



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

Minutes/Action Notes from Board Meeting 30th September 2022

In Attendance:

- Dr Sue Davies (SD) (Chair)
- Tegwen Ellis (TE) (Chief Executive)
- Kirsty Payne (KP) (Head of Operations)
- Mike James (MJ)
- Martin Price (MP)
- Dr Debbie Nash (DN)
- Paul Marshall (PM)
- Yusuf Ibrahim (YI)
- John Graystone (JG)
- Gillian Gillet (GG) (Audit Wales)
- Andrea Thomas (AT) (Audit Wales)
- Gaynor Ace (GA) (Secretariat)

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

SD opened the session and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies had been received from the Welsh Government representative.

There was one conflict of interest to note which has been highlighted by MP. This related to MP being listed on an application for innovation funding received by the Leadership Academy. SD had investigated this and it was confirmed that MP had had no involvement at all in the application or funding process. MJ reminded the Board of the revised process regarding conflicts of interest and the need for full documentation of cases such as this. This will be duly noted from now on.

SD congratulated the team for their achievement on reaching the shortlist for the Investors in Well-being award. The team would not be attending the awards ceremony however on account of the high costs of tickets.

Gareth Keys had been contacting Board members regarding their annual appraisals with SD. SD would be happy to conduct these in an evening session if easier.

SD thanked MJ for agreeing to act as Vice Chair of the Board.

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 most of the actions had now been completed. SD reminded directors to volunteer to lead on work stream areas of interest. Regarding political monitoring, MP highlighted a recent issue with misinformation on the Relationship and Sexual Education Policy in schools. This has been causing some problems that school leaders have had to deal with.

2. Finance/HR Committee Report

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

Staff absence levels have been low. The hybrid approach seems to be working well for the organisation.

JG has been meeting with staff as lead director for well-being. No issues had been reported so far. Policies and procedures were being reviewed and some changes were highlighted relating to the Performance and Development process.

There was nothing major to report on the budget which is on track.

A discussion was held on a potential working from home allowance for staff as there is no longer a dedicated office space available. It had been agreed to widen this discussion to the whole Board with a suggestion of setting up a task and finish group to consider this further. MJ suggested this group also revisit whether the Leadership Academy intends to continue as a virtual organisation.

JG and MJ agreed that it would be consistent to provide some sort of financial contribution to home working and supported the idea of the task and finish group. YI pointed out that a lot of work had been done on this by other organisations so these comparisons could prove useful. PM had also investigated this at the university and highlighted tax/benefits implications and contractual effects. PM also referred to different ways of addressing this such as one-off payments to staff.

JG queried whether any decisions had been taken regarding next year's pay increase for staff but nothing had been confirmed by WG as yet.

The Board agreed to set up a short-term task and finish group. JG volunteered to sit on this group and others were asked to volunteer by email.

SD thanked MP for his update and for bringing the discussion on the WFH allowance to the Board's attention.

3. Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Report

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

Risks were reviewed on the current Risk Register and decisions were made regarding which risks would be carried forward to the register for the new academic year. DN had offered to work with TE on a cross matching exercise of risks relating to the remit letter. Consideration was asked to be given as to the significance of risks relating to the new curriculum and ALN.

The most recent Internal Audit report on Key Financial Controls had been completed and the organisation had been awarded 'reasonable assurance'. Some points had been made regarding the double checking of payments although it was acknowledged here that a degree of pragmatism would be necessary due to the size of the organisation. It was agreed beneficial to have an overlap between internal and external audit.

Charlotte Thomas had given a very useful presentation on communications and marketing for the Deep Dive. The committee were reassured that the move from raising awareness to developing understanding via the various communications channels was being done effectively. The use of segmentation was encouraged as a good way of supporting leaders at different points in their careers.

SD thanked MJ for a useful report and was pleased to hear of the progress being made.

4. Chief Executive Report against the Corporate Plan

TE provided a brief overview on new appointments and welcomed the increase in capacity for the organisation. Nia Miles has taken up her post of Head of Insight and Gareth Key has been appointed as Business Support Executive. Richard Edwards will be starting in November as Head of Leadership Development. TE acknowledged that Mark Isherwood has had no support in his area for a short time which has led to an increase in his workload.

Emma Chivers will also be starting soon as a youth work advisor on a two day per week basis. Ceri Richmond will continue to lead on the Pedagogy Project one day per week.

TE provided an overview of progress in the various work streams:

Para 1.1 Quality Assurance – This work stream has been fairly quiet over the summer although a call for endorsement went out at the end of summer term. This aims to cover each area in the remit and should help identify gaps in provision. It is planned to use a fast track approach with previously endorsed and accredited providers to speed up the process.

Para 1.2 Innovation – Following the last Digital Innovation series of workshops, the organisation is now funding case studies to identify good practice and provide a

better understanding of how to take this forward. YI queried whether 2030 digital standards will be used and provided a link for TE to look into this. The next Innovation series on entrepreneurship is planned for the Spring term with Professor Andy Penaluna.

Para 1.3 System Leadership – Recruitment for Cohort 5 has been finalised and successful candidates attended a 2 day induction last week. The Minister was able to join them for dinner and commented favourably on the cross sector representation and on the energy in the room. TE reported on 2 projects requested by WG. The first one on ALN did not sit comfortably with the remit but may be adapted to focus more on leadership.

The Leadership Academy will be taking the lead on the second project for Welsh Government called Attainment Champions. This has come from the Minister's focus on equity in education. This project will run over a 6 month pilot with the aim of supporting schools who operate in areas of high social deprivation. Head teachers have been invited to send in expressions of interest to work on this project which will be run on the Associate model of peer to peer mentoring. An Associate from Cohort 2, Ian Gerard, has been identified to lead this project. Ian will work in conjunction with WG and an external company Elevate, and will report back to TE.

