RESEARCH ON TIME COMMITMENT, REMUNERATION AND OTHER ASPECTS OF THE ROLE OF PUBLIC APPOINTEES IN SCOTLAND.

October 2025

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Executive Summary & Headline Data

During December 2024 and into early 2025, the Ethical Standards Commissioner (ESC) conducted research into the roles of chairs and board members of regulated public bodies. This research was conducted through a survey, follow up focus groups and one-to-one interviews. The research sought to:

- Establish whether from the perspective of people appointed, the role descriptions included in applicant information packs are accurate. Expectations and treatment (e.g. time commitment, remuneration, support going into the role, reappointments and board culture) should be consistent from applicant pack to appointment meeting the principles of respect, openness, transparency and integrity which are set out in the Code of Practice for Ministerial Appointments to Public Bodies in Scotland (the Code).
- Understand the impact of certain aspects of these roles such as time commitment, remuneration and expenses on people from currently under-reflected groups and whether they can create barriers to taking them up or remaining in them; and
- Explore the extent to which the Commissioner's statutory functions are understood.

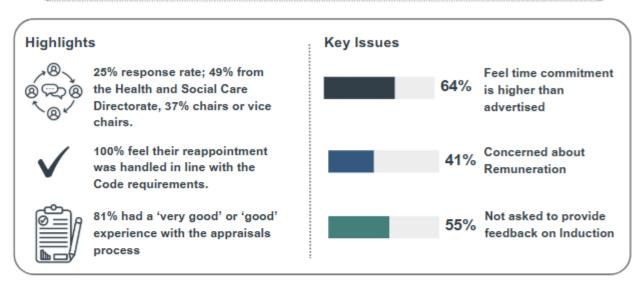
Further information on the research methods is detailed below and is available on our website: https://www.ethicalstandards.org.uk/research-time-commitment-remuneration-and-other-aspects-role-public-appointees-2024

The Commissioner is extremely grateful to all the respondents who took the time and made the effort to provide their views by taking part in the research. Their participation will contribute to the continuous improvement of public appointments in Scotland.

The Commissioner has shared this report with the Scottish Government and Scottish Parliament, as well as publishing it on his website for access by the general public. A summary of the key findings is noted below, and the full and detailed findings in the sections thereafter.



91% of respondents feel as motivated today as when they first applied.



Views on Public Appointments and Regulation



"If I look back, when boards were large with unregulated positions, some people were there with motives, around status and ego, I don't see that on any of the boards that I'm on or work with."

Views on Barriers to Appointment



"I didn't come into this to make money. I have done many voluntary roles which I have done with no remuneration. One in particular I loved and was probably the best experience I have had in my professional career. But what bothers me is the lack of transparency regarding time commitment and remuneration."

Objective 1: Establish whether, from the perspective of people appointed, the role descriptions included in applicant information packs are accurate. Expectations and treatment (e.g. time commitment, remuneration, support going into the role, reappointments and board culture) should be consistent from applicant pack to appointment – meeting the principles of respect, openness, transparency and integrity.

Expectations and treatment in relation to the time commitment of board members, and additional duties once in post, are not consistent from applicant pack to appointment. This was a shared experienced across all respondents, from members to vice chairs to chairs, and across all demographic groups who took part in the research.

Views on remuneration also reflected that. Although, generally, board members are not motivated by remuneration, there is a disparity between time commitment and payment offered; additionally, research participants felt that there is a lack of clarity on remuneration policy and are unclear about the types of expenses or financial support available to them.

This suggests that applicant packs are not fully transparent or clear about what financial support is available to public appointees once in role.

Research participants also felt that the induction experience was variable, that they typically do not have an opportunity to feed back on the process and that it can take up to 12 months to fully understand what is required of them in their role. Many participants expressed that their applicant packs simply stated that an induction would be provided but did not know what to expect from it. Despite not having defined expectations about the induction process, surprise at the volume of material provided during induction, along with surprise about how self-led the identification of their training and support needs are, emerged as themes during the focus groups. Many participants also suggested that regular forums for shared communication and relationship building with other board members would be highly valued and beneficial to them. It may not be the case then that applicant packs are incorrectly outlining the support received once in role, but simply that they are lacking in sufficient information for applicants' expectations to be effectively managed from application to appointment.

High levels of dedication to public service were evident throughout the research. Indeed, every interviewee / focus group member expressed strong commitment to the work that they do on their board. The experience of the reappointments process was also generally reported as positive, and board culture did not emerge as a concern throughout the research.

Objective 2: Understand the impact of certain aspects of these roles such as time commitment, remuneration and expenses and whether these can create barriers to taking up these roles for people from currently under-reflected groups.

The findings of the first objective have clear diversity implications. The research results demonstrate that issues around Time Commitment, Remuneration and Support in Role act as barriers to individuals from under-reflected groups taking up roles. In particular, individuals currently still in employment and those with additional responsibilities – such as caring responsibilities – may be at a significant disadvantage in undertaking a board role, due to the inaccurate time commitment shared in applicant packs, low or unclear levels of remuneration and, finally, those who are potentially new to governance roles not fully understanding how to seek out support they might need once in role. The potential impact of a lack diversity on board may not be immediately apparent to ministers, particularly if current public appointees show high levels of motivation and commitment to their work. However, much research exists to show that varied perspectives achieve better scrutiny and decision-making.¹ If those currently under-reflected on boards are unable to take up positions or take them up only to realise that the conditions are different to what has been described in applicant packs, it may then impact the board reaching its full potential in relation to good governance.

Additionally, the research was restricted to those who are currently in post, and did not include those who have already demitted post early due to the conditions once in post

¹https://www.researchgate.net/publication/351866034 The effect of the board diversity on firm performance An empirical study on the UK & https://cepr.org/voxeu/columns/value-diversity-equity-and-inclusion

being significantly different from those advertised. From the views gathered through the research, it is possible to deduce that at least some public appointees will have resigned early or chosen not to take up an offered reappointment due to these conditions. This will of course lead to additional time and costs associated with a further appointment round, as well as additional induction support needed for the new appointee, which might not otherwise have been required.

Objective 3: Understand the extent to which the Commissioner's statutory functions are understood.

Research participants demonstrated generally sound understanding of the Commissioner's statutory functions and their rights under the Code of Practice for Ministerial Appointments to Public Bodies in Scotland.

The remainder of this report presents the full and detailed findings of the research against the following themes:

- 1. Motivation
- 2. Time commitment
- 3. Remuneration
- 4. Support in role
- 5. Reappointments
- 6. Board culture
- 7. Barriers to appointment and
- 8. The extent to which the Commissioner's functions are understood.

Recommendation: The Scottish Ministers should review the findings in this report, including all comments made by current board chairs and members, and provide a public response, inclusive of any actions that it intends to take as a result.

Introduction

Background

During 2020, the Ethical Standards Commissioner (ESC) conducted research into the roles of chairs and board members of regulated public bodies. The research sought to understand:

- the impact of certain aspects of these roles, such as time commitment, remuneration and expenses, and whether these can create barriers to taking up board positions for people from currently under-reflected groups
- if there are other barriers that are having an impact on the diversity of boards including in relation to sector worked in, disability and socio-economic background
- the extent to which the Commissioner's statutory functions are understood.

The results of this report, in summary, confirmed that some anecdotal concerns raised with the Commissioner surrounding aspects of public appointments were not isolated incidents, but rather a common experience for many public appointees – including concerns regarding the time commitment, level of remuneration, and expenses for public appointees. The results were shared with the Scottish Government and Scottish Parliament and published on our website.²

The Scottish Government's response to our report emphasised how highly they value the leadership and expertise that public appointees bring to public body boards, and that work is ongoing to ensure that an increasingly diverse range of people apply for and are appointed to public body boards. However, the Scottish Government also felt that many of the issues outlined in the report concerned the operational process and policy of public body boards once appointees are in post, rather than the appointments process.³

The 2022 Code and current concerns

The Commissioner sought to use the results of the 2020 report when considering prospective changes to the Statutory Code and Guidance, and also in relation to helping people to understand more about the Commissioner's role and statutory duties. Subsequently, in the revised Code of Practice, the Commissioner made a commitment to reviewing whether this revised Code is meeting its objectives... by conducting thematic reviews on topics that I [the Commissioner] will consult the Scottish Parliament and other stakeholders on. These may include, for example, whether the process is taking less time, whether applicants feel respected and whether boards are becoming more diverse as a consequence of the changes that have been made. The Commissioner is also clear in his strong support of diversity of thought and contribution resulting in better corporate governance and decision-making, and, in turn, supporting the continuous improvement of our public services in Scotland.

Despite these changes and since 2020, the Commissioner has continued to hear anecdotally from board members and stakeholders that the time commitment publicised in public appointment opportunities continues to remain inaccurate, that board members are regularly required to work hours in excess of those they had originally committed to, and

² Report On a Survey on Time Commitment, Remuneration and Other Aspects of the Role of Public Appointees 2020

³ The Scottish Government's Response to our Survey on Time Commitment and Remuneration

that responsibilities being placed on board members (and particularly chairs) are more and at a higher level of professional risk than advertised. Support for such a level of responsibility is also variable. Additionally, the Commissioner feels that there is a lack of transparency on the remuneration policy for board appointments which may continue to exacerbate accessibility differences between the types of boards potential members can access.

Consequently, the Commissioner hoped to establish through this research a baseline of views on these aspects from current board members and chairs, to assess whether there has been any change in the 4 years since the research was last conducted. He also took the opportunity to seek views on additional subject areas including support going into the role (induction and appraisals), the reappointments process and board culture.

In summary, this research sought to:

- Establish whether from the perspective of people appointed, the role descriptions included in applicant information packs are accurate. Expectations and treatment (e.g. time commitment, remuneration, support going into the role, reappointments and board culture) should be consistent from applicant pack to appointment meeting the principles of respect, openness, transparency and integrity.
- Understand the impact of certain aspects of these roles such as time commitment, remuneration and expenses and whether these can create barriers to taking up these roles for people from currently under-reflected groups; and
- Understand the extent to which the Commissioner's statutory functions are understood.

The Code of Practice is based on the principles of Merit; Accountability; Openness, Transparency and Integrity; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion; and Respect. This thematic review is primarily concerned with the principles of **respect**, **openness**, **transparency and integrity**. Each of the research areas and resulting aims are rooted firmly in the Code of Practice for Ministerial Appointments to Public Bodies in Scotland (2022). The basis for the research and the applicable Code paragraphs is set out in <u>Appendix 1</u>.

The role of applicant packs

Applicant Information Packs are a crucial part of the appointment plan design and of publicising opportunities. They are intended to provide applicants with a comprehensive overview of the role itself and of what is required of them during the application process, and they play a vital role in the attraction of applicants. They should be transparent and clear, outlining not only the activities required of the role but also other responsibilities and areas of support they might expect once appointed. Clear and transparent applicant packs can help to ensure that applicants can make informed decisions about applying for board positions, such as whether they can meet the time commitment required or whether their skills, experience and other attributes are aligned with the requirements of the role.

The Code states that the selection panel for each appointment round is responsible for designing an appointment plan in order to deliver the appointing minister's preferred

outcome.⁴ In relation to the applicant information packs specifically, the appointment plan and resulting applicant pack must include an accurate description of the time commitment required, remuneration and expenses paid where applicable. An accurate assessment of whether the job can be offered on a flexible basis must also be included in the applicant pack, where applicable, to ensure that the role is more accessible to a wider range of people. The Code is also clear that applicants should be provided with information on the development and support that they will receive if they are appointed and that those who are appointed will be asked to provide feedback on their induction and training. All of this is with a view to encouraging and generating a diverse range of suitably skilled and able people to apply for the public body concerned and for them to be able to contribute effectively to the work of the board. The Commissioner is keen to emphasise that every part of the Code of Practice is designed to achieve the best outcome for applicants and the board itself. The provisions in the Code which specify that the pack should provide a clear and accurate description of the role are there to ensure that:

- 1 applicants are able to apply for the position knowing what they should expect when appointed. This will allow them to be able to give their best once appointed and contribute fully to the work of the board. This is the basic concept of respect which is a core principle of the Code and one that the Commissioner believes that Ministers would want to apply for all who contribute to public service in this way.
- 2 time and cost resource is not wasted by Scottish Government officials through having to run additional appointment rounds, and train and induct new appointees unnecessarily due to board members resigning early or choosing not to take up offered reappointments because the conditions on appointment were very different to those that had been advertised.

This thematic review and its main objectives will therefore establish how far applicant packs are meeting the requirements of the Code of Practice, and to identify where improvements or changes might be made through appropriate and achievable recommendations for the Scottish Government to implement.

Project Approach & Participation

The research was broken down into two phases. The first phase was the distribution of a survey to board members. The second phase involved focus groups and one-to-one interviews with survey respondents who indicated an interest in participating. The focus group topics related to the three main themes of this review (Time Commitment, Remuneration and Support in Role). Additionally, barriers to appointment and the impact of the pandemic were included as topics for discussion within all focus groups and interviews. This report forms the result of the analysis of both the survey and focus group outcomes.

Survey

The survey used in the 2020 thematic review was developed and enhanced to cover the wider remit covered by this research project; however, the core questions on the subject of

⁴ <u>https://www.ethicalstandards.org.uk/code-practice-ministerial-appointments-public-bodies-scotland-march-2022-version</u>

time commitment, remuneration, barriers to diversity and understanding of the Commissioner's statutory functions remained broadly the same. Where applicable, a comparison of the 2020 survey results will be provided against the results of the current survey.

A link to the survey was circulated to all board chairs, with a request that they distribute this link to their board members. The survey was open during the period 11 December 2024 – 14 February 2025.

Focus Groups

The email inviting board members to compete the survey, and the survey itself, highlighted the intention to run focus groups or one-to-one interviews, with the aim of providing individuals an opportunity to feedback on the key areas of our research. Nine focus groups and six one-to-one interviews were conducted. In total, 35 board members participated though many more indicated that they would be happy to do so. It was not possible to facilitate focus groups or interviews for every volunteer due to scheduling conflicts and the need to ensure that every focus group had a suitable number of participants – of those who indicated that they would be content to join a focus group, 51% were invited to take part with an even split between members and chairs / vice chairs. Of the 51% invited to take part, we were able to secure a suitable date and time for 64% of volunteers with a relatively even split across the main subject areas and board roles. 46% of focus group attendees were chairs, 20% were vice chairs and the remaining 34% were members. The Time Commitment focus groups had more chair / vice chair participants than member and this is reflected in the subsequent analysis discussion.

Time Commitment

- 3 focus groups of 3 or 4 participants (2 chair groups; 1 member group)
- 2 one-to-one interviews (both chairs)

Remuneration

- 3 focus groups of 3 or 4 participants (1 vice chair group, 1 member group and 1 mix of chairs and vice chairs)
- 1 one-to-one interview (chair and member multiple roles)

Support in Role

- 3 focus groups of 3 or 4 participants (1 chair group, 2 member groups)
- 3 one-to-one interviews (2 chair roles, 1 chair and member multi role)

The focus group sessions were facilitated by a Public Appointments Adviser (PAA). PAAs are appointed by the Commissioner and provide oversight of appointment rounds on his behalf by sitting on panels, as a panel member, for all or part of an appointments process. Our PAAs are highly experienced in the areas of equality, diversity and inclusion and often support the Commissioner with additional research that he carries out. Every focus group session was attended by one notetaker and one representative from the Ethical Standards Commissioner's office, who also took notes and provided clarity on aspects of the Commissioner's role as required. The one-to-one interviews were conducted by a member

of the Public Appointments Team from within the Ethical Standards Commissioner's office who also took notes.

Outputs from focus groups and one-to-one interviews were systematically interpreted by the Public Appointments Team to identify recurring themes. This involved a process extracting segments of texts which began to emerge as themes and coding them to fully identify and establish these themes. Where a theme has been identified and presented in this report, we have ensured that it is a topic that occurred in a majority proportion of relevant focus groups / one-to-one interviews. Supplementary quotes have been sourced from a range of different sessions to ensure robust validity and proportionate representation from different focus groups and one-to-one sessions.

Permission to quote

Permission was sought from all focus group participants to use their quotes in this report and they had the opportunity to review, agree, or amend these. This process included providing the participant with their quote and the context in which it would be used to supplement the observations shared in this report. Participants were also offered the choice of full anonymity against their quote, or to release some personally identifying information against their quote. In many cases, individuals agreed to release their name, position on board and board on which they work. However, the ESC made the decision to only release board position and directorate of individuals (unless they requested to remain entirely anonymous).

There may be some quotes used in this report that appear to be identifying, but the ESC would assure readers that nothing has been shared without the permission of the individual it belongs to. Where quotes have no information included at all, these have been taken from the survey comments.

Survey Results: Board and Position Type

In total, the survey received 191 responses, which is approximately 25% of all regulated public appointees. 141 (74%) of respondents agreed to provide demographic data and a summary of this information is available in Appendix 2. It should be noted at this stage that the number of responses received by minority ethnic and LGBT appointees in particular was small. This may give a greater weight to some of the results. A smaller sample size reduces the reliability of the results, which may fluctuate more significantly by chance rather than by trend. The findings are therefore presented as they are and have been interpreted with caution; it is clear that any conclusions made may not be fully representative of the views of minority ethnic and LGBT appointees. That being said, the low sample size may also be representative of the overall underrepresentation of minority ethnic and LGBT public appointees in Scotland more generally (5.04% and 5.33% respectively, as at 31 December 2023⁵).

