



NCER^{CIC}
National Consortium for Examination Results
Community Interest Company

The National Consortium for Examination Results Community Interest Company ('NCER CIC')

REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS EXCLUDING FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE PERIOD 1ST APRIL 2020 to 31ST MARCH 2021.

This is the Directors' report which includes the financial statements of the National Consortium for Examination Results CIC for the period 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions for small companies under Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS (as at 31 March 2021)

Registered Company number: 07960839 (England and Wales)

Registered office: Managing Director - Peter Richmond, 3 Blakeley Court, Raby Mere, Wirral CH63 0ND

Directors

Richard Stiff	Chair
Peter Richmond	Managing Director
Edd Shackleton	NEXUS Development Director
Donna Ross	Communication and Marketing Director
Paul Caladine	Technical Support Director - (appointed 1 st October 2020)

Note the Managing Director acts as NCER's Company Secretary and is the NCER Financial Officer.

Steering Group Support: John Gardner, 1 Sevenacres, Long Crendon, Bucks HP18 9DU.

Independent Financial Examiners: Tim Murphy and John Pearsall.

External Accountants: Halton Borough Council, Municipal Building, Widnes WA8 7QF – (through an annual Service Level Agreement).

Bankers: National Westminster Bank plc.

Legal Advisers and Data Protection Officer: Halton Borough Council, Legal Section, Municipal Building, Widnes WA8 7QF- – (through an annual Service Level Agreement).

Incorporation as a Community Interest Company: 22 February 2012.

VAT registration: VAT No: 131 1079 60

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

National Consortium for Examination Results CIC is a company limited by guarantee as defined by the Companies Act 2006 and organises its activities according to its Articles of Association.

The Articles of Association were reviewed during 2020/21 with the proposed changes being submitted to the Annual General Meeting held on Thursday 11th June 2020 for approval.

A copy of the Articles of Association dated September 2020 can be found on the National Consortium for Examination Results CIC web site <https://www.ncer.org/>

Management Board

National Consortium for Examination Results CIC is managed by its Board currently consisting of five Directors (with a maximum of seven allowed for in the Articles of Association) whose terms of office are normally for a three-year period. These Directors are elected to the Board by the National Consortium for Examination Results CIC Steering Group. Board members are either serving local authority officers or person with relevant previous roles in local government or other relevant experience.

During 2020 the Technical Support Director was appointed to provide leadership and support to the membership covering all National Consortium for Examination Results CIC systems and assisting the Development Director and the Communication and Marketing Director with their key tasks and activities. The NCER Technical Support Director will maximise the full use of National Consortium for Examination Results CIC products by member authorities, by both data teams, school improvement and strategic management.

The Board has the power to co-opt to fill a vacancy or arrange for the necessary cover to be provided should there be a longer-term absence (e.g. agreed leave of absence, maternity leave or illness) of any member of the Board.

The current post-holder appointment periods are as follows, with elections to be held in sufficient time that new post-holders will be able to take up post without delay, noting that existing post-holders are eligible to stand for re-election:

Chair (Richard Stiff): to 31st March 2022.

Communications and Marketing Director (Donna Ross): to 31st March 2022

Managing Director (Peter Richmond): to 31st March 2023

NEXUS Development Director (Edd Shackleton): to 31st March 2023

Technical Support (Paul Caladine): to 31st March 2023

During the year there have been 23 on-line meetings of the Management Board, 8 meetings of the Board representatives with Angel Solutions, 7 meetings of members of the Board representatives with DfE officials, five on line meetings of the Steering Group (which includes the Board in its membership), 8 Development Webinars of the Steering Group with the Development Director as a Development/Technical Group and various presentations to ADCS, NAVSH and DfE officials, as well as the company's Annual Meeting.

2021 Strategic Use of Data in Children’s Services Conference

NCER and NPIMG (the Children’s Services National Performance Information Management Group) hosted an online conference on 4th February 2021 discussing ways councils can make better use of education and social care data and analysis tools already available to them to support policy development and decision making.

