



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

Minutes/Action Notes from Board Meeting 29th September 2023

In Attendance: Dr Sue Davies (SD) (Chair)
Tegwen Ellis (TE) (Chief Executive)
Mike James (MJ)
Martin Price (MP)
Kirsty Payne (KP)
John Graystone (JG)
Dr Debbie Nash (DN)
Katie Phillips (KPH)
Yusuf Ibrahim (YI)
Paul Marshall (PM)
Gaynor Ace (GA) (Secretariat)

Invited: Gillian Gillett (GG), Audit Wales
Andrea Thomas (AT), Audit Wales

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

SD welcomed everyone to the Board meeting. There were no apologies.

MP made the board aware of a potential conflict of interest regarding his recent work with governors on school funding issues, where he had been named in a petition and in a letter to the Minister for Educational and Welsh Language. MP confirmed that there had been no mention of the Leadership Academy in these activities.

The minutes from the previous meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record with one minor error which JG will send to GA.

SD referred to the Action Log:

209: There is nothing specific to report from political monitoring this time.

221: It was suggested that YI shares his anti-racism work with Associates which YI is happy to do.

224: Completed

225: No longer relevant as tailored review is not taking place

226: Completed

2. Audit Wales ISA 260 Report

SD was pleased to welcome Gillian Gillett (GG) and Andrea Thomas (AT) from Audit Wales, who joined by video link.

AT provided a summary of findings from the ISA 260 Report which included information on significant issues from the audit and level of testing. AT was pleased to note that there were no uncorrected statements. The Auditor General would now sign off the annual accounts once they have been formally signed off by the board and the chairs signature added.

AT thanked KP for all the help and support she had provided during the audit. SD thanked the audit team and also reiterated her thanks to KP. GG and AT left the meeting.

In response to a query from MJ, KP agreed that there had been a noticeable change in the level of information required in this year's audit due to a change in the auditing standards for 2023/24. The audit was now more qualitative and delved deeper into processes and policies including risk management and ICT. PM queried what issues had been corrected. KP confirmed that they were minor misstatements that related to the prepayment schedule.

3. Confirmation of Audited Annual Accounts

PM asked that an amendment be made to his title in the financial statements, from 'Dr' to 'Professor'. All board members agreed to authorise the 2022/23 financial statements. **The statement will now be signed by the Chair on behalf of the Board and a copy to Audit Wales for signing by the Auditor General.**

JG was concerned about the apparent surplus in the budget, given the current sensitivity around funding. KP agreed that it was important that the notes that support the accounts clearly explain that the apparent surplus is not cash at bank but rather income that has been committed to projects in the next financial year.

In response to a suggestion from YI to move to a 2 year funding model, TE confirmed that she continues to ask for this but WG have not agreed. The only exception is the funding that relates to the Welsh in Education work that has been agreed over 2 academic years.

As TE has been told to expect a standstill budget at best for 2024/25 and a potential cut of up to 10% at worst, JG suggested considering as a Board how to respond to any budget cuts in the future.

4. Finance and HR Committee Report

MP provided a overview of the last committee meeting where there were no significant HR or well-being issues.

The amended Financial Regulations had been accepted by the committee with some minor spelling corrections and the addition of page numbers incorporated. ***The Board approved the Financial Regulations.***

The committee had also reviewed the draft Employee Handbook and had thanked KP for all her work on this. Page numbers would also be added to this document. Meleri Light will be trialling this handbook as a new employee and will be providing feedback before the final document is published.

SD thanked MP for his committee report.

5. Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Report

MJ presented the report from the Audit and Risk Assurance committee meeting held earlier this month. This had been an intense meeting with some in-depth discussions around the nature of risks and how best to report and monitor them. In response to a suggestion from PM, the Management team have reconsidered the way risks were presented on the risk register. The new version reflects the organisation's maturity by looking at risk more holistically rather than by each workstream. PM was pleased with the positive way the Management team had responded to the committee's recommendation. ***The Board accepted the new version of the risk register.***

The committee considered whether the strategy had to be limited by the political cycle or whether the vision could look further into the future.

