

**MINUTES OF THE FORTY THIRD MEETING OF THE
EDUCATION WORKFORCE COUNCIL**

DATE: 19 March 2026

LOCATION: EWC Offices

Present:

Members:

Geraint Williams (Chair)	Jane Jenkins
David Edwards	Theresa Evans-Rickards
Gwawr Taylor	David Williams
Kelly Edwards	Karl Jones

Apologies: Sue Walker, Nicola Stubbins, Kathryn Robson

Officers:

Lisa Winstone	Chief Executive
Christine Hellings	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>)
Ben Lester	Policy and Planning Manager (<i>observing</i>)
Sioned Wyn	Communications Officer (<i>observing</i>)
Nerys Hurford	Simultaneous translator

1. Welcome and preliminaries

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed members and officers to the forty third meeting of the Education Workforce Council (EWC). He welcomed the simultaneous translator, observers from EWC and Christine Hellings, *Director of Finance and Corporate Services*, to her first meeting. Apologies had been received from Nicola Stubbins, Sue Walker and Kathryn Robson.
- 1.2 The Chair thanked members for completing their review forms in advance of the annual review meetings due to take place the following week.
- 1.3 Members were reminded that the mandatory annual members' training day would take place at the Holland House Hotel on 23 April 2026.

2. Declarations of Interest

- 2.1 Kelly Edwards noted a Declaration of Interest in relation to her role within ColegauCymru.

3. Chair's correspondence and report

- 3.1 The Chair thanked members for their confidence in electing him as Chair of the Council. He noted appreciation to the former Chair, Eithne Hughes, for all her previous work and support in handing over the Chair prior to her departure in December. Thanks were also given to the Chief Executive, Senior Management Team, Governance Team and Executive Assistant to the Chief Executive, for their help in the recent months.
- 3.2 The Chair confirmed EWC's role in the public appointments process for new Council members had concluded. It was expected that Welsh Government would be in a position to appoint two members shortly.
- 3.3 It was noted there had been no nominations from nominated bodies, therefore further recruitment of Council members would take place following the forthcoming election.

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

- 4.1 The Chair introduced the draft minutes of the Council meeting of 20 November 2025. He 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 27 January 2026 Executive Committee meeting

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

7. Draft minutes of the 27 January 2026 Registration and Regulation Committee meeting

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

8. Draft minutes of the 29 January 2026 Audit and Scrutiny Committee meeting

- 8.1 Gwawr Taylor (*Chair of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee*) presented the minutes and reported that there were no matters arising to draw to members' attention that were not covered in Council's agenda.
- 8.2 No queries were raised by members.

9. Report from the Chief Executive

EW C 01/26

- 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 The proposed Grant Offer letter request for 2026-27 had been submitted to Welsh Government on 6 March 2026 and the Chief Executive was aware that Welsh Government policy leads were actively working on it to be signed off by the Cabinet Secretary before the pre-election period.
- 9.3 The Chief Executive was a member of the new Youth Work Workforce Development Group and in addition to meetings already noted, had attended a very useful development day on 13 March 2026.
- 9.4 EWC had been significantly involved in the development of the Strategic Education Workforce Plan which had been published on 18 March 2026 by the Cabinet Secretary. EWC had offered further assistance to help take some of the key areas forward.
- 9.5 The Chief Executive had attended an Anti-Racist Wales: Education Mini Summit follow up session on 16 March 2026.
- 9.6 The Chief Executive and Director of Regulation had met with Welsh Government officials on 17 February 2026 to contribute to the current review of Governing Bodies across Wales, and to explore what assistance EWC could offer as a regulator in that area.
- 9.7 The Chief Executive, Director of Regulation and Director of Professional Development Accreditation & Policy, had attended a meeting with Welsh Government officials on 4 December 2025 to discuss a proposal to establish a pay review body for Teaching Assistants and Support staff in Wales.
- 9.8 The Cabinet Secretary for Education had been unable to attend the November or March Council meetings. Following the Senedd elections in May, an invite would be issued to the incoming Cabinet Secretary for Education to attend the November 2026 Council meeting. The last meetings with political parties had taken place in the autumn term and no further meetings would be held until after election activities had concluded.
- 9.9 The EWC's annual lecture on the role of physical activity in supporting positive behaviour and wellbeing, presented by Professor Kelly Mackintosh, had taken place on 29 January 2026. The next EWC Masterclass event was scheduled for 13 May 2026 and would be presented by Jon Bockelmann-Evans, focussing on emotional health and lasting wellbeing.
- 9.10 Members had no questions and were content to receive the update.

