Minutes of the CCDG Board Meeting, December 11, 2024

**Present:**
Erica Cassin (Chair)

Andrew Clark
Helen White

Tony Smith
Joni Ayn-Alexander
Kate Daubney

Azza Ali

Rokib Uddin

Aled Jones-Griffith

Rhian Roberts (RhR)

Richard Thomas

**From Careers Wales:**
Nerys Bourne
Nikki Lawrence
Ruth Ryder (RR)

**In Attendance:**

Chris Brown – Operational Development Manager (item 8)

**Welsh Government:**Neil Surman

 Sam Evans

 **Translator:**
 Garmon Davies (Cymen)

 **Absent:**

Dave Mathews (DM)

Natalie Richards

James Harvey

**Secretariat:**

Donna Millward (DMM)

## Apologies/Declarations of Interest

Apologies were received from Dave Mathews, Natalie Richards and James Harvey.

No new declarations of interest were noted.

## Minutes of the Previous Meeting, October 1, 2024

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as an accurate record.

## Matters Arising:

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| **Action**  | **Progress**  |
| **Q2ACTION 1:** CWRE to be discussed at next P&I Committee meeting. Director of Customer Strategy and Service Development to update board members in next board meeting. | This will form part of the Performance and Impact Committee meeting update. The action was therefore completed. |
| **ACTION 2:** Update on the progress in a future P&I Committee meeting of the new approach for employer connection in terms of events. | This will form part of the Performance and Impact Committee meeting update. The action was therefore completed. |
| **ACTION 3:** Chair to contact Head of Careers Policy/Deputy Director Skills to discuss possibility of an external board evaluation. | This action had been completed. |
| **ACTION 4:** Executive Assistant to survey board members for preferred time slots and locations for the 2025/26 board meetings. | This action had been completed. |
| **ACTION 5:** Director of Customer Strategy and Service Development to explore with NR - Board member how Careers Wales can align with or support schools' Strategic Equality Plans and PDG (Pupil Deprivation Grant) reporting, potentially enhancing Careers Wales' impact on young people | This action to be carried forward to the next CCDG Board meeting |

## Chair’s Update – Verbal

**4.1 Board changes**

DH resigned from the Board. Confirmation received that Rhian Roberts (RhR) is now a full board member.

**4.2 Stakeholder Engagement**

The Chair highlighted the significant stakeholder engagement activities that had taken place, including meetings with the Minister and other key stakeholders.

**4.3 Ministerial Meetings**

The Chairmentioned the recent meeting with the Minister, where tailored work experience, data intelligence hub, and employer engagement was discussed.

**4.4 Regional Skills Partnership Event**

The Chair shared insights from a recent RSP event.

**4.5 Public Bodies Unit (PBU) Meetings**

Regular meetings for chairs and CEOs of public bodies have commenced. The First Minister attended the last meeting.

**4.6 Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan**

The Chair mentioned the updated action plan and its relevance to Careers Wales. Members noted that the Director of Customer Strategy and Service Development was taking the lead on this area of work.

**4.7 Children, Young People, and Education Committee Review**

The Chair highlighted that the committee is reviewing routes into post-

16 education. The Director of Customer Strategy and Service Development will represent Careers Wales in this review.

## Chief Executive’s Report

Members discussed the previously circulated report.

**5.1 Key Company Risks**

Members noted the four key risks remain unchanged.

**5.2** **Pay Award 2024/25**

The CE explained that the pay award had been agreed with Unison and paid. However, discussions are ongoing regarding the WG statement of a potential pay award of up to five percent. Discussions with WG and Unison will continue around any additional pay award that will be funded and paid for 2024/25.

**5.3 National Insurance Employer Contribution**

The CE mentioned the recent announcement of the increase in National Insurance employer contributions**.** There has been no update from Welsh Government on whether CW will receive funding for this element in its 2025/26 budget.

**5.4** **Stakeholder Engagement**

The CE is actively engaging with stakeholders, including meetings with the Minister and other key figures. Conversations at both national and international levels continue which will help to inform strategy development.

The next online all-staff meeting is scheduled for January 2025, where a general update will be provided. A video by Chief Executive/Chair had been shared with all staff prior to the Christmas break.

**5.5** **Update on key change and transformational projects**

The report covered various operational improvements and transformational projects.

**5.5.1 Premises**

An offer had been accepted on the sale of CW Parc Menai office with completion expected imminently. The proceeds from the sale will be returned to WG. Members discussed premises and capital/revenue spend. Future premises sales are being considered against this context.

## Welsh Government (WG) Update

**6.1 Budget**

An update provided to board members on draft stage of budget.

**6.2** **Collaboration with UK Government**

insights shared on the collaboration with Skills England and the UK Government, emphasising the importance of working closely on skills needs and the Growth and Skills Levy.

**6.3** **Ministerial Engagements**

The Minister has been visiting organisations and companies. A review is planned on green skills and green jobs for January 2025 with selected stakeholders.

## Strategic Update

Board members had received the paper updating on the development progress of the new strategic plan. The Chief Executive summarised the key points and progress.

The timeline for the strategic plan was shared highlighting the phases and key actions to be completed.

