

# Pre-appointment hearing:

## National Adviser for Violence Against Women, Gender-based Violence, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence

July 2022

### 1. Introduction

#### Pre-appointment scrutiny

1. The Welsh Ministers make a range of public appointments across all aspects of public life. Senedd Committees undertake pre-appointment scrutiny of some appointments in order to improve the scrutiny and transparency of the public appointments process. To read more information about the pre-appointment hearings, please visit the [Senedd website](#).

#### Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015

2. The *Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015* (the Act) stipulates that the Welsh Government must appoint a National Adviser for Violence Against Women, Gender-based Violence, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (the National Adviser).

3. The National Adviser works alongside the Welsh Government to advise and assist the Welsh Ministers in tackling Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence



(VAWDASV). The current post-holders are Yasmin Khan and Nazir Afzal OBE, working on a job-share basis. Their term of office ends in July 2022.

**4.** The Welsh Government published its renewed Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy for 2022 to 2026 on 24 May 2022.<sup>1</sup>

## **Role of the National Adviser**

**5.** The National Adviser is expected to be an expert in the field. The functions of the National Adviser are set out in the Act. They include:

- giving advice and assistance to the Welsh Ministers in their pursuit of the purpose of the Act or tackling related matters;
- undertaking research relating to pursuing the purpose of the Act, examining whether abuse is related directly or indirectly to inequality between people of a different gender, gender identity or sexual orientation;
- with the agreement of the Welsh Ministers, advising and giving assistance, to any person on matters relating to pursuing the purpose of the Act; and
- producing reports on any matter relating to the purpose of the Act.

## **2. The recruitment process**

**6.** The post was advertised for six weeks up to 31 March 2022, via a number of websites and on social media, as well as through paid advertisements and various stakeholder networks. Candidates were provided with an [information pack](#), which contained details about the recruitment process, including background and key responsibilities of the role (see Annex A), and other relevant information.

**7.** 21 applications were received and, following a sift by the Advisory Assessment Panel,<sup>2</sup> eight candidates were invited to the next round of assessment.

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<sup>1</sup> Welsh Government, [Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence: strategy 2022 to 2026](#), May 2022

<sup>2</sup> Panel members were: Lisa James, Deputy Director; Kirsty Davies-Warner, Equity in Education Division; Craig Stephenson, Senior Independent Panel Member

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**8.** The next round included:

- a stakeholder session involving approximately six stakeholders, which the applicant was expected to lead, on 9 and 10 May 2022; and
- a formal interview with the Advisory Assessment Panel on 12 and 13 May 2022.

**9.** Prior to the assessment, one candidate withdrew their application, and seven candidates completed the assessment process.

### **Preferred candidate(s)**

**10.** Following the recruitment process the Minister for Social Justice was provided with a list of five candidates deemed suitable for the role.

**11.** The Minister's two preferred candidates for the role, on a job-share basis, are Yasmin Khan (as a re-appointment) and Johanna Robinson (as a new appointment).

**12.** In addition to her role as the current National Adviser, Yasmin Khan is Chair of the Single Unified Homicide Review across Wales; Research Director of Police Super Complaint sexual abuse within BME community; CSE and wider community; and Local Enterprise Partnership member for Tees Valley Combined Authority, responsible for Inclusive Growth.

**13.** Johanna Robinson is currently the Operational Lead for Llamau in Cardiff. She has worked previously as Head of Strategy in the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent and as Head of Victims' Services for Gwent Police. She spent three years working as National Development Manager for The Survivors Trust.

## **3. The pre-appointment hearing**

**14.** To inform the hearing, the Welsh Government provided us with a briefing on the recruitment process and the personal statements and CVs of Yasmin Khan and Johanna Robinson.

**15.** The hearing took place on Monday 4 July 2022, during which we questioned the candidates on a number of areas including:

- understanding of the existing landscape;
- scrutiny and independence;

- the National Adviser role and the way in which it has been restricted as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic;
- working relationships; and
- measuring success.

**16.** The full transcript for the meeting is available on the Committee's webpage.<sup>3</sup>

## 4. The Committee's view

**17.** We note the Minister's preferred candidates for the role of National Adviser and welcome the opportunity to have scrutinised them as part of the pre-appointment process.

**Conclusion 1.** We are pleased to endorse the Welsh Government's preferred candidates to job share the role of National Adviser for Violence Against Women Gender-based Violence, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence.

**18.** We would like to thank both candidates for engaging with us and look forward to further opportunities for scrutiny during the course of this Senedd.

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<sup>3</sup> Equality and Social Justice Committee, 4 July 2022

## Annex A

The job description notes that key responsibilities of the role will include, on behalf of the Welsh Ministers:

- agreeing an annual plan setting out how they propose to exercise their functions during the following year;
- providing an annual report to the Welsh Ministers setting out how the priorities in the annual plan have been met, including a statement of other activities they have undertaken during the year;
- providing an expert perspective to the development and implementation of policy across Welsh Government and so help the development of more coherent and consistent policy and decision-making;
- working with Public Services across Wales and beyond to ensure best practice, and support the high quality and standards required by the Welsh Government;
- reviewing the actions being taken by persons in exercising their functions under the Act, and advising the Welsh Ministers of the findings;
- encouraging all services and agencies to perform to a quality standard, including the coordination of services, performance monitoring, multi-agency working, information sharing and data collection;
- providing a focus to ensure tackling gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence is a priority across the Public Sector;
- addressing the issues of strategic incoherence, inconsistency of approach and lack of leadership at both a Local and a National level in Wales;
- working with the specialist third sector and charitable organisations that provide services in Wales supporting victims and survivors of gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence to seek their input to the development of policy, strategy and service delivery;
- working with victims and survivors, to gain an understanding of their experiences and views and to consider how these could influence the development of policy and delivery of services;

- supporting the Welsh Ministers in raising awareness of the issues associated with tackling gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence including through national campaigns;
- providing expert advice to the wider Welsh Government VAWDASV Team on a range of policy issues including education and training; and
- participating in Ministerial and official level meetings to discuss their work and input to wider policy development.