

EDUCATION WORKFORCE COUNCIL
CYNGOR Y GWEITHLU ADDYSG

MINUTES OF THE FORTY SECOND MEETING OF THE EDUCATION WORKFORCE COUNCIL

DATE: 20 November 2025

LOCATION: EWC Offices

Present:

Members:

Eithne Hughes (Chair)	Kathryn Robson
David Edwards	Sue Walker
Nicola Stubbins	Geraint Williams
Gwawr Taylor	Theresa Evans-Rickards

Apologies:

David Williams, Jane Jenkins, Karl Jones, Kelly Edwards

Officers:

Lisa Winstone	Chief Executive
Kerry Price	Interim Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Bethan Stacey	Director of Professional Development, Accreditation and Policy
David Brown	Director of Regulation
Louise Deeley	Corporate Governance Officer (<i>minutes</i>)
Jess Tippins	EWC Communications Manager (<i>observing</i>)
Ben Lester	Policy and Planning Manager (<i>observing</i>)
Beverley Curtis	Senior Policy and Planning Officer (<i>observing</i>)
Shamima Aktar	Policy and Planning Officer (<i>observing</i>)
Angela Guarino	Executive Assistant to the Chief Executive (<i>observing</i>)
Rachel Rees	Fitness to Practise Manager (<i>observing</i>)
Nerys Hurford	Simultaneous translator

1. Welcome and preliminaries

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed members, officers and observers to the forty second meeting of the Education Workforce Council (EWC). She noted that the public session of the meeting would be followed by a private session where observers would be asked to withdraw. Following lunch, members would participate in the annual planning session. Apologies had been received from David Williams, Jane Jenkins, Karl Jones and Kelly Edwards.
- 1.2 Lisa Winstone was formally welcomed to her first Council meeting as Chief Executive. Kerry Price, Interim Director of Finance and Corporate Services, was also welcomed to his first meeting and thanked for his work to date.
- 1.3 The Chair reminded members that this was her last Council meeting and congratulated Geraint Williams on his appointment to Chair of the Council which would commence on 1 December 2025.

- 1.4 Members were notified that Susan Walker would be retiring from her role as Director of Education, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, as of 30 April 2026, and consequently from the EWC Council. The Chair thanked Susan for her invaluable contributions and insights to the Council.
- 1.5 The Chair thanked the simultaneous translator for being present and informed members that Bethan Stacey (*Director of Professional Development, Accreditation and Policy*) would be presenting her papers through the medium of Welsh.
- 1.6 Members were reminded that the next Council meeting would take place at EWC offices on 19 March 2026. Mandatory annual training would be taking place at the EWC offices on 23 April 2026. Members were invited to contribute to the 10-minute slots available at the session to talk about their roles. David Edwards, Nicola Stubbins and Susan Walker volunteered for the sessions.

2. Declarations of Interest

- 2.1 Geraint Williams declared an interest as a registrant.
- 2.2 No further declarations of interest were received.

3. Chair's correspondence and report

- 3.1 The Chair commented that the Child Practice Review report following the conviction of ex-head teacher Neil Foden was well written and it was noted the EWC's Code of Professional Conduct and Practice had been mentioned in the report as something registrants should be adhering to. The Chair noted that discussions outside of the EWC were necessary to determine who was responsible for acting upon recommendations from Fitness to Practise hearings.
- 3.2 Welsh Government would be advertising four Council vacancies in December for a January appointments process and had indicated they would be chairing the appointments panel.
- 3.3 One member noted that ADEW had been approached regarding appointments and two candidates had come forward.
- 3.4 One member noted that once her term had finished in 2027 there would be no representation from North Wales. The Chief Executive confirmed she would make Welsh Government aware of this before the recruitment process commenced.
- 3.5 One member noted that promoting diversity should be forefront of the recruitment process.
- 3.6 One member suggested reviewing the Magistrates recruitment process which had been successful in identifying a wider perspective of representation within communities.
- 3.7 The Chair and Chief Executive had recently met with politicians from different parties to discuss items such as professional standards and safeguarding.

