

Velindre - Chair

June 18, 2025

Values

I can demonstrate a career-long commitment to engaging with people who use services and who work in them to plan, create and deliver better support and experiences. As a leading Communications specialist, I understand the importance of engagement and mutual understanding as a strategic enabler.

I Chaired *Time To Change Wales*, the national mental health anti-stigma campaign, for six years. Behaviour and attitudes had shifted in the first phase, but remained intransigent in some areas, such as amongst employers and in healthcare settings. Through engaging closely with stakeholders, I led the development of an insight-driven programme of training, support and communication. The campaign saw a significant whole-population reduction in mental health stigma and a quarter of the Welsh workforce covered by participating employers. Central to all was the empathy and understanding created by our amazing group of mental health champions.

As Director of Communications for the Welsh Government, I delivered national, insight-driven behaviour change campaigns to support Ministerial priorities. For example, I led the team in developing insight to the barriers and enablers to introducing a ban on smoking in public buildings. Having engaged and researched extensively with stakeholders, I understood that smokers were opposed to an authoritarian approach to change, taking a fatalistic approach to their own health whilst commercial venues were concerned about implementation and impact on revenue. However, all were motivated to make a difference for others who had no choice about consuming second hand smoke. I developed and executed a highly effective campaign to change smoking behaviours and continued engagement with key venues such as pubs and clubs to continually identify and address barriers. This was a key success for Government.

Skills and Experience

I have a track record of Board level leadership, directing two national charities and serving as a Non-Executive at Cardiff and Vale UHB and Wales Council for Voluntary Action.

As Director of Mind Cymru, I re-set an organization that had lost direction and support. Working with the Chair and members of the Governance Board, I developed a strategic change programme to hone our purpose and increase the quantum and value of our support to people with mental health problems, also strengthening our ability to influence wider change. In the short term, I reformed the organization internally, focusing staff and capabilities more clearly on our mission. Engaging closely with beneficiaries and stakeholders, I built reputation and trust, increasing media coverage by 150% and public awareness to 70%. I established a highly collaborative and effective team, saw trust measurably increasing

most amongst lower socio-economic groups and young people – those most likely to experience poor mental health. This led to a long-term significant increase in the uptake of our advice and information. We developed and delivered innovative national services with excellent reported outcomes. Both income and reach trebled over five years and ran impactful campaigns, winning a CIPR Cymru Gold award.

Chairing Tribunals often means facilitating understanding, analysis and decision-making relating to highly complex and contested issues within a legal and regulatory framework. I recently chaired a month-long final hearing where the case had been ongoing for 10 years and the HCPC found to have breached the Registrant's legal right to a fair trial. Relations between parties had broken down with an application to stay proceedings made. The allegations were of a very serious nature, and I felt strongly that the case needed to be resolved well. Through careful, compassionate and thorough leadership I succeeded in steering the Panel and both parties and their representatives through to a clear and proportionate outcome which enhanced public safety and the reputation of the regulator and profession.

My ability to work as an effective ambassador and advocate and to influence change is highly developed and tested. As Chair of the Wales Alliance for Mental Health I strengthened this coalition of charities. During Covid, we worked together to remain connected to our beneficiaries through service-delivery, our community of members and campaigners, and regular research. We gained an acute and early insight into the effects of the pandemic on mental health. This enabled me to advocate powerfully for a new approach during regular meetings with Ministers, officials and Members. As a result, new services and support were rapidly established – for instance enabling people to refer themselves for therapeutic help rather than having to navigate a highly disrupted primary care system.

I am skilled at bringing people together to get things done, even when opposing views are held. Appointed to Chair the Mental Health Crisis Concordat Group, the goal was to see fewer people held in police cells, improve responses to mental health crises' and to collaborate to support patients much earlier, prevent emergencies. The Group included Health Boards, people with lived experience of crisis, WAST, police, local authority and third sector leaders and practitioners from across Wales. I led the group to a collaborative understanding of shared goals and the development of an implementation plan with clear accountabilities and measurable outcomes. Together, we succeeded in reducing s.136 detentions by 90% and reinforcing the focus on prevention and early intervention leading to lasting innovations such as crisis houses.

I am the founding Chair of the People and Culture Committee at Cardiff and Vale UHB, supporting the 'Putting People First' strategy pillar and with delegated authority from and accountability to the Board, including in

relation to three Board Assurance Framework risks. I learned from other Boards and worked with Executives to develop the agenda and reporting. Our 'culture' risk, for example, is highly complex and just as important as more quantifiable workforce issues such as sickness and retention. I have instigated systematic ways of engaging with staff, including inviting Clinical Directorates to present to us openly and honestly and a focus on positive learning as well their concerns and needs. We now have consistent focus on areas of most concern with reporting on action to address weaknesses in management, leadership and culture - all of which can impact the quality of care. This, in turn, strengthens Board assurance.

Curriculum Vitae

Summary:

Experienced Executive and Non-Executive Director and leading Communications expert in the public and third sectors. Adept at strategic development and leadership of people and organisations, my passion and skills are for helping organizations and the people who work in and with them to think differently and improve for public good. Supporting and embedding compassionate, collaborative and outward-looking cultures and engaging service users to effect change, to me, are essential to getting better outcomes.

Current employment:

Chair, Health and Care Professions Tribunal Service panel: from April 2024

- Chairing fitness to practice hearings across the UK and supporting regulation improvement across 15 health and care professions.

Independent Member, Cardiff & Vale University Health Board: from Nov 2017

Public appointment as Non-Executive Director.

- Founding Chair, People and Culture Committee.
- Vice-Chair/ Acting Chair, Mental Health and Capacity Legislation, member of the Charitable Funds.
- Equalities Champion and third sector lead.

