

# Pre-appointment hearing – Chair of the Citizen Voice Body for Health and Social Care

March 2022

## 1. Introduction

### **The Citizen Voice Body for Health and Social Care**

**1.** The Health and Social Care (Quality and Engagement) (Wales) Act 2020 ('the Act') made provision for the establishment of a new national body: the Citizen Voice Body for Health and Social Care ('CVB'). This new body will replace Community Health Councils (who currently represent the patient voice in the health service only) and will exercise functions across both health and social care.

**2.** From April 2023, the CVB will represent the voices and opinions of the people of Wales in respect of health and social care services. It will be independent of government, the NHS and local authorities, but will be responsible for working with them, and others, to support the continuous improvement of person-centred services.

**3.** The CVB's purpose is to exercise specific functions in accordance with the Act. These include:

- to represent the interests of the public in respect of health services and social services by seeking the views of the public about these services;
- to promote public awareness of its functions, publish a statement of policy setting out how it proposes to do this and how it intends to seek the views of members of the public;



- to make representations to health boards (HBs), NHS trusts, special health authorities and local authorities about any matter it considers is relevant to the provision of health services or social services having sought the views of the public; and
- the power to provide advice and assistance with complaints relating to health and social services.

## Pre-appointment hearing

**4.** On 28 March 2022, the Committee held a pre-appointment hearing with Professor Medwin Hughes, the Welsh Government’s preferred candidate for the position of chair of the CVB. The meeting transcript is available on the [Committee’s website](#).

**5.** To inform the hearing, the Welsh Government provided us with a briefing on the process (“[the Welsh Government briefing](#)”), [Professor Hughes’ CV](#) and a copy of the [information pack for applicants](#).

## 2. The recruitment process

**6.** On 7 January 2022, the Welsh Government Public Appointments Unit advertised for a chair, deputy chair and 6 non-executive members for the CVB.

**7.** Paid advertisements were placed the following websites:

- Jobs Wales;
- Diversity Jobsite Network;
- Golwg 360;
- BYP Network.

**8.** The roles were also promoted via social media platforms and networks, including NHS Wales and Local Authorities Communications Leads, and the Welsh Government facilitated three awareness sessions for prospective candidates. Full details can be found in the Welsh Government briefing.

**9.** As part of the Welsh Government’s commitment to increasing diversity in public appointments the advert was also sent to equality organisations and other organisations who had expressed an interest. Diversity data relating to the applicants can be found in the [Welsh Government briefing](#).

**10.** Following a three week advertisement period, the advert closed on 1 February 2022. 122 applications in total were received, of which 16 were for the chair position. To support the Advisory Assessment Panel,<sup>1</sup> officials undertook a pre-sift of the 16 applications of which 10 were recommended for consideration by the Advisory Assessment Panel. However, the remaining six were reviewed by the Panel and sifted out. Of the 10 individuals considered, six candidates were invited to interview.

### **Role and person specification**

**11.** The Welsh Government set out the roles of the chair, deputy chair and non-executive members in the information pack for applicants. This included notification that, at the Committee's discretion, appointment to the role of chair could be subject to a pre-appointment hearing.

**12.** The information pack explains that the chair is accountable to the Welsh Ministers. Communications between the CVB Board and the Ministers shall, in the normal course of business, be conducted through the chair. The chair is responsible for ensuring the Board's policies and actions support the Minister's wider strategic policies, whilst also ensuring the CVB remains independent, and has an unfettered ability to comment and raise concerns based on evidence drawn from activities.

**13.** In addition, the chair should also:

- ensure Board members are kept informed of all such communications;
- demonstrate a strong, visible passion and commitment to role of the CVB and its strategy;
- ensure the CVB's affairs are conducted with probity; and
- where appropriate, ensure policies and actions are communicated and disseminated throughout the CVB.

**14.** The chair has a particular leadership responsibility for:

- formulating the Board's strategies;

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<sup>1</sup> 1.The Panel members were: Judith Paget, Director General Health and Social Services/NHS Wales Chief Executive; Dr Chris Jones, Deputy Chief Medical Officer; Albert Heaney CBE, Chief Social Care Officer for Wales; Bethan Jones-Edwards, Head of Social Care Futures Programme; Aaqil Ahmed, Senior Independent Panel Member.

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- ensuring the Board, in reaching decisions, takes proper account of statutory and financial management requirements and all relevant guidance including guidance provided by the Welsh Ministers;
- promoting the economic, efficient and effective use of staff and other resources;
- promoting a culture within the organisation based on positive values and behaviours;
- ensuring high standards of regularity and propriety; and
- representing the views of the Board to the public.

