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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS IN WALES **CANDIDATE GUIDANCE**

Welcome and introduction

Thank you for your interest in a public appointment in Wales.

Public appointees play a vital role in guiding public bodies, shaping decisions in the public interest and supporting services that matter to people and communities across Wales.

We know that applying for a public appointment can feel unfamiliar, particularly if this is your first time. This guidance is designed to explain clearly and openly how candidates are assessed, what panels are looking for, and what you can expect at each stage of the process.

Panel members assess candidates fairly and consistently against the published criteria for the role, using professional judgement and clear evidence. Decisions are made transparently, inclusively and in line with the Governance Code on Public Appointments.

The assessment framework explains:

- What panels assess at each stage of the process
- How different types of evidence are considered
- How recommendations are reached and recorded
- The distinction between panel recommendations and ministerial decision making.

Candidates are assessed on their overall experience, skills, behaviours and judgement, not interview performance alone. The approach aims to ensure consistency, recognise transferable skills and diverse career paths, and value relevant lived experience where appropriate.

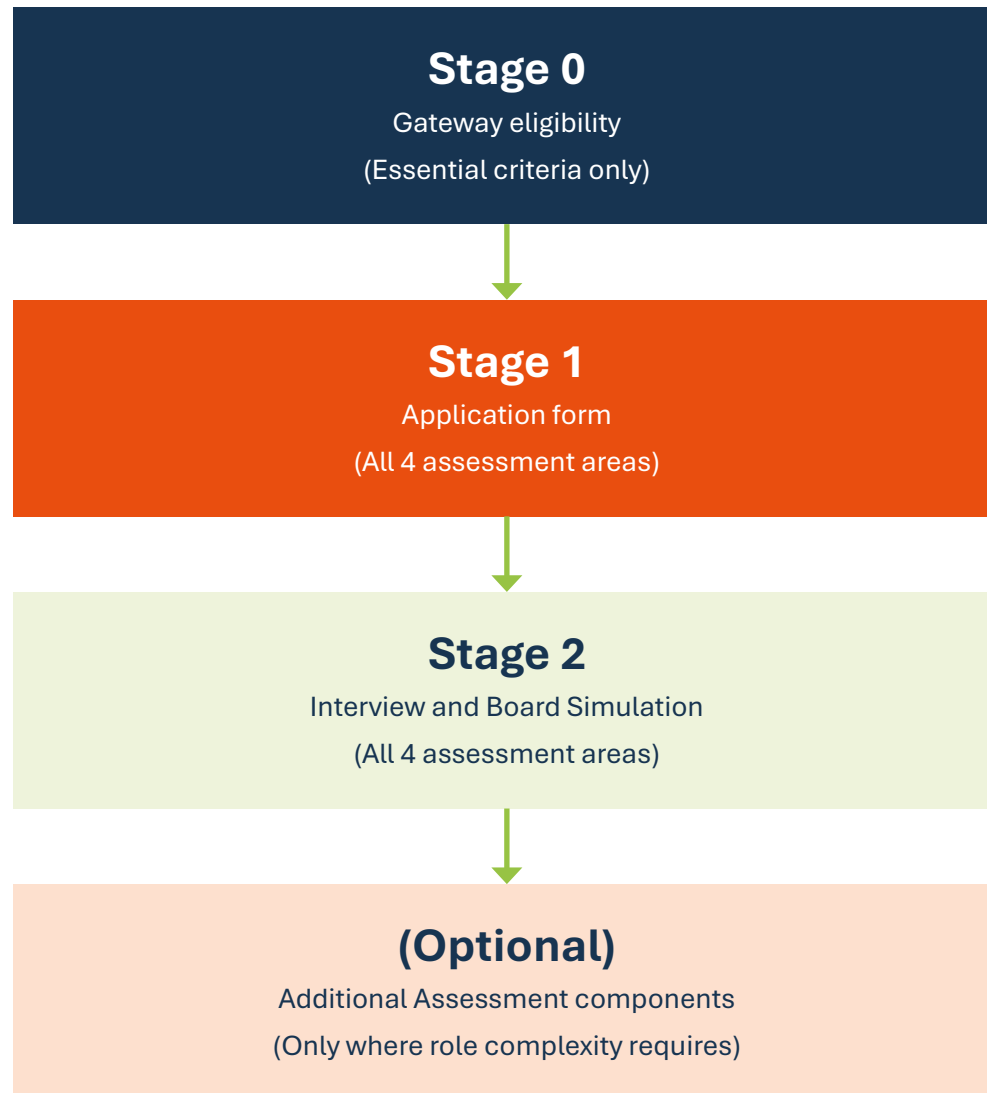
Panels consider evidence from across the whole process, including applications, interview & assessments to ensure recommendations are fair, evidence-based and can be clearly explained.



