

Pre-appointment hearing – Chair of Aneurin Bevan University Health Board

February 2026

1. Introduction

Aneurin Bevan University Health Board

- 1.** Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (UHB) was established in October 2009 and achieved ‘University’ status in December 2013. The Health Board’s principal role is “to ensure the effective planning and delivery of our local NHS system, within a robust governance framework, to achieve the highest standards of patient safety and public service delivery, improve health and reduce inequalities and achieve the best possible outcomes for our citizens, and in a manner that promotes human rights.”
- 2.** The Health Board serves the population of Gwent, which reflects the five local authority areas: Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen. The demographics of Gwent are varied and include rural countryside areas, urban centres and the most easterly of the south Wales valleys.
- 3.** The Health Board employs 13,424 whole time equivalents (WTE) which translates to 17,011 staff and is the largest employer in Gwent. According to the information pack for applicants, the workforce is ageing, as is the demographic profile of the population and the health inequalities of the population are also found within the Health Board’s workforce. 80% of the staff live within the communities. Therefore, it is essential that staff health and wellbeing is a key priority and a feature of the Health Board’s preventative plans.



4. The Health Board receives an annual budget from the Welsh Government of just under £1.6 billion, from which services for the population of Gwent are planned and delivered. The information pack for applicants states that, as well as providing services locally, the Health Board works in partnership to seek to improve health and well-being in the area, particularly through partnership arrangements to respond to the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014 and the Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

5. The Grange University Hospital in Cwmbran opened in November 2020 and provides critical and specialist care to residents in Gwent and South Powys. Three enhanced Local General Hospitals continue to provide a range of inpatient and outpatient services, namely:

- the Royal Gwent Hospital in Newport,
- Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr in Ystrad Mynach, and
- Nevill Hall Hospital in Abergavenny.

6. There are also a range of other hospitals and facilities across the Health Board area.

2. The pre-appointment hearing process

The process

7. The Welsh Government and the Senedd agreed to introduce pre-appointment scrutiny by Senedd committees of certain public appointments which are of significant public interest or which will have a significant impact on the public. The aim is to further improve the scrutiny and transparency of the public appointment making process.

8. Pre-appointment scrutiny generally takes the form of a public pre-appointment hearing with the Welsh Government's preferred candidate. For appointments to these agreed roles, it is for the relevant committee to decide whether it wishes to carry out a pre-appointment hearing.

Pre-appointment hearing

9. On 13 February 2026, the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care announced that Andrew Morgan had been selected as the Cabinet Secretary's

preferred candidate for the role of Chair of Aneurin Bevan UHB, subject to a pre-appointment hearing with the Health and Social Care Committee¹.

10. The pre-appointment hearing took place on 26 February 2026. The meeting transcript is available on the [Committee’s website](#).

11. To inform the hearing, the Welsh Government provided us with a briefing on the process (“[the Welsh Government briefing](#)”) and a copy of the [information pack for applicants](#). The Committee also asked the preferred candidate to complete a [questionnaire](#) in advance of the hearing.

3. The recruitment process

12. The post was advertised on the Welsh Government and Aneurin Bevan UHB websites and in paid advertisements between 27 October and 21 November 2025.

13. Nine applications were received. Four candidates were recommended for interview. Interviews took place on 21 January 2026. The Assessment Advisory Panel considered there to be two appointable candidate.

Role and person specification

14. The Welsh Government set out the role of the Chair in the information pack for applicants. This included notification that, at the Committee’s discretion, appointment to the role of Chair could be subject to a pre-appointment hearing.

15. The Chair will be accountable to the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care for the performance of the Board and its effective governance, upholding the values of the NHS, and promoting the confidence of the public and partners. Detailed responsibilities of the Chair can be found in the [information pack for candidates](#).

