



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

REPORT

# Public body board recruitment: thematic review

Outcome of a review of board recruitment practices and  
Board members' experience.

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# Main report

## Glossary of acronyms and terms

### AAO(s)

Additional accounting officer(s) - Welsh Government officer delegated accountability for a defined remit by the Permanent Secretary.

### AAP(s)

Advisory assessment panel(s) - Recruitment panel for Board vacancy, which would usually include someone from the Public Body, often the Chair, and 2 other independent members. Sometimes referred to as 'Recruitment panel'.

### ALB(s)

**Arms-length body(ies)** - A group of Public Bodies which are funded and overseen by Ministers. The UK Cabinet Office decides which bodies fall into this category and in Wales these are:

- Executive Bodies – normally created by specific legislation, a cabinet secretary / minister normally appoints the Chair, Chief Executive and Non-executive Directors
- Government-owned Companies – trade under companies law, the Cabinet Secretary normally appoint Chair and Non-executives
- Non-Ministerial Departments – special tasks that need separation from cabinet secretaries / ministers, such as tax collecting
- Advisory Groups – no formal existence, members appointed by cabinet secretaries / ministers.

## **AO(s)**

Accounting Officer(s) - The Chief Executive as Accounting Officer is personally responsible for the proper stewardship of the public funds for which they have responsibility; for the day-to-day operations and management of the body; and for ensuring compliance with the requirements of '**Managing Welsh Public Money**'.

## **Cabinet Secretary**

The current **Cabinet** consists of cabinet secretaries and ministers but the report uses the term 'minister' when reporting on the findings as this was correct for the period when the surveys were completed.

## **Campaign**

Used interchangeably with recruitment process and refers to the process of agreeing the job advert (or just advertising), evaluating applicants and appointment to a Board in line with the Governance Code on Public Appointments.

## **CEO**

Chief Executive Officer.

## **DSG**

Devolved Sector Group.

## **EDT**

Executive Directors' Team.

## **EDI**

Equality, diversity and inclusion - Ensuring that there is equality of access and outcome; that a range of people from different backgrounds and experiences are involved and that everyone feels that they have a voice and that they belong in an organisation.

## **Governance Code**

**Governance Code on Public Appointments** - sets out the principles which should underpin all public appointments made to bodies listed in the Public Appointments Order in Council.

## **KAS**

Knowledge and Analytical Skills Division - Division within Welsh Government.

## **MA**

Ministerial advice - Formal written advice which Welsh Government officials provide to minister(s) in relation to a new decision, relating to policy, operations, legislation or other matters.

## **NAO**

**National Audit Office.**

## **NED(s)**

Non-Executive Director.

## **NPA(s)**

**National Park Authority.**

## **NHS**

National Health Service.

## **OCPA**

**Office for the Commissioner of Public Appointments.**

## **PAT**

Public Appointments Team - The team is part of Welsh Government's Public Bodies Unit and was previously known as the Public Appointments Unit.

## **PT(s)**

Partnership Team - Referred to as the Sponsorship Team by some respondents.

Partnership teams are part of Welsh Government, promoting and maintaining an effective working relationship between Welsh Government and Public Bodies.

## **PB(s)**

Public body - An organisation formally established and funded to deliver a public or government service, though not as a ministerial department.

## **PBRG**

Public Bodies Reference Group - Group of Welsh Government Directors accountable for PBs, chaired by the Welsh Government's Chief Operating Officer.

## **PBU**

Public Bodies Unit - A Welsh Government Unit that includes the Public Appointments Team.

## **SIPM**

**Senior independent panel member** - Recruited members with the focus on diverse characteristics to serve as an independent panel member on the AAP when recruiting to Chairs of significant appointments. Significant appointments are those previously agreed by the First Minister and the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

## **Survey list**

A list that includes all the ALBs invited to participate on the surveys.



## WBFG Act

**Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act** - The Act is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales.

## WGSB

Welsh Government Sponsored Bodies - These public bodies fall under the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Category – Central Government, with classification ALBs and non-ALBs.

# 1. Executive summary

## Background

1.1 This review consisted of 2 surveys – one for Board members and one for Public Bodies (PBs) and Partnership Teams.

## Scope

2.1 The surveys were sent to the Board members and Chief Executives of the PBs listed in **Appendix 1**. They consisted of PBs whose appointments are regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments and those who voluntarily follow the Governance Code on Public Appointments.

# Key findings

## 3.1 The recruitment process

- The complexity of the application process and the length of time from advert to completion.
- The need for greater engagement of Board members in the process.
- Clarity on the roles of the Public Appointments Team (PAT), Partnership Teams and the Public Body (PB) in Board recruitments.
- The lack of training, process maps or guidance when recruiting to Boards.
- The value in using a skills and character matrix, to identify the gaps which would allow the PB to achieve its operational aims with a diverse Board.
- A pipeline of ready Board members, along with generic role descriptions to simplify the process when recruiting to single roles.

## 4. Communication

- Many Board members commented on the lack of timely or unclear communication during the recruitment process, as well as the variability in the clarity of role specifications and / or characteristics and the lack, or inadequacy of feedback to unsuccessful applicants.
- The need for a single point of information during the recruitment process.

## 5. Diversity

- Application forms should be more user friendly and intuitive, with adaption for those who are neurodivergent or have other impairments which could be a barrier to application.
- More needs to be done to diversify Boards.

## 6. Unsuccessful candidates

- Unsuccessful candidates should be given constructive feedback and directed to development opportunities.

## 7. Induction and training

- Induction was not always useful as it could be too generic and didn't provide information on the organisation itself or the specific requirements of the role.
- Training and development were needed to build a diverse, Board and ready pipeline.

## 8. Future interest in applying for a Board position

- There was feedback that the difference between Board roles in terms of expenditure, reimbursement and remuneration would influence future interest in Board membership.

## Conclusion

9.1 Table 9 of the report provides an update on how the issues raised in the survey will be taken forward. PBU will also consider the [Committee of Public Accounts report](#), May 2024 and the [National Audit Office \(NAO\) report](#), February 2024, which have similar findings to this thematic review.

## 2. Purpose of the review

2.1 Thematic reviews are part of the Welsh Government tailored review programme and aim to benchmark, identify and share good practice across Partnership Teams (PTs) and Public Bodies (PBs), and where applicable,

provide additional assurance to ministers. Partnership Teams and Public Body (PB) Executives identified Board recruitment as a priority area for a thematic review. The aim was to collate Board recruitment practices and Board members' experiences and to share the information to allow PBs and their respective Partnership Teams to consider and compare their own practices. It will also enable the Public Bodies Unit (PBU) to identify and consider potential improvements to current recruitment practices and processes, adhering to the [Governance Code on Public Appointments](#).

### 3. Scope

3.1 In Welsh Government, the Public Appointments Team (PAT) that sits within the PBU has responsibility for compliance with the [Governance Code on Public Appointments](#) (the 'Governance Code') for Public Bodies' regulated Board recruitments. Regulated appointments are appointments to bodies or posts listed in the relevant Order in Council and that must abide by the procedures laid out in the Governance Code for Public Appointments, and that are subject to independent regulation.

3.2 Partnership Teams, who are the sponsor team for each PB, are the conduit between PBs and the PAT for all matters relating to PB board appointments.

3.3 Board members, of which nearly all are Non-Executive Directors (NEDs), provide strategic leadership and ensure that effective corporate governance and control processes are in place. They hold Executive Directors of the PB accountable for achieving the defined objectives and remits as agreed by the minister and advise PBs on a range of operational and delivery matters.

3.4 PBs included in the Survey List (see [Appendix 1](#)) were both regulated PBs (on the [Orders in Council](#) list and required to use the Governance Code) and unregulated PBs (those not on the Orders in Council list but which chose to use the Governance Code when recruiting to their Boards).

3.5 As the Health and Social Care Boards and their Partnership Team, NHS Workforce & Corporate Business Directorate, were already in advanced discussions on Board recruitments, the Directorate therefore decided that they would not take part in this review. [Appendix 5](#) gives an update on the work of the task and finish group on Health Board appointments.

3.6 Relevant published works on PB members' recruitment were considered as part of this review (see [Appendix 8](#)).

## 4. Methodology

4.1 Two surveys were developed to gather information on Board recruitment practices and experiences. A survey was sent to PBs' senior leadership teams and their respective Welsh Government Partnership Teams and a separate survey to Board members to capture their experiences and thoughts on best practice. [Appendix 1](#), the 'Survey List' shows the PBs included in this Review. All PBs Board members' surveys were sent via the Partnership Teams and / or CEOs, with roughly half sent directly to Chairs.

4.2 The surveys were structured to facilitate engagement and thus included very few mandatory questions, which meant that questions could be skipped. Respondents could also skip a follow-on question, which resulted in different numbers of responses on complementary questions. The surveys included multi-choice selections, as well as open text boxes for some questions, which allowed respondents to give further information. As respondents could select more than one option, the total number of responses could exceed the number of respondents.

4.3 The 2 surveys didn't capture any demographic or diversity data.

4.4 The survey analysis was supported by Welsh Government's Knowledge and Analytical Skills (KAS) Division.

4.5 This report focuses on qualitative data using descriptive statistical terms:

- Nearly all = 90% or more
- Most = 56% to 89%
- Around half = 45% to 55%
- Some = 11% to 44%
- Very few = 10% or less

4.6 Further detail on methodology and the actual surveys can be found in [Appendix 2](#).

4.7 The responses related to experiences when Board members, PBs or Partnership Teams were last engaged on a Board recruitment, and so they may not reflect current practices.

## 5. Survey engagement

5.1 Of the 35 PBs invited to take part in the 2 surveys, responses were received from 27 PBs, a response rate of 77%, of which 15 had regulated Boards, 8 a mix of regulated and unregulated Boards, and 4 had unregulated Board appointments but said they chose to comply with the Governance Code.

5.2 Across the 2 surveys, 113 respondents submitted 126 responses (see [Appendix 1](#)). The number of respondents per PB varied, with 5 as the average (median).

5.3 Most of the PBs (56%) had 4 to 6 respondents:

- followed by 1-3 respondents at 33%
- and then 7-8 respondents at 7%
- Social Care Wales is notable for having the highest number of respondents at 13, which is equivalent to 10% of all respondents across the 2 surveys.

5.4 In total 99 responses were received from 88 Board members on the Board members' survey (see the Survey List in [Appendix 1](#)). While 27 PBs took part in the 2 surveys, only one of these did not have a Board Member as a respondent,

giving a 74% (26/35) response rate on the Board survey.

5.5 The response rate on the PB and Partnership Team survey was significantly less (see [Appendix 1](#)). Responses were received from 27 respondents for 19 of the 35 PBs (54%). 34% (12/35) responses were from 10 Welsh Government Partnership Teams, as one Partnership Team has responsibility for 3 PBs, and 15 responses were from 14 PBs, giving a 40% PB response rate (14/35), as 2 PB respondents submitted on a PB. The respondents were split across the PBs as follows:

- 7 PBs submitted responses from both partnership teams and PBs' leads
- 7 PBs submitted responses from PBs' leads only
- 5 PBs submitted responses from partnership teams only

5.6 Recruitment practices for public appointments have changed and continue to change following the publication of [Reflecting Wales in Running Wales: Diversity and Inclusion Strategy for Public Appointments](#).

## 6. Public bodies' board appointments current practice

6.1 The Cabinet Office maintains the Governance Code, which sets out the process of making a regulated appointment. The Orders in Council set out which PBs are covered by the Governance Code.

6.2 The regulation of public appointments against the requirements of the Governance Code is carried out by the [Commissioner for Public Appointments](#).

6.3 All appointments made by Welsh Ministers to PBs listed in the Orders in Council are made in accordance with the Governance Code.

6.4 In Wales, the First Minister is responsible for public appointments for all the

PBs on the Order in Council. They delegate the oversight of specific bodies to cabinet secretaries / ministers. Those cabinet secretaries / ministers exercise the functions in relation to these bodies and are ultimately accountable to the Senedd for the activities of the bodies. Cabinet secretaries / ministers are consulted prior to a competition to agree the job description, length of tenure, remuneration, recruitment process and the composition of the Advisory Assessment Panels (AAPs).

6.5 The Cabinet Secretary for Culture and Social Justice also has responsibility for public appointments policy and implementation and oversight of the relationship with PBs under the **Wellbeing of Future Generations (WBF) Act**.

6.6 Not all public appointments are remunerated. Where fees are paid, these align to the Welsh Government Remuneration Scheme guidance (shown as Remuneration Criteria and Banding (RCB) on the surveys). The scheme looks to evaluate the size and complexity of a PB and then allocate it to one of 5 daily rate bands covering Board Chair, Deputy Chair (or Members with additional responsibilities) and ordinary Member roles. The evaluation of the body considers its gross expenditure, staff numbers, complexity of role and risk exposure. Cabinet secretaries / ministers can decide to allocate higher levels of remuneration, should they wish to do so, where circumstances warrant.

6.7 Before a competition opens, the relevant cabinet secretaries / ministers are asked for names of individuals to approach. The cabinet secretary / minister can provide their views on candidates to the AAPs at all stages, and will also be provided with the list of appointable candidates. Partnership Teams should ensure there is sufficient opportunity for the relevant cabinet secretary / minister to engage with the Chair of the Board being recruited to, for advice on the skills and experience needed to ensure an overall effective Board. The role of the Advisory Assessment Panel (AAP) is not to choose candidates for the appointment in question, but to provide the relevant cabinet secretary / minister with a list of candidates capable of undertaking the appointment - from which the cabinet secretary / minister can make their selection.

6.8 If the cabinet secretary / minister chooses to appoint someone who is not



deemed 'appointable' by the AAP, or decides to appoint a candidate without a competition, the Commissioner for Public Appointments needs to be consulted and the decision justified publicly.

6.9 Reappointments and extensions must be agreed by the relevant cabinet secretary / minister.

6.10 Whenever there is a significant public appointment to a regulated PB, the AAP will always include a **Senior Independent Panel Member** (SIPM). **Significant appointments** are as per agreement with the Commissioner for Public Appointments and the Welsh Government cabinet secretaries / ministers. The **Governance Code** states that a SIPM should be independent of the Department and the PB concerned, should not be currently politically active, and must be agreed by the **Commissioner for Public Appointments**.

6.11 The Welsh Government holds a list of SIPMs who have diverse backgrounds and can be called upon as and when needed. Each time a SIPM is proposed for a particular campaign, the relevant cabinet secretary or minister is required to consult the Commissioner for Public Appointments on that choice before the process commences.

6.12 Since 2019, committees have been invited to hold pre-appointment hearings for some high-profile Welsh Government public appointments, such as those with a significant impact on the public to further transparency. This helps provide assurance to the relevant cabinet secretary / minister who will make the final appointment decision.

## 7. Reporting on the board survey

7.1 Not all respondents answered every question in the survey, and some questions allowed more than one response from respondents. Findings were structured to report how many of the 88 respondents answered a question and in some instances, the number of responses. **Appendix 1** shows the number of

Board members from each PB that responded on the survey.

