Reengagement Panel Report

Assessment of Capacity and Approval of QA Procedures

Part 1   Details of provider

1.1   Applicant Provider

Registered Business/Trading Name:	Peter McVerry Trust Learning Centre CMS CLG
Address:	Unit 2, The Court, Bridge Foot Street, Dublin 8
Date of application:	21 September 2022
Date of resubmission of application:	N/A
Date of site visit (if applicable):	20 January 2023
Date of reconvene meeting (if applicable)	23 March 2023
Date of recommendation to the Programmes and Awards Executive Committee:	08 June 2023

1.2   Profile of provider

Peter McVerry Trust Learning Centre CMS CLG (PMVTLC) has its origins in the Learning Centre – City Motor Sports (CMS) which originally opened in 1996 to support young, vulnerable learners. In 2019, it was incorporated into the service provision of Peter McVerry Trust CLG under the name Peter McVerry Trust Learning Centre CMS CLG. PMVTLC is based in the city centre in Dublin 8, with a sister facility, Carline, based in Balgaddy, Lucan, Co. Dublin.

PMVTLC's current context reflects a small, inclusive and supportive education provider where learners may require a range of therapeutic and educational supports to help them overcome multiple traumas and adversity as they return to education. PMVTLC is able to offer holistic supports to learners and their families, through the provision of a safe space for learning. This is supported by dedicated teachers, social workers and the wider resources of the Peter McVerry Trust charity.

The City Motor Sports Learning Centre originally had its quality assurance (QA) agreed with FETAC in 2008. The centre's current training has built on the original living skills programme, with *Learning is for Life* (PG10988) which offers learners the opportunity to achieve one or more components towards the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) level 3 award in General Learning (3M0874). This training empowers marginalised learners aged 12-17 to meaningfully reengage with education through day-to-day living skills by building self-confidence in the learner in a safe, inclusive child-centred education environment, and complements the Junior Cycle education programme delivered by the provider.

Part 2   Panel Membership

Name	Role of panel member	Organisation
Ann Dunne	Chair	formerly City of Dublin Education and Training Board
Michael Kelly	Report Writer and Panel Member	Consultant, Wildgeese Training & Quality Solutions
Nuala Glanton	Panel Member	Cork Education and Training Board
Rachel Tucker	Panel Member	formerly Community Training & Education Centre, Wexford

Part 3   Findings of the Panel

3.1   Summary Findings

The panel commends Peter McVerry Trust Learning Centre CMS CLG (PMVTLC) for its individualised support in its provision of training and education services to vulnerable young people aged 12-17 years. Panel members were profoundly impressed by the commitment shown by PMVTLC's staff to its learners. It was also apparent that staff within the organisation had fully engaged with the reengagement process and with the panel members during the virtual site visit, demonstrating a reflective and considered approach to all areas of PMVTLC's current education provision. This commitment to quality assurance was achieved without losing sight of PMVTLC's mission to support young people who cannot access mainstream education due to their personal circumstances.

Nonetheless, at the conclusion of the site visit, the panel had some concerns around the areas of quality assured (QA) academic and programme development governance processes, QA assessment procedures and roles, together with future timescales for the monitoring and evaluation of quality assurance procedures as documented. These were discussed with provider representatives at the conclusion of the site visit, being identified as proposed mandatory changes and are outlined in detail in Section 7.1 of this report. Additional items of specific advice are included in Section 7.2. However, given that these issues were discrete, and in the panel's view could be addressed quickly by the provider, the panel availed of the option to defer its overall decision for a period of six weeks, and has allowed PMVTLC this time to submit evidence to the panel that the changes identified had been satisfactorily addressed.

The panel reconvened on 23 March 2023 to consider PMVTLC's submission of its revised Quality Assurance Manual and supporting materials. At the conclusion of this further evaluation, the panel considered that all of the mandatory changes required had been satisfied. Therefore, the panel was pleased to recommend to QQI that the provider's revised QA system be approved.

3.2 Recommendation of the panel to Programmes and Awards Executive Committee of QQI

	Tick ✓ <u>one</u> as appropriate
Approve Peter McVerry Trust Learning Centre CMS CLG's draft QA procedures	✓
Refuse approval of Peter McVerry Trust Learning Centre CMS CLG's draft QA procedures **pending mandatory changes** set out in Section 7.1 (If this recommendation is accepted by QQI, the provider may make a revised application within six months of the decision)	
Refuse to approve Peter McVerry Trust Learning Centre CMS CLG's draft QA procedures	

Part 4   Evaluation of provider capacity

4.1   Legal and compliance requirements:

	Criteria	*Yes/No/ Partially*	*Comments*
4.1.1(a)	**Criterion:** *Is the applicant an established Legal Entity who has Education and/or Training as a Principal Function?*	Yes	The Peter McVerry Trust Learning Centre CMS CLG (PMVTLC) is a company limited by guarantee with charitable status being registered with the Charities Regulatory Authority. The PMVTLC is an education provider with established links to both the Department of Education and QQI.
4.1.2(a)	**Criterion:** *Is the legal entity established in the European Union and does it have a substantial presence in Ireland?*	Yes	The Peter McVerry Trust Learning Centre CMS CLG (PMVTLC) is a company registered in Ireland. The legal entity originally had its QA agreed with FETAC in 2008 and this status has continued with QQI up to the present time. It provides educational programmes to young vulnerable students aged 12-17 years who are unable to engage in mainstream education.
4.1.3(a)	**Criterion:** *Are any dependencies, collaborations, obligations, parent organisations, and subsidiaries clearly specified?*	Yes	PMVTLC works with a range of child welfare and education external partners including the Department of Education, TUSLA – Child and Family Agency, and the City of Dublin Education and Training Board (CDETB).
4.1.4(a)	**Criterion:** *Are any third-party relationships and partnerships compatible with the scope of access sought?*	Yes	PMVTLC has relationships and receives funding from relevant third parties to support its educational activities.
4.1.5(a)	**Criterion:** *Are the applicable regulations and legislation complied with in all jurisdictions where it operates?*	Yes	PMVTLC is required to meet child welfare, educational standards, corporate governance and charity compliance standards as part of its operational and financial requirements. PMVTLC has provided documentary evidence