54% of respondents were on their first appointment term for their role, 43% had been reappointed and the remaining 3% fell into the 'Other' category which included being on an interim / short term role. This means that the survey results are a relatively balanced mix of those newer to their public appointment and those more experienced in the role.

⁵ https://www.ethicalstandards.org.uk/publication/public-appointments-annual-report-202324

Additionally, 48% joined their board prior to the pandemic, and 52% joined after – offering unique and different perspectives on how the time commitment and support in role may have changed as a result of the pandemic, which is explored later in this report.

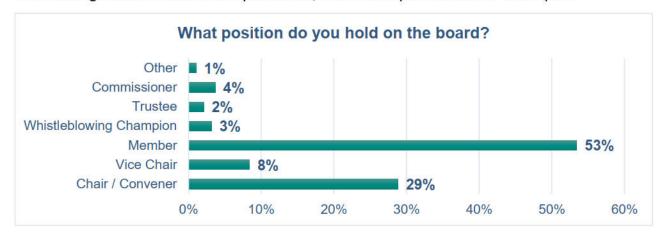


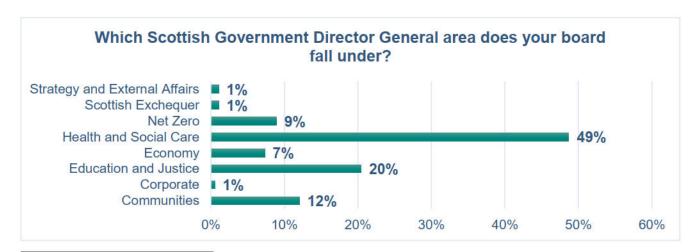
Figure 1 Survey respondents' position on board

Chairs

29% of respondents were Chairs. This is particularly noteworthy as Chairs make up a significantly lower proportion of board membership. As at the period the survey was conducted, according to the Scottish Government's Public Appointments Tracker⁶, there were 95 board chairs in post (approximately 12% of all regulated public appointees at the time). This means that 58% of all current chairs responded to the survey. Furthermore, 46% of focus group attendees were chairs, and 20% were vice chairs. This is a significantly higher proportion of appointees, and for that reason this report includes specific comment on the experience of Chairs & Vice Chairs where applicable.

Health Bodies

49% of respondents were from the Health and Social Care directorate. At almost half of all respondents, this is a significant proportion of the survey. To contextualise this, during the period that the survey was open, 34% of all ESC regulated public appointees belonged to the Health and Social Care directorate according to the public appointments tracker. Focus group participants were slightly less represented at 37% and as such only the survey



⁶ https://www.gov.scot/publications/full-list-of-public-appointments-by-public-body/

findings specific to health bodies are analysed and presented individually, where these findings are of particular interest or vary from the overall average responses.

Figure 2 Survey respondents split by director general area.

Detailed Themes and Findings

Motivation

The first section of the survey asked a series of questions on the motivations of board members, as well as other questions related to appointees' general views regarding their experiences on board. It is encouraging that 91% of respondents felt that they are as



motivated today as when they first joined the board. Factors motivating individuals to apply for a role on a board are also reflective of high levels of dedication to public service. 90% of respondents reflected that they applied through a desire to contribute to public life, 80% felt they were a good fit for the role advertised, and 59% applied because of the work of the public body.

Figure 3 Motivation levels.

Focus Groups

To me having to lose your career because of developing blood cancer, to sit and wonder what you can do with your life, I feel unwell all the time, suddenly to find something where you can contribute, you can do it in chunks, you can make new friendships and relationships with people from all different parts of life, that's a phenomenal thing. I'm privileged to be on board. There's a psychological element - you do add value, and you take that away and feel you've done something good. I genuinely think it's one of the best things I've done in my life. *Vice Chair, Health and Social Care*

These motivators were also strongly reflected throughout the focus groups, where many participants commented that the desire to contribute to public life was a key motivator for them in applying and continuing to stay on board, and that the work of the body was important to them. When split by demographic group, similarly high levels of positive responses are observed although disabled applicants in particular were less motivated than the overall average, whereas LGBT, minority ethnic, and under 50 appointees indicated higher levels of continued motivation (see Table 1).

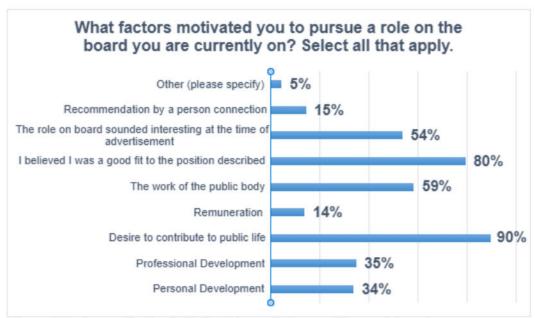


Figure 4 Factors motivating individuals to apply for a public appointments.

Do you feel as motivated in your role now as when you first started?	All	Women	Under 50	Minority Ethnic	Disabled	LGBT
Yes	91%	89%	95%	100%	83%	100%
No	9%	11%	5%	0%	17%	0%

Table 1 Motivation levels split according to demographic group.

The work of the public body itself as a motivator is an interesting element to emerge from the results; it may be an indication of the importance of bodies themselves in making their work known during the attraction efforts for new applicants. Professional and personal development received a respectable but lower level of comment in the survey (35% and 34% respectively); some more comments on this type of motivator were made in the focus groups as reflected below. Indeed, it may be that the lower levels of professional and personal development indicated as a motivator in the survey reflect the demographic of respondents (Appendix 2), and it may be linked to wider views on barriers to appointment which is explored in Section 7 of this report. Breaking down the survey results by those under and over 50 seems to support this assessment: professional development motivated 63% of under 50s to pursue a role on board, while motivating 32% of over 50s. Personal development motivated 47% of under 50s to pursue their roles, while motivating 30% of over 50s.



Figure 5 Motivator comparison for Under 50 and Over 50



"I'm honoured to be involved in a public body. I think all the public bodies are fascinating things. I wouldn't want you to think I didn't value that."

Anonymous

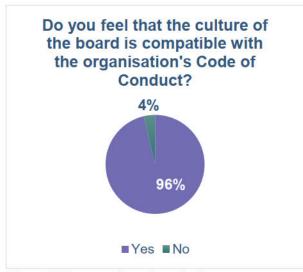
"I am in that situation where I'm being stimulated, and I enjoy that. That's the main reason I do it."

Vice Chair, Health and Social Care

Other questions in the first section of the survey received a similarly positive response. 96% of respondents felt that board culture is compatible with the organisation's Code of Conduct and 86% felt their role on board reflects what was outlined in the applicant pack when they first applied. Similar to the question on motivation, when split by demographic the results vary: minority ethnic and disabled appointees were less likely to feel that their current role reflects what was outlined in the applicant pack (see Table 2).

Do you feel that your role reflects what was outlined in the applicant pack when you applied?	All	Women	Under 50	Minority Ethnic	Disabled	LGBT
Yes	86%	84%	84%	67%	70%	82%
No	14%	16%	16%	33%	30%	18%

Table 2 Views on whether roles reflect applicant packs split according to demographic data.



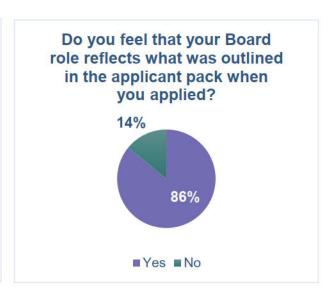


Figure 6 Views on board conduct.

Figure 7 Views on whether roles reflect applicant packs.

It is encouraging and admirable that Scotland's public appointees are so motivated in their roles – it was clear through the ESC's many discussions with board members that they are passionate and enthusiastic about what they do.

However, despite these high levels of motivation and that 86% of respondents felt that their role on board reflected what was outlined in the applicant pack when they applied, respondents did indicate that there were aspects of the role, as identified by the Commissioner as the basis for this research, that were of concern to them. The question asked was: The following list has been identified by the Commissioner as challenges often faced by board members. We will explore each of these areas in more detail throughout this survey but would like to know your immediate view on whether any of these topics are of concern to you.



Figure 8 Challenges identified by survey respondents.

51% of all respondents indicated that time commitment was a concern, and though there was not a significant difference in opinion between chairs / vice chairs and members, there

was greater disparity in responses between specific demographic groups and within the Health and Social Care directorate.

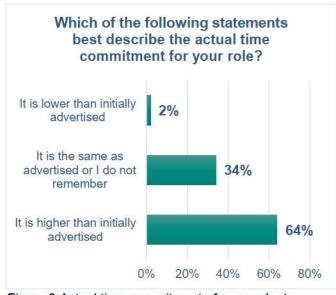
Are any of these topics of concern to you?	A STATE OF THE PARTY OF THE PAR	Women	Under 50	Minority Ethnic	Disabled		Health and Social Care
Time Commitment	51%	52%	47%	67%	63%	64%	70%

Table 3 Time Commitment identified as a concern and split by different groups.

41% of respondents felt that remuneration was a concern for them and 8% indicated the same for expenses. This figure was broadly consistent across all groups including chairs / vice chairs, the Health and Social care directorate, those on first or second term appointments and when broken down by demographic data. Support in role was identified by 14% of participants; expectation to undertake additional duties by 26% and insufficient training by 16%. Expectations to undertake additional duties is explored in both the time commitment section of this report (due to its impact on advertised time commitment for roles) and under the support in role section (as views on how appointees are supported with additional duties emerged through discussion).

Time Commitment

The time commitment of public appointees was explored extensively in the survey and focus groups, and it was a clear concern for many respondents. Despite 86% of all respondents feeling that their role reflects what was outlined in the applicant pack, 64% felt that their actual time commitment is higher than what was advertised (123 respondents). 34% (65 respondents) felt it was the same or they did not remember, and 2% felt it was lower. It is possible to compare this data to the survey run in 2020 asking the same question. Since then, there has been a marginal increase in respondents feeling that their time commitment is higher than was initially advertised.



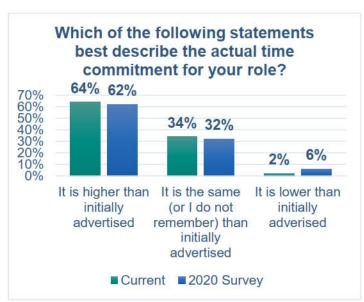


Figure 9 Actual time commitment of respondents.

Figure 10 Actual time commitment of respondents compared to 2020 Survey.

⁷ https://www.ethicalstandards.org.uk/publication/report-survey-time-commitment-remuneration-and-other-aspects-role-public-appointees-2020-summary-version

Moreover, of the 64% that felt that their time commitment is higher, only 33% (40 respondents) indicated that this change in time commitment was discussed with them. This means that for 67% (or 83 respondents) who felt their time commitment is higher than advertised, this change was not discussed with them. This figure differed slightly for chairs / vice chairs and members: members were more likely to have an increase in time commitment discussed with them, as 38% of members indicated that it was. Only 25% of chairs and vice chairs indicated that a change in time commitment was discussed with them and, ultimately, the figure is low across both groups. Finally, 81% of respondents volunteer to take on additional work, though it is encouraging that 77% of respondents did not feel any pressure to do so – these figures were broadly consistent across all groups.

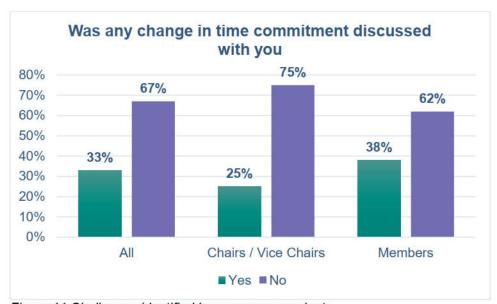


Figure 11 Challenges identified by survey respondents.

Through the survey and focus groups, the following key themes emerged:

- Inaccuracy of time commitment in applicant packs
- Lack of transparency for required attendance at sub committees
- · Risk of board members being unable to offer extra time
- Impact of the pandemic

The focus groups and one-to-one interviews were attended by a slightly higher proportion of chairs and vice chairs than the other subject areas, and for this reason and where applicable the specific views of chairs and vice chairs have been highlighted in the following analysis.

Inaccuracy of Time Commitment in Applicant Packs

The first emerging theme both in the survey and in subsequent focus groups was that there is an inaccuracy of advertised time commitment in applicant packs, versus actual time commitment once in role. Respondents to the survey were asked to provide details of their advertised and actual time commitment. Although the question and results are based on individual estimations, it nevertheless provides a useful and important tool for analysis, alongside the outputs of the focus groups. Figure 12 provides an analysis of these results, showing the average **advertised** and average **actual** time commitment based on days per year. On average, the results show a difference and increase of 32 days per year.

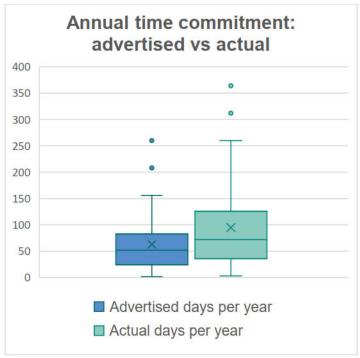


Figure 12 Advertised versus actual time commitment of survey respondents.

To supplement this, the survey asked respondents to identify different aspects of board work and the estimated time impact of these activities, which is detailed below (Figure 13). Not every respondent identified additional work, and the average response rate was 76% (146 participants). These figures reflect a substantial number of respondents' additional time and are therefore a helpful indicator of what board work looks like in practice. In the graph below, n = the number of respondents who provided data that was possible to analyse. It is a revealing analysis: in particular, time spent reading and attending board meetings / sub-committee meetings is significant. A proportion of respondents also commented on 'other' activities not covered by the survey's options, which takes up 30 days of work per year on average. However, comments left in relation to 'other' activities were not possible to analyse as they were specific to individuals with no identifiable patterns.

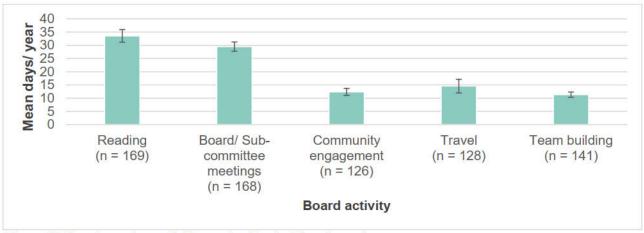


Figure 13 Board member activities and estimated time impact.

It is possible that these indicators may help to inform considerations around the time commitment of roles during the planning phase of the appointment round, and for panels to



consider whether the extent of these activities are accurately communicated and reflected in applicant packs so that appointees understand what to expect when coming into a role.

Survey respondents were also asked whether they felt that their current time commitment felt manageable alongside their other responsibilities. Though there was not much variation between chair / vice chairs and members (with both groups responding positively to the question at 88% and 80% respectively), the results to this question are detailed in Table 4, and have been split by demographic group for interest, where more variation can be observed.

Does the current time commitment feel manageable with your other responsibilities? (such as employment or caring responsibilities)	All	Health and Social Care	Women	Under 50	Minority Ethnic	Disabled	LGBT
Yes	83%	72%	74%	80%	73%	73%	82%
No	17%	28%	26%	20%	27%	27%	18%

Table 4 Views on manageability of time commitment split by different groups.

Appointees within the Health and Social Care Directorate, as well as women, minority ethnic and disabled appointees were less likely to feel that their current time commitment is manageable alongside their other responsibilities. Comments left in relation to this question on the survey indicated that short notice of meetings is often a problem, and that board work is particularly difficult to manage alongside full-time employment.

At times, I do not feel that uncommitted days are respected. For example, being asked to join a short meeting for an hour maybe an hour for those employed by the organisation but prevents me doing other activities before and after.

Struggling to fit prior diary commitments in with the number of demands due to being a new board member.

Sometimes I have to miss events as it's just not feasible to manage them in the 1 day per week I have allocated and I'm a senior leader in my own organisation. Only because I am semi-retired and what other work I undertake, I can fit around the demands of the appointment. I do not think the role could be undertaken by anyone in a full time role unless they had a high degree of flexibility from their employer.

Very important that things like Board meeting dates etc are set well in advance (and requests to give time to ad hoc activities also provided with maximum notice) - this makes it possible to fit the commitment in alongside another part-time role.

This is a huge disappointment as I carefully calculated I could meet the commitment of one day per week. This is causing me serious issues in my other working life. It seems to me this role is geared to people who are fully retired who have more flexibility. If so, you deprive yourself of diversity on your Boards.

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Transparency of attendance at sub committees

The issue of the inaccuracy of applicant packs and the reality of facing an increased time commitment once on board was explored further in the focus groups. In all of the time commitment focus groups, participants reflected that attendance at sub-committees and the resulting time impact of this was an unanticipated aspect of their board position; even where it had been communicated in applicant packs, the reality of attendance at sub committees and the actual time involved was higher than expected. This was highlighted particularly by participants in the Health and Social Care Directorate, in both the survey and focus groups, who are members of territorial NHS bodies. Attendance at Integration Joint Boards (IJBs), which are bodies responsible for developing schemes to integrate health and social care, is an expected element of their role as a board member, and IJBs have a minimum required membership consisting equal representation from Health Boards and Local Authorities to ensure joint decision-making and accountability.⁸ Many participants from the Health and Social Care Directorate expressed surprise at either how much time this role takes up in reality or that the expectation to join was not clear in the applicant pack. A selection of quotes from both the Health and Social Care Directorate and from others, from the focus groups, are noted below. A selection of quotes from the survey are in Appendix 3.



