

Meeting
16/07/2026

Reference No
Medr/26/Ag18

Minutes of the 18th meeting of the Board held on 16 July 2026 at the Welsh Government Office, Llandudno Junction.

Present:

Board members:

Professor Dame Julie Lydon (Chair)
James Owen (Chief Executive)
Professor David Sweeney (Deputy Chair)
Professor Aaqil Ahmed
Jeff Greenidge
Stephen Marston
Professor Chris Millward
Orla Tarn
Jayne Woods

Staff:

Dr Ewen Brierley (Director, Regulation) Teams Item 3
Harriet Barnes (Director, Research, Innovation and Skills)
Heather Davidson (Head of Apprenticeships) Teams Item 4
Rhian Edwards (Executive Director, Policy)
Bethan Evans (Executive Director, Regulation and Funding)
Natalie Williams (Senior Manager Board Secretariat)
Steven Williams (Head of Board Secretariat and Corporate Planning)

Other attendees:

Edmund Burke (Bangor University) Item 1
Joe Yates (Wrexham University) Item 1
Caroline Street (Coleg Cambria) Item 1
Aled Jones- Griffith (Grwp Llandrillo Menai) Item 1

Apologies:

Daniel Beard
Cerys Furlong
Dr Gwenllian Lansdown Davies
James Davies
Estelle Hart
Rob Humphreys
Fran Hill (Chief Operating Officer)

1. North Wales Tertiary Alliance presentation to Board on collaboration in North Wales

- 1.1 The Board received a presentation from representatives of the North Wales Tertiary Alliance on the development of the partnership during its first year of operation. The Alliance highlighted its focus on strengthening collaboration across further and higher education institutions in North Wales to support learners, skills development, Welsh language provision and regional priorities.

- 1.2 The Board noted that the Alliance provided a framework for collaborative working while enabling institutions to retain their individual autonomy. There was an update on activity supporting skills development, regional planning and engagement with partners across North Wales.
- 1.3 The Board welcomed the progress made by the Alliance and recognised its contribution to supporting tertiary education, regional skills priorities and opportunities for learners across North Wales. The Chair thanked the representatives for their presentation.

2. Introductory remarks and declarations of interest

- 2.1 The Chair welcomed Board members, staff and observers to the formal business section of the meeting. The Board noted an update regarding the learner associate member position and the arrangements being progressed for appointment.
- 2.2 No specific interests were declared in relation to the agenda items beyond those already published on Medr's website. Stephen Marston declared that, from 1 August 2026, he would join the Board of London South Bank University Group and Chair its colleges committee. The Board noted the declaration.

3 HE Register Application Approval

- 3.1 The Board considered the report on applications to the Higher Education Register and approved the registration of 13 providers together with their associated Fee Limit Statements.
- 3.2 The Board noted that the assessment process had been completed in accordance with the Initial Conditions of Registration and that all outstanding matters identified during the assessment process had been addressed prior to the meeting.
- 3.3 The Board discussed the operation of the registration process and noted the distinction between initial registration and Medr's ongoing monitoring and regulatory engagement with providers.
- 3.4 The Board noted arrangements for publication of the Register and associated provider communications.

Decision: The Board approved the recommendations regarding registration of the 13 providers, the 2027/28 Fee Limit Statements and any associated actions to be taken. The Chief Executive to finalise provider letters, taking account of Board steers, and finalise publication of the Register.

Redaction:

Detailed content withheld as the document is intended for future publication

4. Apprenticeship Programme from August 2027

- 4.1 The Board considered proposals for the future apprenticeship programme due to commence in August 2027 and discussed the strategic direction of the programme. Members noted the extensive engagement and evidence that had informed programme development to date.

- 4.2 The Board considered the proposed implementation approach and recognised the importance of ensuring the programme remained responsive to evolving policy, learner and employer needs.

DECISION The Board:

- **Confirmed that the process of programme development had been robust and responded to evidence and stakeholder feedback.**
- **Agreed that the design of the new apprenticeship programme aligned with Medr's strategic aims.**
- **Approved the outline process and criteria for new apprenticeship programme grant applications, assessment and award decisions.**

Redaction:

Detailed content withheld due to sensitivity relating to commercial interests and as the document is intended for future publication

5. Quarterly reporting: Financial, Operational Plan and Corporate Risk Register

- 5.1 The Board received the quarterly report on operational planning, corporate risk and financial performance.
- 5.2 The Board discussed the development of organisational performance reporting and the importance of providing clear oversight of delivery, risk and financial sustainability.

NOTED: The Board noted the quarterly report on Operational Planning, Corporate Risk and financial delivery.

Redaction:

Detailed content withheld due to sensitivity relating to commercial interests and information provided in confidence

6. Minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2026

- 6.1 The minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting held on 4 June 2026.

7. Matters arising and actions

- 7.1 The Board reviewed the Action log and agreed on the suggested Actions for closure.

8. Chair's report

- 8.1 The Board received the Chair's report and noted ongoing engagement with sector leaders and stakeholders. The importance of maintaining strong relationships across the tertiary education sector was recognised.

Redaction:

Detailed content withheld due to information provided in confidence

9. Update from Chairs of Committees

- 9.1 The Board received and noted updates from the Chairs of its committees and related task and finish groups.

- 9.2 The People and Culture Committee reported on organisational culture, workforce matters and leadership development activities.
- 9.3 An update was provided from the Funding Task and Finish Group on the funding review programme and future work to support the development of investment approaches across the tertiary sector.

ACTION: The Board would receive a further update on the funding review programme at a future meeting

- 9.4 Audit and Risk Assurance Committee provided an update on financial reporting, governance, regulatory oversight and risk management matters.
- 9.5 The Research and Innovation Committee had discussed research and innovation policy developments and funding matters.
- 9.6 The Quality Committee reported on quality assurance matters and engagement across the tertiary education sector. There was also ongoing work to clarify Medr's approach to school sixth forms and engagement with local authorities.

ACTION: A future Board briefing would be arranged on school sixth form provision and Medr's wider relationship with local authorities.

Redaction:

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10. Chief Executive's Report

- 10.1 The Board received an update on public affairs activity, engagement with Welsh Government and the Senedd, and emerging policy developments affecting the tertiary education sector.
- 10.2 The Board noted ongoing engagement with Welsh Government, sector partners and stakeholders to support the development of policy and to understand emerging challenges and opportunities across the sector.
- 10.3 The Board received an update on participation pressures within further education and the potential implications for learners, providers and future funding requirements. It was noted that Medr was continuing to work with the sector to monitor learner demand and enrolment trends.
- 10.4 The Board received a confidential update on specific regulatory matters.

Action: The Board will receive a further update on learner participation and enrolment trends at a future meeting.

Redaction:

Detailed content withheld under exemptions relating to the effective conduct of public affairs and information provided in confidence.

11. Any other business

- 11.1 There was no other business.

12. Date of next meeting

12.1 Board meeting – 24 September 2026.

Papers provided for information:

- 13. Minutes of the People and Culture Committee held 3 March 2026**
- 14. Minutes of the Quality Committee held 20 April 2026**
- 15. Minutes of the Quality Committee held 22 June 2026**