

1.1 BOARD MINUTES

COMPANY CONFIDENTIAL

Date: 3rd December 2024, 10am-1.30pm, Work.Life Borough, London

Present: Baroness Nicky Morgan (NM) (Chair)
Dame Julia Cleverdon (DJC)
David Baldwin (DB)
Mo Isap (MI)
Ife Awotunbo (IA)
Ashwin Mistry (AM)
Neil McLean (NML), Online
Fiona Millar (FM)
Mohammed Samir (MS)
Oli de Botton, Chief Executive (OdB)
John Yarham, Deputy Chief Executive (JY)

Apologies: N/A

In attendance: Paul Lewis, Chief of Strategy and Communications (PL)

Nicola Hall, Director of Education (NH)

Kevin Ronan, Director of HR & Compliance (KR)

Max Rowe, Associate Director Grants and Development (MR)

James Moon, Head of Network and Employers (JM)

Elizabeth Kingsley, Head of Finance (EK)

Sara Mohideen, Internal Operations Senior Manager (SM)

Alice Coventry, EA to CEO/DCEO (AC)

El Thurston, Business Operations Coordinator (ET)

Notes

1. Welcome and Introduction

NM opened the meeting and welcomed the Board.

1.1. Minutes from the Last Meeting

The minutes from the Board Meeting on 26th September 2024 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

1.2 Table of Actions

The Board discussed the open actions.

Action: AC to arrange a follow-up to the Compass+ interface deep dive.

1.3 Minutes from the Audit Committee

The minutes from the Audit Committee meeting on 16th October 2024 were received.

AM gave an update on the items discussed at the Audit Committee, including the theme of focussing on impact, and an assurance that appropriate security measures are in place for the proposed “Bring Your Own Device” Policy. It was also noted that an uncertainty relating to the GFA extension would have knock-on impacts for CEC teams and Careers Hubs and create challenges to accurately completing financial forecasting.

1.4 Minutes from the I&E Committee

The minutes from the Impact and Evaluation Committee meeting on 6th November 2024 were received.

DB gave an update on discussions that took place around the Future Skills Questionnaire (FSQ) insights, including the potential to do skills testing and the possibility of analysing data in different ways to look at the impact of factors such as Covid and geography. The outcomes of discussions on inclusion were also reflected on.

1.5 Nominations Committee Update

NM announced that as a result of her recent appointment as Chair of the Big Lottery Community Fund, DJC is stepping down from the Board, and in the new year a recruitment exercise will be run to fill this post, including the possibility to recruit more than one Board member. DJC was invited to continue provide her expertise to CEC in the capacity of a Patron.

Action: AC to share the patron contract with DJC for signature.

NM confirmed that MI’s contract has been extended for a further 3-year term and noted that MS will be leaving the Board following the March Board meeting and will be replaced with the newly appointed Youth Board member Rylie Sweeney.

2. Items to Note

2.1. CEO/DCEO Update

OdB provided an update on CEC’s current progress, success, and risks, and noted that CEC has sought to respond well to the recent change of government.

It was confirmed that CEC has submitted to the Curriculum and Assessment Review, with the primary message that careers embedded into the curriculum results in better outcomes for young people.

The Board discussed the possibilities and challenges relating to digital passports.

JY provided an update on rising NEET figures, now reaching 1 million young people aged 16-25. This was discussed in relation to the role of the Department for Education (DfE), Combined Authorities, local authorities, schools and CEC. It was noted that CEC’s approach has evolved and improved, and our evidence shows starting earlier, identifying those at risk and supporting targeted interventions all help to prevent young people from becoming NEET.

The Board talked about the range of factors that contribute to, or have a role in reducing NEET numbers, including the important but limited impact that careers education can provide.

2.2 Workstream Updates

The Board noted the following update papers:

- **2.2.1 Network and Employers**

JY gave an update on Hub based activity, with strong performance noted. Key areas of focus included devolution plans, planning for a new approach to work experience and delivering the first quarter of the ASK contract.

The Board discussed the importance of CEC’s relationships with key staff within Combined Authorities.

- **2.2.2 Data and Digital**

JY provided an overview of the key highlights from the D&D team including the significant increase in completion levels of the FSQ, facilitated through Compass+ and a roadmap in place for further developments in digital

products/activity (including the parent questionnaire). The Board discussed the importance of working within the confines of the current portfolio and the importance of strong partnerships.

- 2.2.3 Education Development

NH took the Board through the key achievements in the EDT team, such as the Gatsby Next 10 Report being launched and commending CEC work, with statutory guidance being updated in Spring 2025 and school uptake from September 2025. This underlines DfE's commitment to GBMs being the foundation of the system.

The Board discussed the importance of the Primary project and the need for continued investment and resource to maintain engagement. They also noted the positive impact of early interventions on reduction of NEET figures.

- 2.2.4 Strategy and Communications (S&C)

PL updated the Board on positive engagement with political stakeholders. These included a planned school visit for Liz Kendall (to showcase the Salesforce funding and ETF) and a visit with Helen Hayes MP, Chair of the Education Select Committee. Offers of meetings and visits have been extended to all Education Select Committee members.

- 2.2.5 Operations

KR summarised the projects the Operations team have been working on including the upcoming Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation and ISO 2001 audit, publication of our Modern Slavery Policy and GFA negotiations with the DfE.

2.3 Management Accounts

EK presented the September Management Accounts, which are stable and on track for 2024. EK highlighted the challenges and opportunities that come with an 18-month budget.

Action: Budget for the 25/26 GFA business case to be brought to the February Audit Committee Meeting and March Board Meeting for strategic discussion.

3. Equalex Deep Dive

NH summarised the four main principles of equalex: 1. Elevating quality through the framework of learning outcomes; 2. Reinvention of two weeks' 'worth' of work experience (WEx); 3. Coordinated implementation to reduce burden through Careers Hubs; 4. A responsive place-based system.

The Board discussed the greatest levers for equalex engagement. It was agreed that CEC's narrative should highlight equalex as the solution to the current problems in the system. It was highlighted that flexibility is a key aspect of the framework and the various benefits must be communicated effectively so that it appeals to the range of key stakeholders.

The Board discussed the importance of work experience starting in KS3 and becoming more granular and bespoke throughout KS4.

Several suggestions were made to ensure effective communication and implementation of the framework.

4. Commercial Planning

JY provided an update on business planning activities. The Board thanked him for the update and provided reflections and feedback.

5. Any Other Business

N/A

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 19th March, 10.00 – 16.00, Leeds