

20 May 2023

To:

Andrew Pickford (EWC)
Sarah Lewis (Estyn)
Max White (WG)

Dear Max, Andrew and Sarah,

Further to Thursday's USCET meeting in Cardiff, I have been asked to provide you with the following feedback.

The key issue, which will come as no surprise, is our concern about the unnecessary and overlapping regulatory burdens being placed on ITE providers and schools by Estyn and the EWC. We have still not received a response to our letter requesting an independent and strategic review of how ITE is regulated. The current system is unsustainable and cannot continue. The USCET group unanimously agreed that we would escalate this if a solution is not identified soon. Several colleagues are planning to attend next week's Estyn workshop. They expressed the hope that discussions would focus on strategy rather than on detailed operational issues.

Concern was also expressed about the length of some Estyn visits – 29 days was given as an example - and the fact that this places significant pressure on both schools and ITE providers, making planning difficult and diverting resources away from important aspects of delivery. The Estyn visits themselves are felt to be inspectorial rather than developmental in nature.

UCAS application systems continue to make it difficult for providers to predict actual levels of primary recruitment and could lead to recruitment above target. It was felt that WG should either ensure that either UCAS changes its systems to reflect the specific requirements of PGCE recruitment or identify alternatives.


Securing school placements is becoming increasingly difficult, and is acting as a brake on recruitment, especially in areas such as Welsh Medium. Schools need to be incentivised and resourced to engage in ITE. They also need to receive funding when asked to attend ITE related meetings with WG, Estyn, EWC or whoever. Joint ownership and joint accountability of ITE, a cornerstone of the recent reforms, will become little more than a romantic notion that exists in name only unless something is done.

The planned research day on 29 November was discussed. The timing for this was felt to be difficult. But, more importantly, the resource implications for both schools and ITE providers could be significant. I have therefore been asked to, on behalf of USCET member institutions, to decline the invitation to participate.

Other requests included: an update on the Global Educational Community Project, and an idea of when the lists of GCSE equivalencies will be published, would be helpful.

I am very sorry if some of this sounds negative, and this does not reflect how we generally see our relationship with partners such as yourselves. But, especially in regards the regulatory issues, progress has to be made quickly.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Rogers', with a small yellow highlight on the right side.

James Noble-Rogers