The event was free to all ADCS members and local authority senior officers and others with responsibility for, or interest in, education services and school improvement, virtual schools, children’s social care, looked after children or children in need.

Steering Group

The National Consortium for Examination Results CIC Steering Group comprises 15 local authorities who are elected to a three-year term of office by the full membership. Elections take place annually on a rotational basis. The Steering Group has the power to co-opt members where an absence occurs within a member’s three-year term but normally an election to fill the vacancy will be held as soon as possible after the vacancy occurs. The Steering Group meets a minimum of four or five times a year.

The Steering Group may also invite additional attendees to all or part of its meetings – these representatives have no voting rights but present reports on their activities insofar as they affect their working relationship with National Consortium for Examination Results CIC. At present Angel Solutions, the company’s principal contractor and service provider, is invited to be represented for relevant agenda items, and takes up this invitation.

Appendix 1 sets out the Steering Group membership for the period to 31st March 2021.

The Steering Group has two important governance functions: to confirm the National Consortium for Examination Results CIC membership fee, and to confirm directors’ remuneration.

Membership

Membership of National Consortium for Examination Results CIC is available to all top tier local authorities in England (i.e. those having statutory children’s services responsibilities) under specific categories as specified in the governing documents and currently all eligible authorities are members of National Consortium for Examination Results CIC. The Directorate of Children and Young People within the Ministry of Defence are also a member of National Consortium for Examination Results CIC covering schools across the globe that provide schooling to the children of UK armed forces personnel. Total membership is 152.

Appendix 2 sets out the members of National Consortium for Examination Results CIC as at 31st March 2021.

Regional Meetings – Spring Term 2021

National Consortium for Examination Results CIC has been working towards getting greater involvement with the various regional group meetings - for some areas where the groups do not exist these have been set them up - this is the case for the East of England, the East

Midlands and the South West regions. In time it is intended that all regional groups will become self-sustaining.

These meetings or the relevant section of the existing groups have been led by the Technical Support Director and the Managing Director.

The agenda being -

National Consortium for Examination Results CIC Update

1. The power of collective data & where it comes from
2. Update on available functionality
3. Update on coming developments - CLA Cohorts and CIN Nova & Insight
4. National Consortium for Examination Results CIC support for assessment in 2021 - Primary Phase - Key Stage 4 and CLA
5. Regional education data groups

Meetings in the Spring Term 2021 were held on

- Wednesday 10th February – North East
- Wednesday 24th February – LERN
- Friday 26th February - West Midlands Group
- Thursday 4th March – South East
- Wednesday 9th March – East (new group)
- Wednesday 10th March – North West
- Wednesday 17th March – East Midlands (new group)
- Tuesday 23rd March – South West (new group)

Shareholders and Assets

The National Consortium for Examination Results CIC has no shareholders. It does not possess any significant physical assets, except where a Board member requires a personal computer or other equipment to carry out the specific duties of their role. Given the nature of such items, these are written off over a period of three years.

OBJECTIVES AND OPERATIONAL PRIORITIES

The National Consortium for Examination Results CIC aims to be the educational data analysis provider of choice for local authorities, focusing both on the provision of data for local analysis and strategic analytical tools for senior managers, backed up by outstanding infographics. The National Consortium for Examination Results CIC aims to deliver both the highest quality and most reliable analyses and maximum value for money, keeping membership fees as low as possible.

The National Consortium for Examination Results CIC's operational priorities during 2020/21 were:

1. To maintain the relevance of its products in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on availability of educational maximising the use of its products by member authorities, both by data teams and strategic management, by focusing on

effective communication and the production of powerful marketing and training materials.

2. To ensure that core products take account of changes to the national assessment and testing regime and the suspension of examination and assessment processes by the UK government
3. To consider the development of new core products where these will be widely used and add most value to the work of local authorities within a very constrained development budget.
4. To develop new products where these are requested by strategic partners, particularly the ADCS.
5. To maintain an overview of the strategic and political landscape to ensure that any new developments that are undertaken will have a significant useful life.

