Information for Candidates

Regulatory Board for Wales

Appointment of an Independent Chair
Diversity Statement

The Welsh Government believes that public bodies should have board members who 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, members of ethnic minorities, disabled people, lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people.

Positive about Disability

The Welsh Government operates a Positive about Disabled People scheme and welcome applications from people with disabilities. The scheme guarantees an interview to disabled people if they meet the minimum criteria for the post. The application form also enables you to detail any specific needs or equipment that you may need if invited to attend an interview.
NFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

Vacancy Description
The Welsh Government is seeking to appoint a new Chair to the Regulatory Board for Wales. This is an exciting opportunity to appoint and lead a new Board charged with advising the Welsh Government on housing policy and regulation. The Chair will lead a strong Board which will contain a diverse range of skills related to the Housing sector. As the leader of the Board, the Chair will both challenge the work of the Welsh Government’s Regulation team and provide strategic advice to the Minister on the current performance and future options of the housing association sector.

Background

In 2007 the Deputy Minister for Housing established a Task and Finish Group to carry out a Review – in the context of the ‘One Wales’ agenda – to explore the barriers and opportunities presented by the Assembly Government’s priority to deliver 6500 affordable homes in Wales by 2011. Affordable Housing in Wales: An Independent Report to the Minister for Housing (The Essex Report, 2008)

The Report indicated that that the mechanisms in place to support the development of such housing – collection and use of information, regulation, resources and ways of working – needed to be more effective. The development and delivery of a more comprehensive risk based, proportionate regulatory framework for Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) formed a core part of the recommendations of the Essex report. One specific Recommendation (17) stated that:

The Board would meet at least four times a year with a remit to receive and discuss reports on Welsh Government regulatory activity and the performance of the sector as a whole.

The Board would advise the Minister on the outcome of its deliberations and publish an annual review of regulation in Wales on how the regulator has discharged its powers. This would be circulated to relevant stakeholders”

Legal Status

The Regulatory Board for Wales (RBW) has been established through housing regulation powers conferred on the Welsh Government under the Housing Act 1996 as an Advisory Board to offer advice to the Minister while control of the RBW is retained by the Welsh Government.

In addition, Section 71 of the Government of Wales Act 2006 gives Welsh Ministers power to do anything… which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the exercise of any of their other functions ie the regulation functions under the Housing Act 1996.
The Board's Role

The main purpose of the Board is to hold the Welsh Government’s ‘Housing Regulation Team’ to account for its work by overseeing the implementation of the regulatory framework. It also advises the Minister on the performance the housing association sector. The Board is supported by a Tenant Advisory Panel. The Panel ensures that tenants’ views, concerns and interests are reflected in the Board’s work.

The following Terms of Reference have been set for the RBW:

1. to examine the regulatory performance and activity of the Welsh Government, and the sector, by way of considering an annual report, and other reports and guidance from the Regulator, and other publications on the performance of the sector;

2. to seek additional advice/perspective on the performance of the sector from a broad range of organisations, as considered necessary; and

3. to use that information to:
   - advise the Minister on the performance of the regulator and the sector
   - advise the Minister on related policy implications
   - advise the Minister on changes to the regulatory framework; and
   - advise the Minister on the need for additional research, as considered necessary.

The RBW does not form part of the Welsh Government. The RBW does not have any executive powers or functions. The Deputy Minister for Housing (the Minister) may request such advice from the RBW as the Minister feels is needed to achieve the purpose of the Board; it is at the discretion of the Minister to accept or reject any recommendations made by the RBW.

The RBW exercises its role on behalf of the Welsh Government. This does not detract from the fact that the RBW is acting in an advisory capacity, within the remit agreed for it by the Minister and that its advice and recommendations will therefore be independent.

Subject to the normal requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, it is at the Minister’s discretion to publish any reports/papers of the RBW. Ownership of any data, reports and other material produced by the RBW will rest with the Welsh Government.

Board Chair; Role Description

The Chair has a vital role to play in establishing the credibility and standing of RBW and its operational effectiveness. The Chair will;

- provide leadership and strategic direction to the board
- contribute to setting up and inducting the new Board and helping to ensure the Board quickly becomes effective
- take responsibility for the overall conduct of RBW Board and its functions
- ensure it meets high standards of probity and governance.
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- establish effective working relationships with the Secretariat and other relevant Welsh Government civil servants
- manage meetings effectively, encouraging participation and constructive challenge, seeking consensus, balancing the need for debates on issues with the requirement to carry forward the agenda.
- ensure that the regulatory oversight provided by the Board is comprehensive, up to date and of a high quality
- provide clear and cogent advice to the Minister on the effectiveness of the Welsh Government’s regulatory role with respect to housing associations in Wales
- provide regular advice to the Minister on the health and performance of the housing association sector.
- attend other relevant meetings as requested. This might include the Tenant Advisory panel
- act as a spokesperson for the RBW

The Chair and the other independent Board members will be entitled to remuneration based on agreed levels approved by the Welsh Government In addition appropriate expenses will be paid.

Board Chair; Person Specification

The Chair will have;

**Strong communication, interpersonal and engagement skills** – the ability to gain respect and keep the confidence of fellow Board members and very senior key stakeholders, including Ministers and senior Government officials, through effective communication and influencing skills.

**Intellectual flexibility**
– a sharp and clear thinker who can quickly grasp the key policy areas, issues and concerns within the Welsh housing association sector whilst maintaining a focus on national policy interests;
- sound understanding of the political framework in Wales and the ability to offer policy advice and guidance to Ministers and civil servants;

**Analysis and interpretation** – the ability to analyse and make judgements from complex data and research in order improve the quality of the regulation of housing associations, their performance and the benefits this brings to tenants, service users and the wider community.

