

EDUCATION WORKFORCE COUNCIL
CYNGOR Y GWEITHLU ADDYSG

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

DATE: 23 March 2023

LOCATION: EWC offices, 10th Floor, Eastgate House, 35 – 43 Newport Road, Cardiff CF24 0AB

Present:

Members:

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

Apologies:

Anne Pitman

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 (<i>minutes</i>)
Sioned Wyn	EWC Communications Officer (<i>observing</i>)

1. Welcome and preliminaries

- 1.1 Angela Jardine, (*Chairperson*), welcomed members and officers to the twenty-seventh meeting of the Education Workforce Council (EWC).
- 1.2 Apologies had been received from Anne Pitman.
- 1.3 She noted that this was the final meeting of the current Council and thanked all members, particularly those departing, for their contributions during their tenures. She reminded the reappointed members that the Induction training and subsequent first meeting of the new Council would be taking place on 19 and 20 April 2023 at the EWC offices.
- 1.4 Members were thanked for completing the documentation for the annual review process. The one on one meetings between members and the Chairperson would be taking place week commencing 27 March 2023.
- 1.5 The Chairperson asked members to ensure that they submitted any outstanding travel and subsistence claim forms as soon as possible with the end of the financial year approaching.

2. Declarations of Interest

- 2.1 Kelly Edwards declared an ongoing interest in several of the agenda items as an employee of Colegau Cymru.
- 2.2 Steve Drowley declared an ongoing interest in agenda item EWC 11/23 as the Chair of ETS.
- 2.3 Gwawr Taylor declared and interest in agenda item EWC 06/23 as an employee of Aberystwyth University.
- 2.4 Members agreed that these declarations of interest would not impede discussions. The Chairperson asked members to withdraw from the meetings should they feel a conflict arise as discussions progressed during the agenda items. There were no further declarations of interest.

3. Chairperson's Correspondence and Report

- 3.1 The Chairperson confirmed that there was no correspondence to report that was not already covered in the agenda items.

4. Draft minutes of the Council meeting of 17 November 2022

- 4.1 The Chairperson introduced the draft minutes of the Council meeting of 17 November 2022. Members were content to approve the minutes as an accurate record of that meeting.
- 4.2 Responding to a query in relation to the minutes of the private session, the Chairperson confirmed that a separate note of the discussion on that agenda item was maintained by Lisa Winstone (*Director of Finance and Corporate Services*) to be discussed as an ongoing item during the private session. There were no other matters arising.

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 Executive Committee meeting of 24 January 2023

- 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 As this was the last meeting of the current Council, members of the Committee were asked to ratify the minutes as an accurate record.
- 6.3 Referring to minute 4.3, one member queried as to whether or not the record should be more specific in outlining the concerns raised by members. The Chief Executive noted that the item was discussed at Council during the private session where more detailed minutes

were taken. The Council agreed that the high level minuting of the live issue was appropriate in this context.

6.4 No further queries were raised and Committee members approved the minutes.

7. Draft minutes of the Registration and Regulation Committee meeting of 24 January 2023

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.

7.2 As this was the last meeting of the current Council, members of the Committee were asked to ratify the minutes as an accurate record. No queries were raised and Committee members approved the minutes.

8. Draft minutes of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee meeting of 26 January 2023

8.1 Clare Jones, Chair of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee, presented the minutes and drew members' attention to minute 7.8 reporting that on the Committee's recommendation, a strategy relating to the Council's cash balances would be put in place. She also noted AUDIT 07/23 and reported that the Committee had agreed to extend the contract of the Council's current internal auditors for a further two years.

8.2 As this was the last meeting of the current Council, members of the Committee were asked to ratify the minutes as an accurate record. No queries were raised and Committee members approved the minutes.

9. Report from the Chief Executive EWC 01/23

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 two, he reported that following extensive staff consultation over a number of months, the EWC had adopted a hybrid working policy whereby officers were required to attend the workplace for a minimum of three days per week. The policy launched week commencing 27 February 2023.

