

**From:** Rex Phillips  
**Sent:** 30 June 2017 07:55  
**To:** 'Phil.Jones@wales.gsi.gov.uk'  
**Subject:** First follow up meeting on the draft Professional teaching and leadership standards

Phil,

2 Rf 1/9/17

Following our meeting on Thursday 29 June, I thought it would be useful to set out my understanding of the issues we discussed and the position reached at the end of the meeting, and to highlight some other issues that have the potential to be 'deal breakers', especially in light of the information contained in the document *Consultation – summary of responses* which I had not had time to consider in any depth prior to our meeting.

For the sake of clarity and transparency, I have set out the issues as a series of points as close to the order in which I recall they arose.

1. It was accepted by the Welsh Government that the use of the PowerPoint presentation as a means of consulting on the standards had been misguided and had caused confusion. The NASUWT welcomed this acknowledgement and referred to the consultation on the FE standards which is currently taking place and suggested that it may be prudent to consider one set of standards for the school and FE sector. The Welsh Government indicated that this had been the original intention but it had been opposed by UCU. On both counts, the NASUWT expressed surprise at these revelations.
2. The Welsh Government suggested that the five dimensions could be presented as the new professional standards with the elements and descriptors providing a narrative for each of the standards at *QTS*, *End of Induction* and *Sustained highly effective practice*. The NASUWT welcomed the suggestion as there would be just five professional standards but pointed out that *Pedagogy* was divided into three dimensions which, in practice, would present seven standards.

It was recognised by the NASUWT that, for *QTS*, the elements and descriptors present 32 requirements which will need to be met in order to gain *QTS*. Likewise, it was recognised that the elements and descriptors relating to *End of Induction* present 32 requirements which will need to be met in order to complete Induction successfully and that this is less than the 55 Practising Teacher Standards (PTS) which are used currently as the End of Induction standards.

3. It was acknowledged by the Welsh Government and the NASUWT that, notwithstanding the extent of the concerns expressed in the NASUWT's consultation response in relation to the nature, construction and detail of some of the descriptors, the main concern with the new standards related to how they would be applied in practice post Induction.

The Welsh Government was clear that post Induction it would be recognised that teachers would be respected as highly trained professional who were continuing to meet the *End of Induction* standards and that the elements and descriptors relating to *Sustained highly effective practice* would **not** present a series of requirements which would need to be met by teachers. However, the Welsh Government pointed out that where it was identified that a teacher or school leader was failing to meeting the *End of Induction* standards the procedures to address under-performance may need to be applied. It was proffered by the Welsh Government that it would be for teachers to decide on the elements and descriptors they wish to consider post Induction to develop and enhance their practice, and that the elements and descriptors relating to *Sustained highly effective practice* should be seen and received by teachers and school leaders as presenting a framework for career-long learning rather than an accountability framework.

The NASUWT welcomed this suggestion but pointed out that the approach identified in the consultation document where it was stated '*At times, and at least annually, a mentor or line manager should consider effectiveness of practice with the teacher to help build a profile of development over time*' would present a twin-track approach to professional development/learning, as the system of Performance Management (PM) already provided the vehicle for considering both the effectiveness of practice and the professional learning needs and desires of teachers (appraisees).

The NASUWT reminded the Welsh Government that a crucial short-coming of the PM system was that the professional development needs of appraisees are identified at the end of the review meeting of a current PM cycle rather than at the conclusion of the planning meeting for a forthcoming PM cycle, and that this issue had

been raised by the NASUWT on numerous occasions in the past. The Welsh Government acknowledged that now may be the opportune moment to reconsider the PM process and guidance.

The NASUWT stressed that a 'twin-track' approach to identifying professional development/learning needs would not be acceptable and that time would need to be provided within the school day for teachers to access professional development/learning/research materials, as a 'DIY CPD' approach would also be unacceptable because it could impact adversely on the contractual right of teachers and headteachers to a work/life balance.

4. It was acknowledged by the Welsh Government and the NASUWT that the expectation in relation to the application of the standards post Induction would require a culture change in schools and within the education establishment generally, with Estyn, the Consortia and Local Authorities cited by the NASUWT as having to embrace the cultural change as well as school senior management teams and governing bodies.
5. The NASUWT questioned the assertion in the consultation document that '*Most teachers and headteachers will elect to move to the new standards immediately...*' as being unsupported by evidence and irreconcilable with the PM process which currently relies on the PTS enshrined in the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD). The NASUWT acknowledges that the consultation document was clear that any decision to move to the new standards before September 2018 would rest with individual teachers and that this has been confirmed in the Welsh Government's response to the consultation in the *Consultation – summary of responses*.

However, it is evident that the right of individual teachers in terms of moving to the new standards prior to September 2018 will need to be clearly articulated to schools by the Welsh Government when read alongside the following comments from *Schools and Practitioners in Consultation – summary of responses*: '*As a school we are happy to integrate them from September 2017*'; and '*Some head teachers will be ensuring that members of staff implement this immediately even if it is not the correct time for that personal member of staff*'. These comments serve to reinforce the concerns of the NASUWT and the need for clear and unequivocal guidance from the Welsh Government.

6. The Welsh Government indicated that it was hoped that the standard could be launched in September with the support of all key stakeholders, including the trade unions. The NASUWT asserted that, if agreement on the standards could be reached, there would be an expectation that any guidance on the application of the standard issued by the Welsh Government and all materials issued around the launch would be subject to consultation with the school workforce trade unions. The NASUWT was very clear that there would be an expectation that the Welsh Government would assist in 'policing' the application of the standards, especially but not exclusively, in relation to their use post Induction, and that there would be no attempt to argue that the Welsh Government could not get involved where issues arose. The NASUWT reminded the Welsh Government that these would be the Welsh Ministers' standards and fine word about how they should be applied would need to be backed up by support from the Welsh Government where they were being misused.
7. The NASUWT agreed to report back to the General Secretary to facilitate consideration of the position reached through the Union's democratic structures with a view to arranging a further meeting with the Welsh Government to discuss, as necessary, the issues raised above and any other outstanding issues that had not been covered in the meeting.

In terms of the next meeting and the outstanding issues, I believe we will need to discuss the following concerns which were raised in our response to the consultation:

- i. the potential for the misuse of the *Sustained highly effective practice* elements and descriptors as assessment tools for 'crossing the threshold' to the Upper Pay Spine (UPS) and/or as a 'job description' for teachers who have progressed to the UPS;
- ii. the provision of adequate funding and timetabled time for professional development/learning/reflection/research;
- iii. the reference in the consultation document that suggests that teachers have to '*...go the distance for their learners...*' to earn respect as professionals;
- iv. the potential for the standards to be used to over-ride the provisions in the STPCD in relation to the awarding of TLR payments;
- v. the language used and the construction of some of the descriptors, especially but not exclusively, those that suggest that teachers are able to '*ensure*' or '*secure*' certain learner outcomes and those that are

related directly to learner achievement, as this approach and construction is too closely aligned to 'inspection speak' and learner progress and achievement can be influenced by many factors that are outside the control of teachers and school leaders; and

- vi. the constant references to 'evidence' throughout the new standards which clearly presents the standards as an accountability framework rather than a means of promoting dialogue between professionals.

I trust that you will find this summary of the meeting both acceptable and useful.

The NASUWT looks forward to meeting with you again in the very near future.

Regards,

*Rex*

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