



Quality in Careers >>>>

QUALITY IN CAREERS CONSORTIUM BOARD

Public Notes of the Board Meeting

ONLINE "ZOOM PRO MEETING" FOR THE BOARD

1230, Tuesday 19th November 2024

Members of the Board present online:

Cathy Thompson (Independent CEG invitee) as **Acting Chair**, Paul Chubb (Quality in Careers Director - PAC in the notes below), Nina Chorzelewski (AoC), Kevin Gilmartin (ASCL), Deepa Jethwa (SFCA), Claire Johnson (CDI), and Eleanor Perkins (HMC).

Observers in attendance online: Jenny Beaumont (Licensed Awarding Bodies), Rachel Green (CEC) and Erica Rowell (Quality in Careers Professional Adviser).

Apologies: Janet Colledge (CDI), Ryan Gibson (Independent CEG invitee), Andy Walls (NAHT) and Clare Worsdale (DfE).

9/2024: INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME BY CATHY THOMPSON, Acting Chair

- i. Cathy Thompson welcomed everyone to the online meeting, including Nina Chorzelewski - attending her first meeting - and Erica Rowell attending as an observer before becoming Director on 1.4.2025 (see Note 16/2024 below).
- ii. Cathy also offered her warmest welcome to Claire Johnson attending her final meeting before retiring from the Board after she retired from the CDI. Cathy offered Claire the Board's heartfelt good wishes and placed on record her thanks for her time serving on the Board and especially for her help in the summer of this year when having had to decide to retire on ill-health grounds, Claire had played a most supportive part in securing the promotion of Erica Rowell from the role of Professional Adviser to become Director on PAC's retirement on 31.3.2025.
- iii. Cathy then moved to the next business advising that as in previous meetings items on the Agenda were once more marked as "for information" (i.e. briefing the Board but not expected to be discussed at any length) and "for decision" (i.e. requiring Board approval to be implemented).

10/2024: NOTES OF MEETING

The Notes of the previous meeting (19th March 2024) were approved with the only matter arising concerning Note 3/2024 (iv) – The Coop MAT had chosen Career Connect as the Awarding Body it would work with following the cessation of the C+K Careers Awarding Body. The Board welcomed this news.

11/2024: QUALITY IN CAREERS DIRECTOR'S REPORT: FOR INFORMATION

11.1 As previously agreed, to ensure the Board was aware of the tasks required to be fulfilled, PAC introduced the latest detailed summary of the key work undertaken during 2024 since his report to the March Board. In the period these involved:

(i) Links with DfE and the CEC:

- PAC advised that regular KIT meetings continued with both the DfE and the CEC. These had continued to be most helpful.
- Clare Worsdale from DfE had confirmed that day-to-day links with the Consortium would now be taken up by Helen Lucarelli in her team, adding that Helen was also the day-to-day link with the CEC on the Careers Impact System so her dual role should be especially helpful. The Board welcomed this news as did Rachel Green from the CEC.
- PAC advised that regular supportive and collaborative meetings with Rachel at the CEC had included strengthening links with the leads for the Careers Impact System, Careers Hubs and with the research team, confirming that full details of all Schools & Colleges on the National Register of Award Holders - Quality in Careers would be provided to the CEC after the end of the month to enable a further analysis of Compass scores to be completed. The Board welcomed this and recorded its thanks to Erica Rowell for her work with Careers Hubs over the summer and the presentation she had produced in agreement with the CEC Raising Awareness of the Quality in Careers Standard: New Presentation for Careers Hubs - Quality in Careers.

(ii) The Virtual Event for Schools and Colleges:

- PAC advised that the (formerly DfE GFA part-funded) virtual event on our website Online Virtual Event - Quality in Careers had been further edited with the removal of two Awarding Body videos (C+K Careers and Positive Steps) and the replacement of the CSW video with an introductory video from the new Awarding Body "Investor in Careers Ltd".
- He confirmed that two FE Colleges had agreed to provide video testimonies – Derby College and Stoke on Trent College. This would then mean that all sectors of secondary (State and Independent) and further education would be covered on the virtual event.
- Nina from AoC warmly welcomed the two FE College additions.

- Deepa from SFCA added that in addition to the testimony by Farnborough SFC on the virtual event she was seeking to secure at least two further SFC case studies, and Eleanor from HMC confirmed that she was looking for further case studies from Independent Schools.
- The Board welcomed all of this news.

