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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Mr Darren Millar AM
Chair
Public Accounts Committee
National Assembly for Wales

28 February 2014

Dear Darren

Covering Teachers' Absence

Thank you for your letter dated 19th February seeking further information on the informal analysis for the Masters in Educational Practice (MEP) and the terms of reference for the external evaluation for the programme.

The scoping for the external evaluation of the MEP is currently being undertaken with colleagues in the Knowledge and Analytical Services team. It is anticipated that the terms of reference for the evaluation will be available shortly and I will ensure that a copy is forwarded to the committee as requested.

In relation to the informal analysis of the MEP, since the launch of the programme in September 2012, the Practitioner Standards and Professional Development Division (PSPDD) has undertaken ongoing informal analysis of the delivery of the contract by the Alliance¹ to ensure that the programme is being delivered to the highest quality and to ensure that value for money is being achieved. As I mentioned in my letter 7 February, this has included a particular focus on the deployment of external mentors, which was one of the matters on which the Committee had sought further information.

Our informal analysis has been based on information gathered by officials from a range of sources including:

- Attendance at all training events for external mentors that are delivered by the Alliance and engaging with mentor delegates to gather feedback on their mentoring role

¹ The MEP contract is delivered by an alliance of HEIs – Cardiff, Bangor and Aberystwyth Universities in partnership with the Institute of Education in London.

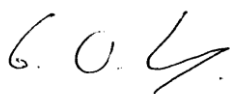
- Attendance at all module learning days that are delivered by the Alliance and engaging with teacher delegates to gather feedback on their experience of the MEP programme
- Chairing the Mentor Management Group, comprised of representatives of the Alliance, Welsh Government and external mentors, which agrees all operational issues related to the training and deployment of external mentors. A Quality Assurance sub-group, with the same representation plus Local Authority representatives, also monitors the quality of delivery
- Attendance at the Alliance's Executive Board to discuss all issues related to the delivery of the MEP. (The Executive Board also serves as the Alliance's Project Board)
- Holding monthly contract meetings between the Alliance's Project Manager and the Welsh Government MEP Project Manager to ensure that the contract is being delivered in line with Welsh Government's requirements and in accordance with principles of effective contract management
- Deployment of Professional Programme Co-ordinators (PPCs) in each consortium to work directly with teacher participants, schools and local authorities/consortia. PPCs have been seconded to the Welsh Government from consortia to provide support in the field and to gather intelligence relating to operational delivery of the MEP and other Welsh Government programmes such as statutory induction

Together, these sources have provided PSPDD with regular information on the delivery of the MEP, particularly in relation to the experience of teacher participants and the deployment of external mentors. PSPDD are satisfied that the use of experienced practitioners drawn from schools to act as external mentors has, so far, provided value for money in terms of the support provided to teachers and schools and we expect this to continue. We will, therefore, continue to closely monitor this aspect of the delivery.

However, we recognise that such informal analysis needs to be substantiated by more formal evaluative methods, which the external evaluation, currently being planned, will be required to provide.

I hope that this additional information addresses the issues that you raised but please contact me if you require any further detail.

Yours sincerely,



Owen Evans