			of corporate compliance and tax clearance, together with financial statements, public liability insurance cover, plus a compliance declaration signed by PMVTLC's Chief Executive Officer (CEO)/Director.
4.1.6(a)	**Criterion:** *Is the applicant in good standing in the qualifications systems and education and training systems in any countries where it operates (or where its parents or subsidiaries operate) or enrols learners, or where it has arrangements with awarding bodies, quality assurance agencies, qualifications authorities, ministries of education and training, professional bodies and regulators.*	Yes	PMVTLC receives funding from State agencies in part to support its education, training and child welfare-related activities. The provider has a track record with QQI (and previously with FETAC) in the delivery of programmes leading to QQI awards at NFQ level 3.

Findings

The panel's evaluation has concluded that the Peter McVerry Trust Learning Centre CMS CLG has provided sufficient information and supporting evidence to meet the required legal and compliance criteria for Section 4.1.

4.2 Resource, governance and structural requirements:

	Criteria	*Yes/No/ Partially*	*Comments*
4.2.1(a)	**Criterion:** *Does the applicant have a sufficient resource base and is it stable and in good financial standing?*	Yes	The Peter McVerry Trust Learning Centre CMS CLG (PMVTLC) receives annual funding allocations from State agencies to support its education and training activities. Financial statements confirm that the Learning Centre has been fully integrated into the Peter McVerry Trust. Therefore, the panel is generally satisfied that PMVTLC is in a position to maintain its current scope of training activities.
4.2.2(a)	**Criterion:** *Does the applicant have a reasonable business case for sustainable provision?*	Yes	PMVTLC has demonstrated a sound business case for its continuing education and training initiatives, both through current State agency funding relationships, together with the support of the management and governance resources available through the Peter McVerry Trust.
4.2.3(a)	**Criterion:** *Are fit-for-purpose governance, management and decision making structures in place?*	Yes	The panel's initial evaluation concluded that PMVTLC must review its proposed Academic Governance Committee to ensure that its membership profile and terms of reference are appropriate across all governance structures as they relate to education and training. This would ensure effective and independent academic oversight of these areas. Furthermore, QA policy and procedures in relation to programme development must be clearly expressed within the Quality Assurance Manual, including the set-up and end-to-end operation of a Programme

			Development Team, to ensure the clear separation of responsibilities between those who develop programme materials and those who approve them. The panel has proposed a mandatory change in relation to these areas and this is outlined in Section 7.1 of this report. At its reconvened meeting, the panel noted the well-articulated revised terms of reference of the Academic Governance Committee (AGC), with the Programme Development Sub-Committee taking the lead on new programme development, reporting to the AGC. Therefore, the respective mandatory change in this area has been satisfactorily addressed.
4.2.4(a)	**Criterion:** *Are there arrangements in place for providing required information to QQI?*	Yes	PMVTLC meets the requirements for QQI reporting in relation to its current scope of provision, with designated Programme Coordinators and supporting procedures in place.

Findings

The panel's initial evaluation concluded that Peter McVerry Trust Learning Centre CMS CLG (PMVTLC) has met the criteria for Section 4.2, with the exception of Section 4.2.3(a).

The panel had proposed a mandatory change for PMVTLC in this area to include revisiting the governance, management and decision-making processes as currently drafted to ensure that the proposed Academic Governance Committee's membership profile and terms of reference are appropriate across all governance structures as they relate to education and training. This would ensure effective and independent academic oversight of these areas. Furthermore, QA policy and procedures in relation to programme development must be clearly expressed within the Quality Assurance Manual, including the set-up and end-to-end operation of a Programme Development Team. These proposed mandatory changes would ensure an adequate separation of corporate and educational interests across PMVTLC's education and training activities.

At its reconvened meeting the panel considered that all the mandatory changes required in relation to academic governance procedures had now been satisfied.

4.3   Programme development and provision requirements:

	Criteria	Yes/No/ Partially	Comments
4.3.1(a)	**Criterion:** *Does the applicant have experience and a track record in providing education and training programmes?*	Yes	Peter McVerry Trust Learning Centre CMS CLG (PMVTLC) has a track record in both secondary education and further education and training (FET) provision. The provider has experience with QQI (and previously with FETAC) in the delivery and assessment of programmes leading to QQI awards at NFQ level 3.
4.3.2(a)	**Criterion:** *Does the applicant have a fit-for-purpose and stable complement of education and training staff?*	Yes	PMVTLC has an established core team of staff to deliver its education and FET programmes leading to QQI awards. Staffing needs are monitored by the Head of Services. As part of their induction and professional development, staff receive training to promote and support the needs of PMVTLC's learner profiles.
4.3.3(a)	**Criterion:** *Does the applicant have the capacity to comply with the standard conditions for validation specified in Section 45(3) of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act (2012) (the Act)?*	Yes	PMVTLC has the capacity to cooperate with QQI in meeting the information requirements of Section 45(3) of the 2012 Act.
4.3.4(a)	**Criterion:** *Does the applicant have the fit-for-purpose premises, facilities and resources*	Yes	PMVTLC has the required facilities and resources to support its

