EDUCATION WORKFORCE COUNCIL
CYNGOR Y GWEITHLU ADDYSG

MINUTES OF THE FORTY FOURTH MEETING OF THE EDUCATION WORKFORCE COUNCIL

DATE: 9 July 2026

LOCATION: Holland House Hotel

Present:
Members:

Geraint Williams (*Chair*)	Theresa Evans-Rickards
David Williams	Kelly Edwards
Gwawr Taylor	Matthew Owens
Anwen Foy	

Apologies:
Jane Jenkins, Nicola Stubbins, David Edwards, Karl Jones, Kathryn Robson

Officers:

Lisa Winstone	Chief Executive
David Browne	Director of Regulation
Bethan Stacey	Director of Professional Development, Accreditation and Policy
Christine Hellings	Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Louise Deeley	Corporate Governance Officer *(minutes)*
Ben Lester	Policy & Planning Manager *(observing)*
Angela Guarno	Executive Assistant to the Chief Executive (*observing*)
Amy Pope	Corporate Governance Manager (*observing*)

1. Welcome and preliminaries

1.1 The Chair welcomed members and officers to the forty fourth meeting of the Education Workforce Council (EWC). He welcomed Anwen Foy and Matthew Owen to their first Council meeting, the simultaneous translator and observers from EWC. Apologies had been received from Jane Jenkins, Nicola Stubbins, David Edwards, Karl Jones and Kathryn Robson.

1.2 Members were reminded that the next in-person Council meeting and planning session would take place at 10:00 on 19 November 2026 at EWC Offices.

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 noted the report would be given in the private session.

4. Draft minutes of the Council meeting of 19 March 2026

4.1 The Chair introduced the draft minutes of the Council meeting of 19 March 2026. 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 19 May 2026 Executive Committee meeting

6.1 The Chief Executive presented the Executive Committee minutes and reported there were no matters arising to draw to members' attention that were not covered in Council's agenda.

6.2 No queries were raised by members.

7. Draft minutes of the 9 June 2026 Registration and Regulation Committee meeting

7.1 David Williams *(Acting Chair of the Registration and Regulation Committee)* presented the minutes and reported 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. Report from the Chief Executive **EWC 19/26**

8.1 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.

8.2 Members were advised that two Council vacancies remained. Following discussions with the Chair, it had been agreed not to undertake a separate recruitment exercise at this stage. Instead, the vacancies would be considered alongside the wider programme of Council appointments due in 2027.

8.3 The Chair had contacted eligible members regarding their preference for undertaking a second term on Council which would be included as part of the discussions around Council appointments over the summer with Welsh Government officials.

8.4 An invitation had been extended to the Cabinet Minister for Education, Anna Brychan MS, for the November Council meeting and a response was awaited.

8.5 The EWC Masterclass presented by Jon Bockelmann-Evans on 13 May 2026, focussing on emotional health and wellbeing, had received positive feedback. The annual Professionally Speaking event was scheduled for 21 October 2026, with the Children's Commissioner for Wales confirmed as keynote speaker.

8.6 Members had no questions and were content to receive the update.

9. Draft Annual Report and Accounts 2025-2026 EWC 20/26

9.1 Christine Hellings (*Director of Finance and Corporate Services*) introduced the draft Annual Report and Accounts for the financial year of 2025-26. These had been presented and recommended to Council for approval at the Audit and Scrutiny Committee on 2 July 2026.

9.2 Members were advised of corrections identified during the audit process. All adjustments had been agreed and incorporated into the final accounts.

9.3 The Chief Executive thanked the Director of Finance and Corporate Services, the Finance Manager and wider staff team for their work throughout what had been a particularly challenging audit process, requiring significant engagement from officers across the organisation.

9.4 The Chair of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee reflected discussions held at the recent Committee meeting regarding the narrative within the accounts relating to registration fee subsidies and the sustainability of funding arrangements. Members noted that whilst concerns regarding long-term sustainability had been discussed, the position reflected within the report was accurate at the reporting date and appropriately reflected ongoing discussions with Welsh Government.

