



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Information pack for candidates

Appointment of a Children's Commissioner for Wales

Closing date: 16:00, 28 June 2021



**The Commissioner for
Public Appointments**

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Children's Commissioner for Wales

Making an application

Thank you for your interest in the appointment of **Children's Commissioner for Wales** to the Office of the Children's Commissioner for Wales. The Children's Commissioner for Wales is a unique post that is designed to influence positive change for children and young people in Wales, through transforming understanding and acceptance in society of the importance of children's rights.

The attached Annexes provide details on the role and responsibilities of the Children's Commissioner for Wales, the person specification and the selection process.

To make an application please visit the Welsh Government public appointment website here: <https://cymru-wales.tal.net/vx/lang-en-GB/mobile-0/appcentre-3/brand-2/candidate/jobboard/vacancy/7/adv/>, click on the Children's Commissioner for Wales vacancy and click on 'Apply' at the bottom left hand corner. The first time you apply for a post through the Welsh Government's online application system, you will need to complete a registration form. You will only need to register once, and you will be able to keep yourself updated on the progress of your application, and any other applications you make, via your registered account.

Once you've registered, you'll be able to access the application form. To apply for this post you will need to upload your two personal statements and your CV to the 'Reasons for applying' section of the online application form.

Personal Statements

Personal statements are your opportunity to demonstrate how you meet each of the criteria set out in the person specification. For this appointment you are being asked to provide **two personal statements, one written for children and young people and one written for adults. Both statements will be considered as part of the public appointments process.**

How you choose to present the information is up to you. However, you should aim to provide detailed examples that demonstrate how your knowledge and experience matches each of the criteria, and which describe what your role was in achieving a specific result. It will also benefit the selection panel if you can be clear which particular evidence you provide relates to which criteria. Providing separate paragraphs in relation to each criterion is common practice.

For your personal statement written for children and young people you will still need to provide detailed examples that demonstrate how your knowledge and experience matches each of the criteria but you should write it in such a way that children and young people can easily understand. You also may want to reflect on the three priorities for the next Commissioner provided by children and young people on page 4.

Please limit your two personal statements to two pages each. Your application may be rejected if you exceed this limit.

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CV

Please ensure your CV includes brief details of your current or most recent post and the dates you occupied this role.

References

Please provide two referees (employer and personal) who will be contacted for successful candidates only. In order to preserve the highest standards of integrity and propriety, we are unable to accept Members of the Senedd or Welsh Government employees as referees for applications for membership of public bodies.

Appointment process

This appointment will be conducted within a public appointments process; with children and young people involved at different stages throughout the process in accordance with the Children's Commissioner for Wales (Appointment) Regulations 2000.

Children and young people are involved at four stages throughout this appointment process:

- Stage one: Prior to this appointment being advertised, two workshops were held with children and young people to seek their views on the top three things that are important to them for the role of Children's Commissioner. Their feedback was reflected in the preparation of the candidate pack.

This engagement identified the following three priorities as being the most important for the role of the Children's Commissioner for Wales:

1. An understanding nature;
 2. Ability to represent all children and young people in Wales and stand up for their rights; and
 3. Excellent communication and listening skills.
- Stage two: Following the closing date, applications for this post will be shortlisted by a Welsh Government panel of officials who will assess candidates' CVs and personal statements. This panel will determine who it believes best meet the criteria for the role and will produce a long list of candidates to recommend to the Minister, the cross party appointment panel and young person's appointment panel. The personal statements written for children and young people of the successfully longlisted candidates will be considered by a group of children and young people who will make a recommendation of their preferred candidates to the Minister and the cross party and young person's appointment panels.
 - Stage three: Following a further sift of the longlisted candidates by the cross party appointment panel, a shortlist of candidates will be decided. A recommendation of candidates to be interviewed will be presented to the First Minister. Successful applicants will be invited to the next stage of the recruitment process. This will involve candidates presenting to a class of school children. The topic will be set out in the invitation to interview letter. Shortlisted candidates will be asked a series of questions by the children who will provide written feedback to the cross party and young person's appointment panels on the performance of each candidate. These questions will be developed and asked by the children. This session will be filmed to be shown to both interview panels.

