Minutes of the CCDG Board Meeting, December 13, 2023
**Present:**
Aled Jones-Griffith

Andrew Clark

Dave Mathews
Erica Cassin (Chair)
Helen White
James Harvey
Joni Ayn-Alexander
Kate Daubney
Neil Coughlan
Toni McLelland
Tony Smith

Richard Thomas

**From Careers Wales:**
Nerys Bourne
Nikki Lawrence
Ruth Ryder

**Welsh Government:**Sinead Gallagher

**Participators:**
Simon Pirotte, CTER Wales

**Absent:**

Sam Evans

Dave Hagendyk

## Declarations of Interest

No declarations were noted.

## Minutes of the Previous Meeting, July 6, 2023

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

## Matters Arising

**3.1 Chief Executive Report – KPI Narrative (Minute 3.3)**

Year-on-Year figures had now been included in the report therefore the action was closed.

**3.2 Safeguarding Report (Minute 3.4)**

A report had been presented to the Board’s Performance and Impact Committee therefore the action was closed.

**3.3 Chief Executive Report – Extend Finance, Audit and Risk Committee Invite (Minute 5)**

All members had been invited to the first item of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee. The action was therefore closed.

**3.4 Evaluation/Return on Investment - Glossary of Terms (Minute 7)**

The action was closed as a company glossary had been circulated.

**3.5 Review Committee Structure (Minute 10)**

Chairs of sub-committees were continuing to review terms of reference therefore the item was carried over to the next meeting. A meeting with the Board Chair, Chief Executive and Sub-committee Chairs would then be scheduled.

**ACTION 1**: Sub-committee Chairs to finalised draft terms of reference.

**ACTION 2:** Meeting to be arranged to discuss the revised terms.

**3.6 Board Meeting Feedback (Minute 13.1)**

The item regarding using interactive technology for virtual meetings would be carried over to the next meeting.

**ACTION 3**: Chair to review interactive technology to support board discussions.

**3.7 Simultaneous Translation for TEAMS (Minute 13.2)**

It was noted that TEAMS would support simultaneous translation and could be used for the next virtual meeting.

## Chair’s Update – Verbal

**4.1 Budget Discussions**

The Chair updated members on several meetings that had taken place with Welsh Government. The inevitability of financial cuts to the Careers Wales budget were discussed, but the value of Careers Wales to both young people and the economy had been noted through these discussions, as well as its contribution to key policies and recent publications.

**4.2 Board Member Performance Reviews**

 It was noted that the reviews were nearly complete with a small number outstanding.

**4.3 Board Recruitment**

The Chair advised that the recruitment campaign for new board members was now live. A refreshed approach was being taken to attract as diverse a range of applications as possible.

Members were asked to share across their networks.

**ACTION 4:** All Board members to promote the recruitment opportunities for new members.

## Chief Executive’s Report

Members discussed the previously circulated report with some items being highlighted.

**5.1 Key Company Risks**

Members noted the top risks to the company. The Chief Executive advised that the wording of the risk relating to the Company’s financial position and potential impact was being updated on a rolling basis.

**5.2 Pay Award 2023/24**

Members noted that the pay award for the current year had been agreed. It was noted that the award given was similar but not identical to that given by the Welsh Government. A risk was discussed around this position over the coming years against a challenging financial climate.

**5.3 All-Staff Meeting**

Members noted that an all-staff meeting had been held to explain the postponement of the annual business planning sessions.

**5.4 Net Zero Progress**

Members noted the progress and the plans to improve the company’s position. Members cautioned that given the likely financial position that actions in the net zero plan be reviewed to ensure affordability.

**ACTION 5:** Net Zero action plan to be reviewed against other company priorities considering the challenging financial climate.

## Welsh Government (WG) Update

**6.1 Budget Position**

Members heard that the overarching MEG budget allocations had been settled but there were still decisions to be made with in the individual MEG’s. It was noted that the Careers Wales budget was amalgamated with all employability activity. The challenge facing the company was recognised.

The Executive and Senior Management Team were thanked for their engagement and responsiveness with short notice requests for further information.

The main message for the Board was that the challenge was a longer-term scenario across the whole of the public sector. Focus therefore should be on the most efficient and most impactful use of resources and ensure alignment with core mission.

6.2 **CTER Statement of Priorities**

 It was noted that the statement publication had been delayed until the new year.

6.3 **Economic Mission Launch**

 The launch was noted, and it was agreed that an update on the implementation of the

action plan would come to the next meeting.

**ACTION 6:** Update on the economic mission implementation plan to come to the next Board.

## CTER Wales

The Board was joined by the Chief Executive Officer of the new commission. Members were updated on the current focus of the commission’s work. Ensuring a smooth transition from current arrangements and laying the foundations for the work of the commission were identified as the initial priorities.

The obvious alignment between the commission and the work of Careers Wales was highlighted, along with a focus on working in a meaningfully collaborative way. The importance of data to underpin informed decisions was highlighted, and the data hub feasibility report was highlighted as providing a potential option for this.

