

Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee
Evidence Paper on Public Appointments
17 October 2024

Public Appointments in Wales

Public appointments in Wales refer to positions on boards and committees of Public Bodies which play a crucial role in the governance and oversight of various public services and institutions in Wales. These appointments are made by, or on behalf of, Welsh Ministers.

Regulated and Non-Regulated Public Bodies

For appointments, Public Bodies in Wales fall into two categories, regulated and non-regulated.

- Regulated Public Bodies fall under the oversight of the Commissioner for Public Appointments. The appointment process for these roles must follow the Governance Code on Public Appointments, which includes transparent recruitment processes, the involvement of independent panels, and public reporting on the appointment process.
- Non-Regulated Public Bodies do not fall under the Commissioner's remit and may have different levels of scrutiny. While the Welsh Government still seeks to apply principles of fairness and merit, the processes for these appointments may be less formalised, and there is greater flexibility in how they are managed.

Welsh Ministers are responsible for making appointments to 48 regulated public bodies in Wales which are detailed in the Privy Council, Order in Council (OiC). Following advice from officials, Welsh Ministers decide which Public Bodies should be listed on the OiC. Regulated Public Bodies are legally bound to follow the Public Appointments Code of Practice and are subject to scrutiny by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. Scrutiny and accountability for the performance of our Public Bodies, however, is a Welsh Government responsibility.

Welsh Ministers are responsible for making appointments to 52 non-regulated bodies which voluntarily adhere to the Governance Code on Public Appointments. These include advisory boards, industry and safeguarding boards and committees. Ministers may make appointments to other informal groups such as small, subject specific, task and finish advisory groups.

The Commissioner for Public Appointments

The Commissioner for Public Appointments, Sir William Shawcross CVO, oversees the appointments made to over 300 regulated public bodies by ministers in Whitehall and 48 by the Welsh Government. These public bodies are detailed in the Privy Council, [Order in Council](#).

The Commissioner provides assurance that public appointments are made in accordance with the 'Governance Code on Public Appointments'. This code sets out the principles and processes that must be followed, including requirements for open competition and the appointment based on fairness and merit.

The Commissioner's role is largely focused on compliance with individual government departments having responsibility for improving diversity within public appointments.

The Commissioner previously reported to PAPAC that 'contact (from Welsh Government) was out of proportion' for the number of appointments made in Wales. In 2023, we reported that processes had improved, and this has continued into 2024 with the level of contact now determined by the requirements of the Code. The Commissioner has requested an introductory meeting with the First Minister.

Public Appointments Team

The Public Appointments Team recently transitioned from the Chief Security Officer's division to the newly established Expert Resourcing Hub. The Hub serves as a centre of excellence for recruitment within the People and Places Directorate. The primary goal is to streamline the delivery of effective and efficient resourcing and recruitment services for our customers and align organisational priorities for improving equality, diversity and inclusion outcomes.

The Hub will enhance collaboration and broaden the knowledge base across functions, enabling the sharing of best practice and delivering of innovative solutions. The enhanced support will create a more effective working environment while aligning with organisational priorities.

Volume of Public Appointments

Between 17 July 2023 and 16 July 2024, the Public Appointments Team delivered 40 recruitment campaigns which resulted in 52 new appointments. Additionally, 21 reappointments were made to 9 public bodies and health boards.

Of the 40 campaigns, 5 schemes failed to appoint a suitable candidate. A review of these schemes found that the level of remuneration offered and very narrow requirements for the roles were contributory factors. Of the 5 schemes, 3 have since been filled through open advert and 2 are on hold.

Delivery of Priorities

Data Collection

Our new on-line recruitment system, Cais, captures a variety of different data sets allowing us to develop a robust baseline to inform our future approach to improving diversity within our public appointments. The data fields include gender, ethnicity, Welsh language skills, postcodes, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Outcomes

An initial analysis of the equality, diversity and inclusion data held on Cais can be found in **Annex A**.

Caution should be applied as numbers are based on applications and not individual applicants. It is therefore possible that some applicants applied to more than one advert, and each application would be counted separately. It is also important to note that some of the numbers included are small, particularly when relating to those who were appointed and to some minority groups.