Focus Groups

For all three board roles the time that they said for core meetings is reflected in advert but prep and anything else, like sub committees, that is additional. In practice it is considerably more time than advertised but the core meeting time is correct. *Member, Economy*

We have a really high quality board but have lost two or three people because we had said 'you only have to do one day a month' but the reality is that it's not true, and the reality is that they couldn't afford the time. We need to be clearer what the commitment is. *Vice Chair, Economy*

According to the job description you could do it, right? But was never just one thing. Nobody's told me about chairing IJBs. Clarifying what your actual commitments are would be helpful. *Anonymous*

Additionally, for chairs and vice chairs in particular, expectations from others regarding their availability also emerged as a factor contributing to their increased time commitment in the role.



In my current role, the Minister could contact me any day and expect me to be familiar with any media that has arisen that day. The job description does not reflect that. **Chair, Education and Justice**

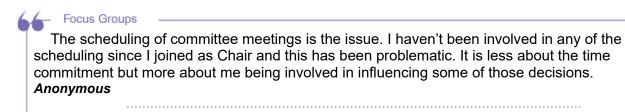
There has been no discussion about any change in time commitment – there seems to be limited understanding across the system that chairs are not employed 5 days a week and this results in unrealistic expectations about meetings and last minute changes of dates. *Chair, Health and Social Care*

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⁸ https://www.gov.scot/publications/roles-responsibilities-membership-integration-joint-board/



Participants also discussed advance scheduling and noted where this could be particularly helpful in managing their time.



As a non-exec, I have no control over the diary which can also be challenging. Anonymous

We're exploring producing a typical calendar out to future Non Execs, giving people a real sense of what it looks like. *Vice Chair, Health and Social Care*

It is helpful to have insight to what is contributing to an increase in time commitment for different groups of appointees, though for many participants, the reality is that the time commitment is different to what is advertised for a multitude of different reasons. Because of this, careful consideration must be given in every appointment round to ensure that the specific requirements of that role are adequately considered and communicated to potential applicants. A selection of quotes from the focus groups are noted below to further highlight



these points.

Focus Groups

Impact is that there's 5-10 additional hours of work at evenings or weekends which could otherwise be spent doing something else, like a hobby for example. I choose to do that, and there are positives that come with that, but it could be spent doing something else. But it just becomes additional work. Adds an additional pressure to life. *Member, Health and Social Care*

.....

The time commitment required, and variability of that time commitment throughout the year, is a challenge and would be very hard to accommodate while working full time. This could lead to issues on age diversity in boards. *Member, Education and Justice*



Focus group participants were also asked about the implications of what would happen if they were unable to offer the additional time that they currently do.



Focus Groups

Some of the additional things, e.g. integration joint board work, it just wouldn't be able to be done. *Anonymous* We get board briefings, very important to go to as it helps your understanding, I would miss that if I stuck only to the time commitment outlined in the applicant pack. Anonymous You would lose the ability to direct the organisation, hold it to account in the way that we do, fall into the trap of having another failure of governance. Chair, Health and Social Care [The public body] would still function but [not putting in the additional time commitment] would make it more difficult. Chair, Economy Representing the organisation in all its forms is a key part of what you take on both at events and as member of other bodies the organisation works with, which are all part of the reputation of the organisation, and which is a large part of what you need to do to do the job

properly. *Chair, Economy*



In general, participants agreed that there would be an impact to their understanding of board work, the work of sub-committees, and / or that there would be a resulting risk to the governance and reputation of the body should they be unable to commit to additional time to their board work on top of their advertised time commitment. Of course, there is also the risk that any unexpected time commitment may result in individuals leaving an appointment before the end of their term, which was raised during both the focus groups and survey (survey quote below).



Survey responses

I think we do provide a lot of quality advice and support to the senior team, sometimes write papers or add value to specific projects with risks. I think it would be good for Scottish Government to be more transparent about the time commitment. We have lost very good committee members early because they cannot afford the time.



Impact of the Pandemic on Time Commitment

Almost half of the survey's respondents (48%) were board members prior to the pandemic. Of these, 47% of respondents felt that their time commitment had increased since the pandemic, while 43% felt it hadn't changed at all and 10% felt it had decreased.

Similarly, focus group participants had mixed views on the impact of the pandemic. For chairs and vice chairs however, increased hybrid models adopted for meetings has contributed to an increased or unpredictable time commitment.



Focus Groups

The danger with working online is continuous back-to-back meetings - this is damaging to health and wellbeing and doesn't set a good example. *Chair, Health and Social Care*

I've noticed a significant difference in the number of days I'm impacted by my board position since COVID. I could pretty much keep to my appointed days each month prior to COVID by cramming meetings into one day at one location. Now those meetings will be spread across more days. Online meetings have been helpful as much easier just to have an hour long meeting without the travel but it does impact my diary in a more spread out way. *Vice Chair, Health and Social Care*

Time Commitment Conclusion

It is clear from this analysis that the research participants felt that applicant packs underreflect the time commitment required for board roles, and that they are not transparent enough about the additional work often required once appointments are made – especially in relation to attendance at sub-committees or additional board work. The disparity between advertised and actual time commitment may have implications not only for board member retention, but for attracting a diverse range of applicants. A difference of 32 days a year, or just over 2.5 days a month, is a significant concern for the Commissioner as it is clear that this is not currently accurately reflected in packs. In addition, Scottish ministers may wish to consider these findings in relation to the commitment being given by current board members and whether they would wish to conduct their own further research into this. Additionally, there may be an impact on the willingness of potential applicants from a range of backgrounds - including those currently in employment, who have caregiving responsibilities or other responsibilities within their communities – to apply for roles if the time commitment is under-reflected. The Code of Practice is rooted in the principles of transparency of the process and respect to applicants, which is essential to ensuring that public appointments are available and accessible to the widest pool of applicants. The current disparity between the advertised and actual time commitment impacts all those applying for public appointments, and in particular those who, once in post, realise they do not have the flexibility required to undertake the additional time. Another potential impact of this, in addition to accessibility of appointments, is increased costs for additional appointment rounds to replace those who take up the position and then realise that they cannot commit to the actual time that is required. The board then loses the diverse contribution that this person could have made, and officials have to spend time and money on readvertising, reappointing and re-inducting someone new.

The impact of time commitment to board members in the Health and Social Care Directorate also emerged as a significant concern. 70% of survey respondents from the Health and Social Care Directorate felt that time commitment was a concern, compared to 51% of overall survey respondents. When considered alongside the comments left in the survey relating to sub-committee attendance and time impact of this, and the comments made in the focus groups relating to IJBs in particular, it is clear that the current model of board membership and IJB membership for those in territorial health bodies is problematic. The Scottish Government may wish to consider therefore whether membership of IJBs is fully and accurately reflected in applicant packs.

Recommendation: Time Commitment Review. Scottish Ministers to review the current time commitment of board members and assess how accurately this is reflected in applicant packs. The Scottish Ministers should work with Boards to conduct a time commitment review; to ensure that applicant packs clearly outline the expected time commitment of individual roles, and to provide support to selection panels so that they are suitably able to identify and establish the expected time commitment during the appointment planning phase.

Recommendation: Scottish Government to review the applicant pack template to ensure there is appropriate space and prompts for selection panels to consider, review and communicate any additional work, such as attendance at sub committees, so that this is clear to prospective applicants.

Recommendation: Scottish Ministers to work with Board Chairs to ensure that appropriate discussions are taking place when the time commitment of a public appointee changes at any point during their appointment term, including discussions concerning sub-committee attendance.

Remuneration

97% of respondents to the survey received remuneration for their position. This gives us significant insights into the experiences of those in remunerated positions; the proportion of unremunerated public appointments is significantly smaller and so the survey results are reflective of that. According to the Scottish Government's Public Appointments Tracker at the time the research was conducted, 6% of regulated public appointees are in unremunerated positions. Similarly, the focus group participants were also largely composed of those in remunerated roles. Where insight has been offered on unremunerated roles this has been analysed and shared where appropriate.

On the topic of remuneration, the key themes emerging were:

- Views on remuneration generally
- Remuneration and its relationship to time commitment
- Remuneration and expenses

Each of these these themes are discussed in more detail below, supported by the survey and focus group findings.

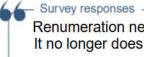
Views on Remuneration

Despite a low number of respondents indicating that remuneration motivated them to apply (14%), 44% of respondents felt that their view on the importance of remuneration has changed since being in post. Although views were similar when split between chairs & vice chairs and members (47% and 42% respectively), there is a higher proportion of respondents answering yes to this question when split by demographic group.

Has your view on the importance of remuneration changed?	All	Women	Under 50	Minority Ethnic	Disabled	LGBT
Yes	44%	52%	53%	67%	60%	45%
No	56%	48%	47%	33%	40%	55%

Table 5 Views on importance of remuneration split by demographic group.

Comments left in relation to this question generally acknowledged that respondents were not motivated by remuneration, but that the remuneration level is low, that it does not match the time commitment required and that there is a lack of clarity around why there is disparity across different boards. Additionally, while Health and Social Care respondents did acknowledge that the recent pay uplift was needed and is appreciated, the same concerns remain around the disparity between remuneration and time commitment overall.



Renumeration needs to reflect the commitment both in time and value of the contribution. It no longer does this.

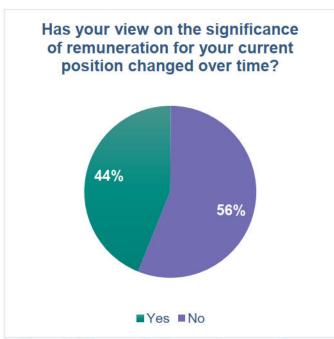
Comparing with other similar orgs in SG Economy Directorate, our remuneration is too low.

Board Roles in NHS Scotland do vary. Relatively lower paid in [Health and Social Care Body] than other agencies of similar sizes.

As far as NHS is concerned greatly under-remunerated and recognised for the expectations in the role. Other public bodies pay substantially higher daily remuneration for far less demanding roles and time commitments.

Feel we should have better recompense for reading and travelling time.

Additionally, of all those whose posts are remunerated, only 36% felt that the level of remuneration received is appropriate and proportionate to the role that they undertake and its responsibilities. This figure was relatively consistent across differing groups although under 50s were less likely to agree, with only 24% of them doing so.



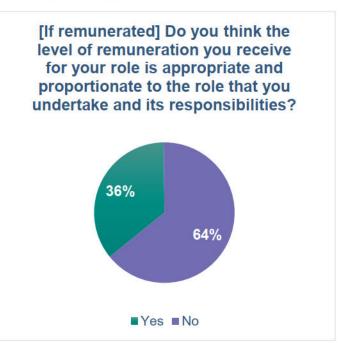


Figure 14 Views on significance of remuneration.

Figure 15 Views on levels of remuneration and responsibilities.

It is possible to compare this data to the survey responses received in the 2020 survey asking the same questions.⁹ Since the survey run in 2020, there has been almost a 10% increase in respondents disagreeing with the question on whether or not they feel the level of remuneration received is appropriate and proportionate.

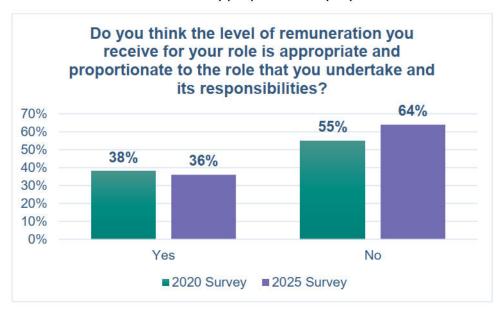


Figure 16 Comparison of views on levels of remuneration to 2020 Time Commitment survey. Note: the remaining 7% of responses to the 2020 survey were in unremunerated roles.

The 2020 survey had a higher number of participants and a higher proportion of respondents in unremunerated roles however, which may account for this difference.

Views on remuneration and its relevance in the appointments process was the main topic for discussion in four of the 15 focus group and one-to-one interview sessions, and it was also discussed in several of the other sessions focussing on different topics. These findings are expanded on below. It was clear from the focus group sessions, as with the survey results, that respondents are largely not motivated by remuneration, but that it does have an important role to play in public appointments for a number of different reasons. It was also evident through discussion that recognition of the additional time input, despite no increase in remuneration being offered, would be appreciated by board members.



It's about reflecting what people actually do. Some members can only give so much even if it's only 8 hours but it's of very high value, whereas where people can give more they need acknowledged for that. *Vice Chair, Economy*

Recognise that we're doing more than a day a week and that it's appreciated. *Member, Health and Social Care*

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⁹ <u>https://www.ethicalstandards.org.uk/publication/report-survey-time-commitment-remuneration-and-other-aspects-role-public-appointees-2020-summary-version</u>

Remuneration and Time Commitment

One of the main themes emerging from the focus groups was the relationship between time commitment and remuneration; that, in general, participants are not motivated by remuneration but that there is a general discomfort around the amount of time and effort involved in board work and subsequent remuneration on offer. This may be reflective of the change in perception in remuneration, as seen in (Figure 15) and the 64% of survey respondents who felt that the remuneration they receive is not appropriate and proportionate to the role and responsibilities undertaken. In essence, and in the view of the Commissioner, although remuneration isn't a primary motivator, the reality of the time commitment must be leading appointees to conclude that they are not being treated fairly.

There was an evident and admirable dedication to public service across all focus groups, and acute awenress that public funds pay for public appointees. However there was clear agreement that current levels of remuneration do not reflect the time and effort put in to board work.



Focus Groups

As vice chair I get an extra day a month and that's good but doesn't cover what I do. Vice Chair. Health and Social Care

Once you are being remunerated for a certain amount of time it takes on a different complexion when you start going beyond that. Member, Communities

Of relevance to this are the survey results, which asked respondents to detail their advertised and actual time commitment, as well as the remuneration they receive. Of the respondents able to answer these questions (162 total, 85% of all respondents), Figure 17 plots the advertised time commitment alongside remuneration for these roles, and demonstrates the relationship between the advertised time commitment and remuneration according to the information provided by respondents. From this information, we can observe that, based on what is advertised, the majority of roles are clustered within the range of £900 - £40,000 with a time commitment range of 2 - 156 days per year. The cluster of remuneration is generally moving upward in line with the time commitment and is indicative of a strong positive correlation between annual days worked and overall annualised remuneration.

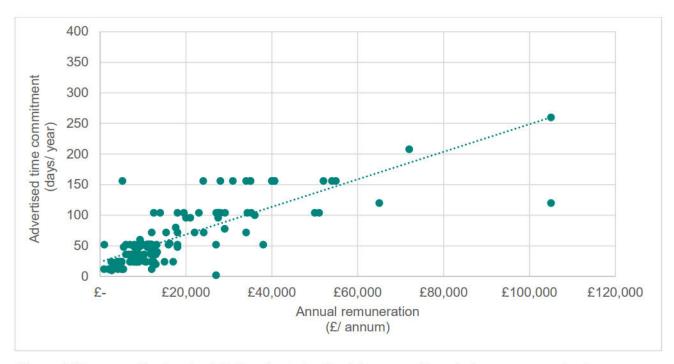


Figure 17 Remuneration levels plotted against advertised time commitment of survey respondents.

We also asked respondents to provide details of their **actual** time commitment to assess how this correlates against their annual remuneration. It is evident that this correlation (Figure 18), though still positive, is weaker than the correlation seen in Figure 17. Based on the data provided by participants, the majority of roles remain clustered within the range of £900 - £40,000, but with an increased actual time commitment range of 3 – 208 days per year. Additionally, there are an increased number of outliers that can be observed than in comparison with Figure 17. This increase in annual time commitment also appears to impact appointees across the board, regardless of whether their remuneration level falls within the majority range, and the increase in time commitment appears to affect appointees with a remuneration of £25,000 or above to a larger extent than those under. This is suggestive of a lack of consistency between time commitment and remuneration.

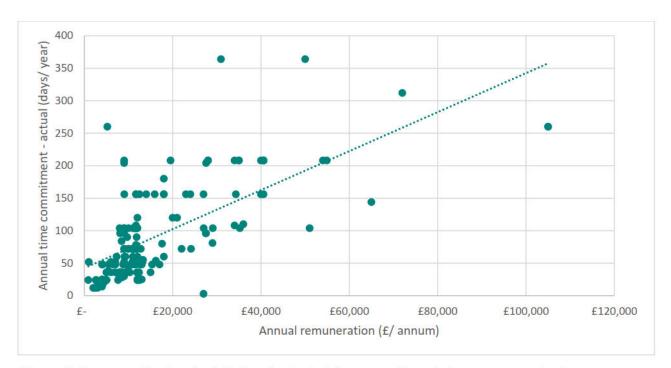


Figure 18 Remuneration levels plotted against actual time commitment of survey respondents.

We recognise that this data is reliant on participants' recollection of the advertised time commitment and estimations of their current time commitment. As such, it is used here to supplement the emerging theme of the focus groups, which was that the time commitment is higher than is remunerated, and to assist in considerations of the implications of this for applicant packs and encouraging applications more broadly.

Remuneration and Expenses

Respondents to the survey were also asked if their out of pocket expenses are paid. 83% indicated that they were and 6% were unsure (11% indicated their expenses are not covered). It is positive that the majority are aware of the policy regarding their out of pocket expenses. Of those who know whether or not they can claim expenses, 84% of them do.

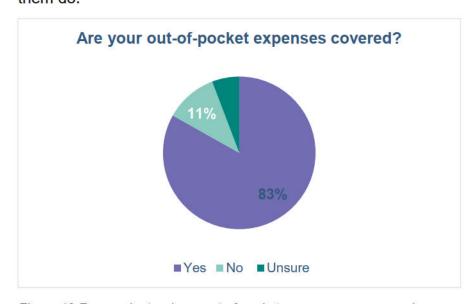


Figure 19 Respondents whose out of pocket expenses are covered.