7.2 Ninety-nine responses were received from 88 Board members on the PBs in the survey list.

## **Experience and motivation for application**

7.3 Many Board members have extensive experience, with 368 years' worth of experience identified by respondents in different roles across the 27 Board responses. They also stated that they serve and have served on other Boards across various sectors, of which most were in the public and third sector (69% of the 158 responses from 67 respondents). Around half of the roles on Boards other than the Survey List, were in Wales (51% of the 102 responses received from 71 respondents), with some UK wide (38%) and global organisations (11%).

7.4 Around half of the 85 (45%) respondents stated that they became aware of the Board vacancy on the Welsh Government website, with others via networks, forums, colleagues or friends. Very few (10%) were contacted by senior leaders or Board members of the PB. Thirteen of the 85 (15%) respondents stated that they were headhunted by recruitment agencies.

7.5 220 responses from 88 respondents were received on the 6 multi-choice options as to what motivated respondents to apply for a role on a Board (see table 1). Nearly all applications (82 of the 88 respondents) were motivated by a 'particular area of interest', with most of the respondents (66%) also stating that they had a 'particular skill set'. Some respondents were also motivated by 'development opportunity' (39%), 'personal aspiration' (30%), and 'career aspiration' (15%). Very few (8%) respondents indicated that 'remuneration' was a motivator in applying to a Board vacancy.

## Table 1: Motivation to apply to a board role

Multi-choice options	Number of Responses	% of Respondents
Particular area of interest	82	93%
Particular skill set	58	66%
Development opportunity	34	39%
Career aspiration	13	15%
Personal aspiration	26	30%
Remuneration	7	8%

### Issues around the campaign

7.6 Half of the 86 respondents selected that there were ‘no significant barriers or challenges’. Sixty-five responses (from 43 respondents) indicated the barriers or challenges they experienced were related to Welsh Government recruitment processes. Most (88%) of the 43 respondents identified the ‘length of time of the recruitment process’ as a challenge.

7.7 Some of the 43 respondents (16%) that selected a barrier or challenge also stated that the ‘recruitment process wasn’t clear prior to applying’, 4 of the 43 respondents (9%) also noted ‘the amount of information required’ as a challenge, and 7% of respondents stated that they ‘didn’t become aware of the vacancy in time to apply’.

7.8 Some respondents (5%) selected ‘a lack of reasonable adjustments in the process’. However, 3 respondents who did not select this commented:

“ Lack of disability access support ”

“ The application and interview process were a tick list and did not factor in additional challenges and barriers experienced by applicants who are not neuro typical ”

and

“ The online application process is difficult for anyone, and for me as a person with dyslexia, it was almost impossible. I was able to get help, but I almost gave up. Someone else probably would have. ”

7.9 If these 3 respondents had selected ‘a lack of reasonable adjustment’, it would have increased the respondents’ rate to 12%. Considering that 20% of the working age population in Wales is disabled according to the 2021 Census, and that not everyone would be interested in a Board role, persist through to the application stage or be successful at appointment, this figure is significant.

7.10 Very few respondents selected, ‘not understanding the role and its requirements’ (5%), or clarity around ‘reimbursement for caring responsibilities, employment compensation, travel and subsistence’ (5%) as a challenge or barrier. There were single respondent selections of ‘for roles receiving a fee, concerned about impact on benefits’, ‘couldn’t speak to anyone about the role’, and one respondent reported that ‘the process wasn’t available through the medium of Welsh’.

7.11 A respondent who only selected ‘the length of time of the recruitment process’ as a response, reported that “There are complexities and lack of clarity in the process. However, once you have done a number of applications (...), it does become easier!”.

7.12 Two hundred fifty-five responses were received from 86 respondents on their experience at the application stage (see table 2). Most of the 86

respondents (69%) stated that they ‘understood what was required of them at the application stage’, with around half stating that they ‘could evidence all the criteria for the role’ (53%) and ‘found the process user friendly and easy to use’ (45%). Thirty-seven of the 86 respondents (43%) also selected that they ‘understood the timeframe for the recruitment’.

7.13 Of the 86 respondents, 23 (27%) selected that they ‘weren’t sure what a strong application looked like’ with a further 7% respondents stating that they ‘could only evidence some of the criteria’ and 5% selecting that they ‘weren’t sure if they could meet all the criteria for the role’.

7.14 Some respondents (19 of 86) selected that they ‘received timely updates on the progress of their applications’ (22%), but another 22% reported that they either ‘had no updates’ or “have not received timely updates” on the progress of their applications.

7.15 Six comments were received from respondents on the recollection of their experience at application stage. Three of these commented on the long process, of which one mentioned that “updates on progress and reasons for the delays were slow and unclear. This affected my ability to apply for other positions”, and another that “The process is very long and repetitive”, with the application form duplicating the required CV. A respondent also noted that for them a key issue was the ability to fully evidence against the multiple set of criteria, within the restricted word limit. They also noted that “there are significant differences in the clarity of specifications for Boards, with some excellent and others less so.”

## Table 2: Feedback on Board Members’ experience at the application stage

Multi-choice options	Response total	Respondents %
Understood what was required of me	59	69%
I could evidence all the criteria for the role	46	53%

<b>Multi-choice options</b>	<b>Response total</b>	<b>Respondents %</b>
Process user friendly and easy to use	39	45%
Understood timeframe for the recruitment	37	43%
Unsure what a strong application looks like	23	27%
No updates on the progress of application	19	22%
Received timely updates on progress	19	22%
Evidence only some criteria for the role	6	7%
Unsure if could meet all criteria for the role	4	5%
It wasn't clear what I needed to do to apply	2	2%
Other	1	1%
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>255</b>	
<b>Total respondents</b>		<b>86</b>

7.16 Three hundred ninety-three responses were received from 86 respondents on their experience following an invitation to interview and reflect on the interview itself. Most of the 86 respondents replied that they 'understood the interview process and timelines (77%), were 'given adequate time to prepare for the interview' (74%), that 'the interview process went smoothly' (66%) with 'assessment panel members keen to listen to [their] experiences' (64%) and that 'the interview questions were relevant to the role and its responsibilities' (70%). However, a few also stated that they 'weren't clear what the interview and

timelines were' (14%) and 7% that they 'had insufficient time to prepare for the interview'.

7.17 One of the 15 comments received on Board members' feedback on the interview invitation and interview itself, read, "I wasn't expecting some of the lines of questioning which related more to governance responsibility and challenges rather than my scientific expertise and interests", and another that "there were significant differences in the campaigns" they were invited to, with the one run by an "external recruitment agency whose 'customer care' was exceptionally good. The standard of interface with those appointments handled solely by the Welsh Government, parlous by comparison". Four respondents also commented on the long process and lack of communication or progress updates.

7.18 Three of the 15 respondents commented on how pleased they were with the process, with one adding, "The process was very rigorous and challenging" and another reported that "the interview was tailored, "which was less standard (but acceptable in my opinion) to the recruiting PB".

7.19 Two of 88 respondents reported that they withdrew from the recruitment process. One respondent commented that this was due to conflicts of interests with other roles and the other respondent noted that discussions with representatives from the PB, led them to believe that they would not be shortlisted so withdrew from the campaign.

## **Support to Board members**

7.20 Most (61%) of the 28 Board members who responded whether they had received feedback when unsuccessful on previous campaigns, reported that they 'received no feedback'. Ten of the respondents (36%) who received feedback, stated that 'it was not helpful', with a further 2 respondents (7%) selecting, 'I asked for feedback following my letter but received no response'. Four respondents (14%) 'received constructive feedback but no further information', and 2 respondents who received constructive feedback, were also

‘made aware of training, mentoring and / or shadowing opportunities’.

7.21 Six of the 16 respondents who stated they received feedback following an unsuccessful campaign, commented that it was poor and not constructive, with one respondent stating, “I had to ask for detailed feedback as it wasn’t provided”. A respondent also noted that when it was provided, it was “rarely timely”, and that, “feedback has generally been so generalised and anodyne that it was not useful. Two respondents also commented on the language used, stating that “the tone and content was critical and far from constructive”, and another stated that, “the language wasn’t the best, giving the idea of a rigid set of competencies that wasn’t highlighted”. A respondent also mentioned that the “recruitment agent didn’t really have any insight into the decisions.”

7.22 The survey also asked Board members what type of support they would find helpful if they were unsuccessful. Table 3 show that nearly all 52 respondents (47) stated they would like to have ‘more detailed, constructive feedback’ and some (23) also said that they wanted the ‘opportunity to meet with someone from the Board and / or AAP’. Respondents also selected that it would be helpful to receive ‘mentoring’ (11), ‘shadowing’ (10) and ‘training’ (10) following an unsuccessful campaign.

**Table 3: Type of support that would be helpful if unsuccessful on a campaign**

<b>Multi-choice options</b>	<b>Number of responses</b>
More detailed, constructive feedback	47
Opportunity to meet with someone from the Board and/or Advisory Assessment (Recruiting) Panel	23
Mentoring	11



Multi-choice options	Number of responses
Training	10
Shadowing	10

7.23 A respondent commented on the type of support they would find helpful as follow:

“ “There is no one size for this. It varies depending on the role, the criteria, and how any interview went (if one reached that stage). Each of the options [as mentioned in the question], could be valuable in different instances and at different times in one’s career.” ”

7.24 Another comment read:

“ “Interview panels from diverse backgrounds that understand and are alert to neuro difference. Advance notice of questions or themes and topics. A rethink of ‘the interview’ as this benefits those ‘who are able to perform in the spotlight’. This quality has very little significance to what is actually required for almost all public body and board roles where listening, understanding, critical thinking and behaviours are the relevant qualities.” ”

7.25 Eighty-six respondents selected from the 6 options the support they received following their successful appointments. Most of the 86 respondents stated that following their successful appointment, they ‘met with the Chair and / or other Board members prior to commencement of role’ (64%) and ‘received [their] induction shortly after’ (58%). Some respondents ‘received induction and / or training prior to starting their role’ (33%) or ‘within 6 months of starting in their respective roles’ (15%). Very few ‘received [either] no induction’ (6%) or

induction only 'after 6 months of starting role' (4%).

7.26 Nineteen comments were received from the 86 respondents on the support required to fulfil their role. Comments varied with some respondents saying how excellent the induction done by their PB was, and others stating that the induction was not comprehensive enough nor met expectations, or that there were no formal arrangements in place, with a few commenting that it varied between appointments. Comments stated that the induction was very basic with limited information about the organisation, and / or not tailored to the role with a comment stating that "...even information required to be provided by the Charities Commission was absent".

7.27 Others commented that Welsh Government didn't offer any induction and that this fell to the PB to provide, nearly all of whom stated that the PBs induction was excellent. Training was described as 'on the job' via support and mentoring from the Chair and other Board members. A respondent noted that attempts to introduce a formal process failed due to lack of resources, which is unfavourably compared to that which is provided in the Third and Housing Sectors. A respondent also noted that it was very helpful to join as an observer prior to the start of their formal starting date, another respondent felt it useful to receive a detailed tour of the PBs' premises, meeting staff members and receiving a "comprehensive suite of information".

7.28 A respondent also noted that the induction was only one part of understanding the complexities of the PB and that more focus should be placed on upskilling Board members to be responsive and agile in their decision making. A respondent also suggested that it would be beneficial to understand other Board members' skills and expertise from the outset to build an effective team.

7.29 Nearly all 76 respondents (97%) who had induction following their appointments, found it useful for their role. The question didn't distinguish whether this was offered by the PB, the Welsh Government, or another provider.

7.30 Sixty respondents detailed the topics they considered essential for Board

membership induction. This included an understanding of:

- Board roles, responsibilities and expectations
- Fiduciary responsibilities of Board members to ensure public money and other resources are used properly and efficiently
- PB and government's governance with the necessary skills and techniques to assess and manage risks
- The strategies, policies, and where relevant, Welsh Government's programme for government
- The business/sector, including its relevant legislation, business plans, decision making, structure, stakeholders and risks. **Appendix 4** provides the full list of comments.

7.31 Most of the 87 (67%) respondents were aware that a framework was in place to deliver training on induction, and diversity and inclusion for prospective Board members and Board members (training was available in 2022-2024), with most (56%) of the respondents stating that they would be interested in receiving further information and 38% stating they would be interested in attending the training.

7.32 Most (65%) of the 48 respondents stated that they would like to receive information on the 'Public Leaders of the Future' course, of which 40% indicated they would like to attend this course. 46% of respondents also wanted information on 'Fair Recruitment Practices' with 23% stating they would like to attend the training. Slightly fewer people were interested in receiving information on the 'Near Ready Leadership' (33%) and 'Board Member Induction Training' (40%), and 23% and 15% respectively indicating that they would like to attend the training. Figure 1 shows the number of responses received in a clustered bar chart.

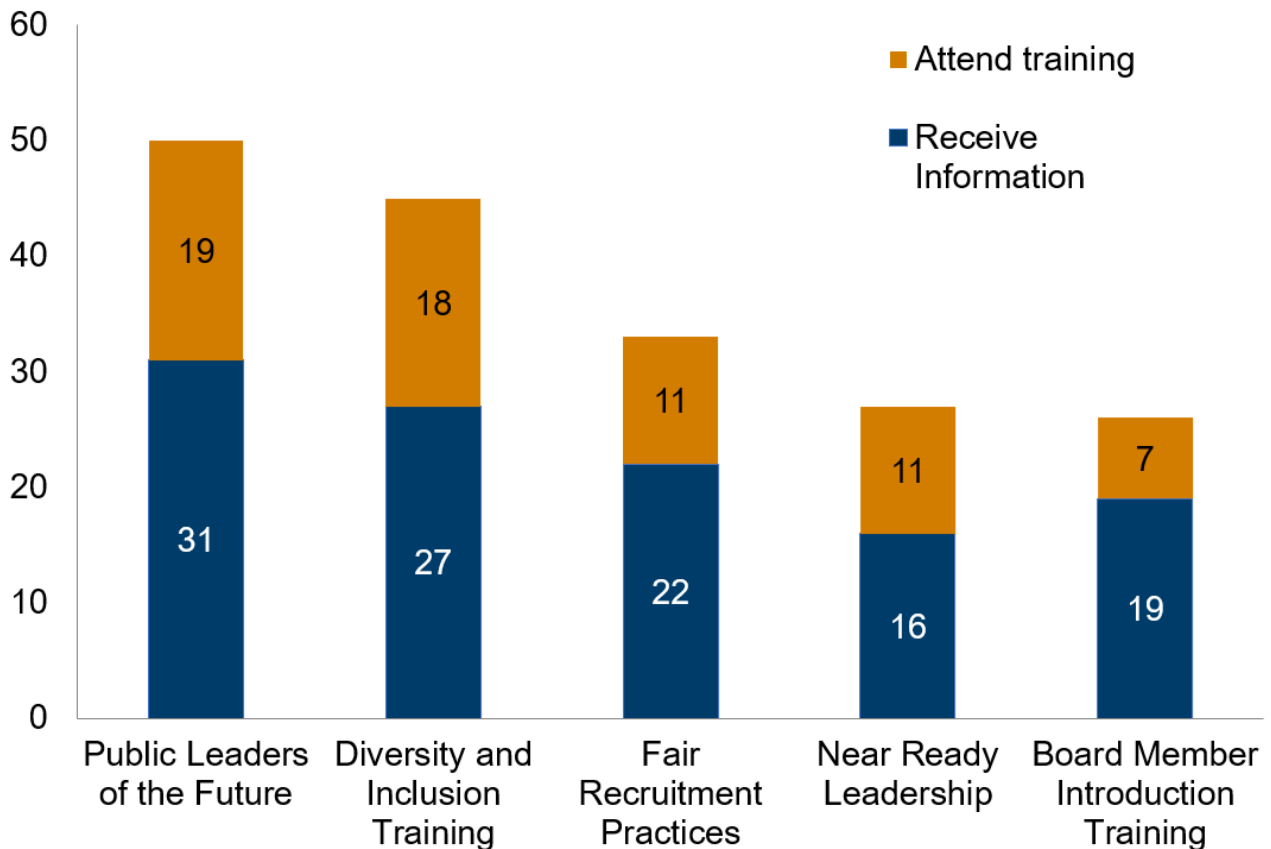


Figure 1: Number of respondents interested in receiving and attending training courses

7.33 Fifty-five Board members noted other training and development opportunities available to them, of whom 11 (20%) stated that they had no training opportunities available to them as Board members, and 12 respondents (22%) said that sufficient training was provided via their own workplaces or other Board roles.

