

INDEPENDENT TRAINING SERVICES – BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Date: Tuesday 17 March 2026
Time: 12:30 – 14:00
Location: A325 – Old Mill Lane

Attendees

Carrie Sudbury (CS)
 David Akeroyd (DA)
 Tracey Johnson (TJ)*
 Samantha Dixon (SD)
 Stephen Hepworth (SH)
 Laila Lawton (LL)
 Jessica Melling (JM)

Mentions

Nicola Adams (NA)
 Carol Cooper-Smith (CCS)

* Joined online

Role

ITS Board Chair
 ITS Board Member and Principal and CEO – Barnsley College
 ITS Board Member
 ITS Board Member
 ITS Managing Director ITS and Smartstyle
 Chief Financial Officer, Barnsley College
 Company Secretary

Role

Retired ITS Board Member
 Barnsley College Board Governor

Procedural Matters	
1. Quorum The meeting was quorate. CS updated the Board that NA had resigned from their position on the ITS Board on 4 March 2026. This resignation puts the number of Trustees below the required 5, in line with the Articles. It was noted that elections need to take place at a general meeting, therefore the Board has the power to co-opt individuals onto the Board for a period up until December 2026, as an interim measure. It is proposed that CCS is co-opted onto the Board until December 2026. The Board are RESOLVED to APPROVE the co-option of CCS onto the ITS and Smartstyle Board until December 2026.	
2. Apologies and Absence No apologies for absence were noted.	
3. Declaration of Interest There were no declarations of interest.	
4. Minutes of Meeting Held on 2 December 2025 The Board RESOLVED to APPROVE the minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2025 as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting.	
5. Matters Arising SD noted that it would be beneficial to see the lessons learnt report produced. LL clarified that ITS does not have any Adult learner Loans and therefore the lessons learnt are more relevant to the College.	Action: JM to share the lessons learnt paper with the ITS Board.
6. Rolling Action List It was noted that all actions were complete or included in the agenda.	

The Board NOTED the rolling action list.	
7. Notification of Any Other Business No other business was shared in advance of the meeting.	
For Discussion/Information	
8. Managing Directors Report SH presented his report, highlighting the following points: • ITS currently holds two Adult Skills Fund contracts with SYMCA for 25/25 (Adult Skills Fund and Courses for Jobs). • Adult Skills Fund ytd draw down is ■■■ with a full year committed value of ■■■ against a contract value of ■■■. • Courses for Jobs ytd funding is ■■■ with a full year committed value of ■■■ against a contract value of ■■■. • All freelance staff have been moved to variable contracts of employment through the College. • Two new posts are out for recruitment and two have been recruited to. • The Apprenticeship Progress Mentor role will mirror the work done in the College and will support apprentices with their professional development It was confirmed that the final Adult Learner Loan cohort on hairdressing are awaiting an EQA visit. The Board NOTED the Managing Directors report.	
9. Business Development SH presented the report highlighting the following points: • ITS is no longer recruiting apprentices through its own apprenticeship contract, with all recruitment going through Barnsley College. • Apprenticeship recruitment numbers are positive and are on target (176 apprenticeship starts). Should the full year funding potential be achieved this will be above budget. • A number of new employers have been engaged with across a range of sectors. • ITS are covering 25 enrolments per month to the courses for jobs contract across level 3 certificates and diplomas, primarily in childcare. • Confirmed commercial bookings have increased by ■■■ to ■■■ for the year. ■■■ of commercial income is currently 'confident' with ■■■ in pipeline. SH attributed the reduction in commercial income to a significant reduction in tuition fee courses. • A series of commercial workshops have been delivered . • A revised sales plan has been developed to increase income before the end of the year. This has included the development of a new commercial brochure, reviewing all accounts and a new mandatory training suite being launched. • Sub-contracting commitment are low, with a large amount of provision being delivered inhouse. • A Sector Work Place Academy (SWAP) working with MasterCalsss Education saw 9/11 learners going into employment. A Health and	Action: SH to share the revised commercial booklet with the ITS Board.

Social Care swap saw 19/21 learners going into employment in Doncaster. The Board questioned the rationale for the drop in commercial income. SH explained that this is partially due to a reduction in longer courses such as health and social care diplomas. It was highlighted that eligibility for funding is now over a longer period, and it is anticipated that an impact of changes in the apprenticeship levy will be seen next year. Th Board sought to understand existing partnerships with skills bank. SH explained that this has been done, however employers are not in a position to contribute to skills bank at present. The potential impact of lifelong learning entitlement of employers willingness to fund training was noted. The Board credited the range of employers ITS are working with, seeking to understand how they are identified. SH credited the work of the nosiness development team in securing this through their proactive approach to generating leads. The Board NOTED the business development report.	
10. Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) SH presented the ITS Quality Improvement Plan, noting the following points: • The QIP has been developed to address the actions shown in the Self Assessment Report. • The figures shown in the report relate just to ITS. • Although work is being done to address the number of apprentices past their planned end date, this remains a priority area for improvement. • Employer involvement in reviews continues to be a challenge and an area of inconsistency. This is being closely monitored. • High grades are being monitored and continue to increase compared to last year. • The personal development programme remains an area of focus for improvement. A new CPD calendar differentiated at each level of apprenticeship/qualification was launched in January and has been successful to date. • The number of students accessing specialist learning support is low. Changes to the additional learning support provision are being explored for next year. • The mandatory requirement to complete functional skills was removed for some learners. The team are working to emphasise and educate on the importance of the qualifications to increase voluntary signups. • There are targets in place to improve diploma achievement rates. The Board explored the cyber attack suffered by NCFE and the impact of this on ITS and its learners. The length of time which the system was down for and the delay to processing learners was noted. It was highlighted that since the system has been back operational, ITS have had no issues.	

