



Welsh Affairs Committee

Oral evidence: Broadcasting in Wales, HC 620

Wednesday 28 June 2023

Ordered by the House of Commons to be published on 28 June 2023.

[Watch the meeting](#)

Members present: Stephen Crabb (Chair); Virginia Crosbie; Ruth Jones; Ben Lake; Mr Rob Roberts.

Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee member present: Kevin Brennan.

Member of the Senedd and Chair of the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee present: Delyth Jewell.

Questions 402-460

Witnesses

I: Efa Gruffudd Jones, Welsh Language Commissioner, and Lowri Williams, Strategic Director, Welsh Language Commission.

II: Sir John Whittingdale MP, Minister of State for Media, Tourism and Creative Industries, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, and Robert Specterman-Green, Director, Media and Creative Industries, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.

Written evidence from witnesses:

- [Welsh Language Commissioner](#)
- [Department for Culture, Media and Sport](#)



Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Efa Gruffudd Jones and Lowri Williams.

Q402 **Chair:** Good morning, bore da and welcome to this session of the Welsh Affairs Committee, where we are bringing to a conclusion our inquiry into broadcasting in Wales. We are delighted to be joined for the first panel in this session by the Welsh Language Commissioner, Efa Gruffudd Jones—croeso; welcome—and Lowri Williams, the strategic director in the office of the Welsh Language Commissioner.

Right at the start of the session, may I encourage my colleagues to be brief and concise in their questions, and also encourage witnesses to provide concise answers as well? That will help us to get through the material.

We are delighted that as a Committee we are joined this morning by Delyth Jewell, who is a Member of the Senedd and chairs the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee. It is a first, I think, in this Parliament that the Welsh Affairs Committee has had a Member of the Senedd guesting on the Committee, and we are really delighted that you are with us. We are also really pleased that Kevin Brennan continues to guest on the Committee from the Culture, Media and Sport Committee. With that out of the way, I will just point out that we are using Welsh language translation services today, and we are very grateful to the translator for being available. You should all have your headsets and channels prepared.

To start the discussion, could I ask you this, commissioner? As a Committee, we have been looking at the changing broadcasting landscape in Wales and some of the big trends that are going on and that could affect the future of broadcasting. Are these things that you in the commissioner's office look at strategically? What is your sense of how they are impacting on the Welsh language, in a very broad way?

Efa Gruffudd Jones: Bore da a diolch am y cyfle i fod yma heddiw, a diolch am y cyfle hefyd i allu cyfrannu yn Gymraeg. Diolch am hwyluso hynny. Mae darlledu yn Gymraeg yn hollbwysig i ddyfodol y Gymraeg. Mae hynny'n hollol glir i ni sydd yn byw yng Nghymru. Rydyn ni'n gwybod am y dadlau yn y gorffennol am sicrhau darlledu trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg yng Nghymru. Mae e'n sicr yn rhywbeth sydd o flaenoriaeth i swyddfa'r comisiynydd i edrych arno fe.

Mae pwerau'r comisiynydd yn y maes yma yn gyfyngedig iawn, felly beth rydyn ni'n dymuno ei wneud, fel rydyn ni, gobeithio, yn cael y cyfle i'w wneud heddiw, yw dylanwadu ar bolisi y maes darlledu. Rydw i yn gefnogol iawn i strategaeth Cymraeg 2050 Llywodraeth Cymru. Mae'r strategaeth honno'n ei gwneud hi'n glir pa mor bwysig yw darlledu trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg i hyfywedd yr iaith i'r dyfodol. Felly, mae'n bwysig iawn i'r Gymraeg yw'r neges fydden i'n hoffi ei throsglwyddo i chi heddiw.

(Translation) Good morning, and thanks for the opportunity to come here today and to contribute in Welsh. Thank you very much for facilitating



that. Broadcasting in Welsh is vital for the future of the Welsh language. That is absolutely clear to those of us who live in Wales. We know about debates and arguments in the past about ensuring that broadcasting could take place in Welsh in Wales. It is certainly something that is a priority of the commissioner's office to look at.

The commissioner's powers in this area are very limited, so what we wish to do, and hope to have an opportunity to do today, is to influence policy in the arena of broadcasting. I am very supportive of the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 strategy, which makes it clear how important broadcasting through the medium of Welsh is to the future viability of the language. It is very important for the Welsh language: that is the message that I would like to convey to you today.

Q403 Chair: Thank you very much. As the number of channels multiplies, with different platforms available for people to consume media, news and entertainment, do you feel that your ability to shape the practice of broadcasters in the field of the Welsh language is getting less because of the way the digital revolution is unfolding in broadcasting terms?

Efa Gruffudd Jones: Mae dau bwynt yr hoffwn i eu gwneud yn y cyd-destun yma. Y cyntaf yw fy marn bersonol i fel comisiynydd, fod pobl ifanc mor bwysig i ddyfodol y Gymraeg. Rydyn ni'n gwybod bod pobl ifanc yn ymwneud â'r cyfryngau mewn ffordd wahanol iawn i fy nghenedlaeth i. Felly mae hynny nid yn destun pryder, ond efallai yn destun cyfle o ran edrych i'r dyfodol a sut allwn ni sicrhau bod y cyfryngau fel maen nhw'n datblygu, ac fel mae pobl ifanc yn eu defnyddio nhw, yn mynd i fod ar gael yn Gymraeg.

Yr ail bwynt fydden i'n dweud yw, ie, dw i'n cytuno, mae'r ffaith bod cymaint o gyfryngau amrywiol nawr yn ei gwneud hi'n anoddach i sicrhau bod y Gymraeg ar gael ar bob un o'r platfformau hynny, ac mae nawdd cyhoeddus i'r cyfryngau sydd ar gael yn hollbwysig oherwydd bod methiant yn y farchnad o ran darparu cyfryngau trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg. Felly mae ystyried sut allwn ni wneud yn siŵr fod y Gymraeg yn bodoli ar blatfformau o bob math yn y dyfodol yn hollbwysig. Dw i'n gwybod bod S4C yn gwneud gwaith da i'r cyfeiriad yma. Dw i'n meddwl bod yna bethau da yn y mesur arfaethedig fydd, gobeithio, yn caniatáu i S4C wneud mwy, ond hefyd, gobeithio, yn rhoi mwy o gyfle i gynnwys Cymraeg fod yn fwy gwledol, ac yn arbennig yng nghyd-destun pobl ifanc a'r dyfodol, mae hynny'n eithriadol o bwysig.

(Translation) There are two points that I would like to make in this context. The first is my personal view as commissioner that young people are so important for the future of the Welsh language. We know that young people engage with media in a very different way from my generation. That is not a cause for concern, but an opportunity, looking to the future, to ensure that media, as they develop and as young people use them, are available in Welsh.

The second point that I would like to make is that I agree that the fact that so many media are now available makes it more difficult to ensure



that the Welsh language is available on all those platforms, and public funding for the media that is available is vital, because failure in the market in terms of providing media in Welsh is an issue. We have to consider how we can ensure that the Welsh language exists on all types of platforms in the future. That is vital. I know that S4C is doing very good work in this space, and there are very good things in the proposed measure that will permit S4C to do more, and that will hopefully provide an increased opportunity for Welsh content to be more visible, particularly in the context of young people and the future. That is vital.

Q404 Chair: We heard in the course of our inquiry that you have a very good relationship with S4C and BBC Wales—the public service broadcasters in Wales. Do you get to sit down with senior people in Amazon or Netflix to talk about their approach to the Welsh language?

Efa Gruffudd Jones: Na, dw i heb wneud hynny eto, ond byddai diddordeb gyda fi i wneud hynny. Un o'r pethau dw i'n credu dw i wedi'i gasglu o'r dystiolaeth sydd wedi cael ei rhoi ger eich bron chi yw nad yw Facebook, TikTok a Netflix, er enghraifft, yn casglu data ar y defnydd trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg ar eu platfformau nhw. Tasen nhw'n gallu dechrau casglu data ar y defnydd o'r Gymraeg ar eu platfformau nhw, byddai hynny'n gymorth i ni wrth i ni drïo llunio polisi cyhoeddus. Mae'r data gyda ni am y darlledwyr cyhoeddus, ond does gyda ni ddim y data ar gyfer y darlledwyr eraill, felly mae hwnna'n bwynt i'w ystyried.

(Translation) No, I have not done that yet, but I would be interested in doing so. One of the things that I have concluded from the evidence that has been put before you is that Facebook, TikTok and Netflix, for example, do not collect data on usage through the medium of Welsh on their platforms. If they were able to start collecting data on usage of the Welsh language on their platforms, that would assist us as we try to formulate public policy. We have the data for the public service broadcasters, but we do not have the data for the other broadcasters, so that is a point for consideration.

Q405 Kevin Brennan: Bore da. Croeso i'r Pwyllgor y bore 'ma. Dw i'n mynd i siarad Saesneg achos dw i'n siarad dim ond tipyn bach o Gymraeg.

(Translation) Good morning. Welcome to the Committee. I am going to speak in English because I speak only a little Welsh.

Efa Gruffudd Jones: Ti'n siarad yn hyfryd, Kevin. Gwych.

(Translation) You speak wonderfully, Kevin.

Kevin Brennan: Dim ond dysgwr ydw i; dydw i ddim yn rhugl.

(Translation) I am just a learner; I am not fluent.

My first question is about S4C. Does it have enough funding, and is it making the right kind of programmes? Is it making the best use of different broadcasting platforms to effectively promote the Welsh language?



Efa Gruffudd Jones: Mae'r cwestiwn am gyllid yn gymhleth, on'd yw e? Wrth gwrs, byddwn i wrth fy modd pe bai S4C yn cael mwy o gyllid. Un o'r pethau pwysig wrth symud ymlaen yw bod unrhyw adolygiad o ffi'r drwydded i'r dyfodol yn rhoi ystyriaeth i ddarlledu Cymraeg. Fel dw i'n deall, o ran cyllido S4C ar ôl 2028, dyw hi ddim yn glir iawn sut fydd hynny'n gallu digwydd, felly mae sicrhau bod unrhyw adolygiad o ffi'r drwydded yn cynnwys cyfeiriad at ddiogelu darlledu drwy'r Gymraeg yn bwysig.

Dw i yn croesawu'r ymdrechion mae S4C wedi eu gwneud yn ddiweddar i ddatblygu rhaglenni ar blatfformau amrywiol. Fel dw i'n deall, bydd y Bil arfaethedig yn rhoi mwy o gyfleoedd iddyn nhw wneud hynny. Bydd hefyd amlygrwydd gwell iddyn nhw ar draws Prydain, fydd yn caniatáu iddyn nhw gael access i ddigwyddiadau rhestredig. Felly mae yna bethau i'w croesawu yn y Bil arfaethedig.

Yn ddelfrydol, hoffwn i i S4C gael mwy o arian er mwyn buddsoddi mwy, ond dw i'n deall bod hynny efallai yn anodd yn y cyd-destun presennol. Ond yn sicr, byddwn i'n awyddus i S4C wneud y defnydd gorau o'r gyllideb sydd ganddo fe. Dw i'n ymwybodol eu bod nhw, trwy werthu rhaglenni i America, er enghraifft, yn gobeithio cynhyrchu incwm er mwyn gallu buddsoddi mwy ar gynnwys Cymraeg.

(Translation) The question about funding is complex. Of course, I would be delighted if S4C were to receive more funding. One of the important things as we move forward is that any review of the licence fee in the future should give consideration to broadcasting in Welsh. As I understand it, it is not entirely clear how S4C will be funded after 2028, so ensuring that any review of the licence fee includes a reference to safeguarding broadcasting through the medium of Welsh is important.

I welcome the efforts that S4C has made recently to develop programmes on various platforms. As I understand it, the proposed Bill will provide further opportunities for it to do that. There will also be better prominence for it across Britain, which will permit it to have access to listed events. There are things to be welcomed in the proposed Bill.

