



QUALITY IN CAREERS CONSORTIUM BOARD
Public Notes of the Board Meeting

ONLINE TEAMS MEETING FOR THE BOARD
12.30 Tuesday 17th March 2026

Members of the Board present:

Paul Chubb (Chair), Cathy Thompson (Vice Chair & Independent CEG invitee), Ryan Gibson (Vice Chair & Independent CEG invitee), Erica Rowell (Quality in Careers Director), Nina Chorzelewski (AoC), Janet Colledge (CDI Careers educator), Natalie Highfield (NAHT), Oliver Jenkin (CDI), Deepa Jethwa (SFCA), Eleanor Perkins (HMC), Jo Sykes (Co-op Academy Trust, Director of CEIAG) and Paula Thompson (Careers England).

Observers in attendance: Jenny Beaumont (Licensed Awarding Bodies) and Helen Lucarelli (DfE).

Apologies: Claire Green (ASCL), Rachel Green (CEC), and Clare Worsdale (DfE)

01/26 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS BY PAUL CHUBB, CHAIR

- i. Paul welcomed everyone to the meeting in his capacity as Chair of the Consortium Board. He also welcomed new Board members: Paula Thompson representing Careers England and Jo Sykes as an 'Additionally Appointed Member'.
- ii. He drew the Board's attention to a potential conflict of interest which he had discussed with Careers England - as Paula's company is a member of Careers England and also works with one of our Licensed Awarding Bodies (Ixion), she would not be able to take part in discussions or vote on subjects that involve the Licensed Awarding Bodies especially when the Board sets "Licence Fees", nor would she be able to serve on any Licensing or Relicensing Panels. Despite these constraints, Careers England had confirmed that it wished Paula to be its nominee on the Board and had restated its commitment to the Consortium Board & the Quality in Careers Standard.
- iii. He advised the Board that Jo's appointment recognised her absolute commitment to quality assuring careers provision across all three key sectors of education: primary, secondary & tertiary.
- iv. He also advised the Board that it was almost 12 months ago that he & Erica were appointed as Chair & Director respectively on a 2-year initial term. Therefore, he was

proposing that he & Erica would meet with Cathy & Ryan (our 2 Vice Chairs) as the Executive Committee in the autumn to consider potential proposals for the November Board to consider looking ahead to 1st April 2027 onwards. The Board welcomed this.

02/26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- i. Erica gave apologies for Rachel Green and Claire Green who had to attend other meetings.
- ii. Helen Lucarelli gave apologies on behalf of Clare Worsdale who had been called to another meeting.
- iii. Paul 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).

03/26 NOTES OF LAST MEETING

The notes of the previous meeting (18th November 2025) were approved with no matters arising.

04/26 QUALITY IN CAREERS DIRECTOR’S REPORT: FOR INFORMATION

In her second report to the Board, Erica summarised the activities that have been undertaken since 1st December 2025:

i. Liaison with DfE

- Monthly meetings had continued to take place with Clare Worsdale and Helen Lucarelli. Paul in his capacity as Chair had also attended these meetings supporting Erica.
- Clare and Helen were pleased with the outcome of the analysis completed in December by the CEC on Quality in Careers Award Holders and their achievements against the Gatsby Benchmarks. As in the previous years the analysis showed that schools and colleges who hold the Quality in Careers Standard gained higher ratings in their Benchmark scores than schools and colleges who do not hold the Standard.
- The subject of funding for the Quality in Careers Standard is regularly raised at these meetings (including the Consortium Board’s proposal for a “Quality in Careers Bursary”) and Clare and Helen confirmed that they remind Department personnel when appropriate.
- Erica has regularly updated Clare and Helen on the Consortium’s progress with nationally endorsing the Licensed Awarding Bodies’ Primary School Careers Education Awards. The Department continued to be supportive of the potential establishment of a national Quality in Careers Primary Standard in due course.

ii. Liaison with the CEC

- Monthly meetings had continued to take place with Rachel Green who had been extremely supportive, and collaboration between Quality in Careers and the CEC had continued to strengthen. Paul in his capacity as Chair of the Consortium had continued to attend these meetings, again in support of Erica.
- Rachel had invited Isabel Hutton, Senior Manager Strategic Development at the CEC to one of our meetings to update us on the primary careers impact review model.

- Rachel supported the amendments to the CEC's newly published Education Inspection Framework Guide for Careers Leaders and Education Leaders that Erica asked to be considered. The Guide now had appropriate references to the Quality in Careers Standard. Erica wished to record her thanks to Rachel for this – which the Board welcomed.

- Erica had also thanked Rachel and her colleague Lucy Heseltine for again completing the data analysis on the Compass scores of Quality in Careers Award Holders and their achievement of the Gatsby Benchmarks.