	to meet the requirements of the provision proposed in place?		current scope of provision with QQI.
4.3.5(a)	**Criterion:** *Are there access, transfer and progression arrangements that meet QQI's criteria for approval in place?*	Yes	PMVTLC has policies and procedures to support learner admissions and referrals to its programmes leading to QQI awards, together with appropriate transfer and progression arrangements. During the panel's evaluation, it was clear that PMVTLC practices its values of equal opportunity, fairness, and inclusivity in access, transfer and progression.
4.3.6(a)	**Criterion:** *Are structures and resources to underpin fair and consistent assessment of learners in place?*	Yes	The panel initially concluded that PMVTLC must revisit its QA procedures for assessment so that any inconsistencies in procedures and terminology regarding assessment authentication are addressed and amended, as appropriate, in line with QQI's published assessment guidelines. Within this context, the panel made particular note of the role of the External Authenticator (EA) and the terms of reference for the Results Approval Panel (RAP) to include finalising results and taking corrective actions when required.

			This would help PMVTLC to ensure that assessment structures and QA procedures are consistently aligned with QQI requirements in this area. A proposed mandatory change in this regard is included in Section 7.1 of this report. At its reconvened meeting, the panel noted that authority in relation to this area was now being delegated from the Academic Governance Committee to the Programme Delivery and Assessment Sub-Committee, with the latter's terms of reference being adjusted accordingly. The panel concluded that this mandatory change had now been met.
4.3.7(a)	**Criterion:** *Are arrangements for the protection of enrolled learners to meet the statutory obligations in place (where applicable)?*	Yes	PMVTLC has suitable arrangements in place with alternative providers to support its Protection of Enrolled Learners (PEL) obligations.

Findings

At the conclusion of its initial evaluation, the panel concluded that PMVTLC must revisit its QA procedures for assessment, so that any inconsistencies in QA procedures and terminology regarding assessment authentication are addressed and amended, as appropriate, in line with QQI's published assessment guidelines. Within this context, the panel made particular note of the role of the External Authenticator (EA) and the terms of reference for the Results Approval Panel (RAP) to include finalising results and taking corrective actions when required. This further work is specified as a proposed mandatory change in Section 7.1 of this report.

At its reconvened meeting the panel evaluated the revised QA procedures in relation to assessment of learners and concluded that the mandatory change in this area had now been satisfied.

4.4 Overall findings in respect of provider capacity to provide sustainable education and training

At the initial site visit, the panel was generally satisfied that Peter McVerry Trust Learning Centre CMS CLG (PMVTLC) has the capacity to provide sustainable education and training programmes. However, the panel concluded that PMVTLC must revisit the quality assurance areas of governance, assessment and self-evaluation, monitoring and review and three proposed mandatory changes in this regard are included in Section 7.1 of this report, as follows:

- Governance and Management of Quality:
    - Academic Governance Committee - The committee membership profiles and terms of reference must be appropriate across all governance structures as they relate to education and training in order to ensure effective and independent academic oversight of these areas.
    - Programme Development Governance Committee - Policy and procedures in relation to Programme Development need to be stated within the QA Manual, including the set-up and end-to-end operation of a Programme Development Team, to ensure the separation of responsibilities between those who approve programme materials and those who develop them.
- Assessment of Learners - Any inconsistencies in procedures and terminology regarding assessment authentication need to be addressed and amended as appropriate (e.g. the role of the External Authenticator; the terms of reference of the Results Approval Panel to include finalising results and taking corrective actions regarding assessment malpractice), in line with QQI's assessment guidelines.
- Documented Approach to QA - Confirm a schedule and timescale for the review and monitoring of QA procedures.

At its reconvened meeting the panel evaluated the revised QA procedures in relation to academic governance, programme development, and assessment of learners and concluded that the mandatory changes in this area had now been satisfied. Therefore, PMVTLC's revised quality assurance procedures now meet the overall standards in relation to the provider's capacity to deliver sustainable education and training.

Part 5 Evaluation of draft QA Procedures submitted by Peter McVerry Trust Learning Centre CMS CLG

The following is the panel's findings following evaluation of Peter McVerry Trust Learning Centre CMS CLG's quality assurance procedures against QQI's Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (April 2016) and Topic Specific QA Guidelines. Sections 1-11 of the report follows the structure and referencing of the Core QA Guidelines.

