

Summary of questions and answers raised at the Citizen Voice Body online information events (January 2022)

These sessions were held to provide an introduction to the Citizen Voice Body for Health and Social Care and the roles, responsibilities and qualities of its Board members, for those considering whether to apply to join the Board.

This document includes questions and answers relating to:

- The Citizen Voice Body for Health and Social Care
- Non-Executive Membership of the CVB Board
- The application process.

Applications for the Chair, Deputy Chair and 6 Non-Executive Members of the Citizen Voice Body close at 4pm on Tuesday 1 February 2022.

[Chair, Deputy Chair and Six Non-Executive Members - Citizen Voice Body for Health and Social Care - Welsh Government \(tal.net\)](#)

[Citizens Voice Candidate Information pack Chair Deputy Chair and 6 x Non-Executive Members CVB FINAL 040122 \(3\).pdf](#)

[What we do: Citizen Voice Body for Health and Social Care | GOV.WALES](#)

Thank you for your interest in applying.

The Citizen Voice Body for Health and Social Care

• Is the Citizen Voice Body being established in response to the pandemic?

No. In September 2017, the Welsh Government published a white paper – Services Fit for the Future – which proposed the establishment of a new body to represent the citizen voice in both health and social care. Following this, the Health and Social Care (Quality and Engagement) Wales Bill was introduced into the National Assembly for Wales (now the Senedd) in June 2019 and the Act received Royal Assent in June 2020.

[Services fit for the future | GOV.WALES](#)

[Health and Social Care \(Quality and Engagement\) \(Wales\) Act 2020 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

• Why are we replacing Community Health Councils?

Community Health Councils have undertaken important and valuable work since they were established in the 1970s, and continue to provide vital support to individuals in their areas. However, there are a number of significant drawbacks with their legislative model which limits the exercise of their functions to health services within their district only. They are also hosted by an NHS organisation; and prevented from being legal bodies in their own right. This means complex operational arrangements need to be put in place to ensure their independence and enable them to operate effectively. The case for change is set out within the

Explanatory Memorandum for the Health and Social Care (Quality and Engagement) (Wales) Act 2020.

Establishment of the Citizen Voice Body therefore provides a real opportunity to renew and reshape arrangements to seek the views and represent the interests of people – locally, regionally and nationally – in respect of health **and** social care. This will ensure a strong, independent organisation that will employ its own staff; enter into its own contracts; design its own systems; determine its own structure; own its own brand; and manage recruitment and retention of its volunteer membership.

[health-and-social-care-quality-and-engagement-wales-act-explanatory-memorandum.pdf \(gov.wales\)](#)

- **Will engagement with children and young people be part of the responsibility of the CVB?**

The Citizen Voice Body will seek the views and represent the interests of all people, of all ages, in Wales. In doing so effectively, it will need to work closely with the Children’s Commissioner for Wales and other partners in the sector. In terms of its complaints advocacy function, the Citizen Voice Body will not offer advice and assistance to those children and young people who already have rights to this support under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, therefore avoiding any duplication.

- **Will the Citizen Voice Body be able to seek the views and represent the interest of those with refugee status?**

Yes, the Citizen Voice Body will engage with all demographic groups, throughout Wales and be able to offer advice and assistance to individuals when considering or making a complaint in relation to health and a wider range of social care services.

- **Does the introduction of a new body create the risk of creating another layer/distance between citizens and health and social care bodies?**

All current duties on NHS bodies and local authorities to directly involve people in the planning and operation of their services will remain. The Citizen Voice Body is intended to add value, as an additional means of the public voice being heard – for individuals, communities and wider population.

- **Will there be a balance in the CVB’s priorities between health and social care?**

Ministers have been clear that the Body is dual purpose and its remit letter will reinforce the need to deliver its functions across both sectors. A key responsibility of the CVB Board will be to ensure there is appropriate balance in the Body’s objectives and priorities, each year, which must be informed by the views of its stakeholders.

