

**NTFW Essential Skills Wales Working Group**

**Minutes 4th June 2025**

Present South: Lisa Harris Talk training (Chair)

Oliver Stacey Qualification Wales

Laura Griffiths Qualification Wales

Amanda Kelly C&G (AMG)

Sharon Cook JISC

Claire Morris Cambrian

Nicola Murray ALS

Adam Serpell Talk training

Karen Crockett CAVC

Kim Ford Portal Training

Richard Powell TSW

Sam Azzopardi ISA Training

Eloise Crout ITEC

Lynsey Cremin ACT

Ceri Griffiths ACT

Diane Block Babcock Training

Sioned Roberts Urdd

Beverley Joyce ALS

Lynne Morris Educ8

Apologies South: Maricel Samson C&G (AMG Chair)

Dawn Rice Portal Training

Catherine Evans JISC

Julie Maughan ACT

Sera Loveluck-Frank ACT

Hayley Phipps JGR

Claire West Learning Curve Group

Lisa Fflur Urdd

Jade Jones ISA Training

Steven Pritchard Talk training

Michelle Watkins Educ8

Samantha Baker Educ8

Michelle Birkin T2

Claire Badham Babcock

Janine Massey ACT

Betsan James TSW

Beverley Cullen ALS

Leah Bennett NPTC

Heidi Gunter ITEC

Melanie Mills ACT

Jenny Brophy Learning Curve

Debra Davies TSW

Anne Morgan T2

Kim Jenkins ALS

 Lydia Harris JGR

 Adam Maclean TSW

Natalie Evans ACT

Sue Adams ITEC

Kate Mantle ITEC

Daisy Thomas ITEC

Donna Edwards Educ8

Amy Thomas ISA Training

Present North: Moya Seaman GLLM

Jennifer Pitts Cambria

Claire Howells Cambria

Apologies North: Alun Sibeon Coleg Cambria

Amanda Morgan Cambria

Glenda Roberto GLLM

Julie Evans NW Training

Natalie Owens-Jones Glyndwr

Justine Le Comte GLLM

Present West: Melisa Elek Ceredigion

Apologies West: Alison Newby Ceredigion

LH opened the meeting and welcomed Oliver Stacey (Qualification Wales) and Sharon Cook (JISC) to the group.

Amanda Kelly (AMG & C&G) gave apologies for Maricel Samson (Chair AMG) and kindly agreed to provide an update on behalf of AMG.

LH gave apologies for absence.

LH confirmed the minutes of the previous meeting and went through actions/agenda.

**Notes from last meeting**

1. **WEST**

LH stated that she met with Tribal to receive a demonstration on Version 2.0, but this was still not fully functional at the time. LH has received an invite for an Introduction to WEST 2 webinar being held on 5th June 2025 at 15.00pm which will cover:

* What’s new in West 2.0
* Key benefits for learner and staff
* Demonstration of West 2.0
* How to get started

Link to register: <https://tinyurl.com/WalesEssentialSkills>

CM stated that Cambrian Training moved to WEST 2 around 3/4 weeks ago, you will need the full WEST 2 website address otherwise you will end up on the old WEST 1 website, it will be beneficial to save the website address as a favorite to avoid this happening (<https://www.walesessentialskillstoolkit.com/en-US/welcome>). CM discussed issues with passwords, plus the new authentication method must be used. CM advised that there are also problems searching for learners (you will need to use one of their names) and this is very slow. Some resources are not available and there are glitches with answers i.e. saying they are incorrect, but they are correct, therefore, manual support must be utilised.

LH stated when she met with Ben Lowther at Tribal, he could not confirm if learner results could be transferred from WEST 1 to WEST 2 from one provider to another. LH asked if this question could be raised and clarified in the webinar on 5th June.

A group member asked when WEST 1 will stop working, LH asked if this question could be raised and clarified in the webinar on 5th June.

Century Tech

MS advised that all FE colleges in Wales are trialing Century Tech at present and suggested inviting them to the next meeting to conduct a brief demonstration, MS will forward the contact details to LH to request a demonstration in the next meeting. MS stated Century Tech have translated the Application of Number initial assessment into Welsh and are currently in the process of completing the translation of Communication. MS stated that Century Tech contains bespoke AI driven handouts and resources (video and audio) unlike WEST, therefore, the resources and content is a lot better for an educational environment. MS confirmed that there is also a Digital Literacy initial assessment available.