The Scottish Government's Public Pay Strategy outlines that expenses may be paid to appointees and the basic principle is no appointee should be out of pocket as a result of expenses arising from their appointment, provided such costs are reasonable. 10 It is silent on financial support for those with caring responsibilities, however. It may be that specific types of financial support are left to the discretion of individual bodies as it is not uncommon to see reference to financial support, such as childcare expenses, to be referenced in applicant packs. In any case the position is ambiguous, and it may not be surprising then that when respondents were asked whether financial support is available for those with caring responsibilities,72% were unsure. This is a significant proportion of board members who are unaware, and in addition to the Scottish Government's Pay Strategy being silent on the matter, the diversity impact for potential applicants is clear; potential applicants for public appointments may be discouraged from applying if they are unclear or unaware of the remuneration and support available, and particularly so for those with caring responsibilities. A lack of transparency from the outset may also impact perceptions of public appointments. It is therefore important that any and all financial support and remuneration offered is clearly communicated in the applicant pack. It may be that this information is already available in applicant packs but given the research findings and volume of participants unaware of whether financial support is available for those with caring responsibilities, it may be an opportunity for the Scottish Government to revisit and refresh the applicant pack template.

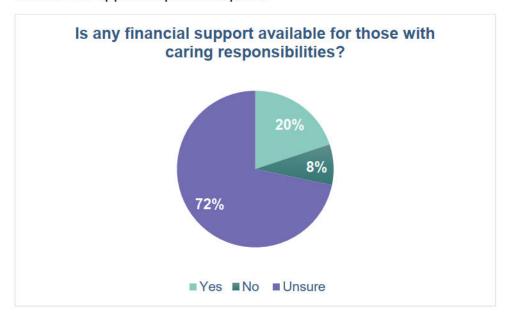


Figure 20 Knowledge of financial support available for those with caring responsibilities.

Building on this, another theme emerging from the focus groups was lack of clarity over remuneration policy. Comments were made across all groups reflecting that participants do not have a clear understanding of the Scottish Government's Public Sector Pay Strategy, or why differing board roles offer different remuneration.

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¹⁰ https://www.gov.scot/publications/public-sector-pay-strategy-2023-24-technical-guide/pages/8/



Focus Groups

I feel guilty asking for more, especially when you're on a board making efficiencies, but when you look across other boards and in particular similar roles you wonder who is making the definition that my job, that it is lesser paid, is less complicated. Vice Chair, Health and Social Care

At times you hear of people getting paid for extra days, but you're not sure why or how. Did they ask for it? Vice Chair, Health and Social Care

People don't really understand the inconsistency between boards, as there seems to be a big range of practices between boards regarding things like timesheets, whether you are paid a monthly flat fee or by the hour, and expenses. Some boards are also completely unremunerated. Member, Communities

The Public Sector Pay Strategy is a matter for the Scottish Government; however, closely linked to this are the experiences of and views on expenses and the expectations set out in applicant packs, which is of interest to the Commisioner. It is clear that remuneration and expenses are appreciated and valued, but the reality of trying to understand why remuneration can vary across boards and positions and the reality of accessing expenses can be challenging or confusing to appointees

Remuneration Conclusion

The survey and focus groups revealed that appointees are appreciative of the remuneration they receive; however, there was an undercurrent of appointees feeling undervalued by the way their work is currently recognised. The remuneration policy – including how it is decided and applied across different public body boards – also appears to not be well understood by appointees. This suggests the current information available to board members and potential board members about remuneration may not be sufficiently circulated to or understood by them. While the Public Sector Pay Policy is a matter for the Scottish Government, the applicant pack and communication to potential applicants has a role to play in the process. Applicant packs should include clear explanations of what the successful candidate can expect once in the role, including the remuneration, expenses and financial support once in post. Even where remuneration is not the primary motivator for applicants to board roles, clear communication will enhance the transparency of the process and increase trust. When considering the mutual desire between the Scottish Government and the ESC to ensuring that public appointments are accessible to a wide and diverse pool of candidate, this is even more important – transparency of process in turn allows for individuals to consider their own circumstances from the outset of the appointments process, and to make informed decisions about applying for positions.

Recommendation: Remuneration and Financial Support Awareness. Scottish Ministers to review how remuneration and financial support is communicated in applicant packs so that, from application to appointment, board members are aware of the amount and frequency of pay, how pay decisions are made, how expenses are reimbursed and what financial support is available to appointees. Ministers might consider developing a separate pay policy for public appointees, clearly setting out the expectations for board roles (including

any expenses) to help achieve a greater level of clarity for board members, and potential board members if linked to in applicant packs.

Support in Role

For the purpose of this research, support in role is defined as the induction and training process, subsequent and ongoing training and support offered in role, and the appraisals process. Overall, the responses to the Support in Role section of the survey are generally positive and reflective of a process that technically is working well. However, detailed results also show that experiences of support in role are variable and particularly so when broken down by demographic group. While we acknowledge that the response rates for certain demographic groups were relatively low and cannot be used as fully representative views, they still provide useful insight.

The main themes emerging from the survey and focus group discussion on the topic of support in role were:

- Need to self-identify induction, training, and support needs
- Unanticipated volume of induction materials
- · Importance of establishing relationships and shared spaces for learning
- Preference for objectives focused appraisals
- Barriers to appointment

Induction, Training and Support

Survey responses to the Support in Role questions were largely positive. 91% of participants received an induction and 72% felt that the induction process met their expectations and needs. Notably for under 50s however, only 53% felt that it did. Similarly, although 75% of all respondents felt that no training is required to undertake their role that isn't currently provided, when split by demographic group the results are quite different (see Table 6). There was no significant variation between chair / vice chair and member responses.

Do you feel there is any training required to undertake your role that isn't currently provided?	All	Women	Under 50	Minority Ethnic	Disabled	LGBT
Yes	25%	34%	42%	50%	43%	36%
No	75%	66%	58%	50%	57%	64%

Table 6 Views on whether further training is required split by demographic group.

Respondents were also asked whether they felt that any additional support should be made available to undertake their role. 31% indicated that additional support should be made available, and this response was broadly the same when split by chairs / vice chairs and members (36% and 28% respectively). Once more, however, when broken down by demographic group, the response rate is quite different and indicates more varying levels of satisfaction with current provisions.

Do you feel any additional support should be made available to undertake your role?	All	Health and Social Care	Women	Under 50	Minority Ethnic	Disabled	LGBT
Yes	31%	39%	34%	53%	33%	57%	45%
No	69%	61%	66%	47%	67%	43%	55%

Table 7 Views on whether additional support is required split by demographic group.

For appointees within the Health and Social Care directorate, disabled appointees, LGBT appointees and those under 50, the number of responses indicating that additional support should be made available to undertake their role is significantly higher than the overall response rate. Comments left to this question by these groups reflect some of the outputs from the focus groups (discussed later): that discussions to help identify knowledge gaps for support would be useful, as would centralised training events or making more opportunities for shared learning available – particularly during the first year of appointment. More comments are available in Appendix 3.

- 0	Survey responses ———————————————————————————————————
	Perhaps a buddy system for first year.
	As requested by the individual = we all have different backgrounds and gaps in knowledge and experience.
	Possibly some additional training in relation to chairing a sub-committee.
	I think a secretary for Board members would be helpful.
	Risk committee members should have more central briefings.
	As above perhaps a network for chairs of sub committees to share learning.

Respondents were asked which things they would have benefited from knowing about during their induction to the board, and the responses to this are revealing. Although 47% were satisfied with everything that was covered during their induction, 24% felt they would have benefitted from having an outline of their expected performance and appraisal on board; 24% from knowing the points of contact and support in post; and 20% from knowing the expected time commitment of their roles.

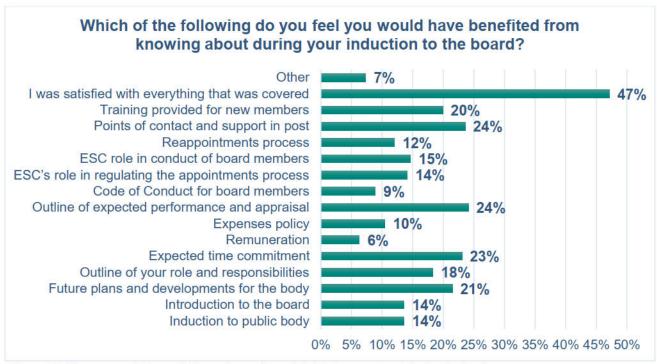


Figure 21 Views on what would have been beneficial to know about during induction.

The results of this question are also highlighted in the table below (Table 8), which are presented alongside a breakdown of responses from demographic groups. The experience of chairs / vice chairs and members was generally in line with the overall response rate. Where respondents have indicated that something might have been helpful and it is significantly higher than the overall response rate (by at least 10%) this has been highlighted in purple. Also highlighted are those who indicated that they were not as satisfied with the induction process as the overall response rate by at least 10%.

	All	Women	Under 50	Minority Ethnic	Disabled	LGBT
Induction to public body	14%	15%	26%	0%	13%	0%
Introduction to the board	14%	18%	32%	0%	17%	0%
Future plans and developments for the body	21%	19%	53%	17%	33%	36%
Outline of your role and responsibilities	18%	23%	37%	17%	30%	9%
Expected time commitment	23%	23%	26%	50%	27%	27%
Remuneration	6%	5%	5%	0%	7%	9%
Expenses policy	10%	15%	21%	17%	13%	18%
Outline of expected performance and appraisal	24%	27%	32%	0%	30%	27%

	All	Women	Under 50	Minority Ethnic	Disabled	LGBT
Code of Conduct for board members	9%	11%	21%	0%	13%	0%
ESC's role in regulating the appointments process	14%	11%	11%	33%	17%	18%
ESC role in conduct of board members	15%	12%	11%	33%	13%	18%
Reappointments process	12%	7%	16%	17%	3%	9%
Points of contact and support in post	24%	26%	42%	33%	33%	27%
Training provided for new members	20%	22%	32%	0%	33%	9%
I was satisfied with everything that was covered	47%	44%	37%	33%	37%	27%
Other	7%	10%	5%	17%	7%	18%

Table 8 Views on what would have been beneficial to know about during induction split by different groups.

This table is particularly insightful for everyone involved in the public appointments process, and particularly so when considering what support is offered to those coming into board roles. Making this information known during the application stage may in turn help to manage expectations for individuals coming into roles.

Compared to the 6% of members who did not receive an induction, 15% of chairs and vice chairs indicated that they did not receive an induction when they joined their boards. Of those who did, only 67% felt that it met their expectations and needs, in comparison to the 75% of members who felt the process met their expectations and needs. Further, and despite being a requirement of the Code (section I7), 55% of all participants were not asked to provide feedback on their induction and 49% were not asked to provide feedback on their training. This is significant, as through the feedback process induction and training can be improved and enhanced, as well as areas of weakness identified. Not only this but showing appointees that their views are listened to and acted on demonstrates a commitment to good practice and accountability, and a culture of inclusion and improvement. It stands to reason that well-informed, well inducted, and well supported board members may in turn be more effective and confident contributors in their governance roles. Similar to the findings of the focus groups, discussed below, many participants who chose to leave comments in response to this question in the survey reflected that engagement with stakeholders was missing from the induction process, or that the process assumed existing knowledge of the body and was not board specific enough. This can be particularly challenging for those new to public appointments. Full comments are available in Appendix 3 with a short selection below.



The expectation was that I would already be familiar with the work of the organisation. Induction was a folder with certain information on remuneration, policies, fire safety etc for me to read at my leisure. There was an absence of induction on working practices, the culture of the body, appraisal or reappointment.

Was a generic session with a host of staff from various roles. Was not board specific.

Some views expressed were influenced by experiences of induction during the pandemic, as a number of appointees received their induction at the beginning of or shortly after the pandemic. These respondents left comments reflecting that their own experience of induction may not have been as expected, but that they understand the process has seen improvement since. Comments can be found in Appendix 3.

For chairs, comments indicated that the induction process was limited or too general, and that they had to be self-led during the induction period. Some chairs agreed that being self-led was an appropriate and preferred approach at chair level depending on their prior experience, though it is important not to assume the experience of an incoming chair and highlights why initial discussions are important. This theme emerged strongly in the focus groups and is discussed further below.

There was also a stark difference between members and chairs / vice chairs in being asked to provide feedback on their induction and training, possibly because fewer chairs and vice chairs received induction and training, though those responding 'yes' to the question remain significantly lower than members responding the same.

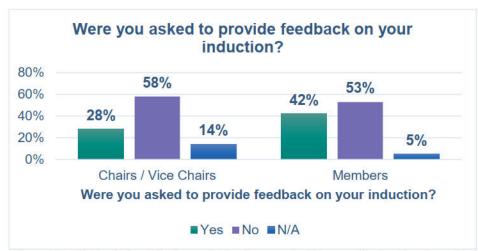


Figure 22 Chairs / Vice Chairs and Members asked to provide feedback on their induction.

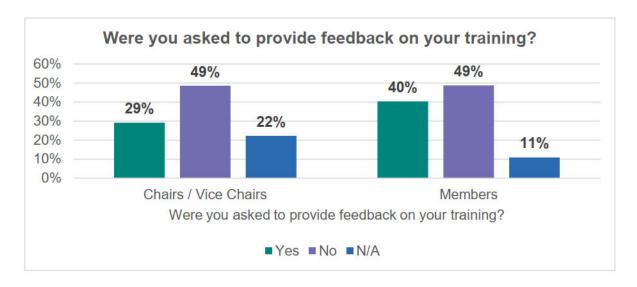


Figure 23 Chairs / Vice Chairs and Members asked to provide feedback on their training.

The experience of appointees was explored more fully during the focus groups, which allowed for further discussion on some of these themes beginning to emerge from the survey.

Self-identification of induction, training & support needs

Similar to suggestions made by survey comments, many focus group participants recalled that the induction process and subsequent training and support was a relatively smooth process when they self-identified training needs or knowledge gaps, and when they had the confidence to identify and pursue their own training. Other participants reflected that it was only after a substantial period in the position that they became aware of some of the online training being available for the board or confident enough to pursue it. It became evident that individuals tend to have a positive experience with their induction and training process once they are able to and have the confidence to identify and drive their own training and support. However, in considering barriers to appointment and encouraging applications, it may be important to consider, communicate and discuss at the start of an appointment term that individuals need to take some responsibility for self-identifying areas for further support – certainly, support for this was reflected in focus group discussions. The appointment process itself should also provide individuals with information on how closely they met the criteria for selection, assisting with the self-identification of areas that they can improve their skills and knowledge in once appointed.

- Focus Groups

The provision [of training / support] is excellent but entirely driven by individual initiative. *Chair, Economy*

I have to go looking for it. There's not a programme there for it [support]. I approached a chair elsewhere to mentor me, because there's a lack of development and support. I think inevitably that will spoil retention and attraction. *Vice Chair, Health and Social Care*

Volume of Induction Material

The unanticipated volume of materials received during induction and the length of time it takes to become familiar with the role also emerged as a key concern across the focus groups and one-to-one sessions.

Across several groups, participants noted that they were not prepared for the volume of material received and feeling overwhelmed as a result. This suggests that appointees have not been prepared for what the initial period of board life looks like, and consequently, they are experiencing a disconnect between what was advertised in the applicant pack, their expectations moving into the role, and the reality of joining their board. The volume of material during the induction period is for each individual board to manage, but it is relevant and important to the applicant pack for potential applicants and future appointees. Transparency and continuity of process ensures that the expectations of successful appointees are met, from the point of advertising and throughout the process – allowing them the opportunity to self-assess against the job description and to prepare and understand what will happen once they are in post, where to seek support and advice, or to understand that additional time may be required during the initial period of appointment.



Focus Groups

I felt 'done to death' by induction, and got no sense of what a chair needs... Found it overwhelming, had not thought through 'what does a chair actually need to know and what do they not need to know.' *Anonymous*

I am used to working long hours and with complex asks, but I was absolutely overwhelmed [with induction material]. *Vice Chair, Health and Social Care*



Relationship Building

The value of having adequate support to establish and build relationships and networks for appointees was also evident during discussions for both board chairs, vice chairs and board members. This did vary across chair / vice chair and member groups, with some chairs and vice chairs feeling more positive about existing established networks they have open to them, though there was commonality in the view that there is an importance of having these networks of support. For members, opportunities to learn and share from other public appointees was identified as important: where this happened during induction, it was commented on positively with a desire for more opportunities to become available; where it was lacking, there was a keenness for more structured networks of support to be made available.

For chairs and vice chairs, where forums for shared learning exist, they were spoken about positively. This was strongly supported in the comments to the survey too, a selection of which are available in Appendix 3 and alongside quotes from the focus groups below.



Focus Groups

NHS chairs are quite lucky as we have a process of coming together. We come together every month for a private meeting, meet again together in regional meetings, national board chairs come together every fortnight just to talk about whatever they want. On the whole the NHS is a much more supported environment. We get lots of messages about collaboration, but the government does this in silo, so they don't necessarily talk about collaboration across the system, which is what we need if we want to make the changes we do. **Anonymous**

The Vice Chair's Forum and action learning sets are very helpful for peer support and development. *Vice Chair, Health and Social Care*

.....