Ideally, I would like S4C to have more funding to invest more, but I understand that that is difficult in the current context. I am certainly eager for S4C to make the best use of the funding it has. I am aware that, through selling programmes to America, for example, it will hopefully generate income to be able to invest more in Welsh content.

Q406 **Kevin Brennan:** Colleagues might talk about that a bit later. Your five-year report expressed some concern about the "lack of plurality" in Welsh language broadcasting. Can you explain what you meant by that and what sorts of things broadcasters and Governments need to do to address that?

Efa Gruffudd Jones: Mae'n wir, on'd yw e? Mae gyda ni un sianel deledu trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg, un a hanner sianel radio—Radio Cymru a Radio Cymru 2—trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg, a peth cynnwys Cymraeg ar un neu



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ddwy, tair efallai, gorsaf radio fasnachol, ond yn gyffredinol dyw'r dewis i siaradwyr Cymraeg ddim byd tebyg i'r dewis sydd gan siaradwyr Saesneg yng Nghymru. Mae hynny'n ffaith. Dw i'n credu mai dyna roeddwn i'n cyfeirio ato fe fel diffyg plurality.

Beth sy'n rhaid ei wneud, felly—a dw i'n credu bod yna ymdrechion yn cael eu gwneud i'r cyfeiriad yma, gyda datblygiad Radio Cymru 2, er enghraifft—yw cael cynnwys sydd efallai yn sianelu at anghenion cynulleidfa benodol, yn hytrach na bod un sianel radio, er enghraifft, yn trio siwtio pawb o bum mlwydd oed i 95. Mae'n her i'r darlledwyr bod rhaid iddyn nhw gynnig rhywbeth i bawb ar eu sianeli nhw. Mae'r ateb i hynny yn anodd. Dyw'r byd masnachol ddim yn cynnig unrhyw atebion i hynny, ac mae'n anodd iddyn nhw wneud oherwydd economies of scale a maint y gynulleidfa Gymraeg. Dyna pam fod cefnogaeth y wladwriaeth mor, mor bwysig i ddarlledu trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg.

(Translation) It is true, isn't it? We have one television channel through the medium of Welsh, one and a half radio channels through the medium of Welsh—Radio Cymru and Radio Cymru 2—and some Welsh content on one, two or maybe three commercial radio stations, but generally the choice for Welsh speakers is nothing like the choice available to English speakers in Wales. That is a fact. That is what I was referring to as a lack of plurality.

What needs to be done—and I think that efforts are being made in this direction with the development of Radio Cymru 2, for example—is to have content that aims towards the needs of a specific audience, rather than one radio channel trying to suit everyone from age five to 95. It is a challenge for the broadcasters that they have to offer something for everyone on their channels. The answer to that is difficult. The commercial world does not offer any solutions or answers to that, and it is difficult for it to do that, because of economies of scale and the size of the Welsh audience. That is why support from the state is so vital for broadcasting through the medium of Welsh.

Kevin Brennan: Diolch am eich atebion.

(Translation) Thank you for your answers.

Ruth Jones: Thank you for your time this morning, which is much appreciated, and for coming to see us in person; that makes it a lot easier.

Efa Gruffudd Jones: Pleser.

(Translation) Pleasure.

Q407 **Ruth Jones:** I am going to drill down from Mr Brennan's question and look at sport. We are coming to the end of our inquiry, and we have heard a vast range of opinions on Welsh language reporting of sport. Some say that we should keep it as it is, while others argue that it should all just go to S4C. What do you think is the way forward to encourage Welsh learners and the Welsh language in the field of sport?



Efa Gruffudd Jones: Dw i'n meddwl bod darlledu chwaraeon am ddim gyda sylwebaeth Gymraeg yn hollbwysig i fywyd y Gymraeg i'r dyfodol. Does dim dwywaith fod y ffaith bod S4C wedi gallu darlledu'r holl gemau pêl-droed, er enghraifft, mewn partneriaeth â'r tîm cenedlaethol, wedi gwneud gwahaniaeth i fywyd diwylliannol Cymru. Mae yna ymdeimlad o Gymreictod, ac mae'r iaith Gymraeg yn rhan ganolog o hynny.

Mae'n wir fod darlledu chwaraeon trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg ar S4C yn denu pobl ddi-Gymraeg at yr iaith, a byddwn i am weld hynny'n parhau. Mae e'n golygu, dw i'n teimlo, bod Cymru'n gallu dod at ei gilydd i fwynhau chwaraeon o bwys, felly byddwn i am weld parhau darlledu chwaraeon am ddim, a hynny gyda sylwebaeth Gymraeg. Dw i'n gwybod, er enghraifft, fod yna sylw gwych wedi bod i seiclo trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg. Dw i'n gwybod bod ansawdd y rhaglenni hynny cyfuwch ag unrhyw beth sydd ar gael mewn unrhyw iaith arall, felly mae hynny yn grêt i'w weld.

Mae yna oblygiadau i'r mathau yma o ddarlledu i wasanaethau cyrff chwaraeon, er enghraifft. Mae Triathlon Cymru newydd gytuno i'r "Cynnig Gymraeg" gyda fy swyddfa i, lle maen nhw wedi creu cynllun ar gyfer sut maen nhw'n datblygu'r Gymraeg o fewn eu corff nhw, a hynny yn rhannol oherwydd bod Triathlon Cymru'n cael ei ddarlledu yn Gymraeg ar S4C. Felly mae yna link rhwng yr hyn sy'n digwydd ar y teledu a'r hyn sydd yn digwydd ar lawr gwlad. Un o'r pethau dw i hefyd am weld yw mwy a mwy o hyfforddi chwaraeon trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg yng Nghymru.

(Translation) Broadcasting sport free of charge with Welsh commentary is vital for the future of the Welsh language. There is no question that the fact that S4C has been able to broadcast all the football matches, for example, in partnership with the national team has made a difference to the cultural life of Wales. There is a sense of Welshness, and the Welsh language is a central part of that.

It is true that broadcasting sport through the medium of Welsh on S4C does attract non-Welsh speakers to the language, and I would like to see that continuing. It means, I feel, that Wales can come together to enjoy important sport, so I would like to see a continuation of broadcasting of sport free of charge with Welsh language commentary. For example, I know that there has been fantastic coverage of the cycling through the medium of Welsh, and I know that the quality of those programmes is as good as anything available in any other language, so that is great to see.

There are implications for this kind of broadcasting for sports bodies, for example. Triathlon Cymru has just agreed the "Welsh Offer" through my office: they have created a scheme to develop the Welsh language offer within their organisation, partially because Triathlon Cymru is broadcast in Welsh on S4C. There is a link between what happens on television and what happens at a grassroots level. One of the things I would also like to see is increased coaching of sport through the medium of Welsh in Wales.

Q408 **Ruth Jones:** Just one follow-up to that. What do you think will be the impact of amending the Ofcom code on specified sports and events?



Efa Gruffudd Jones: Dw i'n croesawu hynny'n fawr. Fel dw i'n deall, bydd hyn yn ddatblygiad pwysig i S4C a'r gofyniad ar hyn o bryd bod modd i ddarlledwr gyrraedd 95% o'r boblogaeth. Dyw hynny ddim yn bosibl i S4C nawr, felly yn syml iawn i fi, mae hynny'n ymddangos fel rhywbeth hollol synhwyrol, a dw i'n croesawu hynny'n fawr. Fel dw i'n deall, bydd yr union restr yn fater i'w bennu maes o law, ond dw i'n meddwl bod e'n mynd i'w gwneud hi'n haws wedyn i S4C ddarlledu digwyddiadau chwaraeon mawr, a hynny am ddim. Byddwn i'n croesawu hynny.

(Translation) I welcome that greatly. As I understand, this will be an important development for S4C given the current requirement that a broadcaster should be able to reach 95% of the population. That is not possible for S4C now, so, very simply for me, that appears absolutely sensible and I welcome it greatly. As I understand it, the exact list will be a matter to be determined in due course, but I understand that it is going to make it easier for S4C to broadcast events and major sporting events free of charge. I would welcome that.

Q409 **Virginia Crosbie:** Croeso; welcome. It is fantastic that we have you here physically. Your enthusiasm for language always shines through, so it is an absolute delight to have you here. In your introduction, you mentioned how young people are important for the future and how they engage with media in a different way. My question is on the impact of social media on the Welsh language. The Committee has received evidence that first language Welsh speakers are not engaging with social media through the medium of Welsh.

Efa Gruffudd Jones: Rydych chi'n hollol gywir. Mae hynny, a dweud y gwir, yn fater o bryder i fi. Yr wybodaeth orau sydd gyda ni ar hyn o bryd yw gwybodaeth o arolwg defnydd iaith Llywodraeth Cymru, a gynhaliwyd diwethaf ddwy neu dair blynedd yn ôl. Mae'r ffigyrau sydd ynddi yn fater o bryder. Mae'n dangos bod dros 50%, os cofia i'n iawn, o siaradwyr Cymraeg ifanc yn dewis ymwneud â chyfryngau cymdeithasol yn unig neu'n bennaf trwy gyfrwng y Saesneg. Mae yna rywbeth yn mynd ymlaen felly, o ran hyder pobl ifanc i ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg.

Prosiect diddorol sydd ar y gweill rhwng fy swyddfa i a swyddfa'r Ganolfan Dysgu Cymraeg Genedlaethol ar hyn o bryd yw casglu gwybodaeth am eirfa pobl ifanc trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg. Mae yna shorthand speech yn Saesneg. Beth sy'n cyfateb i "LOL" yn Gymraeg? Mae hynny angen cael ei ystyried a'i ddatblygu, ac mae gwaith yn mynd rhagddo.

Mater arall, wrth gwrs, yw dyw e ddim wir yn syndod efallai fod pobl ifanc yn ymwneud â'r platfformau yma yn Saesneg, oherwydd mae'r platfformau yna yn Saesneg. Mae'r rhyngwyneb fel arfer yn Saesneg. Dw i'n gwybod bod modd cael rhyngwyneb Microsoft, er enghraifft, yn Gymraeg, a dw i'n croesawu hynny, ond os ydych chi mewn amgylchfyd Saesneg—mae'r plant yma'n ddwyieithog; maen nhw'n gallu siarad Saesneg a Chymraeg—os yw pawb o'u cwmpas nhw'n defnyddio Saesneg, mae defnyddio Cymraeg yn rhywbeth mwy anodd ei wneud, ac rydych chi angen bod yn fwy hyderus. Dw i'n meddwl bod angen rhywfaint o ymchwil pellach i ddefnyddio pobl ifanc o'r Gymraeg ar y cyfryngau cymdeithasol, ac



ystyried beth allwn ni wneud i hwyluso hynny, beth allwn ni wneud i godi hyder hynny.

Mae'r byd yn newid. Mae'r ffordd y mae pobl yn cyfathrebu yn newid. Mae angen i ni ystyried hynny a gweld beth allwn ni ei wneud. A oes yna brosiectau allwn ni eu mabwysiadu? A oes yna sgiliau allwn ni eu rhoi? A oes yna drafodaethau allwn ni eu cynnal? Ond mae'n gwestiwn pwysig, ac mae e'n fater pryder.

(Translation) Yes, you are absolutely right. To be honest, that is a matter of concern to me. The best information we have at the moment is information from the Welsh language usage survey, which was undertaken about two or three years ago by the Welsh Government. The figures included there are a matter of concern. If I remember correctly, it shows that over 50% of young Welsh speakers choose to be involved in social media only or predominantly through the medium of English, so there is something happening there in terms of the confidence that young people have to use the Welsh language.

An interesting project that is currently afoot between my office and the National Centre for Learning Welsh is the collection of information about young people's vocabulary through the medium of Welsh. There is shorthand speech in English, isn't there? But what corresponds to "LOL" in Welsh? That needs to be considered and developed, so work is currently afoot on that.