Data gathered on the 48 **regulated** public appointments for the period 17 July 2023 to 16 July 2024 shows:

- **Gender:** Females had a higher success rate than males, with 60.0% of appointees being women, despite males constituting 49.1% of applicants.
- **Ethnicity:** Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic applicants made up 22.3% of the application pool and 20.0% of appointees.
- **Disability:** Disabled applicants (18.9%) were underrepresented among appointees (10.9%).
- **Sexual Orientation:** Minority sexual orientation applicants made up 9.2% of the applicant pool, with 9.1% appointed, aligning with population statistics (7.6%).
- **Welsh Language:** Applicants with advanced Welsh-speaking skills had a higher success rate of appointments compared to non-speakers, with 27.3% of appointees being advanced speakers.
- **Regional Representation:** South-East Wales residents dominated the applicant pool for appointments (42.7%) and made up 56.4% of appointees.
- **Age:** The largest proportion of applicants and appointees were aged 40-64 years, making up 70.9% of those appointed positions.
- **Socio-Economic Background:** Applicants from lower socio-economic backgrounds constituted 41.8% of appointees

Diversity and Inclusion Strategy Training Programmes

In September 2023, the Welsh Government took over the diversity and inclusion strategy training programme from Chwarae Teg. Contractors Deep Insight and Afallen were appointed to form a consortium to deliver the remainder of the programme.

Between January and March 2024, the 'Deep Insight Consortium' delivered the training programmes listed below to disabled people and people from minority ethnic backgrounds identified as future leaders, with the aim of creating a robust pipeline of board members. Fifty-five people participated in the training across the 3 different programmes:

- Public leaders of the future, 6 days (two cohorts)
- Diversity and inclusion, 2 days (two cohorts)
- Board introduction, 3 days (two cohorts)

Senior Independent Panel Members (SIPMs)

In 2021, 13 SIPMs with diverse backgrounds were recruited from across Wales to join recruitment panels for some of the most significant public appointments, sharing their knowledge, expertise and experience to add value to the recruitment process.

Wales is the first UK nation to actively recruit SIPMs in this way, ensuring an independent perspective to the selection and appointment process.

This initiative continues to be an effective approach with 12 SIPMs currently engaged in the programme.

Mentoring and Shadowing

To further facilitate mentoring and shadowing opportunities for people from protected groups and to build a talent pipeline for the future, a job shadowing pilot programme launched in 2024. The programme provided short-term paid opportunities to 26 participants with protected characteristics.

The participants were matched to 23 boards across Wales and were afforded the opportunity to attend board meetings, contribute to items on the agenda, and engage in planned outreach work between March to August 2024.

Participants were selected from those who completed the Chwarae Teg 'Near Ready Leadership' and 'Public Leaders of the Future' training programmes, members of the Black TUC activists' group, and previous applicants for public appointments who were unsuccessful at the first stage of the selection process.

Annex A – Equality Diversity and Inclusion Data Analysis

(Data captured in Cais between 17 July 2023 and 16 July 2024)

Gender

Regulated

Gender	Applied	%	Interviewed	%	Appointed	%
Male	192	49.1	76	43.9	21	38.2
Female	173	44.2	92	53.2	33	60.0 %
Unknown^	26	6.6	5	2.9	1	1.8
Total	391	100	173	100	55	100

Non-regulated

Gender	Applied	%	Interviewed	%	Appointed	%
Male	109	57.4	51	51.5	24	54.5
Female	71	37.4	45	45.5	19	43.2
Unknown^	10	5.3	3	3.0	1	2.3
Total	190	100	99	100	44	100

^ This is a combination of missing data and candidates who selected 'prefer not to say'

The data shows that for regulated appointments, although males constituted a slightly higher proportion of the application pool (49.1%) than females (44.2%), females tended to have a higher success rate throughout the selection process. Specifically, women constituted 53.2% of those interviewed and 60.0% of those appointed. In contrast, unregulated public appointments showed a male majority at all stages, with men comprising 57.4% of applicants, 51.5% of interviewees, and 54.5% of those appointed.

Ethnicity

Regulated

Ethnicity	Applied	%	Interviewed	%	Appointed	%
White	282	72.1	131	75.7	43	78.2
Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic	87	22.3	36	20.8	11	20.0
Prefer not to say	22	5.6	6	3.5	1	1.8
Totals	391	100	173	100	55	100

Non-regulated

Ethnicity	Applied	%	Interviewed	%	Appointed	%
White	162	85.3	86	86.9	39	88.6
Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic	19	10.0	<10	9.1	<10	9.1
Prefer not to say	9	4.7	4	4.0	1	2.3
Totals	190	100	99	100	44	100

- Figures under 10 have been suppressed to protect anonymity

The majority of applicants report their ethnicity as White, comprising 76.9% of those applying for regulated public appointments and 88.6% for unregulated appointments. For regulated appointments, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic applicants made up 22.3% of the initial application pool and constituted a similar proportion of those appointed (20.0%). For unregulated appointments, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic applicants made up 10% of the application pool and a similar proportion of those appointed (9.1%).

