

1.1 BOARD MINUTES
COMPANY CONFIDENTIAL

Date: 11th June 2025, 10am-1pm, Investment2020, Camomile Court, London EC3A 7LL

Board: Baroness Nicky Morgan, Non-Executive Director (NM) – Chair
David Baldwin, Non-Executive Director (DB)
Mo Isap, Non-Executive Director (MI) – virtual
Neil McLean, Non-Executive Director (NML)
Fiona Millar, Non-Executive Director (FM)
Angela Noon, Non-Executive Director (AN)
Rylie Sweeney, Non-Executive Director/Youth Board Member (RS)
John Yarham, Interim CEO (JY)

Apologies: Ashwin Mistry, Non-Executive Director (AM)
Ife Awotunbo, Non-Executive Director/Youth Board Member (IA)

In attendance: Paul Lewis, Chief of Strategy and Communications (PL)
Nicola Hall, Director of Education (NH)
Kevin Ronan, Director of HR & Operations (KR)
Elizabeth Kingsley, Head of Finance (EK) – virtual
Max Rowe, Associate Director of Grants and Development (MR)
James Moon, Associate Director of Careers Hubs (JM)
Ella Bujok, Digital Consultant (EB)
Simon O’Connell, Procurement Specialist (SO’C)
Sara Mohideen, Company Secretary/Internal Operations Senior Manager (SM)
El Thurston, Personal Assistant to CEO/DCEO (ET)

Notes	
1.	<p>Welcome and Introduction/Governance</p> <p>NM opened the meeting and welcomed the Board, introducing Angela Noon, new Non-Executive Director.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1.1 Minutes of last meeting – 19/03/2025</p> <p>The minutes from the Board Meeting on 19 March 2025 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1.2 Action Log</p> <p>The Board noted the open actions. It was noted that the briefing note on NEET, once written, should remain available on OnBoard for future reference.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1.3 New Declarations of Interest</p> <p>The Board had no new declarations of interest to declare.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1.3.1 Register of Interests</p> <p>The Board approved the Register of Interests. Board members should update SM when any new interests or conflicts arise.</p>

2. 2.1 Performance Overview (CEO Update)

JY provided an update on CEC's leadership following the departure of former CEO, Oli de Botton and outlined the organisation's future direction, values, and governance. A governance effectiveness review will be developed via the Nominations Committee, with findings presented to the full Board in September 2025.

Key strategic risks and corresponding mitigations were reviewed. The Board discussed ways to further strengthen the mitigation in place.

2.2 Workstream Updates

2.2.1 Network & Employers

JM reported on devolution, preparation for the Work Experience (WEX) guarantee, and the current landscape of technical education, including the impact of the ASK programme coming to an end. Careers Hubs have responded positively to WEX preparations, with most securing the necessary match funding.

2.2.2 Data & Digital

NM welcomed EB to the meeting and noted this was her first Board meeting since joining CEC. EB reported steady KPI performance and gave and provided an update on upcoming Autumn feature releases to Compass+, including implementation of the Risk of NEET Indicator (RONI) Tool and enhancements to support WEX. Discovery work continues on a single Compass product to ensure equitable access, which is particularly crucial for NEET prevention.

Discussions focused on the role of parental engagement, including ongoing activities such as the development of a new parent questionnaire and aligned efforts with the Gatsby Foundation. NML emphasised NEET as a priority concern, proposing the use of the RONI tool to help demonstrate CEC's impact. The Board discussed the value of CEC's existing datasets, as well as the use of AI as part of CEC's long-term national strategy.

2.2.3 Education Development

NH outlined support for schools and education professionals in adapting to the updated Gatsby Benchmarks and WEX rollout. Underpinning these efforts is the Careers Impact System (CIS), which is being positively received, and triangulated national datasets. Funding for a pilot programme has been confirmed by JP Morgan, and the team continues working closely with the Department for Education (DfE) to inform policy using data from pilots around the country. Additionally, NH has been awarded a Churchill Fellowship to explore global WEX models.

NM suggested enhanced engagement with officials and ministers to showcase successful pilots. It was noted that planning is in place to promote engagement.

The Board confirmed strategic prioritisation of disadvantaged schools, with resources directed to the most underserved institutions and congratulated NH on the award of her fellowship

2.2.4 Strategy & Communications

PL provided highlights from the teams work since the last board meeting, including CEC's inclusion in the announcement of the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) Tech First programme and first sector-specific engagement through the Health Sector Advisory Group. The Board discussed CEC's relationship with DSIT.

2.2.5 Operations

KR provided an update on recent activity in the operations team, including results from the recent mental health and wellbeing staff survey and preparation for ongoing and upcoming changes in CEC's landscape. Maintaining morale and transparency is a key focus, supported by regular CEO and SLT communications.

	<p style="text-align: center;">2.2.6 Youth Advisory Group (YAG)</p> <p>RS highlighted strong engagement and feedback from recent events. The YAG has expressed interest in the topic of NEET and wishes to contribute more to discussions. The next in-person meeting is scheduled for 26 July 2025, which NM will attend as a guest, and recruitment for new YAG members is underway.</p> <p>Action: ET to provide the YAG with the NEET briefing note, when available, to facilitate member engagement with young people, which can be fed into the Board session.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2.3 Management Accounts</p> <p>EK presented an overview of the 2024–25 year-end financials. Audit finalisation is imminent, with no material changes expected. Total spend was £34m, the organisation’s highest to date, with declining overheads and staffing costs in line with projections. Final accounts will be reviewed in July before circulation to the Board. The GFA is expected to be signed imminently, with budget projections extending to August 2026.</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>Commercial Update</p> <p>JY presented the Commercial Update paper, and the Board discussed the recommendations provided.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Deep Dive: Gatsby Benchmark & Statutory Guidance Changes</p> <p>NH provided an overview of recent updates to the Gatsby Benchmarks (GBMs) and associated statutory guidance, summarising the key changes, risks/challenges and support/mitigations. A discussion followed which included the following points:</p> <p>The Board discussed the challenge of delivering the dual priorities of continuous improvement and the new WEx guarantee within static budgets.</p> <p>The Board also discussed the challenge of ensuring that labour market information is appropriately integrated into the education system, particularly in ways that are accessible and useful to both teachers and young people. There was recognition that employer encounters are often the most impactful way for learners to absorb labour market information, and efforts are ongoing to translate available data into usable formats at the school level. NH confirmed that Careers Hubs are playing a critical role in this translation and dissemination work.</p> <p>There was interest in Ofsted’s evolving role in relation to the Gatsby Benchmarks. NH confirmed that Ofsted inspections do include careers education, particularly in relation to legislative elements of the Benchmarks. Although careers education is not currently a limiting judgement within inspections, Ofsted does review destinations data and may use it to inform their evaluations of schools' careers provisions.</p> <p>The Board questioned the capacity of employers to meet the increased demand for engagement in the context of the new WEX model. NH explained that while national capacity will take time to build, initial feedback from employers has been positive. The new model appears to be more accessible and appealing than previous structures, and the guidance and precision has been welcomed.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>AOB</p> <p>No other business was raised.</p>

Date of next meeting: 24 September 2025, 10am-1pm