Another matter, of course, is that it is not really a surprise that young people are involved in these platforms in English, because English is the language of these platforms. The interface is usually in English. I know that it is possible to have a Microsoft interface in Welsh, and I welcome that, but in an English-medium environment—and these children are bilingual; they can speak English and Welsh—if everybody around them is using English, it is more difficult to use Welsh and you need to be more confident. I think there is a need for some degree of further research into young people's use of the Welsh language on social media, and to consider what we can do to facilitate that and raise their confidence.

The world is changing. The way in which people communicate is changing, so we have to consider that and see what we can do. Are there any projects that we can adopt or skills that we can provide? Are there discussions that we can have? It is an important question, and it is a matter of concern.

Q410 **Virginia Crosbie:** Thank you—an excellent reply. This is my last question. If I am putting something on social media, it will take me several attempts to write "da iawn" because of autocorrect. Have you looked into that?

Efa Gruffudd Jones: Dw i ddim yn siŵr os yw'n swyddfa ni yn benodol wedi edrych ar hynny. Mae gan Lywodraeth Cymru gyfrifoldebau am dechnoleg gwybodaeth trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg, a dw i'n ymwybodol iawn fod ganddyn nhw swyddogion sy'n ymwneud â hyn. Byddech chi efallai'n



gallu cael mwy o wybodaeth drwy hynny. Mae gyda ni tools autocorrect ar Word er enghraifft erbyn hyn, a dw i'n gwybod bod gwaith da yn digwydd gan yr Uned Technolegau Iaith yng Nghanolfan Bedwyr ym Mangor, er enghraifft. Felly mae yna symudiadau yn digwydd, yn bendant. Dw i ddim yn siŵr a ydy hynny ar gael ar tecst erbyn hyn, a dw i'n gwybod bod rhai trafodaethau'n digwydd, ond mae mwy i'w wneud. Ond yn naturiol, mae beth sy'n digwydd yn Gymraeg yn digwydd yn hwyrach na sy'n digwydd yn Saesneg. Felly, mae yna waith i'w wneud ond dw i yn ymwybodol bod y materion hynny ar y radar yn y sector gyhoeddus yng Nghymru.

(Translation) I am not sure if our office has specifically looked into that. The Welsh Government have responsibility for information technology through the medium of Welsh. I am very aware that they have officials who are involved in that, so maybe you could get more information through them. We do now have autocorrect tools, for example on Word, and very good work is going on by the Language Technologies Unit in Canolfan Bedwyr at Bangor. So there are moves afoot, certainly. I am not sure if that is available on text by now. I know there are some discussions ongoing and there is more to be done. Naturally, what is happening in Welsh happens later than it happens in English. There is work to be done, but I am aware that those issues are on the radar in the public sector in Wales.

Virginia Crosbie: Da iawn. Diolch yn fawr.

Q411 **Chair:** Given what you said in answer to Virginia's first question—you talked about the way young people move between the use of the Welsh language and the English language—are you concerned about the decision not to allow the bilingual rapper Sage Todz to perform in the National Eisteddfod?

Efa Gruffudd Jones: Mae hwn yn gwestiwn diddorol. Dw i'n meddwl bod dyfodol y Gymraeg yn dibynnu ar groesawu pawb, ac mae sicrhau miliwn o siaradwyr i'r dyfodol yn dibynnu ar annog pawb yng Nghymru i ddod yn siaradwyr Cymraeg ac i fwynhau'r bywyd Cymraeg. Beth fyddwn i'n ei ddweud yw, mae yna reswm pam bod yna ddeddfau yng Nghymru i warchod y Gymraeg. Mae yna reswm pam ein bod ni wedi gorfod ymladd am yr hawliau yma i ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg. Yn fy achos i, er enghraifft, yr Eisteddfod Genedlaethol yw'r unig wythnos yn y flwyddyn ble dw i'n gallu siarad Cymraeg heb deimlo'n awkward, siarad Cymraeg heb ymddiheuro, siarad Cymraeg yn hollol naturiol. Felly, i fi, mae'r cysyniad o gynnal un wythnos yn y flwyddyn lle mae modd siarad a defnyddio'r Gymraeg yn bwysig. Ond mae'n rhaid i hynny gynnwys siaradwyr di-Gymraeg hefyd, a dw i'n meddwl bod yr Eisteddfod yn gwneud hynny. Mae yna ddarpariaeth, mae yna groeso, ac mae dysgwyr a siaradwyr newydd yn dod i'r Eisteddfod am yr union reswm hwnnw.

Yn achos Sage Todz, dw i'n meddwl bod ni angen parchu'r ddwy ochr, fel mae'r Eisteddfod a Sage Todz wedi gwneud. Dw i'n parchu hawl yr Eisteddfod ac eisiau amddiffyn hawl yr Eisteddfod i gynnal gŵyl Gymraeg, ond dw i hefyd yn parchu dewis Sage Todz i beidio perfformio yn Gymraeg. Dyna'i ddewis e, a dw i'n credu, o'r datganiadau gwreiddiol, mi



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oedd y ddwy ochr yn parchu'i gilydd yn llwyr. Dw i'n meddwl bod rhywfaint o bethau annymunol wedi digwydd wedi hynny, ond yn y datganiadau gwreiddiol, roedd y ddwy ochr yn parchu ei gilydd, a dw i'n credu bod hynny'n hollol gywir.

(Translation) This is an interesting question. The future of the Welsh language relies on welcoming everyone, and ensuring that there will be 1 million Welsh speakers in the future depends on encouraging everyone in Wales to become Welsh speakers and to enjoy Welsh life. What I would say is that there is a reason why there is legislation in Wales to protect the Welsh language. There is a reason why we have had to fight for these rights to use the Welsh language. In my case, for example, the National Eisteddfod is the only week in the year where I can speak Welsh without feeling awkward, I can speak Welsh without apologising, I can speak Welsh absolutely naturally. So, to me, the concept of having one week in the year where it is possible to speak and use the Welsh language is important. But that has to include non-Welsh speakers as well, and I think the Eisteddfod does that. There is provision, there is a welcome, and learners and new speakers come to the Eisteddfod for that very reason.

In the case of Sage Todz, we need to respect both sides, as the Eisteddfod and Sage Todz have done. I respect the right of the Eisteddfod and want to protect the Eisteddfod's right to have a Welsh language festival, but I also respect Sage Todz's choice not to perform in Welsh. That is his choice, and I think, from the original statement, both sides respected each other entirely. I think there has been some degree of undesirable things that have happened subsequently, but in the original statements both sides respected each other and I think that is absolutely right.

Q412 **Chair:** You do not think it is a missed opportunity to broaden the reach of the Welsh language?

Efa Gruffudd Jones: Mae'n gwestiwn diddorol. Mae rheol gan yr Eisteddfod, ac mae rheswm dros y rheol, sef amddiffyn ein cymuned ni i gael cyfle i ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg. A dw i'n parchu dewis Sage Todz i beidio â gwneud hynny. Mae yna ddegau ar ddegau o wyliau eraill lle gallwn i, taswn i eisiau, fynd i weld Sage Todz. Roeddwn i wrth fy modd gyda'i gân ar "Yma o Hyd", er enghraifft. Felly mae yna gyfleoedd eraill i weld Sage Todz yn perfformio. Mae'r Eisteddfod yn ofod cyfrwng Cymraeg.

(Translation) That is an interesting question. The Eisteddfod has a rule and there is a reason why it has that rule: to protect our community to have an opportunity to use the Welsh language. I respect Sage Todz's choice not to do that. There are tens and hundreds of other festivals where, if I wanted to, I could go to see Sage Todz. I am delighted with his version of "Yma o Hyd", for example. So there are other opportunities to see Sage Todz performing. The Eisteddfod is a Welsh-medium space.

Ben Lake: Jyst i ategu'r hyn rydych chi newydd ddweud ynghylch yr helynt a fu ynghylch y penderfyniad gan Sage Todz, ydych chi'n teimlo rhywfaint o siomedigaeth bod y wasg, yn enwedig yng Nghymru, i weld wedi camddeall y sefyllfa'n gyfan gwbl, ac yn ceisio, os ga i ddweud,



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mynd am clickbait ar hyn, a chwarae gwleidyddiaeth eithaf budr, a dweud y gwir? Mae'n achos eithaf sensitif, ie, ond eto, pan oeddwn i'n ystyried safbwyntiau cychwynnol y ddwy ochr, mi oedd e i weld i fi fod yna gytundeb eithaf teg wedi'i gyrraedd a bod pawb yn hapus.

(Translation) To echo what you have just said about what has gone on around the decision with Sage Todz, are you disappointed that the press, particularly in Wales, appears to have completely misunderstood the situation and, if I may say so, gone for clickbait on this and played politics, quite dirty politics? It is a sensitive issue, yes, but considering the initial standpoints of both sides, it appeared to me that a fair agreement had been reached.

Efa Gruffudd Jones: Cytundeb aeddfed, byddwn i'n dweud. Os ga i ehangu fy ateb, un o'r anawsterau yng Nghymru yn aml iawn yw mai prin yw'r cyhoeddusrwydd mewn newyddion Saesneg i bethau Cymraeg, sy'n gwneud dim synnwyr. Os meddylwch chi am Eisteddfod yr Urdd—a dw i'n cofio cwrdd â chi, Cadeirydd, mewn Eisteddfod flynyddoedd yn ôl—mae'r ganran o rieni di-Gymraeg sy'n anfon eu plant i ysgolion Cymraeg yn sylweddol. Felly pam na fydden nhw eisiau clywed am Eisteddfod yr Urdd? Dyw e'n gwneud dim synnwyr i fi nad oes sylw yn gyson iawn ar yr ochr Saesneg i faterion trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg, oni bai ei fod yn achos mwy negyddol neu'n achos o gynnen. Rydyn ni'n gyfarwydd â'r cyfryngau, a'r newyddion, on'd ydyn ni? Dw i ddim eisiau eu beirniadu nhw'n uniongyrchol, ond beth fyddwn i'n ei ddweud yw, tase'r cyfryngau yng Nghymru yn adlewyrchu'n well drwy'r flwyddyn beth yw'r Eisteddfod Genedlaethol, pwy yw Mererid Hopwood, ein Harchdderwydd gwych nesaf, efallai y byddai'r cyd-destun y mae pobl yn ymateb iddo fe yn fwy aeddfed. Mae'n swnio fel pe bai e ddim yn gwneud synnwyr os ydych chi'n darllen un ochr, ond os ydych chi'n deall y cyd-destun, dw i'n gobeithio na fyddai'r ymateb ar y cyfryngau cymdeithasol wedi bod fel y buodd e. Dw i'n credu mai dyna fy ymateb i hynny.

(Translation) It was a mature agreement, I would say. One of the difficulties in Wales, if I can extend my response, is that very often the publicity in English news for Welsh things is quite scarce. That makes no sense, because if you think about the Urdd Eisteddfod—I remember meeting you, Chair, at an Eisteddfod many years ago—the percentage of non-Welsh speaking parents who send their children to Welsh-medium schools is substantial. So why would they not want to hear about the Urdd Eisteddfod? It makes no sense to me that very often there is no coverage on the English-medium side of things of matters through the medium of Welsh, unless it is negative or about a bone of contention of some description. We are very familiar with media and news, aren't we? I do not want to criticise them directly, but if the media in Wales were to better reflect throughout the year what the National Eisteddfod is and who Mererid Hopwood, our next fantastic Archdruid, is, perhaps the context in which people respond would be more mature. It does not make sense if you read just one side, but if you understand the context, I hope the response on social media would not have been as it was. That is my response.



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Q413 **Mr Roberts:** Rydych chi wedi defnyddio geiriau fel “anghyfforddus” ac “ymddiheuro”. Dw i yn anghyfforddus a dw i yn ymddiheuro. Mae Cymraeg fi bach yn rusty. Dw i ddim mor rhugl â Mr Lake. Dw i ddim yn cael lot o siawns i ymarfer, felly dw i’n ymarfer heddiw.

(Translation) You have used words such as “uncomfortable” and “apologise”. I am uncomfortable and I am apologising, because my Welsh is a bit rusty—I am not as fluent as Mr Lake. I do not get a chance to speak much Welsh, so I am practicing today.