4. Draft minutes of the Council meeting of 10 July 2025

- 4.1 The Chair introduced the draft minutes of the Council meetings of 10 July 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 The Chair invited members to raise any issues in respect of the 'for information' agenda items.
- 5.2 There were no issues raised.

6. Draft minutes of the Executive Committee meeting of 23 September 2025

- 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 Registration and Regulation Committee meeting of 23 September 2025

- 7.1 Nicola Stubbins (*Chair of the Registration and Regulation Committee*) presented the draft minutes and reported that there were no matters arising to draw to members' attention that were not covered later on the agenda.
- 7.2 No queries were raised by members.

8. Draft minutes of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee meetings of 3 July 2025 and 25 September 2025

- 8.1 Gwawr Taylor (*Chair of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee*) presented the draft minutes from 3 July 2025 and 25 September 2025 and reported that there were no matters arising to draw to members' attention that were not covered later on the agenda.
- 8.2 No queries were raised by members.

9. Report from the Chief Executive

EWC 38/25

- 9.1 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.
- 9.2 Goodson Thomas had been appointment for recruitment of the Director of Finance and Corporate Services vacancy. The deadline for applications was 1 December and interviews would take place on 17 December 2025. The Interim Director of Finance and Corporate Services was currently in post until mid-January 2026.

- 9.3 The Chief Executive, Director of Professional Development, Accreditation and Policy, and the Policy and Planning Manager had met with Welsh Government officials to discuss priorities for the Strategic Education Workforce plan and what EWC's role could be to support the plan, which was due to be published in March.
- 9.4 Following advice received from Welsh Government it had been decided not to publish EWC's manifesto. The work would instead be used to inform plans going forward and the Policy team were thanked for their hard work. All items in the 'manifesto' had been communicated to politicians informally during recent meetings.
- 9.5 Welsh Government had requested a meeting on 4 December 2025 to discuss options around a negotiating body for TAs/school support staff.
- 9.6 Members were notified that meetings of Chief Executives of the four UK and Ireland Councils took place biannually. The last meeting took place on 8 and 9 October 2025 in Scotland and was attended by the Chief Executive. In addition, the Chief Executives and Chairs meet annually and were due to meet in Cardiff in January 2026.
- 9.7 A briefing event on the annual workforce statistics had taken place on 14 October 2025. A further policy briefing event on 'Recruitment and retention: Trends, challenges and policy pathways' was held on 13 November 2025. Recordings would be available to view in December.
- 9.8 The Chief Executive and Director of Regulation were due to meet with the Teaching Regulation Agency (England) on 25 November 2025 at an Education Regulators event hosted by Kingsley Napley, however because the contract with Kingsley Napley was due for retender in the next six months, it was decided to postpone any meeting until a new contract was in place.
- 9.9 Members had no further comments and were content to receive the update.

10. Quarterly review (1 July – 30 September 2025)

EWC 39/25

- 10.1 Bethan Stacey, Director of Professional Development, Accreditation and Policy presented the second quarter review for the 2025-26 operational year.
- 10.2 One member queried the registration fees and how work was assessed in terms of impact given the increase in registrant numbers.
- 10.3 Bethan Stacey confirmed evaluations took place on a regular basis throughout the year to understand how effective operational processes were in relation to Fitness to Practise, registration matters and work undertaken on behalf of Welsh Government. Improvements were made based on the feedback received.
- 10.4 The Chief Executive invited members to feedback on how information was presented and any suggestions for improvement.
- 10.5 Bethan Stacey confirmed SMT understood the importance of the way information was presented and were working on making changes and improvements to the way reports were presented.

- 10.6 In relation to fees, David Browne (*Director of Regulation*), confirmed the register was monitored weekly and was compared to the previous year each time. The fees were forecast on the numbers paying £45 and £15 and the register was evaluated against the budget. In 2025 the numbers of £45 fee payers are down, and the numbers of £15 fee payers are higher than predicted. The budget would likely be close to the forecast however there have been a high proportion of Fitness to Practise cases in the £15 fee payer category, which did not cover the cost of the Fitness to Practise process.
- 10.7 David Browne also noted some individuals were registered in more than one category and a considerable amount of work was undertaken to ensure registrants were paying the correct fee. In 2024, 3,000 multiples were removed from the register and currently there were 10,500 which were being addressed.
- 10.8 A member noted a multi-year trend would be valuable to assess progress.
- 10.9 Members had no further queries and were content to receive the update.

