

Snapshot

An update from the Education and Training Foundation's December 2013 Board meeting

This was the first meeting of our Board under the chairmanship of Paul Mullins, and, as might be expected of a third Board meeting and one at the end of a very busy three months, it had a very long agenda. Minutes of the September meeting have now been [published](#) and as normal, minutes from this meeting will be published once they have been approved, but for now here's a snapshot of the main issues.

The meeting began with Paul recognising the work of David Hughes, particularly for his guidance since Paul's appointment, and Peter Davies. Paul acknowledged just how much the Foundation had achieved in the three months it had been under Peter's leadership, and how well Peter was supported by the existing permanent and interim team. However he was clear that momentum must be sustained and there was now a need to continue strategic thinking.

HOW THE BOARD OPERATE

- The Board took time to reflect and make sure it had the right membership. The appointment of Joe Vinson, FE Vice President, NUS, as the Learner Representative was welcomed, and the two practitioner representatives identified by NUS and the Unions were considered. The Board has decided to meet those two candidates, so that they can get to know a bit more about them before deciding who it would be appropriate to appoint. David Hughes was appointed as a Director for a one year term, in recognition of the continuity that this would bring to the Board.
- The Board also took time to make sure that they are doing things in the right way, and that involved all members reviewing and signing the Code of Conduct, and identifying who would be on the three sub-committees.
 - Audit and Performance, where the remit includes advice on internal systems, value for money and the performance of Foundation programmes. This will be chaired by Steven Freer, who will be joined by Chris Jeffery, Lynsi Hayward-Smith and Joe Vinson (who will be asked to join this as he was not able to attend this meeting)

- Finance and Resources, which as well as advising on income, expenditure and recruitment, will also consider health and safety and estates issues. This will be led by David Hughes, supported by Mark White and John Hyde
- Remuneration and Search, which will advise on senior pay, and appointment and skill and development requirements of senior staff, Directors and Trustees and good governance practices. This sub-committee will be chaired by Paul Mullins, with Asha Khemka's and Peter McCann's support.

STRATEGIC DEBATE

- There were three items which were more strategic in nature and discussed the most. This began with Paul Crisp, from Curee, providing an update on the work that is taking place to develop the Foundation's evaluation framework. Trustees were able to offer Paul their thoughts on what should and should not be included, the nature of the evidence and data they were seeking and to debate the issue of where the Foundation may be able to demonstrate it has been causal, catalytic, or influential to an outcome.
- They then went on to consider a proposed business planning cycle and first thoughts on the 2014-15 strategic direction. Peter Davies noted that work needed to begin on this now, but recognised that David Russell will want to influence this when he starts as CEO in January. Trustees emphasised the need to maintain some flexibility for responding to issues which arise in-year; that there needed to be simplicity (just a few priorities) but clear articulation of the specifics within these, and of why they had been identified, how they would be addressed and the impact that was expected; that there needed to be awareness of BIS as the funder, the Sector as the lead on strategic direction and employers as the beneficiaries of the outputs. There was also recognition that the underpinning strands, e.g. learning technologies, must remain visible and not be seen as side-line activities.
- Equality and diversity was one of these underpinning issues, and the Board considered this specifically, responding to a paper presented by Pauline Odulinski (Interim Director, Leadership & Governance). Pauline outlined how E&D is embedded within the Foundation's tendering processes, and that there is a need to take a pan-equality approach longer term. Following discussion the Board approved the sponsorship of existing E&D forums and networks in the short term, but that transition funding is offered until March 2014 which will enable a move to a pan-equality expert group model led by the Foundation in the longer term.

SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

- Engagement with the sector was considered through two papers. The first was on the Expert Panels, where Trustees volunteered to lead and support panels, and gave the Executive approval to approach those who they were suggesting as Independent Advisers. The Trustees were also updated on applications for Expert Panels, which closes on 11th December 2014. The Leadership and Governance Panel will be supported by Mark White; the Vocational Education and Training panel will be led by Peter McCann, supported by John Hyde; the Professional Standards and Workforce panel will be led by Don Hayes, supported by Lynsi Hayward-Smith; and the Knowledge and Intelligence panel will be led by David Hughes, with support from Chris Jeffery.
- They also discussed a draft sector engagement strategy, presented by Claire Gill, Interim Director Communications and Sector Engagement. This provided a framework for engaging

with different audiences, ensuring focus is kept on the education and training workforce as beneficiaries. Trustees supported further development and implementation of this approach, and agreed that it should also incorporate the Foundation bringing together cross-sector groups and short and long term working groups, which would break down some of the silos operating across the sector as well as increasing Foundation engagement.

FOUNDATION OPERATIONS

- On operational matters, Trustees reviewed the recruitment process, which is progressing well. Only one post to-date has been re-advertised, and a couple are on hold, as how they are designed may not now fit how the Foundation has developed. It is hoped to publish a full statement of appointments before the end of the year.
- They also considered a range of financial and legal matters, which included confirming appointment of Julie Binns, Director of Finance and Business Services as Company Secretary, reviewed initial management accounts and discussed how to approach a reserves policy, which as a charity the Foundation is required to have reserves.

So, overall a broad and detailed meeting, which didn't run over time! The Board will have an interim meeting in February and then have a residential in early March. You can find details of the Foundation's Board members, who are also our Trustees, on the [Foundation's website](#).