



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

**Minutes/Action Notes from Board Meeting 26th April 2024**

In Attendance:

- Dr Sue Davies (SD) (Chair)
- Tegwen Ellis (TE) (Chief Executive)
- Martin Price (MP)
- John Graystone (JG)
- Dr Debbie Nash (DN)
- Katie Phillips (KPH)
- Yusuf Ibrahim (YI)
- Paul Marshall (PM) – joined via Teams (online)
- Mark Isherwood (MI) (Director)
- Kirsty Payne (Head of Operations)
- Emma Chivers (EC) (Youth Work Advisor)
- Gaynor Ace (GA) (Secretariat)

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

DN opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. Apologies were noted from Mike James.

There were no conflicts of interest declared.

The minutes from the previous meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record. DN referred to the Action Log from the previous Board meeting. TE agreed to check on progress with Actions 233 and 235. All remaining actions were completed or would be dealt with later on the agenda.

*2. Finance and HR Committee Report*

MP provided an overview of matters discussed at the recent Finance and HR Committee meeting. Discussions took place around the role of the new Cabinet Secretary for Education and the Middle Tier Review. TE will provide an update on both of these topics during her report.

There were no specific HR concerns and the committee were pleased to recommend that the board approve the offer of a permanent contract to Geraint Roberts, Digital Marketing and Media Executive, who has proved to be a very useful member of the

team during his 2 year fixed term appointment. The new role will be titled Digital Marketing and Events Officer and will attract the EO pay scale. **The Board has received Geraint's new job description and was happy to approve the appointment.** All offered their congratulations to Geraint on his permanent role.

KP presented an overview of the budget 2023/24 which ended with a slight surplus but within the allowed 2% variance. MP commended KP's excellent work in managing the spend. The Board has received the draft budget for 2024/25. The committee felt that the standstill budget agreed by WG was a good result in the current economic. It was appreciated however that this reflects a budget cut in real terms bearing in mind inflationary increases to services and pay.

SD thanked MP for his summary and accepted the committee report. **The Board were happy to approve the 24/25 budget forecast** and thanked KP for all her good work.

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

PM provided an overview of matters considered at the recent Audit and Risk Assurance committee meeting. There had been no major changes to the risk register. The management team had recommended a reduction to the risk level on the Middle Tier Review risk. A long discussion then took place around the appointment of the new Cabinet Secretary's which was also viewed in a positive light. The recommendation was accepted by the committee. There was one minor change to the Business Assurance Framework.

The Internal Audit Plan was approved subject to the inclusion of a biennial Key Financial Controls audit. The Internal Audit Implementation Plan was largely on track. New completion dates had been agreed for outstanding items.

The committee carried out a deep dive into the Associate Federation with a very informative presentation from Mark Isherwood. All members felt that they now had a greater understanding of the purpose of the Associate Federation and the programme of work being carried out.

SD thanked PM for his report and was happy to accept the committee report on behalf of the Board. SD was pleased to note that the deep dive program was working well.

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

TE was pleased to highlight the recent statement in the Senedd thanking SD for chairing the ALNco task and finish group. TE thanked SD for all her work here which was helping to raise the profile of the Leadership Academy. **TE will share the link to this report.**

TE then outlined progress through the work stream areas as follows:

*1.1 Quality Assurance* – MI will be giving a presentation on endorsement under Item 6 of today's agenda. TE was pleased to note the number of innovation provisions being put forward for endorsement demonstrating that there is still an appetite for new leadership development creation. This should ensure the target of at least 3 endorsements via the Innovation Pathway set out in the grant offer letter is met. There has been some delay in obtaining monitoring reports from all partners due to the Middle Tier Review and a change in personnel. MI is currently addressing this issue.

*1.2 Innovation* – There are currently 5 projects in receipt of funding, all completely different but equally important in providing support for leaders. TE was pleased to note that Cardiff Council has applied for innovation funding for a provision aimed at aspiring Head Teachers. It was interesting to note that they were already moving away from the regional offer prior to the Middle Tier Review.