1	GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF QUALITY

Panel Findings:

> The QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines require that a provider has an effective and comprehensive governance, management, and quality assurance system in place in order to oversee all of its education and training activities. The panel concluded that Peter McVerry Trust Learning Centre CMS CLG (PMVTLC) has made progress across this area but does not fully meet the QA criteria at the present time.
>
> During the course of the panel's evaluation, provider representatives outlined their internal review process which used the gap analysis tool to analyse the Learning Centre's current QA context and future needs. The Peter McVerry Trust (PMVT) charity's directors endorsed this approach, with support from central functions (including the Research and Policy Development teams), together with contacts with relevant external bodies, such as AONTAS (the National Adult Learning Organisation). During the panel's evaluation of PMVTLC's QA procedures it was apparent that the learner was at the centre of the provider's future planning, so the focus was not narrowly concentrated on basic regulatory compliance.
>
> The main outcome of PMVTLC's QA review had identified a need to establish suitable governance structures to reflect the Learning Centre's current activities in its delivery of programmes leading to QQI awards. The goal was to ensure academic integrity and independence in decision-making, thereby reflecting best practice in the education and training sectors. Therefore, PMVTLC has taken steps to create three governance committees to support the oversight and future development, namely the Academic Governance Committee, the Programme Development Governance Committee, and the Programme Delivery and Assessment Governance Committee. Membership profiles and terms of reference had been developed for these new committees.
>
> The panel noted these changes in governance and management structures but considered that further work will be required to ensure a clear separation of academic and corporate matters in the operation of these new governance functions, with the new Academic Governance Committee taking precedence over the committees engaged with programme development and delivery. Furthermore, it would also assist if individual committee members' roles are specified with a view to widen external oversight and independence. Therefore, the panel had proposed a mandatory change in the area of governance and management, so that PMVTLC must address the following:
>
> - Governance and Management of Quality:
>   - Academic Governance Committee - The committee membership profiles and terms of reference must be appropriate across all governance structures as they relate to education and training in order to ensure effective and independent academic oversight of these areas.

> o Programme Development Governance Committee - Policy and procedures in relation to Programme Development need to be stated within the QA Manual, including the set-up and end-to-end operation of a Programme Development Team, to ensure the separation of responsibilities between those who approve programme materials and those who develop them.
>
> Following the resubmission of PMVTLC's revised quality assurance (QA) system, the panel reconvened to evaluate the updated QA documentation. In considering the mandatory change in relation to Section 5.1, Governance and Management of Quality, the panel concluded that the mandatory change for this area of QA had now been satisfied.

2 DOCUMENTED APPROACH TO QUALITY ASSURANCE

Panel Findings:

> The QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines require that a provider operates a fully documented quality assurance (QA) system with robust QA policies and procedures in place to support this. The panel concluded that, whilst PMVTLC has made significant progress in this area as part of its planning for reengagement with QQI, some additional areas need further work.
>
> During the course of its QA approval evaluation, the panel noted the comprehensive Quality Assurance Manual which had been presented by the provider. This was supported by Learner/Guardian and Tutor Handbooks. In addition, risk areas were tracked through a risk register developed by the parent charity body, using an external risk specialist and risk management formed part of the brief for the new Academic Governance Committee. The provider engages with a number of other agencies, e.g., TUSLA – Child and Family Agency, in the course of its education and training work, and was able to provide the panel with evidence of Child Safeguarding Statement being on prominent display in compliance with national regulations.
>
> In summary, whilst the proposed Quality Assurance Manual was a comprehensive document, the panel concluded that review and monitoring procedures in relation to the QA documentation should be included. Therefore, PMVTLC must:
>
> * Documented Approach to QA - Confirm a schedule and timescale for the review and monitoring of QA policies and procedures.
>
> Following the resubmission of PMVTLC's revised quality assurance (QA) system, the panel reconvened to evaluate the updated QA documentation. There is now provision for an annual review of all QA policies and procedures. In considering the mandatory change in relation to Section 5.2, Documented Approach to Quality Assurance, the panel concluded that the mandatory change for this area of QA had now been satisfied.

3   PROGRAMMES OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Panel Findings:

QQI's Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines require that programme delivery, development and monitoring follow systematic methods. In addition, a consistent approach to learner access, transfer and progression (ATP) is required, together with recognition of prior learning (RPL). The panel concluded that PMVTLC must undertake some further changes in the area of programme development, monitoring and approval to fully meet QQI's requirements.

The PMVTLC *Learning is for Life* programme offers learners the opportunity to achieve one or more components towards the NFQ level 3 Certificate in General Learning (3M0874) and has been designed to complement the centre's Junior Cycle provision, acting as a "prevention pillar" through teaching life skills for young people who are at the margins of society. Current modules are Computer Literacy (3N0881), Breakfast Cookery (3N0895), Health and Fitness (3N0531), Personal Effectiveness (3N0565), and non-accredited practical skills such as woodworking. All programmes are delivered in a classroom or workshop mode.

The main Learner Centre in Dublin 8 has a capacity for 15 learners, so there is a waiting list for admissions, but PMVTLC takes an active role prior to access, creating a Pre-Placement Student Profile to help capture all previous experience and academic achievements. This Learning Centre also liaises with the school of origin, educational welfare officers, assigned keyworkers, etc. to develop appropriate support plans as part of the access process for learners. In the light of this pre-admission activity and learner profiles, there are no formalised procedures for RPL as generally understood within a NFQ level 3 programme context. Furthermore, there is strong encouragement for transfer opportunities to further education and training (FET), with PMVTLC working closely with local FET colleges, and also progression to FET programmes leading to QQI awards at levels 4 and above, and also to the future workplace.

Progression routes for learners include attendance at open days, information and support in applying to apprenticeships, plus reengaging in school education/employment. PMVTLC's aim is that no learner leaves without a progression route having been identified. To illustrate this point, PMVTLC was able to provide powerful examples of how its learners had developed on an educational and personal journey within the centres, progressing to FET and meaningful work with major employers. The Learning Centres will maintain contact with and provide support to former learners for 2 or more years after they graduate from their programmes.

PMVTLC also works with education partners such as AONTAS and City of Dublin ETB in developing its programmes, subject to funding and other resources, as most of these must be delivered in a single academic year. Any new programme proposal is based on the evidenced needs of learners, through a balance of appropriate individual challenges and promoting overall achievement, supporting learners in their continuing educational development.

