



**Academi Genedlaethol ar gyfer  
Arweinyddiaeth Addysgol Cymru  
National Academy for  
Educational Leadership Wales**

**Minutes/Action Notes from Board Meeting 26th January 2023**

In Attendance: Dr Sue Davies (SD) (Chair)  
Tegwen Ellis (TE) (Chief Executive)  
Martin Price (MP)  
Mike James (MJ)  
John Graystone (JG)  
Dr Debbie Nash (DN)  
Katie Phillips (KPH)  
Charlotte Thomas (CT) (Marketing Manager)  
Dr Joe Cudd (JC) (Associate)  
Michaela Renkes (MR) (Welsh Government)  
Gaynor Ace (GA) (Secretariat)

*1. Welcome, confirmation of minutes and actions from previous meeting*

SD opened the session and welcomed everyone to the first Board meeting of the year. Apologies had been received from Debbie .

There were no conflicts of interest to note.

SD congratulated the team on the recent Well-being conference and also on the stakeholder forum event held in November.

The minutes from the previous meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record.

SD referred to the Action Log from the previous Board meeting and noted that all actions had now been completed or would be dealt with later in the agenda.

*2. Finance/HR Committee Report*

MP provided a summary report from the Finance/HR committee meeting held earlier this month.

A discussion had taken place regarding the Welsh Language policy and the committee agreed that the Leadership Academy needs to be an exemplar in this field. Proposals are being considered on how to take this forward.

There were no HR issues to note and the committee was pleased to hear that international visits have now restarted.

The current budget was on track to break even or end with a small surplus. Kirsty Payne presented a proposed draft budget for the 2023/24 financial year based on current expectations of funding from WG. KP had made reasonable assumptions regarding inflation especially with regards to the annual pay award. The final grant amount had not yet been confirmed by WG and so changes may need to be made to the budget but the committee were happy with the plans to date.

MR reported that the grant offer is still being finalised and would need ministerial approval before being confirmed. MR also pointed out that the committee minutes referred to *the grant offer letter* being submitted to WG. The minutes would be amended to state that *suggested items to be included in the grant offer letter* had been submitted to WG.

SD thanked MP for his report and the Board was happy to accept the committee minutes and the recommendations within it.

### 3. *Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Report*

MJ presented the report from the Audit and Risk Assurance committee meeting held earlier this month.

MJ was pleased to highlight that the Internal Audit Report for Strategic Planning had awarded 'substantial assurance. MJ congratulated TE and her team for this excellent achievement.

The risks from the risk register were reviewed and the committee considered the changes. JG queried the distinction between risks directly owned and risks perceived to be owned. MJ outlined the conversation that had taken place at committee regarding risks that had been specifically identified in the remit letter as being risks for the Leadership Academy. Other risks such as the new curriculum, Pisa tests and Welsh in Education have wider expectations beyond the organisation. MR also stressed the importance of measuring the impact of initiatives like Leadership Unlocked.

A deep dive on Insight took place where Dr Chris Lewis gave a very useful presentation of work taking place in this area. This sparked an interesting discussion on whether leadership should be evidence based or evidence informed. It was agreed that the aim is to develop critical appraisal in leaders in a move towards being evidence informed. MJ was very pleased to see the organisation moving forwards in a more strategic way.

Although not covered at committee, MJ raised some issues regarding cyber security. The organisation has cyber security certification but MJ also stressed the importance of keeping up to date in this area which may require further training. MJ also suggested considering putting in place safeguards such as pre-employment checks

for staff and also having practice exercises to simulate cyber attacks and recovery. MJ stressed the importance of ensuring general data protections are in place with direct marketing. He also queried who would be responsible for security in any data being shared with WG. MR confirmed that WG would not share hard data with the Leadership Academy and that the sharing of statistics would not fall under GDPR rules.

SD thanked MJ for his report and remarked on the diligence of the committee in their consideration of risk. The Board was happy to accept both the committee minutes and the audit report.

#### *4. Chief Executive Report against the Corporate Plan*

TE began by reflecting on highlights over the past year including the endorsement of 7 provisions, the launch of 3 insight papers and the growth in the team and Associates. The attendance at face to face events such as the Urdd Eisteddfod and the Eisteddfod Genedlaethol has been instrumental in raising the profile of the Leadership Academy and extending its reach.