Consultant and Executive Coach: from March 2024

- Visiting Fellow, Faculty of Healthcare Science and Veterinary Medicine, University of Namibia: Quality Review and Executive Coaching (to March-May 2024)
- Strategic Review for Cardiff University School of Journalism, Communications and Culture Studies (April – June 2024)
- Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, strategy, communications & engagement (Nov 2024 onward)

Mind Cymru Board Member, from August 2023

Employment History:

Chief Executive, Moondance Cancer Initiative: Jan – September 2023

Chief Executive of a philanthropic company established to make cancer outcomes better and fairer in Wales.

- Developing and setting future strategic direction and new projects
- Reviewing governance, including establishing Clinical Advisory Group & strengthening the Board
- Overseeing multi-million-pound portfolio of projects & developing strategic relationships for growth

Head of GMC Wales: 2021 – Jan 2023

Leading the General Medical Council in Wales to protect patient safety and improve medical education and practice. Working with senior stakeholders - government, NHS, Universities, HEIW and inspectorates to:

- Lead engagement and partnerships to improve cultures, knowledge and practice in healthcare.
- Provide expert advice and support to Medical Directors on individual, often contentious cases.
- Improve rapid intelligence sharing and use of data across partner organizations to strengthen safety.

Director, Mind Cymru & Executive Director, Mind: 2015 - 2021

Leading the mental health charity, Mind Cymru, and Executive Director of Mind providing strategic and operational leadership across England and Wales.

- Developing and implementing strategy to re-position and strengthen Mind Cymru building reputation, profile, business, capability, governance and influence.
- Leading the organization through Covid to understand and meet the needs of people with mental health problems, and re-position financing and service delivery.
- Developing evidence-based policy
- Leading collaborative cross-sector policy & influencing. Chairing and running the Wales Alliance for Mental Health; chairing the Ministerial Assurance Board for mental health crisis care; running the secretariat of the Senedd cross-party group on mental health; leading joint work with employers and trade unions on workplace mental health; regular Ministerial and senior official engagement.
- Developing, securing funding for, delivering and evaluating a range of national beneficiary facing programs including the mental health social prescribing pilot; talking therapies; peer support; information services; national Covid emergency support.
- Raising the profile of and support for mental health with a wide range of audiences: *Time to Change Wales*' insight-driven anti stigma campaign supported by employers covering a quarter of the Welsh workforce and achieving significant whole population attitude change; regular and varied media contributions in English and Welsh – BBC, ITV, S4C; regular conference speaker and presenter.

Trustee Welsh Council for Voluntary Action: November 2018 to 2021

Elected by my peers. Priorities include response to Covid, re-branding and preparing for funding and regulation changes including Brexit and shifts from grant to contract funding for the sector.

Welsh Government, Director of Communications 2006 -2015

Secondment, Distinguished Visiting Fellow and Development Director, Cardiff University School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies: Sept 2012 – 15

- Established the Centre for Community Journalism in response to the decline of pluralistic independent journalism and its effect on democracy and on communities.
- Strategic communications advice, including UK Cabinet Office Communications Capability Review and Cardiff University communications review.
- Established Welsh language journalism education provision at undergraduate and post graduate level.

Director of Communications, Welsh Government; April 2006 - 2012

Leadership of all external and internal communications and engagement. Specific achievements include:

- Communications strategy and service for three Government administrations
- Professional support for the First and Cabinet Ministers and their Departments including planning; media and PR; policy and program communications; campaigns and social marketing and digital communications
- Head of the web and digital service. Leading and program managing the major shift to a digital way of working enabled through skills, culture and technical and human capabilities
- Re-branding of the Welsh Government following constitutional change
- Welsh Government internal and corporate communications
- Resilience and emergency communications. Member of the Wales Resilience Forum and Chair of Wales Warning and Informing and Web groups.
- Head of Civil Service Communications Profession and Chair and founder of **Comms Cymru**, Welsh public service communications network with 700 members
- Lead on inter-Governmental and inter departmental communications including membership of Whitehall Director of Communications Group; LG Comms; Government Communications Network
- Service development and delivery with a focus on effectiveness and efficiency.

- SRO for cross-government projects e.g. Customer Service Improvement; Web and Digital platform.

Director of Board and Corporate Support, Advantage West Midlands, 2003 – 2006

Economic development and regeneration for a very diverse region with a population of over 5 million.

- Board support and development, working with the Chair and Chief Executive
- leading the marketing of the West Midlands region as a place to invest, work, live, visit and learn. Bringing together a powerful cross-sector coalition I developed the brand proposition and marketing strategy through to detailed, multi-platform delivery with a network of support. This work contributed to a range of initiatives including government investment in key target sectors such as nano technology and transport infrastructure.
- leading communications for the Agency on issues of national importance, including the closure of Rover and the establishment of the Rover Task Force

Head of Public Affairs & Internal Comms, Countryside Agency: 2001 - 2003

UK Government Agency responsible for policy and development in support of rural communities and the countryside:

Director of Comms, Barts & The London NHS Trust London; 1996 - 2001

Leading on all aspects of communications and on community relations and engagement, working closely with clinicians, senior managers and patient and community groups. Work included:

- leading and implementing communications and engagement on major service change such as new hospital developments and hospital closures.
- Corporate and NHS branding, including pilot development of new NHS brand
- Community relations & engagement with an ethnically and socio economically diverse population.

Education, qualifications and skills

MA (Oxon) Law

Welsh: fluent, first language

ILM 7 Coaching and Mentoring

Women and Leadership, Kenny School for Government

Qualified MSP Practitioner (Project and Programme Management)

Dip CAM (communications, marketing and advertising)

Dip Health Service Management