

***“Every teacher is a learning leader”***

**Terms of Reference**

**Learning Leaders – Communication and Engagement Sub-group**

1. **Introduction**

1.1 In 2017, the Learning Leaders Oversight Group established a Communication and Engagement Sub-group, made up from representatives of key stakeholder organisations, with a view to providing effective and consistent communication in relation to Learning Leaders.

1.2 The Sub-group met on a number of occasions between 2017 and 2019, however meetings were then suspended while the work of the other three Learning Leaders Working Groups continued to develop.

1. **Background**

2.1 The Department’s [Strategy for Teacher Professional Learning: Learning Leaders](https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/teaching-professional-learning-strategy) was published in March 2016. It sets out the Department’s vision for teacher professional learning, together with a number of policy commitments which underpin it. The vision is that ***“Every teacher is a learning leader, accomplished in working collaboratively with all partners in the interests of children and young people”.***

2.2 The Strategy’s overall aim is to empower the teaching profession to strengthen its professionalism and expertise to meet the challenging educational needs of young people in the 21st century. Key areas are the development of a teacher professional learning framework, development and dissemination of effective practice, building professional learning communities, building leadership capacity, and engagement.

2.3 Implementation has been taken forward through an Oversight Group, a number of Working Groups / Sub-groups on (i) leadership competences, (ii) early career development[[1]](#footnote-1) and (iii) the development of standards for teacher professional learning), and annual Action Plans. The Oversight Group provides strategic direction and its membership is from across the sector[[2]](#footnote-2).

2.4 The pace of progress with the work on Learning Leaders during 2020/21 and into 2021/22 reduced significantly whilst the Department and its educational partners dealt with the COVID-19 Pandemic situation – this included suspending the Oversight Group and Sub-group meetings. The Oversight Group meetings did, however, recommence (remotely) in April 2021.

2.5 Prior to this, the Department brought together the chairs of the three Sub-groups and created an Editing Workgroup, with the aim of amalgamating all the outputs from the Sub-groups into a single cohesive package. The Editing Workgroup met on seven occasions between November 2020 and December 2021, culminating in the production of a single document / proposals paper, known simply as “*Teacher Professional Learning in Northern Ireland*” (TPL in NI), together with an aide memoire / summary poster. This paper was approved by the Oversight Group (towards the end of 2021) for use in discussions with targeted Focus Groups in the education sector.

2.6 The aim of the Focus Group sessions, which were carried out for the Department during March and April 2022 by external research assistants[[3]](#footnote-3) to enable an independent feedback process, was to ascertain whether the concepts set out in the proposals paper were understood and suitably developed to enable a full consultation with the education sector during the 2022/23 academic year.

2.7 A Report on the Focus Group sessions was provided to the Department on 15 June 2022 and was considered by the Oversight Group at its meeting on 22 June 2022. This Report found that whilst there was much positive feedback regarding the proposals paper, it also demonstrated that there is still a general lack of awareness and understanding about the Strategy, and there remain considerable misconceptions regarding the TPL proposals.

2.8 It was therefore agreed at the June 2022 Oversight Group meeting that before engaging widely with the teaching profession on the TPL in NI proposals, an education and awareness raising exercise needs to be carried out first. It was also agreed that this programme of engagement will require a new Communication Plan, which should also consider how to ensure that the Learning Leaders messaging and terminology is being used consistently by all stakeholder organisations, both internally and in their external engagement with schools and teachers.

2.9 It was further agreed that the Communication and Engagement Sub-group should be reconstituted to take this work forward and that the original timeline for consulting on the TPL in NI proposals should be revised, to allow for the additional stage of education and awareness raising exercise to be completed first.

1. **Role of the Communication and Engagement Sub-group**

3.1 The main role of the Communication and Engagement Sub-group remains as follows:

* To agree and keep under review the Communication Plan;
* To ensure effective and consistent communication with all stakeholders in relation to the Learning Leaders Strategy;
* To review, agree and monitor communication methods, mechanisms and performance;
* To establish roles and responsibilities of each organisation represented on the Oversight Group; and
* To establish protocols and processes for collaborative working between organisations to advance the Learning Leaders Strategy.

3.2 This role may involve assisting with all or some of the following:

* Promoting Learning Leaders;
* Ensuring that all communication relating to Learning Leaders with the education sector and other stakeholders is clear and consistent;
* Developing agreed Learning Leaders key messages and/or branding;
* Providing advice on the development and co-ordination of communication activities to maximise their impact;
* Ensuring delivery of high quality and innovative communications;
* Identifying new opportunities for communication activities;
* Participating in communication activities, including TPL seminars and conferences;
* Monitoring the impact of communication to refine/enhance its impact; and
* Reporting on communication activities to the Oversight Group.

**4.0 Membership**

4.1 Membership of the Communication and Engagement Group is open to member organisations of the Oversight Group.

4.2 Members should agree to:

* work co-operatively and constructively as part of the Sub-Group; and
* set aside the time necessary to attend meetings.

4.3 The group may invite non-members to provide input and/or advice where it is considered appropriate.

4.4 Membership of the Communication and Engagement Sub-group will include representatives from:

Department of Education;

Education Authority (EA) / C2K;

Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI);

Universities’ Council for the Education of Teachers NI (UCETNI);

Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA);

Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS); and

General Teaching Council for NI (GTCNI).

**N.B. MEMBERSHIP IS CURRENTLY UNDER REVIEW (see Annex for confirmed members)**

**5.0 Meetings**

5.1 The reconvened Communication and Engagement Sub-group may initially be required to meet monthly/bi-monthly, but the frequency will be based on need and is open to review.

5.2 Meetings will be chaired by the Head of Teacher Education Team (TET) in DE or their nominee, however all members will be free to suggest items for the Agenda.

5.3 The group will be receive Secretariat support from TET, who will arrange meetings and send papers to group members at least one week before the date of the meeting.

**6.0 Review**

6.1 The focus and activities of the Sub-group will be reviewed periodically and the Terms of Reference updated as necessary.

**ANNEX**

**Membership – Learning Leaders Communication and Engagement Sub-group**

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| **ORGANISATION** | **NAME** | **CONTACT DETAILS** |
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| **CCMS** |  |  |
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| **CCEA** | Jennifer Bill | [jbill@ccea.org.uk](mailto:jbill@ccea.org.uk) |
| **CCEA** | Ruth Hobson | [rhobson@ccea.org.uk](mailto:rhobson@ccea.org.uk) |
| **EA** | To be confirmed by Averil Morrow once internal EA post filled |  |
| **C2K** | Eamon McAteer | [eamon.mcateer@eani.org.uk](mailto:eamon.mcateer@eani.org.uk) |
| **GTCNI** | Elaine McEnarney | [emcenarney@gtcni.org.uk](mailto:emcenarney@gtcni.org.uk) |
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1. The working group at the time was known as the Induction and Early Professional Development Working Group, however the term ‘early career’ has since been adopted for this period of a teacher’s career (now referred to as “Early Career Teacher” (“ECT”)). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Includes representatives from the Department of Education, Education Authority (EA), Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI), Universities’ Council for the Education of Teachers NI (UCETNI), Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA), Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) and the General Teaching Council for NI (GTCNI), as well as a number of school practitioners. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Universities’ Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)