TE was pleased to note that the organisation is being talked about in wider circles such as in the work on community focused schools. TE will visit Maindee Primary school in Newport where an Associate from Cohort 4 is the headteacher. This should afford an opportunity to talk to a range of educational leaders and to gather information. MR stressed the importance of sending feedback information to WG. TE understood that but also needed time to reflect after such visits. Consideration will be given to making communication mechanisms more explicit.

TE then provided a progress report on all work streams highlighting recent progress and achievements:

*Para 1.1 Quality Assurance* – The endorsement process is continuing and the prospectus has been updated. The fast track process has been piloted with the cross regional consortia and will be piloted for a second time to ensure it is rigorous and robust. Post 16 MLDP received innovation funding and TE would be keen to see this one come through the fast track process.

The monitoring process is still quite onerous so this will need to be looked at further. In response to a query from MJ, TE confirmed that monitoring currently takes a generic approach rather than taking into account the maturity and track record of providers. MJ suggested a more risk based approach for some providers such as a triannual cycle with more rigorous monitoring taking place in year 3. TE thanked MJ for this useful suggestion.

DN would find it useful to find out how many people engaged with endorsed provision and were actively influenced. TE agreed to share that data with the Board when it was gathered from providers during monitoring.

*Para 1.2 Innovation* – The innovation workshop series for 2023, with Professor Andy Penaluna and Jessica Leigh Jones, is currently being developed. This will commence in March and will consist of 2 online and 1 face to face sessions.

Pathway funding continues to support various leadership development initiatives. Estyn have recently approached the Leadership Academy with a request for innovation funding.

TE pointed out that the innovation pot of funding does have some flexibility in case of shortfalls in other areas.

*Para 1.3 System Leadership* – The second learning experience for Cohort 5 took place in December. This was facilitated by Associates from previous cohorts. A Copa event also took place in December, bringing all current Associates together and giving Cohorts 3 and 4 an opportunity to share the current position on their commissions.

Discussions have begun with Cohort 5 to identify a theme for their commission which will support ministerial priorities. MR pointed out that timings could be tricky here as the Minister needs up to date information whereas commissions do take some time to get underway. TE suggested that commissions could become part of the grant offer this time.

TE was pleased to note that Associates are regularly being used as reference groups for different research projects and are often approached to be part of focus groups and respond to surveys. WG have requested the Academy to convene 3 head teacher reference groups (primary, secondary and all age group).

Peer mentoring training has just been completed and the peer mentoring of Cohort 5 started in December 2022. The 7 Attainment Champions have now been appointed and will have a face to face induction this month. They will contact partner schools as soon as a letter has been agreed by WG. It was recognised that their task of tackling poverty in education was a massive one and would not be resolved after a 6 month pilot. TE reported on the recent visit to Ireland where useful discussions took place on this issue.

The organisation is currently co-constructing a conference with DARPL with the assistance of Associates and Attainment Champions. An Associate in Cohort 2 will be joining DARPL's group to highlight BAME experiences across Wales. TE was in agreement with KP when she pointed out the difficulty of one individual representing such a diverse community.

*Para 1.4 Leadership Development* – The Curriculum Unlocked culminated in December and there was some concern was expressed regarding the variance in numbers of attendees registered compared to those who actually attended the event. This could be due to the time of year or could be reflective of the speakers.

Head to head sessions continue but the focus has changed from well-being during the pandemic to more thematic discussions. These are proving useful to gather thinking and also provide evaluation for WG.

*Para 2.1 Resources* – Work is continuing on the Leading Professional Learning resource as it is still not felt that this is being utilised to full effect. MR is currently working on guidance for the additional INSET days and views this as a valuable resource to be used here. TE was happy to agree this and stressed the importance of renewing case studies to keep this resource up to date. TE also referred to the extensive media resources available on the website including podcasts, films etc which could be useful discussion stimuli at INSET days.

Associates continue to develop the Welsh in Education resource. Questions are currently being developed to support schools in evaluating their Welsh provision.

*Para 2.2 Insight* – Cohort 3's survey on ALN concluded last week. They are currently drawing together the findings and preparing for scrutiny in March. It is then hoped to have the first draft ready by the end of March for the launch in May.

It is planned to launch the commission on Community Focus Schools in June. Opinions are currently being collated and the WG will be advised of findings. TE is conducting similar research with 40 Welsh medium schools with one of the discussion points being around recruitment and retention. This will also be shared with WG and may include more information on the Changing Face of Leadership. MR reported on a request made to WCCP to undertake research into how leadership has had to change since Covid.