Over the last eight years National Consortium for Examination Results CIC has successfully positioned itself with local authorities, the DFE, the ADCS and the LGA as a not-for-profit community interest company co-owned by, and for the benefit of, top-tier local authorities. As such, National Consortium for Examination Results CIC acts on behalf of all top-tier local authorities, and delivers value for money through operation at national scale with minimal overheads, and benefits from a national expert community of interest. This positioning has enabled National Consortium for Examination Results CIC to develop very effective working relationships both with the DFE, with which National Consortium for Examination Results CIC has to do business in order to secure the release of NPD data, and the ADCS as the association of local authority directors who are both strategic clients and budget holders. The National Consortium for Examination Results CIC is now a visible part of the national local authority infrastructure, able to work strategically with key national stakeholders.

2020/21 has been a challenging year for National Consortium for Examination Results CIC as changes to the national examination and assessment systems have required a significant development of National Consortium for Examination Results CIC systems combined with the impact of Covid 19. There have been limitations in what could be achieved within the resources available, and development processes for both National Consortium for Examination Results CIC and Angel Solutions have been stretched to the limit. The National Consortium for Examination Results CIC Board is grateful to all concerned for their support; particularly those members who continue give freely of their time and expertise in helping design and test new systems and approaches, and to senior and chief officers who continue to support National Consortium for Examination Results CIC through local authority membership.

As a consequence of the strategic approach that National Consortium for Examination Results CIC takes and particularly in working with the ADCS and the National Association of Virtual School Heads (NAVSH), consideration has also been given to enhancing products that would be directly focused on supporting local authorities in their various roles with children and young people.

National Consortium for Examination Results CIC CLA Project — Purposes and Aims

National Consortium for Examination Results CIC worked in partnership with the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) and the National Association of Virtual School Heads (NAVSH), with the support of the DfE, to further develop the National Consortium for Examination Results CIC Children Looked After Reporting Project, which utilises the NOVA module in Nexus to include national social care data. In partnership we provide a national system to measure performance and progress of young people whilst in care. 151 authorities subscribed to the project for Phase 3 2019/20 the Children Looked After Reporting was integrated within the core service with effect from 1st April 2020.

This service provides valuable data to all Virtual School Heads that will allow them to write effective action plans and annual reports. It will also provide Virtual School Heads with a clear idea of their children's achievement and attainment compared with regional and national trends.

Additional reporting filters have been developed to enable Virtual School Heads to ask (and answer) the questions they need, in order to ensure the effective use of Pupil Premium funding and provide evidence to the local authority or Ofsted of their effectiveness in improving educational outcomes.

The National Consortium for Examination Results CIC CLA project requires access to the SSDA903 Children Looked After (CLA) files for all local authorities. National Consortium for Examination Results CIC has been working closely with the DfE regarding the signing off of the required Data Access Agreements for the 2020 SSDA903 CLA files for all local authorities so that Nexus is pre-populated with the data files for all participating local authorities.

To enable earlier access to CLA analysis the National Consortium for Examination Results CIC developed functionality that empowers member authorities to upload their SSDA903 files. Following the upload, a complex matching process takes place that links outcomes data to pupils included in that local authorities SSDA903 file. This data is then available for analysis using a range of reports that have been developed to function using this early CLA dataset.

For the 2020/21 financial year it was agreed by the Management Board and the Steering Group that the separate CLA charge would be incorporated with the standard membership fee thus regarding the CLA reporting as part of the standard service delivery to member authorities. All authorities were advised of this decision.

National Consortium for Examination Results CIC Membership Fees / Charges.

National Consortium for Examination Results CIC directors had to consider very carefully the membership fee for the 2020/21 financial year, in light of continuing national changes, requests for new developments within existing systems, and the continued budget pressures facing local authorities. It had been agreed that there should be an overall membership fee increase for the 2020/21 financial to reflect the volume of work needed to update systems to operate with new DfE accountability measures. This increase was

approved by the Board and the Steering Group.