9.3 Further to paragraph four, the Chief Executive invited the Chairperson to update members on the Welsh Government's process to appoint a new EWC Council. The Chairperson reminded members that she had sat on the selection panel with a colleague from Social Care Wales and a Welsh Government official. Following the initial recruitment, the panel recommended six members for appointment which was agreed by the Minister for Education and Welsh Language. A second truncated recruitment process took place for the remaining two vacancies whereby eligible nominating bodies were invited to put candidates forward, with the Minister seeking to enhance the ethnic diversity of the Council in this round. The selection panel agreed that none of the applications received from this recruitment met the minimum threshold and so no candidates were shortlisted. Discussions were still ongoing with regards to filling the two remaining vacancies. Members expressed their concern with the situation particularly noting the impact of Council not being at full

complement when electing a new Chairperson. Council would continue to be kept updated on developments regarding the vacancies.

- 9.4 Referring to paragraph six, the Chief Executive informed members that interviews had taken place and discussions were still ongoing with regards to the recruitment for the post of Director of Regulation following the announcement that Liz Brimble (*Director of Qualifications, Registration and Fitness to Practise*) would be retiring on 31 August 2023.
- 9.5 The Council submitted details of the activities and required funding for 2023-24 to Welsh Government on 1st March 2023 as reported at paragraph eight. In previous years this had been inserted into a GOL template, though moving forwards a different format would be used. A response from the Welsh Government had yet to be received.
- 9.6 Referring to paragraph 21, the Chief Executive reported that the annual meeting, usually taking place in January, between the Minister, Chief Executive and Chairperson of Council had been rescheduled to June 2023. Furthermore, the Minister had declined the annual invitation to meet with Council in November 2023. The Chief Executive and new Council Chairperson would discuss this with the Minister in June.
- 9.7 As reported at paragraph 30, the EWC would be holding its next Masterclass on 16 May 2023, with Professor EJ Renold. The Chief Executive noted that the subject matter was particularly topical and of relevance to all of the Council's registrant groups resulting in approximately 200 tickets being reserved within the first 24 hours of being released.
- 9.8 Members had no further questions and were content to receive the report.

10. EWC draft Strategic, Operational and related Plans

EWC 02/23

- 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.
- 10.2 The suite of plans had been discussed by the Executive Committee at its January meeting and was now presented to Council for approval. Following a recent update, Bethan Stacey confirmed that Council would no longer be providing the secretariat service to the National Strategy for Educational Research and Enquiry (NSERE) as this would be administered internally by the Welsh Government.
- 10.3 Responding to a member's query regarding the specific amendments to the suite, the Chief Executive emphasised the Council's work around communications noting that an experienced team was now in place in the organisation leading this area of work. He particularly highlighted the new animations on the website and the EWC's social media presence.
- 10.4 Referring to the Strategic Equality Plan, one member asked for further clarification regarding the objective of diversifying the workforce. Bethan Stacey responded that the Council had worked closely with the Equality and Human Rights Commission whose directive applied to all public organisations nationwide. She explained the long term vision and noted that Council continued to monitor this via its Annual Statistics Digest and through its advocacy and tracking service embedded as part of Educators Wales.

- 10.5 In response to a member's query on the difference between EWC's objectives and deliverables undertaken on behalf of the Welsh Government, the Chief Executive explained that for thorough governance, it was necessary to report and document these aspects of the Council's work in the Plans.
- 10.6 Responding to a member's query, Bethan Stacey noted that one response had been received following the public consultation on the Strategic Plan. She noted that other regulators also saw small response rates when consulting publically on their Plans.
- 10.7 Considering a member's suggestion to outline longer term objectives, the Chief Executive noted that the EWC's work had expanded and evolved considerably year on year since its inception in 2015. It was felt that the work was now stabilising and therefore officers envisioned the implementation of a five year Strategic Plan setting out long term objectives whilst reviewing and updating the Operational Plan on an annual basis.
- 10.8 One member queried the Council's stance on sustainability and suggested that this be emphasised more throughout the Plans. Bethan Stacey noted that the Council published an annual Biodiversity Statement and it was agreed that this would be included and referred to throughout the Plans.
- 10.9 The Chief Executive noted that following the discussions that had taken place, some minor amendments would be made to the Plans. Members approved the suite, delegating to officers the minor revisions.