7.34 Respondents were asked what other training or development they would find beneficial. Of the 47 respondents, 12 (26%) stated nothing specific. Twelve respondents wanted to know more about Welsh Government governance, delegations, budget settings and devolved matters. Seven respondents (15%) also noted leadership development and financial management and accounting as their priorities. Six respondents (13%) wanted more knowledge on relevant sectors and the continuous changes and developments impacting on them, 5 respondents (11%) requested training on relevant PBs governance and risk

assurance practices, and a further 4 (9%) were interested in networking with other PBs and 3 (6%) in good practice dissemination, Board / Trustee functions and responsibilities, and learning Welsh. Other training mentioned related to data security, including cybersecurity, Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) training, collaboration with stakeholders and mentoring.

## Future campaigns

7.35 Most of the 88 (67%) respondents stated that they would be interested in applying to future Welsh Government campaigns. Seven (8%) respondents stated they wouldn't be interested in future Welsh Government campaigns, and 25% said they might apply again.

7.36 Of the 7 respondents who stated that they wouldn't be interested in future Welsh Government Board membership, 5 respondents gave the following reasons: 'other interests' (2 responses), 'didn't feel I added value' (1 response), 'hours exceeded those advertised' (1 response), and 1 respondent selected 'prefer not to say'.

7.37 Three respondents provided further comments as to why they wouldn't re-apply, with two stating that they had enjoyed their Board membership, as they felt their knowledge and skills made a valuable contribution but "felt it was time to retire".

7.38 The third respondent commented:

“ If I am reappointed - the process for re-appointment is opaque and the role of Welsh Government officials in it - I will serve a further 3 years and feel that it will be time for me to step down from public life as I will have retired from my job for over 5 years. The present post has occupied far more of my time than the 14 days given per year. While I have not begrudged this at all because of my commitment to the organisation and the Sector, I feel that I could not continue to do this in another appointment in the light of my experience. ”

7.39 One hundred eighteen responses were selected by the 50 respondents who noted the reasons that would influence their decision whether they might take up a Welsh Government post (see table 4).

7.40 The 22 respondents who weren't sure if they would re-apply, selected 27 reasons influencing their decisions, including 'other interests', 'low or no remuneration', 'no evidence of Ministerial input during my term', 'insufficient authority to discharge my role', 'lack of or insufficient information from the public body to allow considerate decisions to be made'.

7.41 Additional comments were given by 10 respondents, expanding on their selected reasons which influenced their decision to re-apply:

- 2 respondents mentioned sufficiency of remuneration
- 2 respondents mentioned the length of time of campaigns (campaigns are used interchangeably with recruitment process) as barriers
- 3 respondents stated that they needed to feel like they were adding value, with one respondent saying, "The lack of suitable quality of Ministerial interaction with appointed members is something I have raised specifically in the past, and another stated, "My primary questions would be - can I add value, will this Board make a difference in improving people's lives in Wales"
- other comments referred to stepping down, capacity and the type of role. A respondent also noted, "Silo working and thinking of a body and / or department. Body or Panel not having a clear mission or values that I align with and or not delivering or operating in line with its stated mission and or values"
- a respondent also stated that they lost income as the required hours they committed to, were less than advertised.

7.42 Seventy-six responses were received from the 59 respondents who said they would re-apply, noting that their decision would be influenced by:

- remuneration
- expense and travel and subsistence reimbursement
- whether they feel they can add value

- the impact the board has on the PBs' strategy and / or operations
- whether they believe they'd have sufficient authority to discharge role
- evidence of ministerial input
- capacity due to other interests
- sufficiency of information from the PB to allow considerate decision-making
- reputational risk of the organisation
- expected hours as advertised
- training
- notice periods for board meetings.

7.43 Table 4 shows the correlation of whether Board members would consider re-applying for a Welsh Government Board appointment with the multi choice option selection of reasons influencing their decision. A Board member could select multiple responses.

	Yes	No
Would you re-apply for a WG Board appointment?	59	22

#### **Table 4: Breakdown of factors board members considered when deciding on a future Welsh Government (WG) Board role**

Reasons influencing Board members when considering future Welsh Government (WG) Board roles	YES to future WG role	MAYBE to future WG role
Personal development opportunities	1	0
Sufficient notice of Board meetings	2	0
Sufficient training	2	1

Reasons influencing Board members when considering future Welsh Government (WG) Board roles	YES to future WG role	MAYBE to future WG role
Reputational risk if high risk / complex organisation	5	1
Hours required match those advertised	4	2
Sufficient information from the PB to allow considered decisions	5	2
Evidence of board impact(s) on PBs' strategy and/or operation	7	0
Sufficient authority to discharge role	6	2
Travel, subsistence or other expense reimbursement	7	2
Evidence of ministerial input during term	6	3
Adding value	8	1
Other (competing) interests	6	8
Remuneration	17	5

## Feedback on experience throughout the recruitment process

7.44 In total, 41 respondents commented on their experience of the recruitment process, with three stating that it was positive but didn't provide any further details.

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7.45 Around half (46%) of the respondents noted the long time to complete recruitment campaigns. Two respondents also noted the minister adding to these delays, with a respondent stating:

“ Additionally the Ministerial decision process is unacceptably uncertain in timeliness. It is shocking that WG board prospective vacancy pattern is not held and managed on a coordinated, effective project management – basis, and dates for decision by Ministers not scheduled and known. The net result is poor practice and lack of timeliness of the WG public appointment process, including failure to make coordinated and beneficial use of the wide expertise amongst Senior Independent Members for Public Appointments both for advice and to support the processes. The genuinely shocking slowness of the WG recruitment process on occasions was so slow and fraught as to lead, in my view, to a serious risk to fair appointment for, and good governance of, that major arm’s length body. In particular too, it means there is insufficient time to plan and implement the necessary induction and on-boarding processes that allow members to function effectively. This simply should not be the case. ”

7.46 A respondent also agreed that the appointment process has slowed down so much that, “it has become recognised as an issue on the Risk Register maintained by the PB” and a respondent commented that “the process takes ages. It is very easy to become demotivated”.

7.47 Most of the 10 respondents (70%) who commented that they had a positive experience, qualified this by stating the process was very long, there were poor lines of communication in which they had to chase progress updates, stating that the process could be too rigid, or noting that the different campaigns differed in how they are run, with a respondent speculating this related to levels of competence and workloads.

7.48 Nine out of the 41 respondents (22%) mentioned communication as needing to be addressed, due to delays, lack of updating progress to all affected, clarity around specific requirements, or the process, expectations and

opportunities, and unavailability of further advice or discussion of the role. A respondent who stated that the “whole process was very drawn out taking months to complete for reasons which were not always obvious”, and that the communication about the process was very limited, stated:

“ I found the whole process opaque. As a professional person I was able with some perseverance to work around the difficulties. However, to recruit a more diverse range of applicants I would suggest improvements could very definitely be made to make it more user-friendly. There were a lot of assumptions being made about an applicant knowing about the role and responsibilities of a Board member and completion of the application.” ”

The respondent also suggested a “named contact” in the PAT who “could mentor an applicant through the process.”

7.49 Five respondents also noted the lack, or inadequacy of the feedback following an interview. A respondent stated:

“ Feedback when provided is rarely timely. It is often cursory, generalised and non-specific. It was as if an officer had lifted comments from an interviewer's notes. This raises concern about the quality and training of interviewers and that feedback is delegated to poorly trained Secretariat”. ”

7.50 Comments also included that there should be more focus on the behaviours, emotional intelligence and actions of effective Board members rather than rigid criteria, which ‘limits diverse Boards’. A respondent noted that “the ‘current one-fit system’ does not consider the uniqueness of PBs’ statuses, legal status and objectives, with different delivering timelines, some exceeding the appointment terms”, and that the PBs “need to fully reflect and buttress diversity:

“ “the ‘current one-fit system’ does not consider the uniqueness of PBs’ statuses, legal status and objectives, with different delivering timelines, some exceeding the appointment terms ”

and that the PBs:

“ need to fully reflect and buttress diversity. ”

7.51 A few comments stated that it is important to understand what skills and expertise are required for a PBs Board, and that “questions and process shouldn’t reduce the ability to select promising candidates”, and another comment read:

“ “I think it would help candidates to be given more information about the gaps in experience of perspective it wants to fill to progress its strategic and operational priorities. Applicants are often professional people with experience themselves of recognising that they may or may not be the right fit for the needs of the Board at this time.” ”

7.52 A respondent also noted that more needs to be done “to reach out and encourage a wider range of people to apply than those traditionally coming forward”, and continued:

“ It’s important not to create barriers by imposing unnecessary requirements in terms of qualifications or by making the recruitment process more formal and intimidating than it needs to be. Provide support through informal information giving/seeking opportunities, shadowing and mentoring. We want our Boards to reflect the communities they serve. ”

Another commented:

“ “Advertisements need to be more timely and targeted. I feel as though the

same people are recruited to multiple boards and there needs to be more opportunities for new ideas.” ”

7.53 A respondent commented:

“ “We need to consider to what extent our recruitment processes are anti-racist. I am a well-educated and culturally aware individual who is able to navigate the various systems and requirements. People from Black and Minority Ethnic background can see these processes and systems as a barrier.” ”

7.54 A respondent criticised the new Welsh Government recruitment portal as felt it was more difficult to receive updates of Board vacancies, with 2 commentators querying whether Welsh Government officials required further training to make campaigns more consistent.

7.55 There was also criticism for the differences in rates of expense payments and the lack of clarity when applying, as well as the long delays in receiving payments (although the latter seemed to be an issue with a specific PB).

## **Board members’ comments on their tenures**

7.56 Overall, 19 of the 32 (59%) respondents stated how interesting, rewarding and positive their experience has been, despite some of the challenges they have faced. Comments included the personal satisfaction experienced, developing their own skills and how they have contributed to not only the Board and Sector they served in, but other organisations, for the benefit of the economy and society in Wales, creating a fairer Wales. A few extracts from those who stated they had a positive experience:

“ “I have been able to make a small but significant contribution in my roles. But it has been an enormous struggle. There are many people with

talents, experiences and backgrounds that could and SHOULD be contributing to better decision making in Wales who are excluded due to barriers (physical, financial, institutional conscious and unconscious biases).” ”

“ “This review is long overdue. I sincerely hope that its findings will be implemented and not consigned to the "too difficult and costly" to implement box.” ”

A respondent also noted how their role on the Board improved their understanding and appreciation of the role of Welsh Government.

Others applauded the support provided by the Senior Executives in the PB or Secretariats, as well as how their Chairs' feedback and or the 'employed appraisal mechanism' helped the Boards grow and develop, and 2 respondents also stated how valuable the support of fellow Board members and their expertise in addressing challenges are.

Another respondent commented:

“ “There is a constant feeling of being valued both in opinions/ views but also in the time given to contribute, you never feel taken for granted. Having worked with the team you fully understand the amount of work and achievements that a relatively small team manages. The vital work (in my view) continues to excel and the continued support from government reflects that.” ”

A respondent noted the following:

“ “I have very much enjoyed all my board experiences. I am happy to share my experience with anyone interested in being a board member or assisting with this review centrally. I would welcome the opportunity to

discuss how there may be opportunities to improve the networking between board members on public bodies and to make improvements in the efficiency and effectiveness of public bodies through increased central oversight and sharing of resources.” ”

A few other respondents offered support and said they welcomed the opportunity to explore Board recruitment campaigns to streamline them, make them more diverse and support/mentor new members and those who require additional support.

7.57 However, 13 respondents (41%) were less positive, commenting on the Welsh Government’s lack of understanding as to what the organisations do and how they operate, its failure to treat the PB as an Arms’ Length Body [<sup>footnote 1</sup>], undermining of the PBs’ management and Board’s leadership, and lack of appreciation of the work done and expertise of Board members, as well as how the length of the recruitment process (and in some instances reducing membership tenures), make succession planning very challenging and places the PBs at risk.