A detailed explanation was provided to the membership, setting out the new developments and changes to the core costs that will be provided as a result of the agreed 9% increase. It was also agreed that for the 2020/21 financial year the membership charge and the CLA charge should be combined as a single charge. It was subsequently agreed that there would be no membership fee increase in the following year.

Payments to Directors

Payments are made to all Directors and to the National Consortium for Examination Results Support Officer in the form of honoraria (National Consortium for Examination Results CIC does not have any employees). Where a Director is employed by a local authority, payment is made through their local authority payroll so that the necessary national insurance and other contributions are paid, however, the honorarium paid to a Director does not ordinarily count towards any superannuation benefits unless this is required by the employing LA in which case National Consortium for Examination Results CIC makes an additional payment to the employing authority to cover the relevant on costs. Where a Director is self-employed or provides services via a private limited company, that Director is personally responsible for declaring the income received to HMRC according to their particular circumstances, and is required to confirm to National Consortium for Examination Results CIC annually that they have so declared their National Consortium for Examination Results CIC honorarium income.

The honoraria paid in the 2020/21 financial year are set out in Appendix 4.

Where the Director's normal salary is paid by their local authority, National Consortium for Examination Results CIC in agreed circumstances will pay a proportion of the honorarium as a direct payment to the local authority as a means of recognising that the local authority has released the Director to carry out his or her role and carries out some National Consortium for Examination Results CIC work whilst in their working day.

All payments to Directors are authorised by the Managing Director except for payments to the Managing Director which are authorised by the Chair.

Expenses

National Consortium for Examination Results CIC has a travel policy in place and reimburses directors and members of the Steering Group in full; where car travel is used this will be paid at the NJC agreed rate per mile of £0.45p also recognised by HMRC.

There are occasions where payment is made for an overnight stay but only where this is agreed in advance by the Managing Director to be in the best interests financially to National Consortium for Examination Results CIC. Some members have found that using their personal railcard provides a saving to National Consortium for Examination Results CIC, in which case they are reimbursed for the cost of their railcard.

All travelling expenses and claims are authorised by the Managing Director except for claims by the Managing Director which are authorised by the Chair.

Halton Borough Council – National Consortium for Examination Results CIC’s External Accountants

Halton Borough Council entered into a service level agreement with National Consortium for Examination Results CIC to undertake a number of financial functions for the 2016/17 financial year and this continued to the 2020/21 financial year and has now been extended for the 2021/22 and 2022/23 financial years. The service covers - sending out invoices, collecting purchase orders, chasing up payments, calculating VAT, completing VAT returns with HMRC, Corporation Tax returns with HMRC and payments to creditors.

A significant number of authorities are slow to provide both purchase number orders and paying invoices and the Managing Director is involved in chasing those authorities and highlighting their need to avoid delaying the National Consortium for Examination Results CIC payment process. However, compared with previous years the income process is proving to be more successful and timely.

Payments to Independent Examiners

National Consortium for Examination Results CIC took a decision 6 years ago that its accounts must be independently examined on an annual basis. National Consortium for Examination Results CIC has appointed two independent examiners of their accounts. This is to safeguard what is essentially public money. One of the independent examiners is an employee of Halton Borough Council and the other is an employee of Stockport Borough Council. Examination of the accounts begins in the May following the end of year and is normally concluded by September of the same year at the test. Both independent examiners are qualified accountants.

The audit activities for the 2020/21 financial year will be - -

1 RISK MANAGEMENT AND INSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS. Reviewing the arrangements in operation to identify, manage and mitigate against current and emerging risks to the overall objectives of NCER. Reviewing the adequacy of insurance arrangements for the organisation.

2. VALUE FOR MONEY ARRANGEMENTS. Reviewing the procedures and controls in place to secure value for money in the business arrangements between NCER and its suppliers.

3. GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS. Reviewing the arrangements over how NCER governs itself, including decision making, accountability, transparency and financial control.

4. INFORMATION GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS. Reviewing the arrangements for managing and storing all key data of the organisation including compliance with GDPR requirements.

5. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS. A comprehensive deep dive review to include a range of substantive tests to provide assurances over the adequacy of control and risk in key financial areas including: -

- Income setting;
- Income collection;
- Debt recovery;
- Accounting for VAT;

- Expenses management;
- Expenditure control;
- Budget analysis;
- Corporation Tax;
- Accounting structure.

Professional Indemnity Insurance Cover

Various insurance companies were contacted by Towergates National Consortium for Examination Results CIC's insurance brokers in April 2020.

The cover is -

Description	Sum insured – limit of indemnity - £
Professional Indemnity	250,000
Employers Liability	10,000,000
Legal Expenses	100,000
Public / Products Liability	5,000,000

The Halton Borough Council Insurance Manager reviewed the policy cover and advised that the quote and cover was reasonable and adequate.

An extension to the policy was requested from Towergate on 25th May 2019 to include Directors and Officers liability. The additional cover has been provided by Towergate and the insurer being Zurich Insurance PLC. This was renewed in April 2020.

The cover is-

Description	Sum insured – limit of indemnity - £
Directors and Officers Liability	2,000,000
Corporate Liability	2,000,000
Employment Practices Liability	100,000

Value for Money Exercise

The External Scrutiny Report for 2017/18 highlighted the need for and importance of an independent Value for Money exercise to be undertaken in respect of the contractual arrangement with our sole contract partner – Angel Solutions Ltd.

After various enquires National Consortium for Examination Results CIC entered into contract with the York Business School to carry out the following Key Deliverables

The agreed fee for this study and report was £10,000 with necessary travel and subsistence expenses payable in addition. The final report was presented to the Board and Steering Group in November 2019.

The report confirmed that the relationship between National Consortium for Examination Results CIC and Angel Solutions is collaborative rather than transactional with all the added benefits that this type of working relationship brings for both organisations and their service users. The collaborative style of working between National Consortium for Examination

Results CIC and Angel Solutions has led to high levels of trust and responsiveness between the two organisations.

Overall, the investigation found that current contract and pricing arrangements offered value for money to National Consortium for Examination Results CIC and its membership, but also identified a number of areas for action of improvement. In February 2020 the National Consortium for Examination Results CIC Board agreed an action plan against each of the report recommendations which was made available to the CIC's auditors. Discussions took place with Angel Solutions in relation to specific issues relevant to that company. The full report and action plan remain confidential to National Consortium for Examination Results CIC on grounds of commercial sensitivity.

Communications and Marketing

The National Consortium for Examination Results CIC's long-term aim is for its systems to be embedded in the statutory and non-statutory work within local authorities (LAs) to support LAs to improve educational outcomes for all children, including those who are most vulnerable, such as looked after children (CLA) and children in need (CIN).

In addition, the National Consortium for Examination Results CIC continue to aim to retain 100% LA membership to ensure we have the most comprehensive data coverage possible for all LAs in England, as well as securing essential development funding for its systems and value for money for the membership.

The above two core aims were challenged in 2020-21 due to the impact of Covid-19 on the statutory collection of assessment data for primary and secondary phases. Through effective communications, we have ensured that LAs have been kept informed of all operational and development priorities during this time of rapid change.

The communications and marketing approach targets multiple core audiences including data teams, school improvement, social care and schools. In 2020-21 the communication and Marketing objectives included the following additional focus areas on top of business-as-usual communications.