*1.3 System Leadership* – Both of the commission reports from Cohort 5 underwent scrutiny last week from Estyn and other external stakeholders. They are currently regrouping to act on the feedback received and plan to publish their reports by the early Autumn at the latest. The well-being commission has been very well received by Kevin Palmer of WG as it links to his work on workload.

The ALN commission continues to be referenced and cited. TE was asked to talk about this research at a recent meeting in a school to help inform their discussions. TE was very pleased to note the steady impact of all commissions. Consideration should now be given as to how best to compile evidence to track the impact of commissions.

Cohort 6 has been given the focus for their commissions. The cohort is split into 2 groups and will look at 'leading an anti-racist organisation' and 'self-evaluation for improvement'. Self-evaluation was cited in Estyn's annual report as a contributing factor for underperforming schools Cohort 6 met this week to start the work on their commissions.

JG queried whether there was any guidance issued to Associates regarding the drafting of commission reports. TE explained that commissions enquiry projects and that guidance has been created to support them through the process. Completed reports are sent to Charlotte Thomas for corporate branding. **TE will forward the commission guidance to board members.**

Recruitment of Cohort 7 is now live and the application window will close on 10<sup>th</sup> May. It has been decided to reduce the numbers to 12 for this financial year to allow funding to be allocated to the Associate Federation.

*1.4 Leadership Development* – Emma Chivers will be giving a presentation in item 7 of the agenda on her excellent engagement work with the youth sector on behalf of the Leadership Academy. Pedagogy lead, Ceri Richmond, has been engaging the sector in the development and deployment of the strategic leadership of pedagogy

resource. TE is currently in negotiation with WG regarding the continued funding for the pedagogy work. It is likely that an additional £40k will be issue via a grant variation letter shortly. Ceri is unable to continue as a formal secondee so consideration is being given to how she can continue to support with this work.

Since the last meeting a very successful Leadership Unlocked session was held with Professor Ken Jones with over 70 leaders in attendance. His Majesty's Chief Inspector will be leading the next session on 15<sup>th</sup> May, providing an insight into his own leadership journey. Staff would be attending the Leading Through Welsh conference in Llandudno next week. Owain Lloyd will be opening this conference which has a really full agenda.

TE will be chairing the Attendance Policy Insight Wales online conference which has an opening address from Nicola Edwards, deputy director for equity at WG. This was deemed a great opportunity to raise the profile of the Leadership Academy. The organisation will be hosting its own conference on attendance at the ICC Newport on 10<sup>th</sup> July and it is hoped that the Cabinet Secretary will be able to attend. Sir Alasdair McDonald will be one of the keynote speakers and some ideas regarding the conference program have been shared with WG.

*2.1 Resources* – Meleri Light held an event with leaders, WG representatives and middle tier partners yesterday to feedback on the pilot of the self-evaluation of Welsh toolkit. This will be a resource to help all schools measure where they are on the continuum of development of the Welsh language. KP had attended and commented on the really useful discussions focused on the leadership aspect. TE raised the issue of the two year additional funding allocated for ML's role. Schools will need to be supported throughout the roll out of the Welsh speakers target so consideration will need to be given as to how ML's role can be funded after the initial 2 year period.

*2.2 Insight* – It is hoped that the Ministerial Advisory Group will continue under the new Cabinet Secretary. Kevin Palmer has endorsed the usefulness of this group which funnels feedback from Head Teachers into WG. In response to a query from JG, TE confirmed that notes are taken at these sessions by Nia Miles who collates them.

YI referred to the Institute of Fiscal Studies' report on the disparity between Welsh and English education which was quite damning, suggesting policy differences rather than demographical differences were contributing to the lower Pisa scores in Wales. TE reported that the Welsh Conservatives had asked this question of the Minister. KP has this report from the political monitoring service and will send round a summary of the Senedd response.