- **How persuasive can the Citizen Voice Body be in bringing together health and social care services?**

The Citizen Voice Body will seek views across sectors and settings to capture people's lived experience of care pathways, which often span health and social care. It will reflect these back to the NHS and local authorities, making informed representations to them about their services. It will ensure the holistic interests of service users inform plans and policy; help drive improvements and highlight good practice, within a more integrated system.

- **Will the CVB form relationships with Citizen's Panels, set up to support Regional Partnership Boards?**

The Citizen Voice Body will build strong relationships across health and social care, working alongside existing organisations and forums that represent the views of people, including Citizen's Panels, third sector partners and community groups.

- **What will the relationship be between the Citizen Voice Body and third sector organisations?**

Once in place, the Citizen Voice Body, as an independent organisation, will seek to engage and develop mutually supportive relationships with other public, independent and voluntary sector organisations, across Wales. It will be vitally important that the CVB recognise the role of the third sector in health and social care, and its huge contribution to the provision of services and support for individuals. It will need to forge strong links with its partners – locally, regionally and nationally – to share knowledge and learning from the views they obtain and ensure this informs any representations the CVB may make to NHS bodies and local authorities.

- **Will the CVB work with independent providers of health and social care or only with the NHS bodies and local authorities who commission their services?**

Whilst the Citizen Voice Body will only make representations to NHS bodies and local authorities about health or social services, this can include services commissioned by them from independent providers. Therefore it will be vital for the Citizen Voice Body to engage effectively and develop constructive relationships with providers they encounter in seeking the views of individuals or providing them with advice and assistance when considering making a complaint.

- **How will the Citizen Voice Body be supported in seeking the views and representing the interests of people?**

In developing their relationships with the Citizen Voice Body, we expect both the NHS and local government to provide support in reaching as many people as possible, so they can share their views and experiences of the care they receive.

NHS bodies and local authorities will be required to make arrangements to cooperate with the CVB in its seeking people's views and in promoting awareness of

its activities and services. They must also provide the CVB with information it reasonably requests; have regard to representations made to them about their services; and have regard to a code of practice on access to premises.

Collectively, this will support the CVB to reach individuals; seek their views; robustly represent their interests; and help ensure these are taken into account in the design and delivery of health and social care services.

- **Will the Citizen Voice Body continue to have a role in service change?**

There will need to be engagement with the Citizen Voice Body when the NHS and local authorities are planning their services.

This will include service change proposals in the NHS; involvement with local authorities in the design and operation of their care and support provision; and engagement with Regional Partnership Boards when undertaking their population assessments and preparing area plans. However, the CVB can at any time make representations to NHS bodies and local authorities about their services, including service change matters.

- **How will the Board support the CVB's advocacy work?**

The Explanatory Memorandum for the Health and Social Care (Quality and Engagement) (Wales) Act 2020 includes an estimation of the resources required to support the CVB's advocacy function. The CVB Board will have collective responsibility for ensuring the Body's advocacy services are delivered. In terms of responsibility, and members taking a special interest in this area, this is something for the Board itself to determine, balancing all of its priorities and obligations.

- **Will the CVB have a right of access to provide individuals with complaints advocacy support?**

Many health and social care settings – such as hospitals and care homes – currently have arrangements in place to support people to access advocacy services, from a variety of sources and for a variety of purposes. These will enable individuals to receive advice and assistance from the Citizen Voice Body when they are considering making a complaint.

- **Will the CVB have arrangements in place to manage any conflicts of interest that arise in both seeking and representing the views of the public, and its provisions of advocacy support to individuals?**

The CVB will develop systems within its governance framework that will ensure any such conflicts are managed appropriately.

- **Why are locations for the Citizen Voice Body yet to be determined?**

At present no decisions have been made as to location/s for the Citizen Voice Body. A location strategy will be developed in partnership with the CVB Board to support its staff to work in an agile manner and enable it to represent, be accessible to and engage effectively with people throughout Wales.

- **Will the Citizen Voice Body have regional subgroups?**

The Citizen Voice Body must operate effectively at local, regional and national levels, ensuring it is able to represent, be accessible to and engage effectively with people throughout Wales. The Act does not prescribe any particular structure, this is for the CVB itself to determine, however, it will be able to establish committees and sub-groups that could be on a regional footing.