NM stated that the data entry side (Admin) of Century has caused issues with learner registration. MS stated that Century Tech have advised they are working on better data entry methods to support registrations. EC confirmed they were experiencing the same problem and data entry is the biggest challenge to using this software.

1. **Staff undertaking Essential Skills Wales qualifications**

MS (AMG) advised in the last meeting that a specific bank of Essential Skills level 2 and 3 EDLS tasks are now available but currently Communication and Application of Number was looking unlikely. MS stated it would be interesting to know the numbers of staff and asked members to submit numbers to LH for MS to follow up.

AK confirmed that the level 2 and 3 EDLS controlled tasks that have been designed are for staff delivering Essential Digital Literacy Skills qualification so there is no danger of the content of the assessments in the bank for learners being shared. Staff members in other faculties (staff not supporting Essential Skills) can undertake the available EDLS controlled tasks as normal.

AK advised that centres are required to complete a conflict of interest form for members of staff and submit to the awarding body and get confirmation that the registration can be made prior to any assessment taking place. It was discussed that there was a difference in the response times of receiving confirmation from C&G. AK advised that the delay in responses may be due to changes within the teams at City & Guilds, AK will feed this back.

CH asked where the new Tutor tasks were located, AK advised for City & Guilds they are still exploring ways to share them securely. If you have staff who want to complete the new tasks, please make an application to the Quality team for permission to register a member of staff for a qualification in the normal way using the form here:

[Centre Staff or Invigilators: Registrations Request Form](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=KTVTy09n106NoplvWJ6pSx3WzKwuuPJOgjViCuNXzQ1UQU1ZREtYOEEwSTNTWVI5V0FWSzZEU1k5Ri4u)

once approved, the Quality team will notify the Assessment team who will then share the task. In future C&G are hoping to store the task within Walled Garden, if this happens, the Assessment Team will provide a password to download the task.

AK stated that tasks are in the process of being translated into Welsh but due to a number of staff changes including Judith Archer’s retirement, this has caused some delay with the translation.

KF asked what the situation is with staff wanting to undertake Application of Number and Communication. AK stated that AMG were confident that staff delivering Essential Skill qualifications would not be required to complete these qualifications due to holding a suitable qualification. KF stated that some staff members are required to complete a Learning and Development Apprenticeship qualification and must complete the Essential Skills as part of their framework, so the requirement is there. AK advised that it takes a long time for AMG to develop a task so she will feed back the need to AMG as they are not aware of this.

Centres working collaboratively on end test invigilation

AK stated that AMG have agreed that centres can work collaboratively on invigilating end tests for each other as this is a localised agreement, but the sharing of technology (laptops) is not available at the moment. AK will ask AMG for an update and report back.

1. **Oliver Stacey – Qualification Wales’s Essential Skills qualifications review update**

OS advised that Qualification Wales is conducting some targeted engagement with stakeholders via a survey on the essential knowledge and skills for Application of Number, Communication and Digital Literacy qualifications, links below:

<https://haveyoursay.qualifications.wales/essential-skills-wales>

<https://dweudeichdweud.cymwysterau.cymru/sgiliau-hanfodol-cymru>

The survey is live until 20th June and is looking at high level content for Communication and Digital Literacy to help inform the criteria plus task content. OS confirmed that the QW survey content for both employers and educational professionals is the same.

In the Autumn term there will be formal consultation on requirements of the new qualifications and QW are currently focusing on level 1 and level 2 and will then work backwards looking at entry level.

OS advised that QW will be holding Stakeholder panels once the survey is closed, the panel will consist of a range of sectors including WBL. QW will contact WBL providers to obtain additional feedback.

OS stated that there will be two separate Communication qualifications available for English and Welsh (Cymraeg).

SR (Urdd) stated that having no bilingual tasks may be challenging as some learners prefer to undertake their tasks in both Welsh and English e.g. speaking and listening in Welsh and written tasks in English. MS stated that there are several learners who wish to have their certificate recognising they have completed their qualification bilingually. OS said this was a good point to raise and he will look into this.

QW will not be reforming Entry Level 1 and 2 Digital Literacy due to the level of literacy in Digital Literacy and differentiation. QW has not decided if there will be a level 3 yet as currently there is no level 3 in Functional Skills, but some apprenticeships ask for level 3 so QW are following this up and will conduct reviews to find out if there is a need.