It was also queried whether deep dives should be presented to the Board rather than the committee going forward, but it was agreed to keep these at committee level and they can be repeated at the board if the committee think it would be relevant. Operational deep dives on workstreams should be presented within the team for internal scrutiny. It was appreciated that the new risk register would necessitate a different approach to deep dives and may not require a presentation but rather take the form of a discussion.

A discussion ensued on how a short term funding model could sit well with a 5 year remit from WG. SD confirmed that the Leadership Academy was instrumental in co-constructing the remit and have some flexibility to shape the work it carries out. It was deemed helpful that the organisation can now have conversations with different senior officials across WG which provides a more holistic view across departments.

TE commented on how the Associates are instrumental in driving policy change with their commission work. TE believed that the Middle Tier review could provide the ideal time to set the vision on where the Leadership Academy sees itself as a partner

working within the sector. YI suggested that the organisation should ask itself the question 'How can we become impossible to replace?'

MJ highlighted the QA role as one of the things that would help maintain the independence of the Leadership Academy. One of the biggest challenges here is that WG continues to fund professional learning that hasn't been brought forward for endorsement. This may change as they are implementing their own QA procedure for non-leadership provision. TE confirmed that the Leadership Academy's logo appears on the material of endorsed provisions.

SD thanked MJ for his report and thanked everyone for the much wider strategic discussion that had followed. It was noted that face to face meetings are much more conducive to conversations such as these.

6. Chief Executive Report against the Corporate Plan

TE explained that as there is generally less activity during the school summer holiday period and this affords more time for evaluation of the strategic documents and workstreams.

Meleri Light has now been in post for almost a month and consideration is currently being given as to where Welsh sits within the organisation and how it is reported. TE spoke of the two sides of Meleri's role – the internal role in making sure the organisation complies with standards and leads the way in promoting the Welsh language. The external part of the role considers how to support and engage with WG in meeting the targets in the Welsh In Education 10 year workforce plan. Meleri will be working in partnership with external bodies and has been accompanying TE to all relevant meetings. Meleri recently gave a very interesting presentation to NZ delegates on the history of the Welsh language.

TE stressed that although the organisation has only secured funding for this post for 2 years, the Welsh strategy will be an important long term priority.

1.1 Quality Assurance – TE was pleased to say that more private providers were now bringing forward their provisions for endorsement. It was useful to highlight that not all provisions are successful in receiving endorsement and an approach is being developed to support those providers who are unsuccessful. Monitoring is carried out on those provisions that have been endorsed and Richard Edwards supports Mark Isherwood in this area.

MJ queried whether alternative approaches had been considered as the current endorsement process can seem quite lengthy and cumbersome. TE replied that the strength of the current peer led process is that it is the leaders i.e. the Associates who make the decisions. There is a training programme for the panel which TE would be happy for Board members to attend. In response to a query from MP, TE did wonder whether there would be sufficient capacity in the current system if there was a big increase in provisions seeking endorsement. TE also drew attention to the fast track process which had been developed for those provisions that had external accreditation or that came from providers who had other provisions endorsed. It was

agreed to continue this conversation outside of this meeting and to include Mark Isherwood who has in-depth knowledge of the process.

1.2 Innovation – TE reported that funding has been allocated to Cardiff Met University to support their Teacher to Headship programme for global majority teachers. Some of the innovation funding pot has now been redirected to the Federation of Associates to support their research. The innovation workshops have been paused for this academic year.

1.3 System Leadership – Cohorts 3 and 4 have now completed their funded model and the majority have elected to join the federation. Cohort 5 is continuing their programme. Cohort 6 has recently been inducted during their first learning experience in Cardiff, which they found very positive and enriching. This cohort consists of 16 Associates from different sectors and different geographical areas of Wales.

PM spoke of the Associate programme as a unique, amazing programme with a huge amount of evidence of positive change. He suggested submitting the programme for an award. TE thanked PM for this suggestion and consideration will be given to taking this forward.