There used to be chair support networks. Those probably disappeared pre-COVID, and I'm not aware of any post-COVID. *Chair, Education and Justice*

Now there is a buddy/mentoring system which would have been helpful when I first started my appointment. I find it helpful to connect with people on similar boards, sharing mentoring/knowledge with other chairs with similar background or locality. *Chair, Health and Social Care*

The value of board secretaries was also highlighted, though it was also apparent that the experience of support from Scottish Government Sponsor Teams can be variable. The varying levels of support from sponsor teams did emerge as a concern but unfortunately, we were not given permission to share quotes reflecting this.



Focus Groups

[The sponsor team are an] Amazing unit, supporting, proactive, optimal relations. I meet regularly with the director, deputy director, and other members of the sponsor team. *Chair, Education and Justice*

It does help to get to know board secretary, they are very good and in tune to what works for board members. *Chair, Education and Justice.*

In health you have board secretaries who provide very good support to chairs and vice chairs. *Chair, Health and Social Care*

The importance of receiving support particularly in relation to the public facing and scrutiny aspects of the chair and vice chairs roles also arose as a theme across the Support in Role groups; indeed, some chairs and vice chairs expressed that the role could be a lonely one without adequate support.



Focus Groups

Support for the Board and for individual members of it from ministers is particularly important when difficult decisions have to be made which are in line with Scottish Government policy direction. Without this, it will be increasingly difficult to attract people to non-executive roles. *Chair, Health and Social Care*

.....

Being a chair can be an isolated place and you have to be proactive about getting peer support. *Chair, Education and Justice*

I would have valued a conversation about how I'm doing. [The role] makes you feel slightly lonely, and I could see someone being very lonely in their first chair appointment, and that is slightly concerning. *Chair, Education and Justice*

Appraisal

86% of respondents had gone through an appraisal for their work as a member of the board. Of those, 81% had a 'very good' or 'good' experience. 15% were neutral about the experience, and, positively, only 4% indicated a 'poor' or 'very poor' experience. 87% also felt that the current arrangement for appraisals is sufficient for assessing board member contributions to the work of the board in terms of skills, knowledge, experience, and any other attributes. These figures were broadly the same across all groups (chairs / vice chairs, members, demographic groups and those on first or second term appointments), with minority ethnic appointees being the notable exception – only 67% felt that they had a 'very good' or 'good' experience of the appraisals process, and 17% feeling that it was 'poor.'

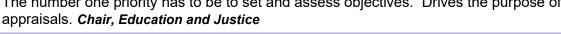
The experience of appraisal was explored further in the focus group sessions. Establishing and assessing objectives was of importance to participants. Closely linked to this, and for board members, the experience and skillset of the chair in managing appraisals discussions was crucial to ensuring a positive experience. It is worth highlighting that the Scottish Government does provide guidance on appraisals, but the latest version is dated 2017.¹¹



Focus Groups

There should also be structured ways of assessing performance and how people improve over time. *Member, Net Zero*

The number one priority has to be to set and assess objectives. Drives the purpose of



Support in Role Conclusion

The analysis shows varying views on the support received by appointees once in role. One main theme emerging from the research was that individuals felt that when they self-identified their own training and support needs, they tended have a more positive

¹¹ https://www.gov.scot/publications/guidance-appraisal-non-departmental-public-body-ndpb-board-members-chairs/

experience, but that this is only effective if someone knows that they can or should do this. This has the potential to be an issue for those new to governance roles in particular. To address this, and in keeping with ensuring that the appointments process is transparent and manages the expectations of individuals coming into roles, applicant packs should include, or link to, detailed information about what support is available once in role. This would be considered and identified by each body and board, and for each new role emerging. Clearly outlining the support that will be offered to individuals and encouraging them to self-reflect and identify their own needs to discuss with the Chair / Appointing Minister during induction may in turn attract a wider pool of applicants to public appointments.

Recommendation: Scottish Government to review the current applicant pack template and to update this so that selection panels can clearly communicate the support that will be offered to successful candidates once in post.

Recommendation: As part of the induction process, the Scottish Ministers to work with board chairs to consider the early discussions that take place with new appointees, to highlight how skills or training needs will be identified, and to ensure that potential applicants are aware that these discussions will be available to them once appointed. Where the appointment is for a chair position, the Scottish Government should ensure these early discussions are held directly with the new appointee.

Recommendation: Scottish Government to review the 2017 Appraisals Guidance document with a view to updating this where appropriate and ensuring that board members have access to it.

Recommendation: Scottish Government to consider how to ensure the appointments feedback process provides individuals with information on how closely they met the criteria for selection, assisting with the self-identification of areas that they can improve their skills and knowledge in once appointed.

Reappointments

A key objective of this research was to assess the extent to which the Commissioner's statutory functions are understood. One aspect relevant to assessing this is related to the reappointments process and how far board members understand the Code's requirements regarding reappointments, which are that:

F1 The Scottish Ministers may reappoint a board member to the same position or extend a member's appointment term provided that:

- I. the member's performance has been properly appraised as being effective during the current term and the member has been given the opportunity to demonstrate that they have the appropriate skills, knowledge and experience and other attributes required
- II. the reappointment or extension will continue to meet the board's needs for the period concerned
- III. the member's total period of appointment will not exceed 8 years.

It is therefore encouraging that a significant proportion of respondents (83%) indicated that they are aware of the Code's requirements.

Furthermore, of all board members who responded and have been reappointed, 100% felt that their reappointment was handled in line with what the Code requires. Experiences of the reappointments process have also been largely positive, with 76% of respondents indicating a 'very good' or 'good' experience and only 2% indicating a 'poor' experience (the remaining indicating a neutral viewpoint).



Figure 24 Experiences of the reappointments process.

For those on their first terms, when asked if they would consider reappointment if offered the opportunity, 66% commented that they would and 26% indicated that they are unsure. Only 7% indicated that they would not (and 1% preferred not to answer).

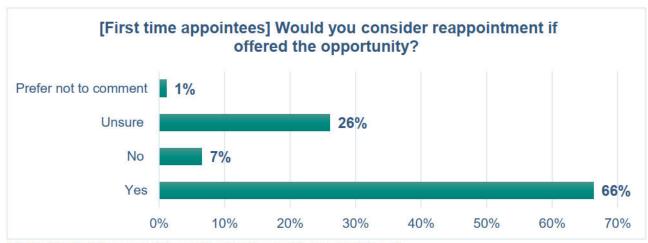


Figure 25 First time appointees who would consider reappointment.

Responses were slightly more mixed when split by chairs, vice chairs and demographic groups, however. Minority ethnic and disabled applicants in particular expressed greater uncertainty about staying in post following their first term.

1 st time appointees	All	Chairs & Vice Chairs	Women	Under 50	Minority Ethnic	Disabled	LGBT
Yes	66%	62%	56%	65%	0%	50%	71%
No	7%	7%	11%	6%	0%	17%	0%
Unsure	26%	28%	31%	29%	100%	33%	29%
Prefer not to comment	1%	3%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Table 9 First time appointee likelihood of taking up a second term split by different groups.

Recommendation: Scottish Government to consider establishing a process for analysing and understanding reasons for individuals resigning before their term is complete, and of those who decline offers of a second term. This could be similar to an exit interview and is with a view to understanding how many and who might be withdrawing from public appointments because expectations and treatment once in role are different to what was outlined in the applicant pack.

Barriers to appointment

Respondents to the survey were asked whether they felt that any of the aspects highlighted in the survey might be a barrier to demographic groups currently under-reflected on public body boards. 48% agreed or partially agreed with the question, 34% did not agree and 18% were unsure. Those who agreed or partially agreed were asked what issues they felt may impact diversity in terms of people's willingness to apply or to remain on a board. Responses aligned with the previous analysis of the survey and focus groups outputs: time commitment (79%), remuneration level (70%) and support in role training (27%) were key issues arising.

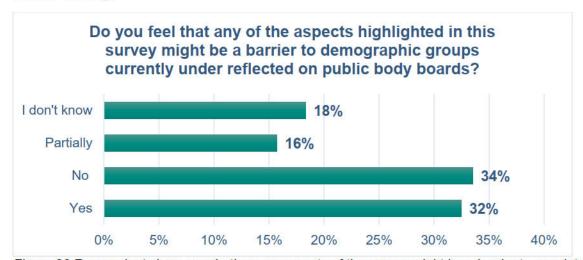


Figure 26 Respondent views on whether any aspects of the survey might be a barrier to appointment.

When split by different groups the results are more revealing.

Do you feel that any of the aspects highlighted in this survey might be a barrier to demographic groups currently under reflected on public body boards?	All	Women	Under 50	Minority Ethnic	Disabled	LGBT
Yes	32%	45%	47%	67%	60%	27%
No	34%	15%	16%	17%	7%	18%
Partially	16%	19%	16%	17%	20%	18%
I don't know	18%	21%	21%	0%	13%	36%

Table 10 Views on whether aspects of the survey may be a barrier to appointment split by demographic group.

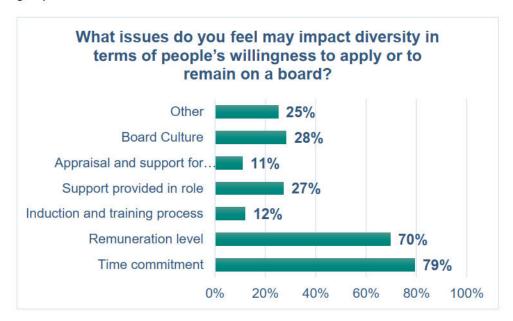


Figure 27 Respondent views about issues impacting people's willingness to apply or remain on board.

What issues do you feel may impact diversity in terms of people's willingness to apply or to remain on a board?	All	Women	Under 50	Minority Ethnic	Disabled	LGBT
Time Commitment	79%	83%	75%	80%	83%	100%
Remuneration level	70%	70%	58%	60%	71%	40%
Induction and training process	12%	13%	17%	40%	21%	0%
Support provided in role	27%	26%	42%	40%	38%	40%
Appraisal and support for development	11%	9%	17%	0%	25%	20%
Board culture	28%	28%	50%	80%	29%	40%
Other	25%	26%	42%	80%	25%	40%

Table 11 Aspects that may be a barrier to demographic groups split by group.

Board culture received 28% of responses; comments left in relation to this (see selection below) reveal that participants do not feel that current board culture is a concern, but that board culture is important for encouraging and welcoming diversity. Additionally, and as

previously discussed, if people do not feel welcome on board or feel unable to provide a positive contribution, the board will miss out on diversity of thought leading to poorer governance and decision making. There is also a cost in terms of having to replace members who leave earlier than they would have otherwise.



It is also important to acknowledge that survey responses from minority ethnic and disabled respondents in particular show greater levels of belief that aspects covered by the survey have an impact on diversity than across other groups. We have acknowledged that their response rates were lower and may show a disproportionate viewpoint as a result of this. However, we also know that minority ethnic and disabled individuals are not as well reflected on public body boards as other groups¹², and the viewpoints offered are important considerations – particularly when evaluating barriers to appointment. A selection of comments offered by minority ethnic and disabled respondents on barriers to appointment have therefore been shared below for further consideration.



Survey responses

Boards are historically seen as 'cliched' in terms of certain groups. Breaking through that takes more effort and requires additional support for the individual. New applicants don't see that support or that there are those who have already broken through and found it a positive experience. In this regard a mentoring approach from current diversity members across public bodies and potential applicants would be helpful. Also there may need to be a culture shift for the Board which may not recognise barriers or behaviours the [sic] discriminate or disengage. For this, I would suggest using current diverse public appointees to visit boards looking to increase diversity and work with them to identify barriers, maximise the positives, identify targeted promotions etc.

With senior leadership that is Execs and CEO in the public sector being almost exclusively white the perception from BME communities is that they are not welcome or we are only required as a token ethnic, furthermore when our sector has deep rooted racism as illustrated by our own racial harassment / hate crime data why would we be seen as a place for BME people? Similarly for disabled people

It is difficult to fit [a board role] around employment but does not pay enough to be a job. The lack of flexibility around when things happen (due to necessity) are likely to be a barrier for some. I also think we need to recognise that the work is hard and often complicated and this will put people off.

¹² https://www.ethicalstandards.org.uk/publication/public-appointments-annual-report-202324



Barriers to Appointment and Time Commitment

Of those respondents who indicated full or partial agreement to the question on whether they felt that any of the themes highlighted in the survey might represent a barrier to demographic groups currently under reflected on public body boards, those who indicated full or partial agreement (48%; 92 respondents) were asked what issues they felt may impact diversity in terms of people's willingness to apply or to remain on a board. Overall, 79% (73 respondents) indicated that time commitment may impact this willingness. When split by different groups, the responses are slightly more varied. We would highlight that, although the percentages appear high, they are based on small sample sizes. Nevertheless, it provides an insight into varying experiences across different groups.

What issues do you feel may impact diversity in terms of people's willingness to apply or to remain on a board?	All	Women	Under 50	Minority Ethnic	Disabled	LGBT	Members
Time Commitment	79%	83%	75%	80%	83%	100%	100%

Table 12 Issues impacting diversity - Remuneration.

The impact of time commitment on the diversity of boards was also explored in the focus groups, with participants mirroring the reflections of those who commented in the survey. In particular, the issue of managing board work alongside employment or caring responsibilities was clear. A number of focus group participants were retired from their full-time jobs, and in turn many acknowledged that they could only provide the additional time required because of this. A selection of quotes is available below (overleaf) and, from the survey, in Appendix 3.



Focus Groups

I agree that the vast majority [of board members are] not doing it for the money. Remuneration is not the primary income for many of us, but the time commitment issue does become a problem when trying to do diversity. It is impossible to do six days a month while also trying to work a full time job. If it were just one or two industrious days, employers might be much more willing to support employees' board work. Vice Chair, Health and Social Care

Goes to the heart of diversity on boards. It's hard and getting harder to recruit people still in employment. If we're not careful we will end up with a board of a certain age. We need people out there in the system, they bring such a lot of experience. I've tried to be as realistic as possible – have had a couple of people in work [as board members], and have agreed there are some things they can't do or might miss because of work, but I've lost people in the past because they can't balance the two things. Anonymous

If you're going to be upfront about it then you have to acknowledge that. If someone is in full time employment, it may make them suitable to be a champion, but it adds time. Anonymous

There is an issue for Public Appointments in Scotland that board roles tend to be something people apply for towards the end of their career and often after retirement. The board role and the time commitment required would need to change if they want to attract people earlier in their careers, when working full time. Member, Education and Justice

I think that unpredictability would be a barrier for some people. Chair, Education and Justice



Barriers to Appointment and Remuneration

Survey responses to respondents who identified Remuneration as a potential barrier to people's willingness to apply to or remain on a board are shown below. As a reminder, 48% of (or 92) respondents indicated full or partial agreement when asked whether they felt any of the aspects highlighted in the survey might be a barrier to demographic groups.

What issues do you feel may impact diversity in terms of people's willingness to apply or to remain on a board?	All	Women	Under 50	Minority Ethnic	Disabled	LGBT
Remuneration	70%	70%	58%	60%	71%	40%

Table 13 Issues impacting diversity – Remuneration.

Within each of the focus group and one-to-one sessions, participants also reflected and were in agreement that the current levels of remuneration on offer may impact achieving full diversity on boards. Disucssions again revealed that the close link to the time commitment required for roles is evident. A selection of comments (highlighted below) demonstrate how individuals in employment or self-employment could face a potential loss of earnings as a result of being a board member, which may make it increasingly difficult to get these people on board.





The [remuneration] inconsistency between boards is also staggering: it does impact who you will get on boards – like the group of us here, white, male, semi-retired – which is clearly not diverse. *Member, Net Zero*

Thinking about future roles, remuneration has to be a consideration. Anonymous

Thinking about future roles, remuneration has to be a consideration. *Anonymous*

I do give a lot of time to the board and am happy to do that, but I would be able to give more time and dedication if there was a compensation. Given my personal background, I'm self-employed, any time I'm giving to the board is time I'm not earning money. It wouldn't put me off another term or another public body but it does narrow the range of potential candidates. *Member, Communities*

There wouldn't be anyone on a public board if it was just about the money, but the danger of that is there are big organisations in the public sector that operate on good will, and there's a danger we rely on boards operating on good will. We will never be truly representative if this is the case. *Vice Chair, Health and Social Care*

Barriers to Appointment and Support in Role

Survey responses which identified areas relating to Support in Role as a potential barrier to people's willingness to apply for or remain in a board role are shown below. As a reminder, 48% of (or 92) survey respondents felt that some of the issues explored in the survey may represent a barrier to demographic groups.

What issues do you feel may impact diversity in terms of people's willingness to apply or to remain on a board?	All	Women	Under 50	Minority Ethnic	Disabled	LGBT
Induction and Training Process	12%	13%	17%	40%	21%	0%
Support in role	27%	26%	42%	40%	38%	40%
Appraisal and support for development	11%	8%	17%	0%	25%	20%

Table 14 Issues impacting diversity - Support in Role

Comments left in the survey reflected some of the concerns on this topic.



Survey responses -

Feeling they can fit in and will be listened to.

Language barriers could be address through interpreters - albeit this could present challenge in terms of managing the board, it also comes with a financial commitment.

......

Although advertisements often say Board members are sought from a wide variety of backgrounds I do not think the roles attract people who have not had significant senior level professional experience.

The challenge was also identified and discussed in focus groups.