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- Stage four: The successful candidates will be formally interviewed by a cross party appointment panel and a young person's appointment panel. The young people's panel will make a recommendation of their preferred candidate to the cross party appointment panel who will consider this recommendation in determining their preferred candidate. The cross party appointment panel will make a recommendation to the First Minister who makes the final decision on the candidate to appoint, subject to a Senedd Cymru – Welsh Parliament Committee hearing.

Indicative timetable

Activity	Date
Opening date	7 June 2021
Closing date	16:00, 28 June 2021
Official sift panel to longlist candidates	w/c 5 July 2021
Children and young people sifting longlisted personal statements specifically written for children and young people	w/c 12 July 2021
Cross party appointment panel sift to final shortlist	w/c 6 September 2021
Shortlisted candidates presentation to school children (this will be filmed to show to the cross party appointment panel and young person's panel)	w/c 1 November 2021
Young person's panel interviews	w/c 8 November 2021
Cross party appointment panel interviews	w/c 8 November 2021
Senedd Cymru – Welsh Parliament Committee hearing	December 2021
Appointment	January 2022
Successful candidate takes up post	20 April 2022 or soon after

Diversity Statement

The Welsh Government believes that public bodies should reflect Welsh society - people from all walks of life - to help them understand people's needs and make better decisions. This is why the Welsh Government is encouraging a wide and diverse range of individuals to apply for appointments to public bodies. Applications are particularly welcome from all under-represented groups including women, people under 30 years of age, black, Asian and minority ethnic people, disabled people, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. More information on the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy for public appointments can be found here [Diversity and Inclusion Strategy for public appointments](#)

Disability Confident

The Welsh Government accepts the social definition of disability, in which it is recognised that barriers in society act to disable people who have impairments or health conditions or who use British Sign Language. We are committed to removing barriers so that all staff can perform at their best. The Equality Act 2010 uses the medical definition of disability ("a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term impact on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities").

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We guarantee to interview anyone who is disabled whose application meets the minimum criteria for the post. By 'minimum criteria' we mean that you must provide us with evidence in your application which demonstrates that you generally meet the level of competence for the role and any qualifications, skills or experience defined as essential.

You will be asked to specify if you would like your application to be considered under the Guaranteed Interview Scheme in your submission.

If you have an impairment or health condition, or use British Sign Language and need to discuss reasonable adjustments for any part of this recruitment process, please contact the Public Appointments Team, publicappointments@gov.wales as soon as possible and a member of the team will contact you to discuss your requirements and any questions you may have.

Contacts

For further information regarding the selection process, please contact:

Public Appointments Team
Public Bodies Unit
Email: publicappointments@gov.wales

For further information regarding the role of the Children's Commissioner for Wales please contact Karen Cornish, Deputy Director, Children and Families Division

Tel: 0300 025 3424
Email: Karen.Cornish@gov.wales

If you need any further assistance in applying for this role, please contact publicappointments@gov.wales.

For further information about Public Appointments in Wales, please visit www.gov.wales/publicappointments

Appointment of a Children's Commissioner for Wales

Background to the Children's Commissioner for Wales

Wales was the first country in the UK to have an independent Children's Commissioner – a lead followed by the other UK nations.

Established by the Care Standards Act 2000, the Children's Commissioner for Wales is an independent children's human rights institution. The Commissioner's remit is laid down in the [Children's Commissioner for Wales Act 2001](#), which amended the [Care Standards Act 2000](#).

The principal aim of the Commissioner is to safeguard and promote the rights and welfare of children.

This is a high profile role which has a significant media and public profile. Appointments are made by the First Minister following a rigorous process including children and young people, a young person's appointment panel and a cross party appointment panel.

The Commissioner's Office currently has more than 21 full time equivalents of staff and the Welsh Government provides a budget of £1.579 million per annum.