Representation of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic applicants was higher than in the Welsh population, with the 2021 Census indicating that 6.2% of the Welsh population were from an ethnic minority.

Welsh Speaking Skills

The table below shows the number and proportion of appointees by skill level in speaking Welsh. Data has been combined into three categories: those with no skills, those with basic or intermediate skills and those with advanced skills. The specific skill levels within each category are listed below the table.

Regulated

Welsh Language Speaking Skills	Applied	%	Interviewed	%	Appointed	%
Advanced Skills^	83	21.2	40	23.1	15	27.3
Basic / Intermediate Skills*	127	32.5	59	34.1	18	32.7
No Skills	181	46.3	74	42.8	22	40.0
Total	391	100	173	100	55	100

Non-regulated

Welsh Language Speaking Skills	Applied	%	Interviewed	%	Appointed	%
Advanced Skills^	64	33.7	42	42.4	24	54.5
Basic / Intermediate Skills*	44	23.2	19	19.2	<10	13.6
No Skills	81	42.6	38	38.4	14	31.8
Prefer not to say	1	0.5	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total	190	100	99	100	44	100

^This category includes appointees who can converse in most work-related conversations or consider themselves fluent.

*This category includes appointees at three skill levels: (i) those who can hold a basic conversation in Welsh, (ii) those who can hold simple work-related conversations or (iii) those who can converse in some work-related conversations.

- Figures under 10 have been suppressed to protect anonymity

In regulated appointments, the majority of applicants (40.4%) reported having no Welsh speaking skills. Applicants with advanced Welsh speaking skills made up 23.1% of those interviewed and 27.3% of those appointed. However, in unregulated appointments, applicants with advanced speaking skills comprised a higher proportion of those offered positions (54.5%) than those in the original application pool (33.7%).

Estimates of Welsh language ability at a population level vary across surveys. The 2021 Census reported that 17.8% of the population were able to speak Welsh, while the 2023 Annual Population Survey put the figure at 29.2%. As such, it appears that Welsh language ability among those appointed was approximately in line with, or higher than, the population figures.

Location

Regulated

Area	Postcode	Applied	%	Interviewed	%	Appointed	%
SE Wales	CF, NP	167	42.7	84	48.6	31	56.4
W Wales	SA	84	21.5	35	20.2	<10	16.4
M Wales	SY/LD	17	4.3	<10	4.0	<10	1.8
N Wales	LL/CH	64	16.4	28	16.2	10	18.2
Outside Wales	All other postcodes	48	12.3	19	11.0	<10	7.3
Prefer not to say		11	2.8	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total		391	100	173	100	55	100

Non-regulated

Area	Postcode	Applied	%	Interviewed	%	Appointed	%
SE Wales	CF, NP	72	37.9	30	30.3	12	27.3
W Wales	SA	34	17.9	19	19.2	<10	18.2
M Wales	SY/LD	17	8.9	11	11.1	<10	13.6
N Wales	LL/CH	33	17.4	21	21.2	12	27.3
Outside Wales	All other postcodes	27	14.2	14	14.1	<10	11.4
Prefer not to say		7	3.7	4	4.0	1	2.3
Total		190	100	99	100	44	100

- Figures under 10 have been suppressed to protect anonymity

The data shows that individuals from South-East Wales (CF, NP postcodes) make up the largest proportion of the application pool at the application and interview stages for both regulated and unregulated appointments. In regulated appointments, applicants from this region make up 42.7% of the initial applicant pool, 48.6% of interviewees, and 56.4% of those appointed.

Within the unregulated appointments, South-East Wales and North Wales residents each represent 27.3% of those appointed. The proportions are lower for South-East Wales residents than the original application pool (at 37.9% of initial applications) but higher for North Wales residents than the original application pool (at 17.4% of initial applications).

Based on Local Authority figures from the 2021 Census, around 43% of the Welsh population are based in South-East Wales, slightly lower than the proportion of appointees to regulated appointments, but higher than the proportion of appointees to unregulated appointments.