As noted in Section 5.1 above, QA governance structures are being upgraded to provide oversight and approvals within programme development. However, the panel concluded that additional work was required to meet QQI guidelines in this area. Therefore, as noted above, PMVTLC must address the following:

- Governance and Management of Quality:
  - Programme Development Governance Committee - Policy and procedures in relation to Programme Development need to be stated within the QA Manual, including the

set-up and end-to-end operation of a Programme Development Team, to ensure the separation of responsibilities between those who approve programme materials and those who develop them.

Following the resubmission of PMVTLC's revised quality assurance (QA) system, the panel noted the changes (see Section 5.1 above) and concluded that the mandatory change for this area had now been met.

4 STAFF RECRUITMENT, MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Panel Findings:

QQI's Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines require that a provider takes responsibility for the quality of its staff, including recruitment, management and development, providing a supportive environment which enables staff to carry out their work effectively. The panel concluded that PMVTLC meets the requirements in this area and it was evident that all staff representatives met by the panel were fully committed to supporting both Learning Centres' learners.

PMVTLC operates as a specialist education centre, with a small group of staff, comprising of teachers/tutors, social care workers, and support/administrative staff. Staff selection and recruitment is handled centrally within the Peter McVerry Trust (PMVT). Processes are in place to ensure that all staff are appropriately qualified and experienced for their designated roles. All teaching staff must be registered with the Teaching Council in addition to having appropriate third-level qualifications.

New hires must complete a standard set of PMVT training modules, covering the areas of Health and Safety, Fire Safety, Managing Challenging Behaviour, plus Child Protection and Safeguarding. The new staff member then proceeds to induction into their specific role and service area within PMVTLC. The Centre Manager is also responsible for monitoring relevant Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programmes for each member of staff within each Learning Centre. Teaching staff engage in peer-to-peer CPD with PMVT's Carline Learning Centre and also through cluster days via the Department of Education.

Collaborative work practices are crucial to ensure the success of PMVTLC's education and training programmes. All staff are able to contribute to self-evaluation reviews through a quarterly report. Staff performance monitoring includes tracking learner attendance and engagement with programmes, the quality of communication across the staff team, learners, and parent(s)/guardian(s), together with overall learner wellbeing, effective keyworker liaison, and grade/certificate outcomes.

5	TEACHING AND LEARNING

Panel Findings:

QQI's Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines require that providers monitor the quality of the teaching and learning experience on a continuous basis, with a view to improving overall quality across education and training and programme delivery. The goal is to develop a learning community using reflective practice across different learning environments. The panel concluded that PMVTLC meets these requirements.

PMVTLC's approach to teaching and learning is distinctive in that it combines both educational programmes and social care for learners aged 12-17 who have been excluded from mainstream education due to individualised difficult circumstances. There is a focus on a person-centred approach to teaching and learning, with teaching staff working alongside keyworkers to support learners who often have diverse and complex needs. Typically, learners will have a negative experience in mainstream education and part of the teacher/keyworker role involves developing self-confidence within the individual. In addition, progression beyond the NFQ level 3 award to higher level programmes helps build a sense of achievement for the learner.

A core aim within PMVTLC's teaching and learning is to meet learners "where they are at" to ensure that learners are challenged at a developmentally appropriate level. This is facilitated through small class sizes which allows for close relationships between the centre's staff and its learners. Classes for programmes leading to NFQ level 3 awards are typically 30-45 minutes duration and take place within an assigned classroom in the centre in a safe, inclusive child-centred education environment.

| **6** | **ASSESSMENT OF LEARNERS** |

Panel Findings:

QQI's Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines require that assessment conforms with standards of fairness, consistency, and fitness for purpose. The panel initially concluded that PMVTLC must undertake further development in this area to ensure consistency in assessment in order to fully meet the requirements.

Quality assurance of assessment is aligned with PMVTLC's overall approach to teaching and learning. Teaching and social care staff are required to ensure that programme delivery outcomes enable learners to achieve their full potential within the assessment process. The low learner/tutor ratio helps to promote completion of assessment tasks with daily individualised support and feedback. Also, teachers are required to ensure that all assessment materials are submitted for internal/external review in the correct format. Assessment outcomes reflect NFQ awards at level 3, where learners are classified as "successful" if they have achieved all of the learning outcomes for the component award. There are a range of QA policies for assessment and supports for learners, including assessment repeats, guidance on plagiarism and academic malpractice, together with reasonable accommodations. Learners may appeal the assessment process and a social care worker is tasked with assisting the learner with any appeal.

The Programme Delivery and Assessment Governance Committee monitors the outcomes of both internal and external assessment review processes, reporting to the Academic Governance Committee on this area. However, the panel noted that some of the terminology and procedures used by PMVTLC within this area will need to be amended to fully meet QQI's assessment guidelines, *Quality Assuring Assessment Guidelines for Providers, 2013(V2 - 2018).* The panel also noted the opportunity in using feedback from the External Authenticator to enhance and develop the assessment process generally.

In summary, PMVTLC must:

- Assessment of Learners - Any inconsistencies in procedures and terminology regarding assessment authentication need to be addressed and amended as appropriate (e.g., the role of the External Authenticator; the terms of reference of the Results Approval Panel to include finalising results and taking corrective actions regarding assessment malpractice), in line with QQI's assessment guidelines.