Efa Gruffudd Jones: Dim o gwbl. Mae’n arfer da—grêt.

(Translation) Not at all. It is good practice—great!

Q414 **Mr Roberts:** Ydych chi’n gweld gwasanaethau fel Netflix ac Amazon Prime, streaming services felly, fel rhyw fath o fygythiad neu fel cyfle ar gyfer yr iaith?

(Translation) Do you see services such as Netflix and Amazon Prime—the streaming services—as some sort of threat or an opportunity for the language?

Efa Gruffudd Jones: Dw i’n berson optimistig. Mae’n rhaid i ni weld popeth fel cyfle, yn does e? Yn achos Netflix, maen nhw wedi prynu “Dal y Mellt” yn ddiweddar, ac ar raglenni fel “The Crown”, er enghraifft, roedd y Gymraeg yn cael ei defnyddio’n gwbl naturiol. Mae isdeitlo’n mynd yn fwy a mwy poblogaidd, yn arbennig ymhlith pobl ifanc. Felly mae’n rhaid i ni weld y rhain fel cyfleoedd. Ac fe wnaeth Amazon ddarlledu chwaraeon ar un adeg yn Gymraeg. Mae’n bosibl i’r platfformau yma wneud pethau yn Gymraeg, felly mae’n rhaid i ni fod yn optimistig ac yn bositif a chymryd pob cyfle y gallwn ni i weld mwy o gynnwys Cymraeg lle bynnag y gallwn ni.

(Translation) I am an optimistic person. We have to see everything as an opportunity, don’t we? In the case of Netflix, it bought “Dal Y Mellt” recently. On programmes such as “The Crown”, the Welsh language was used absolutely naturally. Subtitling is becoming increasingly popular, particularly among young people, so we have to see these as opportunities. Amazon broadcast sport at one point in Welsh as well. It is possible for these platforms to do things in Welsh, so we have to be optimistic and positive, and take every opportunity we can to see more Welsh content wherever we can.

Q415 **Mr Roberts:** Ydych chi wedi cael cyfle i siarad efo’r darlledwyr ynglŷn â phwysigrwydd nid yn unig cynnwys yr iaith ond ei hybu yn eu rhaglenni?

(Translation) Has there been an opportunity to speak to those broadcasters about the importance of not only including, but promoting the Welsh language?

Efa Gruffudd Jones: Dw i’n meddwl ‘mod i wedi cyfeirio ar y dechrau ‘mod i heb eto gyfarfod gyda’r darlledwyr yna, ond mae hyn yn sicr yn rhywbeth y byddwn i’n hoffi ei drefnu. Un o’r pethau i chi ddeall yw bod darlledu wedi’i eithrio o fy gwaith rheoleiddio, felly’r unig beth fyddwn i’n gallu ei wneud yw annog a chael trafodaeth a phwyso. Does dim byd



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cyfreithiol, na mwy swyddogol, y gallwn i ei wneud, ond yn sicr bydda i'n cymryd y cyfle i ysgrifennu atyn nhw a gobeithio cwrdd â nhw i drafod ymhellach, fel rydyn ni'n ei wneud yn barod, a dweud y gwir, gydag S4C a'r BBC.

(Translation) I think I said at the beginning that I have not yet met those broadcasters, but it is certainly something I would like to arrange. One of the things you need to understand is that broadcasting is not included in my regulatory remit, so the only thing I could do is encourage, have discussions and press them. There is nothing legal or more official that I can do, but I will certainly take the opportunity to write to them and, hopefully, meet them to discuss this further, as we are already doing with S4C and the BBC.

Q416 **Mr Roberts:** Os oeddech chi mewn cyfarfod efo nhw rŵan, yn siarad efo nhw rŵan, beth fydddech chi'n ddweud wrthyn nhw?

(Translation) If you were in a meeting and speaking to them now, what would you say to them?

Efa Gruffudd Jones: Beth fyddwn i'n ddweud yw bod Cymru yn wlad wych gyda llawer iawn o dalentau a bod beth rydyn ni'n ei gynhyrchu o safon eithriadol o uchel. Fel dw i'n gwneud y pwynt am isdeitlo, dw i'n gwybod am bobl sydd wrth eu bodd yn gwyllo ffilmiau Ffrangeg ac Eidaleg, a dw i wedi bod yn gwyllo cyfresi Hebraeg fy hun. Mae gwyllo drwy isdeitlau yn mynd yn gynyddol boblogaidd felly does dim rheswm i hynny beidio digwydd yn Gymraeg. Dw i'n meddwl hefyd y byddwn i eisiau eu perswadio nhw o gyfrifoldebau i wasanaethu pawb sy'n byw yng Nghymru. I fi, mae hynny'n golygu ystyried anghenion siaradwyr Cymraeg ac yn arbennig efallai siaradwyr Cymraeg ifanc i'r dyfodol.

(Translation) What I would say is that Wales is a fantastic country with much talent and what we produce is of an exceptionally high standard. On the point about the subtitling, I know people who are delighted to watch French and Italian films, and I have been watching a Hebrew series. Watching through subtitling is increasingly popular, so there is no reason for us not to do that in Welsh. But I would also like to persuade them about their responsibilities to serve everyone who lives in Wales. For me, that means considering the needs of Welsh speakers, particularly young Welsh speakers, for the future.

Q417 **Mr Roberts:** Dw i jyst am ofyn am un pwnc ychwanegol yn gyflym ar y diwedd. Mae lot o bobl yn gwyllo rhaglenni ar S4C efo'r isdeitlau yn Saesneg. Mae yna broblemau fan hyn gan fod y cyfieithiad ddim yn arbennig o dda bob tro. A allwch chi wneud rhywbeth i wella'r isdeitlau fel bod pobl sydd ddim yn medru siarad Cymraeg yn medru dilyn?

(Translation) One additional question. A lot of people watch programmes on S4C with English subtitles. The translation is not always particularly good, so it is difficult. Could you do something to improve the subtitling, so that people who cannot speak Welsh are able to follow?

Efa Gruffudd Jones: Y peth cyntaf wna i ddweud yw dw i weithiau'n gwyllo Saesneg gydag isdeitlau, a dyw hynny ddim wastad yn wych



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chwaith. Ond yn gyffredinol, dyw hynny ddim yn fater sydd wedi dod i fy sylw i, ond dw i yn ymwybodol fod yna waith mawr yn digwydd i wella'r isdeitlo, felly, ar bob cyfrif, gallen ni ystyried hynny.

Un o'r pethau fydden i'n hoffi ei ddweud yng nghyd-destun fy ateb blaenorol yw ei bod hi'n bwysig fod gwasanaethau Cymraeg yn parhau i fod ar gael am ddim. Felly beth bynnag sy'n mynd i fod ar Netflix neu Amazon—gobeithio, yn Gymraeg—mae hefyd yn bwysig bod darpariaeth ar gael am ddim.

(Translation) The first thing I will say is that I sometimes watch English programmes with subtitles, and that is not always fantastic either. Generally, that is not a matter that has come to my attention, but I am aware that there is major ongoing work to improve subtitling, so we can definitely take that into account.

One of the things I want to say in the context of my previous answer is that it is important that Welsh language services continue to be available free of charge. Whatever is going to be on Netflix or Amazon—hopefully in Welsh—it is also important that provision is available free of charge.

Ben Lake: Yn y cyd-destun yma o ddyfodol darlledu, mae tipyn o sylw yn amlwg yn cael ei roi i'r gwasanaethau streamio fel Netflix a Amazon ac ati. Un o'r pethau sydd yn amlwg i ni yng Nghymru, yn ymarferol, yw bod yna o hyd ardaloedd eithaf helaeth sydd heb fynediad parod a hawdd i'r gwasanaethau arlein yma. Ydy hyn yn rhywbeth sy'n eich poeni chi, yn enwedig o ystyried, yn y 10 mlynedd nesaf, bod yna gynlluniau i drosi mwy o'r gwasanaethau traddodiadol radio a theledu i'r maes digidol? Y gofid sydd mewn rhai ardaloedd, yn enwedig ardaloedd gwledig, ble mae'r gwasanaethau yma'n rhai pwysig iawn, yw nad yw'r isadeiledd yna eto i ni allu cael y fynediad parod yna. Ydy hynny'n rhywbeth sy'n eich gofidio chi?

(Translation). In the context of the future, obviously a lot of attention is paid to the streaming services, such as Amazon and Netflix. But one of the things that is apparent to us in Wales on a practical level is that there are still vast areas that do not have ready and easy access to those online services. Is that something that concerns you, given that in the next 10 years there are plans for a number of the traditional radio and television services to be transferred to digital? The concern in some areas, especially rural areas, where those services are very important, is that the infrastructure is not yet in place for us to have ready access. Does that concern you?

Efa Gruffudd Jones: Dw i'n ymwybodol fod gwasanaethau drwy Gymru yn amrywiol iawn, a dw i'n gwybod bod yna broblemau yn arbennig efallai mewn cymunedau gwledig. Byddwn i'n cytuno bod hynny wrth gwrs yn bryder yn y byd digidol.

Mae eithrio digidol yn rhywbeth sy'n broblem i bobl yn gyffredinol wrth i fwy a mwy o wasanaethau cyffredinol fod ar gael ddim ond ar y we. Maed diffyg darpariaeth yn broblem, ac fe allai fod yn rhwystr i bobl gael fynediad at wasanaethau Cymraeg. Yn sicr, byddai hynny'n fy mhoeni i.



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(Translation). I am aware that services throughout Wales are very variable, and I know that there are particular problems in some rural communities. I agree that it is, of course, a concern in the digital world.

Digital exclusion is a problem for people generally, as more and more general services are available only on the internet. A lack of provision is a problem, and it can be a problem for people to get access to Welsh language services. That would concern me, certainly.

Q418 **Ben Lake:** Diolch yn fawr. Os ga i droi, i orffen, at wasanaethau radio. Beth yw eich barn chi, neu'ch asesiad chi, o'r cyfraniad y mae'r BBC yn ei wneud ar hyn o bryd o ran hyrwyddo'r Gymraeg? Oes yna unrhyw beth fyddech chi'n ei nodi fel cryfderau penodol a hefyd, yn fwy diddorol, unrhyw wendidau fyddech chi am weld y BBC yn eu gwella?

(Translation). Thank you. To conclude, I will touch on radio services. What is your assessment of the contribution that the BBC currently makes to promoting the Welsh language? Are there things that you would note as specific strengths? Perhaps more interestingly, are there any weaknesses that you would like the BBC to improve on?

Efa Gruffudd Jones: O ran cryfderau, hoffwn i ddiolch yn gyhoeddus i S4C a'r BBC am yr hyn maen nhw'n ei wneud i ddarparu gwasanaethau Cymraeg mewn ffordd greadigol. O ran enghreifftiau o arfer dda, efallai y gallwn i dynnu sylw at bethau mae Radio Cymru wedi'u datblygu'n ddiweddar—er enghraifft, cyflwyno Wythnos Dathlu Dysgu Cymraeg. Dw i'n datgan diddordeb: mi oeddwn i'n brif weithredwr i'r Ganolfan Dysgu Cymraeg Genedlaethol. Mae yna gydweithio gwych i sicrhau bod siaradwyr newydd y Gymraeg yn lleisiau cyson nawr ar Radio Cymru, fel bod pobl yn cyfarwyddo ac yn deall pa mor bwysig yw dysgwyr i ddyfodol y Gymraeg.

Felly mae Radio Cymru wedi gwneud pethau yn fwriadol iawn. Mae ganddyn nhw bodlediad wythnosol i ddysgwyr, er enghraifft, sy'n ymdrech ar eu rhan nhw ond sydd hefyd, fel dw i'n deall, ymhlith eu podlediadau mwyaf poblogaidd. Yn yr un modd, mae gan S4C wefan benodol sy'n curadu cynnwys i siaradwyr newydd a dysgwyr. Dw i'n credu bod y ddau gorff yn ymwybodol o'u rôl a'r hyn allan nhw wneud i sicrhau hyfywedd y Gymraeg. Dw i'n siŵr ac yn gobeithio y bydd hynny'n parhau i'r dyfodol.

