

Nomination of the Auditor General for Wales

February 2026



The Welsh Parliament is the democratically elected body that represents the interests of Wales and its people. Commonly known as the Senedd, it makes laws for Wales, agrees Welsh taxes and holds the Welsh Government to account.

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Finance Committee
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1SN

Tel: **0300 200 6565**
Email: **SeneddFinance@senedd.wales**
X: **@SeneddFinance**

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About the Committee

The Committee was established on 23 June 2021. Its remit can be found at:
www.senedd.wales/SeneddFinance

Current Committee membership:



Committee Chair:
Peredur Owen Griffiths MS
Plaid Cymru



Mike Hedges MS
Welsh Labour



Rhianon Passmore MS
Welsh Labour



Sam Rowlands MS
Welsh Conservatives

The following Members participated in the pre-nomination hearing in accordance with Standing Order 17.49.



Mark Isherwood MS
Welsh Conservatives



Adam Price MS
Plaid Cymru

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Chair's foreword

The role of the Auditor General for Wales is an essential part of Welsh public life. As an independent officeholder, appointed by His Majesty The King on the nomination of the Senedd, the Auditor General ensures that our public bodies manage public money with efficiency, transparency, and the highest standards of governance. This independence is fundamental to the integrity of the audit function and is central to maintaining public trust in how Wales is governed.

Adrian Crompton has served as Auditor General for the last eight years. On behalf of the Committee, I would like to extend our sincere thanks to him for his leadership and his significant contribution to public audit in Wales during his tenure.

The Committee initiated the recruitment process for a new Auditor General last year. At every stage, we were mindful of the clear expectation from the people of Wales that such an appointment must be undertaken with complete transparency, rigour, and independence.

Under Standing Order 10.6, the Finance Committee is able to take evidence from the preferred candidate before deciding whether to support their appointment. We believe that a pre-nomination hearing is an essential mechanism for providing open and transparent scrutiny, strengthening the Senedd's assurance that the recommended candidate is the most suitable person to be nominated to the Crown. To ensure confidence in the process, we undertook this hearing jointly with Members of the Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee.

During the hearing, Members from both committees questioned the candidate on their professional experience, their approach to safeguarding the independence of audit, and their ambitions for the future of Audit Wales. This helped us assess not only the preferred candidate's technical capability but also their vision for driving forward high-quality public audit in Wales.

Following careful consideration, the Committee has concluded that Catherine Mealing-Jones is highly suited to perform this significant and demanding role. We wish her every success as she assumes these important responsibilities, should her nomination proceed.

Peredur Owen Griffiths MS

Chair of the Finance Committee

Conclusion

Conclusion 1. On 29 January 2026 the Finance Committee held a pre-nomination hearing with Catherine Mealing-Jones, the interview panel's preferred candidate for the post of Auditor General for Wales. The Committee concluded that Catherine Mealing-Jones is a suitable candidate for nomination to His Majesty for appointment as the Auditor General for Wales. Page 14

1. Introduction

The Auditor General for Wales

- 1.** The Auditor General for Wales (AGW) is a Crown appointment made on the nomination of the Senedd under section 2 of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2013 (the 2013 Act).¹ The current incumbent, Adrian Crompton, has held the position of AGW since 21 July 2018.
- 2.** The AGW is the statutory external auditor of most of the Welsh public sector and is Chief Executive and Accounting Officer of the Wales Audit Office (WAO) (although not an employee). The AGW is a corporation sole.
- 3.** The WAO is comprised of a board, which includes a Non-Executive Chair, other Non-Executive members, an appointed employee member and two elected employee members. The AGW is also a member.
- 4.** As specified in the 2013 Act², the AGW is independent of the Welsh Government, the Senedd and other audited bodies and is not subject to their direction or control.
- 5.** The main functions of the AGW are set out in the Government of Wales Acts 1998³ and 2006⁴, the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004⁵, the 2013 Act⁶, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015⁷, the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021⁸ and other legislation relating to audited bodies. In summary these functions include:
 - The audit of the accounts of the Welsh Government, its sponsored bodies, Welsh non-ministerial public bodies, Welsh NHS and local government bodies, and the Senedd Commission;
 - Economy, efficiency and effectiveness examinations ('value for money studies') of Welsh public bodies and reporting the results of those examinations to the Senedd;

¹ [Public Audit \(Wales\) Act 2013 \(anaw.3\)](#)

² [Public Audit \(Wales\) Act 2013 \(anaw.3\)](#)

³ [Government of Wales Act 1998](#)

⁴ [Government of Wales Act 2006](#)

⁵ [Public Audit \(Wales\) Act 2004](#)

⁶ [Public Audit \(Wales\) Act 2013 \(anaw.3\)](#)

⁷ [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015 \(anaw.2\)](#)

⁸ [Local Government and Elections \(Wales\) Act 2021 \(asc.1\)](#)

- Examinations of most major Welsh public bodies' compliance with the sustainable development principle in setting and pursuing well-being objectives.