The Children's Commissioner for Wales remit covers all areas of the devolved powers of the Senedd Cymru insofar as they affect children's rights and welfare. In summary the Commissioner has the following powers:

- The power to review the effect on children of exercise of functions or proposed exercise of functions of defined public bodies including Welsh Government.
- The power to review and monitor how effective are the arrangements for complaints, whistleblowing and advocacy of defined public bodies in safeguarding and promoting the rights and welfare of children.
- The power to examine cases in respect of individual children in certain circumstances.
- The power to provide assistance to a child in certain circumstances.
- The power to make representations to the Welsh Government about any matters affecting the rights and welfare of children which concerns the Commissioner and for which they do not have the power to act.

To find out more about the Children's Commissioner's powers please see the attached: [Children's Commissioner for Wales powers](#)

Children's Commissioner for Wales

Role description for the Children's Commissioner for Wales

You will safeguard and promote the rights and welfare of all children and young people up to the age of 18 (and in some cases to 25) in Wales. This is the principle aim of the Commissioner as set out in legislation.

You will inspire people to achieve better outcomes for all children and young people in Wales under all areas of policy, legislation, decision-making and practice that affect their lives directly or indirectly.

You will continue to stimulate national discussion and debate about achieving a society that respects children and young people and places a real value on offering them the opportunities they need to fulfil their individual potential.

You will provide national leadership and make a positive difference to children and young people's lives by establishing and maintaining strong partnerships and powerful relationships with people and organisations.

You will have regard to and champion the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) – an international charter which sets out the minimum standards for children and young people wherever they live. The UNCRC underpins all of the Commissioner's work.

You will lead on the engagement with and scrutiny of Government and other organisations to deliver responsive services shaped by evidence and the thinking and opinions of children and young people.

You will fulfil the role of Corporation Sole and Accounting Officer for the organisation, ensuring ongoing transparent financial accounting, monitoring and review mechanisms are maintained.

You will lead and manage the Office of the Children's Commissioner for Wales, and will ensure it continues to be a strong, confident, inspiring and resilient all-Wales organisation that works effectively as a team, with robust governance and business structures, to ensure that children and young people are a national priority.

Key areas of responsibility for the Office of the Children's Commissioner for Wales

The effectiveness of the Commissioner's Office

- To develop and share as appropriate the Commissioner's long term, evidence based, strategic vision and operational work plans, including ensuring the organisation maintains and develops an effective work plan to fulfil their legal remit.
- To act with significant autonomy and integrity in engaging with, challenging and advising regulated bodies and organisations¹.

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2001/18/schedule>

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- To ensure that there is independent scrutiny for the Office of the Children's Commissioner for Wales which includes a group of diverse critical friends to advise, support and challenge the Commissioner to discharge their duties; and working with relevant Senedd Committees to maintain a sound governance structure.
- To foster and maintain a culture of high performance and quality outcomes within the Children's Commissioner's Team, taking account of new ways of working and evidence of what works including supporting dispersed teams and those engaged in case work.
- To maintain high standards of outputs from the organisation from consultation responses to reports.
- To fulfil the legal requirements of the Commissioner's Office as a public body, for example requirements under the Equality Act and Welsh Language Act.
- To build and maintain an effective working relationship with the sponsor team within Welsh Government.

Developing best practice policy and response

- To review the way the Senedd Cymru, Welsh Government and other public bodies exercise their functions in relation to children and young people.
- To undertake examinations, make reports on particular matters and to report annually to the Welsh Government on the work of the Office of the Children's Commissioner for Wales on relevant matters affecting children and young people.
- To ensure that Government and organisations in Wales seek to continually improve services for children and young people and where challenges are identified work with those organisations to find solutions.
- To influence the development of national policy relating to children and young people and monitor the framework and effectiveness of implementation.
- To consider and make representations to the Senedd Cymru, the Youth Parliament and the Welsh Government about any matter affecting the rights or welfare of children and young people in Wales.

Communicating and collaboratively raising the profile of children's rights

- To continue to increase the awareness of children's rights and of the Office of the Children's Commissioner through a range of means including proactive engagement with children and young people across Wales.

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- To have an ongoing visible presence online using social media platforms; to promote positive images of children and young people in Wales and challenge negative images should they arise.
- To develop and maintain an effective relationship with the media.

