

EDUCATION WORKFORCE COUNCIL
CYNGOR Y GWEITHLU ADDYSG

MINUTES OF THE FORTIETH MEETING OF THE EDUCATION WORKFORCE COUNCIL

DATE: 10 July 2025

LOCATION: EWC Offices

Present:

Members:

Eithne Hughes (<i>Chair</i>)	Theresa Evans-Rickards
David Williams	Kelly Edwards
Gwawr Taylor	Jane Jenkins

Online: Sue Walker, Nicola Stubbins

Apologies:

Kathryn Robson, Geraint Williams, David Edwards, Karl Jones

Officers:

Hayden Llewellyn	Chief Executive
Lisa Winstone	Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Bethan Stacey	Director of Professional Development, Accreditation and Policy
David Browne	Director of Regulation
Amy Pope	Corporate Services Manager
Louise Deeley	Corporate Governance Officer (<i>minutes</i>)
Angela Guarino	Executive Assistant to the Chief Executive (<i>observing</i>)
Richard Skyrme	HEO PLP Development & Marketing (<i>observing</i>)
Jo Beach	Accreditation and Quality Officer (<i>observing</i>)

1. Welcome and preliminaries

- 1.1 The Chairperson welcomed members and officers to the fortieth meeting of the Education Workforce Council (EWC). She welcomed the simultaneous translator and observers from EWC. Apologies had been received from Kathryn Robson, Geraint Williams, David Edwards and Karl Jones.
- 1.2 Members were reminded that the next Council meeting and planning session would take place on at 10:00am on 10 November 2025 at EWC Offices. The Chairperson noted that the Cabinet Secretary had been unable to attend the meeting; she had been invited to attend the November Council meeting.

2. Declarations of Interest

- 2.1 Kelly Edwards noted a Declaration of Interest in relation to her role within ColegauCymru and the minimum qualifications of FE Teachers.

3. Chairperson's correspondence and report

- 3.1 The Chair updated the Council on the recent recruitment drive to appoint a new Chief Executive. Goodson Thomas, an executive search agency had been appointed and a good shortlist had been provided. No internal candidates applied for the role. Following interviews, the panel (including one representative from Welsh Government and one independent), had agreed not to appoint. The Director of Finance and Corporate Services, Lisa Winstone, who is also the Deputy Chief Executive, had agreed to act as Interim Chief Executive for a period of six months from 14 July 2025. A new recruitment exercise would commence in the autumn.
- 3.2 One member queried the feedback received from Goodson Thomas. The Chair confirmed that they thought the quality of the candidates was good and they had passed on feedback from the panel following the interview process.

4. Draft minutes of the Council meeting of 20 March 2025

- 4.1 The Chairperson introduced the draft minutes of the Council meeting of 20 March 2025. She asked members to approve the minutes as an accurate record of discussions.
- 4.2 There were no matters arising and Council ratified the minutes.

5. To receive notification of any issues which members wish to raise in respect of the 'for information' agenda items

- 5.1 There were no issues notified.

6. Draft minutes of the 20 May 2025 Executive Committee meeting

- 6.1 The Chief Executive presented the Executive Committee minutes and reported there were no matters arising to draw to members' attention that were not covered in Council's agenda.
- 6.2 No queries were raised by members.

7. Draft minutes of the 20 May 2025 Registration and Regulation Committee meeting

- 7.1 Nicola Stubbins (*Chairperson of the Registration and Regulation Committee*) presented the minutes and reported there were no matters arising to draw to members' attention that were not covered in Council's agenda.
- 7.2 It was noted that the Committee had been informed of the delay to implement the registration database.
- 7.3 There had been limited data for 2025-26 so agenda items discussed related to last year's data. There had been concern about the interpretation of legislation relating to the timescale which FE teachers would be allowed to complete a specified mandatory minimum qualification for those who did not have the minimum qualification. The Registration and

Regulation Committee had been notified the team were awaiting legal advice about the matter. Council members were informed that informal legal advice had been received. Officers would need to consider whether or not it may be necessary to seek further formal legal advice.

