



Quality in Careers >>>>

QUALITY IN CAREERS CONSORTIUM BOARD

Public Notes of the Board Meeting

ONLINE "ZOOM PRO MEETING" FOR THE BOARD

1230, Tuesday 25th March 2025

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), Deepa Jethwa (SFCA), Eleanor Perkins (HMC), Janet Colledge (CDI), Katharine Horler (Careers England), Ryan Gibson (Independent CEG invitee – on his welcome return to the Board after his year off during his secondment to the Gatsby Foundation), and Sue Alder (CDI).

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

Apologies: Nina Chorzelewski (AoC).

Absent: Andy Walls (NAHT) and ASCL nominee (yet tbc).

1/25: INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME BY CATHY THOMPSON, Acting Chair

- i. Cathy Thompson welcomed everyone to the online meeting, including Sue Alder from the CDI attending her first meeting succeeding Claire Johnson, Helen Lucarelli (DfE) -also attending her first meeting - and Erica Rowell attending as an observer before becoming Director on 1.4.2025.
- ii. *Kevin Gilmartin left ASCL at the end of February. He had represented ASCL on our Board since 2014. He was a great champion of the Standard and will be much missed. We understand that ASCL is currently reviewing roles for its policy teams, and we hope to have confirmed soon who will succeed Kevin. **The Board wished to minute its warmest thanks to Kevin.***
- 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).

2/25: NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Notes of the previous meeting (19th November) were approved with no matters arising not covered on the Agenda today.

3/25: QUALITY IN CAREERS DIRECTOR’S REPORT: FOR INFORMATION

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 2024/5 since his report to the November 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.
- After 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, noting 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, we had arranged a full day’s introduction to quality assuring careers work for Helen. On 18th March she spent a day with one of our Awarding Bodies (Career Connect) in Liverpool, including visits to a primary school holding the quality award for its careers work and a Catholic High School holding the Quality in Careers Standard. Helen told the Board how valuable her day had been and how it had greatly increased her understanding of careers work being quality assured. The Board warmly welcomed this.
- PAC advised that regular supportive and collaborative meetings with Rachel at the CEC had continued including strengthening links with the leads for the Careers Impact System, Careers Hubs, the Resource Directory and the annual analysis of Award Holders’ Compass “Benchmark” scores Quality in Careers Standard "Award Holders" achieve highest Gatsby Benchmark scores - January 2025 - Quality in Careers. The Board welcomed this.

(ii) The Virtual Event for Schools and Colleges and Case Studies:

- PAC advised that further updates to the virtual event on our website Online Virtual Event - Quality in Careers had been completed. The two FE Colleges that had agreed to provide video testimonies – Derby College and Stoke on Trent College – had seen the Stoke video being completed and added to the website. The Derby College video was still awaited (the Awarding Body working with Derby College – Complete Careers – had followed this up with the College).
- Deepa from SFCA had secured two further SFC case studies – Cardinal Newman SFC and Wyke SFC, which were now live on our website - and Eleanor from HMC confirmed that she was still

looking for further case studies from Independent Schools [*Secretarial Note: after the Meeting Eleanor confirmed that Queen's College was ready to offer a case study – good news*]

- 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 – PAC would put Erica in touch with them after Easter.

- PAC reported that the successful novation of the CSW Licence to Investor in Careers Ltd was working well. Whilst it had not proven possible to secure the novation of the Positive Steps licence, the organisation involved in preliminary discussions on this had subsequently indicated its strong wish to apply to become an Awarding Body in its own right. The Board’s Panel had accepted the application and CareerWave Ltd (based in Peterlee in County Durham) had been granted an “Initial Licence” to work in the North-East Region and with a multi-academy trust with schools across the north (Northern Education Trust). The Board recorded its thanks for this positive outcome.

(iv) The Quality in Careers Consultative Group had continued to meet, and it had played a significant part in the development of the revised national assessment criteria for the Standard (see more under 4/25 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 for her support as Acting Chair and Erica Rowell in her diligence in shadowing him to prepare to become on 1.4.25 (see more under 5/25 below).

Cathy commented on the “huge amount” of work PAC had again undertaken during the period since the November 2024 Board which the Board echoed and thanked PAC for his work, noting the report.

PAC wished to record his thanks to all who had served as members of the Board, as Observers at the Board and served as members of the Professional Team since the formation of the Board and governance of the Quality in Careers Standard just over 13 years ago.

4/25: NATIONAL ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

(i) Since the National Assessment & Accreditation Criteria for the Quality in Careers Standard are fully aligned with the Gatsby Benchmarks, the Board had previously set in train work to revise the Criteria to take account of changes made to update the Benchmarks. 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’s revision had needed to address the requirements for evidence of these additional outcomes.