O ran heriau, dw i'n credu y byddwn i'n cyfeirio at bwynt wnes i'n gynharach, sef bod gyda ni un sianel, un gofod. Dyw'r farchnad ddim yn creu'r dewis y bydden i'n hoffi fyddai ar gael fel mewn ieithoedd eraill. Ond rydyn ni'n gyfarwydd â hynny, i raddau. Rydyn ni'n gorfod dibynnu arnyn nhw i wneud y gorau allan nhw, a dw i'n credu eu bod nhw.

(Translation) In terms of strengths, I would like to publicly thank S4C and the BBC for what they do to provide Welsh language services in a creative way. On examples of good practice, I would draw attention to things that Radio Cymru has developed recently. For example, it introduced Wythnos Dathlu Dysgu Cymraeg—a week celebrating learning Welsh. To declare an interest, I was the chief executive of the National Centre for Learning Welsh. There has been a fabulous collaboration to ensure that new Welsh speakers are now regular voices on Radio Cymru, so that people become



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familiar with and understand how important learners are for the future of the Welsh language.

Radio Cymru is doing things very deliberately. It has a weekly podcast for learners, for example, which is an effort on the part of Radio Cymru but also one of its most popular podcasts. Similarly, S4C has a specific website that curates content for learners and new speakers. I think both organisations are aware of their role, and what they can do to ensure the viability of the Welsh language. I am certain and hope that that will continue into the future.

In terms of challenges, I refer to a point I made earlier, which is that we have only one channel and one space. The market does not create the choice that I would like to see available, as it does with other languages. We are familiar with that to an extent, so we have to rely on those broadcasters to do the best they can, and I believe they do.

Q419 **Ben Lake:** Ydych chi'n meddwl bod yna unrhyw gyfle neu unrhyw fudd mewn ystyried os dylwn glywed mwy o Gymraeg ar wasanaethau'r BBC yng Nghymru yn y cyfrwng Saesneg, fel Radio Wales?

(Translation). Do you think there is any opportunity or merit in considering whether we should hear Welsh on BBC Wales services in the English language, such as Radio Wales?

Efa Gruffudd Jones: Byddwn i'n croesawu normaleiddio'r Gymraeg. Dw i'n gwybod bod hynny'n digwydd ar BBC Wales wrth gyflwyno chwaraeon ac yn y blaen. Dw i'n meddwl bod e yn gwneud gwahaniaeth os yw rhywun yn dweud "Bore da" a "Prynhawn da". Mae e yn ein gwneud ni'n wlad wahanol, felly byddwn i'n croesawu mwy o hynny a, sori i ailadrodd, mwy o gynnwys am y Gymraeg.

Mae dramâu sy'n digwydd yn Gymraeg. Er enghraifft, gallwch chi fynd i weld cynyrchiadau Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru gydag offer clust sy'n gweithio'n dda. Felly mae e o ddiddordeb i gynulleidfa ddi-Gymraeg, nid yn unig i gynulleidfa Gymraeg. Mae e bron yn ystrydebol, ond mae'r Gymraeg yn perthyn i bawb yng Nghymru. Mae pawb yng Nghymru'n gweld y Gymraeg o'u cwmpas nhw. Maen nhw'n clywed y Gymraeg o'u cwmpas nhw ac yn dysgu'r Gymraeg mewn ysgolion, felly mae mwy a mwy allwn ni ei wneud i sicrhau bod y Gymraeg yna o'n cwmpas ni. Dim ond ein helpu ni i ddiogelu'r Gymraeg i'r dyfodol wnaiff e.

(Translation). I would welcome the normalising of the Welsh language. I know that happens on BBC Wales when presenting sport, for example. I think it does make a difference if someone says "Bore da" or "Prynhawn da". It does make us a different country. I would welcome more of that and, sorry to repeat myself, more content about the Welsh language.

There are dramas that happen in Welsh. You can go and see productions by Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru with headsets and that works very well. There is an interest for non-Welsh speakers, not solely Welsh-medium audiences. It is almost a cliché, but the Welsh language belongs to everyone in Wales. Everyone in Wales sees and hears the Welsh language



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around them and they learn Welsh in schools. There is more that we can do to ensure that the Welsh language is there around us. That will only help us to protect the Welsh language for the future.

Q420 Ben Lake: Diolch. Yn sicr, roeddech chi'n sôn bod modd i bobl fynd i wyllo dramâu ac ati gan ddefnyddio offer cyfieithu. Mae pobl wedi hen arfer gweld operâu yn yr Almaeneg neu'r Ffrangeg a ddim yn meddwl ddwywaith amdano fe.

Mae fy ngwestiwn olaf yn ymwneud â gorsafoedd radio masnachol. Mae'n well i fi ddatgan diddordeb: yng Ngheredigion yn enwedig, dydyn ni ddim wedi cael hanes cadarnhaol iawn gyda gwasanaethau Cymraeg ar orsafoedd radio masnachol ers i Radio Ceredigion ddiflannu ambell i flwyddyn yn ôl nawr. Mae yna drafodaeth ar hyn o bryd o ran y rheoliadau ynghylch y cynnwys iaith Gymraeg ar orsafoedd radio masnachol. Oes gyda chi unrhyw asesiad o ran a fydd hyn yn helpu neu'n hyrwyddo neu hyd yn oed yn rhwystr i'r deunydd Cymraeg?

(Translation) Thank you. You talk about it being possible for people to see shows and dramas, for example, using translation equipment. People are more than used to seeing opera in German or French and they do not think anything of it.

I have a final question on commercial radio stations. I had better declare an interest, because in Ceredigion in particular we have not had a very positive history with the Welsh language service on commercial radio stations since Radio Ceredigion disappeared some years ago. There is a discussion at the moment about the regulations around Welsh language content on commercial radio stations. Do you have any assessment of whether that can help to promote, or perhaps hamper Welsh language content?

Efa Gruffudd Jones: Fel dw i'n deall, mae hyn yn fater technegol a chymhleth. Fel dw i'n deall, dyw Ofcom ddim ar hyn o bryd yn gallu gwneud rhyw lawer i fynnu unrhyw gynnwys Cymraeg, os o gwbl. Felly mae hyn yn sicr yn rhywbeth y byddwn i'n hoffi ei weld yn cael ei gryfhau. Dw i'n meddwl bod angen bod yn ofalus wrth i'r Bil newydd gael ei gyflwyno bod dim byd yn lleihau hyd yn oed yr hyn sy'n digwydd ar hyn o bryd, o ran cytuno fformatau ac yn y blaen. Mae yna enghreifftiau da o radio masnachol—mae gan MônFM, er enghraifft, gwasanaeth dwyieithog da.

(Translation) As I understand it, this is a technical and complex issue. As I understand it, Ofcom cannot do an awful lot, if anything, to insist on any Welsh content. That is certainly something that I would like to see being strengthened. There is a need to be careful, as the new Bill is introduced, that nothing reduces what is currently happening in terms of agreeing on formats and so forth. There are good examples of commercial radio—Môn FM, for example, has a good bilingual service.

Ben Lake: Wrth gwrs. Dw i'n anghofio nawr enw'r orsaf dros ogledd Cymru hefyd.

(Translation) Of course. I forget the name of the station for north Wales.



Efa Gruffudd Jones: Capital

Q421 **Ben Lake:** Capital. Ond dw i'n cytuno bod angen bod yn ofalus.

(Translation) Capital. But I agree that there is a need to be careful.

Efa Gruffudd Jones: Mae angen bod yn ofalus. O fy nealltwriaeth i—byddai'n rhaid i fi checio—dyw'r gallu yna ddim gan Ofcom beth bynnag ar hyn o bryd. Byddwn i'n hoffi ystyried sut y byddai modd cryfhau hynny.

(Translation) Indeed. From my understanding—I would have to check—that ability is not in Ofcom's hands anyway at the moment, but I would like to consider how it was possible to strengthen that.

Ben Lake: Ac yn sicr bod ni ddim yn gweld unrhyw lacio.

(Translation) Certainly, we do not want any slackening.

Efa Gruffudd Jones: Yn union. Mae eisiau bod yn ofalus rhag hynny.

(Translation) Exactly. We need to be careful about that.

Q422 **Delyth Jewell:** O ystyried popeth rydyn ni wedi'i glywed bore 'ma, ac unrhyw beth arall yn ymwneud gyda darlledu, beth yw'r peth ydych chi'n meddwl yw'r her fwyaf i'r Gymraeg, a beth sy'n rhoi'r gobaith mwyaf i chi am y Gymraeg yn y cyd-destun yma?

(Translation) Considering everything that we have heard this morning, and anything else to do with broadcasting, what do you think is the greatest challenge for the Welsh language, and what gives you the greatest hope for the Welsh language in this context?

Efa Gruffudd Jones: Cwestiwn da, Delyth. Yr her fwyaf, dw i'n meddwl, yw 2028 ymlaen, a'r sicrwydd ariannol i ariannu gweithgareddau am ddim trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg. Dydyn ni ddim yn gwybod yr ateb i hynny ar hyn o bryd, felly dw i'n mynd i ailadrodd. Os gallwn ni gynnwys rhywbeth am ystyried y Gymraeg wrth adolygu ffi'r drwydded, dw i'n meddwl bod hynny'n bwysig i radio ac i deledu.

O ran y gobaith mwyaf, rhaglenni fel "Hansh" a'r sylw maen nhw'n ei gael ar hyn o bryd, a'r ffaith fod gyda ni ddarlledwyr talentog ifanc yn cael eu meithrin, a newyddiadurwyr ifanc talentog ar ein sgriniau ni. A hefyd, dw i'n rili joio – siarad yn bersonol, mae yna raglenni gwych ar S4C – "Ffit Cymru" ac "Am Dro". Mae yna fformatau da, on'd oes e? Felly ie, dw i'n ddiolchgar iawn iddyn nhw.

(Translation) That is a good question, Delyth. I think the biggest challenge is, from 2028 onwards, financial certainty and assurance about funding free services through the medium of Welsh. We do not know the answer to that at the moment, so I repeat that, if we can include anything about considering the Welsh language in reviewing the licence fee, I think that is important for radio and television.

In terms of my greatest hope, I think of programmes such as "Hansh" and the coverage that it currently gets, and the fact that we have talented



young broadcasters who are being nurtured and talented young journalists on our screens. Speaking personally, I also really enjoy some fantastic programmes on S4C, such as "FFIT Cymru" and "Am Dro!". There are good formats, aren't there? I am very grateful for that.

Chair: Diolch yn fawr iawn—thank you very much—to the Welsh Language Commissioner Efa Gruffudd Jones and to Lowri Williams, the strategic director from the Welsh Language Commission. We are very grateful for the time that you have given us this morning as we bring to a conclusion our inquiry into broadcasting in Wales. We look forward to seeing you before the Committee on another occasion.

Efa Gruffudd Jones: Diolch yn fawr iawn i chi. Welwn ni chi eto.

(Translation) Thank you very much. See you again.

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Sir John Whittingdale and Robert Specterman-Green.

Chair: Good morning and welcome to the second panel of this meeting of the Welsh Affairs Committee, where we are bringing our inquiry into broadcasting in Wales to a conclusion. For the final part of this session, we have Sir John Whittingdale OBE MP, Minister of State at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. Alongside the Minister, we have Robert Specterman-Green, director of broadcasting at the Department. Is that correct?

Robert Specterman-Green: Director of media and creative industries.

Q423 **Chair:** You are both extremely welcome. Minister, you know this territory around broadcasting extremely well. There are probably few other people in this building who understand broadcasting and the legislative frameworks around broadcasting as well as you do. We have spent the last few months as a Committee looking at the changing media landscape and how that is impacting on broadcasting in Wales specifically, and I know there is read-across to other parts of the UK. Will you start the discussion this morning by giving us a general sense of where you think things are in terms of the changing broadcasting landscape and the impact on public service broadcasters, specifically for us in Wales? You and I have talked about broadcasting in the Welsh language on previous occasions. Also, what is your sense of what the long-term trends could be? If you could do that in a nice, short, couple-of-minutes answer, that would be fantastic.