(iii) Work involving Awarding Bodies:

- The two further Relicensing Panels (and CQIRs) during the period had been completed. The Hull & East Yorkshire Awarding Body was still “on hold” pending the ‘hoped for’ Combined Authority’s formation.
- The difficult decisions which C+K Careers and Positive Steps (both companies are heavily reliant upon Local Authority funding and support) had taken to cease providing an Awarding Body service had led to much work to try to retain the engagement of schools and colleges with the Standard through other Awarding Bodies. PAC thanked those involved.
- PAC also reported that the closure of the LA-controlled company, CSW Group, had required significant work with CSW and the founder of a separate company (Investor in Careers Ltd) to secure the sale and transfer of the “Investor in Careers approach” to the delivery of the Standard from CSW to Investor in Careers Ltd. This had been successfully concluded earlier this month and, after confirmation by the Acting Chair, the CSW Licence was novated to Investor in Careers Ltd. The Board recorded its thanks for this positive outcome.

(iv) The Quality in Careers Consultative Group had continued to meet, and it had led on the preparation of a proposed response by the Consortium to the DfE “Curriculum & Assessment Review” (see more under 15/2024 below). PAC recorded his thanks to Jenny Beaumont as Chair of the Group and Claire Nix as its Organising Secretary.

(v) Transition to new Leadership & Management: PAC thanked Cathy Thompson and Claire Johnson for their support over the recent months as he had led the work to secure the promotion of Erica to become Director and the recruitment of an additional Professional Adviser to the core central team on 1.4.25 (see more under 16/2024 below).

11.2 Cathy commented on the “huge amount” of work PAC had undertaken during the period since the March Board which the Board echoed and thanked PAC for his work, noting the report.

12/2024: WORK PLANS

- The Board received and noted the detailed schedule of confirmed revised work plans for the Standard in the period up to 31.3.2025 and the schedule of relicensing panels over the coming three years.
- The Board resolved to review its rules which already required that **Licensing Panels must comprise three Board members** (1 of whom is currently PAC as the Chair, for consistency) plus a member of our Professional Team. Whilst this rule would continue once PAC becomes Chair of the

Board on 1.4.2025, it would need to be amended so that Erica Rowell as Director would also serve on all Panels.

(iii) Therefore **from 1.4.25, the Board's rules for Licensing Panels would require** each Panel to consist of 4 Members: PAC as Chair, with Erica as Director plus

- One panel member must come from 1 of the nominees on the Board from the 4 professional associations of school and college leaders.
- The other must come from the 'careers sector' nominees on the Board (CDI, Careers England, and the independent careers experts).

13/2024 REPORT ON FINANCIAL MATTERS

- (i) The Board approved the 2023/24 accounts as supplied by the Accounts team at the CDI.
- (ii) The Board welcomed confirmation that outstanding debtors had been contacted by PAC and accounts settled.
- (iii) The Board authorised PAC to confirm the details of a Service Level Agreement with the CDI for an accounts service again from 1.4.25.

14/2024 REPORT ON REVISING THE NATIONAL ASSESSMENT CRITERIA FOR THE STANDARD

- (i) The Board was advised that the launch of the outcomes of the Review of the Gatsby Benchmarks was on Monday, 18th November and of the need to act as a result.
- (ii) Since the National Assessment & Accreditation Criteria for the Quality in Careers Standard are fully aligned with the Benchmarks, the Board would need to revise the Criteria to take account of changes which are being made.
- (iii) And since the Criteria go beyond the Benchmarks (requiring evidence of impact and outcomes from meeting a Benchmark in terms of students' career-related learning outcomes), the Board would need to address the requirements for evidence of these additional outcomes.
- (iv) The 2 key documents to update are:
- January 2024: Revised edition of The Guide to the Standard and The Assessment Guide (January 2023) - Quality in Careers
 - the ASSESSMENT GUIDE © Quality in Careers Consortium
- (v) Currently, the shared understanding with the CEC (still to be confirmed by DfE) was that the revised Benchmarks would be required to be followed from 1st September 2025: DfE would be issuing revised Statutory Guidance.
- (vi) Therefore, the Board would have to ensure that all Quality in Careers Assessments from 1st September 2025 were against the revised Benchmarks and our revised National Assessment Criteria.
- (vii) There should, therefore, be a good time between November 2024 and September 2025 to complete the required revisions ready for implementation from 1st September 2025.

(viii) Now that the Board had received the details of the revised Benchmarks, the process of reviewing the Criteria needed to begin. Anthony Barnes & Erica Rowell will work together on a first draft revision of the two key documents. Once PAC receives the drafts from Anthony & Erica, he will complete the revisions and begin consultations on the drafts with Awarding Bodies, colleagues at the CEC and, importantly, also with the DfE.

