



Department for
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Delyth Jewell AS
Chair
Culture, Communications, Welsh Language,
International Relations and Sport Committee
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay
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Dear Delyth

Thank you for your letter of 17 November concerning the future of public service broadcasting (PSB) in Wales. I am responding as the minister responsible for PSB policy and I was interested to hear the updates you provided from the Committee's meeting in October regarding the challenges facing the broadcasting sector and PSBs specifically.

PSBs play an important role in ensuring the broadcasting system serves the whole of the UK, and the Government is fully committed to ensuring the continued success and sustainability of the PSB system. In particular minority language broadcasting organisations, such as S4C, are integral in reflecting the culture and communities of people they represent. It is exactly for these reasons that the Government is conducting its own strategic review of PSB, which has included appointing an independent PSB Advisory Panel. The Government is keen to ensure that the UK continues to benefit from a modern system of PSB that remains relevant and can continue to meet the needs of UK audiences in the future. The review is about working out how best to achieve that in light of the challenges the sector is currently facing.

You mention the increasing pressures that the UK's PSBs are facing from global streaming companies, which is also something that we have been looking at through our review. That is why on 31 August the Government launched a consultation on audience protection standards on video-on-demand services to level the playing field between traditional broadcasters and on-demand streaming services; to provide a fair competitive framework and ensure UK viewers receive equivalent standards, regardless of the technologies they choose to use. A number of Welsh organisations have responded to that consultation and I will consider their responses, alongside others, before setting out our next steps in due course.

You also refer to the importance of ensuring that sporting events of special significance continue to be broadcast by PSBs. The listed events regime is designed to ensure that sporting events of national significance are available to as wide an audience as possible by making the rights for these events available to free-to-air broadcasters.



The Government recognises that sporting events like the rugby autumn international matches are a particular highlight of the Welsh sporting calendar - as well as more widely in the UK - attracting significant audience interest. The Government also understands the important role S4C plays in providing an avenue to Welsh language content, and so I was pleased to see that Amazon Prime committed to providing Welsh-language live match coverage, throughout the autumn internationals, and that viewers in the UK were also able to watch Welsh language match highlights.

However, I should explain that inclusion on the list (even in “group A”) does not guarantee that the event will be broadcast on a free to air channel. The rights owners are not obliged to sell their rights to a free to air channel, nor are free to air channels obliged to purchase rights. Furthermore, the need to ensure significant sporting events are available to as wide an audience as possible must be balanced with the ability of sporting organisations to generate revenues to invest in their sports. The Government believes that the current Listed Events regime works well and strikes an appropriate balance.

Finally, you raised the conclusions from a report of your predecessor committee, *Exploring the Devolution of Broadcasting*. The Government was clear in its response to the report that broadcasting policy - including S4C and other PSBs - is and will remain a reserved matter, regulated at a UK level. Broadcasters play an important part in the UK’s economic and cultural landscape, and it is right the UK government retains responsibility for the sector given the scale at which it operates in the digital age.

I am afraid I cannot commit to joining one of your upcoming meetings at this stage, but I shall continue to take an interest in the Committee’s work and its findings moving forward.

With Best Wishes,



Julia Lopez MP
Minister of State
Minister for Media, Data and Digital Infrastructure