Following the resubmission of PMVTLC's revised quality assurance (QA) system, the panel reconvened to evaluate the updated QA documentation. There is now provision for the delegation of authority by the Academic Governance Council to the Programme Delivery and Assessment Sub-Committee in relation to assessment of learners, including the areas referred to above. Therefore, the panel concluded that the mandatory change in relation to Section 5.6, Assessment of Learners, had now been satisfied.

7	SUPPORT FOR LEARNERS

Panel Findings:

QQI's Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines require that the adequacy of learner resources is monitored on a regular basis, with access to pastoral care, learner representation and related services to help support learners during programme delivery. The panel noted PMVTLC's clear commitment to supporting individual learners on their learner journey. This was apparent through the centre's unique method of education programme delivery and individual supports across its diverse learner profile. The panel concluded that PMVTLC meets QQI's requirements in this area but has included a specific advice in Section 7.2 in relation to further developing the "voice of the learner" within PMVTLC's oversight structures.

All learner supports are designed to be aligned with PMVTLC's core goals of building self-confidence and providing the learner with a sense that they are in control of their own education. Supports work in conjunction with programme delivery, with structured timetables to ensure consistency and developing a routine for the learner. The centre's facilities are geared to assisting the learner (and their wider family) in reengaging with education, including practical provisions for the learner such as meals, as well as conventional educational supports in literacy (using National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) resources) and digital skills. There is a focus on learner engagement and accessibility, using multiple channels to support and reinforce learning, e.g., YouTube video content to support classroom learning.

There is a Learner & Guardian Handbook and information pack for new placements, setting out mutual commitments, and this is supported by a learner induction process. The social care keyworker plays an important role in the successful placement and inclusion of the learner within PMVTLC. Therefore, at the outset a learner is required to engage with their keyworker to create an Individual Student Support Plan. This will help inform teaching and social care support needs for the individual learner. Given the centre's learner profiles, supports are focused on individual needs, being learner-centred and also strengths-based and trauma-informed. PMVTLC also offers workshops for learners to address common issues facing young people, e.g., cyberbullying and/or staying safe online. Furthermore, a holistic approach is used in supporting learners which includes wider inter-agency collaboration, e.g., contacts with TUSLA – Child and Family Agency, local youth groups, Rehab Group (National Learning Network), and the Department of Education. Support also extends to future education and work activation/employment progression routes, with PMVTLC developing progression plans and maintaining contact with the learner for at least 2 years after graduation.

Individualised non-academic supports include one-to-one counselling sessions with an external child psychologist. PMVTLC recognises the need to support the learner within the classroom environment alongside their family outside of the education setting. Therefore, the social care worker may develop an Individual Crisis Support Plan to maintain the learner within an education setting and support the wider family's needs. Other supports include a Behaviour Management Strategy which has been designed to provide guidance for staff in delivering additional behavioural support for learners, including positive interventions and prevention strategies.

Individual learner rights are recognised throughout both centres' provision, with the learner and parent(s)/guardian(s) receiving details of PMVTLC's own formal complaints process. As learners are aged under 18, they also have the legal right of access to *Tusla Tell Us* in relation to any aspect of the service provision by PMVTLC.

At a management level, the Head of Services is responsible for coordinating the full range of learner supports (both short- and long-term) within PMVTLC, including academic, behavioural, physical, and

emotional areas. There are regular meetings with centre staff to track the effectiveness of current supports and both the Head of Services and the social care team will regularly monitor individual support plans to ensure their continuing effectiveness.

As noted above, the panel has included a specific advice in Section 7.2 of this report with the aim of further supporting the learner and their point of view in PMVTLC's activities, as follows:

- Consider how the learner voice may be represented within the governance bodies (e.g., via the appointment of a learner representative such as a previous graduate or a learner advocacy agency, plus the inclusion of learner feedback and evaluations).

8   INFORMATION AND DATA MANAGEMENT

Panel Findings:

QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines require a provider to operate reliable information and data management systems to help inform decision-making, review progress against objectives, and identify areas requiring further action. This may include generating standard reports for use by staff and management in self-monitoring and QA enhancement activities. The panel concluded that PMVTLC meets QQI's requirements in this area.

PMVTLC deals with vulnerable young people and so it recognises that it has a particular duty of care in relation to its data management practices, as it collects significant and sensitive information on learners and their families. The provider has established data protection policies in line with the Data Protection Act 2018/General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (the GDPR), and also follows best practice in its field such as the *Child-Oriented Approaches to Data Processing*.

Data collection forms part of the PMVTLC's operations and processes and is used in relation to learner demographics, developing learner profiles, monitoring drop-out and completion rates, together with assessment results and learner achievements during their placement with the centre. This data in turn is used to analyse PMVTLC's own quality assurance processes as part of its self-evaluation and oversight functions, together with the wider Peter McVerry Trust (PMVT) operational requirements and regulatory obligations.

Data records may be created in both soft and hard copy formats, including sensitive information such as medical, educational, and psychological reports, as well as case notes, individual support plans and Junior Cycle results/QQI awards achieved. All information technology (IT) systems are security-protected, with access restricted to designated PMVTLC devices. Hard copy documents are stored in secure, fire-proof cabinets onsite and soft copy files are currently stored on an organisational SharePoint with access restricted to authorised staff members. Data management policies also extend to Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) systems which are used across PMVT services to protect people, buildings and other assets.

There are procedures in relation to data retention and arrangements for the secure destruction of expired data. Currently, there is a data migration project underway for 2022/23 academic year to transfer all records to a secure Salesforce management information system (MIS) with multi-factor authentication.