11. Upgrade of the EWC database

EWC 03/23

- 11.1 Liz Brimble introduced this paper which set out the progress to date to upgrade the EWC's Registration database.
- 11.2 As previously reported, she explained that the project would be undertaken in six stages which would involve detailed specification discussions with teams, data migration and extensive testing with the 'go live' date scheduled for December 2023. The scoping exercises for the requirements of the Council's registration work, statutory induction and the Professional Learning Passport had been completed and the requirements for the Fitness to Practise work would be considered next.
- 11.3 As part of the data migration, officers would be undertaking a thorough data cleaning exercise to ensure that the data held by the Council was accurate and reflective of registrants' current working practices. Responding to a member's query, Liz Brimble confirmed that the data would be copied from the existing system to the upgraded version and so there would be no interruption of service.
- 11.4 Liz Brimble noted that she and the EWC's Qualifications and Registration Manager were meeting with the project leads on a fortnightly basis to discuss progress. She noted that all work was on track.
- 11.5 One member queried the possible implications of Liz Brimble's retirement in August 2023 before completion of the project. Liz Brimble responded that the EWC's Qualifications and Registration Manager was leading the work on the upgrade, adding that he and a number of the senior team had extensive knowledge and experience in this area. She further assured Council that the work would continue to be overseen by the Chief Executive given the high value and significance.

- 11.6 Responding to a member's query on whether or not a Task and Finish Group comprised of Council members would be beneficial to oversee the upgrade, the Chief Executive noted that this was not necessary given that this was an upgrade with the same company rather than a new project or replacement system. He also reiterated the experience and expertise of the officers leading the project with regards to this area of work. Council and its Committees would continue to be appraised of progress in the area through reporting at each meeting.
- 11.7 Members had no further queries and were content to receive the update.

12. QTS, Registration and Induction progress report

EWC 04/23

- 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 It was reported that the 2023-24 registration fee renewals process was underway with the deadline date for submission of fees to the Council by employers being 7 April 2023. A renewal reminder to the 20,382 registrants who paid their fees directly was sent on 6 February 2023 along with a series of reminders to pay the fee by 31 March 2023. She noted that approximately 7,500 of these renewals had been completed so far. The annual deregistration process for those who chose not to renew their registration would take place on 12 May 2023.
- 12.3 As outlined at paragraph eight, members were reminded that the Welsh Government had consulted on new registration categories for the EWC. The Welsh Government's response to the consultation was published on 21 March 2023. Officers expected sight of the embargoed Order before going to Plenary debate on 16 May 2023. It was anticipated that the Order would be laid on 18 May 2023 before being enacted on 22 May 2023.
- 12.4 Liz Brimble reported that officers had been working closely with the Director of the Welsh Independent Schools Council (WISC) to engage the independent school sector in light of the new legislation surrounding practitioners in the sector. Discussions had been positive and a number of information sessions across establishments had been scheduled to take place. A session delivered by the Director of WISC would also take place at the annual training for Fitness to Practise panel members to increase their understanding of the sector.
- 12.5 In response to a member's query, Liz Brimble noted that officers anticipated that the new legislation would result in approximately 2,000 new registrants being brought onto the Register; 1,700 independent school practitioners and 200-300 practitioners in the youth work sector.
- 12.6 Referring to paragraphs 16-17, one member queried if there would be any cost implication to the Council and/or registrants to undertake revalidation. Liz Brimble explained that revalidation was a process required by many regulators as a condition of registration. Officers were currently conducting research on this matter. The research was in its infancy.
- 12.7 Liz Brimble referred members to the Data and Reporting Report at annex B and as an update to the paper, noted that the data release on Leadership and Newly Qualified Teachers had been published on the EWC's website.