The Federation of Associates will hold its first meeting in early October. TE thanked everyone for reviewing the ToR of this group and the suggested amendments have now been incorporated. TE was very excited about this new initiative and confirmed that more than half of Associates who are eligible have signed up.

A discussion ensued on how best to capture organisational memory. It was noted in the Leadership Survey that exit interviews are rarely conducted in education so valuable qualitative data could be lost. TE confirmed that professional conversations are held with Associates annually.

The initial Attainment Champion project is complete but discussions are underway about extending the pilot.

1.4 Leadership Development – TE gave advance notice of a face to face conference on 29th November which Board members are encouraged to attend. This will replace the stakeholder forum held last November. This conference will be leadership driven looking at how to support leaders in a self-improving system. It will also have sessions discussing anti-racism and Cymraeg, reinforcing that these are very much part of a leader's role.

2.1 Resources – The Head of Welsh will be working on piloting WG's self evaluation resource with schools across Wales.

2.2 Insight – Cohort 3's commission has now been published via a soft launch and has been cited by Estyn. TE was pleased to note that Associates' work is having an impact on policy. It was appreciated that conversations will need to take place with WG as to how recommendations are taken forward to ensure there is sufficient capacity to do so.

The National Leadership survey went live on 18th September and hopes to involve as many leaders as possible. The survey closes on 10th November and this will be the first time that leaders have been to give their views on the Leadership Academy.

A literature review has been delivered by Professor Carol Campbell regarding reflective practice and the next step will be a follow-up discussion between Professor Campbell, the EWC and the Leadership Academy on how to disseminate.

2.3 Well-being – Dr Chris Lewis has met with WG who confirmed that they will proceed to Phase 2 of the well-being project, but want to include the regional consortia. Funding for Phase 2 has not yet been confirmed. TE was pleased to note that Kevin Palmer now has workload in his portfolio.

Cohort 5 has been split into 2 groups to work on their commissions. One of which will work on Curriculum for Wales while the other group will focus on Well-being.

2.4 Strategic Workforce Planning – The NIESR Recruitment and Retention project is on track and initial feedback has been received. The report should be completed by late October and published after Christmas.

3.1 Effective Governance – The Tailored Review is now on hold but the Thematic Review is continuing. Everyone should now have received the email to complete the survey and TE was pleased to note that the Leadership Academy was leading the way with response rates.

The new risk register has been discussed under item 5 of the agenda.

3.2 Executive Function – The Employee Handbook has now been drafted and will be trialled with new member of staff Meleri Light.

The new Risk register, BAF and External Audit report have all been circulated to Board members. Cyber Essentials has been awarded for another year.

3.3 Comms and Marketing – Charlotte Thomas, Marketing Manager, will provide an update on the Communications strategy under item 7 of the agenda.

3.4 Stakeholders and Partnership Work – The annual refresh of the group is now complete. Five members have ended their term and TE have asked them to remain involved with the Leadership Academy beyond their membership to the group. Twelve new members have been appointed.

A partnership agreement is now in place with Estyn and it is hoped to carry out more co-working with them in future looking at why schools are failing, governance, leadership and management. MP agreed that if there is criticism of leadership then this is as much down to governance as to Headteachers and senior leaders. The support given to governors by their local authority is also fundamentally important to assist them in their role. In response to a suggestion from YI regarding including governors as Associates, TE confirmed that this had been discussed but it is felt that a different model would be required.

JG requested that stakeholder minutes include information as to where stakeholders are from.

KPH queried why Head to Head and innovation workshops had been paused. TE explained that this had been mainly due to a lack of attendance. It was not therefore viable to continue these from a resource point of view. They had proved really useful when during the pandemic but now staff were back at work it was very difficult to allocate time to attend sessions.

SD thanked TE for providing a very informative and comprehensive report as always.

