

EDUCATION WORKFORCE COUNCIL
CYNGOR Y GWEITHLU ADDYSG

**MINUTES OF THE TWENTY-FOURTH MEETING OF THE
EDUCATION WORKFORCE COUNCIL**

DATE: 17 March 2022

LOCATION: Microsoft Teams (virtual meeting)

Present:

Members:

Angela Jardine	Sue Walker
David Williams	Steve Drowley
Berni Tyler	Rosemary Lait
Anne Pitman	Kelly Edwards
Kevin Pascoe	Clare Jones
Eithne Hughes	Jane Setchfield
Nicola Stubbins	

Apologies:

Gwawr Taylor

Officers:

Hayden Llewellyn	Chief Executive
Elizabeth Brimble	Director of Qualifications, Registration and Fitness to Practise
Bethan Stacey	Director of Professional Development, Accreditation and Policy
Lisa Winstone	Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Beverley Curtis	Corporate Governance Officer (minutes)
Jess Tippins	EWC Communications Manager (observing)
Branwen Edwards	EWC ITE Accreditation Officer (observing)

1. Welcome and preliminaries

- 1.1 Angela Jardine, (*Chairperson*), welcomed members and officers to the twenty-fourth meeting of the Education Workforce Council (EWC).
- 1.2 Apologies had been received from Gwawr Taylor who was on a period of maternity leave.
- 1.3 The Chairperson invited members to note the two observers in attendance; Jess Tippins (*EWC Communications Manager*) and Branwen Edwards (*EWC ITE Accreditation Officer*)
- 1.4 The Chairperson noted thanks to members for their support and cooperation in making arrangements for the members' annual review process. One on one meetings with the Chair would be taking place during week commencing 28 March 2022 and she reminded members that they would be asked for expressions of interest for reappointment by the Welsh Government following the conclusion the Council's current term ending on 31 March 2023.
- 1.5 The Chairperson requested that members ensure their availability for the annual training day scheduled for 28 April 2022. She reminded Council that the event would be taking place

virtually and invited the Chief Executive to elaborate on the agenda for the day. He noted that there would be a number of sessions delivered by EWC officers as well as two external speakers; Pauline Stephens (Chief Executive of the General Teaching Council for Scotland) and Dr Jim Livingstone (President / Chairperson of the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland).

- 1.6 The Chairperson invited the Chief Executive to update members on the planned publication of the EWC's position paper on supply. He noted that the paper was currently being trialled for feedback with a selected group. Following this, the EWC would share an embargoed version of the paper with the Welsh Government and receive comments back from them ahead of its planned publication on 26th April 2022.

2. Declarations of Interest

- 2.1 Steve Drowley declared an ongoing interest in agenda item EWC 15/22 as the Chair of ETS Cymru.
- 2.2 Kelly Edwards declared an ongoing interest in agenda item EWC 06/22 and EWC 12/22 as an employee of Colegau Cymru.
- 2.3 There were no further declarations of interest.

3. Chairperson's Correspondence and Report

- 3.1 The Chairperson noted that there was no business to draw to members' attention that was not already covered in the Chief Executive's report at EWC 01/22.

4. Draft minutes of the Council meeting of 18 November 2022

- 4.1 The Chairperson introduced the draft minutes of the Council meeting of 18 November 2022. Members were content to approve the minutes as an accurate record of that meeting.
- 4.2 There were no matters arising

5. To receive notification of any issues which members wish to raise in respect of the 'for information' agenda items (21-26)

- 5.1 There were no issues notified.

6. Draft minutes of the Executive Committee meeting of 25 January 2022

- 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 Registration and Regulation Committee meeting of 25 January 2022

7.1 Steve Drowley, Chair of the Registration and Regulation Committee, presented the minutes and reported that there were no matters arising to draw to members' attention that were not covered later on the agenda. He noted particular thanks to officers for the comprehensive papers presented to the Committee particularly surrounding notable developments with the Council's work.

7.2 No queries were raised by members.

8. Draft minutes of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee meeting of 27 January 2022

8.1 Clare Jones, Chair of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee presented these minutes and noted thanks to Lisa Winstone (*Director of Finance and Corporate Services*) and EWC officers for their work in ensuring that the Council had again received substantial assurance from its last set of internal audits. She assured the Council that the Committee had been presented with comprehensive papers and reports and had provided constructive challenge to ensure that everything was in order.

