

# Pre-appointment hearing – Chair of Social Care Wales

March 2026

## 1. Introduction

### Social Care Wales

1. Social Care Wales was renamed under section 67 of the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016, having initially been established as the Care Council for Wales under section 54 of the Care Standards Act 2000. As a public body, its primary role is to fulfil its statutory responsibilities set within the context of the Welsh Government’s strategic aims.
2. Social Care Wales has statutory functions with a view to promoting and maintaining:
  - high standards in the provision of care and support services;
  - high standards of conduct and practice among social care workers;
  - high standards in the training of social care workers; and
  - public confidence in social care workers.
3. Social Care Wales also:
  - maintains and publishes the Register of social care workers;
  - prepares and publishes codes of professional practice;



- regulates social work and social care training;
- makes rules to secure appropriate education, training and learning provision;
- develops qualifications and national occupational standards;
- leads and support service improvement;
- collects and analyses data to inform policy and planning at national and regional level;
- plays a lead role in research, data and innovation to support evidence informed practice and policy development across the social care sector.

## 2. The pre-appointment hearing process

### The process

**4.** 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.

**5.** 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

**6.** On 25 February 2026, the Minister for Children and Social Care announced that Katija Dew had been selected as the Minister's preferred candidate for the role of Chair of Social Care Wales, subject to a pre-appointment hearing with the Health and Social Care Committee<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> [Written Statement: Chair to Social Care Wales Board: Preferred Ministerial Candidate Selection, 25 February 2026](#)

**7.** The pre-appointment hearing took place on 4 March 2026. The [meeting transcript](#) is available on the Committee’s website.<sup>2</sup>

**8.** 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

**9.** The post was advertised on the Welsh Government and Social Care Wales websites and on LinkedIn. There were no paid advertisements.

**10.** Following a six-week advertisement period, the advert closed on 4th December 2025. Four applications in total were received.

**11.** Following the initial sift, two candidates were put through to the next stage.

**12.** On 12 January, Social Care Wales led an Assessment Centre which the candidates attended. The assessment centre covered:

- a Board meeting;
- a stakeholder Engagement Session;
- a Media Interview Workshop;

**13.** The interviews were held on 4 February 2026.

**14.** The recruitment panel was chaired by Albert Heaney, Chief Social Care Officer for Wales and included Lindsay Cordery-Bruce, Chief Executive, WCVA; Stephen Vickers, Joint Chief Executive, Torfaen and Blaenau Gwent CBC; and Aaqil Ahmed, Senior Independent Panel Member appointed by Public Appointments Unit.

### Role and person specification

**15.** 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.

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<sup>2</sup> [Record of proceedings \(RoP\). Health and Social Care Committee. 4 March 2026](#)

**16.** The Chair will be accountable to the Minister for Children and Social Care for the performance and governance of the Board, upholding Welsh public service values and fostering public and stakeholder confidence across Wales. Detailed responsibilities of the Chair can be found in the information pack for applicants.

## 4. The Welsh Government's preferred candidate

### Background

**17.** Katija Dew, the Welsh Government's preferred candidate, is currently the Acting Director for Wales, British Red Cross, and a Board member of Social Care Wales. She has held a number of high profile public roles in the health and social care sectors.

**18.** In the pre-appointment questionnaire, she states:

*"This is the right opportunity, at the right point in my career, to contribute as Chair of an organisation undertaking critical work in a sector that I feel strongly about.*

*Social Care Wales plays an essential role in supporting standards, strengthening workforce confidence and sustaining public trust. Its remit spans not only social care professionals but also the early years and childcare workforce, reflecting the importance of early support in shaping lifelong outcomes. I feel passionately about getting these things right. At a time of rising demand and increasing public expectation, that contribution is more vital than ever. The organisation is not simply a regulator; it is a source of leadership, stability and credibility for the profession and for the wider public service landscape.*

*Having served on its Board, I have developed an understanding of its statutory responsibilities, culture and relationships. I know both the opportunities and the challenges it faces.*

*For me, the Chair has a responsibility to provide stability, sound judgement and perspective during periods of pressure and change, ensuring the organisation remains focused on its purpose while navigating a demanding external environment.*