The Board challenged if ITS and the College look at the cybersecurity safeguards organisations that they work with. It was noted that this is not done at present, however there are challenges to doing this as the employer determines the end point assessment organisation. The Board recommended that 3rd party cyber security be added to the risk plan. The Board RESOLVED to APPROVE the Quality Improvement Plan.	Action: SH to add 3rd party cyber security to the risk plan.
11. Quality update SH presented the quality update, highlighting the following points: • Current achievement rate for apprentices is 29% (29/96 leavers). • ITS have had 63 withdrawals. This is in line with previous year trends. • Of the remaining apprentices who are yet to hit EPA, there are 71 apprentices that are over 50% completed progress. A lot of these claims did not go through due to the cyber-attack. • 36 apprentices are currently in gateway or progressing through gateway. • Current high-grade profile has increased by 9% to 71%. • Distinction high grade rate is 45%. • A number of actions have been taken to reduce the number of learners past their planned end date and progress is being seen. • The new professional calendar was launched in January 2026 and includes differentiated workshops tailored to the level of apprenticeship • Year to date 275 My Skills Advantage certificates have been issued • In year retention for adult skills stands a 93.6% and achievement at 50%. Overall achievement rate is expected to be above 95%. • There are still some legacy learning plans in place. Those with shortened duration have all been extended. This was done in the last academic year, but the impact will not be seen on this cohort. • AAT provision has been moved into the College and targets have been implemented for before the end of July for this cohort. • A curriculum review of the Level 4 Residential Manager apprenticeship has been completed to look at the design and implementation. This will see impact for next year. • All staff have been observed and as a result one staff member is on a coaching plan. • Samples have been completed by 3 awarding bodies, with no actions recorded. • A few maladministration issues have been identified which result from swapping centres between ITS and Barnsley College on adult funded projects. Actions are being implemented to prevent this moving forward. There was no impact on the learners. The Board questioned if the data can be presented to highlight trends, allowing the Board to understand the context of the time of the academic year which they are currently looking at. A discussion explored the reason for withdrawals and breaks in learning, highlighting that 40% were employment related.	Action: SH to highlight annual trends when reporting learner data.
12. Transition Plan The following updates were shared:	

• Meeting with staff too place in December to discuss moving to a Barnsley College contract, however this has been delayed due to the Northern College merger. • LL has written to the DfE to request approval for the write off of the intercompany debt between ITS and Smartstyle. The DfE have responded with clarification questions. • If approved, the write off of the intercompany debt will not have a significant negative impact on the College groups financial position. The financial health score will not be affected. • It would take a minimum of 7 years to trade out of the debt position. • The Board will be asked to approve the write off of the debt once approval is granted. • The Board will be asked to approve the dissolution of ITS and Smartstyle. • Adult contracts will not be renewed with ITS and no new contracts will be applied for through ITS. The Board sought to understand the morale of staff in light of potential changes. It was noted that there has been a lot of uncertainty within the staff, due to the executive being unable to provide updates. This has been reflected in a decrease in the staff survey score.	
Finance and Risk	
13. Management Accounts SH noted the following updates: • ITS are on track to achieve targets for Income, EBITDA and Financial health Grade. • Income at the end of January is ■■■ ahead of the phased profile which is a result of higher than expected carry in apprenticeship income and additional adult skills contracts. • All Adult Learner loan income has been repaid. • Staffing costs are in line with budget, but non-pay is currently ■■■ averse to budget. The majority relate to learner find and freelancer costs. • ITS held a cash balance of ■■■ at the end of January 2026. This is ■■■ worse than budget. The cashflow projection shows that the company will not manage to repay the intercompany loan before the end of the year. The Board NOTED the management accounts.	
14. Risk Register SH shared the following updates: • There is a targeted push on progressions and repeat business. This is in place and historic progressions are being targeted. • The launch of the new commercial portfolio is supporting mitigation of the risk regarding attainment of the commercial income target. • ITS have withdrawn from the Shropshire office. Plans are in place to reallocate staff based in this area to an alternate office space. • A new risk has been added to recognise the risk to the financial health grade of poor financial management of non-expenditure. To	

mitigate this a full review of the finances will be taking place with the College finance team.	
A discussion explored the reason for the decrease in provision in Shropshire.	
15. AOB There was no business raised.	
The meeting was closed at 13:28	
16. Date And Time of Future Meeting Tuesday 9 June 2026 – 12:30-2	