7.4 The Committee had welcomed the new principle on leadership contained within the Review of the Code of Professional Conduct and Practice.

7.5 No queries were raised by members.

8. Report from the Chief Executive

EWC 16/25

8.1 The Chief Executive presented the report updating Council on a range of matters not covered elsewhere on the agenda, and invited members' comments and queries.

8.2 With reference to paragraph 5, the Chief Executive noted the challenge to appointment members with only a year and a half left of the current term, which would be raised with Welsh Government.

8.3 Members were notified that a Written Statement had been issued by the Cabinet Secretary for Education, giving an update on Professional Learning and School Improvement.

8.4 The Chairperson and Chief Executive had provided an hour of oral evidence to the CYPE Committee on 5th June 2025, receiving extensive media coverage thereafter. The evidence had been well received by the Cabinet Secretary and subsequent meetings with the two opposition leads had taken place. The written submission already provided would be reviewed following a request from the Committee for additional evidence.

8.5 In relation to paragraphs 10-12 the Cabinet Secretary had made a formal statement about a new youth work body being formed.

8.6 There had been good attendance at the Masterclass event on the workings of a child's brain with keynote speaker Dean Burnett on 11th May 2025.

8.7 The Chair noted the need to progress Council vacancies for at least a 4-year tenure. It was noted the Cabinet Secretary was keen to have representation for teaching assistants.

8.8 One member queried whether there was a formal skills matrix to identify skills gaps in Council membership. The Chair confirmed there was a robust interview process in place to cover as many of the registration categories as possible. The Chief Executive confirmed that they were Welsh Government appointments and a set of knowledge skills and requirements had been developed jointly.

8.9 One member suggested approaching Higher Level Teaching Assistant's that were members of governing bodies, and members were asked to assist with nominees. Another member suggested exploring with Welsh Government having a training programme for the initial year of Council membership with a view to extending the term.

8.10 Members had no further comments and were content to receive the update.

9. Draft Annual Report and Accounts 2024-2025

EWC 17/25

- 9.1 Lisa Winstone (*Director of Finance and Corporate Services*) introduced the draft Annual Report and Accounts for the financial year of 2024-25. These had been presented and recommended to Council for approval at the Audit and Scrutiny Committee on 3 July 2025.
- 9.2 A thorough review of the full documentation was undertaken by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee and members of Council were provided with a summary of key points to note. The result of the audit was an 'unqualified audit opinion'. Three corrections had been identified and accepted, noted in paragraph 5. One recommendation was noted for next year in regard to strengthening the wording around related party disclosures for council members. The final result was a deficit position of £1.481m, with the general reserve now at £2.993m.
- 9.3 The Chair congratulated officers and EWC teams for an excellent outcome.
- 9.4 The Chair of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee noted the good working relationship, professionalism and constructive challenge between EWC and Audit Wales.
- 9.5 Members had no further comments and were content to approve the Annual Report and Accounts 2024-25.

10. Draft Annual Equality Report 2024-25 and Draft Annual Welsh Language Standards Monitoring Report 2024-25

EWC 18/25

- 10.1 The Chief Executive presented the papers to members that provided draft annual reports on Equality, and Welsh Language Standards. It was noted that the reports (Annex A and B) had been presented and recommended to Council for approval following the Executive Committee on 20 May 2025
- 10.2 Members had no queries and were content to approve the reports.

11. Review of Risk Register

EWC 19/25

- 11.1 Lisa Winstone presented members with a summary of the current Risk Register and the overall risk appetite for annual review.
- 11.2 Given ongoing discussions with Welsh Government over future fee levels and the escalation meeting regarding the database on 17 July 2025, there was potential for changes to some scores at the next review. Members agreed that the overall risk appetite should remain as risk adverse.
- 11.3 One member queried whether the fee consultation with Welsh Government had commenced, and Lisa Winstone confirmed it had not.
- 11.4 The Chair of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee had requested controls or actions around the unexpected loss of key personnel be reviewed to reflect the current staffing position following the retirement of the Chief Executive.