A Board member, reflected on “Welsh Government officials’ interference in the arms’ length bodies’ running”, re-iterated by a further 3 respondents, with a respondent commenting:

“ “At the beginning of my tenure as Chair, as an arm's length body, we were promised 'a more mature and trusting relationship' with Welsh Government. However, this has not happened and over the past 4 years things have got significantly worse. In my view, this undermines the ability of the Board, which has a wide range of relevant expertise, to make decisions and to advise the organisation concerned. I have also felt that my own position and the organisation (which continues to be successful and have very committed staff) are being undermined. There is often interference from Welsh Government officials and constant delays and changes of tack concerning their expectations and advice to the organisation and that given to the Minister. There is also very little

understanding on the part of WG officials of the organisation and its remit which is governed by its legal status and, stemming from this, what it has to do. Whilst the organisation, as a public funded body, fulfils targets in relation to the Welsh Programme for Government, its legal status must remain fundamental. This was not my experience in previous public appointments.” ”

Another respondent put it as follows:

“ “The Board’s remit is narrow and the WG could get greater benefit from using the Board's knowledge more widely.” ”

7.58 A respondent, along with 5 others, commented on the difficulty of recruiting at the right time the required skills and capabilities. There were also concerns that expertise and institutional knowledge/ understanding could be lost with shorter tenures and the lengthy appointment process, with the following verbatim quotes:

“ The process is clear but from time to time, the [Board] has identified a gap in experience, skills, or life experience on the [Board], but subsequent appointments have not reflected those gaps, which can be a risk.” ”

“ “It is difficult to fill vacancies as the Board have not had permission to start the process and officials have been telling us when posts arise, the areas of competence they would be willing to fill, not always those we need and have asked for” ”

“ “The length of the recruitment/appointment process - from advertisement/ application to appointment - is significant and poses real difficulties in appointing new members. Allied is the reduction in terms of offices, which will mean a quicker turnover of members while grappling with a lengthy

appointment process - this is a point of serious concern. Expertise and institutional knowledge/understanding could be lost very quickly.” ”

7.59 Comments relating to expectations, read as follow:

“ “It would be helpful for board members to have more appreciation from WG of the (voluntary) work we do - especially when it is over and above the standard board schedule. In seven years as a trustee, I have never seen a minister thank or visit the board (aside from a one liner in a leaving announcement). This is a missed opportunity I believe. ” ”

“ “My main concern has been the lack of strategic guidance regarding the expectations WG have of their appointed members as well as the reinforcement of what the legal and WG expectations are of elected members. This has time has led to significantly differing views”. ” ”

“ “As a current member, I was disappointed that there was no opportunity to participate in the appointment of new members.” ” ”

7.60 Four respondents also expressed concern regarding shorter terms, with a respondent stating:

“ “there is a danger of the board becoming inquorate as several appointments come to an end at the same time and each appointment takes around a year to fill. One post is unfilled and has been for several years. ” ”

A respondent also stated:

“ The length of time to recruit members leads to uncertainty within the Board and organisation itself; the recent reduction of terms from 5 to 3



years also has implications for consistency and long-term strategic thinking - timing of recruitment and of handover periods on appointments needs to be taken into account. ”

## 8. Reporting on the PB Leads and Partnership Team Survey

8.1 Not all respondents answered every question in the survey, and some questions allowed more than one response per respondent. Findings have therefore been structured to report how many of the 25 respondents answered a question when not all had responded. **Appendix 1** shows the number of Board members from each PB that responded on the survey.

8.2 Twelve responses were received from 10 WG Partnership Teams, as 1 Partnership Team has responsibility for 3 PBs. Fifteen responses were received from 14 PBs as 2 senior leads from the National Academy for Wales (NAEL) submitted a response. The number of respondents were considered for this report unless otherwise indicated.

8.3 There were some inconsistencies in responses received from Partnership Team and PB leads. Often this could be explained by the fact that the PAT would mostly engage with Partnership Teams, and therefore PB leads would not be aware of the role of the PAT. There might also have been changes in engagement and communications since the last time a Partnership Team or PB engaged on a campaign, or since individuals were in post.

### Boards' composition

8.4 Board membership on regulated and those with regulated and unregulated Board appointments, varied between 5 to 18, and for unregulated Boards, varied between 6 to 9 Board members.

## Boards' engagement

8.5 Respondents were asked about their engagement with the PAT. Around half of the 22 respondents' answers (45%) could not be analysed, with both Partnership Team respondents and PB lead respondents stating that they only received advice from the PAT, and only some respondents (14%) stated that the 'PAT managed the complete appointment process (recruitment / interview / appointment / feedback)'. The options may have been unclear because there are processes in place for the PAT to facilitate the whole appointments process for regulated PBs. Partnership Teams and PBs are responsible for identifying skills / expertise requirements. The AAP is responsible for advising the cabinet secretary / minister as to suitable candidates, and subsequently provide feedback to the PAT who engages with the applicants. The PB lead and their respective Partnership Team commented that:

“ even though the PAT is meant to manage the appointment process, the bulk of the work is done by either the sponsorship or PB and stated that increasingly they have made use of 'headhunters', 'outside experts' to 'increase the volume and diversity of applications into the Welsh Government process'. ”

## Board Members' reimbursement

8.6 Of the 17 PBs which responded, 2 PBs reimbursed only the Chair, and one the Chair and Vice Chair, whilst 14 remunerated all their Board members. Most of the 17 PBs (65%) stated that remuneration complied with the Welsh Government Remuneration Scheme's guidance, and 2 (12%) PB leads were uncertain whether all rates complied with this guidance.

## Protocols and practice

8.7 Affirmative responses were received from 18 of the 24 respondents (75%) as to whether they had ‘an agreed internal protocol or process when recruiting to the Board’. Four PB respondents with regulated Boards and one Partnership Team respondent from an unregulated Board stated that they didn’t have a formal internal protocol or process and a PB respondent with a regulated Board wasn’t sure if they had one. However, as the 6 PBs had regulated Boards they would follow the Governance Code, and so it seems that the question might have been interpreted differently by some of the 24 respondents.

8.8 The PAT oversees the adherence to the Governance Code and provides advice and guidance to support Partnership Teams and PBs. Nine PB and Partnership Team respondents stated they were ‘fully knowledgeable’ on the Governance Code, 14 respondents stated they were only ‘partially knowledgeable’ and the only response stating that they had ‘no knowledge’ of the Governance Code, was from a PB respondent of an unregulated Board.

8.9 Most of the 21 (76%) respondents who had regulated Boards, stated that there was ‘always’ an official on the AAP representing the view of the minister for regulated appointments. Only 4 (19%) PB respondents weren’t sure if there were, and one PB respondent selected ‘it is not always clear’ if there were an official on the AAP representing the views of the minister.

8.10 When asked, ‘Do you think the views of the minister feed through to the recruitment campaign clearly enough’, only 68% of the 25 respondents affirmed. Five respondents with regulated Boards, of which one was from a Partnership Team stated they weren’t sure, and 2 PB respondents stated that it ‘didn’t always’.

8.11 63% of the 24 respondents confirmed that they ‘were always clear what the view of the minister was throughout a campaign’. A surprising response was from a Partnership Team respondent supporting a regulated Board, selecting that even though the minister’s view was clear, ‘it didn’t necessarily influence the

Board recruitment’.

8.12 Two PB respondents and one Partnership Team respondent stated that they weren’t sure whether the minister’s view fed through clearly enough on a regulated recruitment campaign and two PB respondent thought it didn’t always.

8.13 Overall, 18 respondents, of which 17 were from regulated Board appointments were aware that ministers could put names forward to the AAP. In total 7 respondents weren’t aware that ministers could put names forward to the AAP, of which 5 were from regulated Board appointments. Table 5 illustrates this information.

**Table 5: Respondents awareness whether ministers could put names forward to the AAP**

	Aware		Not aware	
	Regulated Board	Unregulated Board	Regulated Board	Unregulated Board
<b>Public Body</b>	10	0	4	1
<b>Partnership Team</b>	7	1	1	1

8.14 A PB respondent with an unregulated Board stated that their Board membership always reflected the view of the community they sought to serve. Most respondents (22/25) selected, ‘Somewhat, but there’s room for improvement’. However, respondents from the Partnership Team and PB on one of the PBs didn’t agree, with the PB respondent reporting that ‘Board membership did not reflect the community it served’ and the Partnership Team stating, ‘somewhat, but there’s room for improvement’. Two of the 14 PBs

respondents with regulated Board appointments, selected that the Board membership was not representative of its community. Table 6 shows the distribution of responses received from PBs and Partnership Team respondents

**Table 6: Responses on whether the Board membership reflects the community it sought to serve**

	Public body		Partnership team	
	Regulated	Unregulated	Regulated	Unregulated
Somewhat, but there's room for improvement	12	1	8	1
No	2	0	0	0
Yes, at all times	0	0	0	1

8.15 Most of the 18 comments received, acknowledged the need for EDI on their Boards, mentioning Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups, Welsh language speakers, and a wider age range. A few commented that recent Board recruitments have made some progress in attracting a wider range of diverse candidates, whilst acknowledging that more needs to be done. It was acknowledged that it was difficult with a finite number of Board members to have a fully diverse Board, as well as specialist skills which are essential for some Boards or appointments and need to be the focus of recruitment.

Some respondents (11%) also mentioned that the public appointments process itself has issues and can be burdensome when trying to recruit to a diverse Board.

## Challenges in recruitments

8.16 Some respondents (40%) struggled to recruit Board members when there was a requirement for a specific skill, with most of the 25 respondents (60%) either reporting they weren't aware that this was an issue, or that it wasn't an issue for them. However, the responses from Partnership Team and PB respondents with regulated Boards, differed with 3 out of 5 PB leads' responses stating that it wasn't an issue whilst their respective Partnership Teams stated that it was a struggle to recruit to a specific skill.

8.17 Overall, 17 of 25 respondents (68%) stated that the 'length of time of the recruitment process' was the biggest challenge to a successful campaign. Around half of the respondents also selected recruiting to a 'specific skill and/or expertise, or other essential criteria' (48%), and some 'unclear roles - PBU, Partnership Team, PB) (44%) and 'limited [or] same distribution list when advertising' (40%) as challenges when recruiting. Respondents could select more than one option and Figure 2 provides the number of responses received against each option offered.

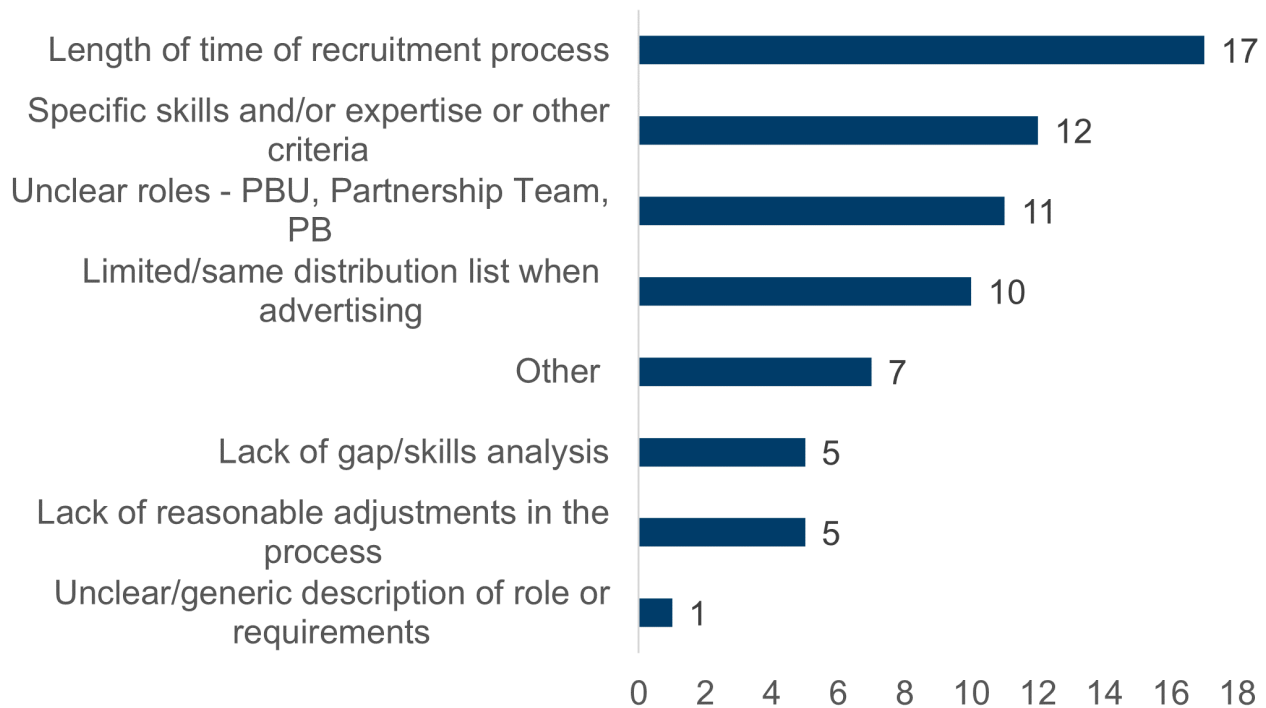


Figure 2: Responses on the challenges to a successful Board recruitment process

## Advisory Assessment Panel (AAP)

8.18 Fourteen respondents stated that they have been either the 'Chair' (14%), a 'Panel member' (36%), 'Organiser' (71%) or 'Note taker' (57%) on an AAP, with most respondents (64%) stating that they understood their roles 'clearly' and 36% of respondents selecting 'well enough'. 71% (10 out of 14) respondents stated they had 'sufficient information [prior to the recruitment] to support them', and 21% (3) noted that the information provided was 'not sufficient for them'.

8.19 When asked what support could be provided to aid understanding of the respective roles, 8 of 20 respondents selected 'Contact point for additional support', 7 'Guidance' and 5 'Proformas / templates'.

8.20 Four respondents suggested improvements on support for respective roles on AAPs, of which 2 elaborated on this by suggesting updating the Welsh

Government intranet page with the necessary guidance and desktop instructions, showing the timetable for vacancies and giving Ministerial Advice (MA) examples. Two respondents suggested provision of additional support to panel members when required in some instances, for example when recruiting to specific or specialist skills.

8.21 One of the 4 respondents also suggested a bank of potential Board members ready to be appointed to reduce the need for adverts and avoid delays.

8.22 A respondent also mentioned that the support received from the PAT “is always excellent – staff are helpful and knowledgeable, they’re just too few and thinly spread.”

8.23 Most of the 14 respondents (64%) thought the role of the Senior Independent Panel Member (SIPM) was clear when a ‘significant appointment’ was being made. However, some respondents (21%) weren’t sure if it was clear, and 2 respondents also selected, ‘it wasn’t always clear’ and it ‘wasn’t clear’.

8.24 The PB respondent who said, ‘it wasn’t clear’, was from a PB included in the Commissioner for Public Appointments Significant Appointments’ List.

8.25 It was stated that the role of the Commissioner was clear, and that this ensured fairness and transparency when recruiting Board Members.

## **Respective roles in recruitments**

9.26 Ten PBs and 8 Partnership Teams provided their thoughts on the respective roles of Partnership Teams, PBs, and the PAT. This has been split between responses for unregulated and regulated Board appointments.

### **Responses on respective roles – Unregulated Board appointments**

8.27 The following quotes are representative of responses which were received



about the different roles in the process for making unregulated Board appointments.

## **Partnership (Sponsorship) Team's responses on respective roles**

### **Partnership (Sponsorship) Team's role**

“ Ensure the Additional Accounting Officer (AAO) and Minister are informed of any changes to the Board. ”

### **PAT / PBU's role**

“ “PBU should do the recruitment for regulated appointments, however if it is unregulated, they should provide a complete process map for partnership teams to be able to follow for best practice.” ”

## **Public bodies' responses on respective roles**

### **Partnership Team's role**

“ The Partnership Team remains a critical link between the PB and Ministers whilst Ministers remain a majority shareholder. The Partnership Team's role will change once Welsh Ministers become minority shareholders in the company. ”

### **PAT / PBU's role**

A respondent saw no role for PBU and another stated, “share updates on talent

pipelines, etc".

#### Public Body's role

“ Advise on skills needed / process, i.e. assessment centres and run these as necessary ”

### Responses on respective roles – Regulated Board appointments

8.28 Responses from respondents with regulated Board appointments varied between Partnership Team and PB respondents, which illustrated the comments made by a few respondents across the 2 surveys, that campaigns differed and changed over time. Experiences and expectations could have been impacted by a combination of variables, such as resource capacity and expertise, individual ways of working, different engagement levels between PBs and their respective Partnership Teams, and the level of complexity of the role being recruited to.