11. Six-month financial review

EWC 40/25

- 11.1 Kerry Price (*Interim Director of Finance, HR and Corporate Services*) introduced this paper which reviewed the Council's financial position at the six-month mark of the financial year. A further review would be undertaken at the eight-month mark which would be presented to the Executive and Audit and Scrutiny Committees in January 2026.
- 11.2 The annual budget was a planned deficit of £1,117,840. Taking account of anticipated activity for the second half of the year, the forecast outturn estimated a deficit of £1,089,069.
- 11.3 It was currently expected that the full budgeted registration fee income of £2,677,500 would be achieved, and that refunds would be in line with the £50,000 budget.
- 11.4 Bank interest and other income were likely to be on budget.
- 11.5 There would be a small overspend on staff costs due to the higher than anticipated staff pay award of 3.7% compared to the budgeted award of 3%. Additional funding for staff costs from Welsh Government was expected to be announced at the second supplementary budget in February.
- 11.6 There was a notable variable due to increased legal costs relating to EWC's regulatory activity.
- 11.7 The current position with the database development would result in the maintenance and development budget being underspent due to the delays in implementation of the new system.
- 11.8 One member queried whether executive search agency recruitment costs covered the Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Corporate Services positions.

The Chief Executive confirmed the costs were for both positions and noted that if recruitment was undertaken via an agency there would be a finder's fee typically of 15-20% of the salary. Further searches at no additional cost would be provided until a candidate was appointed. The Chair also noted the search agency provided an extremely professional service, including comprehensive reports to aid the shortlisting process.

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

12. QTS, Registration, and Induction Progress Report

EWC 41/25

12.1 David Browne, provided members with an update on the EWC's Registration, QTS, and Induction work.

12.2 Individual registrant numbers were higher than the same period in 2024 and 2023, however the mix was changing.

12.3 The non-compliance process initially identified 432 practitioners whom employers had identified as working, but not in compliance with the legislation. This figure had reduced to 22.

12.4 In relation to the introduction of minimum qualifications for FE teachers, legal advice, subject to legal privilege, had been received which confirmed EWC had no legal responsibility to check minimum qualifications. In line with the advice EWC continued to work with Welsh Government and ColegauCymru to clarify, for all stakeholders, how the FE teacher minimum qualification requirement would operate.

12.5 Two members from ColegauCymru declared an interest and noted that official communications had not yet been received from Welsh Government.

12.6 One member noted there was no real mechanism or criteria to determine whether qualifications were suitable. A 10 week 'Get in to teaching' course was enough to qualify as a registrant.

12.7 David Browne confirmed there was no means to prevent someone registering as an FE teacher, with or without a qualification.

12.8 One member noted red flags had been raised by various stakeholder groups during consultation. Of significant note was the amount of investment and resources required to put new staff members through the teaching qualification.

12.9 It was also noted the legislation did not make it clear that guest lecturers did not have to attain the qualification.

12.10 There were no further queries and members noted the update.

13. Upgrade of EWC Registration Database

EWC 42/25

13.1 David Browne (*Director of Regulation*) introduced this paper which set out the progress to date to upgrade the EWC's Registration Database.

13.2 ClearCourse had assigned additional resources to the project management team however they had postponed the delivery date from December 2025 to July 2026, when it became clear that the December 2025 delivery date was not achievable.

