

My working life has been dedicated to the public sector, recognising the power of those services to enhance the quality of each citizen's life. In recent years this has led me to undertake Board roles in a wide variety of organisations, from the NHS to private business, from place based voluntary groups to the largest fire and rescue service in Wales. What unites them all is my ability to lead and support each organisation's Executive team to meet with long term strategic success whilst balancing immediate and short-term necessities.

Each role is also connected by my commitment to ensure that the voice of patients, staff, partners and communities are heard. This has led me to re-instate patient's stories at PTHB and Powys RPB committee meetings, co constructing with the education sector a new international mobility scheme or advocating for communities worried about the impact of large infrastructure projects.

By nature, a curious person I am mindful to "keep out of the weeds", however I do not take things at face value. I believe Boards operate most effectively when there is a culture of frank and objective conversation. When I first joined Powys THB as Vice Chair, I found a culture where Independent Members were often passive recipient of information from Executive colleagues. By modelling the probing of thought processes, scrutinising approaches and appropriately questioning assumptions, the culture at both Board and Committees is no longer one of passive compliance but one where there is the challenge and support. This change has been positively commented on by auditors in their work.

A key element of this culture shift is the building of strong trusted relationships and creating the conditions of "psychological safety". As Chair of the Patient Experience Quality and Safety Committee and working closely with the Director of Nursing, I have created the conditions where there is the expectation that we broach tough issues. This has led to deep dives into areas of concern such as maternity care and the establishment of a local escalation policy that previously was absent. These honest conversations have led to a move from "their problem" to "our problem" where appropriate support and challenge is put in place to drive quality improvements for patients. At the most recent committee effectiveness review the committee was described as "aiming high".

I believe in compassionate and visible leadership. At Powys THB I mentor and provide advice to those who are new to Board level responsibilities. I regularly take time to visit services and spend time with staff to understand their perspective. This two-way exchange of information leads to a better understanding between floor and board and provides valuable insights to help me triangulate information I am receiving from Executives. I was an enthusiastic volunteer to be Powys' representative in the "Aspiring Board Member" Programme.

At South Wales Fire and Rescue Service this has been particularly important given the high levels of suspicion around Welsh Government intervention. Acknowledging the shock and grief experienced following the very public and devastating criticism of the service has been the first step in creating the conditions that has allowed me to lead the development of a strategy to take the service forward. I have fostered relationships to build a sense of a team, who have personal power and accountability to deliver a positive future of the service that is a source of pride and enjoys public confidence. Feedback from staff has been positive, senior leaders report feeling better supported to improve and front-line staff feeling seen and listened too.

An effective board must have systems in place to ensure the organisation is on track to deliver, holding the Chief Executive and the senior leadership team accountable for performance.

On arriving at South Wales Fire and Rescue I found that systems for reporting on performance were extremely limited. Whilst data was available within the organisation this was not routinely made available to the previous Fire Authority, and findings of independent reviews to improve operational effectiveness and public safety had been dismissed without justification. As Lead Commissioner for Operations, I hold the Senior Leadership team to account for delivery of improvement plans. I now receive regular updates on performance. This has led to a reduction in attendance at false alarms by over 42%, and an increase in the number of fires that a contained within the room of origin and more crews trained in specialist high rise firefighting tactics. The service is now developing an organisation wide performance framework.

At Powys THB I have tenaciously pursued the issue of Neuro Development services. Performance has been consistently low against Welsh Government targets. This was impacting on children, their families and partners such as the Local Education Authority. I worked with the Performance Committee and Executives to undertake a deep dive into this service, which unearthed significant performance issues that had not been reported. The PEQS committee now monitors the implementation of an improvement plan, internal waiting list have been cleared and a parents group established to ensure the patient and carers voice is heard.

Good governance structures support both strategy development, operational performance and the appropriate management of risk. I am able to recognise ineffective governance and support improvement, this includes reviewing terms of reference, report quality and risk registers at South Wales Fire and Rescue.

I have a natural team ethos and an inclusive leadership style that brings a sense of value and purpose. I am a listener, in chairing meetings I encourage people to express their views as I believe that rich discussion leads to more effective decision making, however I am not afraid to be decisive when the situation demands it. I would relish the opportunity to bring my experience and skills to Cardiff and Vale University Health Board recognising the unique challenges of meeting local need in an area of significant population and socioeconomic diversity whilst contending with the spotlight that comes from being situated in the capital and the provider of regional and specialised services.

---

## **PERSONAL PROFILE**

A pro-active and results driven Non-Executive Director with a track record of Board level stewardship across the public, private and voluntary sector. Utilizing skills and experience acquired in over two decades of delivery in public life with consistent recognition for effective leadership and communication in both Welsh and UK public service and politics.

## **CORE SKILLS**

- A pioneering change agent who effectively uses the levers available to negotiate tangible outcomes for stakeholders
- Skilled in the development of strategies that address short-, medium- and long-term organisational goals.
- Able to assimilate and triangulate complex information from multiple sources to drive operational performance.
- Adept at reaching creative solutions and fearless in bringing disparate groups together working with governments, trade unions, business, interest groups and the third sector to problem solve.
- Exceptional communication and presentation skills honed over 22 years of intense public scrutiny. A tenacious “problem” solver unafraid to challenge and scrutinise whilst maintaining productive professional relationships.

