



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

Minutes/Action Notes from Board Meeting 25th May 2023

In Attendance: Sue Davies (SD) (Chair)
Tegwen Ellis (TE) (Chief Executive)
Martin Price (MP)
Mike James (MJ)
Debbie Nash (DN)
Katie Phillips (KPH)
Yusuf Ibrahim (YI)
Paul Marshall (PM)
John Graystone (JG)
Charlotte Thomas (CT) (Communications Manager)
Chris Lewis (CL) (Director)
Gaynor Ace (GA) (Secretariat)

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

SD opened the session and welcomed everyone to today's Board meeting. There were no apologies. There were no conflicts of interest to report.

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

SD referred to the Action Log.

Action 220 - TE confirmed that the Leadership Academy would include the WG logo on branding. Gareth Key was checking on email addresses and would send round an updated list when confirmed.

SD reported on recent staff changes within WG. The Leadership Academy's link person with the WG sponsor unit will temporarily be Awen Penry. Going forward, WG representatives will only attend board meetings on invitation from the board or when there are specific items to discuss.

2. Communications Update

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

CT informed the Board of changes to Google Analytics which would come into effect from July. This is quite a major change and would affect what is recorded in the monthly Comms report.

CT reported that some terminology will change which will have an impact on some of the current metrics. This will make it more difficult to compare metrics from before and after this change. There will be no unique page views in the new system which could appear to lower the number of page views.

The bounce rate metric will change to an 'engagement rate' which means users need to remain on the page for at least 10 seconds and also view subsequent pages. It is difficult to benchmark the Leadership Academy against other organisations but a good engagement rate was deemed 50% or more. Currently the Leadership Academy's figure is 57%.

The 'new user' metric would remain although these would need to be active users which could result in a decrease in this figure. Document downloads will now be called file downloads but there will be no change to how this is measured.

CT is currently moving material across in readiness for the new platform and will try to make this transition as seamless as possible. MJ welcomed CT's update in assessing the impact of these changes and how they will affect the metrics.

YI asked how the change from cookie data to impersonal data would affect the reach. CT believed that this should not have a dramatic effect as Google Ads were not heavily relied on. CT would keep a careful watch on any significant drop in metrics however.

SD thanked CT for providing this informed update and for forewarning everyone of potential changes in marketing data.

3. Finance/HR Committee Report

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

There were no major staff and HR issues to report and the hybrid model was still working well.

Kirsty Payne (KP) had presented the budget report from the last year and had managed to keep the carry over within the 2% allowance. The committee had expressed thanks to KP for such careful management of the budget. The draft annual accounts for the year had been considered and it was agreed to include a narrative to explain what looks like a sizeable surplus – this was mainly due to when invoices had been received.

The committee had considered the tailored review but there were no details available as yet. Two Board members were to be included in this review including SD as Chair of the Board.

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

4. Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Report

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

The report from internal auditors had awarded a level of reasonable assurance over the 2022/23 financial year. This was the highest rating possible and MJ congratulated KP and team for all their efforts.

KP has created a risk management policy which had been reviewed by both the internal auditors and committee members. MP congratulated KP on an excellent job here and was particularly impressed with the consideration of risk appetite. **The Board was happy to accept this new policy.**

Consideration was given to the changing stance of Audit Wales who have recently been adopting a revised audit standard with much more emphasis on risk management. This will change the focus from looking at evidence of compliance to checking for non compliance. It was acknowledged that a lot of preparation work will be needed. MJ suggested doing a read across from the new audit standards to the risk management policy. The organisation must also be assured that it is fully implementing the new policy – it was agreed that there is still some work to do there.

Kirsty Payne has had a meeting with Audit Wales to discuss the external audit of the financial statements for 2022/23. They will attend the July Board meeting to present their audit plan, prior to carrying out their audit in August. It is planned that they will then report the audit opinion to the Board in September.

SD suggested that the second Board member for the tailored review should be the Chair of the Audit committee. MJ was happy to accept this role and **this was agreed by all Board members.**

SD thanked MJ for his report **The Board was happy to accept both the committee minutes and the audit report.**

5. Evaluation and Data Report

TE was joined by Dr Chris Lewis (CL) and both presented an overview of the Results and Evidence Framework which sets out how the organisation evaluates its workstreams and activity. TE emphasised the importance of being open and honest when considering current evaluation mechanisms and preparing for the next steps.

TE set out the principles that underpin this framework and help ensure value for money in being accountable for all spend. These include strategic impact and holding to account for short, medium and long term goals. TE also stressed the

importance of challenge, of being responsive to the system and being ready to move to a different direction if required.