12.8 Members were content to receive the progress report and noted particular thanks for the positive progress that had been made surrounding the implementation of the new registration categories.

13. Fitness to Practise progress report

EWC 05/23

13.1 Liz Brimble introduced this progress report on the Council's Fitness to Practise work and associated procedural matters.

13.2 As reported at paragraph two, officers had received 60 complete referrals and 25 were currently being assessed for completeness. She reported that there were also a number of ongoing queries with the various police forces, the DBS and employers.

13.3 Referring to paragraph five, it was reported that 37 hearings had been concluded and a further 21 were scheduled. Although under budget for the year, the case throughput was up to date with no backlog of cases to be dealt with. Furthermore, due to various complexities with cases, the number of hearing days for 2022/23 was 74.

13.4 Members were referred to paragraphs 11 and 12 which reported that 174 cases of suitability for registration had been assessed since 1 April 2022. The outcome of all assessments concluded to date was provided at annex B. During this financial year, 11 Suitability Committees had met resulting in 4 applications being refused, 5 being granted and 2 adjournments.

13.5 Members were informed that officers continued to deliver a high volume of training sessions and presentations requested by stakeholders. As reported at paragraph 17, 57 sessions had been concluded since 1 April 2022 which was 11 more than the previous year. Additional enquiries and requests continued to be received from establishments across all categories of registration.

13.6 As reported at paragraph 19, recruitment of additional lay panel members was launched on 24 February 2023 with a closing date for applications of 31 March 2023. Liz Brimble reported that five applications had been received to date.

13.7 As an update to paragraph 22, Liz Brimble reported that the panel members' annual training would take place virtually rather than face to face due to very limited and expensive accommodation being available for attendees on account of a large scale event happening in Cardiff at the same time.

13.8 With the current Council's term concluding, the Chairperson invited members to consider applying for the role of a Fitness to Practise panel member in the future. She noted that Council's legal advisers had indicated that there should be a 5 year gap following membership of Council before being eligible to apply.

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

14. Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education

EWC 06/23

14.1 Bethan Stacey introduced this paper which provided members with a progress report on the Council's statutory role to accredit programmes of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) in Wales.

- 14.2 Paragraph seven listed the programmes that had been subject to interim monitoring as a condition of accreditation. Outcomes had been shared with Partnerships in accordance with the timeframes outlined within the interim monitoring guidance.
- 14.3 As previously reported to Council, one Partnership's programme had been deemed to be noncompliant with the Criteria following a monitoring visit in July 2022. A subsequent action plan to address these matters was submitted by the Partnership and approved by the Board. The matter was still ongoing and Council would be kept apprised of further developments.
- 14.4 Members queried the action the Board would take and the impact on students if a programme was deemed non-compliant. Bethan Stacey confirmed that accreditation could be withdrawn should the Criteria not be met and an exit plan would be compiled.
- 14.5 As reported at paragraph 16, the Welsh Government was undertaking a review and refresh of the Criteria. The underlying vision of the Criteria would remain unchanged with the review focusing on technical changes to improve their application and consider certain Welsh Government policy priorities. The review was being overseen by a steering group, which included representation from the EWC, Dr Hazel Hagger, ITEA Board Chair, Professor John Furlong as well as a representatives from Estyn and USCET Cymru. Responding to a member's query, Bethan Stacey confirmed that the Criteria was owned by the Welsh Government but was devised and reviewed in consultation with the sector and relevant experts in the field.
- 14.6 Bethan Stacey referred members to annex A and asked Council to review and if appropriate, approve the revised fee policy. She highlighted a number of key changes in relation to the existing policy, explained under the 'revisions' section of the annex.
- 14.7 Members had no further questions and were content to receive the progress report and approve the revised fee charging policy.

