

EDUCATION WORKFORCE COUNCIL
CYNGOR Y GWEITHLU ADDYSG

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

DATE: 07 July 2022

LOCATION: Microsoft Teams (virtual meeting)

Present:

Members:

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

Apologies:

Steve Drowley	
Gwawr Taylor	
Elizabeth Brimble	Director of Qualifications, Registration and Fitness to Practise

Officers:

Hayden Llewellyn	Chief Executive
Bethan Stacey	Director of Professional Development, Accreditation and Policy
Lisa Winstone	Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Jess Tippins	Communications Manager (observing)
Beverley Curtis	Corporate Governance Officer (minutes)

1. Welcome and preliminaries

- 1.1 Angela Jardine, (*Chairperson*), welcomed members and officers to the twenty-fifth meeting of the Education Workforce Council (EWC).
- 1.2 Apologies had been received from Steve Drowley, Gwawr Taylor and Elizabeth Brimble (*Director of Qualifications, Registration and Fitness to Practise*).
- 1.3 The Chairperson informed members that following the postponement of the briefing from the Minister for Education and Welsh language due to take place ahead of the meeting, the session had been rescheduled to take place ahead of the next Council meeting on 17 November 2022. She reminded Council that the annual planning session would also be taking place following this meeting and so asked members to ensure their availability for the whole day. It was hoped that Council would be meeting in person; information regarding the arrangements for the day would be communicated in due course.
- 1.4 The Chairperson asked the Chief Executive to update Council on two live issues concerning the EWC:

- Welsh Government consultation: Amending the Government of Wales Act 2006 (Budget Motions and Designated Bodies) Order 2018: The Chief Executive reminded members of the background on this matter. Following the Chairperson escalating the Council's concerns in April 2022, she, the Chief Executive and Lisa Winstone (*Director of Finance and Corporate Services*) had met with Owain Lloyd (*Director of Schools*) and officials from the Welsh Government's finance department on 8 June and 1 July 2022 for further discussions. As previously reported, legal advice had been sought by the EWC and discussions on the matter were ongoing.
- EWC's position paper on supply: Following a meeting between the Chief Executive and Owain Lloyd, it was agreed that EWC officers would work with Welsh Government officials on refining the EWC's position paper on supply. This work was still ongoing and members would be kept informed regarding the revised publication date.

2. Declarations of Interest

- 2.1 Kelly Edwards declared an interest in agenda items EWC 39/22 and EWC 40/22 as an employee of Colegau Cymru.
- 2.2 There were no further declarations of interest.

3. Chairperson's Correspondence and Report

- 3.1 The Chairperson informed members that she had represented the EWC when attending the Open University Graduation Ceremony on 27 May 2022. She noted that former Minister for Education, Kirsty Williams had received an honorary degree from the Open University at the ceremony.
- 3.2 She reported that she would be attending the Professional Teaching Awards Cymru on 10 July 2022.

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

- 4.1 The Chairperson introduced the draft minutes of the Council meeting of 17 March 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

- 5.1 There were no issues notified.

6. Draft minutes of the Executive Committee meeting of 17 May 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 17 May 2022

7.1 In the absence of Steve Drowley, Chair of the Registration and Regulation Committee, the Chief Executive 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 No queries were raised by members.

8. Report from the Chief Executive EWC 20/22

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 Referring members to paragraph four, he reported that the final agreed Grant Offer letter was signed on 3rd May 2022 for the EWC to undertake specific work on behalf of the Welsh Government. An addendum in relation to additional 2021-22 Induction work was signed on 27th May 2022.

8.3 As stated at paragraph seven, the Welsh Government had commissioned an independent review to further its understanding of matters in relation to the potential registration of the children, play and early years workforce in Wales. The EWC had been interviewed as part of the review in March 2022 and had participated in a workshop in April 2022. Members would be continue to be updated on developments in this area.

8.4 The Chief Executive informed Council that the EWC had been invited to provide oral evidence / information to an inquiry into Welsh medium education by the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee and the Children, Young People and Education Committee on 6th July 2022. Written information was provided in advance by the EWC as requested.

8.5 Referring members to paragraphs 14-16, the Chief Executive highlighted the work that the EWC was undertaking with regards to the learning support staff. This included representation on a Task and Finish Group, the Chief Executive being a member of a newly established Professional Learning Group, meeting with support staff Union officials regularly and an intention to publish a position paper on learning support staff in 2023. Members particularly noted this involvement positively and thanked officers for their progressive work in this area.

8.6 The number of EWC events that that had taken place was outlined at paragraph 29. The Chief Executive noted that these had been well attended and positively received and officers were continuing work on developing engaging future events.