1. In 2020-21 the key focus was to ensure that the membership was getting the best use and value out of the membership by using a broad range of Nexus modules, with particular focus on CLA/CIN Analysis, the school improvement module Insight and using Perspective Lite with schools. In 2019-20 we ran a successful campaign of targeted emails to increase imported data in Nexus to encourage wider use. This targeted approach continued in 2020-21.
2. The communications and marketing approach is multi-faceted with multiple audiences requiring a range of information tailored to their needs. In 2020-21 we focused communications and marketing on harder to reach groups such as school improvement teams, virtual school heads / social care colleagues and schools.
3. In 2020/21 we have worked on marketing materials to maintain our profile and brand awareness amongst the key organisations it works with such as LAs, DfE,

ADCS, LGA, NPIMG and NAVSH.

4. In 2020-21 we produced tailored marketing materials to ensure the harder to reach groups and key organisations are aware of the breadth of services that are provided to local authorities, including promotional videos and infographics for each of our different core audiences.

During 2020-21 over fifty National Consortium for Examination Results CIC bulletin communications have been sent to our target audiences outlining essential system update information and operational and development changes due to Covid-19. These included two strategic newsletters and regular updates for the ADCS and LGA. Emails to the National Consortium for Examination Results CIC key finance contacts containing information about membership fees and invoicing information were also issued in a timely manner.

The Nexus Forum area of the National Consortium for Examination Results CIC's website – www.ncer.org - has been kept up to date throughout the year with key release dates and additional documentation including updates from the DfE. This area of the website was well used in the first half of 2020 due to the rapidly change national picture, due to Covid-19, as LAs supported each other with information and good practice guidance.

The external section of the website, providing non-members with concise information about National Consortium for Examination Results CIC, has been kept up to date along with key company policies including data protection documentation. The Nexus log in page is to be updated in early 2021 and will include additional information for non-members as well as updates for members on new developments, upcoming webinars and conferences. We have continued to increase the R's use of social media with the aim to target awareness of our brand and systems outside of local authorities.

The National Consortium for Examination Results CIC Core Membership Pack has undergone a full review and now includes additional governance information. It continues to be updated annually and ensures that the membership is informed of the range of cost effective systems provided by National Consortium for Examination Results CIC as part of the annual membership fee. The Membership Pack is particularly important as the turnover of local authority staff working with data is significant, and the Membership Pack provides an easy-to-access introduction to services available.

The 2020 National Consortium for Examination Results CIC Annual Members' Meeting had to be moved online due to Covid-19 and associated communications were carried out in a timely manner.

The National Consortium for Examination Results CIC continues to use online surveys and feedback forms throughout the year, to ensure National Consortium for Examination Results CIC members feed directly into system developments ensuring National Consortium for Examination Results CIC systems continue to provide excellent value for money for its members as well as providing essential support for statutory and non-statutory duties within LAs in relation to all children, including the most vulnerable in society.

NEXUS Developments

In 2020/21, the Development Director had to implement a number of substantial changes and reprioritise planned developments at short notice to ensure Nexus continued to support Local Authorities during the Coronavirus pandemic.

Functionality was released that enabled Local Authorities and their schools to decide if they wished to engage in voluntary data collections and analysis, following the cancellation of statutory end of key stage assessments by the DfE. To empower Local Authorities 'predicted outcome' and 'centre assessed grade' analysis was introduced for the summer term 2020.

A new analysis module called Insight was first released to Local Authorities within the Nexus analysis tool and schools within Perspective Lite during 2019/20. The focus of the new analysis module Insight was to provide succinct visualisation and verbalisation of key indicators, enabling a rapid assessment of strengths and opportunities for improvement.

The Insight module was further extended in 2020/21 to include the Insight Tables page that enables a user to build custom analysis tables covering multiple topics, pupil groups and indicators.

In addition, the Insight CLA Cohort page was also launched. This new page provided analysis on all age groups for the first time and was not specifically focused on end of key stage cohorts. The Insight CLA Cohort page contains the following sections; pupil characteristics, school census characteristics, CLA characteristics, absence & exclusions and prior attainment. A member Local Authority can control the page content using a range of page filters that cover; academic year, cohort, CLA 12 months, phase, pupil groups and CLA characteristics.