Participation and engagement

- To develop and maintain creative and engaging means of ensuring that the voices and opinions of children and young people inform the working of the Commissioner's Office, the Children's Commissioner's corporate and annual work plans and Annual Report to the Welsh Government.
- To be committed to listening to children and young people using their experiences, evidence and opinions to drive action and change, building on existing good practice.
- To create and provide innovative opportunities for children and young people to have their voices and opinions heard by the Commissioner's Office as well as other people and organisations.

Investigations and advice

- To act as a source of help and support for children and young people, (or those who care for them) who feel that they have been, or perceive themselves to have been, treated in a prejudicial manner, including when there is a broader principle at stake.
- To use information gathered from investigations, case work and helpline statistics positively in order to influence systemic change.

Partnership working

- To advise and work in partnership with statutory, private and non-statutory organisations.
- To work with similar bodies in areas of mutual interest, to ensure effective access to their services for particular children and young people.
- To develop and maintain co-operative working relationships with Children's Commissioners and Ombudsmen in other countries in the UK and abroad, including sharing information where appropriate and supporting the development of contacts among child and youth led organisations.
- To proactively engage with the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child on its work to monitor implementation of the UNCRC.

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Person Specification for the Children's Commissioner for Wales

To be considered, you must be able to demonstrate that you have the qualities, skills and experience to meet all the essential criteria for appointment.

Essential criteria

- The First Minister is seeking to appoint an individual who can demonstrate the following:
- the ability to demonstrate experience of engaging with and representing the views of others, in particular leading diversity and inclusion for marginalised or under-represented groups, and standing up for their rights;
- an understanding nature alongside an understanding of the particular challenges of representing the views of children and young people;
- a sound knowledge base of and a commitment to furthering children's human rights;
- exceptional influencing skills, including the ability to listen, communicate and inspire confidence with a diverse range of stakeholders from children and young people to decision makers at the most senior level;
- the ability to express complex issues simply and articulately and present evidence in a clear and compelling way;
- independence of judgement and the ability to quickly analyse complex problems and identify potential solutions;
- the confidence and competence to speak out on issues affecting children and young people in Wales, including to the media, Government and Senedd Cymru;
- experience of effective leadership of an organisation or distinct unit within a larger organisation, including financial and people management;
- self-motivation and the ability to be pro-active, determined, positive and resilient;
- the enthusiasm to be an effective ambassador to improve outcomes for all children and young people;
- professional integrity, credibility and sensitivity to maintain confidence and trust; and
- proven knowledge of the political landscape in Wales and legislative position in respect of children's rights and an understanding of how the Children's Commissioner can operate effectively in this context.

The selection process

Welsh Language

Welsh language skills are essential (within 1 year). If the successful candidate is not a Welsh speaker, Welsh language skills need to be learnt following appointment to achieve fluency within the first year of office, with support from the Commissioner's office.

The Commissioner's Office is able to make short term arrangements until the language ability of the appointee improves to the level needed for the post.

The post is therefore also open to applicants who are prepared to commit to achieving Welsh language fluency skills to the designated level within a reasonable specified timescale – in this case a year.

Key facts about the post

Location:	Port Talbot
Time Commitment:	Full time
Tenure of office:	Seven years
Remuneration:	The post of Children's Commissioner for Wales will be paid at £90,000 to £95,000 per annum.

Location of post

The Children's Commissioner's office will be relocating to Port Talbot in 2021. This will be the permanent office base. Travel across Wales is needed as part of the role, although travel and working from the office are subject to flexibility in response to the pandemic.

Eligibility

Applicants should be persons who conduct themselves at all times in a manner which will maintain public confidence in accordance with the Nolan Principles.²

The role of Children's Commissioner for Wales involves contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults. As a result, applicants are subject to a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). More information is available [here](#) on DBS checks.

Terms of Appointment

The letter of appointment will fully outline the terms and conditions of the post and is based on the Civil Service Terms and Conditions.

Duration of Appointment

The appointment is a seven-year, non-renewable term.

Time Commitment

The post is full time although flexibility in working hours may be considered. However you will be required to work such hours as may be necessary to discharge effectively your duties as the Commissioner.

