

Kirsty Williams AC/AM
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg
Cabinet Secretary for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref MA - P-KW-3331-17

Lynne Neagle AM
Chair of Children, Young People and Education Committee

2 October 2017

Dear Lynne,

Thank you for your letter of 20 September.

On behalf of the Children, Young People and Education (CYPE) Committee you have requested additional information in relation to the role of the Education Workforce Council and the new professional standards for teaching and leadership, to inform the Committee's considerations.

Education Workforce Council function

In your letter you refer to the Cabinet decision on 6 July 2015 to move in the direction of enhancing the Education Workforce Council's (EWC) powers. The paper set out one option for the strategic direction of travel the Welsh Government might have taken in relation to the future role of the EWC. This also included the development of a professional learning passport (PLP) and the establishment of a new teacher education accreditation panel within the EWC.

As the Committee will be aware, the EWC is still a fairly new body which has seen more than a doubling in the number of registrants since it was established in 2015. In addition, the EWC has been awarded the initial teacher education (ITE) accreditation function and responsibility for the PLP. These are both important areas of work that expand the role of the EWC and also introduce the EWC to new areas of work that will require a capacity and expertise that differs from the old General Teaching Council of Wales.

To date, the wider education workforce for whom the EWC have responsibility for registering, have not made any representations to me for the EWC to take on any additional functions.

As such, it is important that the reconfigured body (EWC) is given the appropriate time to 'bed in' and focus on their existing core functions, in order to contribute to the development of our education mission.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Gohebiaeth.Kirsty.Williams@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Kirsty.Williams@gov.wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

In developing the new professional standards for teaching and leadership, I insisted that the model was shared more widely. There has been an unprecedented level of involvement of the sector over the last 18 months to develop and test the standards, which has included workshops, consortia events, trialing of the draft standards by practitioners in schools, as well as the formal consultation. The EWC has played an important part in the development of the professional standards and, together with Estyn and the workforce unions, have been involved throughout the process. This is the partnership approach I want to see and encourage, not just having one body taking overall control.

Rest assured, I will approach the EWC if and when I require them to undertake additional functions.

Professional standards for teaching and leadership

The new standards model replaces 55 standards with five key standards and this has been widely welcomed by the sector. The standards concentrate on the essential elements of every teacher's work – pedagogy, collaboration, leadership, innovation and professional learning. Descriptors sit beneath each standard and exemplify how it could apply to a teacher's work depending on where that teacher is in terms of their role and career. Serving teachers and school leaders can explore the descriptors in a developmental way in the pursuit of career-long professional learning.

Teaching is a complex and challenging profession and practitioners have been key to the development of the descriptors which reflect the building blocks of effective teaching.

I now turn to the implementation of the new standards, and in particular, to the Committee's perception of a 'gap' between the vision and the delivery mechanisms. The joint-working approach to develop the standards and outlined above, is echoed in the implementation phase and the mechanisms that have been put in place to ensure that the whole sector is ready to engage with the standards.

Implementation activity

The introduction of the new standards does not fundamentally change the role of those involved with the induction of NQTs. Mentors continue to provide day-to-day support to the NQT and work with colleagues to ensure the NQTs receive high-quality mentoring and supervision throughout the induction period.

Officials have been working with consortium induction co-ordinators since March to ensure mentors were prepared, and have appropriate resources, to use the new standards with NQTs from 1 September 2017. Each consortium has received additional funding of £20k to support their role in the implementation of the standards.

Induction mentors and consortia were invited to an all-day workshop in March, led by Professor Mick Waters, at which the draft standards and mentors' role was explored and schools trialing the standards shared their experiences and provided feedback.

Consortia training of mentors continued during the summer term and the final standards descriptors were published June. In July, a briefing was sent to every school and consortia to update them on progress, raise awareness of the new standards and reiterate the timetable for implementation.

Revised induction guidance incorporating the new standards was developed by officials working with consortia and published in the summer term.

Officials worked with representatives from the ITE sector and the Universities and Schools Council for the Education of Teachers (USCET) to ensure that changes in accreditation criteria are aligned with the new standards and to raise awareness of the new standards amongst NQTs starting induction this September.

Finally, the standards were presented in a more user-friendly online format on 1 September, and also made available for practitioners to use via the PLP.

Implementation timescale

I recognise that an immediate, whole scale move to the new standards by the entire teaching workforce would not be realistic and that is why I have given serving teachers and leaders a year to transition to the new standards before it becomes mandatory for them from September 2018.

For ITE, the new standards will be adopted in September 2019, following a transition year to ensure continuity. This timescale has been agreed with USCET.

I would like to assure the CYPE Committee that the Welsh Government has every confidence in the education workforce continuing to work collaboratively and effectively with the new standards. I hope that the information offered here provides the assurance that the Committee is seeking.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kirsty Williams', written in a cursive style.

Kirsty Williams AC/AM

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Addysg
Cabinet Secretary for Education