TE announced that the work on reflective practice being carried out by Professor Carol Campbell had now been completed and the report was currently with the translators. The report will have a soft launch before the Eisteddfod yr Urdd and a public launch on the Maes in partnership with EWC. Charlotte Thomas is currently working on a flyer with a QR code to promote the report and event which will also be used at the national conference in Llandudno.

*2.3 Well-being* – The online well-being conference was very successful and Nia Miles is very keen to have a face to face conference in the future. The well-being advisory group has now been disbanded and incorporated into the Ministerial Advisory group. The Federation are running a well-being project in partnership with Leeds Beckett, University. The model being piloted is not unlike the former Head to Head initiative.

*2.4 Strategic Workforce Planning* – The recruitment and retention report has been published and a presentation was made to the senior leadership team of the Education Directorate at WG. TE stressed the need to highlight the rewards and benefits of being a school leader in Wales. JG commented on the number of headteachers leaving the profession early, with 47% of headteachers aged between 50 and 59 saying they plan to retire at 60. TE saw the benefit of introducing exit interviews to explore the reasons for leaders leaving the profession. There are also a number of headteachers currently on secondment and acting headteachers covering their roles – it is important to have accurate data to ensure we have a full picture.

MP highlighted the fact that fewer applicants were applying for headteacher roles and this is even more of an issue in Welsh medium schools and faith schools. YI suggested that leaders from FE could also make good headteachers and better alignment between these roles could support. A discussion ensued regarding the skills required to be a school leader and how the interview process needs to be changed to better match the competencies of the job. TE will ask Dr Chris Lewis to give a presentation on the recruitment and retention report at a future Board meeting.

*3.1 Effective Governance* – The Board training plan is in place and a session on youth work is included in today's agenda. A session on ALN will follow in the July board meeting. SD has also invited David Richards to provide an overview of PBU at the next meeting.

*3.2 Executive Function* – KP is leading on the strategic equality plan and has now produced the first draft. TE thanked her for her valuable work on this. TE is very keen to create a culture of inclusion and welcome for anyone new joining the team. Staff should feel that their well-being is of paramount importance and should feel comfortable that the hybrid way of working is suitable for them. Information around the diversity of staff is being collected and future recruitment processes will also ask for this information. A question is also being included in Associate recruitment around the 9 protected characteristics.

*3.3 Comms and Marketing* – Charlotte Thomas continues to pull together valuable information around trends and downloads. Following negotiations with WG, the Leadership Academy is now a partner organisation on Hwb and is able to upload links to resources, media and insight papers, so this should facilitate more downloads. DN found it useful that Charlotte now includes comparisons between last year's figures.

Minor tweaks are being made to the colour palette on the website to ensure it meets accessibility criteria. This might necessitate a small change to branding. There is

also a need to streamline content on the website so this will be evaluated as part of the annual review of the corporate plan. DN suggested including a summary page listing the achievements of the Leadership Academy which was agreed to be a good idea.

*3.4 Stakeholders and Partnerships* – Meleri Light is currently drafting a partnership agreement with Coleg Cymraeg and CYDAG, and monthly meetings are now being held. There have been two stakeholder reference group meetings held online and this group continues to respond to consultations from WG on the Leadership Academy's behalf. These include consultations on Curriculum for Wales and the structure of the school year.

SD thanked TE for a very comprehensive summary as always. TE then provided a brief update on the Middle Tier review which is now an fixed agenda item at the HR and Finance committee and is also included on the Risk Register.

The review is currently in Phase 2 and Professor Dylan Jones and Simon Day are now at the evidence collection stage. They intend outlining changes to the school improvement system which have not yet been shared. This will include changes to the way the regional consortia operate. The Cabinet Secretary will be considering the following over the 3 phases of this project:

- Schools working closer on a local level
- Schools working at a local authority level
- Schools working at a national level across Wales.