8.29 A Partnership Team respondent stated:

“ There is a little ambiguity in terms of sponsorship teams and the Public Bodies Unit (PBU). There had been indications in the past that PBU would be undertaking entire recruitments processes, and in some instances they did, but it was unclear on what grounds those resources were allocated. ”

8.30 A PB respondent also commented:

“ It would be useful to have guidance on what the roles and responsibilities should be. ”

8.31 Some verbatim quotes from Partnership Team and PB respondents respectively illustrated the different expectations on the roles of the PB,

Partnership Teams and Public Appointments Team:.

## Partnership Team's responses on respective roles

### Partnership (Sponsorship) Team's role

Most Partnership Team respondents stated that they liaised with, or supported the PB, minister and PBU on the campaign, but some felt that they managed or led the recruitment process, made public announcements and 'everything to do with Appoint' (Welsh Government's previous recruitment portal) as per following quotes:

“ Everything to do with Appoint, maintaining records, e.g. diversity etc. stats, providing advice to sponsorship teams, interpreting the Code when required, liaison with OCPA, etc. ”

“ Run the process and are the point of contact for all concerned. I think this should probably be the role of PAT but when I last did this it seemed that PAT just supported the Partnership Team, so I was very much the point of contact for everyone. The recruitment process is very difficult for partnership teams as we are the point of contact but do not necessarily have the time or expertise to do the appointments. A slimmed down process is needed. ”

“ The Sponsorship Team leads the recruitment for the Minister. The Public Body and the Sponsorship Team work together based upon direction from the Minister to undertake a recruitment activity, led by the Department. ”

“ Liaising with the public body to ascertain its requirements (skills audit, negotiating the key criteria taking into consideration the body and Ministers' priorities), secretariat to the AAP, preparing MAs and supporting

docs, to an extent, liaising with candidates, liaising with Golley Slater in designing the publicity plan, liaison with numerous other internal teams (e.g. Safonau laith on WL skills assessment). ”

A respondent also felt that it was the Partnership’s role to identify the skills required to complement the Board.

#### **Public Body’s role**

Partnership Team respondents were more in agreement as to how this role is perceived, with the following quote representative of two responses:

“ “Nominating a representative to sit on the panel, performing a skills audit of its current membership, negotiating the job description / essential criteria with sponsorship team, assisting in publicising the role with stakeholders and interested groups, etc.” ”

A respondent also stated the PBs' role as follows:

“ “Draft documents, send out communications, promote the roles and answer queries.” ”

#### **PAT / PBU’s role**

As illustrated by the following 5 verbatim quotes, the role of PAT needs to be more transparent:

“ “The Commissioner ensure that the process is completed in accordance with the Code for Public Appointments. However, this relies on them getting information from the PAT who in turn receive information from the partnership team.” ”

“ “Quality assures the process and provides sign off.” ”

“ “PBU should do the recruitment for regulated appointments, however if it is unregulated, they should provide a complete process map for partnership teams to be able to follow for best practice.” ”

“ “The Public Bodies Unit should be notified of the proposed recruitment with no further action for them.” ”

“ “Provide oversight - guidance - steer to ensure the correct processes are followed and implemented.” ”

## **Public bodies’ responses on respective roles**

### **Partnership (Sponsorship) Team’s role**

A respondent stated that the Partnership Team has always been their “sole point of contact on recruitment.” A further 2 respondents stated the following:

“ “to co-ordinate between PAT and PB and provide some resource to PAT - and to provide advice to PB. To agree scheduling with PB Chair. To advise the Minister.” ”

“ “to provide advice, enable good working relationships and engage with PB to ensure correct process is followed.” ”

## Public Body's role

Most respondents agreed on the role of the PB, with the following quote reflecting most comments:

“ PB do not liaise directly with the PBU, nor they with us on recruitment exercises. We see our own role as informing WG of skills, knowledge, experience and diversity gaps on the Public Body, to inform recruitment exercises. Our Chair has a role in the shortlisting and interviewing panels for prospective members of the Board, and they are also required to submit to our Sponsor Team at the end of each member's term of office an assessment of their contributions, and a recommendation as to whether the said member should be invited to serve a further term. We fully understand that the ultimate decision on initial member appointments and any subsequent re-appointments rests with WG/the Minister.” ”

However, 3 respondents stated that the PB led on the recruitment process:

“ to ensure process is robustly followed and provide assurance to other parties (inc. Minister, PBU and WG Partnership Team)” ”

“ advises on skills needed / process i.e. assessment centres and run these as necessary” ”

“ sets timetable and organise process” ”

## PAT / PBU's role

Public Bodies respondents stated that PAT either “manages” or “support” the recruitment process - advertising, sifting, interview and appointment.”

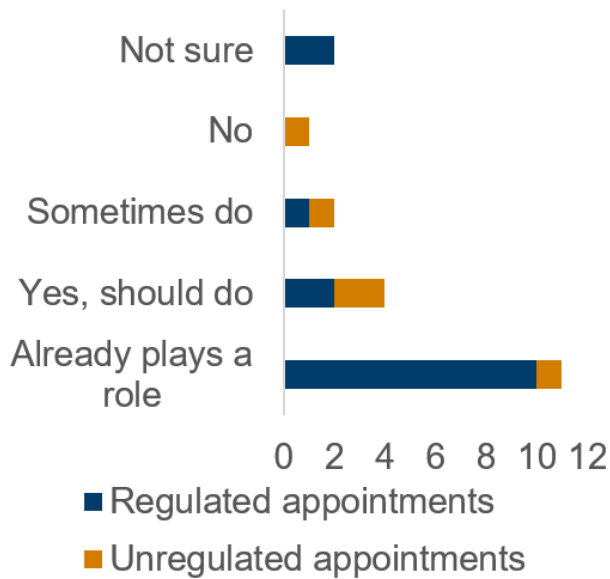
“We understand that our Sponsor Division liaises with the Public Bodies Unit to ensure the recruitment process follows appropriately the requirements set out in relevant Codes and WG practices and guidelines.” ”

PB respondents also noted that the PAT shared updates on “talent pipelines, etc.”, and provided “advice, guidance and sign-off.”

## Role of the Board

8.32 Most of the 22 respondents (82%) stated that their Boards ‘already play a role’ when recruiting, with 15 respondents from regulated Boards, of which 10 were PB respondents. Four PB respondents (18%) noted that they ‘should’ play a role, split equally between regulated and unregulated Board respondents. Three respondents (14%) stated that they ‘sometimes do’. A PB respondent from an unregulated Board said they didn’t play a role and 5 respondents ‘weren’t sure’ if they played a role (23%). Figure 3 shows the number of responses received from the 22 PBs and Partnership Teams respondents for regulated and unregulated Boards.

### Public Bodies' responses



### Partnership Teams' responses

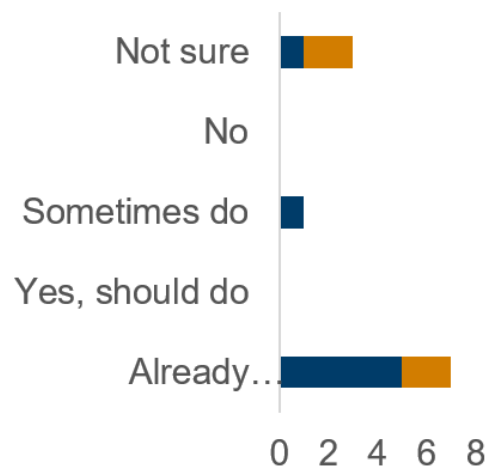
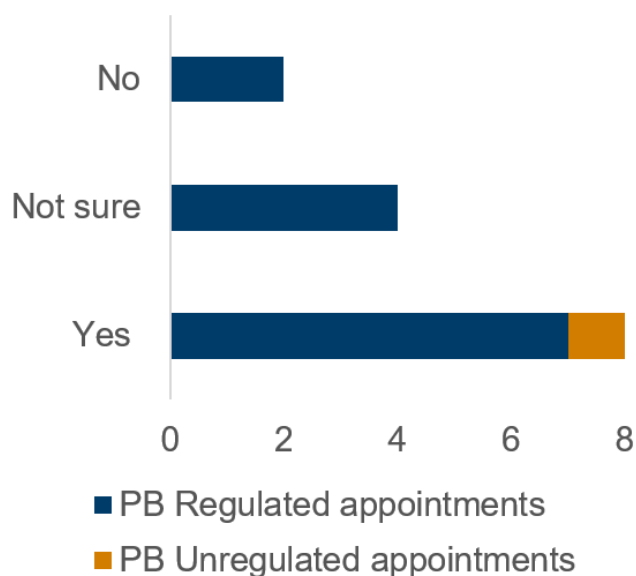


Figure 3. Opinions on whether the Board has a role when recruiting

8.33 Most of the 21 respondents (67%) felt that the Boards should be more engaged in recruitment, with 12 from regulated Boards, of which 7 were from PB respondents. Seven respondents (33%) weren't sure, with 4 PB respondents who had regulated Board appointments. Three respondents (14%) stated that they should not, of which one was from a Partnership Team with a regulated Board (see figure 4).



### Public Bodies responses



### Partnership Teams' responses

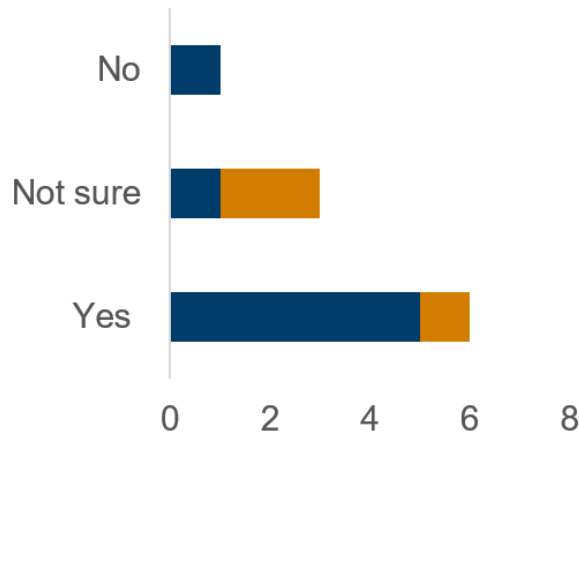


Figure 4: Responses on whether the Board should be more engaged in campaigns

8.34 Eighteen respondents commented on what the role of the Board should be when recruiting to a Board appointment. Two respondents from unregulated Boards, stated that the Board should have full discretion about specification, timescales, advertising, selection and appointment (albeit against clear, concise and sensible guidance), but with a requirement to ensure that ministers are content with preferred candidates before any appointments are made.

8.35 Nearly all 16 respondents (94%) with regulated Board appointments agreed that the Board should be part of the recruitment process with a representative sitting on the AAP, with 2 also mentioning that they should use their contacts and networks to share the advert. 10 respondents also stated that the Board is, or should be, engaged in deciding the person and /or skill requirement. Some mentioned that this ought to be done in collaboration with the Partnership Team and PB.

8.36 A Partnership Team respondent with a regulated Board felt that the Board should not have any official role in the recruitment process, and stated:

“ Given it is the Minister's responsibility to appoint, there should be no official role for the Board. To cede prerogative power to an ALB would be inappropriate. Staff within the Welsh Government will undertake recruitment, helped with advice from the body and its board, but only civil servants should independently be recruiting for the Minister.” ”

## Support to unsuccessful candidates

8.37 Overall 32 responses were received from 23 respondents who answered 'what support or opportunities were offered to unsuccessful candidates'. Some respondents selected 'the opportunity to meet with someone from the AAP' (30%), with 22% of respondents stating 'None'. Very few respondents (9%) selected, 'Opportunity to meet with someone from the Board'.

8.38 Five respondents (22%) noted that they offered 'shadowing' and 'mentoring' opportunities, with a PB respondent stating that "although nothing at present, discussions were underway".

8.39 When specifically asked whether mentoring is offered for potential Board members, some of the 24 respondents (38%) stated that they offered mentoring to potential Board members. Only 1 respondent explained that they "previously offered this to under representatives". It is unclear why fewer respondents selected this option in the previous question.

8.40 Although nearly all 23 respondents (96%) stated that they would support a training opportunity to help the Board be more representative of the community it served, some cautioned that there needed to be clear guidance from the PAT on what these mentoring opportunities would lead to, as previous attempts to do this, were considered unsuccessful. A respondent noted that not only would they offer training opportunities to:

“ the next generation of Board members to enable diverse groups to have confidence in applying for Board positions, but also highlighted the need

to train new Board members on the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan and Social Model of Disability. ”

## Training

8.41 Most of the 24 respondents (71%) indicated that they were aware of the ‘Diversity and Inclusion’ training delivered for the PAT, and nearly all of the 23 respondents (91%) were interested in receiving further information on training opportunities.

8.42 Around half of the 23 respondents (45%) stated they were interested in attending ‘Diversity and Inclusion’ training, with some also interested in attending ‘Public Leaders of the Future’ (29%), ‘Fair Recruitment Practices’ (27%), ‘Near ready leadership’ (24%), as well as ‘Board Member Introduction’ training (20%).

8.43 A lack of suitable training when recruiting to a Board was identified, with 2 respondents noting that:

“ “there could be years between recruitment exercises and at times, a new person in a role is expected to recruit without prior experience or knowledge.” ”

8.44 A respondent suggested that their in-house induction and training for Board Members could be done in conjunction with other PBs as each Board currently does their own, with another commentator asking if Academi Wales could do more.

8.45 A respondent also noted that as their Board is unregulated, they:

“ “struggle to know what questions to ask as there is no process map that they can follow.” ”

8.46 A PB respondent from a PB who has both regulated and unregulated Board appointments noted that the question was not applicable to them “as the PB is in the position of having to accept the appointments.”

## Further feedback on Board recruitment

8.47 A further 11 comments were received from respondents on Board recruitments, of which a PB with an unregulated Board commented:

“ “The PBU's processes need to reflect the relative nimbleness of the Arm's Length Bodies it supports. Small commercially focussed organisations should be afforded flexibility (albeit with support and guidance) to operate in the markets the organisations have been established by Ministers to operate in. Hampering the ability to do so undermines the purpose of their creation. One size does not fit all.” ”

8.48 Two Partnership Teams commented on how resource intensive the process is, particularly when there is no guidance available, or when carrying internal vacancies themselves whilst continuing with business as usual.

8.49 A Partnership Team also commented that Boards and Partnership Teams should retain the lead to recruit to their Boards as:

“ “it is important that Board members feel passionate about the role, especially as many are doing it voluntarily.” ”

8.50 A Partnership Team requested guidance on methods to engage especially younger people and making the recruitment process more equitable, as it felt that the current interview style and questions disadvantaged this group.