- **Is the CVB unique or are there other similar bodies in other parts of the UK?**

Similar bodies exist in other parts of the UK, for example, Healthwatch in England and the Northern Ireland Patient and Client Council. They do not all have the same functions and responsibilities but they do seek the views and represent the interests of people across health and social care, and offer support to individuals who wish to make a complaint.

- **What size of body and budget is anticipated?**

The Citizen Voice Body will employ around 100 staff, with additional volunteer membership, and have an annual budget of around £4.66 million.

- **Will its staff be civil servants?**

No. The Citizen Voice Body will be a Welsh Government Sponsored Body, but operationally independent from Welsh Ministers, the NHS and local government. It will be a corporate body in its own right, able to employ its own staff.

- **What will the CVB's staffing structure look like?**

The CVB's operating model will be designed in partnership with its Board members, once they are in place. Its staffing structure will be a key aspect of this.

- **What will the committee structure of the CVB be?**

The CVB operating model and committee structure will be designed by the CVB board once appointed but will need to show strong governance and best practice.

- **Have any staff been appointed already?**

No staff have been appointed to date. The Citizen Voice Body will appoint its own staff, beginning with the recruitment of a Chief Executive, once Non-Executive Members are in place. Community Health Council staff will move across to the CVB in April 2023.

- **How will Community Health Council staff fit in to the new organisation?**

The work of CHC staff and volunteer members is highly valued and we wish to encourage the transfer of these skills, expertise and know-how into the new Body. People will be engaged in and fully supported to manage the transition, with a training and development package made available to ensure they are supported to perform functions on behalf of the CVB. Welsh Government have given assurances that TUPE principles will be followed in the staff transfer process.

- **To whom would complaints about the Citizen Voice Body be made?**

The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales will have the power to consider complaints made about the Citizen Voice Body, in the same way that it has the power to consider complaints about Community Health Councils currently.

- **What about accountability to Minister or Senedd Committee?**

The Citizen Voice Body will be operationally independent of both the Welsh Ministers and the Senedd.

In accordance with the Health and Social Care (Quality and Engagement) (Wales) Act 2020, the CVB has responsibility for publishing a statement of its policy, setting out how it proposes to promote awareness of its functions and seek the views of the public. It must also publish an annual plan, setting out how it will exercise its functions during the year, having consulted with those it considers appropriate on its priorities and objectives for the year.

The Act provides that the Welsh Ministers will appoint the Non-Executive Members of the CVB – with fair and open competition, via the public appointments process – and may remove them from office, if satisfied that a person is unfit to continue as a member or they are unable or unwilling to exercise the functions of a member. The Non-Executive Members will appoint the CVB's chief executive.

As a Welsh Government Sponsored Body – like others, including Natural Resources Wales, Qualifications Wales and Social Care Wales – the CVB will receive its funding and a remit letter from Welsh Government but, as above, its priorities and objectives will be determined by the CVB itself.

The Act also requires the CVB to produce an annual report on the exercise of its functions during the year, of which it must send a copy to the Welsh Ministers and lay this before the Senedd. This will highlight the CVB's activities to Members of the Senedd.

- **Does the Bevan Commission undertake similar work to that of the Citizen Voice Body?**

The Citizen Voice Body will be an independent public body, to continually seek the views and represent the interests of the public in respect of health and social care, whilst the Bevan Commission, hosted by Swansea University, is a 'think tank' that aims to challenge thinking and practice in health and care. The two may have common interests, will be able to inform each other's work and have complementary but not duplicative functions.

- **Will there be any promotional work done to launch the Citizen Voice Body?**

Welsh Government will fund a substantial publicity campaign in the lead up to April 2023 to raise awareness of the Citizen Voice Body; what it is able to do; how it can support people; and how they can get involved. Thereafter, the CVB will be funded to maintain its own marketing and communications activities.

