

Pre-appointment hearing

The preferred candidate for the Chair
of Sport Wales

March 2022



1. Introduction

Pre-appointment hearings

- 1.** Welsh Ministers make a range of public appointments across all aspects of public life. Public appointments are made for members of committees which guide and take decisions on public services in Wales. As noted by the Welsh Government, public bodies should have board members who reflect Welsh society - people from all walks of life - to help them understand people's needs and make better decisions¹.
- 2.** These appointments are high profile and offer the opportunity to shape and inform many of the public services accessed by the people of Wales. Welsh Ministers must make regulated public appointments in accordance with the principles set out in the Governance Code on Public Appointments. The Commissioner for Public Appointments² is responsible for providing independent assurance that appointments comply with the Code.
- 3.** Welsh Ministers and the Senedd have agreed to conduct pre-appointment scrutiny of some Chair appointments by Senedd Committees in order to further improve the scrutiny and transparency of the public appointment making process. Pre-appointment scrutiny will take the form of a pre-appointment hearing of the preferred candidate conducted by the relevant Committee. It is for the relevant Committee to decide whether or not it wishes to carry out a pre-appointment hearing.
- 4.** A list of ministerial appointments that may be subject to pre-appointment hearings has been approved by the Welsh Government, and will be reviewed regularly. The Chair of Sport Wales is included on that list.

Sport Wales

- 5.** Sport Wales is the national organisation responsible for developing and promoting sport and physical activity in Wales, working at both grassroots and elite levels. It is the main adviser to Welsh Government on sport and supports the delivery of its strategic priorities.
- 6.** The Board of Sport Wales is responsible for the governance of Sport Wales and the Sports Council for Wales Trust. The Board's role is to satisfy itself that an appropriate governance

¹ <https://gov.wales/public-appointments>

² <https://publicappointmentscommissioner.independent.gov.uk/>

structure is in place and to scrutinise the performance of the executive and the organisation's delivery of the Sport Wales Vision.

7. The Sport Wales Board is made up of a Chair, a Vice Chair, and up to twelve other members. All these roles are appointed by Welsh Government. The Board's composition includes representation from a wide cross-section of different professions and members with expertise and experience relevant to both community and elite sport. At the time of the **2020-21 Annual Report**, the Board comprised 57 per cent female representation, 14 per cent ethnic minority community members and 7 per cent considered themselves to have a disability.

8. The Executive, under the leadership of the Chief Executive, is responsible to the Board for the development and implementation of strategy and policies and the reporting thereof. The Executive meets at regular intervals and typically fortnightly to discuss and agree corporate matters. Formal monthly meetings are held which follow an agenda and minutes are taken. Progress against the Business Plan is reported and monitored on a quarterly basis.

9. Sport Wales has six "**strategic intents**". These are:

- **To be person centred:** The needs and motivations of the individual lead the delivery, whether just starting out, aiming to progress or striving for excellence on the world stage.
- **To give every young person a great start:** Every young person has the skills, confidence and motivation to enable them to enjoy and progress through sport; giving them foundations to lead an active, healthy and enriched life.
- **To ensure everyone has the opportunity to be active through sport:** Sport is inclusive and provides a great experience for all.
- **To bring people together for the long-term:** There is a collaborative, sustainable and successful sports sector, led by collective insight and learning.
- **To showcase the benefits of sport:** The impact of sport is evidenced, and sport's reach is fully understood, valued, showcased and celebrated throughout Wales.
- **To be a highly valued organisation:** Sport Wales is a respected organisation, striving to over achieve by delivering a first-class service through our valued staff.

10. Sport Wales has been allocated £31million in the 2022-23 draft budget. This is broadly the same as it was allocated in 2021-22. Sport Wales also distributes National Lottery grants (£13million in 2019-20) to elite and grassroots sports.