OS advised that Welsh Government and Medr are reviewing the policy on who should undertake these qualifications moving forward. OS advised that 19+ learners are now exempt from completing Functional Skills in England, this is not likely to change in Wales but with the election in 2026 changes could be made.

OS stated that there is no requirement for AMG anymore and this will be an open market. QW will not require AO’s to offer everything e.g. Communication but there will be a need to offer all levels for consistency. QW have sent an expression of interest form to all AO’s to complete by Friday, 6th June 2025 so they know how many AO’s are in the mix.

Formal consultation will take place in October 2025 to discuss content and assessment.

1. **Asset Management Group update – Amanda Kelly**

AK stated that AMG have worked with Qualification Wales on assessment and AI with Qualifications Wales, and it has been agreed that learners can only use AI in digital literacy to produce an image using an AI tool. It is not acceptable for any assessment criteria elements to be inputted into any AI tool.

AON Plan Template

AK advised that learners are not allowed to use any template or pre-made plan in their live AON controlled task, it can be used for teaching, but learners cannot use a premade plan and take into a live assessment.

AK advised that Maricel Samson will be stepping down as AMG Chair at the end of June and Naomi Davies (WJEC) will become the new chair. AK to send LH Naomi’s contact details.

AK stated if there is an open market for Essential Skills reform there will be no requirement for the AMG. No discussions have taken place on whether AO’s will continue to work together but will keep us updated.

1. **Sharon Cook – JISC**

Sharon Cook, Relationship Manager at Jisc advised that she is taking over WBL and ACL after internal retirements and is keen to hear the groups priorities.

SC presented information on JISC membership:

* Dedicated relationship manager to support you make the most of your Jisc membership <https://www.jisc.ac.uk/wales/our-priorities-for-wales-2024-25>
* Community support for a variety of topics including Digital Literacy, AI, XR, and Accessibility
* Training support with free to access elearning modules and online digital capabilities training

<https://hwb.gov.wales/playlists/498a4fe3-8d82-4bf6-9eb1-0c4370e9fd87/en/93abe5e0-84a3-414d-9716-3faa0c679286?options=CNIQ39k7rbEp4zsz8OdGxip83XDxyAM%252BxyuNqUgoOrvEtxGXwma9Q0UtNK7LrNnQYqELMObFg4b2apAO3sgfHSBCW3vim9KF0TgUQh0KVCPkWq%252Fkd8lfpD8fcpLzayLx0vhL9OhPD9b%252B8bqNuZhuYsFF5g6AHTB7QjOItFbeVVvxskLW7bUSyihGrTcWLpczeRGRSdLYv8Wbb16Rv5vSdQ%253D%253D> <https://www.jisc.ac.uk/training?categories=6&utm_campaign=&utm_content=07.05.25%20FE%20fortnightly%20update&utm_medium=email&utm_source=adestra>

Upcoming Events for June - July:

* Wales AI working group – Wednesday 18th June 2025 9.30am to 16.00pm – Cardiff and Vale College <https://www.eventsforce.net/jiscevents/frontend/reg/thome.csp?pageID=707092&eventID=2403&traceRedir=2>
* Wales Strategy Forum – Wednesday, 2nd July 2025 9.00am to 14.00pm – Cardiff and Vale College

<https://www.eventsforce.net/jiscevents/frontend/reg/tRegisterEmailNew.csp?pageID=731243&eventID=2484&tempPersonID=563148>

* Digital capabilities course – free to book – upcoming series of courses will run from late May through June, and you can book using the code: WALESFREE

<https://www.jisc.ac.uk/training?categories=6&utm_campaign=&utm_content=07.05.25%20FE%20fortnightly%20update&utm_medium=email&utm_source=adestra>

Some extra resources

* + Our May collection of articles and announcements to share on AI
	+ New AI training modules launched:
		- Module 1 – understanding AI in tertiary education for learning and teaching
		- Module 2 – essential AI skills for teaching and learning
		- Module 3 – ethical and responsible use of AI for teaching and learning
	+ Elearning modules
		- Information security
		- Data protection awareness
		- Digital accessibility
		- Data maturity
		- Digital sustainability
		- Digital wellbeing taster course

**AOB**

No AOB

**Date of next meeting: Wednesday, 8th October 2025 at 9.30am**