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

9. Draft Annual Report and Accounts 2021-22

EWC 21/22

- 9.1 The Chief Executive introduced this paper which set out EWC's operational performance and financial position for 2021-22. Lisa Winstone (*Director of Finance and Corporate Services*) and Bethan Stacey (*Director of Professional Development, Accreditation and Policy*) presented the draft Annual Report and Accounts for the financial year 2021-22, respectively.
- 9.2 Lisa Winstone reported Audit Wales had completed their external audit and had given EWC an unqualified audit opinion. There had been three minor audit adjustments required, which had been straightforward to apply. The Accounts had been presented to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting in June and upon their recommendation, were presented to Council for approval.
- 9.3 The accounts reported an end of year surplus of £466,000 which was higher than anticipated. It was noted that this was attributed to several factors including an increase in registration fee income following cautious budgeting given the unknown effect of the pandemic and the continued impact of Covid with regards to remote working / meetings / hearings / engagements / travel and subsistence.
- 9.4 Clare Jones, Chair of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee confirmed to members that the Committee had stringently analysed the Accounts at their meeting and noted the achievement of receiving the unqualified audit opinion. She thanked Lisa Winstone and officers for the work that had been undertaken.
- 9.5 Bethan Stacey then presented the Annual Report which outlined progress against the targets and performance indicators in the Council's Operational Plan and other supporting documents. She noted that the Report had previously been presented to the Executive Committee for review.
- 9.6 Regarding the attendance of Council members to both Council and Committee meetings, one member suggested that the report should include an additional column to report the narrative of authorised absenteeism. This had been raised by the member previously at the Audit and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 30 June 2022. Members generally supported this suggestion. The Chairperson concluded that further discussions would be required to establish which absences would be categorised as authorised in such a scenario. She also referred to the EWC's Standing Orders which outlined the procedure for continued absences without reasonable explanation and also the calendar of Council and Committee meetings which was circulated to members giving approximately one/two years advance notice of meetings.
- 9.7 Members were content to approve the Annual Report and Accounts for 2021-22 and thanked officers for the work completed.

10. Draft annual equality report 2021-22 and draft Welsh language standards monitoring report 2021-22

EWC 22/22

- 10.1 Bethan Stacey presented these reports which had previously been discussed and subsequently recommended to Council for approval by the Executive Committee. She noted that both reports outlined the progress that had been made against core objectives in these areas.

- 10.2 In response to member's query on diversifying Council, the Chief Executive reminded members that members were appointed by the Welsh Government via the Public Appointments Unit and so this was not within the EWC's control. He noted that he and the Corporate Governance Officer would be working closely with Welsh Government officials on promoting the appointments process amongst EWC networks which would include the promotion of a diverse range of applicants.
- 10.3 There were no further questions and members were content to approve both reports.

11. Draft Fitness to Practise Annual Report EWC 23/22

- 11.1 The Chief Executive presented this paper and asked members to consider the draft at annex A and approve its publication.
- 11.2 In response to a member's query, the Chief Executive noted the Council's Fitness to Practise work continued to be of high interest to the media and the general public. He noted that collating and publishing the data into an Annual Report ensured that the correct information was being reported on and shared.
- 11.3 Responding to a member's query on the increase in registrants who had self-referred, the Chief Executive explained that the EWC's continued engagement work was likely to have attributed to a greater self-awareness among its registrants although he noted that this figure was still very low overall.
- 11.4 Members had no further comments and were content to approve the Fitness to Practise Annual report for publication.

12. QTS, Registration and Induction progress report EWC 24/22

- 12.1 The Chief Executive 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 to paragraph two, he reported that the collection of registration fees and subsequent deregistration of those practitioners who had not chosen to retain their registration for 2022-23 had concluded. He highlighted that the Register had seen a significant increase in the number of learning support staff.
- 12.3 As reported at paragraphs 8 – 10, the Welsh Government consultation on new registration categories for the EWC had concluded on 24 May 2022. Officers anticipated a further consultation on the statutory legislation required to add the registration categories later in 2022 with implementation expected on 1 April 2023.
- 12.4 He further noted that the Council had received a small number of enquiries for QTS recognition from individuals from the Ukraine. The EWC's counterparts in Scotland and Ireland had been dealing with such matters for some time and so officers were liaising with colleagues given the exceptional circumstances.
- 12.5 Council had no questions and were content to receive the update.