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life>

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Salary

The post of Children's Commissioner for Wales will be paid at £90,000 to £95,000 per annum.

Assistance for Disabled People

Where appropriate, reasonable adjustments will be made to enable the Children's Commissioner for Wales to effectively carry out the role.

Selection Process

The appointment of the Children's Commissioner for Wales is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments and the appointment process complies with the Code of Governance for Public Appointments. It is the policy of the Welsh Government to promote and integrate equality of opportunity into all aspects of its business including appointments to public bodies.

Applications are welcomed and encouraged from all groups and we ensure no eligible candidate for public office receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of age, disability, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, or pregnancy and maternity. The principles of fair and open competition will apply and appointments will be made on merit.

Starting date

The successful candidate is due to start in post on 20 April 2022.

Further Information and Queries

For further information on the application process and to apply, please visit <http://wales.gov.uk/publicappointments> or for queries contact the Public Appointments Unit on PublicAppointments@gov.wales

For further information about the Children's Commissioner for Wales you may wish to visit their web site: <http://www.childcom.org.uk> / or contact 01792 765600. For details of the legislation relating to the Children's Commissioner for Wales Children's Commissioner for Wales you may wish to visit: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/all?title=children%27s%20commissioner%20for%20%20wales>

The Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011 can be found here: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2011/2/contents>

Applications

Applications should be made by completing the on-line form. The Applicants Guidance Notes provide detailed guidance on completing the application and monitoring forms.

We hope you will find the on-line process simple to follow but we recognise not everyone will be able to use it because of their own individual accessibility requirements. If you are unable to apply online, please contact Public Appointments Unit on PublicAppointments@gov.wales who will be able to provide a copy of the application pack in an alternative format.

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Important Information about using the on-line application system

When using the on-line application system you should read the "Help and Instructions" which appears as an option on the first page of the application form after the log-in page. The instructions make the important point that you should use the "Save and Proceed" button at the bottom of the page in order to save any information you have inputted.

This is particularly important when you are completing the section on "Evidence of Suitability for Appointment". It is a good idea to click "Save and Proceed" after completing each of the separate questions in this section to ensure no information is lost. You can navigate back to the "Evidence of Suitability for Appointment" section after clicking "Save and Proceed" by using the menu on the left hand side of the page.

A note of caution – if you click on the "Reset Page" button you will lose all the information you have inputted since you last clicked "Save and Proceed".

Closing Date and Key Decision Dates

The closing date for applications is 16:00, **28 June 2021**.

Application forms received after this date will not be considered. You will be informed whether or not you are being invited to interview at least two weeks before the interviews which are expected to be held week beginning 1 November 2021 and 8 November 2021.

The First Minister's decision on this appointment is expected by January 2022.

Conflict of Interests

When applying you will be asked to declare any private interests which may, or may be perceived to, conflict with the role and responsibilities as Children's Commissioner for Wales including any business interests and positions of authority outside of the role in the Office of the Children's Commissioner for Wales.

Any conflicts of interest will be explored at interview. If appointed, you will also be required to declare these interests on a register which is available to the public.

Due Diligence

Welsh Government Public Bodies Unit will undertake due diligence checks on all candidates successfully sifted to interview. This will include, but not necessarily be limited to social media and internet searches. As a result, you may be asked questions at interview in relation to any due diligence findings.

Standards in public life

You will be expected to demonstrate high standards of corporate and personal conduct. All successful candidates will be asked to subscribe to the Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies, you can access this document at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/code-of-conduct-for-board-members-of-public-bodies>

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The appointments process

Your application may be "long-listed", subject to the volume of applications received, before it is passed to the shortlisting panel for consideration. You should be aware that in this situation, your application might not be considered in full by all of the panels. This sift will take place with Welsh Government officials and a Senior Independent Panel Member.

The official sift panel will assess candidates' CVs and personal statements to determine who it believes best meet the criteria for the role, and who will be invited to interview. The panel will rely only on the information you provide in your CV and personal statements to assess whether you have the skills and experience required. Please ensure that you provide evidence to support how you meet all of the essential criteria.