8.2 The Chairperson echoed the thanks of the Chair of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee. No further queries were raised.

9. Report from the Chief Executive

EWC 01/22

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 Referring members to paragraph four, the Chief Executive summarised the origin of the ongoing issue surrounding the Welsh Government proposal to reclassify the EWC. He noted that he, the Chairperson and Lisa Winstone had last met with Welsh Government officials in November and had presented a vast amount of research regarding the classification status held by other regulators across the UK. Several meetings that had since been arranged had been postponed as officials noted that they required more time to consider the information provided by the EWC. Members would continue to be updated on developments in this area.

9.3 Lisa Winstone further added that the issue had arisen following a UK wide initiative which would see all public sector bodies grouped together with regards to their classification status and finances. As members were aware, the EWC was an independent body and the grant funding it received from government was allocated for particular functions undertaken by the EWC on behalf of the Welsh Government.

9.4 Responding to a member's query, the Chief Executive noted that officers were closely monitoring the issue and in time may feel that making other stakeholders aware of this would be appropriate given that the proposal directly affected the EWC's income which was received from registrant fees.

9.5 As outlined at paragraph six, the Chief Executive submitted a draft Grant Offer letter for 2022-23 to Welsh Government officials in early March for consideration. Members would be updated on progress regarding this matter.

- 9.6 Paragraph eight noted the commissioned independent review by the Welsh Government to further its understanding of matters in relation to the potential registration of the childcare, play and early years workforce in Wales. The Chief Executive, Chairperson and Liz Brimble (*Director of Qualifications, Registration and Fitness to Practise*) were interviewed as part of the review on 14 March 2022. The report was currently being prepared to be presented to the Welsh Government. Council would be kept apprised on developments relevant to the EWC.
- 9.7 Referring to paragraphs 13-15, the Chief Executive asked members to note that the Council was represented on two stakeholder groups relating to school learning support staff. He also reminded members that the Council was scheduled to develop a position paper on learning support staff in 2023 as part of its policy work schedule. One member who had previously encouraged further engagement with learning support staff noted this progress positively.
- 9.8 The Chief Executive noted the EWC's presence internationally as outlined at paragraphs 21-24. He highlighted the keynote video speech he would be delivering at the AFTRA (Africa Federation of Teaching Regulatory Authorities) conference in May 2022.
- 9.9 Members were informed that the number of EWC events that had taken place in recent months had been received extremely positively and had gained further traction as a result of the positive word of mouth. The next event featuring Professor Ronald E Dahl was scheduled for 27 April 2022 and members were encouraged to attend where possible.
- 9.10 Members were content to receive the progress report.

10. Draft suite of EWC Strategic, Operational and related plans EWC 02/22

- 10.1 The Chief Executive presented the suite of draft plans for members' approval. He noted particular thanks to Bethan Stacey (*Director of Professional Development, Accreditation and Policy*) and the EWC's Policy and Planning team for the detailed plans and highlighted the work that had been undertaken in refining the suite including its overall presentation.
- 10.2 He explained that since the Executive Committee had considered the plans, the draft budget for the financial year had been included. He invited Lisa Winstone to set out the budgetary details to members.
- 10.3 Lisa Winstone referred members to paragraphs 6-12 and noted that the forecast budget estimated a deficit of -£448.220 for 2022-23 which was higher than the forecasted deficit set last year. She outlined the key factors that affected this;
- The increase in the cost of living and how this would affect the Welsh Government pay award for all staff. Officers had made a prudent assumption of a 2% increase for the 2022-23 financial year.
 - A general increase in all costs due to the current rate of inflation with a 1% increase in National Insurance payments for employers effective from April 2022.
 - An assumption that face to face meetings / hearings would resume from September 2022 onwards as well as an increase in staff travel cost for engagement events

therefore increasing the cost of travel and subsistence reimbursement as well as other related costs such as venue hire / hire cars / refreshments etc.

10.4 Referring members to paragraph 12, Lisa Winstone reminded members of the Council's current reserve balance and noted the EWC's approach in setting its budget cautiously to anticipate the most unfavourable outcomes in each scenario.

10.5 Members noted the detailed overview and were content to approve the suite of plans.

11. Draft suite of Corporate Governance documents EWC 03/22

11.1 The Chief Executive presented the draft suite of corporate governance documents which had undergone a planned review. The suite had been presented to the Executive Committee at its meeting in January and following some further refinements was now presented to Council for comment and approval.