10. EWC draft Strategic, Operational and related plans

EWC 02/26

- 10.1 The Chief Executive presented the suite of draft plans which had been considered by the Executive Committee in January.
- 10.2 Public consultation on the draft Strategic Plan had closed on 13 March 2026 and there had been no substantive changes as a result.
- 10.3 The Operational Plan included the draft budget for the financial year 2026-27 and was forecasting a deficit budget of £1.2m, which was significantly higher than the original forecast budget proposed in 2025-26, mainly due to the assumption that a fee consultation would have been completed by Welsh Government in Spring 2025, resulting in a fee increase. An agreement had been made with Welsh Government to keep fees at £45/£15 with the Welsh Government providing grant in aid of £1.2m in order to keep fees at this level for another year.
- 10.4 The current Welsh Government pay award to which EWC aligned was ending on 31 March 2026. The Welsh Government would be commencing a new pay award review and EWC would be notified of the new pay award once approved by Welsh Government. Based on discussions with Welsh Government, EWC had been advised to budget for a 3.2% increase.
- 10.5 The number of Fitness to Practise hearings budgeted had been kept at 55.
- 10.6 Senior management had reviewed estimates for registrant numbers and although the total number of registrants had remained the same, the split between £45 and £15 registrant numbers had been adjusted to reflect the current position.
- 10.7 The cost of Promotion of Careers (£299,000) had been included in the EWC fee funded budget for the first time due to uncertainty about grant in aid being provided by Welsh Government in 2026-27. If awarded, the deficit budget would reduce by the amount of grant in aid received.
- 10.8 One member noted there was a number of independent special settings employing school teachers but registering them in the lower fee category under different role titles. Another member commented that the roles may have different levels of obligation.
- 10.9 The Chief Executive confirmed the matter would be discussed with the Registration team.
- 10.10 One member sought assurance in relation to the deficit budget and the subsidy from Welsh Government.
- 10.11 The Chief Executive noted that Welsh Government had confirmed the provision of a £1.2m subsidy for 26-27, which used in conjunction with circa £1.2m of the general reserve, would allow fee levels to remain at £45/£15. Welsh Government had agreed that work could commence on drafting the fee consultation documentation for 27-28 in preparation for consideration by a new government in the Spring. It was hoped that a fee model could be agreed that met all of EWC's organisational costs so that future subsidies from Welsh Government would not be required.
- 10.12 One member queried the Promotion of Careers (PoC) funded work and the uncertainty around grant in aid from Welsh Government.

- 10.13 The Chief Executive confirmed that discussions around fee top up had excluded the PoC funded work which was also classified as grant in aid. It was usual for the PoC funds to be requested separately, and it was hoped that confirmation of those funds would be received shortly.
- 10.14 One member queried whether there was a possibility leadership members might pay a slightly different fee to ordinary teacher members under a new fee model.
- 10.15 The Chief Executive noted that discussions around fee categories would be held with Welsh Government, however the model would need to remain simple for administrative purposes.
- 10.16 Members had no further queries and were content to approve the suite of draft plans and deficit budget for 2026-27.

11. Draft suite of Corporate Governance documents **EWC 03/26**

- 11.1 The Chief Executive introduced this paper which presented the Council's suite of corporate documents for discussion following its scheduled review.
- 11.2 The documents had been refreshed with no notable changes.
- 11.3 Members had no comments and were content to approve the draft suite of documents.

12. Upgrade of EWC Registration Database **EWC 04/26**

- 12.1 David Browne (*Director of Regulation*) introduced this paper which set out the progress to date to upgrade EWC's Registration Database.
- 12.2 Members were notified of a revised delivery date of 24 July 2026.
- 12.3 EWC officers had begun User Acceptance Testing phase one of the development and significant progress had been noted.
- 12.4 Payment Milestone 1 had not yet been paid to ClearCourse and discussions about a fair payment structure were ongoing.
- 12.5 Members had no further queries and were content to receive the progress update.

