

## The Welsh Books Council

The Welsh Books Council enthusiastically welcomes S4C's plans to introduce a new public service Welsh language channel for children and young people.

We take pride in the good relationship between the Welsh Books Council's Children's Department and S4C's Children's Services and Marketing Departments. We can refer to successful co-operation on projects such as Bardd Plant Cymru (the Welsh Language Children's Poet Laureate) and the Tir na n-Og Awards (awards for the best children's books of the year) and National Books Day.

A channel dedicated to children, and an increase in broadcast hours, offers an exciting opportunity for further co-operation: TV content could offer additional publishing opportunities and more books could be adapted for television, especially fiction. We believe that there are many and varied opportunities for working across different media. The possibilities should be examined fully as a result of this exciting development.

We also believe that the new service would offer more opportunities to develop additional activities for children, especially in the marketing of programmes and reading materials for children and young people.

We also welcome the emphasis on a convergent service, making full use of new media and ensuring that the service is available on many technological forms.

**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?**

The new service would definitely improve public service provision in Welsh for children. It would consolidate existing viewers and foster a new generation of viewers. It is a necessary step in developing and fostering the Welsh language and ensuring that new generations of children and young people can speak Welsh.

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

We believe that the broadcast hours of 15 hours per day (from 6.00 am to 21.00 pm) are sensible; we also agree that three specific audiences need to be provided for. We share the concern as to whether the older children, especially teenagers, would turn to a children's channel. This should be given careful consideration. Also, as acknowledged in the document, this audience is particularly difficult to attract and provide for successfully. It is a very sophisticated audience and their expectations will be high. Providing an appealing and entertaining service for 14 - 16 year olds is very important, and a decision will have to be made as to where to place this block. Some programmes will be able to cross over and a flexible approach should be taken as the possibilities are considered.

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

The emphasis should be on excellence, pushing boundaries and expanding horizons.

As many originations as possible should be provided, reflecting the everyday lives and interests of the target audience.

In acquiring programmes for dubbing (especially successful pre-school series such as Bob y Bildar) meticulous research should be undertaken to ensure that the very best are bought, without fail.

**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?**

Option 1 would be best in our opinion, but on the clear understanding that the broadcasting of Assembly proceedings in a satisfactory way that does not dilute the current provision can be safeguarded. If that is not possible, we would favour Option 2.

- 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 third party provider would be able to offer a commercially based television service for children and young people of the nature and quality proposed here.

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

The list appears comprehensive and reflects the institutions working with children and young people.