

Pre-appointment hearing: National Adviser for Violence Against Women, Gender-based Violence, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence

17 July 2025

1. Introduction

Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015

- 1.** The Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 stipulates that the Welsh Government must appoint a National Adviser for Violence Against Women, Gender-based Violence, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence. It is a statutory role appointed via the public appointment process.
- 2.** The National Adviser works alongside the Welsh Government to advise and assist the Welsh Ministers in tackling Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV). The Welsh Government published its refreshed VAWDASV Strategy for 2022 to 2026 on 24 May 2022, and its Blueprint in March 2023.¹

¹ [Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence: strategy 2022 to 2026](#)

Role of the National Adviser

3. The National Adviser is expected to be an expert in the field of VAWDASV. The functions of the National Adviser, as set out in the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 include:

- to advise the Welsh Ministers about pursuing the purpose of the Act or tackling related matters;
- 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.

2. Pre-appointment hearing process

4. The Welsh Government make a range of public appointments. Senedd Committees undertake pre-appointment scrutiny of certain appointments, which aims to improve the scrutiny and transparency of the public appointment making process. More information about pre-appointment hearings can be found on the Senedd [website](#).

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

Recruitment process

6. The role of National Adviser for Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence was advertised by the Welsh Government on 13 February 2025, over a six-week period. There were 31 applications.

7. Of the 31 applications, 8 candidates were invited to the next phase of the recruitment process. This comprised a stakeholder session, held on 7, 8 and 9 May, and a formal interview with the Assessment Advisory Panel on 19 and 20 May 2025.²

8. 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. The Cabinet Secretary's preferred candidate is Johanna Robinson.

Preferred candidate

9. Johanna Robinson is currently working in the role of National Adviser on a job share basis and is now applying for the full-time position. Prior to this she was the Operational Lead for Llamau in Cardiff. She has worked previously as Head of Strategy in the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent and as Head of Victims' Services for Gwent Police. She spent three years working as National Development Manager for The Survivors Trust.

3. The pre-appointment hearing

10. To inform the hearing, the Welsh Government provided us with a briefing on the recruitment process and the personal statement and CV of Johanna Robinson.

11. The hearing took place on Monday 14 July 2025 and the full transcript for the meeting is available on the Committee's webpage.³

² Panel members: Andrew Charles, Welsh Government Deputy Director for Cohesive Communities, Nicola Edwards, Welsh Government Deputy Director for Equity in Education and Senior Independent Panel Member Pippa Britton, Chair of Public Health Wales.

³ Equality and Social Justice Committee, 14 July 2025, [Record of Proceedings](#).

4. The Committee's view

12. We note the Cabinet Secretary's preferred candidate, on behalf of the First Minister, for the role of National Adviser and welcome the opportunity to have scrutinised the candidate as part of the pre-appointment process.

13. We are pleased to endorse the Welsh Government's preferred candidate for the role of National Adviser for Violence Against Women Gender-based Violence, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence.

14. We would like to thank Johanna Robinson for engaging with us and look forward to opportunities for further scrutiny during this Senedd.