The strategy is being shaped by several key drivers, including efficiency, sustainability, ministerial priorities, bilingual service, and the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

Several themes from the initial phase of evidence gathering have been identified. Board members discussed the themes for the new strategy, emphasising the importance of integration of technology, employer engagement, and the impact on young people and the economy.

Board members considered and discussed several key questions to shape the strategy such as the impact and outcomes Careers Wales aims to achieve, how success will be measured, and the board's appetite for change.

The Chief Executive expressed that board members’ involvement will continue throughout the strategy development.

## AI Update

The Operational Development Manager leading the project work joined the meeting and provided an overview of the current use of AI within Careers Wales, and the four AI projects currently being considered.

The Operational Development Manager recognised the need for formal training for staff on how to use AI tools effectively and safely. This includes understanding how to write prompts and ensuring data security and confidentiality.

Board members discussed AI including some of the risks and opportunities, and raised concern about ensuring AI tools are capable of functioning in Welsh.

Board members expressed an interest in a further update in a future meeting.

## Risk Management Systems and Appetite

Board members received the paper on risk management systems and appetite. The Chair and Chief Executive led a discussion around risk appetite, risk around new strategy and examples shared.

Board members contributed their views on the organisation's risk appetite across various domains, including innovation, culture, finance, and reputation. The aim is to balance risk taking with the organisation’s strategic areas.

**ACTION 3:** Identify and present the strategic risks for the organisation for further discussion on Risk appetite at a future Board meeting.

## Management Accounts

Board members received the draft management accounts which had been discussed and reviewed in the last Finance, Audit and Risk Committee meeting.

The accounts brought to board meeting for information.

## Operational Plan Update - Verbal

The Director of Customer Strategy and Service Development provided an update on the operational plan with board members. The operation plan was noted as progressing well, with significant achievements in school partnerships and employer-led projects.

A well-being project is being rolled out in schools to demonstrate how guidance can impact young people's mental health and well-being.

The booking app was mentioned and is improving service delivery, with a notable increase in digital appointments.

The Board heard that increased referrals of higher risk customers were being experienced. This was being addressed through additional development of staff and reviewing operational requirements for offices.

**ACTION 4:** Consider including a risk on the company’s risk register to reflect this operational risk. (referrals and drop-ins for high risk customers)

Members were also informed of the progress on KPIs.

The Chair formally thanked the team for their contributions and achievements.

## Cyber and Information Security Update

In the absence of the SIRO, the Director of Resources and Transformation shared highlights of the cyber and information security update report with board members. The report emphasises the latest phishing simulation exercise and recommendations from a recent audit.

Board members shared good practice within their organisations. Suggestions included using a phishing button to report emails rather than deleting the message.

**ACTION 5:** SIRO update on cyber and information security to be added as agenda item for next board meeting.

**ACTION 6:** Executive Assistant to circulate the cybersecurity report produced by the SIRO to board members.

## Q3: Finance, Audit & Risk Committee – Minutes (Draft) – November 7, 2024

The minutes of the last meeting were shared, and the Chair outlined the key points of the meeting for members.

## Q3: Performance & Impact Committee – Minutes (Draft) – October 17, 2024

The minutes of the last meeting were shared with Board members. The Chair outlined the key points of the meeting for members. Members heard that the Head of Services to Stakeholders attended the meeting who provided an overview of the services.

**ACTION 7:** Executive Assistant to circulate stakeholder services paper to board members.

Members noted that NS – Board member had been appointed as Safeguarding lead.

## Q3: People Matters Committee – Verbal Update (Draft) – December 4, 2024

Verbal update of the last meeting was shared with Board members. The Chair outlined the key points of the meeting for members.

## Any Other Business

Board member raised Careers Wales' presence on the social media platform X.

**ACTION 8**: The Director of Resources and Transformation to review and give an update on the operational decision made on Careers Wales' presence on X.

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| **Action Log:** | **Lead** | **Update to be provided:** |
| **ACTION 1:** Chair to contact Head of Careers Policy/Deputy Director Skills to discuss possibility of an external board evaluation. | EC | 05.03.25 |
| **ACTION 2:** Director of Customer Strategy and Service Development to explore with NR - Board member how Careers Wales can align with or support schools' Strategic Equality Plans and PDG (Pupil Deprivation Grant) reporting, potentially enhancing Careers Wales' impact on young people | NB | 05.03.25 |
| **ACTION 3:** Identify and present the strategic risks for the organisation for further discussion on risk appetite. | NL | 21.05.25 |
| **ACTION 4:** Consider including a risk on the company’s risk register to reflect this operational risk. (referrals and drop-ins for high risk customers) | RR | 24.01.25 |
| **ACTION 5:** Cyber and information security to be added as agenda item for next board meeting. DM – Board member to provide update. | DM | 05.03.25 |
| **ACTION 6:** Executive Assistant to circulate the cybersecurity report to board members. | DMM | ASAP |
| **ACTION 7:** Executive Assistant to circulate stakeholder services paper to board members. | DMM | ASAP |
| **ACTION 8:** The Director of Resources and Transformation to review and an update on the operational decision made on Careers Wales' presence on X. | RR | 05.03.25 |
| **No further actions recorded** | **No further actions recorded** | **No further actions recorded** |