9.5 Members recognised the improved engagement with Welsh Government and the positive progress being made regarding future funding arrangements.

9.6 The Chair congratulated officers on the excellent audit outcome.

9.7 Members had no further comments and were content to approve the Annual Report and Accounts 2025-26.

10. Draft Annual Equality Report 2025-26 and Draft Annual Welsh Language Standards Monitoring Report 2025-26 EWC 21/26

10.1 The Chief Executive presented the papers to members that provided draft annual reports on Equality, and Welsh Language Standards. It was noted that the reports (Annex A and B) had been presented and recommended to Council for approval following the Executive Committee on 19 May 2026.

10.2 One member queried actions arising from a review of recruitment practices referenced within the report.

10.3 It was noted that substantial changes had been made to recruitment documentation and processes and that the impact of those changes would continue to be monitored and reviewed.

10.4 Members welcomed the diversity information included within the report and sought clarification regarding improving workforce diversity.

10.5 Officers confirmed that improving diversity remained an area of active focus, including consideration of recruitment methods and advertising routes to attract a broader range of applicants. Members noted the challenges of measuring change within a relatively small workforce.

10.6 One member queried levels of Welsh language skills and plans for embedding them in the workforce.

10.7 The Director of Professional Development, Accreditation and Policy referenced the CEFR framework which staff would align to from September onwards.

10.8 Members had no further queries and were content to approve the reports.

11. Review of Risk Register **EWC 22/26**

11.1 Christine Hellings presented members with a summary of the current Risk Register and the overall risk appetite for annual review.

11.2 Overall the Council's risk appetite was assessed as risk-averse, which was unchanged from 2024-25.

11.3 Members were advised that a new risk had been added relating to Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) information sharing arrangements. Appropriate specialist advice had been sought and work was ongoing to manage the risk.

11.4 Members noted that a comprehensive risk management workshop was scheduled to take place later in July 2026. The exercise would review the organisation's risks from first principles and consider the distinction between organisational risks and issues. An updated version of the risk register would be considered by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee in September. Members requested that this also be presented to Council for information in November.

11.5 Members discussed the Registration Database project and associated cyber security considerations. Officers confirmed that the new system would provide a more secure and sustainable platform than the current arrangements and that they remained confident in the implementation timetable.

11.6 Members discussed the overall organisational risk profile and risk appetite and were content that the current approach remained appropriate pending the wider review.

11.7 Members had no further queries and were content to approve the review and current risk appetite.

12. QTS, Registration and Induction progress report **EWC 23/26**

12.1 David Browne (*Director of Regulation*) introduced this progress report which updated members on the EWC's work in relation to the Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), Registration and Induction work.

12.2 Members noted that 15,320 practitioners had been deregistered as part of the annual process, consistent with the previous year. The non-compliance exercise had initially identified 348 practitioners, which had already been reduced to 153 and was expected to reduce significantly in the next two weeks.

12.3 It was noted that increasing complexity in routes to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) in England was presenting challenges for assessing equivalence with Welsh requirements, and discussions with Welsh Government were ongoing.

12.4 Members noted that the Annual Education Workforce Statistics for 2026 were due to be published by the end of July.

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

13. Upgrade of the EWC Registration Database **EWC 24/26**

13.1 David Browne provided an update on progress to date with the Council-approved project to upgrade the EWC's database system.

13.2 Members were informed that, due to issues identified during User Acceptance Testing (UAT) a revised delivery date of 7 September 2026 had been proposed by ClearCourse. It was noted that following delivery on 7 September, it would not be operationally feasible for EWC to proceed to the go-live phase until the October half term.

13.3 In relation to a query around the likelihood of further delays, the Chief Executive reassured members that EWC had taken a firm position on contractual milestones and payments, and no further payments would be made until agreed deliverables were fully completed.

13.4 Following a query around cyber security it was noted that following implementation of the new database, EWC would be able to apply for Cyber Essential Plus accreditation.