It was noted that early consultation documents highlighted an aim to provide unbiased careers information advice and guidance for all year 11 learners in Wales, and assurance was sought that this would not be diluted in the priorities given to the commission. The importance of the unbiased independent advice provided by Careers Wales with the role of CTER was highlighted by the Board. The importance of a continued focus on young people’s resilience and mental health was discussed, along with the potential work of the commission in relation to neurodiversity.

The Chief Executives agreed to meet regularly to ensure that a firm relationship was established.

**ACTION 7:** CEOs to set up regular meetings.

## Management Accounts

Members noted the management accounts.

## Quarterly Performance Report

The previously circulated report was discussed with key aspects highlighted.

## Update on Budget Position 2024/25

The Chief Executive updated members on the ongoing budget discussions. The significant budget deficit highlighted by the Welsh Government was noted and therefore the likely impact on the company’s budget.

The company would experience a reduction in its budget, but the percentage was yet to be confirmed. Members were concerned at the impact on the ability of the company to deliver its core services against its current Brighter Future strategy, and in particular the potential impact on Year 8/9 offer. The discussion included the need to use any change as an opportunity to strategically re-shape the potential service model, and fully explore the use of a digital/blended offer, although recognising the issue of digital poverty in some areas. The Board also raised concerns about the budget for a fair pay award. The Executive and Senior Management Team were continuing to work closely with its sponsor team to review potential impact, with a view to protecting its services to customers.

**10.1 Risk and Change Management**

A general discussion took place regarding the most effective way to approach the significant change brought about by the inevitable reduction in funding.

The consensus was that the company focus on building its service and focusing on co-creation to include all staff, and customers, also engaging actively with stakeholders to explain any changes. It was noted that the careers advice and guidance profession was changing, and this was also an opportunity for the company to reimagine how it could offer its professional and independent advice and guidance.

The importance of managing expectations about what could be delivered was highlighted.

The Board requested to be kept informed on budget discussions as they progressed to ensure consistency of message.

**ACTION 8:** CEO and Chair to update members when key updates take place.

## Employer Engagement

Members were updated on a recent ‘round table’ discussion that had taken place with the Minister for the Economy, Careers Wales, RSP’s, Educators and Employers. It was noted that this was the first of three regionally based meetings that would take place. The focus was on how better links could be made between schools and colleges and employers.

Work experience was seen to provide some of the solutions. However, the resource intensity of this approach was noted as being even more challenging in the current and foreseeable financial climate. It was suggested that Careers Wales could act in an advocacy and curation role, providing the scaffolding to support meaningful work experience.

## Cyber and Information Security Update (Update from SIRO)

The Board noted that the Finance, Audit and Risk committee receive regular updates on the security work being undertaken by the company. One of the company’s top risks remains a cyber security threat due to the sophistication and ever-changing nature of the threats being experienced.

The SIRO is confident in the company’s approach and commended the ICT team on the work that it does to keep the company safe.

## Board Committee Meetings

### Finance, Audit & Risk Committee

The minutes of the last meeting were noted with the Chair highlighting key elements of the discussions.

### Performance & Impact Committee

The draft minutes of the meeting were noted.

It was agreed that given the nature of the company’s work, a Board Safeguarding role would be helpful. It was noted that this is a role that exists on other boards and it was agreed that role descriptors would be shared.

**ACTION 9:** Chair to receive a descriptor and share with P&I Committee for them to nominate a lead.

### People Matters Committee

No minutes were yet available as the meeting had only taken place in the last few working days. The Chair outlined the key points of discussion for members.

## ANY OTHER BUSINESS

 **14.1 Circulation of Minutes**

It was agreed that the minutes of the meetings should be circulated as soon as possible after the meeting has been held.

**ACTION 10**: Minutes to be circulated as soon as possible following meetings.

**14.2 Future Meetings**

It was agreed that a blend of virtual and in-person meetings was appropriate, with day long meetings being held in-person.

**14.3 Date of the Next Meeting**

The next meeting was confirmed as being held virtually on Wednesday March 6.

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| **Action Log:** | **Lead** | **Update to be provided:** |
| **ACTION 1**: Sub-committee Chairs to finalised draft terms of reference. | AC/DH/TS | 31.01.24 |
| **ACTION 2:** Meeting to be arranged to discuss the revised terms.  | EC | 21.02.24 |
| **ACTION 3**: Chair to review interactive technology to support board discussions. | EC | 06.03.24 |
| **ACTION 4:** All Board members to promote the recruitment opportunities for new members. | All | 31.12.23 |
| **ACTION 5:** Net Zero action plan to be reviewed against other company priorities considering the challenging financial climate. | NL | 31.03.24 |
| **ACTION 6:** Update on the economic mission implementation plan to come to the next Board.  | SG | 06.03.24 |
| **ACTION 7:** CEOs (CCDG and CTER) to set up regular meetings | NL | 31.01.24 |
| **ACTION 8:** CEO and Chair to update members when key budget updates take place.  | NL/EC | 31.03.24 |
| **ACTION 9:** Chair to receive a descriptor of Safeguarding role and share with P&I Committee for a nomination. | EC/AJ-G | 31.01.24 |
| **ACTION 10**: Minutes to be circulated as soon as possible following meetings. | NL/NB/RR | 15.01.24 |
| **No further actions recorded** |