2. Recruitment process and candidate selection

Recruitment process

11. The role was advertised for a little over four weeks between 13 September and 13 October 2021.

12. It was advertised on the Welsh Government website, the Cabinet Office's public appointments website, and on the Sport Wales website. Publicity was further supported by paid for advertising on a number of relevant websites, and programmatic banners on social media which targeted sports stakeholders across the UK. This includes:

- Diversity Jobsite network (online listing);
- Octave (digital radio);
- Sports pages of all Reach Plc titles in Wales;
- Fish4Jobs (online listing);
- Lleol (online listing);
- Safle Swyddi (online listing);
- Golwg (online listing);
- Y Cymro (online banner listing).

13. Sport Wales and the Welsh Government also made use of relevant networks and mailings lists to promote the opportunity. Individuals were contacted directly, and equality and diversity contacts were also approached as part of the recruitment process.

14. Candidates were provided with an information pack which included an outline of the: role of Chair of Sport Wales; person specification; relevant information on remuneration and time commitment (see Annex A).

Candidate selection

15. Candidates were asked to provide a personal statement and a CV. A total of ten applications were received. Candidate selection followed the following process:

Panel assessment: An Advisory Assessment Panel met on 19 November 2022 to undertake a sifting exercise. Following this, six applicants progressed to next stage.

Stakeholder session: A stakeholder session was held where candidates led a 30 minute discussion with six stakeholders on the topic of partnership working. The stakeholder panel scored candidates against three criteria: content, chairmanship skills, and ability to deal with, and respond to differing perspectives. The members of the Advisory Assessment Panel were not in attendance at the stakeholder session.

Interview: Six candidates were asked a series of questions closely linked to the essential criteria. Interviews took place over two days, and lasted approximately 45 minutes each.

16. As part of deliberations at the end of the interview process, the Advisory Assessment Panel Members were informed of scores and comments from the stakeholder session before final decisions were made on whether candidates were appointable.

17. The Advisory Assessment Panel felt there were three appointable candidates.

18. The Deputy Minister for Arts and Sport and Chief Whip was presented with a full interview report. This report included a narrative on all candidates' answers against all interview questions to enable the Deputy Minister to identify their preferred candidate.

3. The Welsh Government's preferred candidate: The Baroness Grey-Thompson, DBE, DL

19. Tanni Grey-Thompson is a cross-bench peer of the House of Lords and former Paralympian. Baroness Grey-Thompson was born in Cardiff and started wheelchair racing at 12 years old. She went on to represent Great Britain and Northern Ireland in five Paralympic Games (winning 11 Gold medals) and Wales at three Commonwealth Games.

20. She received a degree in Politics and Social Administration from Loughborough University. During her career, she has sat on a number of boards including the Sports Council of Wales, London Marathon, Transport for London and the BBC. Among other current appointments, she is the current Chair of ukactive and the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.

21. She received an MBE in 1992, an OBE in 2000, a DBE in 2005 and was appointed as an Independent Cross Bench Peer of the House of Lords in 2010.

4. Pre-appointment hearing

Pre-meeting

22. Members of the Committee were provided with the following information in advance of the pre-appointment hearing:

- Baroness Grey-Thompson's application form, CV and personal statement;
- the job advertisement and a description of how the vacancy was advertised;
- job description and person specification;
- the application form and criteria for assessment;
- anonymised data on the diversity of applicants which included an outline of candidates at each stage of the recruitment process.

23. The Committee also asked Baroness Grey-Thompson to complete a short questionnaire. The questions and answers provided by Baroness Grey-Thompson can be found in Annex B.

The hearing

24. The hearing took place on Wednesday 2 March 2022, where The Baroness Grey-Thompson was asked a range of questions on how she intended to undertake the role of Chair of Sport Wales. The framework for questions were based on the pre-hearing questionnaire with the intention of exploring these themes further.

25. A summary of the key areas of discussion are outlined below. A full transcript of the hearing is available on the Senedd Record of Proceedings³.

Knowledge and experience

26. The Committee felt that Baroness Grey-Thompson's experience as both an athlete and working in a variety of sports settings means she has a strong background for undertaking the role. This includes time spent as an elite athlete, as well as a coach and as a chair and member of numerous sports authorities. Her experience and work as a cross-bench Peer also mean she's well-qualified for this role.