15. Statutory Induction and Professional Learning Passport

EWC 07/23

- 15.1 Bethan Stacey introduced the report and invited members to note the progress with the Council's work in administering funding, tracking and recording arrangements for school teacher Induction as well as the progress on establishing and embedding the Professional Learning Passport (PLP) on behalf of the Welsh Government.
- 15.2 As reported at paragraph two, all activity continued to be completed in accordance with the terms and conditions of grant performance targets. She further noted that an internal audit of the administration of the induction programme was completed in November 2022, the outcome of which was substantial assurance opinion and no recommendations raised.
- 15.3 As reported at paragraph four, the funding allocated in the Grant Offer letter for the administration of the induction programme 2022-23 was £5,200,000 but officers had estimated that the work would exceed this level of grant. Welsh Government had previously agreed that the EWC could approach them for an addendum should this be the scenario and consequently a request by the EWC was made. On 31 January 2023 Welsh Government issued EWC with an addendum to the Grant Offer letter for 2022-23

confirming the additional funding, and taking the total funding allocated to £6,200,000.

- 15.4 Updating members on the implementation of the Professional Learning Passport (PLP), Bethan Stacey confirmed that the Passport had been embedded into a number of national and regional programmes of professional learning as outlined at paragraphs 19 – 20. A number of schools had also approached the Council to seek support in establishing the PLP on a whole school basis to assist staff with their continuous professional learning.
- 15.5 Bethan Stacey reported that the large scale development work being undertaken by the PLP's software provider PebblePad was progressing well and was expected to be concluded by the end of the financial year as reported at paragraph 21.
- 15.6 Members had no comments and were content to receive the update report.

16. Promotion of careers in education EWC 08/23

- 16.1 Bethan Stacey introduced this paper and explained that under the Education (Wales) Act, one of the EWC's main functions was to promote careers in the education workforce.
- 16.2 As reported at paragraph 2, a number of software developments were in progress and deliverables were on track. She particularly highlighted the 'spider software' noting that seven local authorities had the function embedded whereby vacancies posted on their websites would be duplicated and advertised on Educators Wales. Work continued with other local authorities and FE colleges.
- 16.3 Referring to paragraph five, Bethan Stacey reported that it had become apparent that some issues had arisen between the partners in one of EWC's contracts. Officers were currently working with both parties to resolve the matters and ensure that the EWC's work contracted to them in partnership would be delivered.
- 16.4 Council was content to note the progress outlined in the report.

17. Report on Professional Standards and other short term Welsh Government projects EWC 09/23

- 17.1 Bethan Stacey introduced this paper which provided an update on a number of projects being undertaken by the EWC on behalf of the Welsh Government.
- 17.2 She reported that all projects were on track to be completed within the approved timeframes. It had been agreed with the Welsh Government that the EWC's work on the Professional Standards and Silhouettes for FE teachers and WBL practitioners would continue into the new financial year to facilitate a wider consultation agreed by the Steering Group who last met on 6 February 2023.
- 17.3 In response to a member's query regarding the number of projects undertaken by the EWC on behalf of the Welsh Government, Bethan Stacey confirmed that the grant received to complete the work was awarded specific to the strand of work.
- 17.4 Members were content to note the progress report.

18-21. Information items

Members received in “for information” papers on:

- **Quarterly review (1 September – 31 December 2022)** (EWC 10/23)
- **The Quality Mark for Youth Work in Wales** (EWC 11/23)
- **Secretariat to the IWPRB** (EWC 12/23)
- **EWC responses to external consultations** (EWC 13/23)

22. Any other business

22.1 The Chief Executive gave a short presentation to the Chairperson to thank her for her support and contribution during her tenure as the EWC’s inaugural Chair and former GTCW member and Chairperson. The Chairperson thanked the Council, its officers and paid special tribute to fellow long standing member Jane Setchfield.

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

Council moved into private session