

EDUCATION WORKFORCE COUNCIL
CYNGOR Y GWEITHLU ADDYSG

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

DATE: 20 April 2023

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

Present:

Members:

Bethan Thomas	Kathryn Robson
David Williams	Kelly Edwards
Eithne Hughes	Nicola Stubbins
Geraint Williams	Rosemary Jones
Gwawr Taylor	Theresa Evans-Rickards
Jane Jenkins	

Apologies:

Sue Walker

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>)
Jess Tippins	EWC Communications Officer (<i>observing</i>)

1. Welcome and preliminaries

- 1.1 The Chief Executive welcomed members and officers to the twenty-eighth meeting of the Education Workforce Council (EWC). He explained that the previous Chairperson of Council concluded their term on 31 March 2023 and the process to elect a new Chairperson would open immediately following the meeting. He would be chairing the inaugural meeting of the new Council in this transitional period in line with the EWC's *System for Election of Council Chairperson*.
- 1.2 Apologies had been received from Sue Walker who had returned a number of comments on the papers which would be covered during the course of the meeting.
- 1.3 Members were asked to share their views and feedback on the Induction Training that had taken place the prior day. Members concluded positively that the sessions were comprehensive and engaging. Reappointed members further noted that the sessions were beneficial in refreshing their knowledge and particularly highlighted the briefings delivered by the external speakers in doing this.
- 1.4 The Chief Executive reminded members to complete the documentation that had been provided to them including their preferences for Committee delegation. Members would be

allocated to sit on the EWC's standing Committees following the collation of documents at the end of the meeting.

- 1.5 Members were reminded that their pen pictures would be taken at the end of the meeting and would be published on the EWC website.

2. Declarations of Interest

- 2.1 Kelly Edwards declared an ongoing interest in several of the agenda items particularly EWC 17/23 as an employee of Colegau Cymru.
- 2.2 Gwawr Taylor declared an interest in agenda item EWC 20/23 as an employee of Aberystwyth University.
- 2.3 Kathryn Robson declared an interest in several agenda items relating to her role as Chief Executive of Adult Learning Wales.
- 2.4 Geraint Williams noted that he has undertaken the role of an Induction Mentor in relation to agenda item EWC 22/23.
- 2.5 Members agreed that these declarations of interest would not impede discussions. The Chief Executive asked members to withdraw from the meeting should they feel a conflict arise as discussions progressed during the agenda items. There were no further declarations of interest.

3. Draft minutes of the Council meeting of 23 March 2023

- 3.1 The Chief Executive introduced the draft minutes of the Council meeting of 23 March 2023 and asked that the reappointed members who were present at the meeting approve the minutes as an accurate record of discussions.
- 3.2 Responding to a query in relation to the private session discussing the Chief Executive's salary framework review, members were informed that a separate note of the discussion on that agenda item was maintained confidentially by Lisa Winstone (*Director of Finance and Corporate Services*). There were no other matters arising and members ratified the minutes.

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

- 4.1 There were no issues notified.

5. Report from the Chief Executive

EWC 15/23

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 He asked Lisa Winstone to update members on the upcoming audit by Audit Wales. She explained that on account of a new auditing standard being introduced this year, Audit

Wales had confirmed that there would be a nationwide delay in conducting the annual audits for the 2022/23 year. The dates given to the EWC were only slightly later than those originally anticipated however the audit and its findings would not be completed in time to be discussed by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee at their June meeting and could not be presented to Council for discussion and approval on 6 July 2023. Consequently, a single item agenda meeting of both the Committee and the Council would need to be convened in early August 2023. The Corporate Governance Officer would contact members in due course with proposed dates for these meetings to take place.