The stages

The recruitment process

The recruitment process follows a small number of clear stages. The diagram below shows how these fit together.



How you're assessed – at a glance

Across the process, candidates are assessed in a consistent and fair way:

- You're assessed against four broad areas, not technical expertise.
- You need to meet the required standard in all four areas.
- Panels consider evidence from the whole process, not just the interview.
- You're assessed against the standard for the role, not against other candidates.



Stage 0 – Gateway criteria (eligibility)

Some roles include specific requirements that determine whether a candidate is eligible to be considered for appointment. Where this applies, these are known as Gateway criteria.

Gateway criteria are used only to confirm eligibility. They are not part of the assessment of your behaviours, experience or potential, and they are not scored.

Examples of Gateway criteria may include:

- A legal or regulatory qualification required by law
- Previous Board Chair experience for a particularly high risk public body
- The ability to operate in Welsh at Board level, where this is essential to the role.

If Gateway criteria apply to a role:

- They will be clearly set out in the advert and candidate information
- They are checked before applications are sifted
- If you do not meet the Gateway criteria you will not be eligible to progress.

Gateway criteria cannot be changed once a role has been advertised, and no further assessment takes place at this stage.

Stage 1 – Application and sift

At this stage, your written application is assessed against the four assessment areas.

The sift process:

- Focuses on the evidence you provide
- Applies the same standard to all candidates
- Is non comparative (you are assessed against the standard for the role, not against other applicants).

Panel members assess whether your application demonstrates evidence meeting the required standard in each of the four areas.

Applications are assessed on what you say, not on writing style, confidence or presentation.

Panels will look for clear evidence that you meet the required standard in each of the four areas.

Stage 2 – Interview and Assessment

This stage looks at your evidence across all four assessment areas using two elements: a structured interview and a Board Simulation assessment exercise. Evidence from both elements is considered together.

Structured interview

The structured interview focuses on Motivation, Public Service & Integrity, assessed through two consistent questions asked of all candidates.

Interviewers may ask follow up questions to clarify your evidence, but no new criteria, weightings or technical tests are introduced at this stage.

Board Simulation exercise

The Board Simulation is used to assess the remaining three assessment areas through a realistic Board level scenario.

The focus is on how you think, reason and exercise judgement in a governance context rather than presentation style or technical expertise.

Information and preparation

You will receive the Board Simulation scenario in advance. This is to ensure all candidates have an equal opportunity to:

- Understand the context and information provided
- Prepare initial thoughts and questions
- Take part confidently in the discussion.

Structure of the Board Simulation

The exercise follows a consistent format:

- 10 minutes – candidate reflections.
- 20 minutes – facilitated Board style discussion with the panel.

During the discussion, the panel will explore how you:

- Analyse information and identify relevant issues
- Weigh risk, uncertainty and competing considerations
- Listen to others and offer constructive challenge
- Apply judgement in the public interest.

Stage 3 – Other assessment steps (Where used)

For some roles, an additional assessment element may be used where this is appropriate to the nature of the role and where it adds value to the evidence already gathered.

These are not used in all campaigns, and most appointments will not include this stage.

Examples may include:

- Stakeholder engagement exercises
- Media or communication exercises
- Psychometric profiling.