6. The AGW works closely with the Senedd's Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee (PAPAC) and is required to take into account its views in determining how to exercise functions in relation to value for money studies. The PAPAC considers accounts and value for money reports laid before the Senedd by the AGW.

7. The Finance Committee (the Committee) has oversight responsibilities in relating to the AGW and WAO (delegated to the Committee under Standing Order 18.10 and 18.11)⁹, therefore, the AGW is expected to appear before the Committee when required.

Role and Person Specification

8. The appointment is for a single, non-renewable eight-year term of office, in accordance with section 2 of the 2013 Act.¹⁰

9. In considering the recruitment of the AGW, the Committee considered the remuneration arrangements in accordance with section 7 of the 2013 Act.¹¹ The Committee agreed to advertise the position with a salary of £165,871. The salary will be uplifted on the appointment start date (21 July 2026), and on each anniversary of that date, by the estimated percentage change in the most recent data in the Annual Survey for Hours and Earnings for the annual gross median earnings for full time employee jobs in Wales as published by the Office for National Statistics, subject to a 0 per cent and 3 per cent lower and upper limit.

10. The job description stated that the successful candidate must demonstrate:

- a highly-developed understanding of public audit issues (including its strategic role in scrutiny and accountability); experience of maintaining and improving standards of financial accountability and probity at chief officer, director or board member level within an organisation and of providing advice to others on such matters;

⁹ [Senedd Cymru. Standing Orders of the Welsh Parliament](#)

¹⁰ [Public Audit \(Wales\) Act 2013 \(anaw.3\)](#)

¹¹ [Public Audit \(Wales\) Act 2013 \(anaw.3\)](#)

- experience as a senior leader of managing a complex organisation with a multi-million pound budget and significant numbers of staff with a diverse set of skills;
- experience of developing a strategic vision and being accountable for its implementation;
- experience of working collaboratively with a Board, including non-executive members, and supporting its governance functions;
- understanding of, and commitment to, the Nolan Principles and ethical standards, including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard for Auditors;
- understanding of the system of devolved and local government in Wales and the political context in which the AGW and Wales Audit Office are operating;
- an understanding of, and commitment to, equality of opportunity with a proven ability to champion diversity, equality and inclusion and identify and challenge discriminatory practices;
- appreciation of the importance of the bilingual environment in which public bodies in Wales operate; and
- experience of operating with a personal public profile and the ability to manage media relationships.

11. The job specification also stated that it would be desirable for candidates to demonstrate the following:

- a proven ability to deliver public sector audit work at a senior level;
- experience of strategic financial management;
- experience of leading on value for money examinations and the audit of financial statements;
- the ability to communicate through the medium of Welsh.

12. In addition, the job specification stated that the successful candidate must have a proven ability to:

- provide strategic leadership and demonstrate the effective management of a high profile public sector organisation;
- represent, influence and negotiate effectively at a senior level to ensure that their Office and organisation are regarded as credible, authoritative, accountable and transparent;
- demonstrate good judgment, personal integrity, independence, consistency and decisiveness in dealing with sensitive and important matters, such as those that may arise from audits;
- build effective working relationships and trust with politicians and/or senior executives;
- develop and communicate effectively the strategic vision, aims and objectives of the organisation;
- develop, with a Board, the credibility, accountability and transparency of the work of their organisation;
- focus on long term quality service while balancing often conflicting or competing requirements of key stakeholders;
- lead on organisational change and development, including through use of emerging technologies; and
- inspire confidence as Accounting Officer or equivalent.

13. In delivering these competencies the job specification added that the successful candidate will need to be:

- visionary, building and inspiring teamwork to deliver the organisation's vision;
- strategic and forward thinking;
- a positive thinker and motivator with high personal impact;
- decisive and inclusive;
- able to adapt and a change leader;
- empowering, demanding high performance and recognising success;
- a great communicator, able to build loyalty and trust; and

- self-aware, emotionally intelligent, and diplomatic.