*2.3 Well-being* – TE would like to recognise the amazing work in this area, particularly that of Nia Miles who leads on well-being. The recent well-being conference was very well attended with over 100 attendees. It was deemed a very good idea to have the Minister speak at the end of the conference as this seemed to reduce the number of 'drop-offs'. The conference provided a useful opportunity for leaders to discuss the well-being entitlement and this will be evaluated for WG.

MR would find it interesting to understand how this conference compared to previous years in terms of numbers and whether the same people attended. MR also suggested several shorter sessions rather than a full day conference might make it easier for more people to attend. TE agreed to do a data track on numbers and would consider MR's point about timings.

*2.4 Strategic Workforce Planning* – An inception meeting took place with NIESR for the Recruitment and Retention project. Good progress is being made with Bangor University on the Executive Heads project.

JG had queried the current pattern of recruitment and retention using up to date data and also what part the Leadership Academy could play here. TE had not received any data as yet but it was hoped that this research would provide a fuller picture. Early indications point to the fact that it is more difficult to fill appointments in faith schools and in certain secondary subjects and also in some parts of Wales. MR would find this information very useful to feed into wider policies and for consideration of promotion into leadership roles. SD will be sitting on the teacher recruitment and retention advisory board later today where issues are being raised regarding leadership. SD commented that recruitment and retention was a major issue for the whole of the system especially in Welsh medium education.

MJ called on the expertise of the Board to consider the wider issues here. It was agreed that the teaching profession used to be a much more popular choice of career but teacher training institutions are now struggling to recruit candidates. Workload and new initiatives such as ALN might be deterring applications and also negative experiences during the pandemic. Consideration will need to be given as to how teaching can be professionalised and how the education sector can learn from other sectors. MJ and DN pointed out that teaching in schools and universities is now often seen as an extension of social services due to all the problems being experienced by learners of all ages. DN referred to the lack of childcare support for women with families. TE also pointed out that women tended to retire earlier than men possibly due to menopausal problems exacerbated by high workloads.

*3.1 Corporate* – The Annual Report has now been laid at the Senedd. A planning meeting for the tailored review was attended by TE and KP. This was seen as a good opportunity for the organisation to consider governance structures and funding issues.

The draft budget had been approved by the Finance and HR Committee and was now awaiting funding confirmation from WG. TE was pleased to note that ‘Substantial Assurance’ had been awarded by internal auditors in the latest audit

*3.2 Executive Function* – An ALN lead had been appointed to support leaders in ALN reform. Emma Chivers will lead on the youth work remit area.

*3.3 Comms and Marketing* – This will be considered under Item 6 of the agenda.

*3.4 Stakeholders and Partnership Work* – A Stakeholder Forum took place on November 30<sup>th</sup> with 80 attendees. TE continues to visit associate’s schools across Wales.

The tri nations work is going from strength to strength and may provide useful opportunities for joint research with the other two countries. An Associate proved successful in securing funding to take a delegate to Singapore in April and TE has also been invited by WG to visit Washington DC in March.

SD thanked TE for a very informative report highlighting all the key issues and bringing about some very useful and challenging conversations.

## *5. Associate Update*

SD welcomed Dr Joe Cudd (JC), an Associate from Cohort 3, who had come to update the Board on his work and share his wider experience of being an Associate with the Academy.

JC spoke of his role as an Executive Head of two very different schools. Taking on the role of Associate has greatly enriched his professional life and has made him redefine his role as a leader. He welcomed the exposure to outstanding leaders across Wales and spoke of having an enhanced sense of belonging. JC now feels he is a curious leader who actively seeks out new experiences and has renewed his ‘brain juice’.

JC further considered the impact on him of being a part of the Leadership Academy. He welcomed the opportunity of having an inspirational coach at the start of his journey which inspired him to undertake training in coaching and gain a professional qualification in counselling. He also designed and developed a framework for supporting mental help in schools. This had a very positive impact on the culture in JC's schools where well-being is key both for staff and pupils.

As a member of Cohort 3, JC assisted in the design of a survey on ALN reform. This survey received 730 responses and JC shared some of the key themes coming out of this survey.

In summary JC felt that his experience as an Associate helped him build capacity for the future. He also feels better able to trust his own team which has increased their capacity. JC was pleased to have been chosen as an Attainment Champion which will enable him to offer peer to peer support across Wales.

SD thanked JC for his presentation and the many positive comments and congratulated him on his new role as an Attainment Champion. SD did comment on some of the rather alarming themes to come through from the ALN survey. MR had also picked up on this and would welcome information from the ALN survey to better inform the guidance on this topic which had to be completed by Easter.