*I believe I can provide that leadership at this important moment for the organisation and the wider sector.”*

## **Our view**

**19.** 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.

**20.** During the pre-appointment hearing, we had a wide-ranging discussion with the preferred candidate, Katija Dew. This covered

- Her knowledge and experience, and how that makes her suitable for the job;
- Her views on the strategic direction of Social Care Wales, and her own short and longer term priorities;
- The approach she wishes to take to ensure that Social Care Wales (SCW) has a vision, structure and culture that will engage its staff and ensure their well-being, including promoting equality, diversity and inclusion; and
- How she intends to lead, develop and support the Board.

**21.** She told us that, given her extensive experience of non-executive and executive roles, she understands what is needed to hold board-level responsibility in a complex public environment. She said:

*“(…) for me, it's very much around governance and assurance, having the right processes and structures in place, and having the skills and experience to exercise appropriate scrutiny and establish assurance, whilst also, at the same time, supporting creative thinking alongside leading at a strategic level to develop the organisation to meet its responsibilities.”<sup>3</sup>*

**22.** We questioned her about her views on the main challenges facing the social care sector. She told us these fell in into three categories - workforce sustainability; the increasingly complex needs of the population; and the importance of maintaining public confidence and trust in the sector. She described workforce sustainability as a huge challenge, saying that although people are motivated to

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<sup>3</sup> [RoP, 4 March 2026, paragraph 6](#)

come into the sector to “make a difference”, around 20 per cent of respondents to the SCW workforce survey said they were thinking of leaving the sector in the not-too-distant future. She talked about the need to train the workforce to meet the needs of an ageing population with increasingly complex needs. She also told us that the public needs to understand and have confidence that the sector is capable of meeting their needs and has appropriate systems in place for that.

**23.** We asked her how she intended, as Chair, to manage the relationship with the Welsh Government, particularly in terms of the Welsh Government’s strategic direction for social care. She told us that her way of working is about “collaboration”, and holding a position of trust and respect based on the “strong use of evidence and data and learning that we produce”.

**24.** Looking ahead, we asked her about her vision for Social Care Wales and the steps she would take to ensure the right culture is in place in the organisation. She told us that Social Care Wales is in the process of forming a new strategy for the future, and that the Board will be “guiding the principles of that”. Part of that work, she told us, involves “listening deeply to the workforce” as well as those who receive its services and other similar organisations.

**25.** We questioned her about how she would act as an advocate for Social Care Wales and ensure strong relationships with the public. She told us that her role as Chair would be to ensure that the organisation is listening to, and interacting appropriately with, the public. She said she wanted to hear directly from people on the ground and understand what they are feeling, and to ensure that those messages are brought to the Board.

**26.** She told us it was important to live the values and be seen to live values that support equality, diversity and inclusion. She said these were concepts that she valued deeply and brought to her professional roles through her own personal experiences of having a mixed heritage and being brought up in a multilingual household. She also talked about her own personal support for the use of the Welsh language and that use of the language is “normal business” in Social Care Wales, with board meetings conducted bilingually and the organisation’s ‘offer’ to the sector being made equally through the medium of Welsh and English.

**27.** Finally, we asked her about her own priorities for the role, and how success should be measured at the end of her term. She told us that, first and foremost, she wanted to ensure delivery of Social Care Wales’ statutory responsibilities, supported by effective governance and strong values. She said she also wanted to properly support a “confident and skilled workforce”; work with partners to

support a sustainable sector; and ensure the provision of support in terms of training and standards.

**28.** As regards measuring effectiveness, she said:

*“I firmly believe that it is for us to make the sum greater than the sum of the parts, and we can do that through that spirit of trust and co-operation and collaboration.”<sup>4</sup>*

**Conclusion 1.** Based on her performance and responses to questioning at the pre- appointment hearing, we see no reason why the Welsh Government’s preferred candidate, Katija Dew, should not be appointed to the post of Chair of Social Care Wales. We wish her well for the future in this role.

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<sup>4</sup> [RoP, 4 March 2026, paragraph 61](#)