13. Upgrade / replacement of the EWC database **EWC 25/22**

- 13.1 The Chief Executive introduced this paper which set out the actions to date and the further work required to upgrade or replace the EWC's Registration database. He reminded members of the £800,000 database reserve ring-fenced for this purpose.
- 13.2 As reported at paragraph five, the outcome of the discovery project was due to be received imminently and officers hoped to review the information and make a decision on how to progress by the end of July 2022.
- 13.3 In response to a member's query, the Chief Executive noted that the current database was sufficient for the Council's work in the medium term but would not be fit for purpose in the long term. He assured Council that the planned action was on track to ensure no interruption in the delivery of service.
- 13.4 Responding to a member's query on Council's involvement in supporting the project, the Chief Executive noted that the EWC's senior officers were working closely together on the operational aspect of the upgrade / replacement and members would be kept fully informed on the matter via Council and Committee meetings.
- 13.5 Members had no further questions and were content to note progress in the area.

14. Fitness to Practise progress report **EWC 26/22**

- 14.1 The Chief Executive introduced this progress report on the Council's Fitness to Practise work and associated procedural matters and the annexed revised draft of the Code of Professional Conduct and Practice for Council to discuss following its scheduled review.
- 14.2 As outlined at paragraph 20, the recruitment of additional panel members was necessary to maintain the compliment required for the Council's casework. Recruitment of new registrant members had commenced in May 2022 and the closing date for applications was 4 July 2022. The recruitment of lay members would shortly commence in the Autumn.
- 14.3 The Chief Executive reported that the annual union caseworker meeting took place on 21 June 2022 as noted at paragraph 22, officers had received positive feedback regarding the continuation of hearings being conducted virtually. Representatives concluded that it was a preferred model for its members but appreciated the option of face-to-face hearings being offered also.
- 14.4 Referring members to annex D, the Chief Executive presented the revised draft of the Code of Professional Conduct and Practise following its scheduled 3 yearly review. As previously reported, the review had been 'light touch' given the extensive review that had taken place previously and the positive feedback on the current version. The draft had been presented to the Registration and Regulation Committee at its meeting on 17 May 2022 and was presented to Council for approval for publication in September 2022. Council had no questions and approved the draft for publication.

15. EWC draft – Guide to good conduct and practice for leaders **EWC 27/22**

- 15.1 The Chief Executive introduced this paper and reminded members that the draft had been presented to Council for approval at its meeting in March following a recommendation from the Registration and Regulation Committee. Council requested that further amends be made to the draft. The Registration and Regulation Committee had again discussed the draft at its meeting on 17 May 2022 and had recommended that the amended draft now be presented to Council for approval.
- 15.2 One member noted that the amends made reflected the discussions previously had by Council and that the tone and language used in the document was more suitable.
- 15.3 Members were content to approve the draft for publication.

16. Review of Risk Register **EWC 28/22**

- 16.1 Lisa Winstone introduced this paper and presented the EWC's current Risk Register. She reminded members that the Risk Register was reviewed by senior management on a quarterly basis, discussed by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee at each meeting and presented annually to Council for approval.
- 16.2 No additional risks had been identified in relation to Covid as any such concerns were already addressed within the Risk Register and therefore the Council's risk appetite remained as risk averse.
- 16.3 Members concluded with the risk appetite assessment as risk averse, had no questions and were content to approve the Risk Register.

17. Accreditation of Initial Teacher Education **EWC 29/22**

- 17.1 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.
- 17.2 As outlined at paragraph four, CaBan Bangor had submitted a new PGCE ALN programme for consideration by the ITEA Board. An accreditation visit had taken place 6 – 8 July 2022 and the Board would be issuing its decision on accreditation within 15 days of the assessment.
- 17.3 Referring to paragraph seven, it was reported that interim monitoring had commenced. Two monitoring visits, covering 4 programmes had taken place to date. Three programmes had been deemed compliant (one Partnership) and one programme had been deemed non-compliant with the accreditation Criteria. The programme was now subject to a 'cause for concern' process. The Partnership was required to submit an Improvement Plan to the Board for consideration by 8 July 2022. Responding to a member's query, Bethan Stacey noted that the Board and the EWC would support the Partnership throughout the process.
- 17.4 In response to a member's query on paragraph eight, Bethan Stacey confirmed that discussions with Estyn on the inception of a single process streamlining accreditation, monitoring and inspection remained ongoing.
- 17.5 Further to what was reported at paragraph 11, Bethan Stacey confirmed that the steering group created by Welsh Government officials to oversee the refresh of the Criteria had met twice and work in this area was progressing well.

17.6 As reported at paragraph 13, the EWC had advertised for Board members to fill two vacancies that had arisen. The process had now closed and the applications received were currently being considered.

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

18. Funding of Induction progress report

EWC 30/22

18.1 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.