11.2 Referring to paragraph 22 in the Standing Orders, one member suggested that the number of members needed to call for a special meeting of Council should be amended to 'the majority' rather than 'two thirds' as was in the draft. It was agreed that this would be amended.

11.3 Members had no further comments or queries and were content to approve the suite for publication.

12. QTS, Registration and Induction progress report EWC 04/22

12.1 Liz Brimble 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.

12.2 Referring members to paragraph two, she noted the registrant numbers and the corresponding income. As previously reported, she highlighted that the number of applications from school learning support workers was high with over 2,500 more individual applications received compared with the same period last year.

12.3 It was reported that the 2022-23 registration fee renewals process was underway with the deadline date for submission of fees to the Council by employers being 8 April 2022. A renewal reminder to the 18,492 registrants who paid their fees directly was sent on 7 February 2022 along with a series of reminders to pay the fee by 31 March 2022. The annual deregistration process for those who chose not to renew their registration would take place on 11 May 2022.

12.4 As reported at paragraph 18, registration fees and procedures were subject to internal audit in November 2021 and the EWC's compliance with UK GDPR and the 2018 Data protection Act was audited in February 2022. The outcome from both audits was an overall assessment of substantial assurance with no recommendations for change or improvement identified. Members were particularly pleased with this achievement.

12.5 In response to a member's query on the current situation in Ukraine and the figures provided at annex C documenting the number of QTS recognitions to overseas applicants, Liz

Brimble confirmed that officers continued to monitor the situation closely and would liaise with the Welsh Government on the matter should any issues come to light.

12.6 Members were content to receive the progress report.

13. Upgrade / replacement of Registration Database **EWC 05/22**

13.1 Liz Brimble presented this paper which set out the actions taken to date and the further work required to upgrade or replace the EWC's registration database. The Registration and Regulation Committee had been appraised of the developments at their January meeting.

13.2 As outlined at paragraphs 4-7, it was reported that the discovery project was underway with the results expected to be reported early in the 2022-23 operational year.

13.3 Responding to a member's query on the projected costings for the upgrade / replacement, Lisa Winstone confirmed the EWC already had cybersecurity insurance in place.

13.4 Council would be informed of further developments in this area at its next meeting.

14. Welsh Government consultation in new categories of registration for the EWC **EWC 06/22**

14.1 The Chief Executive presented this paper on the Welsh Government's consultation on new registration categories for the EWC. He reminded members that officers had continually raised concerns regarding the anomalies within the registration legislation concerning the categories now being consulted on. He noted that this was the first of two consultations being published on the matter and officers had worked closely with Welsh Government officials in ensuring that all anomalies were addressed and being consulted on.

14.2 Council noted the positive progress particularly with the regards to the registration of staff in independent schools and discussed a number of matters to include in the EWC's response.

14.3 Responding to a member's query, the Chief Executive noted that officers had established a positive relationship with the independent school sector via the Welsh Independent Schools Council (WISC).

14.4 In response to a query regarding the Welsh Government subsidy on registration fees, the Chief Executive provided an estimate of the potential number of additional registrants, and explained that any subsidy was a matter for the Welsh Government.

14.5 The Chief Executive confirmed that the draft response would be circulated to all members for comment, with the final version for submission agreed by the Chair and Chief Executive.

15. Welsh Government consultation on statutory induction for newly qualified teachers in Wales **EWC 07/22**

15.1 Bethan Stacey presented this paper on the Welsh Government's consultation on statutory induction of newly qualified teachers in Wales. She reminded members that the EWC had particular expertise in the area given its role in the process since 2006.

- 15.2 She noted the four main areas of change being consulted on and invited members to provide officers with comments to include in the EWC's response.
- 15.3 Members concurred that the proposed changes were overall positive but also noted concerns regarding NQTs having access to full time employment upon commencing their induction period. It was also noted that an increase in funding, training and support for mentors was required to achieve the objectives outlined in the consultation.
- 15.4 Bethan Stacey thanked members for their comments and noted that a draft response would be circulated to members for comment before being submitted on 8 April 2022.

