

Pre-appointment hearing: Chair of Swansea Bay 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 Swansea Bay 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 Swansea Bay University Health Board?

I was born and brought up in Swansea and my family home has always been in the City, irrespective of my place of work. I have decades of experience as a patient, visitor, unpaid carer and NHS worker, across Neath, Port Talbot and Swansea.

I am a dedicated public servant and believe passionately in the power of public service as a force for good. I live and breathe NHS values and am committed to playing my small part in enabling the NHS at 100 to be a quality-led, agile and sustainable service in which the country can take great pride.

Whilst the wider determinants of health lie outside the NHS, the health and care system impacts significantly on the conditions "in which people are born, grow, live, work and age." (WHO) The Swansea Bay Population Health Strategy offers a significant chance, working with partners, to improve the health, well-being and resilience of the population, and reduce health inequalities.

I am an alumna, and past Council member, of Swansea University; I am enthused by the opportunities presented by the strategic partnership with SBay UHB(SBay) to offer educational and employment opportunities, and to optimise the application of the University's world class research, enterprise and innovation expertise in support of high quality health care. The ARCH Regional Collaboration for Health is a particularly inspiring partnership, working across the region, with the University and Hywel Dda UHB; as a systems thinker, this regional collaborative agenda is also a motivating factor.

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

The chair needs to provide strategic Board-level leadership, ensuring that the Board discharges its role across direction setting, building strategic partnerships, identifying and overseeing strategic risks, scrutinising in-year delivery against plans, embedding good governance and setting the right tone and culture. I have significant experience of discharging such a strategic leadership role, including through challenging times, most notably through the COVID-19 pandemic.

For decades, I have acted as the public face of organisations, discharged ambassadorial roles and led on strategic change consultations. I am conversant with the legislative and policy landscape in Wales and in leading on the implementation of Government policy.

I have a track record of building strategic partnerships and of securing meaningful stakeholder engagement, at times in an adversarial environment.

The SBay chair role calls for system-level leadership and I would seek to engage all partners in a debate on the principles underpinning effective system working, delivering the changes agreed and identifying the measures against which partners would evidence collective accountability.

I am comfortable analysing complex information and ensuring that Boards take informed decisions underpinned by the right data sets. Above all, in the SBay role, I would focus on ensuring that service safety and quality, service user and staff experience, were at the heart of the Board's approach to decision making, in support of delivering high-quality services.

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

A sustainable health and care system, both across Swansea, Neath and Port Talbot, and the wider West Wales region; in line with A Healthier Wales, this would be underpinned by a strategic shift to prevention, be primary care-led, with the optimum use of digital, technology and innovation, a forensic focus on safety and quality, and a balanced financial plan. Staff would feel safe and supported, providing high quality care in a system that ensured timely access across services.

A shared, system-wide consensus on the population health, well-being and resilience priorities, with a demonstrable shift in trends against key chronic conditions, and specified health inequalities' reductions. A particular focus would be implementation of the Tackling Diabetes Together Programme, and I would hope to secure partners' agreement to this being a key priority.

A workforce that both reflected the population and attracted talent from further afield, with the right capacity and capability to work at the top of their skill sets. A workforce whose members were supported in coming to work and being their best, authentic selves, practising primary, secondary and tertiary prevention and making every contact count. They would engage as a matter of course with patients and service users in co-producing care plans and pathways.

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

Improvements in population health and wellbeing depend on all partners working together to deliver against a common purpose; this can involve extensive partnership development work, exploring differences of perspective, overcoming barriers and, ultimately, agreeing that common purpose.

I have extensive experience of working constructively with other health bodies at national and local level, forged through decades of interdependent working; I would build on this in a new role.

I have worked in Welsh Government three times in my executive career, and have long-established, constructive working relationships with officials. I would look to gain insights into officials' views of the health board's issues and challenges, and to access in full the support available.

The NHS and local government have a symbiotic relationship, in the planning, delivery and evaluation of public services that are interconnected, none more so than social care services. I would work to establish effective working relationships with all key personnel, familiarise myself with the existing partnership architecture, and agreed work programmes. This would include the RPB, PSBs, voluntary sector bodies and the ARCH collaborative machinery. My focus would include ensuring that SBay played its full part in delivering against agreed priorities, including a sustainable care service, with timely access, this being a key societal priority. I would seek to gain early insights into partners' perspective on this key social policy imperative.

I would also welcome the opportunity to account for health board performance at scrutiny and other local government committees, in the spirit of transparent partnership working.

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

The lived experience of patients, service users, residents, carers and communities must underpin the planning, delivery and evaluation of local health services. I would apply the current SBay Engagement Strategy, establish working relationships and make early contact with Llais Neath Port Talbot and Swansea Region personnel. I would attend community events to gain insights into current health issues, setting out to work closely with Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Services, and its counterpart in Swansea. I have long appreciated the vital role that voluntary organisations play in community cohesion and development and, during my executive career, I secured increased investment in voluntary service provision.

Gaining and building trust across the voluntary sector would be a key priority for me, recognising its unique ability to engage individuals, families and communities in conversations about what matters to them in accessing and using public services.

The experience of SBay staff is also vital when designing and delivering services; I would ensure a clear 'line of sight' from the Board to the front line, and to all the staff representative and engagement architecture. It would be important to listen to, and gain insights from, all staff at the earliest point.

I have constructive working relationships with the Children's, Older People's and Future Generations Commissioners, with the chairs of ALBs in social care, arts and sport and I also work constructively with colleagues in policing . I would endeavour to fully utilise and strengthen these relationships in the interest of SBay.

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

I would make early contact with Senedd Members in the SBay area, establish their preferred way of building a working relationship and of being involved in service delivery issues and future plans. I would ensure prompt responses to all matters raised through their constituency offices and encourage Members to visit SBay services, meet key personnel and receive regular briefings on current and emerging issues.

I have an appreciation of the vital role that parliamentary committees play in scrutinising public bodies, having appeared in front of committees in both Westminster and Cardiff. I would welcome the opportunity to brief the HSCC on SBay performance and to contribute to the Committee's work programme, through submitting evidence as requested.

I would also set out to engage with the wider Senedd Membership and Committees, through providing updates on the work of SBay as it impacted on delivery against the Programme for Government, in recognition of the interconnectedness of all the wider determinants of health- the economy, climate change, education, transport, arts, culture and sport etc. In so doing, I would build on those working relationships established with different Ministers and their offices, in my current role.

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?

In February 2024, I was appointed as a Welsh Government independent member (public appointment) of the Board of Trustees of Amgueddfa Cymru; this is a four-year term, with a time commitment of 12 days a year. I am of the view that this would be compatible with holding the position of SBay chair and that the two roles would have some synergy. This would stem from the connection between the arts, culture and health.