13. QTS, Registration and Induction progress report **EWC 05/26**

- 13.1 David Browne introduced this progress report which updated members on the EWC's work in relation to Registration and administering the award of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and Induction.
- 13.2 Members were informed that the registrant numbers for 2025-26 had met the budget.
- 13.3 To date the number of higher fee registrants was below the number set in the budget, whereas the number of lower fee registrants was above the number set in the budget. The net effect was that income had exceeded the budget.

- 13.4 In relation to the legislative change, 'Requirement to hold a Further Education Teacher Qualification', changes to Schedule 6, which lists acceptable qualifications, had been updated on 19 March 2026.
- 13.5 Welsh Government had issued a factsheet about FE teacher minimum qualifications, and EWC had received very few queries from employers as a result.
- 13.6 EWC continued to work with Welsh Government and ColegauCymru to clarify, for all stakeholders, how the FE teacher minimum qualification would operate for all FE teacher practitioners.
- 13.7 Members were referred to Annex A and notified that 7,308 practitioners were now registered in more than one category, 2,973 less than reported in the last Registration and Regulation Committee paper. However, this figure was expected to rise again once employers had paid their fees and updated their records.
- 13.8 Following the earlier query around registrants from independent special settings, David Browne confirmed that numbers in Annex A relating to independent school/special teachers and learning support workers, were as expected.
- 13.9 One member queried whether registrants were paying multiple fees if registered in more than one category.
- 13.10 David Browne confirmed only the higher registration fee would be charged.
- 13.11 One member queried whether there was any concern in the fall in number of school teachers completing induction, and whether there was any data around those not completing induction.
- 13.12 Bethan Stacey, *Director of Professional Development, Accreditation and Policy*, noted the fall in induction reflected the fall in available posts in the system. Data held showed that 75-80% of those undertaking induction were on fixed-term, temporary or supply contracts, all of which had an impact on recruitment and retention.
- 13.13 Welsh Government had appointed the Wales Centre for Public Policy to undertake some research work in order to inform an early career framework.
- 13.14 Members had no further queries and were content to receive the progress update.

14. Fitness to Practise progress report

EWC 06/26

- 14.1 David Browne introduced this progress report on the Council's Fitness to Practise work and associated procedural matters.
- 14.2 The 2025-26 budget had planned for 55 hearings and 52 had been held.
- 14.3 There had been 17 Suitability Committees since 1 April 2025, which had exceeded the planned number of 10. Of those, 11 had been granted and 6 refused.
- 14.4 One member queried the variation in referrals and whether there was a link between Fitness to Practice hearings that concluded with no order imposed, and referrals coming from employers or different agencies.

- 14.5 David Browne noted that frequently when a case had concluded and there was no order imposed, it was due to issues such as failed probations, rather than concerns around conduct. He also noted that there were large local authorities that did not appear to be making any referrals, which was a higher concern.
- 14.6 One member queried the drop in numbers of referrals for work-based learning practitioners, and whether that category had settled in the sector, or whether it might be due to the preventative work the EWC undertook.
- 14.7 David Browne acknowledged it was possible preventative work was having an impact, but also that the sector was good at referring when necessary.
- 14.8 Members had no queries and were content to receive the progress report.

15. Draft Reserves Policy

EWC 07/26

- 15.1 Christine Hellings introduced this paper which set out formally the EWC position on its General reserve.
- 15.2 It was noted the General reserve was £2.9m with additional ringfenced reserves for the database, accommodation and fitness to practise activities.
- 15.3 It was possible the database reserve would reduce before the end of the financial year if a milestone payment schedule for the database was agreed, and would significantly reduce in the next financial year.
- 15.4 Discussions around the accommodation lease would take place in the autumn.
- 15.5 Welsh Government had recognised that EWC cash reserves at the year-end would exceed the standard 2% tolerance, and EWC would need to obtain formal confirmation from the Welsh Government's Director of Finance for the balances unavoidably held.
- 15.6 Members had no queries and were content to approve the reserves policy.