JC pointed out the failings in healthcare which had been highlighted in the survey. He also stressed the need to manage expectations of the new system and to work through the route map, fully involving parents in the process.

MJ thanked JC for a superb presentation and questioned why people didn't feel autonomous (which was one of the early results of the survey). JC felt that the Leadership Academy gives more autonomy to Head Teachers as it opens up a network of contacts to discuss issues with. This allays the feeling of being 'left on their own' which can often prevail.

MP queried whether there was a feeling that the new ALN act was better than the previous one. JC's personal view was that the new one is preferable due to it being more of a person centred approach. As with all new things though, people were wary of change and the new process take some time to 'bed down'.

SD thanked JC for his interesting presentation which had inspired further discussions and was very pleased to see that the Leadership Academy, through the Associate program, is making such an impact on the wider world.

## *6. Communications Update*

SD then welcomed Communications Manager, Charlotte Thomas (CT) to the meeting who provided an update on communications and marketing.

CT introduced the new communications report which had been developed in December 2022. This included reporting on the new social media strategy including industry updates. Results from the new social listening and sentiment analysis platform were also included.

CT went through the highlights of the Leadership Academy's online KPIs. Cohort 2's commission on Welsh in Education remained the top download. CT was very pleased to report the exceptionally low bounce rate which was much lower than similar organisations' websites. This indicates that people are staying on the website and engaging with the content.

There is a continuous increase in traffic across all social media channels and an increase in podcast viewings. The only slightly negative figure was the 15 people who had unsubscribed from the mailing list. CT had investigated this and was reassured to see that these people were either based outside Wales or had changed email addresses, left their posts etc.

CT ran through the new social listening and sentiment analysis platform and provided examples across the board of positive mentions and the kind of language used to describe the Leadership Academy and partner organisations too. This platform enables CT to pull out any key mentions and themes and also identify top users. It can also be used for specialist events to monitor new releases and website updates. The information provided by these tools has proved very useful to Dr Chris Lewis in his insight work stream.

MJ thanked CT for an excellent presentation and felt that this information would be very useful for feeding into the strategy planning process. It was pleasing to note the high figure of 1500 users. In response to a query from MJ however, CT stated that it could be difficult to identify how many were new users if people use different devices to log in.

KP queried whether the profile of users could be identified. CT confirmed that she was currently working on the segmentation process which should provide a clearer picture of the type of user and facilitate more targeted messaging. CT also reported that she was looking at other social media platform with the aim of engaging a younger audience. The team were setting up a comms group which included Associate schools spread messages through schools.

JG had queried whether there was anything in the report that CT was surprised at, especially pleased with or disappointed with. CT had been very excited about the low bounce rate, had been somewhat surprised at some of the key words used for the Leadership Academy and had initially been disappointed to lose some subscribers, although felt more reassured after finding out the reasons behind it

MR had found CT's presentation and report very interesting and useful to WG.

SD thanked CT for such an interesting presentation.

#### *7. Date of next meeting, future agenda items and close*

KP asked the Board whether they would consider allowing someone to shadow her in her role as Board member. This would hopefully encourage more people to engage with public life in Wales. SD had taken advice on this request in terms of



protocol but it did raise concerns regarding confidentiality. It was agreed that this would need more consideration before an answer could be given to KP.

SD congratulated TE and the team for all their hard work as evidenced at this meeting. SD commented on the well-being conference in particular which had been a very successful event. SD also thanked GA for her work in producing the minutes for Board and committee meetings.

MR referred to the stage review of NPQH which could provide a potential opportunity for the Leadership Academy. MR was unable to share any information on this as yet but suggested a catch up meeting with TE just before half term.

SD thanked everyone for their participation in today's meeting and for the interesting discussions that had ensued.

The next Board meeting will be held on March 23rd - this will be a face to face meeting and will take place in the Marriott Hotel, Swansea. As GA will be unable to attend this meeting, it will be recorded then the recording will be deleted.

The meeting was closed at 12.45pm.

### Action Log

No.		Owner	Deadline	Status
209	Highlight anything relevant from Political monitoring report	MP	Ongoing	
217	Amend Finance/HR minutes as per Para 2	KP	February 2023	Completed
218	Share with Board data on active engagement and influence following events	TE	March 2023	
219	Provide info to WG regarding attendance at well-being conference	TE	March 2023	