TE then explained the methods for approaching evaluation. These include participant surveys, commissioning research, deep dives, peer reviews, internal audit reports and professional conversations. The deep dives are proving very effective in scrutinising and questioning all work streams internally. Professional conversations are held not only with Associates but also with wider stakeholders.

Evaluation reports follow every event or every series of events. It was acknowledged that peer review had been one of the weaker evaluation elements to date. There may be more opportunity to progress this when the middle tier review has been completed.

TE demonstrated the Operational Plan which is discussed at management meetings. This aligns with all priorities as set out in the remit letter and is regularly reviewed to ensure the organisation is on track to meet anticipated outcomes. DN asked whether Board members could have access to this plan. Whilst happy to share, TE stressed that Board members would not generally need that level of detail as their focus should be more strategic,

YI found this spreadsheet very clear and a good way of setting out the various work streams and how to measure them. MJ was also impressed by this well structured planning tool but queried whether unstructured meetings are also held with the team. CL was happy to confirm that unstructured meetings and conversations take place regularly.

TE outlined next steps for the framework which include standardising the approach to the evaluation of events. TE acknowledged that there is still some way to go but was really pleased at the way this framework is populated with evidence not just words.

CL also added that the current free and frank discussions with WG are proving very useful in evaluating work.

In response to an enquiry from SD regarding timescales, TE replied that whilst the framework would be evaluated annually, the evaluation process would be continuous.

JG queried how progress could be compared from one year to the next and also whether there were any similar organisations that could be used for benchmarking.

TE informed the Board that OB3 are being commissioned to design a leadership survey that should prove useful for benchmarking. TE outlined the difficulties in finding other similar organisations to benchmark against. It would seem that the Leadership Academy is closely aligned to the Centre for School Leadership, Ireland but they are shortly being absorbed into government so their role and remit may well change. The middle tier review should also help define roles in the sector.

YI referred to the difference between outputs and outcomes – outcomes being much wider as they include attitudes, confidence and skills. YI suggested creating an

international baseline for the purpose of contextualisation. He also stressed the difference between short term changes as a result of training and longer term changes which encompass societal and wider progress. TE thanked YI for sharing these interesting perspectives.

MJ wasn't too concerned about being immeasurable in some aspects and queried the need for tie in with the political cycle in Wales. TE confirmed that this plan will coincide with the current cycle and will end in 2026.

PM thanked TE and CL for their presentation and referred to an organisation he was currently working with in Australia which has a model similar to the Associate one. PM would be happy to share their experiences and suggested there may be international models like this which could provide useful comparisons.

SD thanked TE and team for coming up with such an impressive framework and for continually evaluating to remain responsive to system needs.

6. Chief Executive Report against the Corporate Plan

TE began by reflecting on the political monitoring tool which provides much quicker access to information and references to the Leadership Academy. It is pleasing to note that the Minister is now referring to the organisation as one of the prominent players in the middle tier.

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

Para 1.1 Quality Assurance – An application for endorsement has been received from DARPL – this training will include governors as well as senior leaders. This was seen as a very positive move in ensuring governors have access to anti-racist professional learning.

Conversations are continuing with WG around funding following endorsement and how to increase its perceived value in the system. There will soon be another body to endorse provision other than leadership provision and TE has been invited to sit on the steering group for this new body.

YI queried the links between school and other settings . TE confirmed that Cohort 5's commission on Curriculum for Wales encompasses all provision including primary, secondary, youth and Post 16. TE will ask Associates to copy in YI with findings.

JG referred to Estyn's thematic report on governance and TE confirmed that she was attending a meeting with WG to further discuss. TE agreed to circulate a link to the Estyn report.

Para 1.2 Innovation – TE referred to the big range of areas currently being funded through the innovation pathway – the target is to get at least 3 of these to come forward for endorsement. It is planned to use innovation funding for more enquiry based activity going forward.

Para 1.3 System Leadership – Scrutiny panels for Cohorts 3 and 4 are now finalised. There have been meetings with WG officials and it has been agreed not to publicly launch the commission reports. Cohort 5's commissions on Well-being and Curriculum for Wales is now underway.

Cohort 6 recruitment is well underway and more applications were received than ever before. The Federation of Associates is being created. Terms of reference have been drafted and a Chair has been identified. Associates will be invited to join the group and activity will be self-directed.

The Attainment Champions pilot is now coming to an end and there will be a full evaluation over the summer.