- 5.3 In response to members' queries on the potential of further delays, Lisa Winstone explained that in accordance with Schedule 1 (Paragraph 21) of the Education (Wales) Act 2014, the Council was required to produce a set of financial statements to be submitted to Welsh Ministers and the Auditor General Wales by 31 August annually. The Act also required the EWC to send its Annual Report to Welsh Ministers who would lay a copy of the Report before the Senedd. Audit Wales was aware of these timescales set in legislation.
- 5.4 Further to paragraph five, the Chief Executive highlighted that the Council was operating with 12 members rather than 14 as the Welsh Government was unable to fill the two remaining vacancies at this time. It was anticipated that the vacancies would remain unoccupied for some time. Members expressed their concern with the situation particularly noting the impact of Council not being at full complement when electing a new Chairperson. In response to members' suggestions regarding a recruitment strategy, the Chief Executive confirmed that officers had liaised frequently with the Welsh Government on the recruitment process highlighting the potential pitfalls and making suggestions to remedy the scenario. However in accordance with legislation, Council was appointed by the Minister and so the EWC had no jurisdiction in the matter.
- 5.5 Referring to paragraph eight, the Chief Executive reported that the Council had submitted details of the activities and required funding for 2023/24 to Welsh Government on 1 March 2023. In previous years this had been inserted into a Grant Offer letter template, though moving forwards it would be in a different format. A response from the Welsh Government had yet to be received. Responding to a member's query, Lisa Winstone clarified the financial position of the Council with regards to the split between the income received from registration fees and the grant money received to undertake activities on behalf of the Welsh Government. She noted that the EWC was not reliant on the grant funding to undertake any of its core statutory functions and the grant monies received was costed and assigned to specific areas of work.
- 5.6 With regards to the grant funded work, one member queried if the delay in response from the Welsh Government would have any implications for EWC staff working in these areas. Lisa Winstone confirmed that the majority of this work had been undertaken on behalf of the Welsh Government for a significant number of years therefore officers were not concerned in this regard.
- 5.7 As reported at paragraph 21, the Chief Executive and new Chairperson of Council would be meeting with the Minister for Education and Welsh Language on 7 June 2023. This was a reoccurring annual meeting.
- 5.8 Referring to paragraph 30, the Chief Executive noted that the EWC would be hosting its next Masterclass on 18 May 2023, with Professor EJ Renold and speakers from a number of partner organisations. He encouraged members to attend where possible.

5.9 Members had no further questions and were content to receive the report.

6. Election of Council Chairperson

EWC 16/23

6.1 The Chief Executive presented the paper which set out the process to elect a new Council Chairperson.

6.2 As agreed by Council during earlier discussions at the Induction Training, members would discuss the matter in detail during the private session of the meeting. Members noted that future thought should be given to succession planning so that the Council would not be in a position of operating without a Chairperson in place. However it was recognised that this may be difficult due to members being appointed by the Welsh Government and the Chairperson being elected amongst its membership.

6.3 Members noted the paper to consider during the private session.

7. QTS, Registration and Induction progress report

EWC 17/23

7.1 Liz Brimble (*Director of Qualifications, Registration and Fitness to Practise*) 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.

7.2 As reported at paragraph two, the final number of individual registrants for 2022/23 was 88,748. Liz Brimble gave a detailed overview of the number of registered practitioners as at 31 March 2023 by category of registration as outlined in the data provided at annex A.

7.3 It was reported that the 2023/24 registration fee renewals process was ongoing 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. The annual deregistration process for those who chose not to renew their registration would take place on 12 May 2023.

7.4 In response to a members' query on practitioners with multiple employers, Liz Brimble confirmed that the salary deduction for the registration fee would be taken from the registrant's listed main employer. Should the payment be taken more than once by employers, this would be refunded.

7.5 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. It was anticipated that the Order would be laid on 18 May 2023 before being enacted on 22 May 2023.

7.6 In response to a member's query, Liz Brimble reported that officers had been working closely with the independent school sector in light of the new legislation surrounding its practitioners. Discussions had been positive and a number of information sessions across establishments were taking place. The number of new practitioners required to register in the Youth Work sector was very small and so it had been more challenging to engage directly with them. Officers continued to utilise the strong relationships it had established

and maintained with the sector as a whole since the requirement for Youth Workers and Youth Support Workers to be registered with the EWC came into force in 2017.

