

Appointment of the National Adviser for Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence 2025

Recruitment Process Briefing for the Equality and Social Justice Committee

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1. Vacancy summary

On 13 February 2025 the Welsh Government – Public Appointments Team advertised for a National Adviser for Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence.

Recruitment consultants were engaged to assist with the campaign. This was with the aim of ensuring that a large and diverse pool of candidates with necessary skills were attracted through outreach actions to encourage applications. Their search strategy also factored in the diversity dynamics of the board currently.

2. Background

2.1. Under section 20 of the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 Welsh Ministers must appoint a National Adviser for Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (National Adviser).

2.2. The Act aims to improve:

- arrangements for the prevention of gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence;
- arrangements for the protection of victims of gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence; and

- support for people affected by gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence.
- 2.3. The Act places a duty on the Welsh Ministers to appoint a National Adviser who may advise and give assistance on arrangements for the prevention, protection and support for people affected by gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence. The functions of the Adviser(s), as set out in the Act, are to:
- advise the Welsh Ministers about pursuing the purpose of the Act or tackling related matters¹;
 - give other assistance to the Welsh Ministers in their pursuit of the purpose of the Act or tackling related matters;
 - to undertake research relating to pursuing the purpose of the Act, tackling related matters or examining whether abuse of any kind is related directly or indirectly to inequality of any kind between people of a different gender, gender identity or sexual orientation;
 - to advise and give other assistance, with the agreement of the Welsh Ministers, to any person on matters relating to pursuing the purpose of the Act or tackling related matters;
 - produce reports on any matter relating to the purpose of the Act or tackling related matters.

3. The Role of the National Adviser

- 3.1. The primary function of this statutory role is to advise and assist the Welsh Ministers in tackling gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence, in line with the purpose of the VAWDASV Act 2015 – working to prevent VAWDASV, to protect victims and survivors, and to support people affected by gender-based violence, domestic abuse and sexual violence in Wales.
- 3.2. They will be expected to be an expert in this field, working alongside Government to provide an informed perspective and to advise and assist the Welsh Ministers in tackling these issues. An element of the Adviser’s role will involve working with public service providers across Wales to promote best practice across the public sector. The Adviser will also have a key role in reviewing the actions being taken by local authorities, Local Health Boards, fire and rescue authorities and NHS Trusts under the duties imposed by the Act and advising the Welsh Ministers of the findings.
- 3.3. The role was advertised as a 4-year term, with an annual salary of c. £73,978 per annum FTE and enrolment into the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme, plus reasonable expenses. The role is Full-time (37 hours per week) and welcomed applications on a job share basis.

¹ A “related matter” is abuse which the National Adviser considers to be related directly or indirectly to inequality of any kind between people of a different gender, gender identity or sexual orientation.

- 3.4. The current National Advisers are operating on a job share basis. With Yasmin Khan approaching the end of her second term and Johanna Robinson approaching the end of her first term. Their contracts, which originally came to an end on 31 July 2025 were extended to 31 October 2025 to ensure continuity in advice to Ministers while the current full recruitment process is taking place.

4. Advisory Assessment Panel

4.1. The Advisory Assessment Panel ('the panel'), which was agreed by the Cabinet Secretary comprised:

- Panel Chair - Andrew Charles, Welsh Government Deputy Director for Cohesive Communities
- Panel Member - Nicola Edwards, Welsh Government Deputy Director for Equity in Education
- Senior Independent Panel Member - Pippa Britton, Chair of Public Health Wales

5. Recruitment Process Summary

5.1. In accordance with the Governance Code for Public Appointments the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip, Jane Hutt MS was consulted on the proposed recruitment process and timeline. The Cabinet Secretary was kept informed during the process and consulted when required to meet the role of Ministers.

5.2. The role was advertised over a six-week period and promoted using a combination of paid advertisements (See Annex 1), Welsh Government maintained websites and the VAWDASV Blueprint and Welsh Government VAWDASV networks.

5.3. Following the advertisement period, which closed on 30th March 2025, there were 31 applications received and considered by the panel.

5.4. The panel reviewed all applications received via a blind sift - sifting against agreed criteria. Of the 31 applications, eight candidates were invited to the next phase of the recruitment process.

5.5. The eight candidates were invited to a two-stage assessment at this point in the process. No candidates requested adjustments to be made during the process.

- *Stakeholder Session* – candidates were required to facilitate this session, beginning with a presentation on an identical theme. The stakeholder

group were made up of sector professionals from across Wales. Sessions were held on 7th, 8th and 19th May 2025.

- *A Formal Interview* – held with the Advisory Assessment Panel. These were held on 19th and 20th May 2025.

5.6. All candidates attended the stakeholder sessions prior to their formal interview. The Stakeholder Session reports were shared with the panel as part of the interview process.

5.7. Following interviews, the panel agreed that three candidates were deemed appointable and advised the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip, Jane Hutt MS of their names for consideration.

5.8. The Cabinet Secretary's preferred candidate(s) is Johanna Robinson. Johanna has no notable conflicts of interest or political activity.

5.9. Throughout the recruitment process we have been evaluating our recruitment frameworks, outlining lessons learned and setting recommendations for future appointments of the VAWDASV National Adviser. We are currently engaging stakeholders on their views of the processes in place – a meeting is planned with stakeholders after the pre-appointment hearing and official appointment has been made.

Annex 1: Summary of Paid Advertisements and websites

The Vacancy was promoted through the following websites and networks:

- Welsh Government Public Appointment website
- LinkedIn: Welsh Government
- VAWDASV Blueprint membership (which includes stakeholders from across 6 workstreams).
- VAWDASV Wales based Regional Advisers
- Individuals who have expressed an interest in new Public Appointments and the talent bank.
- As part of the Welsh Government's commitment to increasing diversity in public appointments the advert was be sent to equality and other organisations who have expressed an interest
- Shared through stakeholder contacts of the Welsh Government VAWDASV Team.

Paid advertisements were placed at the following locations:

- Fish4Jobs
- The Guardian
- Sunday Times Appointment
- Diversity Jobs
- Golwg
- Y Cymro
- Charity Job Finder
- Recruit 3
- Women On Boards