8.51 Nearly all of the PBs' respondents commented on the length of time it takes to recruit, with one commenting:

“ This is an area which frustrates Ministers, Board members and Executives of PBs alike. Our last recruitment process took over 18 months. Significant change and improvement are necessary if we are to recruit the best people we can to the Boards of Wales' public bodies and to increase diversity of background and thinking.” ”

8.52 A PB respondent who welcomed “any training on Board recruitments”, also stated they would be happy to contribute to any training or seminars.

8.53 A PB respondent requested statistics ‘to allow scrutiny of courses’, such as how “getting people ready to apply for Board” outcomes, and “how many have been part of the programme to see the talent pipeline being developed”. They queried if there is “an opportunity for Chairs to have a slot to talk about upcoming vacancies to bring the roles to life” when these courses are being run. The same respondent also queried whether “there is an opportunity for organisations to work together when recruiting either generic Board members or those with similar skills to help with resources”, and suggested that “it would be good to have a list of people from diverse backgrounds and skills who would be willing to be on the Assessment Panels, in addition to those already on the SIPMs list”.

8.54 A PB respondent also noted that:

“ there is inconsistency on how the appointments process is applied across the board with some PBs having more autonomy. In general, the support we have received from PAT is poor. The PB respondent suggested there “should be a system in place with PAT on early alerts of appointments coming to an end to allow for early engagement on recruitment. ”

## 9. Good practice

9.1 Board members, PBs and Partnership Teams were asked about their

experiences or knowledge of good practice. Comments also included experiences of Boards which weren't mentioned in the Survey List. As such a respondent noted that the Fundraising Regulator recruitment process was very good. Another referred to the practices in smaller Registered Social Landlords, which included training, support and reimbursement of expenses to attend interviews.

## **Board members experience and recommendations**

9.2 Overall 29 Board members shared their experiences or knowledge of good practice protocols on Board recruitments, some of which mentioned increase of networks and channels of communication, development of a pipeline of appointable Board members from diverse backgrounds and experience. Comments on good practice have been sorted into 8 headings:

### **i. Principles and process**

- Board recruitments should be fully transparent, open, fair, fully inclusive and collaborative between Board, PB and Welsh Government
- Make use of external expertise and insight as required
- A respondent also noted they would have valued their fellow Board members' opinions on candidates during a campaign
- A respondent asserted that diligence checks and some reference checks (to check reputation of applicant) are needed at application stage to ascertain "if the applicant would be eligible to serve on a Board"
- Opportunity of an in-depth and full interview by an independent observer to review any issues in the recruitment process and the PBs governance, operations and engagements
- Campaigns should be much shorter and better co-ordinated as current long delays in timescales could "lead to a serious risk to fair appointments and good governance for the PB"
- Forward planning, making use of project techniques, with the periods of appointees known and tracked, and thus being proactive as to likely

timelines for re-appointments or recruitments

- Co-ordinated, scheduled timelines would allow ministers to make more timely decisions
- Inclusion of the lead of the PB in the recruitment process.

## ii. Adverts and engagement

- Target identified groups / networks, capitalise on these connections and invite them to apply
- Give candidates the opportunity to meet with the CEO or Board members to understand the reality of the role and understand the process
- Give candidates the opportunity to meet with some of the staff, following an interview
- Make use of experts when specific skills or knowledge is required
- Suggested toolkit to tailor an advert: [The Higher Education Board Diversity and Inclusion Toolkit](#).

## iii. Skills and expertise

- Develop a skills and diversity matrix and measure against where the PB needs to be, to enable the best possible combination on the Board.

## iv. Interviews

- Make use of non-traditional interview techniques to allow all candidates to shine, such as mock Board meetings, language / questions targeted to audience group. A respondent stated that “straight interviews / presentations only measure a limited range” and that it “allowed them to demonstrate their skills”
- Encourage feedback on the process from interviewees
- Give constructive feedback to help unsuccessful candidates to learn
- “The process was clear, and I genuinely felt like it was an important role that

I could positively contributed to. What was equally important was the communication of the passion and friendliness of the team you were potentially joining”.

## **v. Fees and expense reimbursement**

- Inclusive application practices across all Boards, such as reimbursement of travel and care costs to attend interviews
- Once appointed, care and support costs and equipment to attend meetings and undertake the role
- Pay and leave of absence for sickness and parental leave.

## **vi. Diversity**

- Recognise bias especially when it comes to the lack of expertise in younger people or other diverse groups
- Increase diversity by having a pipeline of trained and “ready candidates for public office” who can be encouraged to apply
- Make use of non-traditional channels to encourage more diversity
- “Diversity on the recruitment panel can be hugely encouraging in attracting diversity of candidates and successful outcomes
- Mentoring from experienced people from under-represented backgrounds is hugely important.”
- “When working for a national company, we advertised for a junior member (under 30) to be a Board member for 2 years in order to gain experience on Boards, and this attracted an incredibly good response.”

## **vii. Training and development**

- Should be consistent across Boards
- Part of Induction should include a site tour and meeting some staff members
- Board buddying for new and inexperienced members



- “The training from Equal Power, Equal Voice (EPEV) pilot programme and the support of my EPEV mentor has been the single most impactful support I've received in working on boards.”

## viii. Pipeline development

- Provide training and development for candidates who lack the necessary experience in applying for Board roles
- Development opportunities could include attendance of subcommittees or Board meetings, open days with communications around what it is to be a Board member and the application processes
- Information packs about the roles of Board members, including stories, champions of specific characteristics or skills required.

## PBs and Partnership Teams experience and recommendations

9.3 All 4 Partnership Team respondents' best practice examples focussed on recruitment to improve diversity on their Boards. Some used diversity networks, national press and half of respondents (50%) said they made use of a recruitment agency, although one respondent commented that it didn't achieve the desired outcomes.

9.4 The National Park Authorities (NPAs) Partnership Team respondent said they funded a shared post between the 3 NPAs focussing on EDI, to build links with organisations and individuals representing protected characteristics, and to encourage people from those backgrounds to apply to Board vacancies. They contributed their biggest success in recruiting to a more diverse population and subsequent diverse Board appointments:

“ “to the language used in the application pack and the evolution of the way in which we advertise vacancies, particularly the use of social media and

advertising in more targeted media.” ”

9.5 The NPAs also advertised, along with the adverts placed by the PAT:

“ “We have also adopted the practice of offering the NPAs a modest amount of money to undertake publicity work of its own to share info regarding vacancies with their networks.” ”

9.6 A Partnership Team respondent whose PB benefitted from the use of a recruitment agency, noted that offering potential candidates the opportunity to meet with the Chair or Board members worked well.

9.7 In total, 10 PB respondents contributed to what worked well for them. One respondent who quoted their recruitment process as the ‘golden standard’, summarised it as follows:

- “ i. Development of a targeted publicity strategy to support recruitment, to access under-represented groups.
- ii. Option for candidates to speak to Chair/Accounting Officer prior to application submission.
- iii. Convening of Stakeholder panel to complement the considerations of formal review panel.
- iv. Detailed sift/interview reports to enable the provision of helpful feedback. ”

9.8 Some PB respondents reiterated the value of a good campaign to all necessary targeted audiences, with a respondent stating:

“ “investing in advertising the role widely brings a high calibre of candidates despite the poor remuneration on offer.” ”

9.9 Most of the respondents (60%) also noted the value in giving interested

candidates the opportunity to learn more about the organisation, the role, and the recruitment process either by including a webinar or video when advertising, the opportunity to meet with Board members or an assessment centre which gives the candidates the “opportunity to be in a role of a Board member”.

9.10 Two PB respondents also mentioned the value of the Board doing a skill audit, using this information to discuss with their Partnership Teams the person specification requirements. A respondent mentioned that drafts of the job description are discussed and agreed prior to advert and that their Chair is always part of the AAP.

9.11 A PB respondent also quoted good practice examples from their role in other bodies, which included:

“ “developing a pipeline from different backgrounds, providing advice and support for new entrants to the system and building relationship with communities.” ”

9.12 A PB respondent mentioned that they had a mentoring process to support potential applicants “but as there was no involvement of Welsh Government, it wasn’t as successful as it could have been”.

9.13 A PB respondent from an unregulated Board stated that they shared the names of preferred candidates “directly with Ministers prior to appointment to ensure that all candidates are acceptable”.

## 10. Conclusion

10.1 The aim of the report was to share the findings from the 2 surveys to allow PBU, PBs and their respective Partnership Teams to consider and compare their own practices and to identify where improvements can be made.

10.2 The following actions have been taken or are planned by PBU in response

to the issues raised in this review.

## **Issues raised and actions taken or in-progress**

### **Issue A**

The delivery of campaigns is variable, with some very good and others less so.

### **Action A**

In the last 18 months, the PAT has reviewed its process and streamlined the recruitment process, ensuring greater consistency of delivery and response across campaigns.

Dedicated campaign managers support Partnership Teams to complete proformas, which includes the 'information to candidate pack', Welsh Language assessments, advert and MA templates.

The process timetable clearly notes the separate responsibilities of the PAT and the Partnership teams.

The PAT continually review guidance and proformas, and consider their effectiveness, and are responsive to Partnership Teams requesting additional assistance to support a campaign.

### **Issue B**

Long campaigns with insufficient planning and co-ordination.

## Action B

The PAT has moved from a reactive to a proactive process by developing a forward planning system, showing when each Board membership tenure ends, which allows early engagement with the relevant Partnership Teams.

This allows Partnership Teams to collaborate early with their respective PBs and Cabinet Secretary / Minister on skills, expertise and characteristics required, and submit MAs in a timely manner to ensure clearance is received within planned timelines.

The recruitment process for regulated appointments is wholly compliant with the Governance Code on Public Appointments, ensuring fair and open processes with appointments on merit.

The Governance Code has clear instructions on the process which is expected to conclude 3 months from the cabinet secretary / minister's approval, following the advert closing, as well as dates for sifting, interview and notification to candidates. (Closing date refers to the cabinet secretary / minister accepting the long list of candidates. Occasionally the cabinet secretary / minister might ask for the vacancy to be re-advertised, thus changing the planned closing date.)

Overall, 21 out of the 26 Welsh Government campaigns for regulated appointments met this deadline in 2023-2024. Lessons will be learned from the campaigns which didn't adhere to the timeline, and changes discussed below would also improve compliance with the timelines.

## Issue C

Lack of Information and poor communication during campaign

## Action C

Candidate packs now state sift, interview and start of position dates for regulated appointments, as well as standardised essential person criteria.

Timelines are agreed with the Partnership Teams and additional information is provided to candidates in the candidate pack.

Campaign managers are the first point of contact, are trained in the Governance Code and will respond directly to queries. Their contact details are included in the candidate packs when advertised.

## Issue D

The recruitment process is complex

## Action D

The recruitment process to regulated PBs is compliant with the Governance Code on Public Appointments, ensuring fair and open processes with appointments on merit.

The Governance Code has clear instructions on the process which is expected to conclude 3 months from the cabinet secretary / minister's approval, following the advert closed.

Partnership Teams are provided with clear guidance and templates prior to the start of a campaign. Any issues of concern or uncertainty can be discussed with the delegated campaign manager at this early stage.

PAT is working with an external steering group to design a pilot approach to streamline public appointments aimed to encourage a more diverse group of applicants to NED roles, reducing bias by removing unnecessary barriers which

includes overly-specific criteria. Details of appointable candidates who have given consent, will be held on a 'talent bank' and appointed to roles when they are available.

The approach will allow applicants to be considered for suitable roles within the subsequent 12 months without rewriting their application for each role.

## **Issue E**

Outreach is limited and needs to include targeted groups and not just the traditional pool of applicants.

## **Action E**

Plans for the PAT to undertake some outreach work will be underway when the team is restructured. The PAT will also work with Welsh Government Human Resources colleagues who are already delivering outreach to explore where there can be an overlap of messages

Partnership Teams and their PBs are responsible for agreeing outreach strategies to ensure diversity on their Boards.

Vacancies are currently disseminated to a wide range of stakeholder groups. Some campaigns have external recruitment agencies to improve outreach and diversity, but success has been varied.

Techniques used by some Partnership Teams and PBs included information webinars or open days to meet with current Board members and ask questions, utilising networks, forums and targeting specific stakeholder groups. The PAT will also look at these techniques for Chair recruitment.

The Welsh Government Public Appointments webpage will be redesigned in 2024 to include case studies of current Board members talking about their experiences to encourage people to apply to Boards.

## **Issue F**

Applications and interviews don't attract a more diverse group.

## **Action F**

The new platform, Cais has been established and the PAT can provide support to complete an on-line application when help is requested as a reasonable adjustment.

The current process requires an individual to complete an application for every vacancy, with each vacancy often varying the criteria required. This means the individual must rewrite their personal statement to highlight areas of expertise each time to match the shortlisting criteria. Those who do not, risk not meeting the criteria and not being shortlisted.

## **Issue G**

Feedback is slow and not always constructive.

## **Action G**

Advisory Assessment Panels are put together by the Partnership Team, often with the PB represented by the Chair. A senior experienced official will also be present, who will occasionally Chair the panel if the appointment is for a Chair position.

AAP members are provided with guidance and templates to complete following sifts and interviews. The Chair collates the panel's views and the outcomes before submission to the relevant cabinet secretary / minister for clearance and final decisions.



The PAT provides the recorded feedback to unsuccessful candidates with the option given to discuss further with the Chair of the AAP. When a candidate has been assessed as appointable but not selected by the cabinet secretary / minister they are informed that their names will be held on a talent bank and could be invited to consider a similar vacancy, if it came up, which would reduce the time needed for a new campaign.

Consideration will be given to develop further guidance for AAP members, which should also include examples of good practice when providing feedback.

## **Issue H**

AAPs need to be more diverse

## **Action H**

The Governance Code on Public Appointments requires that the AAP includes a member of the PB, a Welsh Government representative and an independent member

Welsh Government ensures AAPs are gender diverse and consideration is given to including other protected characteristics as much as possible given that the recommended size of a panel is 3 or 4 members.

The current SIPM list is used for appointing Chairs of significant appointments. Significant appointments are those previously agreed by the First Minister and the Commissioner for Public Appointments. There are 10 SIPMs with a mix of diverse characteristics.

## **Issue I**

More work to be done on diversifying Board members

## **Action I**

PAT funded a paid job shadow / mentoring project which gave 26 participants who were Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people or disabled people, the opportunity to be part of a Board during 2024. The pilot will be evaluated in September 2024.

## **Issue J**

Training and Development of Board Members are variable with sporadic generic input from Welsh Government

## **Action J**

Training was procured for Board members and prospective Board members in 2022-24, which resulted in 208 delegates participating in the 5 modules, 'Near Ready Leadership', 'Fair Recruitment Practices', 'Public Leaders of the Future', 'Board Member Introduction', and 'Diversity and Inclusion'. This also included unsuccessful applicants who benefitted from training

PBU will consider what further guidance could be provided to assist with induction training.

Chairs and Non-Executive Board Members have been invited by PBU to attend quarterly briefing sessions on different topics from January 2024. This is ongoing and the views of Chairs and Board members are taken into account when planning the programme.