9	PUBLIC INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

Panel Findings:

QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines require that a provider gives clear, accessible, and accurate information on its core activities including accredited and non-accredited programmes, its QA procedures, and the processes for access, transfer, and progression (ATP). In addition, a provider is required to make available programme information for both current and prospective learners, together with QA evaluation reports. The panel concluded that PMVTLC meets the requirements under this section.

The Peter McVerry Trust (PMVT) has a dedicated Communications Office which is responsible for reviewing and approving all public information, promotional materials, evaluation reports, etc. in relation to PMVTLC. It is a policy requirement that all information is accurate and appropriate, whilst also meeting all child protection/safeguarding policies and procedures. The Academic Governance Committee must approve all programme information prior to publication. The centre's website includes relevant information to support enquiries by past, current, and future learners in relation to programmes, including available awards/formal titles, plus referral and admission requirements.

10	OTHER PARTIES INVOLVED IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING (incl. Apprenticeships)

Panel Findings:

QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines require that peer relationships across training and education are monitored by the provider and are subject to effective QA oversight. External partnerships and independent experts must operate within documented terms of engagement, including prior due diligence, ethical practice considerations and appropriate conflict management. The panel concluded that PMVTLC meets the requirements in this QA area.

Due to the unique position of its education and training provision, PMVTLC does not engage in third-party partnerships beyond those required to meet its statutory obligations (e.g., TUSLA – Child and Family Agency, Department of Education, together with Liberties Training Centre and Clogher Road Community College for arrangements for the protection of enrolled learners (PEL)). However, PMVTLC also maintains wider links with the education and training community to support QA improvement, policy research, and staff CPD (e.g., AONTAS, City of Dublin ETB, Dublin City University). It also engages external parties to help maintain the academic and organisational integrity of the organisation (e.g., external members of governance bodies, external authentication of assessment).

The above relationships are subject to the wider governance and oversight requirements of the Peter McVerry Trust (PMVT). In addition, PMVTLC's own Quality Assurance Handbook and governance procedures operate to ensure the effective scope, governance and code of conduct of any third-party relationships.

11   SELF-EVALUATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW

Panel Findings:

QQI Core Statutory Quality Assurance (QA) Guidelines require that a provider's internal QA system links effectively with its external QA obligations. Therefore, internal reviews and self-evaluations of quality, including reviews of programmes of education and training, are seen as a fundamental part of a provider's wider QA system. This assists the provider in identifying current fields of effective practice as well as areas for improvement.

PMVTLC engages in QA monitoring processes to maintain a high standard of service provision and best practice, and to keep on track with changes in legislation and statutory guidelines. To support these processes, PMVTLC has developed QA self-evaluation and monitoring procedures. These operate at all levels of its management and operations to ensure the effective delivery of its educational and supporting services.

On a granular level, the effectiveness of PMVTLC's services is measured through specific indicators, e.g., learner progress on individual plans, attendance, engagement, communication, behaviour, grades achieved, etc. Learner feedback is also used to monitor the effectiveness of educational and support services within the centre. Staff members also provide feedback to the teaching and social care teams, together with their own monthly reports.

On an organisational level, monitoring measures include formal governance oversight and reporting on the management and staffing within PMVTLC as a provider, designated management function reports on daily operations, plus the monitoring of adherence to child protection and safeguarding procedures.

Following the initial site visit, the panel was generally satisfied that PMVTLC operates a comprehensive range of QA monitoring and self-evaluation procedures to support its QA framework and inform improvement plans. However, the panel proposed one mandatory change in relation to monitoring in Section 7.1 of this report, as follows:

- Documented Approach to QA - Confirm a schedule and timescale for the review and monitoring of QA procedures.

In addition, the panel included one area of specific advice in Section 7.2 of this report, as noted below:

- Review Department of Education guidelines on Child Safeguarding to ensure that the PMVT Learning Centres are fully aligned with these.

Following the resubmission of PMVTLC's revised quality assurance (QA) system, the panel noted the changes (see Section 5.2 above) and concluded that the mandatory change for this area had now been met.

Evaluation of draft QA Procedures - Overall panel findings

The panel commends the Peter McVerry Trust Learning Centre CMS CLG (PMVTLC) for its demonstrated commitment and unique approach to supporting marginalised young people through individualised support and education services. It was evident that the ethos of the Peter McVerry Trust guides the planning and operational delivery across each Learning Centre.

Panel members were deeply impressed by PMVTLC's staff commitment. In addition, the panel noted the manner in which the provider's representatives and supporting teams had engaged in a reflection on how its scope of education and support services could be delivered through a holistic quality-assured system. This was achieved without losing sight of PMVTLC's mission to support young people who cannot access mainstream education due to their personal circumstances.

Nonetheless, at the conclusion of the site visit, the panel had concerns around the areas of QA academic and programme development governance processes, QA assessment procedures and roles, together with future timescales for monitoring quality assurance as documented. These were discussed with PMVTLC's representatives at the conclusion of the site visit and are outlined in Section 7.1 of this report and identified as *proposed mandatory changes* (additional items of *specific advice* are included in Section 7.2). Given that these issues were discrete, and in the panel's view could be addressed quickly by the provider, the panel availed of the option to defer its overall decision for a period of six weeks, and has allowed PMVTLC this time to submit evidence to the panel that the changes identified have been satisfactorily addressed.