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

14. Fitness to Practise Progress Report **EWC 25/26**

14.1 David Browne introduced this progress report on the Council's Fitness to Practise work and associated procedural matters.

14.2 Members were informed that a procurement exercise for Presenting Officer services had been successfully completed, securing continuity of the current provision under a new contract to 2029, with the option to extend for a further year.

14.3 Members noted the annual in-person refresher training for panel members and chairs scheduled for 25-26 June 2026 had been postponed until the autumn due to the extreme weather warning in place at that time.

14.4 In relation to a query around low referral numbers from some authorities, the Director of Regulation confirmed the numbers would be reviewed over the summer and meetings with relevant authorities would be arranged if required.

14.5 The Chief Executive noted EWC had been approached by the Local Authority HR Directors Group to provide further support and information relating to fitness to practise. The Director of Regulation would be attending future meetings of the group to support this

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

15. Draft Fitness to Practise Annual Report EWC 26/26

15.1 David Browne asked members to consider the Draft Fitness to Practise Annual Report which had been presented and approved at the Registration and Regulation Committee on 19 May 2026.

15.2 Members had no comments and were content to approve the report for publication.

16. Options for EWC to fulfil its statutory role to provide advice EWC 27/26

16.1 Bethan Stacey *(Director of Professional Development, Accreditation and Policy)* introduced this paper which provided options regarding EWC's approach to fulfilling its statutory function to provide advice.

16.2 Members noted the ongoing commitment to develop relevant matters of interest and research being undertaken into alternative methods of presenting advice.

16.3 In relation to a query raised about whether advice would be evidence based and subsequent recommendations made, the Director of Professional Development, Accreditation and Policy responded to confirm that the advice would be evidence based. The output from this could be recommendations, but it would depend on the nature of the advice being given.

16.4 With a new Government in place the opportunity to develop relationships and build trust around the EWC's role and public perception was acknowledged, with a progressive developmental approach encouraged by Members.

16.5 Members had no further comments or queries and were content to receive the update.

17. Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) EWC 28/26

17.1 Bethan Stacey *(Director of Professional Development, Accreditation and Policy)* introduced this paper which provided members with a progress update on the EWC's statutory role to accredit programmes of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) in Wales.

17.2 Initial discussions had taken place with Wrexham University regarding their expression of interest to deliver ITE in Wales.

17.3 Following completion of the initial cycle of accreditation, monitoring and reaccreditation, there had been good progress on a draft report on ITE provision in Wales, decisions regarding publication of the report, including the extent and format of publication, would be taken following its completion.

17.4 Welsh Government had commenced work on a refresh of the ITE criteria and a draft version was expected during the summer, with a formal consultation on the draft criteria expected in the autumn term.

17.5 Members noted the achievement of a new Memorandum of Understanding between EWC and Estyn which provided a framework for the two organisations to work together in relation to their roles in ITE.

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

18. Council Review and Discussion on Members' Annual Training Day EWC 29/26

18.1 The Chief Executive introduced members to this report which compiled responses from the Council's review process (Annex A). Good scores and positive comments were noted.

18.2 An annual induction day on 21 April 2027 was noted to accommodate newly appointed council members, and all continuing members were encouraged to attend.

18.3 The Chair thanked members for the constructive conversations held during the review process.

18.4 There were no comments and members were content to receive the paper.

19 - 25. Information item(s)

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

- **Quarterly review, 1 January – 31 March 2026 (EWC 30/26)**
- **Review of Audit and Scrutiny Committee's Year 2025-26 (EWC 31/26)**
- **The Quality Mark for Youth Work in Wales (EWC 32/26)**
- **Statutory Induction and Professional Learning Passport (EWC 33/26)**
- **Promotion of Careers in Education (EWC 34/26)**
- **Secretariat to the IWPRB (EWC 35/26)**
- **Calendar of future meeting dates 2027-29 (EWC 36/26)**

26. Any other business

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

Observers were asked to leave before Council moved into the private session.