The Leadership Academy were interviewed as part of Phase 1 where the letter stated that leaders didn't value or understand the Leadership Academy's work **under its current constitution**. A further meeting was requested in Phase 2 to consider what else could be done under the current articles with current resources and also if more resources were to be made available. This was further discussed with Kevin Palmer last week at the quarterly review.

A briefing note had been sent to the Cabinet Secretary outlining the purpose of QA provision and the Leadership Academy's insight and policy influencing role. Suggestions were also made regarding additional areas that could be taken on such as the co-ordination of NPQH, co-ordinating the professional development offer and developing the Associate role into becoming school improvement advisors to support the system. TE will be meeting the Cabinet Secretary on 22<sup>nd</sup> May to talk through these steps.

JG asked TE what are her biggest concerns as Chief Executive. TE spoke of how she was starting to delegate more as she has full confidence in her team. TE was however somewhat concerned at the possibility of 'biting off more than we can chew' in striving to meet all the current and future demands of the system. It will be vital to ensure that the Leadership Academy has sufficient resource to fulfil any additional objectives.

SD thanked TE for her report and commented on her good work leading a strong team. SD was happy to accept TE's full report on behalf of the Board.

## 5. *Anti-racism Presentation*

TE gave a presentation on becoming an anti-racist organisation in Wales. Inclusivity and equality and diversity were already included in the values of the Leadership Academy but the organisation needs to ensure that they are actually living by those values. TE included a quote from Desmond Tutu that being neutral means being on the side of the oppressor.

The Wales Anti-racist Action Plan has been published and training sessions have been held with staff. WG highlights 6 factors to consider on its website:

- Experience in every day life
- Service delivery
- As part of the workforce
- In gaining jobs and opportunities
- Lacking visible role models in positions of power
- As a refugee or asylum seeker.

Young people can experience discrimination every day as can older professionals. There is only a small percentage of senior leaders representing very diverse communities in Wales. TE questioned whether the organisation was doing enough to recruit staff and Associates representing all protected characteristics as events attract a diverse range of attendees. In response to a query from JG, TE replied that names are not blanked out during recruitment as this would not allow for any positive selection. There is less knowledge around the last factor listed above but leaders will need to listen to the voices and understand the needs and of refugees and asylum seekers.

The Leadership Academy has signed the zero racism and the endorsement criteria has been reviewed and updated to include reference to anti-racism. An internal audit into Equality, Diversity and Inclusion recommended some areas to improve on. The innovation pathway has allocated money to a number of organisations to focus on specific aspects of anti-racism. The organisation has also supported the 'Teacher to Headship' pilot carried out by Estyn. TE confirmed that consideration is given to including individuals from diverse backgrounds in every event.

The corporate plan includes anti-racism as a separate entity at the moment – this could be embedded within the workstreams although this might dilute the focus. The Leadership Academy responded to the call for action at the DARPL conference and created an anti-racist steering group of which YI is chair. The steering group has advised keeping records of all work carried out so TE shared an Excel spreadsheet drawn up for that purpose. All future meetings of the steering group will be held face to face in the community like the last one which was held in Butetown, Cardiff.

TE outlined the next steps as follows:

- Undertaking the Diverse Cymru Cultural Competency Scheme which includes a training day for staff

- Supporting leaders to integrate Anti-racist pedagogies within Curriculum for Wales
- Professional learning provision to reflect policies
- Associate commission by Cohort 6 on Leading an Anti-racist organisation
- Recruit an Associate to Cohort 7 from a diverse background.

TE stressed the importance of filling the tool box with the right tools to tackle this job. Additional funding has been requested from WG to take this forward with a part time role leading on this area.

YI was pleased to see the passion and enthusiasm for becoming an anti-racist organisation and stressed the importance of considering how the culture mutates all the time. PM was very happy to see everyone responding to this challenge and felt really positive about achieving the aims in the plan.

SD thanked TE for a very thought provoking presentation which brought these issues to everyone's attention.