Sir John Whittingdale: Thank you, Chair, for your kind words. We are in the middle of what is an accelerating revolution of the broadcasting landscape, which is fantastic news for people who enjoy watching television content. When I chaired a Select Committee, we produced a report on the impact of new media. Since then, there has been an explosion of content from the streaming services, which are taking a



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growing share of the market. We are still seeing new arrivals on a monthly basis. Alongside Netflix, Amazon, Apple and Disney, you now get Paramount+ and HBO, and that will continue to increase.

In my view, that makes the importance of public service broadcasters even greater because while the streaming services provide fantastic content, they do not—apart from some exceptions; there is content on them that meets what most people would regard as public service content, but that is not their prime motivation. Therefore, the things that the public service broadcasters are required to provide are ever more essential. At times when we are faced with a deluge of fake news and false information, the need for trusted news content is absolutely central, as well as the traditional genres. We are trying to give a bit more flexibility in precisely how they deliver the public service remit through the Media Bill, but nevertheless the underlying purpose of public service broadcasting remains as strong as ever.

In the context of the Welsh nation and Welsh public service broadcasting, obviously, the two main providers will continue to be the BBC and S4C. They will have the prominence they enjoy at the moment on linear, reinforced with the prominence legislation in the Media Bill, and we are also giving them a bit more flexibility as to how they go about delivering the content. As I say, for broadcasting generally, this is a golden age in terms of consumer choice and so on, but for public service broadcasting, it remains absolutely central to the Government's view of the broadcasting landscape, however it should evolve.

Q424 Chair: Are you not concerned that a point is coming somewhere in the future when the very concept of public service broadcasting starts to look outdated and that, because linear TV channels will continue to decline, what people understand now as public service broadcasting will cease to have any real meaning in the future?

Sir John Whittingdale: I don't think so because, as I say, while the streaming services are producing fantastic content, they generally do not provide what we see as the core content of the public service broadcasters. I suppose outside of the PSB channels, Sky News and CNN do provide news content, but the BBC will remain the primary news broadcaster and the most trusted brand in news. Things like documentary, investigative journalism, arts, education and current affairs are core parts of public service broadcasting, as well as high-end TV. One of the things we can go on to discuss is that while the dramatic content on the streaming services is incredibly good, it is normally—not in every case—aimed at an international audience, so it does not have the distinctively British content that we believe public service broadcasters are good at and should continue to deliver.

Q425 Chair: Do you think that the global platforms like Netflix and Amazon, which you have already suggested occupy a growing share of the marketplace, share that understanding of public service broadcasting that you have just described?



Sir John Whittingdale: I can think of shows on those services that would not look out of place on the BBC or ITV, so to that extent, it might well meet the definition. There is "The Crown", which is an amazing series; we are about to have season five or six launched, and it is clearly devoted to British content that has huge international appeal. But that is not the primary focus of those platforms. Their viability depends on attracting subscribers, not just in the UK but across the globe. That is in their mind. The changes taking place in the broadcasting landscape are going to pose challenges, particularly for the funding of all the public service broadcasters. They are all having to look at that and consider how they are going to meet that.

Q426 **Chair:** Can I ask you a specific question on that point? Amazon, so I understand, is taking a pretty strict approach to when it hosts public service broadcasters on its platform. I understand that it wants 30% of the advertising inventory, so effectively 30% of the revenue, of public sector broadcasters that it hosts on its platform. That is surely going to be a major threat to the financial viability of public service broadcasters in the future. Is that something you have already had discussions about?

Sir John Whittingdale: It was raised with me in the debate we had on the report produced by your sister Committee, the Scottish Affairs Committee, and featured then. One of the provisions of the Media Bill, which you all know well, is to achieve the same degree of prominence on smart TV sets and other means of receiving TV that currently apply to linear television. Amazon Fire Stick, for instance, will get covered by the prominence requirements. Under the Bill, it will need to carry ITV and the other PSBs in the top positions in the programme guide.

The commercial relationship between Amazon and ITV or the other broadcasters is something that, in the first instance, is for Amazon and ITV to negotiate. But standing behind that under the Bill will be Ofcom, which will be there to ensure that it is a commercial negotiation conducted to obtain an agreement on fair and reasonable terms. If one party—whichever of the streaming services it happens to be—is felt to be using its clout to impose unfair terms, that is something Ofcom can examine. It is early days, but under the legislation Ofcom will have that role.

Q427 **Chair:** But given that Amazon has a balance sheet bigger than most nations on earth, it is perhaps not going to be a very fair negotiation.

Sir John Whittingdale: No, but Ofcom also has in mind the requirements and shares the views of the Government about the importance of ITV, alongside the other PSBs, being available through whichever means, including Fire Stick. Therefore, that is something that they will want to ensure, and also that ITV is not subject to completely unfair terms as a result of a negotiation.

Q428 **Kevin Brennan:** If you are surprised to see me, it is because I am here as a guest this morning on the Committee. The draft Media Bill has now been published. There are measures in it, quite frankly, that should have been introduced maybe five years ago, in terms of prominence and so on.



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People have been waiting around for quite a long time. When do you anticipate introducing the actual Bill into the House?

Sir John Whittingdale: You are entirely right. Not quite when I was chairing the Select Committee, but when I was Secretary of State—six years ago now—we were talking about the provisions that have emerged in the Media Bill. Certainly, the PSBs have been clear that prominence is very important to them going forward, and I would have liked it to have arrived sooner.

As you know, we have published the draft Media Bill in detail. It is quite complicated. We are getting a lot of representations on the detail—on issues such as the one that the Chair just raised, and others too. It gives us the opportunity to look at the detail of the Bill to ensure that when we do introduce it, we get it absolutely right. To that extent, it is advantageous that we have that additional time, but it is certainly my strong hope that it will be early in the next Session. You know the process of government; it is not entirely within our gift, but it is an important Bill that I would want to see us get on to the statute book as soon as we can.

Q429 **Kevin Brennan:** Just to throw a couple of spanners in the works in relation to that, obviously the privatisation plans for Channel 4 have been abandoned by the Government—quite rightly, in my opinion. Nevertheless, the Government have chosen to introduce new rules in relation to Channel 4's commissioning and the ability to commission in-house, which Channel 4 did not want. In evidence to this Committee, independent producers in Wales have said that they are greatly concerned that the proposal might undermine the independent producers constellation within Wales. What is your answer to those concerns from independent producers?

Sir John Whittingdale: The provisions in the Bill affecting Channel 4 are designed to try to help it remain viable in the future, when the challenges that we have already discussed will intensify. The removal of the bar on in-house production is a part of that. It doesn't mean that Channel 4 is going to immediately abandon the independent sector. There will be remaining quotas like the ones that exist at the moment.

Q430 **Kevin Brennan:** But it could, by definition, take away from them.

Sir John Whittingdale: Obviously, if Channel 4 chooses to make a production in-house, that production is not being made by an independent production company—so, to that extent, yes. But Channel 4 is aware of the importance and it will still have obligations to commission particularly from outside London, including in Wales. One of the great success stories for Wales is the amount of television content that is being produced by both public service broadcasters and streaming services in Wales.

Q431 **Kevin Brennan:** Is there any specific protection for Welsh producers that you envisage in this new arrangement?

Sir John Whittingdale: That is something that I know TAC has raised. Going back to the beginning of our discussion, the Bill is still in draft form. We will continue to look at it, and if it is felt that there needs to be



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stronger requirements, we will consider that. We are still talking to Channel 4 about its precise obligations in that area, so the door is not closed, but there will already be some obligations in place for the channel to continue to commission.

Q432 Kevin Brennan: My second spanner is commercial radio. I don't know whether you have caught any of the evidence given over the last few weeks to your former Committee—the CMS Committee, which I sit on—about part 6 of the draft Bill, which relates to commercial radio. It is fair to say that it was put together quite late in the day when the Bill was drawn up. There was a spat—I can only describe it as that—between the commercial radio sector, represented by Radiocentre, and the big tech companies, represented by techUK and companies such as TuneIn that provide these selection services.

Are you confident that that part of the Bill can command sufficient support and is sufficiently practical to be able to be included in the final Bill? The tech sector has basically said that it wasn't consulted and that it is unworkable, impracticable and a lot of the things in it couldn't actually be introduced for many years to come.

Sir John Whittingdale: It wasn't that much of a late addition. When I was last doing this job, we carried out the radio review, which was very clear that the same challenges that applied to PSBs applied to radio. In a world where people are accessing content through different means, such as smart speakers, there needs to be discoverability right at the top. The general principle that content should be identifiable, easily available and not subject to penal terms applied to radio as much as it does to TV. That is why we included the radio provisions in the Bill. I personally am very pleased that we have done so because the radio review was very clear, and the radio sector has argued very strongly for it.

On relations with the tech platforms, I have been talking to them just as you have been doing. We are still open to precisely how that relationship should work, but again it will be subject to the oversight of Ofcom, to obtain the same fair outcome as applies in the TV world.

Q433 Virginia Crosbie: Croeso, Sir John. It is a privilege to have you before the Committee. I wanted to talk about funding for PSBs. You mentioned the successes of PSBs in Wales, but we have some evidence that the BBC has experienced a 30% drop in real-terms funding, and S4C a drop of 36%. How do you see these companies responding to these concerns, particularly when we have the Netflixes of the world, who have deep pockets?

Sir John Whittingdale: S4C, I think, has had a really good outcome. I am very pleased that they got the boost. We had a very deep look at the whole way in which S4C operated. We had the Williams review, which came back with a lot of recommendations, almost every one of which has either been accepted or will be implemented. Also, as part of that, S4C had a big injection to allow it to develop its digital offering. It has an agreement that it will receive funding through the licence fee, and it has had a big uplift.



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S4C went through a period when it did not get any increase, as indeed did the BBC. The BBC has had to accept a continuation of flat cash for another couple of years. Next year, we come to the end of that period, and it will revert to receiving an inflation-linked increase. I understand that the BBC has been under pressure, but everyone has to remember that, at the end of the day, ordinary households have to provide the funding through the licence fee, and these are extremely hard times. The Government felt that it was right not to ask people to pay a significantly increased licence fee for the time being. It was a difficult balance. I understand the pressure that that has created for the BBC, but I think S4C should be pretty content with the settlement that it received.

Q434 Virginia Crosbie: Regarding the review of the licence funding model, could we have some clarity on the timing, and on the funding arrangements post 2028, when it needs to be renegotiated?

Sir John Whittingdale: The funding review is a long-term look. I have talked about this in the past. Various people have argued for different options for funding the BBC. A lot of people have said, "People can choose whether to subscribe to Netflix or Amazon. Why can't they choose whether to subscribe to the BBC?" I have always said, "The reason you can choose is because you get Netflix and Amazon through IPTV, and a significant number of people rely on DTT. You can't have a subscription model at the moment on that."

The future funding is really looking further ahead. We have said that DTT will remain until 2034, but more and more people are switching to streaming TV content. That will in itself create additional pressure. It is really a long-term look. I do not see any likely alternative to the licence fee, certainly in this charter period. Looking into the next charter period, I suspect—whoever happens to be in charge then will need to consider this—that the licence fee is likely to continue for that time.

The future funding examination is really looking beyond that, because as broadcasting evolves, pressure on the licence fee model will continue to grow, and more and more people will say, "I don't watch the BBC. Therefore, I don't see why I should pay the licence fee. Indeed, I don't have to." That is already a significant number, and it is rising.

Q435 Chair: Coming back to the draft Bill—forgive me if you have made this point already—where is it in the system at the moment? Is it still being considered, with the technicalities being worked on?