(ix) Assuming DfE's timetable for required implementation is 1.9.25, the Board agreed that its strategy would be as follows:

- **Aim to have completed the review of the National Assessment Criteria by the March 2025 meeting of the Consortium Board so that approvals might be given for publication of the updated Criteria at Easter 2025 (around 25.4.25).**

- This would assist Awarding Bodies and schools & colleges working towards Assessments after 1.9.25 to prepare knowing the revisions a full Term ahead.

- Assessments up to 31.7.25 would continue against the current Criteria.

- Assessments from 1.9.25 would be against the revised Criteria.

(x) The Board authorised PAC to implement the strategy for the revisions as set out above.

15/2024 REPORT ON DfE CURRICULUM & ASSESSMENT REVIEW

(i) The Board was advised that the DfE's Curriculum and Assessment Review, chaired by Professor Becky Francis CBE, had launched a call for evidence, open for 8 weeks.

(ii) The review sought evidence from young people and parents, teachers and lecturers, leaders, experts and employers on how the curriculum and assessment system can ensure all young people are prepared for life and work, including:

- *An excellent foundation in core subjects of reading, writing and maths.*

- *A broader curriculum, so that young people do not miss out on subjects such as music, art, sport and drama, as well as vocational subjects.*

- *A curriculum that ensures children and young people leave compulsory education ready for life and ready for work. This includes embedding digital, oracy and life skills in the curriculum.*

- *A curriculum that reflects the issues and diversities of our society, ensuring all children and young people are represented.*

- *An assessment system that captures the strengths of every child and young person and the breadth of curriculum, with the right balance of assessment methods whilst maintaining the important role of examinations.*

(iii) The Board was further advised that it had been confirmed that the Review was only about the curriculum, so it excluded careers advice and guidance personal interactions as well as Work Experience.

(iv) In considering the Board's response, it was noted that the 1997 Education Act introduced a statutory requirement for schools to provide careers education as part of its curriculum offer. Regrettably, that duty was repealed in 2011. In preparing the proposed response, the Consultative Group of Awarding Body representatives had met to consider and draft a suggested basis for the response. Claire Nix, as Organising Secretary for the Group, undertook the writing up of the draft.

(v) The Board received, considered and approved the suggested response (noting minor additions helpfully suggested by Janet Colledge in writing before the meeting).

(vi) The Board recorded its thanks to the Consultative Group and to Claire Nix, and authorised PAC to submit the response *{Secretarial note: action completed 19.11.24}*.

16/2024 REPORT ON LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT & GOVERNANCE

(i) **Director:** The Board noted that it had planned to contract from 1.4.25 with the CDI through an additional SLA to cover the strategic direction of the Consortium's work (i.e. revised arrangements for securing a "Director" after PAC's retirement on 31.3.25).

(ii) This decision of the Board in March was founded upon the CDI's Claire Johnson leading the CDI's involvement through the proposed SLA. Claire began shadowing PAC in March and became well-versed in the details of acting as Director by the summer. Unfortunately, Claire's health deteriorated, and she has had to retire from the CDI on ill health. The Board was united in wishing Claire well.

(iii) The CDI then advised that it would no longer be able to fulfil the proposed SLA. Therefore the Board had to review its options. Based upon discussions between Claire and PAC, and considering **Erica Rowell's** growth in her role as a Professional Adviser in our team, the Acting Chair authorised discussions with Erica about potentially promoting her to the Director role, indicating that this was the preferred option.

(iv) Based upon those discussions the Acting Chair agreed that Erica should be offered a promotion, with her terms and conditions required to be confirmed by Board resolution at today's meeting (the confidential item recorded as Note 18/2024 below dealt with this).

(v) The Board noted that it had been advised of this in the summer, as was DfE, indicating that Erica would begin shadowing PAC then and therefore preparing in good time to be promoted to the Director's role from 1.4.25.

(vi) The Board was further advised that since the end of August, Erica had been actively engaged both in shadowing PAC at meetings (e.g. with the CEC and with Jenny Beaumont as the elected nominee of Awarding Bodies) and the Staffordshire CC Awarding Body Relicensing Panel. She would also be attending the National Endorsement Panel for the Career Connect primary

school quality award in December. In the New Year, she would begin accompanying PAC at meetings with DfE.

(vii) The Board now had the responsibility to consider and confirm the terms and conditions of Erica's promotion. As that was a 'personnel' matter, it was dealt with under a Confidential item to be considered, after the Board (with its invited observers) ended, by the Board in closed session (see Note 18/2024 below).

(viii) **The Professional Team:** The Board noted that Anthony Barnes, who had been with us from the outset of our work on the Quality in Careers Standard in 2011, was retiring on 31st March 2025. The Board wished to record its thanks to Anthony, who has been an outstanding colleague, with unparalleled expertise in the field. The Board was pleased to note that Anthony had indicated a willingness to offer some continued limited involvement in our work on nationally endorsing quality awards for primary schools.