Para 1.4 Leadership Development – The Leadership Unlocked series is progressing well and requests are now being received for specific topics. Fewer numbers have been attending and this could be attributed to how well known the speaker is. Head to head sessions continue with a thematic approach – again numbers are lower. Tri nations events continue.

TE highlighted the Diversity Anti-Racist Professional Learning (DARPL) conference on 8th June which has been co-constructed with DARPL, EWC and the Leadership Academy. TE was pleased to announce that YI will be presenting at this conference. TE stressed the importance of being proactive in the Anti-Racist Wales agenda and has asked the committee to include this as a regular agenda item. It is also hoped to recruit an Associate from a diverse background. YI is confident that the organisation is going in the right direction under TE's leadership and welcomed the inclusion of anti-racism on the agenda.

JG mentioned the concept of Wales being a nation of sanctuary that provides welcome for refugees and asylum seekers.

MJ referred to sub brands like Leadership Unlocked and Head to Head and the importance of ensuring that these are always linked to the Leadership Academy. TE thanked MJ for raising this.

TE mentioned that there are tickets available for the conference on 21st June on Leading Curriculum for Wales. This should also afford an opportunity to look at Post 16 and the youth sector as well. TE invited Board members to come along and also to attend workshops.

Para 2.1 Resources – The Professional Learning resource continues to be used although it will take some time to fully understand its impact.

Para 2.2 Insight – The contract with Professor Carol Campbell has now been signed. This should be a really good piece of work looking at reflective practice. TE has already referred to the Leadership survey with OB3.

2.3 Well-being – Phase 1 of the Compassionate Leadership work has taken place and funding is now awaiting to undertake Phase 2.

2.4 Strategic Workforce Planning – The NIESR seminar on interim findings in the Recruitment and Retention project has now been rearranged to 9th June. Work

should be completed by October and the qualitative data generated should prove useful to WG. The issue of why people are leaving leadership roles in education remains a massive area of concern.

3.1 Effective Governance – The grant offer variation letter has not been received as yet but is expected by the end of May.

TE and KPH had interviewed today for the post of Head of Welsh Language and the one candidate proved successful. KPH had been very impressed with the candidate and had agreed that she should bring an extra dimension to the work of the organisation.

The tailored review will take place next year – this should provide a useful opportunity to get independent views on the work of the Academy. The thematic reviews are due to start in September 2023. TE will keep everyone informed of progress. MJ suggested sharing information when available with the internal auditors which TE thought an excellent idea.

3.2 Executive Function –the operational plan is being developed to feed into the work streams. This is planned to be completed by end of June.

The Uned office space is proving very useful in facilitating more face to face meetings. TE will sign the lease this week on the new storage unit in Bridgend.

3.3 Comms and Marketing – CT provided an update under item 2 of the agenda. If anyone has any further questions, CT will be happy to answer.

3.4 Stakeholders and Partnership Work – A ministerial group of Head teachers was convened which was over subscribed. WG initially requested 3 groups (primary, secondary and all age) but have now asked that a special school group be created too. The first online meeting was held yesterday. This was seen as a real opportunity to bring the voice of leadership much closer and is another example of how the Leadership Academy is taking a leading role in developing leaders.

Partnership Agreements are currently being signed and will then need to be put into practice.

TE reflected on her recent visit to Singapore which provided really useful insights into another educational system but also helped evaluate the Welsh system. TE will share the report when completed.

TE, CL and an Associate will be attending the Belmas conference in Belfast in July and will be giving a poster presentation on how the commission work influences policy.

JG recognised the value of international visits and agreed that they help reflect on the UK system. JG would welcome sight of reports on all recent international visits. TE informed the Board of an international symposium taking place on 6th July in Cardiff. This will highlight experiences from all international trips and will also be

attended by a group of Head Teachers from Australia. TE will check whether this event can be recorded.

SD thanked TE for a very informative and comprehensive report highlighting all the key issues.

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

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 18 July – this will be an online meeting and will be followed by a face to face meeting in September. SD reminded everyone of the Urdd Eisteddfod next week in Llandovery and invited Board members to attend and support the team if possible..

The meeting was closed at 12.35pm

Action Log

No.		Owner	Deadline	Status
209	Highlight anything relevant from Political monitoring report	MP	Ongoing	
220	Send round updated list of email addresses	Gareth Key	June 23	
221	Ask Associates to copy in YI to curriculum work	TE	ongoing	
222	Circulate link to Estyn report	TE	June 23	
223	Check whether international symposium can be recorded	TE	June 23	