A new topic area of Exclusions was also introduced to the Insight Headlines page for the first time at the end of the 2020/21 period. This new topic area covers; fixed period exclusion rates, pupils with 1+ exclusion and permanent exclusion rates.

CLA functionality has been enhanced to enable a member Local Authority to import and update their own CLA cohort of pupils. This development increased the flexibility for Local Authority members and gave them full control over the inclusion and exclusion of pupils within their CLA analysis.

Nexus was updated to enable the additional Phonics collection introduced by the DfE in Autumn term 2020 in response to the Coronavirus pandemic. This development enabled the import, quality assurance and analysis in Nova and Insight of Autumn Term 2020 Phonics.

Following the substantial developments outlined above, several further releases of functionality were made covering a range of developments from accommodating different data input sources and export enhancements, through to more minor adjustments supporting an improved user experience.

National Consortium for Examination Results CIC and Angel Solutions Ltd continued to evaluate development priorities based on a range of intelligence received from membership Local Authorities and partner organisations. To deliver major new developments in 2020/21 and beyond, detailed planning specifications have been developed for topics prioritised by the membership. This new development work has been tracked on “Confluence”, an online space where multiple users can contribute towards and stay informed of key operational priorities and developments over the short, medium and long term.

The Steering Group have continued to be a critical resource providing essential support to the National Consortium for Examination Results CIC Management Group and Angel Solutions for 2020/21 developments. To continue to facilitate this high level of engagement the Nexus Management Group and Angel Solutions held regular online development meetings focused on specific development items requiring prioritisation or feedback; this will continue into 2021/22. In addition, three development days have been held with the Steering Group to provide the opportunity for detailed discussion and feedback for proposed developments.

Throughout the year work has continued to understand further the implications for NEXUS as previously announced accountability changes take effect within Education, CLA and CiN, ensuring the National Consortium for Examination Results CIC development priorities remain fit for purpose and offer value for money.

Training and Support

Training and Support has long been an essential part of the National Consortium for Examination Results CIC’s interaction with members and has been focused on documentation supporting new developments and older – legacy – elements of the system. In 2020/21 the National Consortium for Examination Results CIC Management Group identified the need to respond to developments in technology around training and support including the prevalence of webinars, online meetings and pre-recorded material, though there were resource challenges involved in utilising those opportunities.

With the appointment of the Technical & Support Director in October 2020 the National Consortium for Examination Results CIC Management Group made the addition of these opportunities’ priorities for the new role as summarised below:

- Update of legacy Nexus documentation
- Engagement of Local Authorities to encourage increased usage of Nexus
- Communication through live webinars
- Delivery of pre-recorded training

Almost immediately the cancellation of Primary Phase statutory assessments for academic year 2020/21 required a re-prioritisation of training and support. In addition to presentations for the Strategic Use of Data Conference (focused on Nexus capabilities for Vulnerable Children), the early decision to once again facilitate Primary and KS4 imports collections meant that additional advice and guidance could be provided for members.

Introductory videos and suggested timelines were produced to give Local Authorities the necessary information to start to consider – with their schools – whether they wished to make that offer in their areas.

The ongoing support for 2021 imports has already included webinars with opportunities for questions and answers and will go on to ensure that documents and video support is available for members in opting to participate.

As mentioned elsewhere in this report, the Technical Support Director and Managing Director have engaged with all nine English regions during over February and March 2021. This has included establishing three regional groups that did not previously exist and participating in meetings with the other six. The National Consortium for Examination Results CIC presentations for those meetings focused on ensuring members are aware of the capabilities already available to them as part of the subscription, what is coming soon and – given the fortuitous timing – explanation of the 2021 import offerings. It was also important to stress that some of the new functionality developed in 2020 wasn't a response to Covid-19 and actually was developed for the long term.

The intention in engaging all members in this way is to help ensure that decisions taken by member authorities in terms of the functionality they wish to make use of fully informed. Naturally, every Local Authority and its circumstances are different and the Management Group fully supports the decisions of each member to use as much or little of the functionality as provides them with the necessary return on their membership subscription. Disruption in 2020 may otherwise have masked the release of functionality – such as Insight – which has tremendous potential to support members and their schools.