³ <https://record.senedd.wales/Committee/12632>

Challenges facing sport and physical activity in Wales

27. The Committee noted The Baroness Grey-Thompson's comments on the challenges facing sport and physical activity in Wales. The Committee concurred with her view on what needs to be done to improve participation. She noted that whether participation is recreational or at an elite level, the "key is unlocking the barriers to participating" and that people should be encouraged to participate in sport whatever level of fitness they have, saying "it's okay not to be good at sport".

28. The Committee discussed the possible barriers to participation in sport, including financial barriers. The Committee welcomed her views on the value of social prescription for sport and physical activity.

29. During the discussion The Baroness Grey-Thompson spoke of the importance of inspiring the next generation to participate in sport and physical activity is important. She noted that the role of Sport Wales in this will be important in future. In addition, she noted that being "physically active by learning to play a musical instrument but walking to the lesson", means she understands that there are opportunities to work with other organisations outside of sport to meet other aims such as the Well-being of Future Generations goals.

Partnership working

30. The Committee asked Baroness Grey-Thompson about partnership working with organisations in receipt of funding from Sport Wales. In her pre-hearing questionnaire, she stated that "it will be my job as Chair to develop ongoing relationships and help create new ones." During the hearing, she also noted that partnership working is also an opportunity to learn from one another. She stated that ultimately "we all want the same thing".

5. The Committee's view

31. We see no reason not to endorse Baroness Grey-Thompson to the appointment of Chair of Sport Wales.

Recommendation 1. The Committee recommends that Baroness Grey-Thompson is appointed as Chair of Sport Wales.

32. We are of the view that the appointment of Chair of Sport Wales is an important one, and welcome the opportunity to undertake pre-appointment scrutiny. Participation in sport and physical activity, at all levels, is at a critical juncture as it recovers from the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore ensuring the right person is appointed to this position is important.

33. We are of the view that in order to support this role, ample engagement opportunities must exist at an early point into the Chair's tenure. This includes meetings with a range of stakeholders including the Members of the Senedd and this Committee. We feel that being subject to a range of discussions like this with key partners is essential to both developing the Chair's knowledge as well as developing working relationships. We would welcome the opportunity to meet with The Baroness Grey-Thompson as soon as is practically possible when she begins her tenure as Chair of Sport Wales. We are also reassured that she will be available beyond the minimum two-day a week time commitment if required.

Recommendation 2. The Committee recommends that consideration be given to ensuring an informal meeting with this Committee takes place early and throughout the tenure of the Chair of Sport Wales.

34. We also noted that all candidates who applied for the post were from a White background. Whilst we appreciate the steps taken by Welsh Government to share the job advertisement with a very wide range of organisations, we would recommend that you consider what further steps you can take to increase the ethnicity diversity of candidates for public appointments.

Recommendation 3. The Committee recommends that the Welsh Government consider what further steps it can take to increase the ethnic diversity of candidates for public appointments.

Annex A: Chair of Sport Wales person specification and job description

1. Role and Person Specification

ROLE OF CHAIR

You will be accountable to the Deputy Minister for Arts and Sport for Sport Wales' performance and for the delivery of strategic priorities. Developing and maintaining a close relationship with the Deputy Minister and key members of the Welsh Government is a crucial part of the Chair's role.

Leadership

- Provide effective leadership to Sport Wales and its Board, defining and developing its strategic direction and representing the views of the Board to the general public.
- Work with other members to discharge the functions of the Board which will comprise:
 - Delivery of the Board's corporate/business plan in response to the Deputy Minister for Arts and Sport's Remit Letter.
 - Ensuring that governance arrangements are sound and that there is probity and propriety in the workings of Sport Wales.
 - Putting into action the Welsh Government's policies and priorities including equal opportunities and diversity issues, by working with key stakeholders to ensure an integrated approach for the delivery of sport in Wales.
 - Maximise the benefits from major high profile national and international sporting events by providing a sustainable sports legacy.
 - Addressing the needs of sport both nationally and locally, taking responsibility for deciding how resources are deployed to meet Sport Wales' strategic objectives.
 - Supporting the Welsh Government's efforts to increase levels of physical activity throughout the population of Wales.