- 7.7 In response to a member's query on the resource and staffing capacity of the EWC to process the new categories of registration, 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 and therefore the numbers were relatively small with regards to the overall number of registrants.
- 7.8 One member queried how practitioners with fitness to practise disciplinary orders against them in other categories would be identified when being brought onto the Register in a new category. Liz Brimble confirmed that officers were able to identify any such persons easily. She also assured members that officers had used the same process when completing the bulk registration of other categories of practitioners in recent years.
- 7.9 Referring to paragraphs 14-15, one member asked for further information with regards to the Council potentially undertaking revalidation. Liz Brimble explained that revalidation was a process required by many regulators as a condition of registration. Officers were currently conducting research on the subject which was in its infancy stage. The Registration and Regulation Committee and Council would be kept apprised as the research continued.
- 7.10 Liz Brimble referred members to the Data and Reporting Report at annex B and particularly highlighted the further education and work-based learning sector workforce survey for which a separate grant amount had been agreed. The final report was due to be completed in June 2023.
- 7.11 Members were content to receive the report and noted particular thanks for the positive progress that had been made surrounding the implementation of the new registration categories.

8. Upgrade of the EWC database

EWC 18/23

- 8.1 Liz Brimble introduced this paper which set out the progress to date to upgrade the EWC's Registration database. She outlined the history, the work undertaken and Council's approval of the recommendation to upgrade the existing database at its November 2022 meeting.
- 8.2 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 specific requirements of all of the Council's areas of work had been completed. She further noted that the Fitness to Practise database would be incorporated into the upgraded system to streamline and centralise the Council's work.
- 8.3 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.
- 8.4 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.

- 8.5 Responding to a member's query regarding risk, 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. Given its high value the upgrade itself had been added to the Council's Risk Register which was discussed by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee at each meeting and presented to Council for discussion annually each July.
- 8.6 Members had no further queries and were content to receive the update.

9. Fitness to Practise progress report EWC 19/23

- 9.1 Liz Brimble introduced this progress report on the Council's Fitness to Practise work and associated procedural matters.
- 9.2 As reported at paragraph two, officers had received 63 complete referrals for the year 2022/23 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.
- 9.3 Referring to paragraph five, it was reported that 46 hearings had been concluded in 2022/23 and a further 21 were scheduled for 2023/24. Although under budget for the 2022/23 year, the case throughput was up to date with no backlog of cases to be dealt with. She reminded members that resulting from the adopted working practices during Covid and in line with the approach of many other regulators since, hearings took place virtually by default with registrants given the option to choose for their case to be heard 'in-person'. For an 'in-person' hearing to be confirmed, the registrant was required to commit to attending or be represented 'in-person' at the hearing.
- 9.4 Members were referred to paragraphs 10 and 11 which reported that 186 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.
- 9.5 Members were informed that officers continued to deliver a high volume of training sessions and presentations requested by stakeholders. As reported at paragraph 16, 58 sessions had been delivered since 1 April 2022 which was 15 more than the previous year. Additional enquiries and requests continued to be received from establishments across all categories of registration.
- 9.6 As reported at paragraph 17, 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 21 applications had been received and interviews for those shortlisted was due to take place during the first week of May 2023.
- 9.7 Liz Brimble encouraged members to contact the Corporate Governance Officer to observe a hearing to garner a deeper understanding of the Council's casework procedures.
- 9.8 In response to a member's query on the differing number of referrals received from each local authority at annex B, Liz Brimble confirmed that officers wrote to employers annually, met with HR leads and liaised regularly with stakeholders to confirm that they were aware of their legislative statutory obligation to make referrals to the EWC. Responding to a further

question, she confirmed that meetings also took place with all Police forces in Wales with data sharing agreements also in place.

- 9.9 Responding to a query on the minimal number of referrals relating to the youth work sector, Liz Brimble explained that youth work practitioners accounted for approximately 1000 of the overall 88,748 number of registered practitioners and so it was more likely that smaller numbers of referrals would be received.
- 9.10 In response to a member's suggestion to contextualise the number of referrals made by each local authority by percentage, Liz Brimble explained that this had been attempted before but due to the number of case referrals received by the EWC in comparison to its overall registrant numbers, the results produced were of a such a small decimal that they held no value.
- 9.11 Members had no further questions and were content to receive the progress report.

10. Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education EWC 20/23

- 10.1 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.
- 10.2 As reported at paragraphs 4 - 5, the Welsh Government had undertaken a review and refresh of the Criteria. The review was overseen by a steering group, which included representation from the EWC and the changes were due to be published imminently. Officers had revised the accreditation procedures and documentation and had developed draft procedures and documentation relating to reaccreditation in line with the refresh. These would be published once the revised Criteria had been published by the Welsh Government.
- 10.3 Paragraphs 8 - 12 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.
- 10.4 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.
- 10.5 Referring to paragraph 16, she reported that the EWC had allocated numbers to each programme in Wales in line with the desired national intake of ITE students for 2023-24 as issued by the Welsh Government. This was communicated to Partnerships on 21 November 2022. The EWC commenced monitoring of recruitment against the allocations on a monthly basis in January 2023.
- 10.6 Members had no further questions and were content to receive the progress report

11. Welsh Government's consultation on Proposals for a Welsh Language Education Bill EWC 21/23

- 11.1 Bethan Stacey introduced this paper which presented the Welsh Government consultation on Proposals for a Welsh Language Education Bill. She noted that the consultation document covered many areas and so the EWC intended to respond to the questions only relevant to its remit. Members were asked to give officers a steer on a draft response which would then be shared with Council for approval before submission.
- 11.2 Members discussed a number of topics relating to recruitment and retention around the Welsh language in the education workforce particularly taking into account the current landscape across the sector. It was also agreed that the EWC's response should note that the vision should be applied to practitioners across all seven categories of registrants.
- 11.3 Bethan Stacey thanked members for their comments and noted that a draft response would be circulated to Council for approval in due course.

12. Statutory Induction and Professional Learning Passport EWC 22/23

- 12.1 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.
- 12.2 As reported at paragraph two, all activity continued to be completed in accordance with the terms and conditions of grant performance targets.
- 12.3 As reported at paragraph 12, 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. As previously reported the Council was awaiting the Funding Letter from Welsh Government for 2023/24.
- 12.4 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.
- 12.5 Bethan Stacey reported that the large scale development work being undertaken by the PLP's software provider PebblePad had now been completed as reported at paragraph 22.
- 12.6 Responding to a member's query, Bethan Stacey noted that registering for a PLP was not mandatory but officers were liaising with a number of schools to encourage use of the PLP as the primary choice of professional learning tool.
- 12.7 Members had no comments and were content to receive the update report.

13. Promotion of careers in education EWC 23/23

- 13.1 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.
- 13.2 As reported at paragraph two, a number of software developments had taken place during the 2022/23 year. She particularly highlighted the 'spider software' whereby vacancies posted on employer websites would be duplicated and advertised on Educators Wales. 16 local authority feeds and all FE college feeds were live with another two due to go live by the end of April 2023.
- 13.3 Referring to paragraph five, the contracted suppliers were currently developing additional videography and photography to populate the careers portal within the Educators Wales website. Issues between the contracted partners previously reported to Council, had now been resolved by the EWC. In light of this, a slight delay had been agreed and the additional content would be ready by May / June 2023.
- 13.4 Bethan Stacey noted the significant amount of advocacy work that was ongoing in this area at paragraphs 9 – 14. Officers continued to attend a high number of events as outlined at annex A.
- 13.5 Responding to a member's query, Bethan Stacey noted that officers attended events throughout all of Wales and in areas close to the border to encourage practitioners to teach in Wales. With regards to measuring success, it was noted that the inaugural 18 month plan for the work and brand had now concluded and officers were considering the successes and areas that required more work in planning for the next 18 months.
- 13.6 Council was content to note the progress outlined in the report.

14. The Quality Mark for Youth Work in Wales

EWC 24/23

- 14.1 The Chief Executive introduced this paper which provided members with a progress report on the delivery of the Quality Mark for Youth Work in Wales. He invited any comments or queries from members deriving from the comprehensive report.
- 14.2 As reported in the paper, the Council had accepted an invitation in late November 2022 to extend the current contract until 13 January 2024, with an increased total annual value of £85,000 and a small number of additional requirements.
- 14.3 Council noted the positive progress that had been made in this area of work.

15. Information item(s)

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

- **Secretariat to the IWPRB** **(EWC 25/23)**

16. Any other business

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

Council moved into private session