¹ [Written Statement: Chair to Aneurin Bevan University Health Board: preferred Ministerial candidate selection, 13 February 2026](#)

4. The Welsh Government’s preferred candidate

Background

16. Andrew Morgan, the Welsh Government’s preferred candidate, is currently the Leader of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and Leader of the Welsh Local Government Association. He has held a number of high-profile public roles in local government.

17. In the pre-appointment questionnaire, he states:

I have spent my whole working life in public service, starting as an apprentice at Cynon Valley Borough Council before progressing into management at Rhondda Cynon Taf Council. I then became an elected Member in 2004 and a Member of the Executive in 2008. I have led the Council since 2014.

As a Council Leader and as Leader of the WLGA, I have worked closely with health boards, Regional Partnership Boards and national bodies to strengthen integration between health, social care, local government and the third sector. This experience has given me a detailed understanding of the pressures facing the NHS and the importance of long-term planning and prevention. I am motivated by the opportunity to bring that experience to a leadership role where I can work collectively with others to achieve the right outcomes.

I have always fostered a team approach, recognising the strengths of others and providing leadership or support as needed to secure the best results.

Aneurin Bevan University Health Board serves a large and diverse population, including communities with significant health inequalities and socioeconomic challenges. I strongly believe there is a real opportunity for the Health Board and wider public services to make a long-term step change, particularly by strengthening primary care and focusing on preventative interventions.

Our view

- 18.** In line with the guidance on pre-appointment hearings agreed between the Welsh Government and the Senedd, our role is to set out our views on the suitability of the Welsh Government’s preferred candidate.
- 19.** During the pre-appointment hearing, we had a wide-ranging discussion with the preferred candidate, Andrew Morgan. This covered his extensive experience of working in local government and his vision for the future of Aneurin Bevan UHB.
- 20.** Mr Morgan said that he did not hold any other appointments that he believed were, or could be perceived to be, conflicts of interest. He confirmed that he would be stepping down as leader of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (CBC), should he be appointed as Chair of Aneurin Bevan UHB. He further confirmed that he had been asked to retain his WLGA leader role for four to six weeks after appointment, to cover transitional arrangements following the Senedd election in May.
- 21.** We talked about the need for strong governance and good financial management, given that the Board was currently in targeted intervention for finance, strategy and planning, and for performance and outcomes related to urgent and emergency care at the Grange University Hospital. Mr Morgan told us that he had significant experience of scrutinising and setting budgets, and highlighted the importance of longer-term planning:
- “You don't just plan for your budget, but also your savings and efficiencies in the current year, and you do it on a rolling three-year basis. So, I think providing that level of challenge, but also support around financial planning I think is key, and just making sure that we are looking at the longer term in terms of those pressures.”*
- 22.** He said another area he believed would benefit from longer term planning was recruitment, and he would be looking to reduce the reliance and spend on agency staff, in particular.
- 23.** We asked Mr Morgan how he would balance competing priorities within the health board. He told us that, firstly, he would want to understand what the range of priorities should be, while also trying to address the health board’s financial position. In terms of balancing the Welsh Government’s and health board’s strategic priorities, he said he would expect the board to make decisions around how to prioritise them based on both financial and “people resources”.

24. In relation to the Grange University Hospital, Mr Morgan said that he would want to understand the issues that had led to it being placed in targeted intervention before looking at any potential changes. He said that he believed there was a lot of good work going on at the Grange, but this was being overshadowed by a small number of areas.

25. We then asked Mr Morgan about the challenges facing the health service more broadly. He said, in his view, the biggest priority, especially in terms of the targets set by the Welsh Government, was waiting lists and their impact on people:

“All too often, we see people who basically should be living healthy and fulfilling lives, and in some cases should be in work, who are at present not able to do that because they are on the waiting lists. I think that is certainly an area that needs to be one of the biggest priorities in terms of addressing that.”

26. He went on to say that longer term sustainability of services was key, especially as there would never be enough funding available within the health service to do everything it would like to do, especially when balanced against all the other public sector areas.