If additional assessment elements are used:

- This will be made clear in the role advert and candidate information
- You will be informed in advance
- Clear guidance will be provided on what to expect.

Any additional assessment elements will:

- Be proportionate to the role
- Assess evidence only against the same four framework areas
- Use the same threshold (non compensatory) approach.

Additional assessments are intended to complement, not replace, the interview and Board Simulation assessment exercise.

Specialisms (role specific requirements)

Some roles operate in more complex or highly regulated environments (for example finance, audit, clinical, digital, regulatory or system wide leadership roles).

Where a role has a specific context or “specialism”, this is considered because it affects the type of issues, risks and governance decisions a Board may need to deal with. It does not mean that candidates are expected to demonstrate detailed technical expertise.

It is important to note that:

- Specialisms are not additional assessment criteria.
- All candidates are assessed against the same four framework areas, regardless of background or professional experience.
- Any role specific context will be considered within the framework areas, not separately or as an extra requirement.



Using lived experience well

Everyone has lived experience. The real value comes when board members can use those experiences to broaden perspectives, challenge assumptions, identify risks or opportunities others may miss, and bring real world insight into decisions affecting people in Wales.

You are welcome to draw on lived experience in your application or interview where it is relevant. Many strong candidates do.

Lived experience might come from different parts of your life, including:

- Your work or professional background
- Your community, voluntary or civic involvement
- Your experience of using, delivering or overseeing services
- Your cultural, linguistic or personal background.

What matters is how your experience helps you explain the contribution you could make as a board member, not the detail of the experience itself.

How lived experience can support your evidence

You might use lived experience to help demonstrate:

- Your motivation and values, including commitment to public service
- How you understand and work with different perspectives
- Your judgement in real world situations
- Your awareness of communities, cultures or issues in Wales
- How you identify risks, challenge assumptions or consider impact.

Panels are interested in how you use experience to inform thinking, decision making and judgement in a governance context.

What you are not expected to do

You do not need to:

- Share anything private, sensitive or personal
- Describe experiences in detail if you are uncomfortable doing so
- Have experienced adversity for your experience to “count”
- Present your experience in a particular way.

There is no single type of lived experience that panels are looking for. Panels consider lived experience in the same way as all other evidence, through how it supports the assessment of the four framework areas.



The four areas we assess

At all stages, we assess you against four areas.

You don't need technical knowledge – the descriptions below focus on how you approach your role as a Board member.

A. Motivation, Public Service and Integrity

We want to understand:

- Why public service matters to you
- How your values align with fairness, accountability and ethical behaviour
- Your understanding of the responsibilities that come with public office.

Examples you could use:

- Times you acted ethically or took responsibility
- Moments where you stood up for fairness or transparency
- Experiences that shaped your commitment to public service.

How lived experience can help

You may wish to draw on life experiences that helped form your values or your understanding of public service – but you do not need to share anything personal or sensitive.

B. Collaboration and Constructive Challenge

We want to see:

- How you work with others to achieve shared goals
- How you listen to different perspectives
- How you handle disagreement respectfully
- How you ask helpful questions or challenge ideas constructively.

Examples you could use:

- Teamwork
- Committee or group participation
- Coaching or mentoring
- Community or voluntary work.

How lived experience can help

Lived or community experience may help you explain how you understand different perspectives, or how you've handled difficult conversations constructively.

C. Curiosity, Judgement and Ethical Decision Making

We're interested in:

- How you approach difficult decisions
- How you balance risks, priorities and different viewpoints
- How you think about long term impact not just short-term pressures
- How you use information and ask questions.

Examples you could use:

- Decisions you made at work or in volunteering roles
- Personal decisions that required weighing up risks or values
- Times you learned from a decision that didn't go as planned.

How lived experience can help

Local insight, community experience or personal challenges may help show how you understand risk, impact, context or consequences.