## **CURRENT PORTFOLIO**

### **Vice Chair – Powys Teaching Health Board, 2022- Present**

- Playing a full role in the corporate governance of the organisation. I have provided input and constructive challenge to the executive team in developing plans and strategies with a particular focus on primary care, mental health and community services.
- Modelling effective scrutiny and questioning at Board and Committees, contributing to a culture change, from one of compliant acceptance to critical friend.
- Leading the Patient Experience Quality & Safety Committee. I have successfully created a psychologically safe space for colleagues, enabling frank and open conversations about how we best deliver high quality services for the local population. This includes escalating concerns to the Board where necessary.
- Triangulating and interrogating data to gain assurance that the Health Board is responding to immediate pressures without losing sight of and making progress to deliver long term goals.
- Visible and curious leadership, taking time to meet with staff and patients, listening to their experiences and using this to shape future strategy.
- A supportive and empathetic colleague, providing one to one support to Directors in their first board roles. Working with new Independent Members to assist with ‘landing’ in their new positions and being the Board’s sponsor of the Welsh Government’s Aspiring Board Member Programme.
- Successfully supporting partnership working as Chair of the Powys RPB.

### **Commissioner – South Wales Fire & Rescue, 2024 – Present**

- Appointed by the Cabinet Secretary to restructure and reform service management whilst instilling a positive non-discriminatory culture.
- Creating the expectation and conditions for significant improvement in operational effectiveness.

- Working to implement a fit for purpose governance structure that commands staff and stakeholder confidence.
- Challenging poor culture and supporting the Executive team to prioritise action to address standards of conduct and behaviors.
- Contributing to the development of a new vision and strategy for a service that has been through a period of crisis.

#### **Chair – Global Centre of Rail Excellence Community Committee 2023 – Present**

- Facilitating the discussion between the business and community representatives to support the delivery of a multi-million pound rail infrastructure project, ensuring the citizen's voice is heard
- Objectively scrutinising the activities of the business and providing constructive challenge to executives on strategy and performance.

#### **Chair – National Education Coherence Group, 2024 – Present**

- Appointed by the Cabinet Secretary to facilitate open and frank discussion across educational stakeholders regarding school improvement reforms.
- To consider and advise the Cabinet Secretary of progress that is being made across Wales towards delivery of school improvement arrangements.
- I offer advice to the Cabinet Secretary on what actions may be necessary to achieve the policy intent.

#### **Chair - Taith Advisory Board, 2021 – Present**

- Providing strategic advice and oversight of Wales's new multi-million-pound international education programme to replace Erasmus from inception to delivery.
- Championing equity and inclusion within the organisation's strategy and performance indicators. resulting in over 40% of participants in the scheme coming from underrepresented groups, significantly higher than the previous Erasmus scheme.
- Ensuring the highest standards of governance, including advising on the need for review and restructure when the programme moved from its development phase to awarding public monies to projects.
- Lead NED for safeguarding ensuring that there are robust systems in place to secure the wellbeing of project participants.
- An ambassador for the scheme to UK and international audiences.

### **POLITICAL CAREER**

#### **Commissioner – Commission on the Constitutional Future of Wales. 2021- 2024**

- Appointed by the First Minister of Wales to examine and report on the future governance options for Wales. Required the interrogation of significant amounts of specialist information and public facing engagement events.

#### **Minister for Education – Welsh Parliament, 2016 – 2021.**

- Leading a national programme of educational reform across compulsory, further and higher education. Including the introduction of significant legislation.
- Accountable for the expenditure of a £3 billion budget.

**Leader – Welsh Liberal Democrats, 2008 – 2016.**

- The first woman to lead one of main political parties in Wales
- Successfully worked across the political divide to pass a Private members Bill enshrining nurse staffing levels in legislation, a first for the UK and Europe.

**Chair**

- National Assembly for Wales Environment and Rural Affairs Committee, 2010 – 2011
- National Assembly for Wales Standards of Conduct Committee, 2003 - 2007
- National Assembly for Wales Health and Social Care Committee, 1999 - 2003

**Assembly Member for Brecon and Radnorshire, 1999 – 2021.**  
**National Assembly Advisory Group, 1997 – 1999.**

**COMMUNITY**

**Brecknock YFC Board of Management, 2022 – Present.**

- Providing guidance and support to the staff and volunteers of a charity that provides youth services to over 450 young people in South Powys.

**Director Powys Samaritans, 2025 – Present.**

- Responsible for both the strategic direction and operational effectiveness of the Charity.

**HONOURS & RECOGNITION**

- Honorary Fellow - RCN (Royal College of Nurses) for delivering the UK's first ever Nurse Staffing Levels legislation.
- Honorary Doctorates – Cardiff Metropolitan University & Open University 2022. For services to education excellence and access in Wales.
- Commander of the British Empire (CBE) for "*political and public service*" – 2013.