

Response ID ANON-AJTR-EH1D-K

Submitted to **Complaints procedure consultation**
Submitted on **2016-11-21 15:11:04**

Introduction

What is your name?

Name:

Nuala O'Donnell

What is the name of your organisation?

Organisation:

The Irish National Teachers' Organisation

What is your email address?

Email:

nodonnell@into.ie

What is your school/organisation address?

Street Address:

23/24 College Gardens

Town/City:

Belfast

Postcode:

BT9 6BS

Please indicate in which capacity you are responding:

Other (please specify below)

Other::

Recognised Teachers' Union

Question 1

Do you agree that the revised wording makes it clear that the complaints procedure can be used to appeal an inspection finding if you feel that it is not based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection?

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Additional Comments:

The wording is clear, however it is in the wrong place and therefore the message is not clear. The sentence should be a bullet point in section 1.2 to make it clear.

Question 2

Do you agree that it would be helpful for the investigating officer to contact you before beginning the investigation or as part of the investigation?

Strongly Agree

Additional Comments::

It should be a pre-requisite for the Investigating Officer to contact the school, stating their role before beginning the investigation and during the investigation if clarification or further information is required to properly investigate. The investigating officer should also be available to discuss the findings of the investigation at the end when the outcome has been determined to clarify the decision made if required by the school. It is concerning, however, that while ETI receives the evidence supplied by the school, the school is not given the opportunity to see what evidence has been supplied by ETI, nor given an opportunity to refute it.

Question 3

Do you agree that 'inconclusive' should be the outcome when there is a difference of opinion that cannot be corroborated?

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Additional Comments::

Using the term 'Inconclusive' when there are differing opinions which cannot be corroborated, gives at least some indication that the school/teacher has been listened to and evidence considered.

It is concerning, however, that while ETI receives the evidence supplied by the school /teacher, the school/teacher is not given the opportunity to see what evidence has been supplied by ETI, nor given an opportunity to refute it.

If the complaints procedure is to be meaningful, open and transparent, then the decision in relation to an investigation should also include the evidence reviewed from both parties in reaching that decision.

Question 4

Do you agree that an independent person should be involved at stage 2 of the investigation of a complaint?

Comments

Additional comments::

INTO strongly agrees that an independent body should be involved at stage 2 of the investigation, but surprisingly there is no 'strongly agree' for this question?! INTO has repeatedly called for an independent element to the ETI complaints procedure. The Education Committee of the NI Assembly also recommended a '...reformed school inspection complaints procedure which would allow for investigation by personnel outside of the inspectorate or the Department of Education.' The proposal from ETI for a panel of three, two of whom will be ETI, does not satisfy the Education Committee's recommendation or the INTO. There are existing independent bodies and structures available to provide this service. INTO is willing to engage with the ETI and DE in relation to this.

Question 5

Would you agree to participate in an internal review as a serving practitioner?

Disagree

If you have any further comments or suggestions please enter them in the box provided below:

further comments:

INTO strongly disagrees with the inclusion of a serving practitioner in the internal review. (Strongly disagree was not available for this question!) This has the potential to place school leaders in a compromising position between fellow practitioners and the ETI, who will be inspecting them in due course also. The 'perception' is that the ETI would not take kindly to school leaders challenging them and they fear potential repercussions for their own school in their inspections. The current inspection environment is not conducive to this proposal.