16. Draft Good Practice Guide: Maintaining Confidentiality

EWC 08/26

- 16.1 David Browne presented the new draft good practice guide on maintaining confidentiality.
- 16.2 Members of the Registration and Regulation Committee were thanked for their input.
- 16.3 One member queried whether it should be made clearer that photographs were considered personal data, and whether an Annex could be included which gave specific examples of personal data. They also noted the issue of staff being expected to use personal devices to take photographs due to the lack of available equipment.
- 16.4 One member queried whether the impact of good practice guides was monitored via website visitor numbers and feedback from registrants.

- 16.5 David Browne noted that EWC good practice guides were promoted during presentations and were readily available when visiting schools and colleges. He would investigate whether it was possible to monitor website activity around the guides.
- 16.6 Bethan Stacey noted that it would be useful to obtain feedback from registrants where possible.
- 16.7 One member noted that continuous professional training was not always available to newly qualified teachers, and queried whether mandatory training in terms of meeting the Code of Conduct could be introduced before registrations were revalidated.
- 16.8 It was noted that revalidation would be welcomed by EWC as part of its regulatory duties and discussions would be held with Welsh Government at a future date.
- 16.9 There were no further comments and members were content to approve the good practice guide.

17. Draft response to The future of tertiary education in Wales: five challenges and calls for submission EWC 09/26

- 17.1 Bethan Stacey, *Director of Professional Development, Accreditation and Policy*, presented EWC's draft response to Welsh Government's call for evidence on the future of tertiary education in Wales: five challenges and calls for submission.
- 17.2 The anomaly of HE not falling under the registration remit was commented on and it was noted that EWC was quite unusual in the breadth of categories that it registered.
- 17.3 One member queried whether the progress into higher education had been considered. UCAS data had showed an increase in applications for England and a decrease for Wales, which would also have an impact on Welsh language.
- 17.4 One member suggested focus could be strengthened around how the information requested would benefit learners and the broader impact on the system, particularly around safeguarding.
- 17.5 Another member agreed this would aid the narrative in helping the wider workforce.
- 17.6 Bethan Stacey confirmed comments would be taken into consideration following the meeting and any amendments would be shared with members.

18. Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) EWC 10/26

- 18.1 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.
- 18.2 It was confirmed that Athrofa Professional Learning Partnership monitoring had been completed.
- 18.3 Glyndwyr University had made contact about new programmes in relation to ITE.

- 18.4 Estyn's observer status on the ITEA Board and its commitment to joint work on aligning accreditation, monitoring, and inspection had been confirmed and EWC officers would be attending a further meeting on 24 March 2026.
- 18.5 It was confirmed that EWC's participation in monthly meetings of the Welsh Government steering group for the Evaluation of ITE policy, would continue into the next financial year.
- 18.6 Members had no queries and were content to receive the progress report.

19. IFTRA Conference 2026

EWC 11/26

- 19.1 The Chief Executive presented this paper which provided details of the Chief Executive's proposed attendance at the 2026 IFTRA Conference.
- 19.2 It was confirmed that the Chief Executive no longer planned to attend the conference due to the timing of the annual report and accounts being audited, and planned staff absence.
- 19.3 The next meeting was scheduled to take place in Canada in 2028, and the Chief Executive would plan to attend.
- 19.4 One member noted the importance professional development and welcomed the opportunity the conference provided.
- 19.5 One member noted the opportunity to explore ownership of standards from across the globe.
- 19.6 Bethan Stacey confirmed EWC undertook horizon scanning around other bodies, their fees the reserves they held, and also regulatory powers and how they compared to EWC.
- 19.7 It was noted the Chief Executive would be meeting with the Chief Executive of the General Teaching Council for Scotland, who by that time would have attended the IFTRA Conference and would be able to share information.
- 19.8 It was also noted that the Director of Professional Development, Accreditation and Policy and Director of Regulation would be attending the Institute of Regulation Annual Conference on 25 March 2026.
- 19.9 Members and no further comments.

20 - 25. Information item(s)

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

- **Quarterly review, 1 October – 31 December 2025** **(EWC 12/26)**
- **Statutory Induction and Professional Learning Passport** **(EWC 13/26)**
- **Promotion of Careers in Education** **(EWC 14/26)**
- **Secretariat to the IWPRB** **(EWC 15/26)**

- **EWC responses to external consultations** **(EWC 16/26)**
- **Quality Mark for Youth Work in Wales** **(EWC 17/26)**

26. Any other business

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

The Council then moved into private session.