11.5 Members had no further queries and were content to approve the review and current risk appetite.

12. QTS, Registration and Induction progress report **EWC 20/25**

12.1 David Browne (*Director of Regulation*) introduced this progress report which updated members on the EWC's work in relation to the Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), Registration and Induction work.

12.2 Collection of registration fee renewals for 2025-26 had concluded. A total of 15,481 practitioners' names had been removed from the Register for non-payment of the fee.

12.3 The non-compliance process had identified 432 practitioners whom employers had identified as working, but not in compliance with the legislation. That figure had since reduced to 112.

12.4 In relation to the introduction of a minimum qualifications requirement for FE teachers, in May 2024 members were informed that the EWC had worked closely with Welsh Government. However there had been some Welsh Government staff changes following the introduction of the minimum qualifications requirement which had made the implementation phase more complicated. When it became apparent that the number of FE teachers who held the required minimum qualification was considerably lower than anticipated, EWC officers worked closely with FE colleges to make sure that the qualifications data was accurate. After concluding data collection efforts with FE Colleges, the EWC had engaged in additional discussions with ColegauCymru and Welsh government to seek further clarification about the implementation of the minimum qualification requirement for FE teachers. The EWC had planned to communicate with all FE teacher registrants affected by the legislative changes when their registration was confirmed in May 2025. However, Welsh Government had requested that EWC delayed sending correspondence whilst they sought legal advice about updating the schedule of mandatory qualifications and the time permitted to obtain one of the qualifications. David Browne advised that EWC would also need to seek formal Counsel opinion on the matter. In any event EWC wanted to work pragmatically with the sector and Welsh Government to implement the minimum qualifications legislation. Discussions between ColegauCymru, EWC and Welsh Government remained ongoing.

12.5 One member queried the communication with Colleges. The Chief Executive confirmed the EWC was continuing to work closely with ColegauCymru on this matter

12.6 Members had no further queries and were content to receive the progress report.

13. Upgrade of the EWC Registration Database **EWC 21/25**

13.1 David Browne provided an update on progress to date with the Council-approved project to upgrade the EWC's database system. He notified members that there had been a delay due to a global issue with the Miller software which had affected testing. An escalation meeting had been scheduled for 3 July 2025, however ClearCourse had since requested an in-person meeting on 17 July 2025. The risk register had previously been amended to reflect the delays and would continue to be reviewed by the SMT

13.2 Members had no queries and were content to receive the update.

14. Fitness to Practise Progress Report

EWC 22/25

14.1 David Browne introduced this progress report on the Council's Fitness to Practise work and associated procedural matters.

14.2 Members were referred to paragraph 11 and informed that seven suitability committees had now sat and there had been one refusal.

14.3 Members had no further queries and were content to receive the progress report.

15. Review of the Code of Professional Conduct and Practice

EWC 23/25

15.1 David Browne presented this paper which set out actions to complete the 3-yearly review of the Code of Professional Conduct and Practice for Registrants. This had been presented and recommended to Council for approval at the Registration and Regulation Committee on 20 May 2025.

15.2 Attention was drawn to the tracked changes in the revised Code starting on page 25. A new set of principles had been added around leadership. In paragraph 1.4 the language had been modified to strengthen safeguarding responsibilities. He noted the structure of the register is changing and therefore the principles that people should be adhering to required modification. A new point had been added around alcohol and other substances following the review of codes from other regulators and an increase in Fitness to Practise cases involving alcohol.

15.3 Member had no comments and were content to approve the Code for publication.

16. Draft Fitness to Practise Annual Report

EWC 24/25

16.1 David Browne asked members to consider the Draft Fitness to Practise Annual Report which had been presented and approved at the Registration and Regulation Committee on 20 May 2025.

16.2 Member had no comments and were content to approve the report for publication.

17. Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education (ITE)

EWC 25/25

17.1 Bethan Stacey (*Director of Professional Development, Accreditation and Policy*) introduced this paper which provided members with a progress update on the EWC's statutory role to accredit programmes of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) in Wales.