Focus Groups

The whole system is dependent on individual self-confidence and drive. This is fair enough to a point, but you will lose particularly younger people or people new to board governance. *Chair, Economy*

The only thing the pack said about training and support is just that an induction would be provided. Limited. Don't know how inclusive it would be. *Member, Communities*

I think particularly for someone stepping into the role newly, but maybe wasn't clear that bringing someone in simply on their skills would have been enough – [the applicant pack] may be more focussed on physical barriers, which is mentioned much more explicitly – some clarity on what you need to turn up with vs what can be developed and offered in role would be beneficial. *Member, Communities*

It is vital that new board members receive adequate, sufficient, and tailored support when coming into a new role. Ensuring this will allow new board members to feel equipped and empowered to contribute effectively from the outset. Helping to navigate the organisation's culture, access to sufficient information and resources and access to peer networks of support were all identified during the focus groups as being an important element of the induction, support and training process, along with ensuring that each individual is given the opportunity to drive the support that they need and will be of value to them. Clearly outlining the support available – which may vary across different appointments and different boards according to their own needs – will be particularly effective to individuals with non-traditional backgrounds and those who may be new to governance positions. Without clarity regarding support in role, or if expectations from application to appointment are inconsistent, the process may be discouraging to capable individuals who may perceive that they will not have sufficient support or knowledge to apply for a role.

Barriers to Appointment Conclusion

General comments from the survey left in relation to the main areas of concern regarding barriers to appointment are detailed in <u>Appendix 3</u>, and from the survey focus groups below. The comments reflect many of the concerns observed earlier in this section (Time Commitment, Remuneration and Support in Role), including:

- advertised versus actual time commitment published in applicant packs
- transparency around additional work or attendance required at sub-committees
- transparency of remuneration
- clearly communicating and identifying individual support needs once in role and
- establishing networks or forums for shared learning and support across other board members.

Inaccurate or not wholly transparent communication in applicant packs will in turn impact the overall aim of attracting a wide pool of applicants and increasing diversity of thought and better governance and decision making to Scotland's public body boards.

Observations, comments, and recommendations have been made in each of these respective areas within this report, alongside comments on the implications of these concerns to diversity.

Mixed responses ———————————————————————————————————
Need diversity of experience and a lot of boards are in a good place of diversity of professional experience, but lacking lived experience of diversity. <i>Vice Chair, Health and Social Care</i>
It can restrict your field if any candidate thinking about a Chair's role is working full time. Chair, Economy
I am very committed to public service and the public sector but even now the actual remuneration, despite the uplift, is still insufficient to attract a wide diverse group of people onto the board. <i>Vice Chair, Health and Social Care</i>
Although relevant posts are renumerated it is difficult to be a board member around other fixed commitments. This inevitably impacts on diversity. The interplay between lower time commitment - as say compared to a even a regular part-time position - means that only certain groups of people could consider applying. <i>Survey response</i>
If roles are not remunerated this will adverse impact - although our Board culture is good I am sure the culture in some Boards can be a reason for individuals leaving. <i>Survey response</i>
It is difficult to fit around employment but does not pay enough to be a job. The lack of flexibility around when things happen (due to necessity) are likely to be a barrier for some. I also think we need to recognise that the work is hard and often complicated and this will put people off. Survey response

Extent to which Commissioner's functions are understood & Board Culture

The Commissioner was keen to understand from this research the extent to which his functions are understood. To that end, and in addition to the survey content on Reappointments, a number of other questions were asked to explore this in more detail. 92% of respondents indicated an awareness of the Commissioner regulating the initial appointment and reappointment of public appointees, and 90% were aware that they can complain to the Commissioner if they believe a board member is not adhering to the body's Code of Conduct. It is possible to compare these results to the survey conducted in 2020 (Figure 28 and Figure 29). It is positive to see an upward trend in responses indicating that board members are aware of the Commissioner's regulation and role in ensuring board members adhere to the body's Code of Conduct.

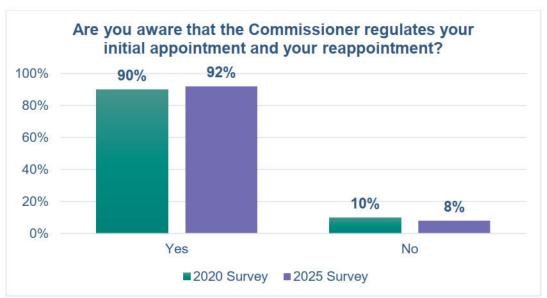


Figure 28 Respondent awareness of ESC regulation compared to 2020 Time Commitment survey.

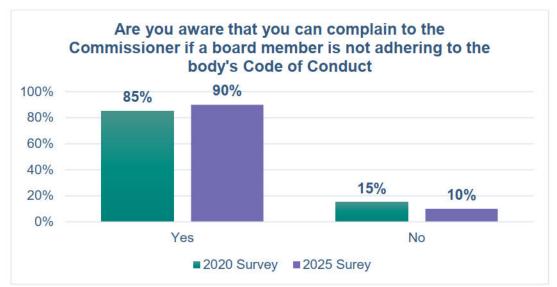


Figure 29 Respondent awareness of ESC complaints process compared to 2020 Time Commitment survey.

Respondents were asked, if they have concerns about board culture, whether these have been reported to anyone. It is encouraging that 79% indicated that they had no concerns about board culture, and 13% indicated that, where they did have concerns, they had reported these to someone.

Some comments left in relation to the question 'What difference do you think that [regulation] makes to the conduct of board members' included views that regulation, both in relation to the Code of Practice for Ministerial Appointments and the Code of Conduct applicable to each body, can act as an incentive for proper behaviour, though largely the comments revealed that board members have an awareness and dedication to their responsibilities and behaviours, and should be acting ethically without incentive.



It defines clearly that the process is conducted in line with the key principles and to ensure that those appointed are people who will adhere to the Code and deliver the best service possible to ensure the public body delivers the highest standards.

.....

Removes any chance of nepotism or appointing inappropriately qualified persons.

Ensures there is an agreed, Scotland wide, standard and principles. Compliance.

.....

It ensures that appointments / reappointments are made on the basis of merit and role compatibility rather than on the basis of favour.



A full selection of quotes from this question are available in <u>Appendix 3</u> and it is encouraging that respondent views reflect the intentions and meaning of the Commissioner's role; to ensure that appointments are fair, open, transparent and made on the basis of merit and that board members are evidently aware that they are able to raise concerns about conduct of other members, and be complained about when it appears that the body's Code of Conduct is not being followed.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This research sought to establish the following objectives:

- Establish whether from the perspective of people appointed, the role descriptions included in applicant information packs are accurate. Expectations and treatment (e.g. time commitment, remuneration, support going into the role, reappointments, and board culture) should be consistent from applicant pack to appointment meeting the principles of respect, openness, transparency and integrity.
- Understand the impact of certain aspects of these roles such as time commitment, remuneration and expenses and whether these can create barriers to taking up these roles for people from currently under-reflected groups; and
- Explore the extent to which the Commissioner's statutory functions are understood.

Overall, the responses to the survey conducted by the Commissioner and the focus groups run on his behalf demonstrate that Scotland's public appointees are motivated, engaged and passionate about the work that they do and the bodies they represent. On a surface level they appear to demonstrate that the process for appointing, inducting and supporting board members is generally working well – due to this general satisfaction and motivation, and the survey results before they have been broken down into specific groups. It would be fair to assert however, in light of the evidence from this research, that this is not entirely the case.

The research findings reveal that the reality of board work is different to what is advertised in applicant packs. This is particularly so in relation to the expected time commitment of public appointees, which was of significant concern to most of our participants. Participants were also evidently engaged and motivated to participate in public life despite low levels of or no remuneration but did indicate a disparity between the time commitment required and the remuneration offered. To ensure full transparency and fairness to applicants, in line with the principle of Respect for applicants, the remuneration and expenses policies and procedures should be clearly communicated at the beginning of the appointments process and in applicant packs.

Transparency of process, and so transparency of information provided to potential applicants at the beginning of the appointments process, is vital to ensuring that expectations and treatment are consistent from applicant to appointment. In turn, the impact to diversity, achieving wider diversity of thought and on good governance and decision making, is clear.

Applicant packs under-reflecting the time commitment required for board roles, or packs that are not fully or appropriately transparent about the additional work often required once appointments are made, will have a significant impact on appointees who will experience inconsistencies in their expectations from application to appointment. At worst, this may result in appointees leaving their positions earlier than they would otherwise have done. We should also acknowledge that although 91% of our participants felt as motivated today in role as they did when they first joined, our research did not include those who have been

public appointees and since left their positions. Clarity of what is to be expected in post – including an accurate description of the time commitment, remuneration, expenses and financial support offered (and how to obtain this support), and appropriate consideration of support that a new appointee can expect to receive once in post – will all aid and enhance the accessibility of public appointments. It will also reduce the costs and resource implications of more regular appointment activity being needed to replace those who have come on board with different expectations as to what is required of them. As such, a series of recommendations has been made throughout this report, with a view to improving the accessibility and transparency of the current appointments process. These have the added benefit of reducing unnecessary costs resulting from individuals leaving boards if their expectations, based on applicant packs, are different to the reality of working on board.

Finally, the levels of engagement in our research from chairs / vice chairs and members of the Health and Social Care directorate also provided unique perspectives into their experiences of public appointments. For the chairs / vice chairs that we engaged with, the expectations placed on them, particularly regarding availability, appears to result in added pressure and increased time commitment in the role. A need to adequately invest in and discuss specific induction, training and support needs for chairs / vice chairs was also identified during the research – this may be particularly true for individuals moving into chair or vice chair roles from a member role position, and it should not be assumed that a chair does not have development or support needs, particularly for those who might be new to public body governance.

For appointees in the Health and Social Care directorate, increased time commitment in relation to additional duties emerged as a significant concern. Where appropriate the concerns raised by these groups have been addressed in the overall recommendations set out in this report.

The full recommendations made throughout the report are detailed below for ease:

Recommendation: The Scottish Ministers should review the findings in this report, including all comments made by current board chairs and members, and provide a public response, inclusive of any actions that it intends to take as a result.

Recommendation: Time Commitment Review. Scottish Ministers to review the current time commitment of board members and assess how accurately this is reflected in applicant packs. The Scottish Ministers should work with Boards to conduct a time commitment review; to ensure that applicant packs clearly outline the expected time commitment of individual roles, and to provide support to selection panels so that they are suitably able to identify and establish the expected time commitment during the appointment planning phase.

Recommendation: Scottish Government to review the applicant pack template to ensure there is appropriate space and prompts for selection panels to consider, review and communicate any additional work, such as attendance at sub committees, so that this is clear to prospective applicants.

Recommendation: Scottish Ministers to work with Board Chairs to ensure that appropriate discussions are taking place when the time commitment of a public appointee changes at

any point during their appointment term, including discussions concerning sub-committee attendance.

Recommendation: Remuneration and Financial Support Awareness. Scottish Ministers to review how remuneration and financial support is communicated in applicant packs so that, from application to appointment, board members are aware of the amount and frequency of pay, how pay decisions are made, how expenses are reimbursed and what financial support is available to appointees. Ministers might consider developing a separate pay policy for public appointees, clearly setting out the expectations for board roles (including any expenses) to help achieve a greater level of clarity for board members, and potential board members if linked to in applicant packs.

Recommendation: Scottish Government to review the current applicant pack template and to update this so that selection panels can clearly communicate the support that will be offered to successful candidates once in post.

Recommendation: As part of the induction process, the Scottish Ministers to work with board chairs to consider the early discussions that take place with new appointees, to highlight how skills or training needs will be identified, and to ensure that potential applicants are aware that these discussions will be available to them once appointed. Where the appointment is for a chair position, the Scottish Government should ensure these early discussions are held directly with the new appointee.

Recommendation: Scottish Government to review the 2017 Appraisals Guidance document with a view to updating this where appropriate and ensuring that board members have access to it.

Recommendation: Scottish Government to consider how to ensure the appointments feedback process provides individuals with information on how closely they met the criteria for selection, assisting with the self-identification of areas that they can improve their skills and knowledge in once appointed.

Recommendation: Scottish Government to consider establishing a process for analysing and understanding reasons for individuals resigning before their term is complete, and of those who decline offers of a second term. This could be similar to an exit interview and is with a view to understanding how many and who might be withdrawing from public appointments because expectations and treatment once in role are different to what was outlined in the applicant pack.

Appendix 1

Code basis for our research

The current <u>Code of Practice for Ministerial Appointments</u>, published in March 2022, includes several provisions covering the key elements of this research. These are detailed below.

Induction and Training

The Code of Practice states that *I6 Applicants will be provided with information on the development and support that they will receive if they are successfully appointed* and *I7 Those who are appointed will be asked to provide feedback on their induction and training.* The associated <u>statutory guidance on the Code</u> states that *2.14 The principle of "Respect" means that the applicant journey from application to, where successful, appointment and induction should be a positive experience* and that *14.2 The Code also requires those who are appointed to be asked to give feedback on their induction and training. It is anticipated that the information generated in this way will be used to improve over time on the induction and training provided.*

Time Commitment

The Code of Practice states that the appointment plan *C1 must include an accurate* assessment of the time commitment required to fulfil the role and that (Annex 2) 3. Publicity must give an accurate assessment of the necessary time commitment and will state whether the position is remunerated; if remunerated, the amount will be indicated. Publicity must also advise which out of pocket expenses will be reimbursed for people who are appointed.

Remuneration

On remuneration, the Code of Practice states that the appointment plan *must include an* accurate assessment of the time commitment required to fulfil the role and of the remuneration and expenses paid, where applicable.

Appraisal

On appraisal, the Code of Practice states, in relation to the reappointments process, that a member may be reappointed if: *F1* (*i*) the member's performance has been properly appraised as being effective during the current term and the member has been given the opportunity to demonstrate that they have the appropriate skills, knowledge and experience and other attributes required.

Reappointments

On reappointments, the Code of Practice states that F1 The Scottish Ministers may reappoint a board member to the same position or extend a member's appointment term provided that: i. the member's performance has been properly appraised as being effective during the current term and the member has been given the opportunity to demonstrate that they have the appropriate skills, knowledge and experience and other attributes required ii. the reappointment or extension will continue to meet the board's needs for the period concerned 14 iii. the member's total period of appointment will not exceed 8 years. The

statutory guidance on the Code states that 12.4 For reappointments, the ministerial decision to reappoint should be made and communicated to the board member or chair concerned no later than 13 weeks before the reappointment is due to end. This is a firm target date and failure to comply with it will be considered to be a failure to comply with the Code's provisions. For full details of the Code's requirements on reappointments, please click <a href="https://example.com/here-new-ministerial-new-ministeria

General

The Code of Practice requires Scottish Ministers to undertake activity during the appointments process to increase the diversity of Scottish public body boards. It states that B1 When considering any appointment activity, the Scottish Ministers will take into account the effectiveness of the board and how well it is functioning. They should consider the current composition of the board in terms of the attributes and the diversity of its membership. Attributes may include skills, knowledge, experience – including lived experience – values, perspectives, backgrounds – including socio-economic background and sector worked in – and geographical location. Diversity will be considered in relation to the protected characteristics of the current members, to the extent that that is known, in comparison with the protected characteristics of the population of Scotland or the region served by the board as appropriate. The Scottish Ministers will then determine what skills, knowledge, experience and other attributes are needed by the board for it to perform its statutory functions and to do so economically, efficiently and effectively.

Diversity basis for our research

The 2022 Code is also grounded in a commitment to the making of appointments that reflect Scotland's diverse population. The Code outlines that *it is in everyone's interests that these important public bodies are led by people who have a diverse mix of the most appropriate skills, knowledge, experience and other relevant attributes, who act with integrity and commitment and who are reflective of Scotland's geography, demography and breadth of backgrounds and insights. The reason for this is that that there is substantial research to confirm that diversity of thought and viewpoint aligns with effective governance. It is therefore important to the Commissioner to understand what some of the current barriers and challenges to appointment are, and what those barriers and challenges might be once in post. This research seeks to understand the perspectives of those who have experienced the public appointments process and who are currently in post and informs wider research into this topic being undertaken by the Commissioner which is outlined below.*

The Commissioner also has the statutory function of preparing and publishing a strategy for ensuring that appointments and recommendations for appointment are made by the Scottish Ministers in a manner which encourages equal opportunities. That strategy, Diversity Delivers, was first published in September 2008. The strategy included the following recommendation:

"A4. Research the impact of

- · board meeting times and arrangements
- remuneration on the number and diversity of applications."

Ahead of the Commissioner's plans to refresh this strategy in 2025/26, it is important for us to understand current accessibility concerns to board positions which board members/ aspiring board members face to better inform the future of Scotland's public appointments diversity strategy.

The Code also includes the principle of Respect, which states that "Applicants and ultimately the people appointed to boards are integral to the good governance of Scotland's public bodies. Applicants will be accorded the respect that they are due for their interest and their efforts and appointees for their contribution to public life." All candidates for a board appointment are required to pass a fit and proper person test. This includes ensuring that the "applicant agrees to apply the Principles of Public Life in Scotland and be bound by the Members' Code of Conduct for the body concerned."

Assessing whether board culture is aligned with the principles of public life in Scotland will assist us in understanding whether the application of the fit and proper person test has been applied effectively. We know from research conducted in other spheres and context that poor culture can also be a barrier to diversity, as well as an inhibitor to strong governance and decision making.

Appendix 2

Demographic Data of Respondents

Providing demographic data	Women	Under 50	Minority Ethnic	Disabled	LGBT
74%	52%	13%	4%	21%	8%

First time appointees	Reappointed	Chairs & Vice Chairs	Members		Post Pandemic
48%	52%	38%	62%	48%	52%



Appendix 3

Selection of survey participant comments

Do you feel as motivated in your role now as you did when you first started?