Following PMVTLC's resubmission of its revised QA procedures and associated materials to QQI, the panel reconvened on 23 March 2023 to formally evaluate the updated QA system. The panel was pleased to record that all of the mandatory changes from the initial report were now satisfied. Therefore, the panel recommends that QQI approves the provider's QA system.

Part 6   Conditions of QA Approval

6.1   Conditions of QA Approval

N/A

Part 7   Mandatory Changes to QA Procedures and Specific Advice

The following proposed mandatory changes were identified at the conclusion of the site visit on 20 January 2023 by the panel. The panel availed of the option to defer its decision to allow Peter McVerry Trust Learning Centre CMS CLG an opportunity to address these issues within a six-week period.

The panel reconvened on 23 March 2023 to evaluate evidence submitted by Peter McVerry Trust Learning Centre CMS CLG in support of the proposed changes. Following an evaluation of the evidence submitted, the panel is satisfied that Peter McVerry Trust Learning Centre CMS CLG has adequately addressed the issues set out in Section 7.1 below.

7.1   Mandatory Changes

> 1. Governance and Management of Quality:
>   a. Academic Governance Committee - The committee membership profiles and terms of reference must be appropriate across all governance structures as they relate to education and training in order to ensure effective and independent academic oversight of these areas.
>   b. Programme Development Governance Committee - Policy and procedures in relation to Programme Development need to be stated within the QA Manual, including the set-up and end-to-end operation of a Programme Development Team, to ensure the separation of responsibilities between those who approve programme materials and those who develop them.
> 2. Assessment of Learners - Any inconsistencies in procedures and terminology regarding assessment authentication need to be addressed and amended as appropriate (e.g. the role of the External Authenticator; the terms of reference of the Results Approval Panel to include finalising results and taking corrective actions regarding assessment malpractice), in line with QQI's assessment guidelines.
> 3. Documented Approach to QA - Confirm a schedule and timescale for the review and monitoring of QA procedures.

7.2   Specific Advice

1. Consider how the learner voice may be represented within the governance bodies (e.g., via the appointment of a Learner representative such as a previous graduate or a learner advocacy agency, plus the inclusion of learner feedback and evaluations).
2. Review Department of Education guidelines on Child Safeguarding to ensure that the PMVT Learning Centre is fully aligned with these.

Part 8   Proposed Approved Scope of Provision for this provider

NFQ Level(s) – min and max	Award Class(es)	Discipline areas
3 to 3	Minor	Arts and humanities and business, administration and law
Delivered full time, face-to-face only.		

Part 9   Approval by Chair of the Panel

This report of the panel is approved and submitted to QQI for its decision on the approval of the draft Quality Assurance Procedures of Peter McVerry Trust Learning Centre CMS CLG.

Name:

Ann Dunne

Date: 30 March 2023

Annexe 1: Documentation provided to the Panel in the course of the Evaluation

Document

Quality Assurance Handbook
Application for Reengagement, dated 29 September 2022
Response to Request for Information (RFI) – Jan 2023
Organisational structure chart
Provider presentation to QQI panel (20 Jan 2023) – PowerPoint & Video
Child Safeguarding Statement
Learner & Guardian Handbook
Tutor Handbook
Computer Literacy Course Plan
Course Calendar
Health & Safety Statement
Fire Evacuation Procedure
Leaving the Centre Protocol
No Smoking Policy
Risk Management Policy 2020
Risk Register – Site Specific 2022
Site Specific Combined Risk Assessment Register
QQI Statement of Approved Scope of Provision
QQI Provider Profile Report
QQI Awards per Year since 2010 – detail/summary reports
Service Level Agreements – TUSLA – Child and Family Agency; City of Dublin ETB

PMVTLC - CRO Certificate of Incorporation on change of name, 09 Sept 2020
PMVTLC Staff Structure
PMVT U18s & Central Support Staff Structure
Learning Centre Interrelated Operational & Governance Structure
Protection of Enrolled Learners (PEL) documentation
Audited Financial Statements for PMVTLC corporate entity – 2019/2022/2021
PMVTLC Management Accounts (Apr 2022)
Auditor's letter dated 8 September 2022
PMVT & related entities indemnity insurance confirmation of cover 2022/2023
PMVTLC Tax Clearance Certificate (14 Sep 2022)

Annexe 2:   Provider staff met in the course of the Evaluation

Name	Role/Position
Tanya Blyth	Director of Child and Family Services
Sarah Morrissey	Head of Services
Paul Rosbotham	Head of Activation
Cimara Witte	Research and Policy Officer
Denise O'Keeffe	Tutor and Social Care Worker

Appendix: Provider response to the Reengagement Panel Report

Yvonne Agnew
Senior Executive Officer, Quality Assurance Awards Directorate,
Quality and Qualifications Ireland,
26-27 Denzille Lane,
Dublin 2,
Ireland.
D02 P266

29 Mountjoy Square
Dublin 1
D01 C2N4
Ireland

T +353 (0)1 823 0776
E info@pmvtrust.ie
W www.pmvtrust.ie

10th April 2023

Re: QQI Re-Engagement Report and Factual Accuracy Check.

Dear Yvonne,

Thank you for the panel reengagement report for Peter McVerry Trust Learning
Centre CMS CLG.

We have reviewed the report and attached the Factual Accuracy Feedback Form
with no factual accuracies identified.

PMVT are grateful for the support throughout the process and accept the
recommendation of the panel.

If you require anything further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Tanya Blyth,
Director of Child and Family Services.