17.2 Members were informed that a new 'PGCE route to QTS for School Based Employees' programme was now live.

17.3 Members were referred to paragraphs 6-8 regarding a wellbeing/safeguarding letter issued by Estyn to two ITE partnerships mid-inspection, the detail of which indicated non-

compliance with the accreditation criteria. EWC's subsequent action and response to this evidence to support restoration of compliance with the criteria was outlined.

- 17.4 Discussions with Estyn were ongoing in relation to revised inspection arrangements.
- 17.5 Bethan Stacey had participated in the Welsh Government steering group for the Evaluation of ITE policy. Following a tender process in April, Alma Economics had been appointed by Welsh Government to undertake the review.
- 17.6 Members had no questions or comments.

18. Professional revalidation EWC 26/25

- 18.1 Bethan Stacey invited members' views on the possibility of introducing a revalidation requirement for EWC registrants. A version of the paper had previously been considered by the Executive Committee on 20 May 2025.
- 18.2 One member agreed the principles were valid and suggested that conversations with trade unions would be useful.
- 18.3 The Chief Executive notified members that he and the Chair had met with the General Teaching Council Scotland to review their model.
- 18.4 Following a query about negative impact on recruitment and retention, Bethan Stacey noted that other jurisdictions have the same requirements and were experiencing the same issues in terms of recruitment. Revalidation could prove beneficial by solidifying the entitlement to professional learning and development for those in the workforce.
- 18.5 In response to a query about cost, Bethan Stacey informed members that EWC legislation was being reviewed to determine cost implications.
- 18.6 One member noted the need to be mindful of workload implications and whether it could be aligned with the ITE review.
- 18.7 Another member agreed with the concept but noted the need for a good understanding of the horizon and what is possible for the individual registrant groups, in order to avoid unintended consequences.
- 18.8 Members had no further comments. An updated paper would be considered by the Executive Committee in September.

19. EWC Draft Good Practice Guide: Supporting Learners' and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing EWC 27/25

- 19.1 Bethan Stacey presented the EWC's new draft good practice guide. The guide had been presented and recommended to Council for publication at the Registration and Regulation Committee on 20 May 2025.
- 19.2 One member expressed concerns about how the guide would be received and noted some sensitivity would be required with how it was communicated.

19.3 Bethan Stacey noted the resource was to support individuals to comply with current requirements, and the Children’s Commissioner had been consulted for feedback and commentary.

19.4 Members had no further comments and were content to approve the guide.

20. EWC recommendations for political party manifestos EWC 28/25

20.1 The Chief Executive introduced this paper and informed members this was the first time the EWC would provide a ‘manifesto’ style document in order to help shape debate and influence the policy platforms of political parties.

20.2 One member noted the importance of timing and how it might be beneficial for conversations to be had before the official publication of the document.

20.3 The Chair thanked the team for the work undertaken. It was agreed that an updated draft would be circulated to members over the summer period for further review and comment and a revised draft presented to Executive Committee in September.

21. Council Review and Discussion on Members’ Annual Training Day EWC 29/25

21.1 The Chief Executive introduced members to this report which compiled responses from the Council’s review process (Annex A). Good scores and positive comments were noted.

21.2 There were no comments and members were content to receive the paper.

22 - 28. Information item(s)

Members received “for information” paper(s) on:

- **Quarterly review, 1 January – 31 March 2025 (EWC 30/25)**
- **Review of Audit and Scrutiny Committee’s Year 2024-25 (EWC 31/25)**
- **The Quality Mark for Youth Work in Wales (EWC 32/25)**
- **Statutory Induction and Professional Learning Passport (EWC 33/25)**
- **Promotion of Careers in Education (EWC 34/25)**
- **Secretariat to the IWPRB (EWC 35/25)**
- **EWC responses to external consultations (EWC 36/25)**

29. Any other business

29.1 No other business was raised and the public meeting was closed.

Observers were asked to leave before Council moved into the private session.