Time commitment expected greater than advertised and I applied for one Board and find myself on 3 [Listed]. I think the advertisements have changed as I provided feedback that this should be clear. There is no protected time for whistleblowing so this is in addition to all other aspects of the role.

Funding cuts and lack of long term base funding

As time goes on there becomes a feeling of 'deja vu'. I think this due to numerous chairs and interim chairs and also a large turnover of members. It's difficult to stick to the plan.

The current financial challenges appear unresolvable in the long term

Board has lost its way, and is unstable and not wanting to learn from previous experience - very dominant chair and chief executive who inhibit board members contribution

The volume of work required without adequate time or sufficient numbers of non exec coupled with my board being in special measures has led to frustration and reduction in motivation. Also despite raising this on numerous occasions was until recently ignored.

I have found it impossible to give the role what it needs given my other commitments (job, children etc). The problems in the NHS are significantly bigger than the problems we as NEDs can control. It feels sometimes slightly like rearranging deckchairs on the titanic.

Impossible to deliver adequate service in current financial climate

I'm looking forward to the term coming to an end. Initially I found the role interesting and rewarding and believed I was helping the organisation improve, because of the experience and insight I bring. Don't get me wrong, there have been significant development/changes, but I feel a 6 year term is probably slightly too long as I am now beginning to feel I contribute less (because most things are working well) and I do believe everyone has a 'sell by date' and new blood is a good thing.

However, at times I am frustrated by too much institutional process and a lack of focus on the main purpose of the organisation

In terms of degree of motivation, it is similar. In terms of what motivates me, it is entirely different

Workload is massive and far beyond expectations

Change is needed but both the desire and pace within the Scottish public sector is lacking.

Slow progress and unnecessary time spent on managing unrealistic budgets.

Do you feel that your board role reflects the role description that was outlined in the applicant pack when you applied?

The time requirement was understated. Did not take account of actual frequency of Board meetings and committees, as well as preparation, training and development.

No mention of three board memberships in application pack when I applied. I also feel uncomfortable with the Charitable Foundation role as there is a conflict of interest with my role on the NHS Board. The SG needs to resolve this quickly.

The role description did not mention the requirement to serve on Integration Joint Boards or the Charitable Health Foundation.



Membership as a non executive board member of an IJB was not covered in any detail within the role descriptor.

In order to do this role effectively it takes longer than the advertised days - and in fact you have to check in regularly to get updates on important issues and therefore its quite a time commitment

As part of a small board the time commitment is beyond that of 7/8 hours per week

the sheer volume of work involved.

A much greater time commitment

But anticipated time commitment of 1 day per week is not realistic

The role is primarily 'holding to account', scrutiny and governance. Which are all important and necessary. There is little (or no) influence on strategy, little stakeholder engagement or influencing of culture. Maybe that's normal but it makes the role less interesting

There are far more aspects to the role that are key to its successful fulfilment.

The role is similar but the time has increased

Did the induction process meet your expectations and needs?

the role was new, there was little understanding/acknowledgement and even dismissal of the board initially about the need for the role, and treating the new member disrespectfully. It was not surprising as the board chairs were keen to have control. I have no reason to be diplomatic in such matters as a public servant and a clinician. Also, other colleagues in the role from other boards seemed out of depth at times which would have allowed the chairs to be in control with corporate mindset rather than promoting transparency, minimising risks and embedding culture of honesty in clinical service.

Yes, in the main as I have served on a number of Boards in my previous role as a CEO in the public sector.

In parts it was very good but I've found it a bit patchy as there are still aspects of the work of the board and organisation that I'm not clear about.

Induction was limited as coincided with start of pandemic.

A day session on a range of directorate functions and operational activity. It did nothing to strengthen how NEMs could shape strategy and the processes underpinning it - an issue only now being addressed. There has been an historic gap between national strategies and performance and the day to day governance and how NEMs can shape and influence these

I feel there should have been a more focused induction allowing new members to ask questions along with introductions to executive team. Time commitment advertised is a lot less than you actually undertake. Time commitment advertised needs to be more accurately reflected. Time commitment is easily double that advertised.

It would have been useful to have better direction in terms of scheduling meetings with executives.

Some of the Mandatory training was not pertinent to my role

Yes, given the circumstanced as I joined the board immediately prior to lockdown. Clearly I would have benefitted further from more face to face interaction.

No clear direction or training provided



My induction was cut short due to lockdown in 2020

It was some time before the SG 'On Board' could be arranged - as the initial training/induction.

National induction was poor. Local Board induction was minimal - I was the only new Board member staring at the time that I did and was left to get on with things.

Much reduced induction due to pandemic when priorities of the staff were elsewhere.

A lot was on line and would have preferred more perron contact

It partly met it but more insight to the operational processes and more preparation for the work on sub committees would have been helpful

Some of the really basic skills, such as finance for public boards, audit and risk should be offered/mandated at the outset There was no discussion around my actual skills and understanding. I started during the pandemic (Oct 2020) and everything was online which will have impacted how the board communicated and learned but still, more could have been done to check in with new members and discuss gaps and needs. I expect that this differs considerably between boards and chairs

I didn't have set expectations - I find I am still learning things I maybe should've been told about at induction

It took place shortly after appointment at a point when I didn't know what questions I should be asking. Staged approach would be better.

It was poorly designed, not delivered in an organised manner and not encouraging for participating. This has dramatically changed for new members now I am pleased to report

It was too little. The induction process has been improved since that time.

See my answers above to Q13- more could have been provided

Information on organisational policies seemed limited.

The expectation was that I would already be familiar with the work of the organisation. Induction was a folder with certain information on remuneration, policies, fire safety etc for me to read at my leisure. There was an absence of induction on working practices, the culture of the body, appraisal or reappointment.

The Board was newly set up when I joined it. No criticism on the lack of induction at that point. There is induction now for new members.

Yes and no - it was during lockdown so was one-to-one entirely online. Very intensive series of presentations - would have benefited from opportunity to discuss, reflect, meet people on the board.

Is there any training required to undertake your role that isn't currently provided?

I would have welcomed some face to face training for my whistleblowing role. I completed the online modules and that was the extent of my training. I received a brief handover from the outgoing whistleblowing champion.

The organisation responds positively to any requests from the Board for additional training.

Unclear on which organisational training applies to Board members.

We need to do more on humanist and human rights approaches to accompany equality, diversity and inclusion.



Far more development on an ongoing basis than when I first joined.

More on how a board operates and how individuals can really voice their opinions/thoughts properly

I'm not sure; I have been appointed to Chair a sub-Committee of the board and I wonder if there is any training which could help with this.

On line Non Executive modules form NSS

Role of being endowments charity trustee

I am a risk professional but it is only the chairs of risk committees that seemingly go to the central meetings. It would be good to have a periodic invite to remain aware of public sector risk issues.

Greater training around EDI especially Anti-Racism training is very much needed and long overdue - I mentioned this at a Board seminar and everyone in the room (Execs and Non-Execs) agreed that they are not comfortable talking about Racism - given the challenges facing BME communities and the role of the public sector in alleviating these inequalities I find it shocking that Anti-Racism/ EDI training is not mandatory

Training and support much improved

Understanding public finance

it would have been helpful to have handbook on public sector finance processes at a much earlier point. A simple and clear guide to the different types of public body and implications for Board Members roles and responsibilities in the context of the authority and accountability of the body.

It should be clear to appointees that we have a responsibility (and require motivation) to do this for ourselves, spoon feeding is not the answer.

The local, online and national offering now covers the comprehensive range required by the role

Clarity on accountabilities

As chair of clinical governance committee, I think NHS Boards would benefit from giving some guidance on major clinical issues to NXD's from non-clinical backgrounds prior to their dealing with clinical governance matters, especially if they are to sit as members of clinical governance committees.

Been asked to chair a board committee and as part of my development into that role I will seek out other chairs for a mentor

Understanding finance. Tailored training relative to my public body - SG provided induction tried to cover a large range of types of bodies.

As mentioned in relation to induction, training on working practices and processes in the workplace would be useful.

I haven't had formal training for the role. Training on the public sector equality duty, and equalities more generally could be useful for all Boards.

More of the budget and risks process would have been helpful from the outset

Training was part of induction I guess.

There does not appear to be any further 'On Board' training after the initial session. It might be helpful if members could meet up/network/ refresh after a couple of years to share experiences and hear of new matters (e.g. perhaps Audit Scotland).

I'm not sure what training I would expect but I suppose I have struggled rather with not entirely knowing what I was 'meant to do'. The fact that the job is very much one that you effectively end up designing yourself I found quite difficult and it would have been helpful to have more structure, particularly at the beginning.

Its worth noting that the complexity of the body and the role means that a board member requires some period of time before they are fully able to contribute, regardless of the details induction process.

Training is minimal, limited to areas such as diversity only

Really this depends on the previous experience of the new member, in my case having previously served on another health board and having had experience as an executive board member I did not require the level of training and induction than might be the case if I had joined without my previous experience

financial understanding

I have noted that a good number of fellow board members just don't understand how the public sector works, including sponsor divisions, Accountable Officer role, Scottish public finance manual, Treasury green book, staff remuneration (civil service pay policy) etc.... luckily I was a Senior Civil Servant so understand all this and have been told my experience and understanding is 'invaluable'

An introduction into how the body operates.

Like more about finance

I think I would benefit from some training around understandings how the organization set out their budget information. However, I think it is my responsibility to pick that up with the organization, as it could be delivered by staff to board members.

NES has been working with the NHS boards to identify training needs and gaps so this may be helpful

its been much better in recent months and more plans to improve

What are your views on the quality of training currently provided?

I am satisfied with the current training as there is ongoing programme that reviews and improves the training / induction package.

NES are currently developing a package for new Chairs and have introduced an Aspiring Chair programme for those seeking to become Chairs in the future

The standard of training is generally good, but navigating the TURAS Learn platform is challenging - especially where so many courses have similar titles. It would be helpful to give courses numbers similar to OU courses to avoid ambiguity.

I didn't receive any formal training

Some "mandatory" training is not relevant to my role on the board eg manual handing

Generally good, but much of it is not appropriate to my role ands does not consider my previous attainment.

Locally it was very good. From a sectoral or SG perspective it was non existent.

Training since induction has been very limited



Depends where you get it from.

Good training available via TURAS

OK - induction was great. Scot Gov provided Public appointments training was ok/poor

Mixed - depending on who is delivering

Mostly very good, and thorough. Not very keen on online self completion training modules but they are convenient.

A very good mix of seminars, workshops and other developmental opportunities are provided

A lot of training is provided - not sure how it is identified as not always what is needed and is a big time commitment

I have not really experienced much training, beyond my induction, to date.

No negative issues - plenty offered - both compulsory and discretionary.

Training provided was quite extensive although it was a lot of information to be given at one time so expectations need to be clear as to when a new Board member is expected to get through all of it.

The training I have undertaken has been very impressive and comprehensive

It seems very reactive

Turas has great resources on board development and other useful materials. Board development sessions are usually worthwhile.

It covers what is needed - but correctly it also expects the board member to act with initiative to find appropriate training.

Were you asked to provide feedback on your induction and training? If yes, what was the outcome of this feedback.

Changes in induction and a buddy system

Improved induction now in place

I made it clear about my disappointment but nothing happened.

Tweaks to the process for future intakes.

It was shared with the Succession Planning Committee.

I was not asked for feedback but gave it anyway and as a result an induction book was developed

Review of training programme

Those involved in delivery are good at listening and adjusting training accordingly.

We are always invited to provide feedback on training and development, which is generally we received.

Do you feel any additional support should be made available to undertake your role?

A formal training package together with a mentor programme for the initial months

I think most of the support that is required is there, but the signposting could be better. Formal monitoring is available, but by the time I knew it was there, the moment had passed and I had got



by using informal means including face-to-face conversations with my fellow board chairs. This is less easy now than it used to be because we mainly meet by Teams.

Ongoing support from SG for networks, action learning sets and succession planning

I think a formal mentoring or pairing arrangement between college chairs would help and support new chairs and provide a source of ongoing support between sector colleagues

Chairs should have a common group - an annual meeting, Teams page or email distribution page and a change to discuss issues together. I also believe that dedicated finance training re public sector finances (when to return money if expected to be under budget, for eg) would be useful

There needs to be more support for chairs.it is a challenging role and often there is no one to support you. Everyone is busy and you don't want to add any additional work for colleagues

Clear budget for personal development training for me and board members would be useful.

Possibly some additional training in relation to chairing a sub-committee.

Risk committee members should have more central briefings.

I think a secretary for Board members would be helpful

I would have appreciated a bit more personal support when I took on the chair role. Maybe one person to contact with any questions.

Perhaps a buddy system for first year

See above - briefing on major clinical issues for lay people prior to their participation in governance discussions around clinical matters would be very helpful.

Please provide any additional comments on the induction and training process that you feel are relevant.

Everyone has different learning styles and more accommodating for that would be helpful. Most training / inductions are based on the organisation preference or practice. A programme of mentorship between board members on their last year and new members would be useful to allow for continuity of knowledge and expertise as well as building new members confident quickly. It also provides for a culture of cooperative working. Would also be useful to shadow Teams and services to allow for an in-depth understanding of the work and challenges. This helps to make better strategic decisions.

There is extensive training and induction process. This takes up a significant amount of time and much more than I was expecting; coupled with the number of meetings I have to attend the hours of work for the board is substantially more than 1 day per week that was advertised.

As a board member in another organisation I had two dedicated half day induction sessions - something like that would have been very useful.

The feedback on the training and induction was more informal I think-the culture is very supportive at [body] and I felt that if I had any concerns I could have easily fed them back.

I believe the induction process is much improved now. I had previous experience as a public appointee and suspect my training needs reflected this.

Am generally satisfied with all aspects but do find that the time commitment advertised is about 50% too little to fulfil the role adequately. The remuneration could well be more generous but doesn't deter me from maintaining my input.



It is almost impossible for board members in this NDPB to contribute meaningfully without far better planned and delivered training and CPD.

Given the huge variability in how Chairs work, a standard template for them might be useful

Does the current time commitment feel manageable with your other responsibilities? (Such as employment or caring responsibilities.)

Yes. But I don't think it's something that I can maintain indefinitely.

Usually OK, but occasionally creates unanticipated pressures.

At times, I do not feel that uncommitted days are respected. For example, being asked to join a short meeting for an hour maybe an hour for those employed by the organisation but prevents me doing other activities before and after.

Some meetings do changes (minimum). Due to involvement of sub cttees some months have much higher input of time.

My circumstances (retired, no caring commitments) make it possible to cover the existing time requirements

Its not a linear consistent commitment There is significant variation between months as regards workload/tome commitment. Overall the time commitment exceeds the advertised number of days per month

Only because I am semi-retired and what other work I undertake, I can fit around the demands of the appointment. I do not think the role could be undertaken by anyone in a full time role unless they had a high degree of flexibility from their employer.

Very important that things like Board meeting dates etc are set well in advance (and requests to give time to ad hoc activities also provided with maximum notice) - this makes it possible to fit the commitment in alongside another part-time role.

Can be very difficult to get a work life balance

It currently is costing me money to fulfil my role properly. This is due to my travel time not being renumerated. The cost of living crisis has made this a real problem for me since covid.

It does feel manageable but only because I don't have any other employment or caring responsibilities right now. I am keen to be able to take holidays though. It can be challenge fitting days away around a busy board schedule. I do sometimes have to remind myself that I am not an employee but am only "contracted" to work six days a month. I think because I don't have other commitments I have a tendency to not say no to requests on my time.

I do manage it but it is challenging as dates / times keep changing and additional meetings keep being added at short notice. I have another job and caring responsibilities which I have to fit around.

This is a huge disappointment as I carefully calculated I could meet the commitment of one day per week. This is causing me serious issues in my other working life. It seems to me this role is geared to people who are fully retired who have more flexibility. If so, you deprive yourself of diversity on your Boards.

Increasingly difficult to sustain due to increase in expectation. Less of an issue in years 1-4. More of an issue during Covid then over last 2 years with significant changes in the leadership team and chair of board.



I really struggle. I have a huge day job, which provides excellent background for my board role, but equally means the massive vol of work associated with the board role is too much

Have you felt any pressure to take on additional board work?

In the last year non exec's have been expected to attended additional committees, development sessions etc at board and IJB. It's been difficult to manage. If my 8 years were not up I would have to give up the board. I have loved my time doing this so it's not all negative

Self generated probably, but the Chairs role requires me to demonstrate leadership from time to time and the present funding crisis in the sector has made this an obligation.

There is no direct pressure but commitment to public service means one cannot let the board down

Individual circumstances are not considered sensibly in my experience. Over an appointment term it probably evens out across the membership but there is definitely pressure from the Chair to do more.

To undertaken the role adequately additional time is needed. The pressure comes from myself and is never forced upon me.

The problem is that by not doing extra you will short or be ill prepared for certain committees so you end up doing it because you are passionate about the work and want the best for the public

The workload is such that everyone has to "do their bit" to enable the organisation to deliver

I have to be very flexible with my time and work my two days over the entire week, but I try very hard to remain within my two days as I also have caring responsibilities and do not want to overstep into executive functions. It balances out over the month to the two days.

Conversely, the Chair is concerned I do too much and all the pressure is from a desire to contribute meaningfully

Has your view on the significance of remuneration for your current position changed over time? Please provide a reason for your answer.

Two points: - in some cases there is a loss of income where employers consider your attendance to public appointments as 'unpaid leave' events. - with the cost of living, the remuneration is now vital in order to participate and to do so over an extended period.