**High standards of corporate and personal conduct**
– demonstrate a sound understanding of and strong commitment to equal opportunities, public service values and the seven principles of Public Life.
The ability to act impartially and remain independent of the different interests represented on the RBW Board.

**Desirable** – An understanding of the social housing sector would be an advantage, although not essential.
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- Highly established chairing skills; the ability to lead on the set up and induction of the new Regulatory Board for Wales and comfort in effectively working with a Board with diverse interests.
- the ability to be independent of the different interests represented on the RBW and to be able to secure common ground, thus ensuring the RBW is able to improve the quality of the regulation of housing associations, their performance and the benefits this brings to tenants, service users and the wider community;
- the ability to quickly grasp the key policy areas, issues and concerns within the Welsh housing association sector
- a sound understanding of the political framework in Wales and the ability to offer policy advice and guidance to Ministers and civil servants;
- undisputed personal integrity and credibility
- a clear understanding and commitment to equality issues and challenging discriminatory practices;
- a clear understanding of and commitment to Nolan’s ‘Seven Principles of Public Life’ and;
- Whilst not essential, an understanding of the social housing sector would be an advantage

The ability to work through the medium of Welsh is desirable, but not essential.

Eligibility

Applicants should be persons who conduct themselves at all times in a manner which will maintain public confidence.

In particular applicants are required to declare whether they are aware of anything in their private or professional life that would be an embarrassment to themselves or to the Welsh Government if it became known in the event of appointment.

Membership

The RBW will be made up of the Chair and Five other Independent Board Members plus one Senior Civil Servant of the Welsh Government who will sit in an ex-officio capacity.

The Chair will be appointed for a period of up to three years and RBW membership will last for a period of three years also. Members will be able to offer an authoritative view of the regulatory regime founded on their personal expertise, and will be expected to support the operation of the RBW through the provision of relevant sector information and intelligence, and:

(a) offer their view on issues relating to the role of the RBW falling within their remit;
(b) contribute to discussions on issues requested by the Minister, or are agreed with the Minister, in relation to the Terms of Reference set out above.
Sub-groups

The RBW will be supported and advised by a Tenant Advisory Panel (TAP) given the greater emphasis on tenant participation/satisfaction within the regulatory process.

The Board may also wish to consider establishing other sub-groups as and when necessary to offer the RBW advice on issues that fall outside the remit and experience of Members.

Ex-Officio Members

Subject to the agreement of the Minister these may be appointed to RBW.

Secretariat

This is provided by Welsh Government civil servants.

Terms of Appointment

Appointments will be made by the Minister for Communities and Tackling poverty.

Duration of Appointment

The appointments will be for an initial period of 3 years, renewable subject to satisfactory review, to a maximum of 6 years.

Time Commitment

The RBW is expected to meet as a minimum on a quarterly basis with possibly two meetings a year with the Minister. The Chair will be expected to spend approximately 4 days a quarter (or a total of 16 days a year) on Board business.

Location of Meetings

The RBW meetings are usually held in Cardiff or Merthyr, but there may be occasion when meetings are required throughout Wales.

Remuneration

The post of Chair will be paid at £256 per day. The Chair of the RBW is regarded as a holder of an office for tax and National Insurance purposes. Fees payable will, as a result, be chargeable to tax under Schedule E of the Taxes Act and subject to Class 1 National Insurance contributions. These liabilities will be deducted via the Welsh Government payroll system and the net fee paid to the office holder. Fees are not subject to VAT.

Travel and other reasonable expenses that might be incurred in carrying out work on the RBW can be claimed from the Welsh Government within the recognised limits. You may also be eligible to claim reimbursement for costs in relation to child care/care of the elderly/assistant carer, whilst carrying out work on behalf of the Panel.
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**Assistance for Disabled Members**

Where appropriate all reasonable adjustments will be made to enable members to effectively carry out their duties.

**Induction Training**

Successful candidates will be required to attend induction sessions that will take place in the period shortly after appointment.

**Selection Process**

Although appointments to the RBW do not come within the remit of the Commissioner for Public Appointments these appointments are made using a process which takes into account the Commissioner’s Code of Practice on Ministerial Appointments to Public Bodies as best practice.

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. It welcomes and encourages applications from groups currently under-represented including women, minority ethnic community groups and disabled people. The principles of fair and open competition will apply and appointments will be made on merit.

**Starting date**

February 2016 as Chair-elect for induction and handover
March 31st 2016 as Chair.

**Further Information and Queries**

For further information on the application process and to apply, please visit [gov.wales/publicappointments](http://gov.wales/publicappointments) or for queries contact the Shared Service Helpdesk on 029 2082 5454 / SharedServiceHelpdesk@wales.gsi.gov.uk.

For further information about the RBW you may wish to contact Ian Williams on 07812 191428 or by email to: [mailto:ian.Williams@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ian.Williams@wales.gsi.gov.uk)

**Application**

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 that not everyone will be able to use it because of their own individual accessibility requirements. If you are unable to apply online please contact the Shared Service Helpdesk on 029 2082 5454 who will be able to provide a copy of the application pack in an alternative format.

**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 use should use the “Save and Proceed” button at the bottom of the page in order to save any information you have inputted.

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”.

To apply you will need to submit two supporting documents. The first a full CV and the second a personal statement (no more than two pages of A4), detailing how you meet the role description and each of the essential person specification requirements. The two documents should be uploaded to the “Attach Supplementary Document(s)” section of the online application form.

**Closing Date**

The closing date for applications is 1\textsuperscript{st} **October 2015**. Application forms received after this date will not be considered. It is expected to hold interviews in early December 2015.