Relationship with the Chief Executive

- Establish and build a strong, effective and a supportive working relationship with the Chief Executive, providing support and advice while respecting executive responsibility;
- Conduct an annual appraisal to ensure the Chief Executive is held to account for achieving agreed strategic objectives. Provide relevant training and development opportunities.

Governance

- Ensure that the governance arrangements are working in the most effective way.
- Build an effective Board, initiating change and succession planning for Board appointments through the OCPA regulated process;
- Annually consult with and appraise Board members on their roles and assess their performance;
- Plan, preside over, and facilitate Board and committee meetings;
- Ensure Sport Wales' commitment to equality and diversity.

Communication and External Relations

- Act as an ambassador for Sport Wales;
- Promote effective relationships between non-executive members, the executive team and staff within Sport Wales;
- Develop, manage and maintain good relationships with interested parties both nationally and locally. Interested parties include:
 - Welsh Government
 - Sport Governing Bodies
 - Sports Associations
 - local authorities

- local communities
- the business sector
- the voluntary sector
- elected community representatives
- the media

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Essential

- Experience of leading a high profile organisation and able to provide continuity and stability to an organisation.
- An understanding of the benefits of sport and physical activity at all levels and a good knowledge of the sporting landscape in Wales.
- Strong communication skills with the ability to build appropriate relationships with all stakeholders, including Ministers and Government, Board Members, the press and media, drawing on a range of perspectives and lived experience as appropriate.
- A good understanding of Welsh public life and Welsh Government policies and values, in order to lead an organisation which delivers effectively for Welsh Ministers
- Have excellent scrutiny and analytical skills to support and challenge the Executive effectively, to ensure that Sport Wales meets its aims, objectives and performance targets;
- The ability to deliver an established strategy, supporting the values and behaviours of the Welsh Government and Sport Wales, including a strong commitment to the Well-Being of Future Generations principles;
- Act in a way that promotes high standards of propriety and public finance, ensuring Sport Wales achieves value for money within a framework of best practice;
- Lead the corporate planning process, including agreeing annual budget plans for operational programmes and corporate activities;
- Have a clear understanding and commitment to Nolan's "Seven Principles of Public Life";

- Committed to inclusive leadership and leading by example in a way which respects and promotes diversity and equality of opportunity. Ability to lead and foster an inclusive and diverse Board.

Desirable

- We would welcome applicants with experience in a related field, such as health, community development or education.

Annex B: Completed questionnaire completed by Baroness Grey-Thompson ahead of the appointment hearing

<p>Tell us a little bit about yourself and your background (for committee session).</p>	<p>Dywedwch ychydig wrthym amdanoch chi eich hun a'ch cefndir (ar gyfer sesiwn y pwyllgor).</p>
<p>I was born in Cardiff and brought up in Heath. I went to Birchgrove Primary School. My secondary education was in Penarth (St Cyres – the only accessible school in South Wales). My parents strongly believed in physical activity and sport to keep fit and healthy and at 12 years old I started wheelchair racing and joined Bridgend Athletics Club. I have a degree in Politics and Social Administration from Loughborough University. I went on to compete for GB at 5 Paralympic Games and for Wales at 3 Commonwealth Games (Team Captain in 2006). I have sat on numerous Boards and am currently Chair of ukactive (due to end shortly) and the Duke of Edinburgh Awards. I am married and have one daughter.</p>	
<p>Question 1: What is your motivation for applying to be the Chair of Sport Wales?</p>	<p>Cwestiwn 1: Beth yw eich cymhelliant dros wneud cais i fod yn Gadeirydd ar sefydliad Chwaraeon Cymru?</p>
<p>I benefitted significantly from growing up in Wales and being able to access good physical activity and sport. Not only is it a chance to put something back into the system that gave me so much, but the opportunity to connect different areas of work to help bring about a difference to health and wellbeing (both physical and mental). From it being the first Board that I sat on as a competing athlete, it is a privilege to have the opportunity to apply for this role. As a nation we are not as fit and healthy as we could be and to be competitive on a world stage, whether in business or sport, we need to change some patterns of behaviour.</p>	
<p>Question 2: Why do you think you are well-suited for the role?</p>	<p>Cwestiwn 2: Pam yr ydych o'r farn eich bod chi'n ymgeisydd addas ar gyfer y rôl hon?</p>
<p>I have been an athlete, administrator, sports development officer, coach, worked on Talent ID and Performance Programmes, sat on numerous Boards and am now a Parliamentarian in Westminster so am able to see issues from a number of perspectives. I am used to working with quite different groups of people to bring them together to find solutions. There are many passionate people in the wider industry with competing interests that need to be supported, guided, and at times directed towards the end goal. Obviously from my</p>	