## *6. Endorsement Presentation*

SD welcomed MI who gave a presentation to the Board on the endorsement process. He began by outlining the overarching purpose of endorsement in contributing to the development of current and aspiring leaders across education by providing clarity and coherence within leadership development provision.

Endorsement is carried out via a robust Quality Assurance system to ascertain if the provision that comes forward is of good quality and meets the requirements of the system. MI provided an overview of how this works by sharing practical examples of application forms and scoring criteria. MI explained how providers are scrutinised and often requested to provide more evidence to ensure they meet the criteria for endorsement.

A deep dive on endorsement had been carried out in the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee where discussions took place as to whether some of the bureaucracy could be reduced to move towards a more streamlined system. All endorsed provision is advertised on the Leadership Academy's website and annual events are held to showcase the work and share the impact or the provision.

MI shared the headline numbers as follows: 48 applications had been received from a total of 16 providers of which 30 had been endorsed. 8 provisions needed more work and 2 had been resubmitted. 90% of programs were monitored following endorsement.

DN queried whether getting a provision endorsed would enhance the credibility of providers. MI replied that all providers working with the Leadership Academy feel the benefits of endorsement and that it was especially important to private providers. MI welcomed the suggestion of asking providers to share impact statements.

MI then outlined the next steps which included working with WG on the endorsement of all other professional learning for the education sector. WG have modelled their



process on the endorsement process although have reduced the number of criteria. When this has been piloted MI will look to bring the learning in-house so that the two processes remain aligned.

SD thanked MI for his presentation and was pleased to hear of the good feedback from the providers. SD also felt that this enhances the sectors awareness of the Leadership Academy and strengthens its role.

### *7. Youth Work Sector Training*

SD welcomed Emma Chivers (EC) who would provide some training on the Youth Work Sector in Wales and her role as an advisor to the Leadership Academy.

EC began by providing an insight into her role as a youth work leader over the last 20 years. EC has also been Chair of Youth Cymru for 10 years. EC spoke with passion of her career and how she has fully embraced the challenges of her varied roles. EC has recently completed her research into the professional development needs of leaders and managers in youth work, who are often non-traditional learners.

EC has a joint work plan and collaborates with a lot of stakeholders. She is hoping to get as many youth leaders as possible to attend the conference on July 10<sup>th</sup>. EC meets regularly with MI and attends team meetings. She has also been working with the communications team to develop podcasts.

EC defined the key purpose of youth work as to enable young people to develop holistically and to help them find their way in society, pointing out that the relationship between young people and youth workers is voluntary. Unfortunately, there is an imbalance in the system as a lot of universal provision has gone. There are less youth clubs due to funding issues and young people's well-being and fitness activities have been adversely affected. The 12 year research program into well-being in youth work has stressed the need for more provision outside of school. EC spoke of how she gave evidence to this end in the Ministerial review of 2016 when the national body was disbanded but a way forward wasn't agreed.

EC pointed out that not all principal youth officers are professionally qualified and some struggle with traditional learning methods. There is very little training or support available for leaders. EC was pleased that the sector received some innovation funding from the Leadership Academy and this training programme had been delivered to 50 youth work leaders. This was the first professional learning that many of them had had for 15 years. The accreditation they received (ILM Level 5) proved a good incentive for their managers to let them attend. EC supports many youth workers in having the confidence to study and write as many of them are non traditional learners.

The quality mark initiative has been successful and leaders see this as a positive move. There are 3 levels of accreditation: bronze, silver and gold, so there is a clear pathway for progression. Estyn has not carried out a targeted inspection of youth work for 23 years but they have re-started inspections, stating that youth work should

be valued more. One of the voluntary sector organisations, the Boys and Girls Clubs of Wales, was the first to go through the pilot inspection process.