PBU will discuss with Partnership Teams if there are benefits to Partnership Teams or ALBs combining resources to procure specific training which is relevant to particular sectors.

Training and development of Board members will be discussed at a future

meeting of the Public Leaders Forum.

## **Issue K**

Recruitment is resource intensive whilst 'Business As Usual' has to continue without additional resource

## **Action K**

The forward look allows better planning, and updated guidance and templates should better support Partnership Teams and remove uncertainty and inefficient time consuming activities.

The talent bank of appointable members will provide a resource for Partnership Teams and PBs.

## **Issue L**

Improving data transparency of the appointments process

## **Action L**

The new appointment system, Cais, creates a clear transparent process for appointments, including the collection and collation of all the standard diversity data.

The Welsh Government is subject to audits from the Public Appointments Commissioner and submits full sets of data for scrutiny and inclusion in the Office for the Commissioner of Public Appointments **(OCPA) Annual Report**.

There will be more publicly available data when the results of two pilot surveys on the diversity of the workforces in PBs are published later in 2024. The

surveys were conducted by the Equality, Race and Disability Evidence Unit in Welsh Government in summer 2023. The first survey focussed on the diversity of Board members and the second survey on how data on workforce diversity is currently collected.

These findings will provide insight into public leader diversity, highlight gaps in the evidence base and make recommendations for future data collections.

## **Issue M**

Remuneration affects potential Board applications with different rates for different ALBs

## **Action M**

Respondents didn't identify this as a major motivation when applying for their current role, but it was a key consideration when selecting reasons which would influence future interest in Welsh Government campaigns.

However, considering the challenging financial landscape for the public purse, fee rates have remained unchanged for several years. This position is regularly reviewed with Welsh Government fees evaluated against similar arrangements and appointments across UK public services.

All public appointees can claim reimbursement for travel and subsistence expenses that are properly and necessarily incurred. The arrangements are subject to the host body's expense policies, as agreed between the PB and its Trade Union or staff representative to ensure the PB does not have a two-tier expense policy for employees and their Board.

## **Issue N**

Board members felt their expertise and professionalism were not always

recognised or appreciated

## **Action N**

Consideration will be given on how to make cabinet secretaries / ministers' engagement in the PB more transparent to Board members.

PBU will explore how to address this issue at one of our regular meetings with Chairs.

It is suggested that Partnership Teams should develop guidelines in collaboration with their respective PBs:

- as to the required documentation and information to be shared with Board members, which could include information on the organisation's structure, annual reports, strategic and business operating plans, policies and Board minutes;
- the quality of information to be shared with Board members, for instance business cases or business justification cases for any proposed significant changes in delivery or operations, or investment proposals developing a uniform or a minimum template when the Chair reviews the performance of the CEO and Board members.

## **Issue O**

Criticism that PB's status and independence are not always recognised.

## **Action O**

Relationship issues will be captured by the Public Bodies risk tool an adaption of the Self Assessment Model (SAM) used by the UK government, that will be developed later this year.

## Future considerations

10.4 PBU will consider the recently published [Committee of Public Accounts report](#), from May 2024 and the [National Audit Office \(NAO\) report](#) published in February 2024, which have similar findings to this thematic review, with the NAO reporting on emerging themes and PAC making 8 recommendations to improve the Board Appointments process (see [Appendix 7](#)), noting any further outstanding actions that needs to be considered.

## Footnotes

1. “The guiding principle underlying the framework is that the classification of an arm’s length body (‘ALB’) should be determined by the degree of freedom that body needs from ministerial control to perform its functions.”, [Public Bodies Handbook – Part 1. Classification Of Public Bodies: Guidance for Departments](#) (publishing.service.gov.uk)

## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Public Bodies list (“survey list”)

Public Body	PB leads & WG Partnership Teams (PT) responses			Board members
	Welsh Government PT	PB	Total PB & PT	Total Board members
Adnodd Cyfyngedig			0	0

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	PB leads & WG Partnership Teams (PT) responses			Board members
Arts Council of Wales		1	1	3
Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority	1		1	1
Careers Wales	1		1	5
Centre for Digital Public Services Ltd	1		1	1
Commission for Tertiary Education and Research			0	2
Cwmni Eginio Ltd			0	0
Design Commission for Wales			0	5
Development Bank of Wales plc	1		1	4
Education Workforce Council			0	3
Eryri National Park Authority	1	1	2	1
Global Centre for Rail Excellence Ltd (GCRE)		1	1	0
Higher Education Funding Council Wales		1	1	3
Independent Appeals Panel			0	0

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	PB leads & WG Partnership Teams (PT) responses			Board members
Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales			0	1
Industry Wales (Sector Development Wales Partnership Ltd)			0	0
Life Sciences Hub Wales Ltd		1	1	4
Llais			0	5
Local Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales		1	1	1
Hybu Cig Cymru (HCC)	1	1	2	1
National Academy for Educational Leadership (NAEL)	1	2	3	3
National Library of Wales		1	1	7
National Museum Wales			0	5
Natural Resources Wales	1	1	2	2
Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority	1	1	2	3
Qualifications Wales	1	1	2	4

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	PB leads & WG Partnership Teams (PT) responses			Board members
RCAHMMW			0	6
Social Care Wales	1	1	2	11
Sport Wales		1	1	7
Transport for Wales			0	6
Welsh Development Management Ltd			0	0
Welsh Industrial Development Advisory Board	1		1	5
Welsh Language Commissioner Advisory Panel			0	0
Welsh Revenue Authority			0	0
WGC Holdco Ltd			0	0
<b>Total</b>	12	15	27	99

Twelve responses were received from 10 Welsh Government Partnership Teams, as 1 Partnership Team has responsibility for 3 PBs.

Fifteen responses were received from 14 PBs as 2 senior leads from National Academy for Wales (NAEL) submitted a response.

Ninety-nine responses were received from 88 Board members on the PBs in the

Survey List, the average (median) number of Board members responses per PB was 3.

Of the 22 ALBs which engaged, 15 responses were from Welsh Government Sponsored Bodies (WGSB) and 7 from companies owned by Cabinet Secretaries. Two responses were from non-ALBs and 3 from Independent Public Sector Delivery Partners, the National Park Authorities.

## Appendix 2: Methodology and survey links

Most of the questions were non-mandatory and allowed multi-choice options and therefore the number of respondents on each question differed and did not necessarily equate to total responses received. For instance, a single respondent could select all the options, resulting in more responses than respondents on a particular question. A respondent could also refrain from answering when further information was required on a previous response, which affected both the response and respondent count. Thus, either the number of respondents and number of responses, or in some instances both, are stated to clarify the percentage calculations used to quantify some of these responses. Notwithstanding these calculations, all comments have been considered by the Public Bodies Unit.

‘Board member’ is used to also include Panel members and Commissioners, as the latter two only included a small number of respondents.

‘Other Boards’ indicate Board / Panel, as well as Commissioners of Public Bodies not included in the Survey List.

‘Survey list’ in the text and diagrams refer to the Welsh Government Public Bodies who were invited to take part in this review, as shown in [Appendix 1](#).

Common threads were gathered from comments and feedback to make the report a bit more succinct, however some quotes are included to reflect the richness of the responses.

Where a respondent or their organisation is identified in the text, this is with their explicit consent.

Links to the 2 surveys are as follows:

### **PB leads and Partnership Teams' survey**

### **Board members survey**

No further results on these surveys are captured. However, a mandatory question is denoted with an asterisk, and you will need to select an answer to view the rest of the questions, or you could select different page numbers in the top right corner

## **Appendix 3: Flowchart of the Public Appointments Team's delivery**

### **1. Preparatory work**

#### **Public Appointments Team:**

- identifies vacancy from 'forward look' sheet 12 months in advance.
- contacts Partnership Team to advise campaign which may need to be run.
- contacts again 9 months in advance, send campaign forms and confirm campaign manager and first point of contact.

#### **Partnership Team:**

- is sent templates to complete in preparation of the new campaign commencing.
- provides text for post to be advertised.

### **Public Appointments Team:**

- engages with contact Golley Slater about marketing and publicity and seeks a quote to advertise the appointment.

### **Partnership Team:**

- Partnership Team completes the MA for PAT to clear as being compliant with the Governance Code on Public Appointments and sends to the Cabinet Secretary / Minister with the relevant campaign documents.
- provides the MA clearance number for regulated bodies.

## **2. Cabinet secretary / minister to agree campaign before any further action is taken**

### **Public Appointments Team:**

- PAT advertise the vacancy on Cais (WG's recruitment portal). Link sent to diversity contacts, any contacts suggested by the Cabinet Secretary / Minister, and to the Partnership Team for them to advertise through the Board's own channels.

## **3. Cabinet secretary / minister to confirm if satisfied with field of applicants prior to sift taking place**

### **Public Appointments Team:**

- When application deadline has passed, PAT compiles a long list for the cabinet secretary / minister with a brief description of candidates' experience

and diversity data.

### **Public Appointments Team:**

- sends sift report template and name-free applications to Panel; Panel to return completed sift report.
- carries out due diligence on receipt of sift report, and forward results to the Partnership Team.

### **Public Appointments Team:**

- sends sift documents and recommendations for interview to the cabinet secretary / minister in a follow-up email to the initial MA approval.

## **4. Cabinet secretary / minister to confirm they are content for interviews to take place**

### **Partnership Team:**

- allocates interview slots for PAT to send letters to candidates.

### **Public Appointments Team:**

- contacts all candidates to confirm if they have/not been invited to interview. All candidates receive their letter on the same day.
- provides feedback on request.
- aims is to send letters for interview at least 2 weeks prior to the interview date.

## **Public Appointments Team:**

- sends all relevant documents to the Advisory Assessment Panel.
- monitors return of all completed documents from the Panel post-interview. Must ensure there is a choice of candidates available to the cabinet secretary / minister.
- undertakes 'light touch' due diligence checks.
- sends interview report with a draft Appointment letter for the cabinet secretary / minister's signature, and awaits their comment and preferred candidate.

## **5. Cabinet secretary / minister confirms candidate(s) to be appointed**

### **Public Appointments Team:**

- contacts the successful candidate via telephone.
- sends letters to all candidates to confirm their position.
- sends feedback on request.
  - If candidate appointable, but unsuccessful at interview, their details will be held on a 'talent bank' for 12 months. If candidate deemed not appointable, they will be given links to training which may assist them with future applications.
- if a significant appointment, begins the pre-appointment hearing process and provides a bilingual briefing for the Clerk of the Senedd Committee.
- ensures collection of signed acceptance forms from successful candidates.
  - For health appointments, vetting for the post is undertaken by NHS Shared Services.
- publishes the decision report and closes the campaign.

## **Appendix 4: Board members' suggestions as to**

# what ought to be included in induction training

“ Organisational mission, vision, values  
Corporate strategy and business plans  
Key strategies and policies  
Principles of corporate governance  
Role of Board members  
Governance framework  
How the organisations fits into the wider system  
Scrutiny skills and techniques  
Managing risk proportionately  
Understanding budgets reports and how to scrutinise them  
Familiarisation with the business  
Key HR policies. ”

“ Depends on the person's experience. In-depth knowledge of the organisation is key but giving new members (especially inexperienced ones) good governance principles is equally important. ”

“ Knowledge of your responsibilities, procedures regularly undertaken and expectations of your role. ”

“ Should include number of staff, and organisation chart, number of collection items, average number of visitors, overview of the types of material collected and volume of each type, overview of services provided along with comparative scale of each service and any order of priority to the services and benefits the service provides. Charities commission publications were provided but the information the charities commission says a Board member should know was not provided. Upon starting the new position, it did not seem appropriate to detail all the missing information. ”

“ The role of the Board member. Being a critical friend but understanding the difference between Executive Officers and Board members; time commitment, making time to get to know the organisation and possible extra involvements. ”

“ Not simple just to reel off here: for good coverage I suggest you get the new member induction outline from the [Public Body's] governance team and PCNPA team (undoubtedly there are other good practice examples out there amongst WG bodies and other national as well as international bodies - please don't solely confine your examples to Wales). ”

“ Very much depends on the organisation concerned. ”

“ A summary of the last 12 months decisions. ”

“ Who, what, where, when and how of the organisation  
Relevant legislation and data  
EDI, Information assurance, Health and Safety. ”

“ My induction included a great deal of useful information about the organisation, what it does, its structure, risk, meeting organisation, etc. This was essential as I was new to the organisation, though I had worked with it in the past, and not a previous Board member. I have since attended diversity training. ”

“ Fiduciary and other accountabilities. Public law obligations (eg Disability legislation). ”

“ The experience of "action" is more important than anything! In other



words, there's a huge folder full of details, low down on the priority list. ”

“ Organisational structure

Key responsibilities of trustees and how these differ from executive/  
management

Personal learning development expectation - i. ad-hoc learning/knowledge  
requirements developed separately to any organised training. ”

“ Signposting trustee basics - legal obligations of trustees etc. Finance  
basics for those who need it.

Key regulatory info and partner / stakeholder organisations

Confidentiality

Relevant WG programme for government priorities and legislative info, eg  
Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, Welsh Language, Anti Racist Wales  
Action Plan, etc. ”

“ Main expectations: Key rules and policies; Planning issues; Introduction to  
staff and organisation structure; Meeting with the Chair; Annual appraisal  
process. ”

“ Financial, decision-making processes and historical funding. ”

“ Full breakdown of the leadership team and their individual responsibilities.  
A high level strategic overview of existing challenges and work plans. The  
practicalities of board meetings and committees. Governance  
arrangements and obligations. ”

“ Expectation of what is required. Ability to read, assimilate complicated  
information and express clearly your view and supporting facts. Being able

to challenge other Board members and officers and also provide support to same when required. ”

“ Roles and responsibilities of the Arm’s Length Body, the Board and the individual.