Statutory Disqualifications and Post-Incumbency Restrictions

14. Section 4 of the 2013 Act¹² disqualifies anyone from being AGW if they:

- are a Member of the Senedd, the House of Commons, the House of Lords, the Scottish Parliament or the Northern Ireland Assembly;
- hold any office or position to which a person may be appointed, or recommended or nominated for appointment, by or on behalf of the Crown, the Senedd or the Senedd Commission,
- are an employee of the Wales Audit Office.

15. Full details of statutory disqualifications and post-incumbency restrictions are set out in sections 4 and 5 of the 2013 Act.¹³

16. In relation to section 5(3) of the 2013 Act¹⁴, for the purposes of section 5(2), the Finance Committee resolved not to specify further requirements on a former Auditor General other than those already imposed by section 5.

The Recruitment Process

17. The role was advertised on 19 September 2025 and the closing date for applications was 31 October 2025.

18. To encourage a strong and diverse field of candidates, and following a robust procurement process, the Committee agreed to appoint Saxton Bampfylde, an executive search agency, to undertake certain aspects of the recruitment process, including:

- advertising the role,
- identifying and approaching potential candidates,
- conducting a pre-sift of candidates and providing a summary report to the panel, and
- conducting preliminary interviews..

¹² [Public Audit \(Wales\) Act 2013 \(anaw 3\)](#)

¹³ [Public Audit \(Wales\) Act 2013 \(anaw 3\)](#)

¹⁴ [Public Audit \(Wales\) Act 2013 \(anaw 3\)](#)

19. The role was also advertised using a combination of hard print, electronic publications, social media and personal contacts. The advertisement was placed in a range of locations, including:

- Senedd website and Finance Committee/Senedd social media feeds;
- Audit Wales website;
- Jobs in Wales;
- Times online.

20. The window for applications was open for six weeks and candidates were required to submit a completed application form, political activity questionnaire and detailed CV. Twelve applications were received from two women and ten men.

21. A longlist meeting was undertaken by the full panel on 10 November 2025. Saxton Bampfylde then conducted preliminary interviews with the longlisted candidates.

22. The panel agreed a shortlist of candidates on 27 November 2025, and four of the ten longlisted applicants were selected for interview. One candidate withdrew their application prior to the interviews taking place.

23. The panel members were:

- Chair – Peredur Owen Griffiths MS (Chair of the Finance Committee);
- Mark Isherwood MS (Chair of the Public Accounts and Public Administration Committee);
- Dr Ian Rees (Chair of the Wales Audit Office Board);
- Lynn Pamment CBE (Comptroller and Auditor General, Jersey Audit Office).

24. Shortlisted candidates had an informal meeting with the incumbent Auditor General for Wales to discuss the post before their interview with the selection panel.

25. Interviews took place on 16 January 2026, at which candidates were questioned on the criteria set out in the job description. Executive Assessments,

designed to measure the skills, behaviours, and attributes required for senior leadership roles, was also conducted by Saxton Bampfylde with the candidates.

26. The panel made a recommendation to the Finance Committee on its preferred candidate for nomination and the Committee undertook a pre-nomination hearing with the preferred candidate, Catherine Mealing-Jones, on 29 January 2026.

27. In accordance with Section 2(3) of the 2013 Act¹⁵, the Finance Committee consulted with the Welsh Local Government Association, One Voice Wales and the Police Liaison Unit (as bodies representing the interests of local government bodies in Wales) prior to making a nomination for appointment to the Senedd. The responses are attached at **Annex 2**.

¹⁵ [Public Audit \(Wales\) Act 2013 \(anaw 3\)](#)

2. The Preferred Candidate

29. The Committee undertook the pre-nomination hearing with a view to understanding the professional competence of Catherine Mealing-Jones, how she is planning to undertake the role and the experience and expertise she would bring to the position. Catherine Mealing-Jones's CV is attached as **Annex 1**.

30. During the hearing the Committee explored the following areas:

- the candidate's background and professional experience, and
- the work of the WAO, and their aspirations.

31. A transcript of the evidence session can be accessed on the Finance Committee webpages.¹⁶

Conclusion 1. On 29 January 2026 the Finance Committee held a pre-nomination hearing with Catherine Mealing-Jones, the interview panel's preferred candidate for the post of Auditor General for Wales. The Committee concluded that Catherine Mealing-Jones is a suitable candidate for nomination to His Majesty for appointment as the Auditor General for Wales.

