

Basic Details

Consultation title: **Serving Children in the Digital Future**

To: Alun Thomas, Secretary, S4C

Name of respondent: **Wales Environment Link**

Representing (self or organisation/s) / Job Title:

Please state your age if you are 16 years old and under:

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Confidentiality / Declaration

What do you want S4C to keep confidential?

/ Name / Contact Details / Job Title / Age

I confirm that the correspondence supplied with this cover sheet is a formal consultation response. It can be published (subject to that which I have noted to be kept confidential above) on S4C's website and shared with DCMS, unless otherwise specified on this cover sheet, and I authorise S4C and DCMS to make use of the information in this response to meet its legal requirements. If I have sent my response by email, S4C can disregard any standard e-mail text about not disclosing email contents and attachments.

Name Signed (if hard copy)

Michele Aitchison
Assembly Information Officer for Wales Environment Link

Cyswllt Amgylchedd Cymru



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**Response to the S4C Authority Consultation Paper on
Serving Children in the Digital Future**

Wales Environment Link (WEL) is a network for voluntary environmental and countryside organisations in Wales, most of whom have an all-Wales remit. WEL is officially

designated the Intermediary Body between the government and the voluntary environmental sector in Wales. Our vision is to increase the effectiveness of the environmental sector in its ability to protect and improve the environment through facilitating and articulating the voice of the sector.

WEL is not at all opposed to the creation of a new Welsh Language public service television channel for children, however it is concerned that this might result in National Assembly proceedings ceasing to be broadcast by S4C. Therefore, WEL would like to make the following points in response to the above consultation paper, and in particular to questions 4, 6 and 7:

- WEL believes that the broadcasting of National Assembly proceedings is a public service, and has therefore noted with concern that Option 2 in the consultation document suggests ceasing this service.
- WEL considers that ceasing to broadcast National Assembly proceedings would undermine the Assembly's core philosophy of openness and transparency, particularly in light of the Assembly's recent reaffirmation of its commitment to increasing public awareness and understanding of the Assembly.
- WEL believes that the proposed changes would be detrimental to the functioning of the voluntary environmental sector, and the Third Sector more generally, particularly in the context of its work relating to Assembly liaison and policy monitoring.
- WEL's Assembly Information Officer, whose role it is to provide our member organisations with up-to-date information on the Assembly, often relies upon S4C2 coverage as a means of monitoring Assembly business.
- WEL member organisations benefit greatly from the current Assembly coverage broadcast by S4C2, particularly as a significant proportion of their staff:
 - are not based in Cardiff, and therefore cannot attend Assembly business at the Senedd.
 - do not have Real Player, Media Player or broadband and therefore cannot watch the Assembly via webcasting.
- WEL member organisations believe the proposed changes would diminish the ability of the public, in particular their supporters and volunteers, to follow and become

informed about Assembly business; and would have the effect of deterring civil engagement with the Assembly.

- WEL is calling on S4C to pursue either Options 1 or 3, and to continue broadcasting National Assembly proceedings.
- WEL would only accept Option 2, if we were assured that third parties would be taking over the provision of carriage for this service.
- WEL would suggest that, in addition to the S4C research on the views of Children – as provided in Part 2 of the consultation document, research should be carried out into users of the Assembly coverage.
- WEL would suggest that the Welsh Council for Voluntary Action should be contacted – being a stakeholder which has not been included at Annex A.

Wales Environment Link values the opportunity to take part in this important consultation process and trusts the above response will be taken into consideration by the S4C Authority, to help safeguard the broadcasting of National Assembly proceedings.

The member organisations of Wales Environment Link that sign up to this consultation response are:

Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales

Council for National Parks

National Trust in Wales

Open Spaces Society

RSPB Cymru

WWF Cymru

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