

**1. Do you agree with our view that a dedicated service for Children will enhance the public service offering in the Welsh language for Children?**

There is no doubt that the proposed service would improve the public service provision available to children in Wales. S4C is to be congratulated for investing so much in original programming for children at a time when investment in children's programming is falling. But, securing a Welsh language service in and of itself is not enough. It would be imperative to provide an attractive and appealing service, in terms of its appearance and content, interesting and varied and of a high standard. Without this, the service could backfire, rejected or ignored.

Should not more research be undertaken to prove on a more scientific and measurable basis that there would be an audience for the service if it went ahead? In our opinion, this is central to the success of the plan.

The Welsh Language Board has held a number of research projects recently, which include policy recommendations on how to encourage more young people to speak Welsh and increase language transference in the home.

The Board's research into young people's networks and their use of language showed that providing opportunities for young people to use the language socially is crucial to the attempt to increase use of the language. The Board's research into language transference in the home suggested that television plays an important role in encouraging transference, especially in homes in where not both parents speak Welsh. The research showed that high quality programmes in the Welsh language can help encourage parents to pass the language on to their children.

The evidence is there, and the timing appears fine to us. In terms of funding, adequate funding must be available, as this is the only provider.

**2. Do you have any comments / what are your views about the proposed hours of broadcast and our target audiences?**

In terms of broadcast hours, detailed consideration must be given to the nature of the content and when it is broadcast, especially for the teenage group. Generally, this group watches less television than in the past and watch in different ways e.g. on computer or laptop. It is also known that young people in this age group like programmes that are not aimed specifically at them e.g. soaps, American drama serials (e.g. 'Lost', 'The O.C.'). In terms of Welsh language programmes, series such as 'Con Passionate' and Dewi Pws' travel programmes have proved popular in this age group. In terms of a channel for children and young people, the question would be whether programmes like these would be shown on the new channel? How much cross-promoting would there be between the new channel and S4C?

We agree that the provision for older children and teenagers need to be clearly defined and separated from the service for younger children. The suggested pattern seems sensible. As many hours as possible should be broadcast.

**3. What would you consider to be the most important key characteristics for television services for Children provided by S4C?**

The most important key features would be original content, effective branding and marketing, capitalising on the experience and specialisms of key partners e.g. the Urdd (Youth movement), Mentrau Iaith (Language Initiatives), Young Farmers, Schools.

A Welsh language service must be as good as other children's services if viewing habits are to be changed. In terms of pre-school age provision, it is especially important to consider bilingual parents who watch programmes with their children. It is important to attract mixed-language potential viewers such as these if we wish to create future S4C audiences.

The features described in the document highlight the needs well, but special care needs to be taken in the provision for teenagers. They are used to watching sophisticated English language programmes and it would be easy to draw unfavourable comparisons.

Additionally, the document makes no mention of how the new service would be marketed to children. It is crucial for the long term success of the service that the marketing is as imaginative and creative as the content itself. I.e. considered risk-taking and innovation should be encouraged in marketing the service. It is a target audience which is familiar with marketing messages and the variety of techniques used to transfer those messages.

**4 Do you have any comments on the options set out at paragraph 4 and in particular the option 1 and 2? Do you have any other comments you would like us to consider on this issue?**

There is a desire throughout the world to give citizens the opportunity to watch and listen to parliamentary discussions and debate, on radio and television. It is considered an integral part of the democratic process. During recent years, countries such as Trinidad and Tobago, Fiji and Zambia have moved towards live broadcasting of parliamentary proceedings. The decision by S4C and BBC in 1999 to create a partnership to broadcast National Assembly proceedings was unique and innovative. Losing this service would be a backward step, especially at a time when the Assembly has more powers and is keen to see the citizens of Wales actively engaged with its work.

The options in paragraph 4 are presented as a choice between retaining Assembly broadcasting and therefore losing an element of the children's service or losing the Assembly service totally. We wonder if there is another possible option which has not been outlined in the document?

Paragraph 5 mentions that additional programming would still be broadcast from national events e.g. The Royal Welsh and the Eisteddfod on S4C2 via the red button. If it is technically possible to run the children's service alongside these additional programmes from national events, why could the Assembly service not run alongside the children's service, bearing in mind that the Assembly does not sit during the periods when these national events occur?

In terms of option 2 (para 4.3.2) it is unlikely that a commercial provider would be interested in providing broadcast space for the Assembly service. The BBC could possibly use some of the space available to them on Mux B to carry the service.

Having a break in broadcasting between 9.00am and 6.00pm from Tuesdays to Thursdays would be damaging to viewing habits and figures, especially in the hours immediately after school, because children would get used to watching other channels (English language channels) on these three days and would possibly not return to the Welsh language channel on the other two school days.

**5. Do you believe that a third party provider would be willing to provide a Welsh language television service for Children of a similar nature to that outlined above on a commercial basis?**

It is unlikely that any commercial company would regard providing a Welsh language service for children as commercially attractive or viable. ITV has already stopped producing original programming for children because there is no economic advantage in doing so. The commercial value of children's programmes is set to drop even further with the ban on advertising some foods and sweets during children's programmes. It is possible that we will see fewer children's channels in the future as the advertising ban begins to take effect.

**6. Can you identify any other stakeholders we should be contacting not included at Annex A?**

The National Eisteddfod is on the list, but what about the local eisteddfodau and other local organisations? That would ensure grass roots participation in the consultation.

**7. Do you have any other comments you would like us to consider in relation to this Consultation on a new Welsh language television channel for Children?**

S4C may possibly lose viewers as a result of a children's channel. Currently, non-Welsh speaking parents who have opted for Welsh-medium education for their children may be drawn to other programmes on S4C as a result of viewing children's programmes with the family on S4C. They may, then, make use of subtitles on other S4C programmes. There is a danger that some of these viewers may be lost to S4C, as they won't chance upon S4C's other programmes. Effective cross-promotion is vital to mitigate this.

Finally, there is reference in paragraph 3.4.1.6 to the national curriculum, but no analysis of the sort of education provision. Is it an intention to produce programmes for schools? Who will provide schools programming in Wales? Will the resource be available for use by schools?