

OCPA statement on public appointment processes in Wales during social distancing public health provisions due to COVID-19.

23 March 2020

- The Welsh Government is suspending all Ministerial Public Appointment campaigns with immediate effect until further notice. The priority is to protect staff, assessment advisory panel members and candidates involved in campaigns.
- Welsh Government will ensure public bodies are able to function by taking steps mandated in the Code for Public Appointments, keeping boards quorate and stable. The Code and its Principles will be adhered to as per usual. The following steps have been agreed with the Commissioner for Public Appointments.
- Ministers will suspend public appointments competitions due to take place in the next 6 months, and will resume them in September 2020. This resumption date will be kept under review as the public health response to COVID-19 develops.
- For bodies whose campaigns have been suspended, and that cannot legally carry a vacancy or a vacancy would destabilise the board, ministers are able, in line with the Governance Code, to extend existing members or to make a direct appointment without competition, until a competition can be held.
- Extensions in these cases will be for up to 12 months (31 March 2021), allowing for Welsh Government to stagger the resumptions of campaigns if desired. The Code's provisions on extensions in Section 3.5 continue to apply.
- The Commissioner will continue to be notified of proposed extensions made to members in their second or subsequent terms, or to those who have served ten years, in line with Section 3.6 of the Code.
- Any proposed direct appointments will be brought to the Commissioner for consultation before announcement in line with Section 3.3 of the Code.
- When campaigns resume from September 2020 onwards (this date will be kept under review by Welsh ministers), any members/chairs who have been extended/appointed under Sections 3.3 and 3.6 due to campaign suspension, should vacate their positions as soon as a substantive appointee has been found and is able to take up the role.



Version: 1

Date for review: 1 July 2020