27. In terms of how he would support collaboration across the health board area, Mr Morgan highlighted work he had been involved with in Cwm Taf Morgannwg to address delayed hospital discharges by bringing together the Leader and Chief Executives of the local authorities with the Chair and Chief Executive of the health board:

“so there's political buy-in and there's officer buy-in from local authorities with the chair and chief exec of the health board. We have regular fortnightly meetings, but also below that, we've been able to set up a set officer group between the three local authorities and it's about buy-in and making sure that this isn't passing a problem over, but it's getting everybody to buy in to the shared problem and then identifying what is the best intervention.”

28. He said that a shared purpose and understanding, as well as having a trusted relationship, enabled all partners to work together and ultimately focus on the patient.

29. We asked Mr Morgan how he would develop working relationships with the Board, Chief Executive and staff of the health board. He said that he believed that having the right culture in the organisation was key: being approachable, open, and transparent. In relation to the executive team, he said it would be important to set out expectations from the start, and establish a constructive relationship that would enable him to challenge and scrutinise the team, while also supporting them. As regards staff, he said they needed to feel empowered and to believe that their views, when sought, were taken account of. In terms of regional collaboration, Mr Morgan highlighted the work he had been involved with in relation to the development of the Llantrisant Health Park, and said he would want to bring that knowledge and experience to Aneurin Bevan UHB.

30. Mr Morgan said he thought public engagement was a fundamental role for the board as well as the chair, particularly as a means of instilling confidence in the public about the health board. He said that there were areas within the NHS that were “really delivering” for patients but these were being overshadowed by those areas that were not delivering and were having a negative impact on patients. He told us:

“I think it's important to also speak up about the good areas and to have that engagement with the public, because I think it's also important for staff as well, for staff morale. So, where there is good work being delivered, I think that we should talk about that as well, but also have those open and frank conversations with the public about areas that are in difficulty and how we address those, going forward.”

31. He also highlighted the importance of using information obtained directly from the public and staff, via consultations and surveys, to help shape services.

32. In terms of diversity, equality and the Welsh language, Mr Morgan said that they need to be embedded in the policies and strategies of the organisation, and not an add-on:

“I think it's really important that that is in there from the outset so that they're not just seen as being a tick box. In particular, for the Welsh language, in terms of the Welsh language standards, that's the minimum we should be doing. So, I think that having buy-in and having that from the chair and from the top of the health board, having that embedded and that view is

important to help to drive the organisation to look at those areas.”

33. He highlighted the approach to equality adopted in Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC, including the use of staff support groups to give employees a voice and make them feel empowered, and he said this would be something he would be looking to replicate in Aneurin Bevan UHB.

34. He said it was important to create a culture where, if issues are being flagged, they are addressed, and that care and concern is applied so that issues are addressed early and at source before there is a need for escalation.

35. Finally, we asked Mr Morgan what his immediate priorities for the health board would be. He told us:

“I think, in the first year, clearly, the areas of escalation and addressing them and seeing either progress being made in terms of de-escalation, or certainly being well on the path to de-escalation in terms of the strategies being implemented by the health board, would be the immediate priority, certainly.”

36. With regard to longer term priorities, he said that he hoped that, by the end of the four-year term, patient care and pathways were in a better position in terms of people being able to receive high-quality care at the right time, and in a locality which addressed their needs. He also talked about the need to address health inequalities and the importance of a healthy and active lifestyle:

“Because in my own area, in Cwm Taf Morgannwg, but certainly also in Aneurin Bevan, the health inequality in terms of healthy lifestyles is quite significant. From one county to another, you can have as much as 10 or 12 years difference in a healthy life expectancy. So, addressing that through a whole range, a whole suite, of interventions is important.”

37. Based on his performance and responses to questioning at the pre-appointment hearing, we see no reason why the Welsh Government’s preferred candidate, Andrew Morgan, should not be appointed to the post of Chair of Aneurin Bevan UHB. We wish him well for the future in this role.