(ii) The key documents to update were:

- [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](#)

(iii) DfE had confirmed that the revised Benchmarks would be required to be followed from 1st September 2025: DfE would be issuing revised Statutory Guidance after Easter.

(iv) Therefore, the Board agreed that all Quality in Careers Assessments from 1st September 2025 would be against the revised Benchmarks and our revised National Assessment Criteria.

(v) The process of reviewing the Criteria had involved Anthony Barnes & Erica Rowell working together on a first draft revision of the two key documents. Ryan Gibson and PAC had commented upon the drafts from Anthony & Erica. Consultations on the drafts had taken place with Awarding Bodies (through the Consultative Group) with colleagues at the CEC and with the DfE.

The Board received and approved the revised National Assessment Criteria and authorised 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.

(vi) The Board thanked everyone involved in the review.

5/25 SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS:

- (i) Based upon decisions made in principle by the Board at the November 2024 meeting, two SLAs had been prepared and were presented to the Board for approval.
- (ii) Erica Rowell's as the incoming Quality in Careers Director from 1.4.25, and
- (iii) PAC's who, in addition to becoming Chair of the Board (unremunerated) from 1.4.25, the Board had invited to continue to Chair Licensing Panels and (primary school quality awards) National Endorsement Panels plus further consultancy support to Erica and the Board.
- (iv) The Board approved both SLAs for execution.

6/25: WORK PLANS

(i) The Board received and approved the detailed schedule of confirmed revised work plans for the Standard and the schedule of relicensing panels over the coming three years.

(ii) Bearing in mind that Note 16/2024 xi in the public notes of the November Board in respect of the Professional Team and Claire Nix's retirement in July 2026, said this *"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."*, Cathy Thompson had responded by putting us in contact with a potential new

member of the team. PAC & Erica had met her, and her CV was copied to the Board. After discussion the Board authorised PAC & Erica to appoint her in September if all matters could be resolved to permit her induction and deployment.

(iii) As a result of the above discussion, the Board also resolved that a report to the November 2025 Board should be prepared by Erica (after consultation with Jenny Beaumont and with Cathy Thompson/Ryan Gibson/PAC) setting out proposals for future Board rules on recruitment of Advisers.

7/25: REPORT ON FINANCIAL MATTERS

- (i) The Board confirmed the three elements of Licence fee rates (Panel, CQIR and Accreditation Levy) for the coming period up to 31.3.27 alongside daily rates for Advisers for the same period – to be reviewed at the March 2027 Board Meeting.
- (ii) The Board confirmed procedures for raising invoices to Awarding Bodies and authorisation levels for fees and expenses. The Board authorised PAC to finalise the details of a Service Level Agreement with the CDI for an accounts service again from 1.4.25 including Bank statements to be sent by CDI to Erica as Director & PAC as Chair. The Board noted that management of cash flow was crucial.

8/25 REGISTER OF INTERESTS

(i) In accordance with clause 6.5 in the Constitution of the Consortium (see below), the Organising Secretary (PAC) requested all members of the Board to update their declarations.

*6.5 Declarations of interest: No voting member of the Board shall be directly involved with any of the **licensed awarding bodies** for the © “**Quality in Careers Standard**” in England, to avoid any potential conflict of interest. “Direct involvement” shall be deemed to mean “employee, owner, partner, director or shareholder of a licensed awarding body”. All members of the Board shall declare any other interests prior to meetings; and the Organising Secretary shall maintain a **Register of declared interests**.*

(ii) Members of the Board were reminded that it was their responsibility to declare any additions or changes to their Register of Interests. These should be declared at a meeting of the Board and confirmed in writing to the Organising Secretary for the Consortium.

(iii) **The Board resolved that all declarations, using the WORD proforma provided by PAC, should be returned to him by Friday 4th April 2025.**

Cathy Thompson drew the Board to a close, thanking PAC for his 13+ years of service as Director and welcoming him as Chair from 1.4.25. In turn PAC thanked Cathy for acting so assiduously as Acting Chair and welcomed working with her and Ryan Gibson as the two Vice Chairs from 1.4.25. He finished the meeting by congratulating Erica on her promotion to become Director from 1.4.25.

9/25: NEXT MEETING: The Board confirmed that the next meeting would be scheduled to be **Tuesday 18th November 2025 via TEAMS 1230-1400.**

*Notes prepared by Paul A Chubb,
Quality in Careers Director & Consortium Organising Secretary 27.3.25*