

Telesgôp's response to the questions raised:

Firstly, Telesgôp welcomes the consultation and the desire to expand provision for children and young people in Wales.

Although a higher and increasing percentage are receiving their education through the medium of Welsh and leaving school with fluent or relatively fluent bilingual skills, there is a tendency to associate the Welsh language with the education world, a "formal" world, remote from the everyday lives of young people. Extending "entertainment" or "cool" elements of the language, through television and multi-media and interactive experiences is vitally important and plays a major role in securing the future of the language. It is a means of strengthening, extending and "normalising" Welsh language experiences.

1. Without a doubt, Telesgôp agrees that the Children's service would improve the public service available in Welsh for Children. Moreover it provides a more equal and fair opportunity for children and young people in Wales to partake of Welsh language experiences.

2. The broadcast hours seem appropriate to the lifestyle patterns of the majority of children and young people in Wales. S4C's research confirms the three target audiences (in terms of age).

3. The most important key features would be:

- an appropriate language register that would not alienate the target audience;
- programmes of a high standard (in line with S4C's Creative Excellence Strategy);
- a wide variety of 'experiences' including networking elements. Wales is a mix of rural, urban and post-industrial. It should be noted, however, that a direct rural experience is within three generations for most children and young people in Wales and that urban young people respond positively to the countryside;
- an emphasis must be placed on meeting and extending viewers' aspirations. They are sophisticated and knowledgeable and expect programmes to challenge and inspire, as well as entertain;
- Content should aim to be international, but always firmly rooted in Wales. Wales should be shown as a place relevant to the outside world and international experiences should be shown as relevant to the lives of our young people.

4. Having watched S4C2 from the Assembly, discussions can be long-winded, irrelevant and too detailed to be of any entertainment value. BUT S4C has a duty to broadcast from the Assembly and show the democratic process in our country. HOWEVER - Telesgôp believes that option 2 would be the best option, but that a programme of 'highlights' from the Assembly aimed at (and possibly presented by) children and young people should be incorporated weekly. It is also possible to include adult provision within the digital timetable. Ultimately, a 'highlights' programme is more likely to sustain interest and therefore extend the appeal of Welsh politics than hours of uninterrupted broadcasting between Tuesdays and Thursdays while depriving the young people of Wales of a comprehensive service.

5. It would be nice to say 'yes, definitely', but the reality is that public money and a central body is necessary to ensure fairness to all age groups and a consistency of standard. Even if it were commercially viable, it would always be a danger that the need to 'make money' would over-ride quality considerations. Telesgôp believes that S4C, in terms of experience, ability and awareness of audience needs, is more appropriate to fulfil this role than any other third party.

6. The only other stakeholders that should possibly be considered are the local Mentrau Iaith (Language Initiatives), although currently under the stewardship of the Welsh Language Board, of course.

7. The big challenge is providing a wide enough variety of programming. Some of the channel's current output could be tailored towards young people to help with this. We also need to understand and appreciate the commitment shown by the increasing number of non-Welsh speaking parents who choose to send their children to Welsh medium schools. They are the ones who choose what their children watch on television. Research amongst this all-important group is vital, as is marketing.

Families living outside Wales should also be considered. Many of them are searching for materials to help their children keep hold of their Welsh experiences, or foster and extend them. Subtitling some programmes is very important, to make viewing a family experience.

It is true that S4C has a huge mountain to climb here - and a challenge. But through experience, working with the independent sector and aiming for a consistently high standard, it is possible to fulfil the task. Detailed data should be kept of the channel's achievements. We are aiming high here, but the challenge is exciting for everyone involved with broadcasting and who wishes to participate practically in the effort to see the Welsh language survive.

Telesgôp supports S4C in this exciting plan.

Elin Rhys
General Manager