

Thank you very much for your consultation document. It is a very interesting and important document. Reading it was enlightening for me. Here are some points.

1. I found that para.3.1 and 3.2 were of great help to understand the nature and size of the problem facing S4C. There is a problem throughout Europe (and possibly throughout the world) of how to provide programmes that will be "the natural choice for a large number of children", and "teenagers" which is an especially "hard to reach group". This is the starting point.

2.1 What is unique about S4C's situation is your finding that "the profile of the Welsh language is changing". You therefore face not only the general problem, but also a problem specific to S4C. But I wonder if it is the profile of the language that is *changing*? Maybe you are correct, but I am not so sure. The world has changed. The world has changed many times in the past, but the Welsh language has survived. Are we not today facing just another changing world - this time in the wake of globalisation and technological developments - but that the external forces are, admittedly, much stronger this time.

2.2 It appears that your findings about the language profile are based to a large degree on evidence from the 2001 Census. An increase in the number of children able to speak the language was inevitable following the addition of Welsh as a subject to the National Curriculum. But care should be taken in drawing general conclusions about the state and future of the Welsh language from Census evidence. The weakness of the figures is that they tell us nothing about children's ability to use the language, or the children's 'feelings' about the culture associated with the Welsh language. When the census says that X% of the children in town A can speak Welsh, that is the parents' self-assessment - we know that parents can exaggerate their children's abilities! I fear that the number of children who speak Welsh in their everyday lives is, in reality, much lower than the Census figures.[And what significance should we place on the fact that the percentage of children between 3-4, and 5-9 who speak Welsh in south east Wales (apart from Monmouthshire) is lower than the percentage of children under 15 who speak the language, according to the 2001 Census, Table CAS 146? Does this not suggest that the number of young people between 10 and 15 who speak Welsh will have fallen below 43% within the next twenty years if current trends continue; or am I misunderstanding the statistics?] Having said all that, there is a positive aspect to the figures in the 2001 Census, of course. They show that a large percentage of children in Wales have some knowledge of the Welsh language. They also suggest that there is good will towards the language by a large number of parents in the anglicised south-east. This is a base that can be built on.

3.1 I believe that paragraphs 3.4.1.3 to 3.4.1.5 are key paragraphs. It would help if you expanded upon the proposed provision and explain some of the terms used in these paragraphs. I would welcome enlightenment on the following:

i. Is it a legal obligation that the service is "a mainly Welsh language service"? Why "mainly"? What percentage of the service will be in a language or languages other than Welsh? If the intention is to use English language content - or any other language apart from Welsh - you should be aware of the criticism that bilingual programmes can create the impression, or suggest that, the minority language is "poor, substandard and insufficient" - the opinion of Dafydd Glyn Jones.

ii. When you mention "the divergent requirements of the audience, both culturally and linguistically", to which audience are you referring? Is it a reference to the three divergent audiences who are learning Welsh, mentioned in 3.2.5? Or what? In order to increase the number of children who watch S4C you say that in order "to capture the attention of Children, content and means of delivery will have to be engaging, entertaining and innovative" [Para 3.4.1.4], especially so "in seeking to reach older children/teenagers". [3.4.1.7] The term "engaging, entertaining and innovative" is a loose term [I believe BBC Wales favours "lively, interesting and relevant". The meaning of 'innovative' is 'to break new ground'. How exactly will the new service break new ground? The meaning of para 3.4.1.3 is lost on me, but 3.4.1.6 suggests that the innovation will lie within content. It would be worthwhile expanding on your ideas about content.

iv. Is it an intention to further weaken the standard of spoken Welsh? I suspect that everybody accepts that the spoken language needs to be flexible and simple - and, of course, very simple for the youngest children - and able to adjust to a new world and new experiences. But it is also important that the spoken Welsh be of a standard, as it is taught in schools. Not "literary" Welsh or a dialect peculiar to one region. I often hear

complaints about heavy dialect in one particular programme. While using flexible spoken Welsh, we must be aware of the danger of diluting the language so much that it becomes grammatically incorrect, which could ultimately lead to its destruction, as the notable academic Professor J.E.Caerwyn Williams warned, as you will remember.

v. You say in para 3.4.1.3 that "the S4C Authority will lay down a Welsh language policy for the New Service". To ensure against a lowering of standards in the future I would like to strongly recommend (i) That the language policy is approved by a Welsh language academic [in consultation with a subject specialist?]; (ii) that the language standards are constantly monitored and reviewed by a body of specialists appointed by the Welsh Language Board or (in the absence of the Board) by a body independent of S4C and that reports by that body are published. I would like to think that both these recommendations would be acceptable to S4C. It would give peace of mind to friends of the language and of S4C.

4. I know of no reason why it should not be possible to produce in Welsh the types of programmes made in English if funding and professional resources are available. I understand that production values of English language children's programmes are extremely high. Do we currently have the human resources to provide a service of the highest standard for children throughout the day, 7 days per week?

5. It would be extremely valuable, if not imperative, to have the full support of the Welsh Language Board. This would show that the proposal is not just a passing whim by S4C managers - in an attempt to increase viewing figures. It would be even better if the new service could be said to be launched in co-operation with the Welsh Language Board. If the law does not permit this kind of wording, a mode of expression should be sought that identifies the enthusiastic support of the Board.

6 As well as the three divergent audiences mentioned in para 3.2.5, there may be another three groups to bear in mind. Is there currently a substantial difference in response to S4C's programmes from (a) pupils in Welsh-medium schools, (b) pupils in schools that teach Welsh as a subject and as a second language, (c) pupils in schools or streams that teach some of their subjects through the medium of Welsh and teach Welsh as a second language more often than not? I raise this question because it leads to another question. Would programmes aimed at audiences (b) and (c) be at the expense of audience (a)? All three groups are important. The last two groups have probably been poorly served in the past, and that situation needs to be rectified. But we must not go too far in the other direction. Group (a) is important partly because this is the sector that is most likely to provide fluent Welsh speakers; and I sense that this is the group most likely to have "passionate feelings" about their culture. Will the new service meet the needs of all three groups? Is that the intention of 3.2.5?

6. If the new service means less broadcasting of Assembly proceedings, one senses that Assembly politicians (and others) will oppose it on these grounds. Apart from any party political considerations and the natural pride of Assembly Members in their work, it could be argued that one of the Assembly's biggest contributions to Welsh life so far - if not the biggest- is that its activities strengthen our sense of national identity. This, in turn, can help to increase pride in the language and to a strengthening of its status in public life and on a community level. It is important that S4C does not create enemies for itself in the Assembly, but I would think that it is a duty on S4C to ask for the resources it considers important to fulfil its task. What does S4C consider are the minimum initial requirements for the service's success? No less than that should be called for.

7. While on the Assembly, it would be worth emphasising that a Welsh language television service for children would be an important step - maybe the most important step - in fulfilling the aims of *Iaith Pawb*, the Welsh Assembly Government's policy of increasing the number of Welsh speakers by 20% by the next Census in 2011.

8. Are there lessons for Wales in services provided for children in other Western European countries - such as Switzerland and Denmark, as well as the Basques and Catalonians - that S4C can apply to our particular circumstances in Wales? Could the new service be described as part of a pan-European movement?

9. I see that you are consulting widely. I did not notice that you have invited comments from the Mentrau Iaith and individual Language Centres, individual members of the Secondary Pupils' Council, and the Head teachers' Society (if it exists in Wales) and Further Education Colleges that have Welsh language classes.