Lower Socio-economic Background

Regulated

Consider themselves from a lower socio-economic background	Applied	%	Interviewed	%	Appointed	%
Yes	141	36.1	72	41.6	23	41.8
No	161	41.2	72	41.6	24	43.6
Prefer not to say	89	22.8	29	16.8	8	14.5
Total	391	100	173	100	55	100

Non-regulated

Consider themselves from a lower socio-economic background	Applied	%	Interviewed	%	Appointed	%
Yes	53	28	23	23.2	<10	20.5
No	103	54	56	56.6	26	59.1
Prefer not to say	34	18	20	20.2	9	20.5
Total	190	100	99	100	44	100

- Figures under 10 have been suppressed to protect anonymity

Applicants who consider themselves as coming from lower socio-economic backgrounds, make up 41.8% of regulated appointees and 20.5% of appointees for unregulated positions.

Sexual Orientation

Regulated

Sexual Orientation	Applied	%	Interviewed	%	Appointed	%
Heterosexual	308	78.8	136	78.6	45	81.8
Minority Sexual Orientation	36	9.2	19	11.0	<10	9.1
Prefer not to say	47	12.0	18	10.4	5	9.1
Total	391	100	173	100	55	100

Non-regulated

Sexual Orientation	Applied	%	Interviewed	%	Appointed	%
Heterosexual	161	84.7	84	84.8	38	86.4
Minority Sexual Orientation	11	5.8	<10	6.1	<10	4.5
Prefer not to say	18	9.5	9	9.1	4	9.1
Total	190	100	99	100	44	100

- Figures under 10 have been suppressed to protect anonymity

Heterosexual applicants were the largest group in the applicant pools across all stages for both regulated and unregulated appointments. Minority sexual orientation applicants (including lesbian, gay and bisexual applicants), accounted for 9.2% of the initial applicant pool for regulated posts, and 9.1% of those offered positions. For unregulated appointments, minority sexual orientation applicants made up 5.8% of the initial applicant pool and 4.5% of those appointed.

The proportions of applicants and appointees with a minority sexual orientation, are similar to that of the population, with the 2021 Census reporting that 7.6% of the Welsh population had a minority sexual orientation.

Age

Regulated

Age	Applied	%	Interviewed	%	Appointed	%
16-24	<10	0.3	0	0.0	0	0
25-39	81	20.7	33	19.1	<10	12.7
40-54	121	30.9	51	29.5	20	36.4
55-64	117	29.9	57	32.9	19	34.5
65+	42	10.7	23	13.3	<10	12.7
Prefer not to say	29	7.4	9	5.2	2	3.6
Total	391	100	173	100	55	100

Non-regulated

Age	Applied	%	Interviewed	%	Appointed	%
16-24	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
25-39	34	17.9	16	16.2	<10	11.4
40-54	63	33.2	29	29.3	15	34.1
55-64	61	32.1	36	36.4	15	34.1
65+	22	11.6	15	15.2	<10	18.2
Prefer not to say	10	5.3	3	3.0	1	2.3
Total	190	100	99	100	44	100

- Figures under 10 have been suppressed to protect anonymity

The age distribution of applicants shows that largest numbers of applications came from individuals aged 40-54 years and 55-64 years for both regulated and unregulated appointments. Within the regulated appointments, these groups combined comprised 60.8% of the applicant pool, 62.4% of those interviewed, and 70.9% of those appointed. Similarly, in unregulated appointments, these groups represent 68.2% of those appointed.

Younger candidates made up a smaller proportion of appointees, with 12.7% of regulated appointments made to the age group 25-39 years and 11.4% of unregulated appointments.

Disability

Regulated

Stated they are disabled / requested GIS for disability or requested recruitment adjustment	Applied	%	Interviewed	%	Appointed	%
Yes	74	18.9	27	15.6	<10	10.9
No	317	81.1	146	84.4	49	89.1
Total	391	100	173	100	55	100

Non-regulated

Stated they are disabled / requested GIS for disability or requested recruitment adjustment	Applied	%	Interviewed	%	Appointed	%
Yes	31	16.3	16	16.2	<10	6.8
No	158	83.2	83	83.8	41	93.2
Prefer not to say	1	0.5	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total	190	100	99	100	44	100

- Figures under 10 have been suppressed to protect anonymity

While 18.9% of applicants for regulated appointments stated they were disabled/requested the Guaranteed Interview Scheme (GIS) for disability or requested a recruitment adjustment, they made up a small proportion of those appointed, at 10.9%. The disparity is similar in unregulated public appointments, where 16.3% of applicants declared they were disabled, compared to only 6.8% of those appointed.

The 2021 Census indicated that disabled people make up 21.1% of the Welsh population. While it is difficult to draw firm conclusions based on the relatively small numbers of appointees, the figures suggest that disabled applicants were less likely to be appointed than non-disabled applicants.