Sir John Whittingdale: There are two different aspects. There is the technicalities aspect, which involves ongoing discussions with all the various stakeholders about potential amendments. Your sister Committee is carrying out pre-legislative scrutiny at the moment. I am going to talk to them in a week's time. Obviously, we will be keen to hear what they have to say. There are a lot of people feeding into the existing draft to improve it. In due course, we will look at all of that and then publish the final text.



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Alongside that is a different discussion, which you will be only too familiar with, which is with the PBL process to see when and how early we can get a slot in the legislative programme.

Q436 **Chair:** There is a danger that we will simply run out of road before the election, isn't there? You would need the best part of a year to get this through.

Sir John Whittingdale: Who knows when all of us are going to have to fight an election? It would certainly be my hope that we would get it on to the statute book before then.

Chair: Delyth Jewell is guesting on the Committee today from the Senedd in Wales. Delyth, please.

Q437 **Delyth Jewell:** Diolch, Cadeirydd. Bore da. I want to ask first about the governance of the BBC. As of yesterday, it is good to know that a state-educated Welsh speaker is at the reins of the BBC, which had been reported on with some astonishment by *The Telegraph*, but there are lots of state-educated Welsh speakers in Wales who are very pleased that Elan Closs Stephens is there.

Ben Lake: Hear, hear!

Q438 **Delyth Jewell:** Reflecting on the recent resignation of the BBC chair, do you think that more stability could be brought to that process, if the devolved Governments were involved in some way in that appointment process?

Sir John Whittingdale: The BBC board, which was a creation only at the time of the last charter, has a reserved place for each of the nations of the UK. All four have a board member. I share your pleasure that Elan has taken on the interim chair role. I know her from previous incarnations, and I have no doubt she will do a very good job. The appointment of the chair is subject to a process, which is laid down.

Ultimately, it is a matter for the Government, but it has to go through the public appointments process. That will be undertaken quite soon. We have not yet, for instance, even drawn up a panel who will consider the applications, but I think that will continue under the same process with which the chair has always been appointed. Obviously, devolved Administrations will have an ability to express views but, ultimately, it will be done through that process.

Q439 **Delyth Jewell:** Thank you. Turning from the governance and behind the scenes to the content that is on people's screens or is reaching people, I am sure you are very familiar with the information deficit about Welsh politics, because so many people in Wales get their news through the lens of a different country.

I think this Committee has heard evidence from the Media Reform Coalition that only 31% of Welsh adults were able to identify the First Minister of Wales without being prompted. What is your reaction to that?



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Do you think that is a problem? What do you think could be done to address that information deficit?

Sir John Whittingdale: I am not sure I am necessarily going to say that the blame for that rests entirely with broadcasters. Equally, you could probably make the same argument for many members of the UK Government here who would not be identified. The BBC is subject to obligations to serve all the nations and regions of the UK. That is absolutely at the top of the charter for the public purposes of the BBC. How it goes about doing that is a matter for the BBC.

Wales is fortunate in that it does have a dedicated public service channel besides the BBC to serve the population of Wales who speak the Welsh language. Ofcom stands behind to ensure that the BBC delivers on that public purpose, but it is not for us to tell the BBC the way in which it needs to devote so many hours to news or whatever. It is more an overarching purpose, laid down under the charter.

Q440 **Delyth Jewell:** Thank you for that. By the way, Chair, I wanted to put on the record my thanks for the fact that we are doing this; it is a really innovative way of doing things. I do not believe that the Committee that I chair in the Senedd has extended an invitation to you, Minister, but we have extended an invitation to some of your predecessors to give evidence. Unfortunately, on those five occasions their diaries could not allow for that, which is a curious shame, but there is a standing invitation to you, of course. My thanks to the Committee for allowing this to happen—diolch yn fawr iawn, Cadeirydd.

Sir John Whittingdale: As you probably know, I am doing this job while my colleague, Julia Lopez, is absent on maternity leave, so we will see quite how long I will be in the job, but I will do my very best to make sure that my diary does allow me to attend if there is such an invitation.

Delyth Jewell: We would be delighted—thank you so much. That would be wonderful. Diolch yn fawr iawn.

Chair: Fabulous—bendigedig.

Q441 **Mr Roberts:** Good morning, Sir John. To follow on from Delyth's point, a lot of witnesses have expressed concern to this Committee that Wales is not properly reflected in public sector broadcasting. You just said that how public sector broadcasters go about doing that is a matter for them; until what point? At what point do the Government step in and say, "You're not doing it very well"?

Sir John Whittingdale: In the first instance, Ofcom steps in and says, "You're not doing it very well." Ofcom has a duty, particularly in the area of the BBC. S4C is obviously a Welsh-language channel, so I don't think it is likely to be criticised for not doing enough in Wales. ITV and Channel 4 are under slightly less stringent obligations. The BBC is governed by a charter, which is very clear, and one of Ofcom's jobs is to make sure that the BBC delivers the requirements of the charter, so if Ofcom decided that the BBC was not doing enough in Wales, then Ofcom could say so.



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Also, Elan, as a Welsh board member, is also there to speak up. The board members of the BBC are not there just to be representatives of the particular nations that they are appointed to represent—they contribute to the general discussion—but they obviously have a role to speak on behalf of Wales or the other nations in board meetings. So there are internal and external voices.

Q442 **Mr Roberts:** Would you expect Ofcom to actively monitor how much Welsh content there is nationally?

Sir John Whittingdale: Yes. That is part of the role of Ofcom. Again, how Ofcom goes about deciding whether or not the BBC is delivering the public purpose that is laid down in the charter is up to Ofcom. I think you, Chairman, have already had Ofcom appear before this Committee, and they will be able to tell you in more detail about how they go about that, but that is one of their duties, absolutely.

Q443 **Mr Roberts:** I guess this issue has been made more prominent because the BBC, as a good example, has a 24-hour news channel and BBC Wales has half an hour at 6.30 of an evening. It is more obvious then. When something like the scandal at the Betsi Cadwaladr health board in north Wales happens and £120 million has disappeared, that was a big story in Wales, but I don't remember seeing much coverage of it at all on the BBC News channel as a national story. There is very, very little in the national news—the UK-wide news—about things that are going on in Wales. Is that a problem?

Sir John Whittingdale: Obviously, with an example like that it is not just an issue about whether or not the BBC carries it; it is an issue for all the news providers as to the extent to which they report on events taking place in Wales. It is not for the Government to tell news providers what they should and should not report.

The BBC has been very active in trying to ensure both that its content is produced from across the UK and that its news reporting is too. I know that part of the BBC's news operation will now be centred in Cardiff—I think it is the science bit. There is going to be greater BBC news presence in Wales and one hopes that that might perhaps lead to more stories coming out about Wales on the national BBC.

Q444 **Mr Roberts:** Wonderful. On a different topic, some Committee members went to America in January. We went to New York, Washington DC, Atlanta and a little town just outside Atlanta, and everywhere we went, even in the small town, everyone had heard about Wrexham—everybody. I have family in America, and for years and years it was a case of, "You're from Wales—where?" "We're from Wales." "Is that part of England?" "No, it's not part of England!" This was all we got. Given the success of programmes like "Welcome to Wrexham", which has been such a huge thing, and other programmes made in Wales, like "Doctor Who", how are the UK Government encouraging public service broadcasters to make more programmes in Wales than they currently do?



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Sir John Whittingdale: That is a really interesting question. First, let's all salute Ryan Reynolds, who has not only propelled Wrexham AFC into the next league up but is now taking the Welsh language to America, which is terrific news. Welsh Wednesdays are going to take place in the US on his streaming channel. Hopefully that will bring Welsh content and Welsh culture to a much wider audience.

In terms of the content made in Wales, you have two different types, both of which are terrific. You have the content that is very clearly Welsh. It is made primarily by the BBC but also by one or two others. "Doctor Who" is less obviously Welsh, but "Torchwood" was quite obviously Welsh—it was set underneath Cardiff. "Gavin & Stacey" brought together Barry and Billericay, which is just next-door to my constituency. The alliance between Essex and Wales was very good. There also is "The Pembrokeshire Murders". That is distinctively Welsh content.

Then you have the content that is made in Wales but not obviously Welsh, although obviously the Welsh economy benefits enormously. "Sex Education" is a great show and it is made in Wales, but it is directed at an international audience, so it is less obviously branded Welsh. Both are good things. It is great for the Welsh economy that international companies are choosing to come and make shows in Wales. Equally, it is important that distinctively Welsh content is available. And that, I think, is more likely to be done by the PSBs.

When I was Secretary of State, I went to visit the new BBC headquarters in Cardiff, which were still under construction. I think £120 million has gone into that. But also—obviously—S4C is making programmes. ITV has done. Channel 4 has done. I think you will see Welsh production right across all the different TV providers. At the same time, the obviously Welsh content is an important part of PSB.

Q445 **Mr Roberts:** Another production company said to us that there were rules around how much of the production is supposed to be done by companies that are in Wales or are Welsh production companies, and that a bit of brass-plating was going on—companies outside Wales are pretending to be Welsh companies by having a little office there, although there is no one really there, just to say that they are a Welsh company. Is that on your radar at all? Do you see that as a problem?

Sir John Whittingdale: I think TAC particularly raised that. Brass-plating is not meeting the requirements. There does have to be a significant proportion—I think it is laid down—that is actually headquartered or financially spent outside London or within the obligations. That is a matter for Ofcom, but this is another area where, potentially, if there is a problem, the draft Media Bill will address it, so we will be very happy to have submissions from TAC or anybody else on the issue.

Q446 **Chair:** On that point, we as a Committee have just written to Ofcom about exactly that point—brass-plating—so we will share with you the response that we get from Ofcom.

Sir John Whittingdale: That would be helpful; thank you.



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Chair: We are going to have to quicken the pace of questions and answers, if that's okay. Kevin Brennan, please.

Kevin Brennan: I did all mine in one go earlier, so I'm okay, Chair, if that saves you time.

Q447 **Chair:** Fantastic. Could I ask you about sport then, Minister? We took evidence about the changes going on in broadcasting and sport, and the fact that, for example, the rugby autumn internationals in Wales were now behind a pay wall with Amazon Prime, including for the first time the Welsh-language coverage. What is your sense of the changes going on there? Are you broadly relaxed and neutral about such trends? Is it something purely for the broadcasters and the sports governing bodies to work out for themselves? At what point do your antennae get alerted to the fact that there is a public interest issue at stake?

Sir John Whittingdale: As you know, the listed events that are required to be made available to free-to-air providers are the really top, iconic events that unite the nation. There is a subsequent list for highlights. After that, it gets very difficult, because they have to strike a balance. The sport's governing body has to weigh up whether attracting as large an audience as possible is a priority against maximising the revenue they will get from the sale of rights. That is a delicate balance, and I have always taken the view that they are probably the best placed to reach it.

Wales is relatively fortunate, in that S4C carries an awful lot of sport, which is obviously free to air. Under the Bill, S4C will become a PSB, which makes it one of the channels that is able to access listed events.¹

It is something that we keep under review. We are looking at the whole issue of digital rights, because listed events apply to linear, but we are considering whether we should extend that to digital. It is something we will be consulting on further in due course. At the moment, we have no intention of changing the events that are listed.

Q448 **Chair:** We heard in evidence that live sport is crucial for S4C. Some of the programmes that get the biggest audiences on S4C are live sporting events. In the first part of today's session we heard from the Welsh Language Commissioner about her desire to see Welsh-language commentary freely available to an audience.

The autumn internationals were behind a pay wall with Amazon, as I mentioned, but Amazon refused to come to take questions from this Committee; we can question S4C and other public sector broadcasters. Does that little example not go to the heart of the change that we are seeing, in that the more powerful that the likes of Amazon become in controlling broadcasting—whether that is access to Welsh-language sports events or other types of things—the further out of reach they become to policy makers, legislators and regulators? There is a growing

¹ Correction by witness: S4C has been a PSB since its launch in 1982. The published draft Media Bill sets out changes that make qualifying for the listed events regime a PSB-specific benefit. This means S4C will qualify for the regime for the first time.



disparity. Is that something that concerns you, Minister?