- Ryan Gibson suggested that discussion was needed with the CEC when next correlating data of Award Holders and the revised Benchmarks this coming year to note if there were any dips in achievements because of the revisions. This point had also been raised with Helen Lucarelli from the DfE in a recent meeting. The Board agreed that this was something to monitor carefully.

iii. Communications with Stakeholders

- Erica reported that she had supported Ixion (part of Shaw Trust) with the transition to a new Quality in Careers Awarding Body manager following Michele Squire's retirement. The Board welcomed this.

- She had met with the Staffordshire County Council Awarding Body to discuss the potential benefits of them working towards national endorsement of their primary careers education award. They had recently gained permission from the Authority to seek to achieve national endorsement of their primary careers education award. The Board welcomed this.

- Bi-monthly meetings with David Morgan, CEO of the CDI, and Oliver Jenkin CDI Senior Professional Development and Standards Manager have continued to be helpful.

- She had also attended and been invited to a number of conferences and events to 'fly the flag' for Quality in Careers.

- Her monthly newsletter had continued to be circulated to Licensed Awarding Bodies and the Professional Team with Paul circulating this to Board Members.

- She had continued to attend the Quality in Careers Consultative Group and arranged for Kelly Dillon from the CEC to speak to the March meeting on the CEC's approach to work experience and Equalex.

- She had initiated following up with Schools & Colleges previously accredited by former Awarding Bodies no longer trading. There were a significant number of accredited institutions whose 3-year period of accreditation by a former Awarding Body was coming to an end. To seek to retain their engagement Erica had also contacted all the Licensed Awarding Bodies with the list of institutions and encouraged them to contact those institutions in the locations in which they usually work.

- One of the Professional Advisers (Emma) with appropriate expertise had been invited by Erica and Paul (he oversees the website) to review the Quality in Careers website to offer suggestions about ensuring the right information for schools and colleges is foregrounded and easily accessible.

iv. Case studies

- Erica had continued to ask institutions and Awarding Bodies to provide case studies so that this section of the website was up to date.

- She advised that she would be contacting institutions whose case studies had been on the website for 3 years or more, encouraging them to refresh the information so that all case studies were no more than 3 years old.

- v. **Conclusion:** The Board warmly welcomed all this news from Erica, congratulating her on her work.

05/26 INCREASING THE CAPACITY OF THE PROFESSIONAL TEAM: FOR DECISION

- i. A briefing paper had been presented to the Executive Committee in February 2026. They were in favour of the proposed plan to establish a “pool” of Professional Advisers (see below). They had also suggested that research on the candidates’ backgrounds would be prudent with formal interviews thereafter (if required) to demonstrate absolute transparency and integrity in the process.

- ii. 4 potential candidates had come forward; 2 from the CDI Public Notice and 2 had approached the Director independently.

- iii. The Director had arranged informal online meetings with all 4 candidates individually to discuss the experience they were offering and to explain the role of the Professional Adviser.

- iv. All candidates had been asked for their CVs. These had been passed to the Executive Committee for scrutiny.

- v. All 4 candidates had demonstrated expertise which would be useful to the Consortium. The Director had proposed to Paul as Chair of the Board that a pool of Advisers should be formed. Erica advised that this would offer the advantage of being able to call on specific expertise for future projects, and to be able to quickly replace an Adviser who might for whatever reason wish to discontinue working with the Consortium.

- vi. Members of the Board (Cathy & Ryan) had met 2 of the candidates during recent Re-Licensing Panels. One of the candidates had led (as part of her part-time role as careers leader in a Sixth Form College) the College through 3 consecutive assessments achieving the Quality in Careers Standard.

- vii. One of the Candidates was also known to the Board through her long history of leading one of our larger Awarding Bodies prior to her recent retirement.

- viii. The Executive Committee had agreed no further interview was necessary for these 2 candidates.

- ix. The 2 candidates who had made contact through the CDI Public Notice had been asked for further evidence to corroborate their CVs and had been invited for a 30-minute interview with the Chair and Director. At the interview they had been were questioned on the evidence presented and how their experience could benefit the Quality in Careers Consortium. Erica advised the Board that both candidates had interviewed extremely well.

- x. The Chair and Director had consulted the 2 Vice Chairs, and as the Executive Committee they recommended that all 4 candidates were offered part-time roles as Professional Advisers.

- xi. **The Board welcomed the approach that had been taken and approved the recommendation to increase the Professional Team with the offer of part-time roles to the 4 candidates.**

xii. **The Board authorised Erica to recruit the Professional Advisers and induct them on to the Professional team with the aim of them being ready to act from September.**

06/26 WORK PLANS: FOR DECISION

i. The Board received and approved the detailed schedule of the confirmed work plans for the national Quality in Careers Standard and the schedule of Relicensing Panels and CQIRs until March 2028.

ii. Update on National endorsement for Primary Careers Education awards:

- CareerWave had applied for a National Endorsement Panel and was successful in receiving our National Endorsement for its Primary Careers Education Award.
- A National Endorsement Panel was being arranged for Career Seekers Direct in July 2026.
- Ixion had confirmed that it hoped to put forward its Primary Careers Education Award for National Endorsement in the Autumn Term.
- Staffordshire County Council had recently been given the 'go-ahead' to prepare their award for National Endorsement Panel.
- The aim was to have all Awarding Bodies endorsed by the end of 2026.
- Following this the aim, from early 2027 at the latest was for work to begin with the Awarding Bodies, DfE and the CEC to develop a national "Quality in Careers Primary Standard" which would bring quality assurance for primary careers education into line with secondary and tertiary careers education. The DfE remains fully committed to work with the Board to achieve this goal.

iii. **The Board approved the current work plans.**

07/26 REPORT ON FINANCIAL MATTERS: FOR DECISION

i. The Board noted that all fees (for Awarding Body Licences, CQIRs, and fees for Professional Advisers) would be reviewed at the Board meeting in March 2027.

ii. The Board also noted the small additional costs for the expanded Professional Team and travel expenditure for the Director to travel to 2 meetings/events in March 2026.

iii. The Board was reminded of the annual SLA with the CDI for accounting services which Erica confirmed was working well.

iv. **The Board approved the small additional costs and travel expenses for the Director.**

v. **The Board authorised the Director to contact David Morgan at the CDI to review and agree the SLA for accounting services from 01.04.26**

08/26 REVIEW OF KEY DECISIONS TAKEN

The Board reviewed the key decisions taken as now recorded in these public notes.

9/26 NEXT MEETING

i. Paul drew the meeting to a close by thanking the Board members for their attendance and contributions. He also thanked them for their attendance at Relicensing Panels throughout the year.

ii. Paul asked the Board if future meetings could be arranged on Thursdays rather than Tuesdays. The Board confirmed that this was acceptable and the next meeting was scheduled for **12.30 – 2.30 on Thursday 19th November 2026 via Teams.**

The meeting closed at 13.25 and the 2 Observers present left the meeting.

10/26 INTRODUCING THE SUBSEQUENT CONFIDENTIAL MEETING. In his capacity as Organising Secretary for the Consortium, Paul advised the Members present & the other members of the Board present that the Constitution needed to be amended to take account of 2 developments outlined in an additional paper circulated to them prior to the Board meeting. He presented the additional paper.

11/26 CONFIDENTIAL PAPER: AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CONSORTIUM

i. To propose amendments to the Constitution to take appropriate account of the dissolution of the company known as “Careers England”.

- Paul explained the changes to Careers England from a limited company to an “informal coalition” from November 2025 and at that point ceased to be a Member of the Consortium. The “informal coalition” could not be invited to be a Member.
- He advised the best option available to retain the desired involvement of the Careers England coalition would be for the Members of the Consortium to invite the Consortium Board to resolve to invite the coalition to remain actively involved with the Consortium at Board level by amending the Constitution as follows:

Clause 5.2 The Board shall also include a nominee from the “informal coalition” of organisations involved in the provision of careers education, information, advice and guidance in England known as “Careers England”.

ii. To propose amendments to the Constitution to enable timely and prudent provision for development work to be undertaken to establish the “Quality in Careers Primary Standard”.

- Paul explained the “2 stage approach” that had been agreed between the Consortium and the DfE.
- The first stage of all existing Awarding Bodies to achieve “national endorsement” was on track to be achieved by the end of 2026. Therefore, the second stage was projected to begin at the latest by January 2027. This would involve the engagement of the awarding bodies in consultations to seek to establish a single national “Quality in Careers Primary Standard”, which the awarding bodies would be licensed to offer to primary schools instead of their individually named awards.
- He advised that it would be prudent now, therefore, to amend the Consortium’s Aims and Objects explicitly to include this additional development work.
- He added that he would expect that the Board would wish to establish a Committee to oversee this development and he suggested that the Board might wish to invite Jo Sykes, because of her commitment and track record, to contribute to the Committee

and the consultations to establish a single national “Quality in Careers Primary Standard”.

- He concluded that he recommended the Members of the Consortium to invite the Consortium Board to resolve to amend the Constitution as follows:

Clause 3.1.3: To oversee the establishment and maintenance of the © “Quality in Careers Primary Standard” as the single national quality award for careers education in primary schools (primarily but not exclusively in England).

Clause 3.1.4: To oversee the implementation of all matters related to assessments for, and the awarding of, the © “Quality in Careers Primary Standard” - including establishing, maintaining, and monitoring a network of licensed awarding bodies.

- iii. **The Consortium Board approved both proposed amendments to the Constitution with effect from 17th March 2026 and authorised Paul to post the revision as a public document on the website.**
- iv. **The Board also authorised the Chair to invite Jo Sykes to contribute to the proposed Committee and consultations to establish a single national “Quality in Careers Primary Standard”.**
- v. **Finally, the Board resolved that although the discussions had been required to take place in confidence, it was right that they now should be recorded in the public notes of the two Meetings held on 17th March.**

The meeting closed at 1400.

Notes prepared by Erica Rowell, Quality in Careers Director 17/03/26