YI questioned whether other staff could put themselves forward as Champions such as Deputy or Assistant Heads. It was however the Minister's decision to only target Head Teachers for these roles. TE informed the Board that there will also be round table discussions with leaders from Post 16, early Years etc.

DN queried what the measure of success would be here after the relatively short period of 6 months. TE believed that qualitative measures such as surveys and interviews will be important although there will be some quantitative metrics to compare such as levels of attendance at school.

Whilst agreeing that this was a good initiative and also high profile for the Leadership Academy, MJ wondered whether WG were fully acknowledging that this was really an economic problem not an educational one. TE explained that the Minister wants to focus on giving children the best chance possible in a learning environment irrespective of their background. MJ accepted this but was unsure how the educational system could fully compensate for the current financial problems. SD would be very interested in the findings of this study as this issue had been the focus of some earlier work for her.

In response to a query from DN, TE confirmed that there were no current plans to extend the project beyond the initial 6 month period. DN also agreed with the intrinsic purpose of the initiative but was slightly cautious of rushing things through in such a tight timescale.

Para 1.4 Leadership Development – A very successful international Bletcher was held with partners in Ireland and Scotland. TE will be arranging meetings with directors in these countries and planning a peer review model to scrutinise work. The well-being space for new and acting Head Teachers was proving to be popular.

Para 2.1 Resources – The Leading Professional Learning resource was now embedded into national policy. Nia Miles has been talking to groups of Heads about how to use the resource in practice.

Para 2.2 Insight series – Professor Carol Campbell will soon be carrying out a piece of work on reflective practice. TE stressed the importance of acting on key messages in research papers rather than just commissioning them.

2.3 Well-being – The organisation has been nominated for an Investors in Well-Being award as stated in Para 1. Charlotte Thomas is now working on a media campaign to highlight the work that has taken place. TE reflected on how the well-being aspect encompasses everyone and was very pleased to note how the work carried out in this space is having such a positive impact on policy.

2.4 Strategic Workforce Planning – the procurement exercise has now closed for the recruitment and retention project and the executive heads project. The contract for recruitment and retention in the school sector can not be awarded until it has been confirmed that the company prove its understanding of the Welsh policy context. Bangor University will be carrying out the executive headteachers project although the deadline for this work will need to change to fit with the IWPRB timescales. The review of Leadership Development Provision in Post 16 will be shared with principals in November before being published. JG queried whether this includes work based learning. TE will check on this but does not think it does. TE hoped that the recent appointment of Emma Chivers would strengthen and coordinate work in the youth sector and provide greater cohesion.

3.1 Corporate – The Risk Register was referred to in Para 3 above.

3.2 Executive Function – An update of new staff members had been provided earlier in this report.

3.3 Comms and Marketing – August saw the usual decline in visits to the website, attributable to the school holidays. The bounce rate had increased to 16% but still good to see that the majority of people were visiting multiple pages. The most downloaded publications were: the guide to endorsement; corporate plan; and the remit letter. The most watched video was the Leadership Unlocked webinar featuring Hamish Brewer. TE was pleased to note the increased number of Twitter and Facebook followers through the summer. User numbers of Linked In and Instagram had also increased. as had Mail Chimp subscribers to the newsletter.

3.4 Stakeholders and Partnership Work – There is now a very strong stakeholder reference group in place which met in person this week. Stakeholder mapping had been carried out earlier with the team and this was then reviewed at this meeting. This reference group are currently co-constructing a much larger meeting with stakeholders in November.

PM was really pleased to hear of the progress with stakeholders. He recently had the opportunity to talk about the work of the Leadership Academy with the UK shadow Minister of Education.

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

5. External Audit Report

SD welcomed Andrea Thomas (AT) and Gillian Gillet (GG) from Audit Wales to the meeting.

GG confirmed that the audit work had now been completed with only some minor issues to report which had been corrected. Extra checks had been run on pre-payments this year due to the issues found in the previous year but only 1 very small error had been found and a correction has not be required.

The Auditor General now intends to issue an unqualified opinion on the accounts. In response to a query from KP, GG confirmed that digital signatures would be accepted on the paperwork.

GG thanked the team for all their work and cooperation throughout the audit. KP in turn thanked the Audit team for their support and was please that the changes to the process this year had decreased the administrative load for everyone involved.

SD also thanked the Audit team and KP for all their hard work on the audit.

6. Annual Accounts 2021-2022

KP had brought the accounts to the Board for formal sign-off and confirmed that electronic signatures would be accepted on the paperwork

JG was pleased to see the explanation in notes regarding the deficit amount and congratulated the senior management team for a good result.

The Board were happy to sign off the annual accounts for the period ended 31 March 2022

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

SD thanked everyone for their participation in today's meeting and reminded everyone to get in touch regarding their appraisals. Sue also thanked the 2 committees for all their work. SD commented on the usefulness of the deep dives carried out in the Audit and Risk Assurance committee that really drilled down into individual areas of activity

In reply to a query from JG, TE confirmed that the next face to face Board meeting was scheduled to take place in the Spring term. The hybrid way of working will be reviewed to ensure that it continues to work well.

The next Board meeting will be held on 22nd November - this will also be an online meeting.

The meeting was closed at 11.45am

Action Log

No.		Owner	Deadline	Status
205	Volunteer to be lead director for work streams	All directors	October 2022	Completed
208	Book appraisals with SD	All	October 2022	
209	Highlight anything relevant from Political monitoring report	MP	Ongoing	
210	Invite CL to a future Board meeting	KP	November 2022	Completed
212	Volunteer to join the Task and Finish Group	All	October 2022	Completed