18.2 Members were referred to paragraph five and invited to note the significant increase in the number of NQTs undertaking Induction via a known period of employment and the subsequent impact upon the level of grant funding required to administer the Induction programme. She explained that this was largely in line with the changes that had come into force from September 2021 as outlined at paragraph 15.

18.3 As reported at paragraph 18, the Welsh Government had allocated £5,200,000 grant for 2022-23 and had also acknowledged that the area of work was demand led and so additional funding could be sought if required.

18.4 Council was reminded that the Welsh Government's consultation on the proposed changes to the Induction programme launched in February 2022 and the Council's response was submitted on 8 April 2022. The consultation report summarising the changes due to take place had yet to be published.

18.5 Responding to a member's query on the proposed changes to Induction likely to happen in November 2022, Bethan Stacey confirmed that it was hoped the changes would be in place before commencing the 2022-23 academic year however the legalities surrounding such changes was likely to have impacted the Welsh Government's original timescales.

18.6 Members had no further comments.

19. Promotion of careers in education

EWC 31/22

19.1 Bethan Stacey introduced this paper and referred members to paragraph three. She reported that officers were finalising the new 'Application Tracking System' which had been developed within the Educators Wales website to track individuals' career paths to further inform recruitment and retention data for the education workforce in Wales. It was anticipated that the system would launch imminently so that the final payment for the development work would be settled thereafter.

19.2 As reported at paragraph six, following an Invitation to Tender exercise using Sell2Wales a contract was awarded, on the 19 April 2022, to Equal Education Partners and CREO Interactive to supply content development, campaign development and management and social media management. The value of the contract was approximately £200,000 for a duration of two years and work was underway.

- 19.3 Bethan Stacey confirmed that three recruitment and support officers had been recruited to the Promotion of Careers team, each with a responsibility to focus on a specified area of priority recruitment (STEM, Welsh language and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic recruitment). Two officers were already in post, with the third due to commence on 11 July 2022.
- 19.4 Members noted the positive progress that had been made on building usage and driving traffic to the Educators Wales website as well as the advocacy service offered by the team. It was noted that this progress was particularly encouraging given the challenges faced with recruitment and retention in the education sector.
- 19.5 Council was content to note the progress outlined in the report.

20. Registrant Services Plan EWC 32/22

- 20.1 Bethan Stacey presented this paper which introduced EWC's suite of guidance, resources and professional services and its plans for development. She invited members to consider the plan at annex A and provide comments, feedback and a steer to further inform the work.
- 20.2 Members positively noted the plan and were particularly encouraging about the development of a wellbeing 'hub' for registrants on the EWC website to signpost to relevant resources.
- 20.3 One member suggested that elements of the plan could be delivered through a Vlog or a Podcast to offer varied approaches to engagement.
- 20.4 Another member noted the high standard of events accomplished by the EWC and suggested practitioner led events with the aim of sharing best practice amongst peers.
- 20.5 Officers thanked members for their suggestions and noted that the plan was an ongoing development and so further ideas were welcomed and encouraged.

21. Council review and discussion on members' annual training day EWC 33/22

- 21.1 The Chief Executive presented this paper which gave an overview of the responses collated from the members' annual review process. The Chairperson thanked members for working collaboratively to complete the annual reviews. Members were asked to note the positive scoring and feedback resulting from the review.
- 21.2 As a result of the feedback acquired from the review process in a previous year, it was members' preference for an annual training day rather than training sessions immediately preceding or following Council meetings. The second annual training day took place on 28 April 2022. The Chief Executive invited members to relay their feedback from the day.
- 21.3 Members agreed that the approach was preferred and found all of the training sessions provided value to their governance roles. The briefings for the external speakers were of particular interest and it was requested that further sessions from other regulators be considered for future training days.

21.4 One member suggested presentations from practitioners for Council to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by each registrant group. This suggestion was noted by officers.

21.5 In response to a member's suggestion to allocate a peer for support to new Council members, the Chairperson agreed to revisit the idea following the conclusion of Welsh Government's process to appoint a new EWC Council to commence term on 1 April 2023.

22-29. Information items

Members received in "for information" papers on:

- **Quarterly review** (EWC 34/22)
- **Review of Audit and Scrutiny Committee's year** (EWC 35/22)
- **The Quality Mark for Youth Work in Wales** (EWC 36/22)
- **Professional Learning Passport** (EWC 37/22)
- **Secretariat to the IWPRB** (EWC 38/22)
- **Review on professional standards and other short term Welsh Government projects** (EWC 39/22)
- **EWC responses to external consultations** (EWC 40/22)
- **Calendar of future meeting dates** (EWC 41/22)

30. Any other business

30.1 No other business was raised and the meeting was closed.