Children and young people will be involved in this stage in the appointment process by considering the personal statements written for children and young people at the long list stage and making a recommendation to the cross party and young people's appointment panels of their preferred candidates.

We anticipate that during October 2021 the panel will have decided who will be invited to present to children and young people and for interview in November 2021. The presentation topic will be provided for candidates successfully invited to interview. Due to Coronavirus pandemic and potential restrictions it is our intention that interviews will take place virtually, though this may be subject to change as the pandemic response progresses. We will ensure all candidates shortlisted for interview are updated on the process when invited for interview.

The cross party appointment panel will select for interview only the strongest applicants who it feels have demonstrated that they best meet the criteria set out in the person specification. However, if you have applied under the guaranteed interview scheme **and you meet the minimum essential criteria** for the post, then you will also be invited for interview.

If you are invited to interview we will give you 2 weeks' notice of the interview date. If you are unable to make the arranged interview date, we will endeavour to re-arrange it but it might not be possible due to time constraints within the appointment timetable or the availability of the selection panels.

You will receive email communication from Welsh Government's application centre to let you know whether or not you have been invited to be interviewed.

If invited to interview, you will be invited to present to a class of school children during the first week of November. Shortlisted candidates will be asked a series of questions by the children who will provide written feedback to the cross party and young person's appointment panels on the performance of each candidate. These questions will be developed and asked by the children. This session will be filmed to be shown to both interview panels.

If you are invited to interview, interviews will take place with the cross party and young people's panel during the second week of November. The panel will question you about your skills and experience, asking specific questions to assess whether you **meet the criteria** set out for the post.

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The cross party appointment panel will be chaired by the Minister for Social Justice and will also comprise of Members of the Senedd. A Senior Independent Panel Member will also be part of the panel as well as a Senior Civil Servant in an observer capacity.

Candidates who the panel believe are 'appointable', will be recommended to the First Ministers who will make the final decision. The First Minister may choose to meet with appointable candidates before making a decision. If he does, he will meet all candidates and in the presence of the panel chair or their nominated representative. There will be a time gap between interview and a final appointment decision being made. Candidates who have been interviewed will be kept informed of progress.

If you are successful, you will receive a letter appointing you as Children's Commissioner for Wales, which will confirm the terms on which the appointment is offered.

If you are successful as Children's Commissioner for Wales you will be asked to attend a pre appointment Senedd Cymru – Welsh Parliament Committee hearing as part of the recruitment process. The Commissioner position is subject to pre-appointment scrutiny by the relevant Senedd Committee.

Pre-appointment scrutiny by select committees is an important part of the process for some of the most significant public appointments made by Ministers. It is designed to provide an added level of scrutiny of the overall process and verify that the recruitment meets the principles set out in the Governance Code on Public Appointments*. This scrutiny may involve the relevant select committee requesting and reviewing information from the Department and the Minister's preferred candidate. The select committee may also choose to hold a pre-appointment hearing.

Pre-appointment hearings are held in public and involve the select committee taking evidence from the Minister's preferred candidate. These public hearings take place before an appointment is confirmed, but after the selection process has taken place.

Where a public appointment is subject to pre-appointment scrutiny, it is a matter for the relevant select committee to decide whether to undertake such scrutiny, including whether to hold a pre-appointment hearing. Following a review of information provided by the Department about the recruitment process, the select committee may decide that a pre-appointment scrutiny hearing is not required before it publishes its report, if it agrees with the Minister's choice of candidate.

If you are unsuccessful at interview, you will be notified through the Welsh Government's application centre. We appreciate it takes a lot of time and effort to apply for roles and that feedback is a valuable part of the process. As a result, the letter will provide the details of who you may approach for feedback on your interview and application, if you so wish

Queries

For queries about your application, please contact publicappointments@gov.wales.

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If you are not completely satisfied

Welsh Government will aim to process all applications as quickly as possible and to treat all applicants with courtesy. If you have any complaints about the way your application has been handled, please contact publicappointments@gov.wales.

Additionally you can write to: Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments
G/08, 1 Horse Guards Road, London SW1A 2HQ.