INSTITUTE FOR APPRENTICESHIPS & TECHNICAL EDUCATION BOARD

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| Meeting Title | Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education Board |
| Meeting Date | 26 January 2022 |
| Protective marking | Official |
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| Board members present | Kate Barclay (KB), Dayle Bayliss (DB), Paul Cadman (PC, John Cope (JCop), Jennifer Coupland (JCou), Dame Fiona Kendrick (FK), Jessica Leigh Jones (JLJ), Baroness Ruby McGregor-Smith (the Chair) (RMS), Robin Millar (RM), Toby Peyton-Jones (TPJ), Malcolm Press (MP), Bev Robinson (BR) |
| Institute officials present | Beth Chaudhary (BC), Rachel Cooper (RC), Kristofer McGhee (KM), Rob Nitsch (RN), Peter Schild (PSch) |
| Other stakeholders present | Peter Mucklow (PM) (ESFA) Karen Riley (ESFA) |

**Welcome and Introductions/declarations of interest**

1. Baroness Ruby McGregor-Smith (the Chair) welcomed Board members and participating officials to the meeting.
2. The Chair asked Board members whether they had any declarations of interest to make. All Board members recognised that should a potential or actual conflict arise by virtue of their other interests (outlined in the declaration of interests) then it must be raised at the outset of the relevant meeting which deals with the issue giving rise to the actual or potential conflict. No interests were declared for this meeting.

**Learner story**

1. The Board welcomed an apprentice who explained why the apprenticeship route was preferred, after becoming dissatisfied with studying for a degree in the conventional manner. The learner’s apprenticeship was in the rail industry, which built upon previous interests introduced to her by family.
2. The apprentice’s experience was mainly positive, but she did have difficulties with the service provided by her training provider. She noted that despite her issue being resolved after providing feedback, the same problem was not addressed for others in her cohort. She also reported that her progress was hindered by a delay of several months to her End Point Assessment being marked, meaning she could not move to the next level in line with her plans.
3. The apprentice felt that regular contact between apprentices and training providers and strengthening the feedback loop would give apprentices confidence that their concerns would be addressed.
4. A suggestion was made to introduce a platform similar to models like Trip Advisor, where apprentices could submit reviews of their experience with particular training providers.

**Minutes and actions from the last meeting**

1. A query was raised about point 9 in the minutes, which would be checked and clarified. A request was made to make the minutes more concise with a separate action list annexed. The Legal and Governance Division would review the minutes and make the requested changes.

**Delivering apprenticeship quality**

1. PM and KR led the presentation on the delivery of apprenticeships. The Board was invited to consider what action could be taken to help training providers deliver high quality apprenticeships.
2. The Chair observed that it would be helpful for employers and apprentices to know if a training provider was a good one and queried if a ranked list of training providers was being planned and when it would be available. PM stated that this was being worked on.
3. The Board was advised of the cooperative responsibility of training providers and employers to make sure that training standards remained high.
4. Transparency of ratings for training providers was also discussed. Potential students and employers would likely find this useful as a tool to decide on the most suitable training provider. This would mean any rating system would need to be available by qualification/subject type as well as provider, with the ability to compare different providers of the same offering.
5. There was agreement around the importance of data, in particular our ability to see outcomes for students/apprentices beyond the life of their studies. This would include further data on roles undertaken and associated wages, which could prove useful indicators of success and quality of a qualification. However, it was observed that whilst vast quantities of data currently held through the LEO dataset, it could be better utilised in this respect. A suggestion was made to make the data publicly available which could then be used to set quantifiable goals, that would in turn, encourage training providers to improve their standard.

**Roadmap for 2022-23, Strategic guidance and spending review: 2021-22 onwards**

1. The Board was advised that the outcome of the spending review was pending. PS and JC were confident that a strong case was made.
2. The Strategy Directors provided an overview of the upcoming strategic guidance, which is issued to the Institute by the Department for Education each year. They explained the guidance was broadly staying the same, with a renewed focus on our oversight function.
3. The Strategy Directors then presented the high-level delivery roadmap for the next three years. The Board welcomed the clarity of the plan but expressed concern around the significant number of activities proposed and the ability to achieve on all of this. The Executive explained that a similar volume of work had been delivered in the year elapsed. There was a need to agree realistic timing for the proposed digital strategy including implementation considerations. At the March meeting, the team agreed to return with the next iteration of the roadmap at the next level of detail, including:

* A clear goal for each project;
* Clear responsible owners for the delivery of the projects; and
* The resourcing and scope for each project including whether there was in-house resource, whether any outsourcing was required, or whether any further appointments were needed to fill any skills gaps.

**Matters arising from the papers for information**

1. The Board requested for a training provider to be invited to a future Board meeting. The Delivery Director would liaise with potential training providers.
2. The Board was concerned about the staff annual leave accrual challenge that happened in 2021 and wanted to make sure that provisions were in place to prevent a recurrence. PS assured the Board that the accrual exercise would be improved to help with this. The Chair requested that any issues arising from the accrual exercise should be brought to the Board.
3. There was an increase in staff sickness absence, which was largely due to the Covid omicron variant. The Chair recommended that the SLT explored ways in which support could be provided to staff returning to the office. JC had started work on this and would provide an update to the Board.
4. JC confirmed that the SLT would work with their teams to find ways to develop emotional and mental resilience for staff, to help with returning to working in the office. Carefully positioned communications would be sent out to encourage people to return to working in the office.
5. Staff retention was discussed. Research showed that organisations had higher turnover of staff during the pandemic. One of the potential causes was limited contact with colleagues. The Board encouraged the Executive to consider its approach to staff retention, including retaining those employees with specialist skills.
6. JC was pleased to confirm that the engagement results for the recent staff survey had increased. The results had not yet been published. A recruitment campaign for a Director of HR was also launched. One of their objectives would be to focus on staff welfare.

**Any other business**

1. Board members were asked to reflect on the activities from their away day and provide feedback on the following:

* Priorities for the Institute
* Actions required to help with development
* What could be done to improve Board meetings

1. The Board confirmed the establishment of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, with RB as the Chair. The Board would meet on 15 February to discuss and agree the terms of reference for the new (and existing) Committees.

**Next Board meeting**

1. The next Board meeting would be on Tuesday 15 February 2022.
2. The meeting after this would be on 23 March 2022 and held in London.

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