It is not a main driver but it seems totally at odds with the level of responsibility that NHS Chairs and non-executive members are remunerated at the lowest level across the public sector. The role is at least as important as that of other emergency services and the low level of remuneration prevents Boards from attracting a more diverse group of people from all sectors of society because they cannot afford the time commitment for such a low return

I have committed myself to public service and I'm proud of what I do, but I did reach a point where it felt like my good will being taken a loan of. This has recently been redressed, to an extent, by an increase in remuneration.

If you were to calculate the number of hours in line with the salary, the salary is very low for the expertise and skills required of a board member.

My view on the importance of this has changed as the level of responsibility is enormous and it would be impossible to do any additional work in the remaining time

I think the remuneration is very low but knew this at the outset and was willing to support a public body for the greater good. However, the level of work to be undertaken and the time commitment required is not reflected in the salary.

Pay is low. Very difficult to claim expenses

Recent uplift and classification of non executive remuneration I think better reflects role and demands.

Remuneration not main motivation

Just slight change. I'm aware of quite a wide discrepancy between the daily rate paid for my role and a similar role i.e. my remuneration is considerably lower. It's not a major issue - more one of being unsure of the justification of the different rates.

It is not highly remunerated for the expectation of the role

Need to be remunerated for the work that you contribute to. Requires commitment and dedication. Although the role that I have is not driven by money

It should be better remunerated

My original impression was that the remuneration was not great but acceptable - not a motivating factor. Now it can feel like the commitment needed is taken for granted (not by the organisation).

I do this as part of public service/to give back. The stretch beyond one day per week on average is compromising my ability to deliver my business. That has financial implications for me.

Yes. I feel that it is unfair that certain appointments are remunerated and others are not.

What impact, if any, do you feel that remuneration has on the work of the board?

Creates a greater sense of responsibility (than non remunerated / discretionary volunteering)

For me it ensures I am totally committed to delivering and prioritising the work of the Board and to striving to do my very best. I suspect for others that is similar.

Remuneration means boards get a much wider range of people than if it was a voluntary role.

Most of us do it when we have other well paid jobs or are retired.

I would imagine board members would devote more time to preparation and might result in a more diverse board from wider socio-economic backgrounds.

It does make me feel valued but apart form that it does not I feel impact the work of the board.

I am not sure that remuneration is a significant factor for NEDs...certainly not for me although it was pleasing to note that the additional time commitment and workload was recognised.

Most of those involved are there because they are keen to contribute but there is a feeling that we are not adequately paid for what we do.

Do you think the level of remuneration you receive for your role is appropriate and proportionate to the role that you undertake and its responsibilities?

This area needs a deal of review given the split in expectations for senior NEMs who have much greater time commitments and responsibilities from new inductees.

Remuneration not linked to the level of the work expected



The remuneration is fixed irrespective of the amount of work undertaken so the remuneration is half that you expect based on time commitment advertised. Also, the role on the board and level of responsibility as well as accountability is not nearly reflected in the remuneration package.

Needs to be less hours or more money - not that the money is my driver

Difficult to answer; it's obviously not a competitive rate or proportionate to the level of responsibility but just about enough to attract good candidates.

Based on the experience needed and the time commitment actually expended, it isn't.

For reason above. The time commitment is way more onerous than advertised and impacts on the rest of my week. Board/committee papers out one week before the meeting mean I can't always get ahead of the game in terms of doing the prep

I'm not doing it for the money - but - if one was then the daily rate is very significantly below the market rate for the time being/ skills / experiences being provided.

For me yes as it not about money , but the day rate is very low for the standard of individual required and so it is always clear that everyone doing the role wants to see the region thrive . They are motivated by wanting to put something back not by the cash.

The recent increase is extremely welcome. I don't think it's enough when broken down into an hourly rate considering the real number of hours worked though.

I think it fits the time, effort and expertise required

Now it is, but this was just increased in December 2024.

Not clear why there is so much variation across public bodies involved in similar board roles.

Do you claim for your expenses? If you wish, please give a reason for your answer.

My expenses are mainly small and travel related - I am happy to cover these myself.

Because they are direct costs that I wouldn't otherwise incur if I weren't required to travel to meetings

Not usually for incidentals only if away for more than 1day. I m advised by the board secretary as to what I am entitled to

Cannot not do so given the cost of fuel etc

If you don't claim, you're effectively paying tax to attend meetings. Transport isn't cheap.

I do claim for mileage and public transport (although there is the benefit of my senior railcard which I cover the cost of). I am concerned that a dangerous precedent could be set if board members don't claim and this would have a detrimental effect on board diversity. I would always advise colleagues to claim for caring responsibilities for the reasons outlined above.

Travel is extensive, it would be very expensive for me to bear the cost.

Travel only - I don't claim for childcare though I really value the culture which says that I could if I had to.



I enjoy the role and feel that the organisation needs to keep as much of it's money to enhance services and my company or I can afford to cover them

The significant ones, but day to day meals and travel I do not claim.

I claim for mileage and feel it is appropriate to do so. I have not claimed for anything else.

I don't like paperwork and the amount is nominal.

I live some distance from the office and to simply meet expenses out of my own pocket would be unreasonable.

Do you think the current arrangement for appraisals on your board is sufficient for assessing your contribution to the work of the board in terms of your skills, knowledge, experience and any other attributes you may have?

It depends on the conversation with the appraiser and the pro forma given the current exercise. I already know the expectations and what performance and development should look like. I would also prefer additionally a 360 degree feedback from colleagues at least

The Chair is excellent in conducting appraisals which explore not just performance but also development and motivation

this varies depending on the Chairs - some have been excellent giving clear direction and outcomes and others not so much. Unusually i have had 5 chairs in my time

Very arbitrary process - I don't get any feedback on my performance

My chair is very supportive but also gives constructive and helpful feedback to assist me in growing and developing in the role.

Biased by person undertaking the appraisal, very opaque procedure.

Generally OK but difficult to get person doing the appraising to give an open comment on how well they feel you are undertaking the role.

My experience of appraisals is that those providing them are not always willing or able to engage in a reflective conversation and that more often, use the opportunity to talk about issues around the organisation or themselves. This has not been an issue for me as I am an experienced professional and it may be that there are genuinely no issues to raise with me, but I always welcome a reflective discussion.

It worked very well for me in my position and with my commitment and enthusiasm. Whether the same can be said for everyone I doubt

Appraisals should be completed by the relevant cabsec/minister - and not by a civil service director

The appraisal is not useful at all...on any level and it is a painful process for myself as well as the Chair

I do not feel my appraisal is sufficient. I would like there to be greater scope relating the strategic direction of the Board, my role as line manager of the CEO, and opportunities for me to understand my next steps and succession planning for the board.



It would be helpful to see the actual write ups.

360 process asks the same questions of people, however they work with you - it would be better if it considered the role of the person answering the questions

It's variable.

I think Non-Executive format could be improved and the 360 feedback for Chairs from Stakeholders needs review, the questions aren't appropriate as they assume you see the person in their Chair role.

It could be refined and evolved further.

Would you consider reappointment if offered the opportunity? If no, why not?

Will depend on other time commitments at the time reappointment is on offer.

I am totally enjoying the role and if I ignore time/remuneration disparity I would consider reappointed. At present unsure however because of the disparity.

I am so new into my role that I think it is too early to consider a decision around this.

The volume of the work and the fact I cannot claim the remuneration are huge issues. It's worth saying that even though I do not collect the remuneration, it is attributed to me and I therefore am paying NI and income tax on the remuneration. I feel very upset about that.

Yes in general, but the time commitment and pay make me slightly unsure, despite how interesting and added value the role is.

What has been your experience of the reappointments process?

Have found staff helpful in guidance terms and the process has been promptly concluded

Both from a personal point of view and from the experience of seeking the reappointment of my Board members, the Public Appointments Team has been excellent. However, I have concerns going forward as I understand that changes in personnel have put pressures into the system

Just starting this process now but welcome the forward planning of working a year ahead of the planned reappointment date

Had an appraisal which counted towards the re-appointment and did not have to do anything else

It was very straightforward. Chair asked if I wanted to continue, I said yes, as long as I retain the sustainability role and he recommended me

How likely would you be to recommend taking up a public body appointment to others? What is the key reason for your answer to the previous question? Those who selected 'Other':

An opportunity to make a difference and break through the discrimination that under representation presents.

There is the potential to make a great contribution to key aspects of Scottish life!

Fulfilment of trying to support improvement



Role comes with a lot of responsibility and accountability. Need to take this on with eyes wide open.

The personal satisfaction from making a positive difference and impact

Need to be totally committed and extremely flexible. Work life balance can be difficult

It wears you down so be prepared to be very very resilient!

Opportunity to challenge / be challenge - new experiences and "giving back".

Demotivation arising from lack of induction, training, performance management or other support. "Thrown in at the deep end"

The overall opportunity to contribute and enjoy the challenge.

...for those who can, its a very rewarding role and honour to contribute at this level to public service

Were there any other aspects of the role that weren't "as advertised", e.g. governance or staffing issues that would have put you off applying if you had known about them in advance?

I have answered No given my current experience, but it will prompt me, in future recruitment/selection processes, to ask more about duties, time commitments etc.

Having sat on many boards I know there are good things and challenging things to manage with staff and other board members. I am came in with my eyes open.

The role has in every way been better than advertised in terms of support and interest

The role is advertised as 1 day a week but its infact 1.5 days spread across the entire week and it makes having any other job alongside it really difficult unless you have complete control of your diary *all the time* Also even though you are only 1 day a week you are still expected to respond to emails as if you are full time there isn't an understanding that this is only 1 day week so therefore cannot answer emails everyday again this lends itself to people who may be retired / not have young kids/ caring responsibilities etc who may possibly be able to do this.

The financial situation for the body has deteriorated due to funding constraints. This does impact the ability of the body to do its work and therefore reduces the satisfaction from the role.

I applied as the advert was specifically looking for someone with infrastructure experience. I felt suitably qualified. Since appointment I feel I've grown into the role of Board member. Nothing since has made me regret applying.

That 95% of the role is just doing your best to make sure the organisation is doing their job rather than any particular strategic, cultural or stakeholder influence. If I only had to attend the standard committees, I would not have accepted reappointment.

IJB involvement. Additional committee commitment required.

Not especially but I believe the breadth and demands of the role are underestimated.

What issues do you feel may impact diversity in terms of people's willingness to apply or to remain on a board?

lack of knowledge/visibility of the Board and bad publicity

Remuneration has to be appropriate (this issue is now being addressed). Time commitment and the flexibility required.

This is a big issue. Accessibility around connectivity particularly digital is a challenge. Travel and support for disabled people is another. 50/50 by 2020 has been addressed. Race and ethnicity is



very difficult where racism is still prevalent for staff/patients/carers/and service users. You need to feel confident in what can be a very disempowering environment.

Possibly timing of meetings rather than time commitment. All meetings are held during office hours.

It is difficult for anyone in full time employment to commit. Most non execs tend to be retired, part time or self employed.

Commitment is very difficult if you are in full time employment or have young family.

The culture is key- whether or not diversity is welcomed and recognised.

For many, the remuneration levels mean a board role is not an option. I previously sat on an NHS board where remuneration levels are even lower and for some this was not a viable option at all.

Are you aware that you can complain to the Commissioner if you believe a board member is not adhering to the body's Code of Conduct? What difference do you think that makes to the conduct of board members?

You indicated that you are aware that the Ethical Standards Commissioner regulates your initial appointment and reappointment. What difference do you think this regulation makes to the appointments process?

Helps to ensure the process is fair and protects politicians and civil servants from being too close to appointments.

Keeps it objective by providing an extra set of eyes, may be useful in Boards where there is some conflict or differences of opinion.

I hope it would enhance fairness, equity and inclusion as well as ensuring high standards in the people appointed to boards.

It ensures that appointments / reappointments are made on the basis of merit and role compatibility rather than on the basis of favour.

It provides an elements of assurance and knowing there are processes in place is important for board chair to access and gain advice.

Provides consistency and rigor and assurance.

A huge difference. It ensures a fair process and adherence to codes of conduct.

It's good to know there is a process there if needed.

Very little. The appointments process is pretty thorough and robust. But the recruitment process fails to bring forward a sufficiently diverse pool of candidates.

Values and ethics are the cornerstone of any democracy hence it is important these standards are upheld for the public to maintain faith in public institutions.

Just ensures top level adherence to ethical standards and supports healthy culture

Hard to say from my side. I hope it means that those undertaking the appointment think hard about the ethics and moral standards of the applicants and consider that when appointing.

Provides a sense check against standards.

ensures the process of recruitment reflects the values and standards espoused by the organisation; weeds out bias and as far as possible ensures a level playing field for all candidates, appropriately recognising diversity in the job planning, skills amongst applicants.

It makes it extremely bureaucratic, time consuming and slow. It put off people who would add value to public bodies and it seems to churn out the same names time and again.

I think that this makes the appointment process more fair and transparent.

I think that it is very important that these appointments are rigorously monitored as they are essentially about ensuring that public money is well spent on the priorities of the government, Adherence to the Nolan Principles of Public Life become increasingly important, particularly given the shifting political landscape across the world.

There is oversight but still an issue in obtaining truly diverse Board membership. The main difference is clear exposition of standards required.

I think this is a critical role as it ensures independence in the appointment of candidates as well as transparency of the recruitment process.

I believe it sets clear ground rules for the accepted behaviour of all Board Members and therefore offers a degree of protection to applicants. We can challenge each other within the agreed standards without fear of being misunderstood.

It provides greater governance.

Provides a degree of independent reference and consistent standard setting across the appointment decisions of a wide range of individuals in different bodies.

I hope it provides an extra layer of governance to the process.

You indicated that you are not aware that the Ethical Standards Commissioner regulates your initial appointment and reappointment. What measures should the Commissioner put in place to ensure that people know that these are regulated appointments?

Better comms

More information provided at application stage.

I am aware about it for my appointment, just not re-appointment. Maybe the commissioner could provide an induction course or pack for all new appointees setting out its role and members' responsibilities.

training and periodic reinforcement training.

It is not front of my mind because the letter comes from the Minister.

Issues every newly appointed member with a statement to that effect.

Include in application pack.

You indicated that you are not aware that you can complain to the Ethical Standards Commissioner regarding a board member's breach of the Code of Conduct. What measures should the Commissioner put in place to ensure that people know that they can raise Code of Conduct complaints with him?

I think that for this issue and others the role of the commissioner in the appointments process and the ongoing role and responsibilities of the commissioner should be much more overt and clearer than it is currently.

Ask for this to be included as mandatory in inductions.

Writing annual to the board and asking them to note it in the minutes would likely help.

Direct contact with newly appointed board members via email containing relevant information.

Visit boards -presentations at board meetings / development sessions.

Wider promotion of this, built in to board development.



Should be part of the induction process and part of the appointments letter form the Commissioner.

What was the pandemic's impact to the time commitment in your role? Please explain your answer.

The online process reduce travel time, which could be used for other personal/professional functions. COVID allowed for review of time commitments and resulted in a reduction of meetings overall.

The shift to on line meetings through Zoom or MS Teams has been helpful but there was a whole lot of additional engagements required to support the Principal and staff in unprecedented times.

Business moved quickly onto remote working so the impact on board members was minimal (in comparison to the exec team and ops staff who had to make significant changes/ adaptations)

My time commitment has spread over more days. Where I would hold all meetings in one place on one day these can now be spread over a number of days using MS Teams, fitting with other people's calendars. The more I think about it the more I really do think this has made a material difference to the call on my time.

Actually during COVID the time commitment as a result of agile governance actually decreased compared with the time prior to COVID as I was not part of the agile governance process. However on a full return to Board duties there was a significant increase in commitments.

I was appointed a month before lockdown, so the impact was immediate. Additional meetings were required during the pandemic

The only change was the time for travel however, this was compensated as meetings increased and there seemed to be no time in between meetings. Again, it appeared there was an expectation that one was available at all times of the day, sometimes evenings and each day of the week.

During Covid there was greater need for regular updating and communication and overall the board enjoyed greater involvement in providing support to the executive.

There was more urgent business to deal with but meetings were all online so travel time vanished.

Do you feel there is a greater expectation to attend meetings online since the pandemic? If yes, why do you feel this is the case?

We all agree that meeting in person is crucial to the specific role we fulfil and that online meeting is a very poor substitute.

Where I may have taken a holiday, avoiding key dates where possible, now I feel a pressure to attend meetings even if I am away. I try very hard not to but it isn't always that simple and I do see colleagues attending meetings from far flung places.

Most meetings now need to include an online option which sometimes works well, but can also make meetings more difficult to manage. Planning meetings do not work well online and in person is always better. When meetings are hybrid they are more difficult.

What was a necessity during the pandemic has become a way of saving money. I believe that sometimes this can be appropriate and effective but that generally, in person meetings are more valuable.

It cuts down on travel expenses and enables greater attendance at meetings.

The presumption is now towards in person but with an online option.

Everyone seems to consider these are easier to attend meetings as no travel is required and that everyone is available.

I do think (especially for people with significant travel commitments) that it is easier to attend on line than in person - and whilst I do not feel this has created a greater expectation of attendance I believe it enables higher attendance rates. I (and others) regularly join meetings remotely whilst honouring other commitments to family or other roles which would not have been possible in the "in person only" era.

As above - culture of hybrid.

Enables wider attendance, reduces costs, increases productivity (though also downsides in quality of transaction at meetings but we have all learned to improve on this through experience).