Sir John Whittingdale: It is something that we need to keep under review, particularly with the growth of the streaming services. They might well have ambitions. A long time ago, we started off down this road with the agreement reached between Sky and the Premier League, which brought huge resources to the Premier League but also benefited Sky. We can see the attraction, but at the end of the day it is up to the sports body to decide whether their interests are best served by maintaining free-to-air provision.

I understand that it is important to S4C to continue to carry sports rights, but it is also of real benefit to sports fans in Wales that a large proportion of sports events are available free to air through S4C. A week or so ago, I was before the Scottish Affairs Committee, and Scotland does not have a dedicated channel that carries a large amount of Scottish sports content so, to that extent, Wales, through S4C, is fortunate.

Q449 **Ruth Jones:** Thank you for your time this morning, Sir John. I want to carry on with the sports discussion. Looking at the potential extension of the listed events regime to catch-up programming, for events on the other side of the world, catch-up is important. However, the listed events protection for things like the Olympics and the World Cup will not necessarily apply to the new streaming platforms, so we could have the World Cup behind a pay wall. Do the Government have plans to extend the listed events regime, and if not, why not?

Sir John Whittingdale: As I have said, digital rights is now becoming a really important issue. That is something we will look at very carefully. I think the case for extending the listed events regime to cover digital rights as well as linear rights is a strong one. Precisely how you go about doing that is something that we are discussing and will in due course be consulting on. It is an intention, but we will be wanting to—

Robert Specterman-Green: We have already consulted.

Sir John Whittingdale: Oh, we have already consulted on it! Having already consulted on it, we will publish proposals in due course. There are complications in it. It did not cover the issue of whether we should extend the listed events regime to other events, and at the moment we do not have any intention of doing that, but it is something that both the broadcasters and the sports bodies will also need to keep under review. The other thing to say is that—this is particularly important for the Senedd—while broadcasting is a reserved policy issue, sport is not, so if the Welsh Government had strong views about sport, we would be keen to discuss that with them.

Ruth Jones: Thank you. I am sure the Committee will keep that under review as well.

Q450 **Ben Lake:** Thank you, Sir John, for your time this morning. Can I turn to the Welsh language? You mentioned earlier how the draft Media Bill will transform the prominence of S4C and other PSBs in terms of digital



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platforms and modern devices. Are there any other aspects of the Bill that you think will be a particular help to Welsh-language broadcasting?

Sir John Whittingdale: Obviously, the centrepiece of the Bill is prominence. The fact that S4C has the No. 4 slot in Wales, and that will be extended to apply to all the different ways in which people access TV, will be as important for them as it is for the other public service broadcasters. That is a central thrust.

The provisions specifically around S4C are in large part implementing what the Williams review put forward in terms of things like the governance structure, but there will be aspects of the Bill that will also take account of some of the recommendations. S4C has an important part in the Media Bill that we are keen to hear. Robert, do you wish to add anything?

Robert Specterman-Green: If I may, there is a specific provision that we are introducing in the Media Bill, which you might have seen. It is to give clear statutory recognition to content in the UK's minority languages and to build that into the public service broadcasting remit, which is a change compared with the current arrangements.

Q451 **Ben Lake:** Thank you; in fact, that anticipates my next question. The written evidence we received from the Department notes that the review into PSBs should consider "whether and how the BBC" in particular "should continue to deliver minority language broadcasting services". Would you mind elaborating a little on what you expect and what you hope to achieve from such a review? Also, if I may rather cheekily ask, does that include the Welsh language? It might be perceived as running a little bit contrary to some of the other very welcome changes that the Government are trying to make.

Sir John Whittingdale: There is a general additional flexibility that is going to be brought in as a result of the Bill applying to all the PSBs and how they go about delivering their public service obligations. As you know, we have moved to full funding of S4C out of the licence fee, which was a Williams recommendation but is now in place.

There is the current requirement of 10 hours of programming supplied by the BBC to S4C. The Bill will allow them a bit more flexibility in precisely how that is delivered. Funnily enough, I asked earlier about how it would be agreed, and it will be for S4C and the BBC to agree how that obligation is achieved. It needs both parties to agree that that is a desirable way of meeting it. So there is the flexibility, but it retains S4C's ability to set out how they would like it to be achieved.

Q452 **Ben Lake:** Finally, on Welsh language radio and particularly commercial radio stations, it has been a long-standing grievance for many of my constituents that we no longer have a commercial radio station that broadcasts in the Welsh language, although the Welsh language retains its place as the daily spoken language in the area. When we had representatives of Ofcom before us, they explained that they did not have the requisite powers to require commercial radio stations to increase their Welsh language content output over and above anything they might have



agreed in the original licensing.

Do you think there is any scope for or merit in giving Ofcom powers to exercise greater discretion in certain cases? Let me give you an example. In my area, there was a commercial radio station called Radio Ceredigion, which was almost exclusively bilingual—50:50, if not a little bit more in Welsh—seven days a week. We no longer have Radio Ceredigion, which has been submerged into a larger conglomerate, and the Welsh output is an hour at 9 o'clock on a Sunday evening. Do you think there is any scope for or merit in giving Ofcom greater discretion in very clear cases where we need to look again at the licensing?

Sir John Whittingdale: As you will know, Ofcom is now making available small-scale DAB licences, which take advantage of the technology to allow quite a lot more broadcasters the opportunity. It would be a good opportunity for Welsh language broadcasters in specific areas where there is a higher proportion of Welsh language speakers to apply for one of those licences. The allocation of those licences is a matter for Ofcom, but it would seem to me reasonable to make the argument that this is an underserved population whose needs could be met through a small-scale DAB licence.

Q453 **Virginia Crosbie:** I want to ask about community radio, which is really important across Wales and particularly for the Welsh language. It is disappointing that Welsh community radio broadcasters make up 3% of applications for the community radio fund, but they only receive 1% of the allocation. Do you know why that is?

Sir John Whittingdale: Part of the problem, particularly during the pandemic, when I was last doing this job, is that we had a huge number of community radio stations that were finding it difficult, and the community radio fund was not able to support more than a relatively small proportion of them. There are far more applications than we are able to give grants for.

We have increased the community radio fund, I think, in each of the last three years, and I know that there are specific community radio stations in Wales that have benefited from grants from the fund. That is not to say that I would not like to be able to do more, because I do think community radio plays a very important role in serving audiences in a way that the larger commercial stations and the BBC cannot.

Q454 **Virginia Crosbie:** One of the ways we can support community radio stations is by advertising on them—for example, when recruiting for police forces. Is there a reason why that money is not being spent on community radio stations?

Sir John Whittingdale: You are talking specifically about public service information or advertisements. That is for the individual Departments concerned and for the Cabinet Office. It is a battle I have been having for a long time, because they have not been as imaginative as they should be—not just in radio but in newspapers, online and so on—in reaching specific audiences. I would encourage you to make that point. I do not



think there is any reason why they should not, other than that they usually say they have to go through due diligence, and it is quite difficult to identify a large number of very small stations.

Q455 Chair: Virginia raises a good point, because a large chunk of local radio, certainly in Wales, is radio stations that carry the name of a particular county but have long since lost any real connectivity with that community and do not really carry any content but still carry the name of the county. In the meantime, there are a lot of other stations cropping up, starting off digitally and growing, and they are real community stations. Surely, those are the people that we as a Government, in terms of our huge advertising spend, should be backing and letting them carry adverts, whether that be for police recruitment or other forms of public service information, don't you think?

Kevin Brennan: Chairman of the BBC—you could advertise for that.

Sir John Whittingdale: The Cabinet Office will say to you that their priority has to be to achieve the maximum reach of the advertising or information expenditure to obtain value for money for the taxpayer. The purpose is not to support specific stations. Having said that, in my view, that is a very useful by-product and that was a discussion that we had during the pandemic particularly, as to how they could meet those objectives. I would certainly not try to dissuade you from making that argument.

Q456 Ruth Jones: Looking at the interplay between FM and DAB, we believe the FM system is not going to be switched off until 2030 now. Given that DAB is not necessarily accessible to cars across Wales due to the geography and so on, is there not an argument for allowing radio stations to continue with the FM system rather than cutting them off prematurely?

Sir John Whittingdale: FM is in decline and we have achieved quite a lot of success in extending DAB coverage across Wales, so it does now reach—I am not sure of the figure. Sorry, I do not have it immediately here. That has been the first priority in terms of Ofcom. And then, on top of that, we have small-scale DAB licences, which, again, offer opportunity. Having more FM stations is not necessarily seen to be the most effective way of extending radio coverage in Wales. That is not to say that it is not something—ultimately, it is a matter for Ofcom. It is something that Ofcom would certainly need to look at, if that case were made. At the moment, that priority has been DAB.

Q457 Ruth Jones: On the roll-out of the DAB small-scale licences, the main criticism from the evidence we have heard is that they take an awful long time to be issued and they are very expensive for what they are. How would you deal with that criticism?

Sir John Whittingdale: I would hope that both things—length of time and cost—could be reduced. Again, that is a matter for Ofcom. Ofcom is awarding new small-scale DAB licences. I think at least a couple have recently been awarded in Wales. However, I would encourage you to talk to Ofcom about that because it has the prime responsibility.



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Ruth Jones: I am sure we can do that.

Q458 **Chair:** I just want to follow up on Ruth's question. I suspect, Minister, that you will respond by saying that this is a matter for Ofcom, but I would like to ask the question anyway.

It is a good point, isn't it? FM is not being switched off—I think the Government said this—until 2030 at the earliest. We have talked about the growth of genuine community radio stations, many of which are getting to a point where they are becoming commercially viable. I know some of those in Wales would really value being able to get an FM licence to continue their growth. Lots of cars in Wales are older than on average across the UK and therefore do not necessarily carry DAB, so FM is still seen as a really important thing to go after.

As I understand it, Ofcom is offering short-term trial FM licences. There is an application process that a station needs to go through. Surely, if Ofcom can award a licence for 28 days or whatever the trial period is, why can it not award the licence for longer? If a station satisfies the criteria to get a short-term trial FM licence, why can't it be given one for five years, which would still keep it within the timeframe for switching off FM?

Sir John Whittingdale: The first thing to say is, as you correctly predicted, that is a matter to raise with Ofcom. Obviously, there is a cost attached to moving into FM broadcasting, which it would need to take account of. There are also limitations on the strength of transmission and the obligation that Ofcom has to make sure it does not interfere with other broadcasters nearby. However, in principle, that is something that Ofcom would be able to take into account and you would need to ask it.

Chair: We will do.

Sir John Whittingdale: I cannot see any specific objection.

Q459 **Chair:** It just seems to me that there is perhaps somebody sitting there saying, "No, in our world, for the future it will be DAB. That is what we are interested in and we don't want anyone else joining FM." However, the world is a bit more complicated than that and there are opportunities for FM.

Sir John Whittingdale: And I think particularly in Wales, where you have quite remote areas that do not have the advantage of DAB coverage. That is something and maybe a small-scale DAB can still be applied there, but there is no reason to say that they should be prevented from having new FM licences.

Chair: Thank you very much for that answer. Final question from Kevin Brennan.

Q460 **Kevin Brennan:** I asked most of my questions earlier, but I will ask a final one. Commercial radio has argued that some of the provisions in the draft Media Bill aren't necessary because the digital markets unit will have the opportunity to do those sorts of things. What is your response to that argument from the tech companies?



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Sir John Whittingdale: On the digital markets Bill, it is more about the competition requirements, which will be enforced by the new unit within the CMA. The issue that we had been debating earlier, which is around the commercial relationship or settlement reach between broadcasters and tech platforms, is going to be the obligation of Ofcom to oversee. So, to some extent, you are dealing with two different regulators and two different processes. I think both are equally important.

Chair: Thank you very much. That brings us to the end of this session. Minister Sir John Whittingdale, thank you very much, and Robert Specterman-Green, director of media and creative industries at DCMS, thank you very much for your time with us. We will bring the session to a close.