Nolan principles

Dealing with conflicts of interests

Equality Diversity and Inclusion. ”

“ It is important that the topics are specific to the organisation and individual requirements are not generalised. ”

“ Detailed knowledge of the PB and its strategic plan; the role of Board members - specifically in terms of governance, not management; Conflict; Finance; Networking and getting to know fellow Board members to build successful working relationships. ”

“ Full and open discussion about the work of the organisation and its challenges  
Expectations of Board members  
Specific elements such as GDPR, confidentiality, communication channels, constructive challenge, equality and diversity, Welsh Language Standards. ”

“ Role and responsibilities of Board members, Strategic overview of organisation, information about corporate plan, risks, priorities, etc. ”

“ The content of the Royal Warrant and the obligations placed upon Commissioners therein. ”

“ Organisational structure  
Board composition and details  
Meeting with executives  
Tours of facilities (where relevant)  
Financial and risk situation of the organisation.  
Key challenges facing the Board currently and in the recent past.  
EDI information  
Climate emergency information as it relates to the organisation. ”

“ A clear overview of the organisation, its structure, strategic aims, current financial position and a summary of the key challenges it faces. It would also be helpful (perhaps for some appointees more than others) to provide a clear understanding of the expectations of Board members in terms of their commitment and responsibilities, and their relationship with the executive team in governing the organisation. ”

“ Role of Board members  
Public Bodies governance  
Understanding of relationship with WG team, Minister, and relevant policy landscape. ”

“ Governance, Role of Independent Member compared with Elected Member and what Welsh Government and local management expect, Purposes of National Park and the relevant legislation, how the Welsh National Parks feature in Welsh Government thinking and in relation to the rest of the UK. Public sector finance principles and accounting overview. ”

“ The induction covered everything I felt ought to be included - how the organisation works, its core work, members of staff, etc. ”

“ Governance, structure of the organisation, specific challenges that the Board has dealt with in recent times, introduction to the sub-committees and their roles and attendance at each to understand how they operate. ”

“ Historical and political background; fund sources; FCA regulatory requirements; Nolan principles. ”

“ An overview of the organisation, its priorities - both statutory and operational - for the duration of the appointments, as well as clarification by the body as to the role they want the new member to fulfil. ”

“ All essential requirements and expectations. Relevant administrative processes, including point of contact. Training requirements. ”

“ I was happy with the content of the induction. It covered the requirements of the role and laid out the expectations clearly. ”

“ Governance, Policy, Procedures, Finance, Site visits, Introduction key contacts, Strategy, Departmental introductions. ”

“ Explanation of function and services:

- “ • Vision and mission
- Board and Committee structure
- Departmental structure and hierarchy
- Initial discussion re personal contribution as a Commissioner
- Outline of appraisal process
- Training needs analysis
- Give copy of strategic plan and discuss progress
- Provide policies and procedures. ”

“ Timelines/schedules for reporting to WG; briefings on areas of accountability, committees, Civil Service alignments, etc.  
Timelines for strategic design, approval and delivery for the PB  
More detail on [Public Body's] structure and staffing, and alignment to strategic responsibilities. ”

“ Responsibilities of exec and non-exec members, working practices, expectations of members -- while everyone has relevant experience, it is helpful to make sure everyone has the same understanding. ”

“ About the business - ways of working, 'how to'- guides (including access to systems, raising issues, accessing payroll and expenses), detail on what the board can and cannot do in relation to Welsh Government. ”

“ Governance, better understanding of the organisation's operations and objectives (see enhanced induction comments above), financial training and/or specialist training/induction for relevant sub-committee appointees.  
Training in Welsh Government objectives and relevant Welsh Government departmental budget spending (like training sessions from Welsh Government department officials). ”

“ Good governance, managing public finances, structure of organisation and key stakeholders, delegation of responsibilities, code of conduct and key processes for safeguarding, whistleblowing etc. as appropriate. ”

“ How to get support within the organisational culture, how to read a board paper pack, how to ask questions in a board environment. ”

“ Meeting the key people. Them giving you an outline of their roles and

responsibilities. Visiting key sites and meeting team members.  
Explanation of board processes and expectations. ”

“ Depends on the individual and their needs. At this level induction should be tailored, otherwise time is wasted. ”

“ What is expected of you?  
What are the objectives of the board?  
What tools/resources are available to enable us to deliver on objectives/expectations? ”

“ Government’s governance process. Operational. Technology and how it was. The role of scrutiny in public sector. If applicable. ”

“ Governance, Financial management, Safeguarding. ”

“ Nolan Principles, An overview of the organisation and its activities, Who's Who within the organisation and Welsh Government, Relevant Regulatory and related Guidance, Fiduciary Duties of a Director, An overview of the Remit Letter, Strategy and Business Plan, any specific guidance related to the organisation and roles being undertaken (including areas relevant to any committee membership), an overview of stakeholders, an overview of the financial and budgetary context, sessions on board governance etc. ”

“ Governance ”

“ Who is otherwise a panel member  
Details of the role, including explaining the scope of the relationship with other people, such as a Chief Executive. I would for example like to

understand possibly from the WG what my specific role is, with a little more clarity, and specifically in relation to holding the organisation a little more on occasion to account, if that is a task.  
Details of the schedule of meetings. ”

“ Risk - and board risk appetite  
Financial governance. ”

“ Starting info along with declarations of interest.  
Fees and expenses  
About the organisation  
Welsh context/political structure  
Health and social care system in Wales  
Organisational structure  
Board governance  
Committee governance  
Roles and responsibilities of Board members  
Training and development  
Key contacts  
Key legislation  
Document library  
Useful links  
Meet and greet the team. ”

“ Roles, areas of influence, meeting dates, additional tasks/support. ”

“ Relationship between the body and Welsh Government (structure as well as reporting processes).  
Strategic plan & outcomes of the body. ”

“ Governance, finance, strategy, ”

“ Overview of the functions and responsibilities of essential committees of the board, such as Audit, Risk, Remuneration etc. ”

“ i. understanding the entity's purpose and mission  
ii. meet all key management one on one  
iii. past board papers  
iv. selected meetings with staff at all levels organisationally and geographically. ”

“ Public Body overview and current ways of working. How this Public Body works with other Public Bodies. Board Committees, how they work and what they do. Appetite and timescale for change - if relevant. ”

“ Governance.  
Strategic and financial planning.  
Diversity and Inclusion. ”

“ Key requirements of Board membership - like Nolan principles, equality and diversity, fraud prevention, cyber security;  
Organisation - organisational culture, business plan/ strategy, budget, risk appetite and register, original structure, standards of behaviour, stakeholders and key partners;  
Context - history, political, social, legislative;  
Board - standing orders, workplan/ programme of meetings;  
Practical- IT (software, access to documents etc.), how to claim expenses. ”



# Appendix 5: Update on public appointments for Health and Social Care Boards

1. An NHS Wales Public Appointees Task and Finish Group was established in 2023. The role and remit of the group was to:

- Review the arrangements for the recruitment to the role of Chair, Vice Chair and Independent Member of NHS bodies in Wales. This included the recruitment timeline, opportunities to increase diversity of applicants and development opportunities once appointed.
- Consider the extent to which the current skills, responsibilities, activities and roles undertaken by non-officer members are appropriate. Note – this would also include consideration of NEDs where more specific skills are required to discharge the role, for example local authority, legal, finance, etc.
- Consider the required time commitment to effectively discharge the role of a non-officer member of a Local Health Board Trust or Special Health Authority in Wales, as set against the expectations in the terms and conditions.

## Recommendations delivered

2. The following 7 recommendations were made and 3 have been actioned. These are:

### Recommendation 1

The PAT and NHS bodies work closely to ensure the recruitment timeline for the appointment of public appointments is followed.

## **Action taken on Recommendation 1**

The recruitment timeline has been reviewed and roles have been clarified. There have also been changes with Welsh Government, with the Health and Social Care Early Years Group (HSCEY) playing a much bigger role in the recruitment process. The roles which fall to the PAT, HSCEY and the Board Secretary/NHS bodies are now much clearer which assists with the recruitment timeline, with the PAT having a much closer working relationship with the NHS bodies and their respective Partnership Teams.

## **Recommendation 2**

That NHS bodies ensure they complete the Public Appointments Recruitment Form prior to the commencement of any recruitment campaign or re-appointment and the PAT ensures they have arrangements in place to respond on receipt of a form in a timely fashion;

## **Action taken on Recommendation 2**

This process has been made redundant now with the PAT moving from a reactive team to a proactive team approaching Partnership Teams in advance of vacancies to allow sufficient time for engagement and due process.

## **Recommendation 3**

The following documents were recommended to the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care and have been approved and is being used.

- Model Candidate Pack
- Model Role Profile – Chair
- Model Role Profile – Vice-Chair
- Model Role Profile – Independent Member

### **Action taken on Recommendation 3**

The Cabinet Secretary agrees the required information prior to each campaign and the consistency in information presented, supports the streamlining approach and strengthening the public appointments process.

## **Recommendations in progress**

3. The remaining 4 recommendation are yet to be delivered. These are:

### **Recommendation 4**

The Board Secretaries were asked to evaluate the effectiveness of introducing the above steps a year after their implementation in quarter one of 2025/26.

### **Progress on Recommendation 4**

Time is needed to allow the actions taken in Recommendations 1 – 3 to have an impact so that the Board Secretaries can make a proper and fair evaluation of their effectiveness.

### **Recommendation 5**

There is an ongoing review of the board champion positions, and new positions will not be introduced without the agreement of the Executive Directors Team (EDT), prior to agreement of the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care.

The Task and Finish Group recommends Champion roles are kept under regular review with the temptation to add additional roles, resisted. The approach taken in England should be reflected and if a policy official should consider a Champion necessary, they will need to be clear it meets the test and would not

be more appropriately performed in some other way. The introduction of any new Board Champions should be with the agreement of the Welsh Government Health and Social Care Early Years Group Executive Director Team to ensure the test has been adequately met.

### **Action taken on Recommendation 5**

In partnership with policy leads across HSCEY, the existing Champion roles have been reviewed to ensure that they are current, fit for purpose, and designed to drive best practice across the Health Boards

The review has been concluded and a report is being prepared for consideration by EDT, and findings will be shared with the relevant stakeholders and customers as relevant. The recommendations include:

- discontinuing some Champion roles
- formal inclusion of an R&D Champion role
- for some roles; changing the requirement for the Champion to be an executive or non-executive Board member.
- the provision of a role profile for champions to manage expectations.

### **Recommendation 6**

A review of Independent Member time commitments and the appropriateness of the roles performed is undertaken to inform the effectiveness of board governance in NHS Wales.

### **To deliver on Recommendation 6**

Following consideration by EDT a proposal will be shared with the Cabinet Secretary for approval.

It is the responsibility of a Chair to ensure Independent Members can discharge

their roles and responsibilities within the required time commitment. However, Chairs have advised that they are not able to effectively achieve this due to the number of external pressures placed on NHS bodies in Wales. It is clear that the current expectations placed on Independent Members needs to be reviewed. Thus, a governance review is proposed to consider the time spent discharging the role (the quantity), as well as the appropriateness of the tasks undertaken and the contribution this is making to the governance of the organisation (the quality of the task). This review won't affect Board members' terms of appointment and is unique to NHS Bodies, and outside the PAT's remit.

## **Recommendation 7**

Resources are made available to review the statutory and mandatory non-executive member roles on the boards of Local Health Boards.

## **Progress on Recommendation 7**

Since the Task and Finish Group produced their report the Cabinet Secretary has established the Accountability Ministerial Task and Finish Advisory Group to reflect on the current governance structures within NHS Wales. This group will provide a view about whether accountabilities are clear and appropriate and advise on any recommendations necessary to strengthen them. The review will conclude shortly and will potentially provide a view on statutory and mandatory roles. It is also anticipated that as a result of this work, a wider review of the governance structures may need to be commissioned. This findings of the Accountability Ministerial Advisory Group will be used to help inform any review, with the mandatory roles being reviewed over the coming months.

# Appendix 6: Public Bodies Unit communications plan

PBU continues to welcome discussions on how to make the journey from application to effective Board membership more inclusive and easier to navigate by developing protocols and guidance. It has several ways it communicates with and receives feedback from PBs and Partnership Teams:

- Bi-annual Public Leaders Forum meetings, which consists of Chairs, AAOs, AOs, which invites guest speakers on current topics and provides the opportunity for feedback.
- Bi-monthly Chief Executive Officer meetings which allows operational and other general issues to be discussed in more detail.
- Quarterly Chair meetings which give the PBU the opportunity to update Chairs and hear directly from Boards, as well as inviting guest speakers on issues affecting Boards.
- Quarterly Public Bodies Reference Group (PBRG) meetings which are chaired by the Chief Operating Officer and attended by AAOs responsible for a number of PBs.
- Quarterly Devolved Sector Group (DSG) meetings which bring together employer and Trade Union representatives from Welsh Government and ALBs to share, consider and discuss employment matters and act as a forum to highlight good practice and issues.
- The Four Nations Public Bodies Forum was established to serve as a forum to share information on governance, accountability and functions of PBs in the delivery of public services across the United Kingdom. This includes approaches to sponsorship and leadership of PBs.
- Newsletters are sent on an ad hoc basis to Chairs and Partnership Teams with information on new initiatives, events and progress updates.

# Appendix 7: Recommendations from recently published reports

Recommendations in the **PAC report** focused on:

- an aspirational 3-month appointments completion period
- tracking regulated and unregulated appointments to ensure compliance with completion period
- collection of diversity data and setting out standards of independence of NEDs
- set out dates for a diversity plan for public appointments and review feasibility of data on diversity of AAPs
- scrutinising for possible bias in Arm's Length Body (ALB) job advertisement prior to Ministerial approval
- review and report on bias in the public appointments process and public's view on improvements to achieve greater diversity
- rules in paragraph 3.3 of the Governance Code that apply to NED appointments without competition, should be applied to both regulated and unregulated appointments, with Cabinet Office to publish quarterly a register of all NED appointed without competition by Ministers
- state how it will measure effectiveness of outreach activities to develop a wider pool of candidates, as well as drawing up a new code of best governance practice which includes Ministers and NEDs to attend departmental board meetings.

**NAO reported** on the 5 themes that emerged from their interviews with NEDs and previous work done by them and Parliament.

- Length of process – lengthy appointment process creates governance risks and may put off prospective applicants
- Data - Good-quality, real-time data allows the government to better understand pinch points in the system.
- Diversity and Skills - Effective boards require a diverse mix of members.
- Training and Sharing Good Practice - Training and support to new NEDs can

help improve effectiveness.

- Transparency - A lack of information about the appointments process can hinder accountability

## Appendix 8: Reference documents

Welsh Government has not formally adopted all UK Cabinet Guidance but in most instances, we continue to follow the principles where practicable.

### Public Board Appointments

[Public appointments](#)

[Public appointments](#) on GOV.UK

### Recent publications on Board members' (NEDs) Appointments

[Non-executive appointments](#) - National Audit Office

[Government non-executive director appointments not efficient, transparent or fair, PAC warns](#) - UK Parliament

[Reforming public appointments](#) - Institute for Government

### Board effectiveness

[Board effectiveness reviews: principles and resources for arm's-length bodies and sponsoring departments](#) on GOV.UK

[Non-executive director appraisals: principles and resources for arm's-length bodies and sponsoring departments](#) on GOV.UK

[Chair appraisals: principles and resources for arm's-length bodies and sponsoring departments](#) on GOV.UK

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## Governance

[Managing Welsh Public Money](#)

[Regulating Appointments](#) - Commissioner for Public Appointments

[Governance Code on Public Appointments](#) - UK Cabinet Office

[12 Principles of Governance for all Public Body NEDs](#) on GOV.UK

[Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies](#) - UK Cabinet Office

[Public Bodies: A Guide for Departments \(Chapter 5: Public Body Staff\)](#) - UK Cabinet Office

[Regulating Public Appointments with the Governance Code 2016](#) - Commissioner for Public Appointments

[Arm's length body sponsorship code of good practice](#) on GOV.UK

[Public bodies](#) on GOV.UK

## Diversity

[Talent to thrive? Diversity in Public Appointments](#) - Public Chairs Forum

[Barriers and Enablers to Board Diversity in the Heritage Sector](#) - Historic England

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