- 13.3 Detailed project plans had been presented which were under review to confirm whether they met with the operational needs of the EWC.
- 13.4 Fortnightly meetings with ClearCourse and senior management were underway to ensure the project is completed by the revised July 2026 delivery date.
- 13.5 One member queried whether there was a risk of viability with ClearCourse.
- 13.6 The Chief Executive confirmed they were monitoring the financial performance of ClearCourse and would receive alerts of any concerns. The Director of ClearCourse was attending meetings and they were expecting to see an updated project progress report at the next meeting.
- 13.7 One member queried whether the EWC could use any leverage around the fixed fee in the event of non-delivery, and whether there was confidence in a post-implementation review.
- 13.8 The Chief Executive confirmed one payment of £76k had been made to date and no further funds would be released until it was clear milestones had been delivered.
- 13.9 It was noted that there had been staff changes to the project team following escalation meetings and the EWC had worked with those staff now on the project for a considerable number of years.
- 13.10 Members had no further queries and were content to receive the update.

14. Fitness to Practise Progress Report

EWC 43/25

- 14.1 David Browne introduced this progress report which updated members on the EWC's Fitness to Practise casework and associated procedural matters.
- 14.2 Members were informed that since the EWC first received ISO powers in April 2021, the EWC had imposed 40 ISOs, all for the maximum period of 18 months.
- 14.3 David Browne thanked Council members for their support in updating the Code of Professional Conduct and Practice which went live on 1 September 2025.
- 14.4 The importance of continued training sessions for practitioners and stakeholders was noted, and 36 sessions had concluded since 1 April 2025.
- 14.5 Officers had arranged to meet the four police forces in Wales individually in November 2025.
- 14.6 One member commented that training was very important for future prevention of fitness to practise cases.
- 14.7 One member queried how someone on an ISO was affected if they subsequently took up a position in England.

- 14.8 David Brown confirmed that the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) would be informed that an ISO was in place in Wales and they would expect that to also be implemented in England. The information would also be shared with the other nations. TRA equally shared information on prohibitions and ISOs with the EWC.
- 14.9 One member queried whether training had been undertaken with governors.
- 14.10 David Browne confirmed training was regular with governing bodies in certain authorities.
- 14.11 Members had no further comments or queries and were content to receive the progress update.

15. Welsh Government's consultation on Revised Professional Standards for Assisting Teaching, Teaching and Leadership **EWC 44/25**

- 15.1 Bethan Stacey introduced this paper and invited members to provide a steer for the development of the draft Welsh Government's consultation on the revised Professional Standards for assisting teaching, teaching and leadership.
- 15.2 One member noted that safeguarding was everybody's business and had to be included.
- 15.3 The Chair noted that standards were mandated for some registrants but not for others, yet registrants were required by mandate to register.
- 15.4 The Chair requested that close attention be paid to the consultation document once circulated and feedback returned in order to aid EWC's response to Welsh Government.
- 15.5 Members had no further comments.

16. Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education **EWC 45/25**

- 16.1 Bethan Stacey introduced this paper which provided members with a progress update on the Council's statutory role to accredit programmes of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) in Wales.
- 16.2 It was noted three partnerships, CaBan, USW and the Open University had recently had Estyn inspections and reports published. All had been placed in 'enhanced follow up' by Estyn and EWC was considering the evidence in those reports to identify any non-compliance with the accreditation criteria. Appropriate action would be taken should any non-compliance be identified.
- 16.3 Members were notified of a change in personnel at Estyn which had given EWC the opportunity to clarify Estyn's membership of the board, and discuss issues around the current processes.
- 16.4 Members had no questions and were content to receive the progress report.

17. Statutory Induction and Professional Learning Passport **EWC 46/25**

17.1 Bethan Stacey provided members with a progress report on the EWC's administration of the Induction programme, and the development and implementation of a Professional Learning Passport (PLP) on behalf of Welsh Government.

17.2 In relation to those receiving induction support it was noted 75% of NQTs receive induction whilst employed in schools on temporary contracts.

17.3 Members were content to receive the update.

18. Promotion of Careers in Education **EWC 47/25**

18.1 Bethan Stacey provided members with a progress report on EWC's role in the promotion of careers in education.

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

19 - 21. Information item(s)

Members received "for information" paper(s) on:

- **Secretariat to the IWPRB** **(EWC 48/25)**
- **The Quality Mark for Youth Work in Wales** **(EWC 49/25)**
- **EWC responses to external consultations** **(EWC 50/25)**

22. Any other business

22.1 No other business was raised and the public session of the meeting was closed.

The Council then moved into private session.