

Pre-appointment hearing: Chair of Hywel Dda University Health Board

Pre-appointment questionnaire

April 2024

Background

You are being asked to complete this questionnaire because you are the Welsh Government's preferred candidate for the post of Chair of Hywel Dda University Health Board.

Your answers to this questionnaire will be published with the meeting papers for the pre-appointment hearing, and will be used to inform Members' preparation for the hearing. Your response to each question should be no more than around 250 words.

Providing Written Evidence

The Senedd has two official languages, Welsh and English.

In line with the [Senedd's Official Languages Scheme](#) the Committee requests that documents or written responses to consultations intended for publication or use in Senedd proceedings are submitted bilingually. When documents or written responses are not submitted bilingually, we will publish in the language submitted, stating that it has been received in that language only.

Please see [guidance for those providing evidence for committees](#).



Disclosure of information

Please ensure that you have considered the Senedd's [policy on disclosure of information](#) before submitting information to the Committee.

1. What motivated you to apply to be the Chair of Hywel Dda University Health Board?

I am motivated to apply for this role for three primary reasons:

Firstly, I am profoundly passionate about people, community wellbeing and the critical role played by the NHS as a provider/facilitator of healthcare. Health is a universal building block and a prerequisite for creating a successful, prosperous, cohesive and fair society. Throughout my career, I have worked extensively within health services and engaged regularly with providers, I understand the scale of challenges facing the Health Board and very much want to play my part in finding a long-term sustainable solution.

Secondly, I live in west Wales within the community served by the Health Board and hope to bring a local perspective and lived experience to the role. I see and experience the service at its best and worse, engaging with people across west Wales to build a picture of what is needed and the role played by everyone to secure good health and wellbeing. I fundamentally believe the communities we live in and the way we engage with each other are an essential part of the solution.

And finally, I have spent much of my career blending both paid and unpaid work to build a unique portfolio of experience which I am confident would enrich the work of the health board and hopefully strengthen its operation. I am service orientated, solutions focused and resilient. Over many years, I worked with Boards in both a non-executive and executive capacity to appreciate the factors which help to deliver success.

2. Why do you think you are well suited to the role?

In response to this question, I have tried to anticipate what the Health Board needs at the current time and how I think the skills and experience I can bring to the role of Chair will add value.

In my view, the Health Board needs clarity of vision, a renewed and reinvigorated focus upon service improvement and cost reduction, a willingness to explore solutions and alternatives that may not be palatable or comfortable, a rigour to the way it delivers its services to ensure safety, resilience, timeliness and clinical effectiveness, an increased appetite for innovation and post-conventional thinking and a culture where constructive challenge and openness to alternative ways of doing things flourishes .

These factors need to be embedded in the seams of a culture where staff feel confident, well skilled, valued and empowered to make decisions based on their knowledge and experience of how things could be improved and done better.

I have spent much of my career working within senior roles, largely within the people profession, across the public service, including central, regional and local governmental, the NHS, Charities, voluntary groups and foundations. This diversity of experience has strengthened my understanding of organisations, relationships, the separation between the strategic and operational function, effective delivery, the importance of good governance and as importantly sharpened my skills as a leader and an architect of transformational change.

I am confident when working in complex and often contested environments, comfortable with challenge, and relationship focused – putting people at the heart of the enterprise and change proposition.

3. What are the three main outcomes that you want to achieve during your tenure?

A resilient, sustainable and exemplary west Wales health/care service delivered collaboratively and in partnership with the patient and other providers.

A measurable improvement in the health of the local population, including a reduction in health inequalities.

An engaged and skilled workforce, working at the edge of its competence to deliver outstanding healthcare.

4. How will you work with NHS bodies, Welsh Government, local authorities and social care partners?

My approach to working with others is to build relationships rooted in honesty, openness, and authenticity, that are 'grown up' and sufficiently robust to allow for the expression of different views, thoughts and ideas which on occasion may conflict.

In a collaborative context where often other parties hold different responsibilities and interests, I work to a set of design principles to provide an operating framework and underpin the process of collective enterprise. This can help to ensure at times of divergence or contestation that we are remember our core purpose and commitments.

I am firmly of the view that proximity of interest and familiarity contribute significantly to developing long-lasting, trustful and productive relationships. In this regard, developing relationships beyond the pale or conventional transaction to understand the priorities, the ambitions, and the motivation of others is deeply important. As is meeting regularly and often, to strengthen the personal and professional connections.

Within the context of working with other NHS bodies, I would very much want to build on the existing network architecture, to intensify the benefits of innovation, service redesign and cost reduction. I am keen to explore the potential benefits of strengthening collaboration with SWBHB to understand the health needs of the people living in west Wales within a regional health economy and the potential for more integrated delivery.

Working regularly with Welsh Government officials to develop a trustful and open relationship to promote confidence in the work of the Health Board but also to access the resources of the department such as comparative data.

In the case of Local Government, meeting regularly at an officer and member level will be essential to creating a deeper level of service synergy and finding ways to manage the interface between health and social care. Exploring the benefits of a unified care service that bridges health and social care in collaboration with social care partners would provide a framework for developing ongoing relationships and make the best use of resources.

5. How will you work with community groups, patients, the third sector and other stakeholders?

The Broad principles offered above apply within the context of community groups, patients, the voluntary sector and other stakeholder groups.

Meeting regularly, building equal status partnerships, and supporting organisations to play an active part in sustaining good health within communities including the delivery of health care will be central to my role. I firmly believe good health is the consequence of co-productive efforts by a coalition of organisations of which the NHS is one. Building greater interdependence with other providers will be essential.

Similarly, strengthening the voice of patients, not just in the context of advocacy and formal meetings but actively seeking engagement with those who use primary and secondary care services will be a regular feature of my work. As a patient, I understand at first hand the opportunity to become actively involved in one's own healthcare is essential to staying well.

As the Chair of the Wales Council for Voluntary Action, with a long history of working within a voluntary capacity, I appreciate the deeply important role played by community organisations, of which there are more than 30,000 in Wales, in supporting the health and wellbeing of the people of Wales. This is an enormous asset base, with profound value and impact. I passionately believe strengthening social capital within communities is essential to delivering good health and an investment opportunity for the NHS.

Finally, within the context of the Board itself, engaging regularly with staff and representative groups, to share thoughts, listen to alternative perspectives and develop common currency will be essential for building trust and communicating value.

6. How will you work with Senedd Members and Senedd committees?

Within the environment of the Health Board, I would seek to meet regularly with local Senedd Members and to maintain formal and informal contact. Building a shared sense of mission based on local priorities and working to deliver a transformed health service will be a collaborative enterprise with Senedd Members at the core.

More broadly, having worked with and within Welsh Government and also within the Scottish Government and Whitehall, I appreciate the important role played by Committees members as scrutineers of public policy and delivery. Engaging positively to ensure transparency and openness will be central to my work as well as providing regular opportunity to receive constructive challenge on the work of the Health Board.

Building relationships with the wider Senedd Community will be equally important to strengthen connections both geographically and within the broader policy context. The connecting themes of education, economy, social justice, local government, transport and sustainability to name but a few are systemically connected to the delivery of good health.

7. Do you currently hold any other appointments that could give rise to any potential conflicts of interest or perceived conflicts of interest? If so, how do you propose to manage those conflicts or perceptions?

I am currently a Non-Executive Director with the Scottish Government. I don't anticipate a conflict of interest. However, if one should arise, I will declare an interest and take the appropriate course of action.