EC spoke of the funding challenge for youth work, especially in the maintained sector. Capacity is an issue – roles that are vacated are not being replaced. 13 local authorities in Wales have had an increase in funding but 9 have had their funding decreased. The £17.1 million budget varies greatly between local authorities and there is no statutory guidance as to how money should be spent.

EC referred to the Youth Work Strategic Implementation Group where a lot of work is being carried out to strengthen the legislative basis for youth work. There has been an independent review of funding which is currently in Phase 2. There is no strategic plan for raising the profile of the sector and only 2 universities now deliver any youth work programmes.

EC ended by considering the future challenges for the sector which included achieving policy parity with other educational professions, lack of resources for professional learning and for the role of youth work leaders and recruitment and retention issues.

YI had been pleased to hear the overview of the sector and how the various parts connect. TE thanked EC for doing an amazing job on behalf of the Leadership Academy and for integrating the work of the Leadership Academy into so many networks. TE recognised the challenge of there being no 'back fill' for youth leaders, so even if training courses are funded they are still unable to attend. EC was pleased that youth workers had been contacting her regarding the Associate roles and hoped additional candidates would apply from the youth work sector.

SD spoke of how the youth work sector was very dear to her heart. SD thanked EC for her very informative session and appreciated the challenges that the sector was currently facing.

#### *8. Board Appointments communication Plan*

KP outlined the situation with Board appointments. Of the 8 current members, 5 were appointed in 2018 (and reappointed in 2021) and the remaining 3 were appointed in 2022. The contracts of 4 members will expire on 30/4/25 and the remaining 4 on 30/4/26, although there is a potential to extend contracts for 3 members. From a continuity point of view, it would be a good idea to seek a staggered re-appointment for those 3 members.

KP explained the process of recruitment where Welsh ministers officially appoint board members but delegate the process to the Public Bodies Unit. Adverts for Board members will be placed on the WG website. The Chair is a separate appointment where anyone can apply including current or previous members of the Board. SD will sit on the appointment panel for Board members although the Chair will be from WG. Recruitment is likely to open in September/October 2024 with appointments made by March/April. The new Board members will therefore attend their first meeting in July 2025.

KP spoke of proposed changes to Board appointments by the Public Sector Bodies Unit where a pool of board members will be recruited to fill vacancies in Public Bodies across Wales. Some concern was expressed at this proposed change as the Leadership Academy might be allocated Board members without any experience in the education sector.

KPH queried whether there would be any handover period for Board members which was agreed to be a good idea. SD was unsure of this as it would depend on the timing of appointments which is generally a long bureaucratic process. In response to another query from KPH, SD confirmed that Welsh speakers would be very sought although there had been a low number of Welsh speaking applicants in previous rounds of recruitment. It will also be important to consider diversity across all the protected characteristics.

KP spoke of the Leadership Academy's role in promoting Board memberships via advertising channels. KP confirmed that adverts can be posted on the Leadership Academy's website but the post will be hosted on the WG website. Charlotte Thomas will be undertaking a social media campaign and creating a comms pack to share with external partners. Videos, leadership stories, blogs, podcasts and quotes can also be included on the website. Board members will be requested to participate in this and were asked to let KP know their preference of media.

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

The next Board meeting will be held face to face on Friday July 19<sup>th</sup> at the Grand hotel in Swansea.

Future agenda items will include:.

- ALN work
- PBU update – David Richards to attend

SD thanked everyone for their participation in today's meeting and closed the meeting at 3pm.

#### **Action Log**

No.		Owner	Deadline	Status
233	Circulate White Paper responses and also a link to Paned a Sgwrs	ML	May 2024	Completed
235	Find out details on free Welsh language courses	ML	May 2024	Completed
236	Send round commission guidance notes for information	TE	May 2024	Completed

237	Share summary of Senedd's response to Fiscal studies report	KP	May 2024	Completed
238	Arrange a presentation on recruitment & retention for future Board meeting	TE	May 2024	
239	Let KP know preferences for promoting Board membership	All Directors	May 2024	