

**WBL Contract Holders Reference Group Friday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2024 10:00 – 12.00pm Via MS Teams**

**Notes and Actions:**

<p><b>Members:</b></p> <p>ACT Training Ltd – Matt Burnett  B-WBL – Berni Tyler  Cambrian Training Company – Angela Maguire-Lewis  Cardiff and Vale College - Alan Mackay  Coleg Cambria – Vicky Barwis  Gower College Swansea – Rachel Searle  Grŵp Llandrillo Menai - Sophie Martin  Grŵp NPTC Group - Nicola Thornton-Scott  Itec Skills and Employment – Gareth Matthews  Ceri Murphy  Welsh Government:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Alun Gosney</li> <li>2. Christopher Hare</li> <li>3. Catherine Jenkins</li> <li>4. Nikoleta Stastna</li> </ol>	<p><b>Secretariat:</b></p> <p>NTfW – Lisa Mytton (Chairing)  ColegauCymru - Jeff Protheroe (Note taking)</p> <p><b>Meeting Invitees:</b></p> <p>Stephen Jones (WG H&amp;S Lead)  Claire Rooke</p> <p><b>Apologies:</b></p> <p>Welsh Government - Rhian Edwards  Cambrian Training Company - Faith O'Brien</p>
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**1. Welcome and apologies (Chair)**

Lisa Mytton (LM) welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted the apologies received.

**2. Notes and actions from previous meeting (Chair)**

The notes from the previous meeting were reviewed and agreed.

LM reviewed the actions from the previous meeting:

- Action 1 – discussed during today's meeting
- Action 2 – discussed during today's meeting
- Action 3 – (ACW recognising proxies) – CH to pick up with WS. RS raised issue around claiming certificates where individuals have dropped to a lower level as a result of ALN. CH will follow up. Further action below.
- Action 4 – (review of WEST) – discussion with WG around who needs to take forward the action (AG and CH). Possibly the requirement for a wider – discussion
- Action 5 – (Cross – cutting themes) – Carry forwards. Convene a meeting with WG and Quality Managers – JP /LM – additional burdens placed on providers
- Action 6 – (Meeting with Estyn) – linked to above action. Combine actions **JP / LM**
- Action 7 – (Welsh priority sectors) – **Carry forwards**
- Action 8 – Felt that this forms part of previous action – SARs, contractual requirements etc.

- Action 8 – (WBL Data and Compliance Gp) – Carry forwards (JP)

### 3. Welsh Government Updates

#### a. Apprenticeships

AG went on to provide the following updates:

**2024 / 25 Contract** – no further update

**Two – year Contract** – no further update

**Policy Statement on Apprenticeships** - MEcon has welcomed the publication of the document. Has a 5-year horizon. Set out 3 high level objectives. Sets out 20 Actions

### 4. Employability – feedback from Jobs Growth Wales Plus (JGW+) Operational Group

Gareth Matthews (GM) provided the following update:

- No meeting for some time. However, a great deal of work has been undertaken on the ground.
- WG JGW+ budget at 2023/34 levels – however current demand is about 30% above budget available
- 16 – 24-year-olds are quickly becoming the largest ‘economically inactive’ cohort across the UK
- Ongoing (and productive) work going on the Welsh Government to ensure the funding available goes as far as it can – inc. reducing bureaucracy and increasing efficiencies
- Data shows continuing progress and success – demand last quarter up 50% and positive progression from 62% to 68%
- NEETs figures are still quite high. Although there is conflicting data which makes it difficult to plan provision

A wider point – WG’s commitment to reducing NEETs by 2050 is too big a horizon, The Network needs to push for the introduction of milestones – to ensure that policy makers are held to account

### 5. Discussion Topic – H&S Eligibility Requirements

A recent update has been given (further to the note circulated) – shared on screen

Recognise the issues with the provider being involved in the investigation around incidents that lead to an accident. The Code of Practice has been removed.

Appraisal and monitoring are still within the Programme Specification (vetting was removed previously)

Why is Q3 still relevant – when the legal duty is with the employer? – SJ – Assurance (for WG) that the learner is in a safe place. Monitoring can be through the learner (no prescription on how this should be undertaken).

Lack of clarity makes providers nervous – what does the guidance ‘look like’ – it is just a check of the employers’ responsibilities. It is just getting an assurance that the employer is meeting their obligations.

Unless removed completely – specific guidance is needed

Employed status learners (apprentices) and non-employed (JGW+) – the guidance needs to be clear. We cannot be ‘half in’.

The requirement for providers to ‘appraise’ and ‘monitor’ employers is a contractual requirement not a legal one.

N T – S - Why does Wales need to ‘appraise’ and ‘monitor’ employers when this is not the case in England – recognising that providers have a responsibility to monitor the health, safety and wellbeing of the apprentice?

MB – If it is ‘contractual’ and not ‘legal’ – then it is within Welsh Government’s gift to remove. It is contradictory that the removal of investigations (because it can impact on the employer) and not ‘appraisal’ and ‘monitoring’ – it just does not make sense

RJ – The change from ‘vetting’ to ‘appraisal’ has not made an impact on practice – providers are still defaulting the guidance that was available previously. Maybe the production of an agreed ‘checklist’ for providers to follow?

SJ – recognise that the guidance in England applies to 16 – 19 learners and not employed status learners – Commitment to look at again, with specific reference to ‘employed status’ learners. Changes could be made as soon as the next Programme Specifications are published

Recognition that Steve will need some time for reflection on discussion, before producing further direction and guidance.

#### **H&S – JGW+**

No change to requirement for JGW+ Programme (leaves change of ‘appraise’ to ‘check’ and separation of the programme Strands)

JB – Can the JGW+ guidance be checked to ensure it does not read that JGW+ Participants are employed i.e., reference to ‘employers’

#### **Eligibility Requirements – Apprenticeships**

AG – recognise that this is an Action for WG to take forward (revert to position in 2014). AG awaiting feedback from internal compliance colleagues etc.

### **6. Any Other Business**

Apprenticeship framework funding reviews

### **7. Date of next meeting: Friday, 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2024**

## ACTIONS

Action	Lead
<b>Action 1</b> – Collate issues being experienced with claiming certificates through ACW. Send through to JP / LM to forward to on to CH	<b>All CCH</b>
<b>Action 2</b> – Share Hefin David report and CIPD and FSB report and L&W Employment Support (LM / JP)	<b>LM/JP</b>
<b>Action 3</b> – SJ to review the direction in the Programme Specification, with regards to ‘appraisal’ and ‘monitoring’ of H&S, for employed status individuals i.e., apprentices. Any change to be communicated to the Network via AskWBL.	<b>SJ</b>
<b>Action 4</b> – Wider Eligibility requirements ESF etc AG to take forward and provide feedback to the Network after discussing with compliance colleagues	<b>AG</b>
<b>Action 5</b> – Framework funding reviews LM / JP to follow up with WG colleagues	<b>LM/JP</b>