### 3. The Welsh Government's preferred candidate

#### Background

**15.** Professor Medwin Hughes, the Welsh Government's preferred candidate, is the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Wales Trinity Saint David and of the University of Wales.

**16.** His CV states:

*"He is the longest serving Vice Chancellor in Wales and has been responsible for significant system transformation. He is a graduate of the Universities of Wales and Oxford, a Supernumerary Fellow of Jesus College, Oxford University and an Honorary Fellow of Harris Manchester College, Oxford University He plays a significant public role both within a national and international context in the areas of education, inclusion and cultural policy. He has served upon numerous Governmental and Inter-Governmental bodies and has been responsible for facilitating several international initiatives with institutions including The Council of Europe and UNESCO. He has also held several public and crown appointments."*

**17.** A [full copy of his CV](#) is available on our website.

#### Our view

**18.** In line with the guidance on pre-appointment hearings agreed between the Welsh Government and the Senedd, our role is to set out our views on the suitability of the Welsh Government's preferred candidate.

**19.** During the pre-appointment hearing, we had a wide-ranging discussion with the preferred candidate, Professor Medwin Hughes. This covered his experience of working in other organisations, including his current role of Vice-Chancellor of the University of Wales Trinity Saint David and of the University of Wales.

**20.** We also talked about equality and diversity, his vision for the new body and the importance of building on the good work previously carried out by Community Health Councils and extending this into the field of social care. Professor Hughes demonstrated a particular willingness to engage with people and communities across Wales, to create a body that is truly representative of the views of all people in Wales. He recognised the importance of communication and enabling people to share their views in their language of choice, not just English or Welsh. He also recognised the importance of cross-border relationships for those people who live in Wales but receive their health or social care services in England.

**Conclusion 1.** Based on his performance and responses to questioning at the pre-appointment hearing, we believe the Welsh Government's preferred candidate, Professor Medwin Hughes, is suitable for appointment to the post of Chair of the Citizen Voice Body for Health and Social Care.

**21.** Should Professor Hughes be appointed, we wish him well in his role. We look forward to constructively scrutinising the CVB during this Senedd. We also hope that the new organisation will continue, as Community Health Councils have done, to contribute positively to our work in holding the Welsh Government to account on policy, legislation and spending relating to health and social care in Wales.

## 4. The pre-appointment hearing process

### The process

**22.** Welsh Ministers and the Welsh Parliament agreed to introduce pre-appointment scrutiny by Senedd committees of certain public appointments which are of significant public interest or which will have a significant impact on the public. The aim is to further improve the scrutiny and transparency of the public appointment making process. Pre-appointment scrutiny generally takes the form of a public pre-appointment hearing with the preferred candidate. For appointments to these agreed roles, it is for the relevant committee to decide whether or not it wishes to carry out a pre-appointment hearing.

**23.** We agreed to hold a pre-appointment hearing with the preferred candidate for the chair of the CVB because of the significance of the role in ensuring that the new body effectively

represents the voices and opinions of the people of Wales in respect of health and social care services. As the Welsh Government advised us that it was keen to make an appointment before 1 April 2022, we sought agreement from Business Committee to hold an additional meeting on 28 March 2022 for this purpose.

**24.** Interviews for the role of chair were held on 4 March 2022. However, we were not provided with the information about the candidate or the appointment process until 21 March. This meant that we had limited time to prepare for the hearing, and we were unable to follow the approach taken by the Fifth Senedd Health, Social Care and Sport Committee of inviting the preferred candidate to complete a questionnaire in advance to provide information about their experience or their priorities for the role should they be appointed.<sup>2</sup>

### **Our view**

**25.** Pre-appointment hearings are an important part of the public appointment process. They bring greater transparency, and ensure that appointees to significant roles are able to withstand parliamentary and public scrutiny. To be fair to candidates, and ensure that the hearings add the value they are intended to, it is vital that both committees and candidates have sufficient time to prepare.

**26.** We understand that there will be many factors to be considered when planning public appointment recruitment processes, and that circumstances may change during a recruitment campaign. Nevertheless, planning for the appointment of roles for which committees have the option of holding pre-appointment hearings—or where it may be considered likely that committees would request to hold hearings in line with the criteria set out in the pre-appointment scrutiny protocol agreed between the Welsh Government and the Senedd—must include sufficient time for committees to prepare for, hold, and report on their scrutiny.

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<sup>2</sup> The Welsh Government's preferred candidate for the Chair of Swansea Bay University Health Board submitted a [pre-appointment hearing questionnaire](#) in advance of the meeting on 12 March 2020

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