7. Communications Strategy

Charlotte Thomas (CT) provided a presentation on the Communications Strategy having evaluated last year's strategy over the summer and updating for the remainder of the term of the remit. This timescale fits with the other strategic documents such as the corporate plan.

CT highlighted the purpose and key objectives of the strategy and outlined the approach that would be taken to achieve those objectives. This approach involves 4 steps as follows:

- Reach – create awareness and convey information
- Act – build trust
- Convert – inspire action and loyalty
- Engage – Connect people and encourage networking.

CT spoke of using a mix of online and offline activities to succeed in this approach. She would be working closely with WG's education teams to share credible, useful content through all the various channels. CT planned to focus more on include anti-racism and also Welsh, promoting bilingualism in shared material. Brand identity seemed to strong and CT was pleased with the distinctive colour palette.

CT had inserted a table at the end of the strategy document which provided a full list of marketing objectives.

CT expanded on the segmentation issue by explaining how newsletters and social media will be utilised to create tailored messaging for different audiences across the sector. In response to a query from MJ, CT confirmed that she was able to target career stage and sector but would like to get more information on locality. The Leadership Survey should provide more info on location, career stage, sector, locality and age although the latter one was optional.

CT emphasised the importance of stakeholder engagement to foster brand loyalty and plans to work more with stakeholders and also Associates, using them as brand ambassadors. She will encourage them to promote the Leadership Academy in all channels available. They should also prove invaluable in contributing up to date blogs and case studies.

CT used a matrix to evaluate comms mix and tactics into low/high effort and low/high impact. This makes it easier to ensure that resource is allocated to the most impactful activities. The strategy includes a 'Tactical Mix' - table of marketing tools such as direct mail, keyword analysis, social media marketing etc indicating target

audience and support and funding. This is proving very useful in testing targeted approaches and deciding where to input more resource to achieve objectives.

SD thanked CT for a very interesting and informative presentation where her enthusiasm clearly shone through. JG referred to the recent survey at the Senedd which showed quite low levels of awareness of what the Leadership Academy does. CT reported that the team was currently looking at a political engagement approach which could increase awareness. A report was recently produced for the Minister on digital innovation workshops which was very well received.

JG would be keen to attend more events so CT will share the Media and Events list with Board members. DN asked for comparative figures for engagement in the various channels between this year and the previous year. CT can provide this on a month by month basis although website comparisons may be more tricky due to the recent change with Google Analytics.

YI was very impressed with CT's presentation and the way the strategy had evolved. He suggested including some unusual events on the calendar such as World Squirrel Day and National Lego Day. These fun facts could then be linked with anti-racism messages in an innovative way.

In response to a query from MJ, CT confirmed that the communications budget was 12k per year. All were very impressed at what good value this was and how much the team seemed to achieve with so little.

8. Review of Terms of Reference

The Board had reviewed the current terms of reference with some amendments suggested at the previous meeting. SD confirmed that the Chair of the Board was appointed by WG. WG doesn't recognise the appointment of a Deputy Chair but it was agreed important to add this in.

SD had checked with the Public Bodies Office regarding frequency of meetings and 4 meetings per year were sufficient. It was agreed to follow this reporting cycle which would then allow for an extraordinary meetings if required. If meetings were moved to quarterly then all could take place face to face and incorporate training sessions like today's session on ALN. It was therefore agreed to move to quarterly board and committee meetings in January, April, July and October. Meetings in November will be cancelled and reconvene in January. KP will send round an amended list of meetings.

SD thanked everyone for completing the Skills Audit which had identified several areas for upskilling linked to the corporate plan. The top 5 areas for further training were: youth work, community focused schools, Welsh in Education, curriculum development and ALN. This provides a baseline plan for future training and will provide some assurance that all board members are equipped with the relevant skills for their roles. JG suggested keeping an archive of training which would be a useful record for new Board members. TE was also considering a handbook for directors as well as an induction/training programme.

The Board agreed the revisions to the ToR. KP will make the changes and circulate with January's papers.