16. Draft good practice guide - 'Leaders in education' EWC 08/22

- 16.1 Liz Brimble presented the draft of the EWC's latest good practice guide. She reminded members that Council's suite of good practice guides (eight to date) supported registrants in using and understanding the Code of Professional Conduct and Practice. This latest guide had been presented to the Registration and Regulation Committee for comment at its January meeting and had since been shown to a small number of practitioners as part of a series of focus groups to obtain feedback. The draft was now presented to Council for comment and if deemed appropriate, approval.
- 16.2 Council discussed the draft in detail and overall concluded that the language and tone used in the draft didn't complement the existing suite of good practice guides. It was also noted that whilst the guide was underpinned by the regulation outlined in the Code of Professional Conduct and Practice, a more positive approach to leadership might also be incorporated.
- 16.3 Members requested that another version of the guide be presented to the Registration and Regulation Committee at its next meeting in May 2022 before again being discussed and if deemed appropriate, approved by Council at its meeting in July 2022. This approach was agreed.

17. Fitness to Practise progress report EWC 09/22

- 17.1 Liz Brimble presented this paper which included an update on the EWC's Fitness to Practise work.
- 17.2 Referring to paragraphs 2-6, members were invited to note the number of cases being considered by the Fitness to Practise team.
- 17.3 As an update to paragraph nine, members were informed that 61 hearings were expected to be concluded by the end of the financial year, with a forecasted underspend in the region of £160,000. She reminded members that the forecasted figure was a broad estimate as a number of unknown costs were yet to be calculated including the end of year billing for 'work in progress' from the solicitors investigating EWC cases.
- 17.4 As reported at paragraph 11, 12 Suitability Committees had met in the 2021-22 financial year with two further meetings likely to take place before 31 March 2022. Within this figure, two applications had been refused and one had been adjourned.

- 17.5 Referring to paragraphs 16 and 17, Liz Brimble explained that as part of legislation, the Code of Professional Conduct and Practice was subject to a review every three years with the next review required to take place during 2022. The Registration and Regulation Committee agreed the proposal that the 2022 review would be 'light touch' given that the previous review in 2019 was extensive. This was underway and Council would be informed on progress at its next meeting.
- 17.6 As noted at paragraph 24, officers were finalising the documents required to advertise for additional panel members for the Fitness to Practise work. Liz Brimble encouraged members to share this within their networks.
- 17.7 In response to a member's query on the number of referrals received by the EWC from each local authority, Liz Brimble confirmed that officers continued to work closely with employers and engagement leads to ensure that they were fully aware of the legislative requirements regarding referrals.
- 17.8 Members were content to receive the progress report.

18. Promotion of careers in education

EWC 10/22

- 18.1 Bethan Stacey introduced this paper which provided members with a progress report on the EWC's role in the promotion of careers in education.
- 18.2 Referring members to paragraph four, she reported that the work to develop an 'Application Tracking System' within the Educators Wales website was well underway and was anticipated to be completed by the end of March 2022.
- 18.3 Bethan Stacey updated members on the extensive engagement work ongoing in this area and reported that officers had been working closely with the higher education and adult learning sectors via a digital campaign.
- 18.4 Member were content to receive the progress report.

19. Funding of Induction progress report

EWC 11/22

- 19.1 Bethan Stacey introduced this report which updated members on the EWC's role in administering funding, tracking and recording arrangements for Induction in Wales on behalf of the Welsh Government.
- 19.2 Members were referred to paragraph four which reported that the number of newly qualified teachers undertaking Induction via a known period of employment in a school had increased by 472 in comparison with last year. An addendum to the Grant Offer Letter for the EWC to undertake this additional work for the 2021-22 financial year had been agreed as outlined at paragraph 20.
- 19.3 Members were content to note the progress report.

20. Report on professional standards and other short term Welsh Government projects

EWC 12/22

- 20.1 Bethan Stacey introduced this paper which updated members on four projects being undertaken on behalf of the Welsh Government.
- 20.2 As a further update to the paper, it was reported that officers had recently concluded a series of focus groups with Pembrokeshire College and Coleg Cambria discussing the professional standards for FE teachers and WBL practitioners.
- 20.3 Council noted the positive engagement with colleges as well as the WBL providers and thanked officers for the encouraging progress in this area.
- 20.4 Members were content to receive the update.

21-26. Information items

Members received in “for information” papers on:

- Quarterly review **(EWC 13/22)**
- Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education **(EWC 14/22)**
- The Quality Mark for Youth Work in Wales **(EWC 15/22)**
- Professional Learning Passport **(EWC 16/22)**
- Secretariat to the IWPRB **(EWC 17/22)**
- EWC responses to external consultations and calls for evidence **(EWC 18/22)**

The Council then moved into private session.