Non-Executive Membership of the CVB Board

- **In the first 12 months, from April 2022, what support will be available to the Board in setting up the CVB and its governance framework?**

During this time the Board will have an appropriate support structure and receive the governance advice it needs to prepare for the Citizen Voice Body to become fully operational from 1 April 2023. Welsh Government officials will work closely with the Board, and others, during this establishment phase, whilst ensuring the CVB maintains independence and sets its own strategic direction.

- **Will Board members have a key role in stakeholder engagement?**

The CVB will need to establish itself as a key partner within health and social care, making strong connections with public, independent and voluntary sector partners, in the interests of citizens. Once appointed, Board members will have an important role in early engagement to introduce the new body, promote its purpose and shape constructive relationships.

- **Are you looking for specific health experience e.g. medical, allied professional?**

It is necessary to ensure the Board has the right range of skills and experience to ensure the success of the Citizen Voice Body. The Information for Candidates details the experience required, and health and/or social care experience are two of the areas listed. A specific profession or group is not highlighted within this.

When appointing Board Members, the range of skills required of the whole Board will be taken into account and there will not be a focus on one particular set of experience or skills.

- **Will there be fair representation on the CVB Board from across Wales?**

The pandemic has increased the ability of people to work remotely, making these roles more accessible and bringing some equity to those who live in, perhaps more remote areas. The Board will need to understand the culture of Wales and what is important to citizens throughout Wales, when reflecting their views. Whilst there is no requirement for Board Members to live in different parts of Wales, this may be taken into account when considering the overall make-up of the Board.

- **Do applicants need to be resident in Wales?**

There is no requirement to live in Wales but Board members should have a deep understanding of Welsh culture and the importance of the Welsh Language.

- **Do you anticipate at this stage whether the 'Welsh Essential' Board members will play a particular role on the Board - if so, can you expand?**

There would be key areas we would consider the Welsh Essential Board Members playing a particular role in, including engagement with Welsh speakers and supporting the CVB to deliver Welsh language services, meeting the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards.

- **Will the balance of the board include third sector background?**

The experience and skills required of Board Members is wide and varied. Those working within the third sector are likely to possess the required skills and experience, and they are encouraged to apply.

As indicated above, it will be vitally important for the Citizen Voice Body to establish effective relationships with the third sector and this can and will be achieved in ways other than having a member of the Board with third sector experience.

- **How will you ensure that there is diversity on the Board of the Citizen Voice Body? For example, ethnic minority applicants may feel they do not have the experience required. Will there be a gender balance? Does diversity include socio-economic disadvantaged applicants?**

Applications from individuals from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds are welcomed, with all candidates encouraged to demonstrate their lived experience and how this will contribute to the effectiveness of the Board. The diversity and the ability of the Board seek and represent the views of the citizens of Wales will be considered when making appointments to the Board.

Consideration will also be given to gender balance and applicants who may be disadvantaged from a socio-economic perspective.

- **Would applicants with disabilities be able to work/attend meetings remotely?**

Applications are welcomed from disabled people and reasonable adjustments will be provided for any part of the recruitment process. If appointed, reasonable adjustments would also be made to ensure they are able to fulfil the requirements of the role, in accordance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

[The Equality Act 2010 uses the medical definition of disability (“a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term impact on a person’s ability to carry out normal day to day activities”).]

- **Even if you meet the essential criteria, could age possibly be a problem?**

Applications are encouraged from a diverse group of applicants, this includes from a wide age range.

- **Would it be a conflict of interest for someone to apply who is:**

- a) **employed by an NHS body or local authority;**
- b) **employed by a private health or social care provider; or**
- c) **a local authority councillor?**

Page 13 of the Information for Candidates provides details of the criteria which disqualifies an individual from appointment to the Board of the Citizen Voice Body. The criteria detailed above are not considered disqualifications.

Applicants are required to state any potential conflicts of interest in their application. The likely potential for any conflict will be considered on a case by case basis and would be explored at interview if the candidate progressed to that stage.

[Citizens Voice Candidate Information pack Chair Deputy Chair and 6 x Non-Executive Members CVB FINAL 040122 \(3\).pdf](#)

- **If you are currently a member of a Community Health Council, would you have to resign this position if your application to join the Board of the Citizen Voice Body were successful?**

This is unlikely to be necessary. However, any potential conflicts of interest would be considered and discussed with the individual concerned.