D. Future Awareness – Role, Organisation and Welsh Context

We want to understand your awareness of:

- What the organisation does and why it matters
- The responsibilities of the Board and the specific role
- The Welsh context – communities, culture, policy priorities, Welsh language and how these shape the organisation's work.

Examples you could use:

- What you've learned from reading about the organisation
- Why the role interests you
- Understanding of issues that matter in Wales.

Most candidates will not have specialist knowledge – thoughtful insight is what matters.

How lived experience can help

You may draw on insight linked to your community, cultural background, work in Wales, lived experience of services, or understanding of local priorities.

Evaluation

How decisions are reached

Threshold (non-compensatory) assessment model

This is a threshold-based assessment process.

This means:

- Evidence is assessed against the defined standard for each framework area.
- Strength in one area cannot compensate for a gap in another area.
- Candidates are assessed against the criteria, not against each other.
- Scores are based on evidence, not impression.

Scoring Outcomes

Your application and any assessments are considered against clear scoring outcomes. These help ensure that decisions are fair, consistent and based on evidence.

You may hear your performance described using the following terms:

Exceeded – Clear, well-evidenced examples that are directly relevant to the role and demonstrate strong application of the framework in practice.

Achieved – Relevant evidence that meets the required standard for the role.

Not Yet Achieved – Evidence does not demonstrate the required capability.

This is a non-comparative, non-compensatory model:

Candidates are assessed against the standard, not each other.
Strength in one area cannot make up for gaps in another.



Feedback

Feedback is an important part of a fair, transparent and robust public appointments process. All candidates will receive feedback on their application or assessment. The level of detail provided will reflect the stage reached in the process.

Stage 1 – Application sift

If you are unsuccessful at the application sift stage, you will receive brief, factual feedback confirming:

- The outcome of the sift.
- Which framework area(s) did not meet the required standard at this stage.

Stage 2 – Interview and Board Simulation

If you progress to interview and board simulation, you will receive more detailed feedback. This will:

- Cover all of the framework areas.
- Explain the panel's judgement using the published threshold criteria.

How feedback is provided

All feedback is intended to be:

- Respectful and fair.
- Clear and factual.
- Consistent with the published assessment framework.

Feedback is prepared so that it can be shared openly with candidates.

Additional Information

Significant appointments and pre appointment scrutiny.

Some public appointments are classed as significant appointments because of the nature of the role, the level of responsibility involved, or the impact the organisation has on the public.

Significant appointments typically involve:

- Leadership of high profile or influential public bodies.
- Roles with substantial responsibility for public funds, regulation, safety or public confidence.
- Positions where accountability and transparency are particularly important.

If a role is identified as a significant appointment, this will be made clear to candidates during the campaign.

Pre appointment committee scrutiny

For certain significant appointments, the preferred candidate may be invited to attend a pre appointment scrutiny session with a Senedd committee before the appointment is formally confirmed.

Pre appointment scrutiny:

- Is a standard part of the process for some senior public roles.
- Provides an opportunity for the committee to question the preferred candidate about their experience, approach and suitability for the role.
- Supports transparency, accountability and public confidence in appointments.

If pre appointment scrutiny applies:

- Candidates will be informed early in the process.
- Guidance and support will be provided to help candidates understand what to expect.
- Attendance at the committee session is a requirement of appointment.

The committee's role is advisory. The final appointment decision remains with the appointing authority.

Reasonable Adjustments

We are committed to making our recruitment process fair, accessible and inclusive.

Reasonable adjustments are changes that remove barriers and support candidates to take part on an equal basis. You can request adjustments at any stage of the process, including when you apply or after being invited to interview. You do not need to provide a diagnosis, explaining your access needs is enough. All requests are handled sensitively and confidentially. Further information, including how to request adjustments, is available on our website.

Final Reassurance

We are committed to making public appointments in Wales open, fair and accessible.

You do not need previous board experience to apply. Panels are interested in how you think, the values you bring, and the contribution you could make in the public interest.

If you decide to apply, focus on what you would bring – your experience, your perspective and your judgement all matter. We welcome applications from people from all backgrounds and communities across Wales.