(ix) The Board was pleased to be advised that Claire Nix, who has also been a tremendous asset to us in our team, had agreed to stay with us until July 2026 (i.e. for the whole of the academic year 2025-26). The Board noted that Claire, in addition to her role with Awarding Bodies individually, fulfilled with skill the role of Organising Secretary for the **Consultative Group** – which provides the forum for all Awarding Bodies to come together on several occasions each year to share ideas and views.

(x) The Board agreed that with Erica's promotion from 1.4.25, we needed to recruit an additional member of the team. In the summer the Board was advised that Iffat Ahmad (nationally highly regarded Careers Leader at Batley High School) would be retiring in 2025 and was interested in joining us after a lengthy time of great support for the Standard's value to schools and their students. After a discussion with the Acting Chair, discussions took place with Iffat. Note 18/2024 below records that, in a confidential session, the Board dealt with her appointment, terms and conditions, and the process for her induction (the Board recorded its thanks to Claire Nix for the role she had agreed to play as Iffat's mentor) in the summer of 2025.

(xi) The Board also agreed that we should keep a watching brief on potential addition(s) to the team. With Claire's retirement not until July 2026, the Board's view was that this provided us with a good lead time to secure her replacement.

(xii) **The Board & Governance:** The Board reviewed its arrangements for governance from 1.4.25, noting that PAC would then be its Chair and Ryan Gibson its Vice Chair. In considering the future, the Board's view was that during 2024-25, with Cathy Thompson as Acting Chair, she was fulfilling the role with diligence and wisdom.

(xiii) The Board resolved that it would strengthen its ability to fulfil its Governance duties by having two Vice Chairs: Ryan & Cathy. Bearing in mind, for example, that through 2024 Ryan had been unavailable due to his secondment, the Board considered that it would be prudent to ensure that it had sufficient scope for "officers" of the Board to be available for advice and decisions in between the two Board meetings each year.

(xiv) In addition, since PAC would also continue to be chairing Licensing Panels after 1.4.25, the second reason why it would be prudent to have two Vice Chairs was so that one of the two would be available “in extremis” to chair an Appeals Committee should an Awarding Body make an Appeal against a decision of a Panel. Even if Ryan or Cathy served on a Panel alongside PAC, the other Vice Chair would then be available in the (albeit unlikely) event of an Appeal.

(xv) The Board also resolved that the Chair & two Vice-Chairs might also act if required as a “**standing committee**” of the Board, which might be delegated with authority to act on certain matters from time to time by the full Board.

(xiv) The Board concluded this discussion by formally confirming the actions of the Acting Chair & Director, as reported to the Board in the summer, to offer promotion to Erica Rowell and the potential appointment of Iffat Ahmad to the Professional Team from 1.4.25 on terms and conditions to be determined by the Board under a Confidential Item recorded below as Note 18/2024.

(xvi) The Board confirmed the appointment of two Vice Chairs from 1.4.25 – Ryan Gibson (already appointed) and Cathy Thompson and resolved that the Chair & Vice Chairs might from time to time act as a “standing committee” of the Board. Cathy thanked the Board and accepted the offer.

17/2024: NEXT MEETING: The Board confirmed that the next meeting would be scheduled to be **Tuesday 25th March 2025 via ZOOM PRO 1230-1400.**

The Acting Chair then declared the meeting closed and invited the Observers (Jenny, Rachel & Erica) to leave the meeting so that an “In Confidence” additional item could be considered by the Board.

18/24 TERMS & CONDITIONS

(i) Cathy invited the Board to consider the proposed terms and conditions for Erica Rowell as Director from 1.4.25, for Iffat Ahmad as a new Professional Adviser from 1.4.25 and for PAC’s “additional General Service Agreement” to perform some professional duties beyond acting as Chair of the Board.

(ii) The Board approved the appointment of Erica Rowell and her terms and conditions. PAC was authorised to confirm this in a formal offer letter. *{Secretarial Note: PAC did so, and Erica had formally accepted}.*

(iii) The Board approved the appointment of Iffat Ahmad, her terms and conditions, and her induction process to join the team. PAC was authorised to confirm this in a formal offer letter. *{Secretarial Note: PAC did so, and Iffat had formally accepted}*

(iv) The Board authorised Cathy to confirm the “additional General Service Agreement” with PAC to perform some professional duties beyond acting as Chair of the Board.

At 1332 Cathy declared the Meeting fully closed.

*Notes prepared by Paul A Chubb,
Quality in Careers Director & Consortium Organising Secretary 20.11.2024*