- **Will those who work part-time as a public sector worker be remunerated for the non-working days they dedicate to the Citizen Voice Body?**

If a Board Member is employed on part-time basis and undertaking the role outside of their hours of employment, they would be remunerated at the appropriate rate for the position.

Some employers allow their employees reasonable paid time off work to carry out certain public duties. If an employer allows time for an individual to undertake the role of a Board Member and they remunerate them for this time they will not be entitled to claim further remuneration from the Citizen Voice Body, but they may be able to claim reasonable expenses.

Applicants should discuss their circumstances with their employer, the Welsh Government and the Citizen Voice Body, if appointed.

- **Will the time commitment remain at 4-5 working days a month or is this likely to change?**

The time commitment of 4 days per month for a Non-Executive Member and 5 days per month for the Chair and Deputy Chair is the minimum time commitment required to undertake the role.

There may be times when more days are required in a month. However, as this is a new organisation and Board it will be important for the Chair, Deputy Chair and Non-Executive Member to work out and agree the roles and duties to be performed, ensuring these are distributed fairly and are not excessive.

It is likely the time commitment will be spread out throughout the month, however, it will not be possible to know this for definite until the Chair is appointed, the Board becomes fully operational and has agreed a work plan for the year. As the organisation evolves, the roles undertaken by the Board are also likely to change which may provide for further flexibility.

- **How will the roles and responsibilities of the Non-Executive Members differ from those of senior executive posts?**

Initially, the Board will be made up of the Chair, Deputy Chair, six Non-Executive Members ('the non-executive members') and its Chief Executive, as its Accounting Officer. A trade union representative may also be appointed as an Associate Member, when the CVB becomes fully operational on 1 April 2023. The Chief Executive is the only executive member of the Board.

The role of the Board will be to set the strategic direction, organisational culture and oversee the organisation in achieving its aims and objectives. This reflects the role of a non-executive member, to decide 'what' the body should do. The role of the Chief Executive and the staff of the Citizen Voice Body, once in place, will be to consider and work out 'how' this will operate.

- **Will the CVB Board have access to professional support mechanisms to ensure it has the expertise it needs to represent people's views?**

Welsh Government will fund an initial training package for staff and volunteers of the Citizen Voice Body to ensure they are appropriately skilled to perform functions on its behalf and meet its statutory obligations. In addition, an organisational development programme for Board members will assist them in the effective leadership and management of the body. Thereafter, it will be for the CVB to

determine what additional knowledge, advice and expertise is require to support its work. We anticipate it will form effective working relationships with partners across health, social care and wider public, independent and voluntary organisations, to help gather the information it needs.

The application process

- **Some of the interviews will take place in April 2022 which coincides with the month of Ramadan. Will this be taken into consideration for any Muslim applicants?**

Yes, advice has been sought in this regard and consideration is being given to ensure candidates are not placed at any disadvantage.

- **Does the description of why you are applying for the role need to include within the 1000 words of the personal statement?**

The brief paragraph outlining why you have applied for the role; what benefits you will bring to the Citizen Voice Body; and whether you meet the criteria for 'Welsh essential'; **must be included within the 1,000 word limit for the personal statement.**

Welsh Language Skills will be essential for two successful candidates and desirable but not a pre-requisite for the rest of the Board. All candidates will show a commitment towards the language and culture and demonstrate leadership to promote bilingual service provision within the NHS and social care.

Candidates should also specify their preference as to the length of appointment; and which of the roles they would like to be considered for. **This does not count towards the 1,000 word limit.**

- **When will applicants be informed whether or not they have been invited to interview?**

It is not possible to indicate the exact date candidates will be invited to interview, if they proceed to this stage. The published timetable is as follows:

Chair Appointment – shortlisting w/c 14 February 2022
 – interviews w/c 28 February 2022

Deputy Chair and
Non-Executive Members – shortlisting w/c 14 February 2022
 – interviews w/c 4 April

All appointments should be made during April 2022.