9. ALN Presentation

SD welcomed Simon Roberts (SR) who would be delivering today's presentation on ALN. SD passed on apologies from his colleague Catrin Thomas who could not make today's session.

Simon introduced himself as a member of Cohort 3 and Headteacher of a primary school in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Cohort 3's commission had explored the role of educational leadership in delivering ALN reform in Wales.

The headline findings were that the ALN system was challenging, complicated, stressful, overwhelming but inclusive. Key messages, recommendations and action plans centred on:

- The impact on the ALNco's well-being
- Recruitment and retention of ALNcos
- Multi agency educational partnerships
- Funding
- Ability of Welsh medium schools to deliver this programme.

A survey was sent out to all Headteachers and ALNcos in December 2022 asking questions on skills expertise, capacity, funding etc. Most respondents felt well supported by the education sector but less so by Health. The survey highlighted problems in recruiting staff with the relevant skills especially in Welsh medium schools. Funding was also a big issue and some did not understand the funding formula.

Structured interviews followed the survey where 65% of ALNcos felt that their well-being had been adversely affected. Workload seemed to be the main problem with many struggling to balance the role of an ALNco whilst still being a classroom teacher. It was concerning that some were handling back the responsibility as they felt it wasn't worth the extra money.

The following recommendations were made in the action plan:

- There should be adequate resources
- Increased opportunity for developing networks and collaboration
- Recruitment and retention – 65% of schools find it difficult to recruit
- Recognition for ALNcos – better work conditions and pay (currently only an extra £40 per month)
- Dedicated release time
- Professional learning opportunities for all staff – inconsistencies across Wales
- More clarity around roles
- Review of the transition process when children transfer schools and LAs.

SR also spoke of a lack of support from outside agencies and a huge divergence between education and health. The report also recommended a consistent and

equitable funding mechanism and adequate resources, especially in the Welsh language.

SR was very pleased that the report has been published and hopes the recommendations will be acted on. SD was very concerned at the funding issue as the Transformation Grant was only earmarked for 2 years. SD believed that the ALNco should be in the senior management team as they have a statutory responsibility but in some schools this role has been delegated to LSAs.

SR agreed wholeheartedly regarding the transformation grant as this has been vital in making the system happen. He was concerned that staff who need this training/qualification have had to carry out this work at weekends.

SD reported that ALN now forms part of the main training programme for new teachers. It was also deemed important that school governors understand this role. Another concern was the long wait for assessment of children with many parents putting pressure on schools and local authorities. It was felt that this was reinforcing the gap between rich and poor and often leaving behind those children who most need the help. DN highlighted the problems of young people entering higher education who still hadn't been diagnosed or received the help they need.

JG enquired as to the scale of ALNcos who are giving up the role. SR claimed that 37% were considering it which was very concerning.

SD thanked SR for his presentation on a topic which was very close to her heart. TE reported that the Deputy Director for ALN had spoken at the Ministerial Advisory Group deeming this a harrowing report but very necessary. TE was very pleased at this opportunity to influence policy more directly and thanked SR for his overview today which had highlighted many issues. SD confirmed that WG have now commissioned a further report on the role of ALNcos themselves.

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

The next Board meeting will be held on January 30th – location to be advised.

SD thanked everyone for their participation in today's meeting and closed the meeting at 3.30pm.

Action Log

No.		Owner	Deadline	Status
209	Highlight anything relevant from Political monitoring report	MP	Ongoing	
221	Ask Associates to copy in YI to curriculum work. YI to share anti-racism	TE/YI	ongoing	
227	Sign off audited accounts	SD	October 2023	Completed
228	Discuss endorsement programme	TE/MI/Directors	Oct/Nov 2023	
229	Consider applying for an award for Associate programme	TE and Team	Oct/Nov 2023	
230	Include stakeholder details on minutes	KP	October 2023	Completed
231	Share Media & Events list with Board	CT	October 2023	Completed
232	Send round an amended list of meetings	KP	October 2023	Completed
233	Sign off amended Terms of Reference V7	All	January 2024	