<p>time as an elite athlete I care about sport but I also care about physical activity and the duty of care we owe to those in sport.</p>	
<p>Question 3: What are the three main outcomes that you want to achieve during your tenure?</p>	<p>Cwestiwn 3: Beth yw'r tri phrif ganlyniad yr ydych am eu cyflawni yn ystod eich cyfnod yn y rôl?</p>
<p>I have read all the public facing documents that I could find in relation to Sport Wales. There will obviously be work programmes and other discussions that need to be had and there are a number of priorities already in place. The most obvious answer is to help run Sport Wales with integrity, diligence and compassion, helping both Sport Wales deliver on its targets and being a good partner with the Welsh Government, where we may at times challenge each other. I want to make it easier for people to build physical activity into their daily lives. This obviously ties in with having a safe place to live and the ability to eat. I want to give talented athletes the best chance to represent Wales and GB and for the nation to be proud of their achievements. Finally I want to be able to work across all strands of Government to help join up both thinking and work.</p>	
<p>Question 4: How will you work with individuals and organisations in receipt of funding from Sport Wales and those you seek to influence to increase participation in sporting activity?</p>	<p>Cwestiwn 4: Sut y byddwch yn gweithio gydag unigolion a sefydliadau sy'n cael cyllid gan Chwaraeon Cymru a'r rhai yr ydych yn ceisio dylanwadu arnynt i gynyddu cyfranogiad mewn chwaraeon?</p>
<p>There will be a number of relationships that Sport Wales already has. It will be my job as Chair to develop ongoing relationships but help create new ones. It is about being really clear where the lines of demarcation are, what is everyone's responsibility and how we work together to achieve the best for Wales or the greater good. Honest conversations are a really important part of the process. It is about being open minded about who we are able to work with and the connections other organisations are able to make with the population. Everyone's motivation for being active and playing sport is different and we have to find ways that connect to them</p>	
<p>Question 5: How will you work in a way that maintains independence from Welsh Government whilst also trying to influence the government to achieve the outcomes for</p>	<p>Cwestiwn 5: Sut y byddwch yn gweithio mewn ffordd sy'n cynnal annibyniaeth y sefydliad o Lywodraeth Cymru, tra hefyd yn ceisio dylanwadu ar y Llywodraeth i gyflawni'r canlyniadau i sefydliadau ac</p>

<p>organisations and individuals which Sport Wales has prioritised?</p>	<p>unigolion y mae Chwaraeon Cymru wedi'u blaenoriaethu?</p>
<p>The role of Chair is to help lead the organisation and support the team but also provide a channel of communication into the Welsh Government. It is about being clear about the strategy for the organisation, providing accurate data and knowledge and working in a collaborative manner with the Welsh Government. There may be at times some difficult conversations but we all have to recognise there may be competing priorities. The Welsh Government will, rightly, at times challenge the work that Sport Wales does. There are a number of areas that I have worked in where maintaining both independence but also a close working relationship is important.</p>	
<p>Question 6: How will you work with Senedd Members, Senedd committees and other stakeholders?</p>	<p>Cwestiwn 6: Sut y byddwch yn gweithio gydag Aelodau o'r Senedd, pwyllgorau'r Senedd a rhanddeiliaid eraill?</p>
<p>There will be a process of understanding who the key people, committees and stakeholders are. I will already know many of them. A big part of my early time will be connecting to those people while getting on with the day job of Chairing Sport Wales. It is important to both listen and hear what people say. There will be a number of meetings that are scheduled within the Governmental process but making time outside of that is also valuable. Through the process that I have been through so far it has been clear that people care about this agenda and want to make it work to the best of everyone's abilities.</p>	