¹⁶ [Finance Committee, RoP, 29 January 2026](#)

Annex 1: Career history – Catherine Mealing-Jones

Catherine Mealing-Jones FCPFA FRAeS

Career to date

July 2021-Present Chief Executive, Bannau Brycheiniog (Brecon Beacons) National Park Authority

Responsible for running, rebuilding and providing a new strategic direction and identity for this Special Purpose Local Authority. (c.110 FTE staff; £8.3m operating budget)

April 2014 -July 2021 Director of Growth, UK Space Agency

Led space strategy working across government. Provided a focus on industrial strategy, including opening new markets for the UK,

Jan 2012 - Apr 2014 Director Growth, Applications and EU Programmes, UK Space Agency

Provided leadership for space sector growth activity and investment. Ensured that the UK secured effective management of the EU space programmes. Lead for European space policy. Lead on engagement with the European Commission.

2008-2012 Director, Business Change and Technology, Border Force, UK Border Agency

Led the Business Change and Technology Portfolio within the Border Development Programme which created the UK Border Force. Ensured that technology development and delivery met programme objectives to improve performance and deliver savings of between £65m and £85m by 2014. Lead on research and development and emerging technologies and on strategic capability management for Border Force including automated technology, biometrics, non-intrusive inspection, ICT and systems and surveillance technologies and scientific aids. Budget c. £20m, core team of 90 staff with matrix management responsibility for a flexible pool of technical specialists and contractors.

Professional Qualifications and Experience

- Fellow, Chartered Public Finance Accountant
- Fellow, Royal Aeronautical Society
- Executive Board Member, UK Space Agency (2012-2021)
- Chair, ESA Joint Communications Board & Programme Board for Navigation (2014-17)
- Lay Member of Council, University of Bath (2016-2024 Finance Committee; Audit Committee; Remuneration Committee; Nominations Committee)
- Graduate of Infrastructure and Projects Authority and Cranfield University Project Leadership Programme
- Windsor Leadership Programme
- Non-Executive Director, Satellite Applications Catapult (2013-15)
- GOLD Commander, National College of Policing
- Cabinet Office Public Service Leadership Scheme
- Postgraduate Diploma, Public Finance & Leadership (Warwick Business School)
- MSc, European Politics (Brunel University)
- BA(Hons), English (Bedford College)

Annex 2: Responses from bodies representing the interests of local government bodies in Wales

One Voice Wales

Good afternoon,

I have consulted with senior colleagues in One Voice Wales and members of our National Executive Committee regarding Catherine Mealing-Jones as the preferred candidate for nomination as the Auditor General for Wales.

We have no comments to make and as such would support the nomination.

I have copied in our Deputy CEO Mr Paul Egan, our Chair Cllr Mike Theodoulou and our Vice Chair Cllr Gordon Hughes for their information.

Kind regards,

Mr Lyn Cadwallader
Chief Executive
One Voice Wales



Dr Chris Llewelyn

Prif Weithredwr / Chief Executive

**Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru
Welsh Local Government Association**

Un Rhodfa'r Gamlas

Heol Dumballs

Caerdydd

CF10 5BF

Ffôn: 029 2046 8600

One Canal Parade

Dumballs Road

Cardiff

CF10 5BF

Tel: 029 2046 8600

Ein Cyf / Our Ref:

Dyddiad / Date: 19th February 2026

Gofynnwch am / Please ask for: Chris Llewelyn

Llinell uniongyrchol / Direct line: [REDACTED]

Ebost / Email: [REDACTED]

Peredur Owen Griffiths MS
Chair, Finance Committee
Senedd Cymru

Dear Chair,

Consultation on the Preferred Candidate for Nomination as Auditor General for Wales

Thank you for inviting the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) to contribute to the Finance Committee's consultation on the preferred candidate for nomination as Auditor General for Wales. I am writing to confirm formally the position of the WLGA following consideration of the Committee's correspondence. The WLGA has no objections to the appointment of the preferred candidate.

The WLGA recognises the importance of the role of Auditor General for Wales in providing independent assurance, promoting good governance, and supporting continuous improvement across the Welsh public sector, including local government. We therefore welcome the opportunity to contribute to the Committee's oversight process.

I hope this letter is helpful to the Committee in finalising its report. Please do not hesitate to contact me if any further clarification would be of assistance.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Llewelyn'.

Chris Llewelyn
WLGA Chief Executive