Working with colleagues from Angel Solutions Ltd , the Management Group has been able to progress the establishment in Nexus of a Training LA. This Training LA – populated with 'fake' data across all assessments – will serve two purposes. It will facilitate NCER training and support by allowing videos and documentation to include 'fake' screenshots but will also allow members to train staff in the LA and – via a Training School associated with the Training LA – train schools in their areas on the use of Perspective Lite.

The Technical Support Director will be running a 'Train the Trainer' style session for members – including supporting scripts – to help members train their schools on Perspective Lite.

Despite the planned review of legacy documentation being de-prioritised in the changing circumstances around the cancellation of primary assessments, Nexus Associates have supported the Technical Support Director in the review and rewriting of elements of the old documentation. The Technical Support Director and Communications and Marketing Directors had previously planned for how the new documentation will take advantage of the new functionality available in the help software and this work will still happen, the priority has simply changed.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE DETAILS – 1st APRIL 2020 to 31st MARCH 2021

This is managed, maintained and reported on by Halton Borough Council.

Directors' Responsibilities

Company law requires the Directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year which gives a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company and of the profit or loss of the company for that year. In preparing these financial statements the Directors are required to:

- (1) Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently
- (2) Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent: and
- (3) Prepare financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business.

The Directors are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Directors have considered these duties and believe that they fulfil their responsibilities.

Appendix 1 – National Consortium for Examination Results CIC Steering Group Members as at 31st March 2021

Richard Stiff	#	Chair
Peter Richmond	#	Managing Director
Donna Ross	East Sussex	Communications Director
Edd Shackleton	Southampton	NEXUS Development Director
Paul Caladine	Calderdale	Technical Support Director
John Gardner	NCER Support Officer	+
Steve Kearns	Angel Solutions Ltd	+
Jon Ward	Gateshead	2019-22
William Hurst	Nottinghamshire	2019-22
Sammy Njue	Surrey	2019-22
Matthew Stevens	West Berkshire	2019-22
Kelly Partington	Wigan	2019-22
Kathy Oluwi	Stockport	2019-22
Stephen Down	Doncaster	2019-22
Sharon McBriarity	Kirklees	2019-22
Hannah Cartlidge	Blackpool	2020-23
Laura Berry	Gloucestershire	2018-21
Mark Attwood	Nottingham City	2018-21
Rebecca Flowers	Sandwell	2018-21
Liam Skinner	Hampshire & IOW.	2018-21
Mark Bennett	Suffolk	2018-21
Sally Metcalfe	Worcestershire	2018-21

+ = *not* members of the SG but invited to join the SG for specific agenda items or to support the operation of Group

= retired local authority officer

Appendix 2 – Members of National Consortium for Examination CIC as at 31st March 2021

All top-tier local authorities in England and the MOD DCYP are in paid-up membership of National Consortium for Examination Results CIC. Total membership is 152 organisations.

Appendix - 3

2020/21 Honorarium Payments

	Total Payments	Local Authority payment	Total
Chair	£16,447		£16,447
Managing Director – Halton * inc an additional supplementary payment of £1000 authorised by the Steering on 10 th September 2020	£23,241		£23,241
Communications and Marketing Director – East Sussex * inc an additional supplementary payment of £1000 authorised by the Steering on 10 th September 2020	£15,001	£4,500	£19,501
Development Director – Southampton ** inc an additional supplementary payment of £2000 authorised by the Steering on 10 th September 2020	£21,651	£2,000	£23,651
Technical Support Director – started on 1 st October 2021	£7,160	£900	£8,060
NCER Support Officer	£1,311		£1,3151
Total	£84,841	£7,400	£92,241

Signed on behalf of the

National Consortium for Examination Results CIC Management Board

Dated 14th April 2021

National Consortium for Examination Results CIC - Managing Director - Peter Richmond