

Agenda – Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee

Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 2, Senedd

Meeting date: 14 May 2025

Meeting time: 09.15

For further information contact:

Manon George

Committee Clerk

0300 200 6565

SeneddCulture@senedd.wales

Hybrid

Pre-meeting registration

09:15 – 09:30

1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions, and declarations of interest

09:30

2 Welsh Government's International Strategy – Oral evidence – Panel 3

09:30 – 10:30

(Pages 1 – 15)

Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson – Sport Wales

Helen Antoniazzi – Football Association of Wales

Abi Tierney – Welsh Rugby Union

Attached Documents:

Research brief

Break

10:30 – 10:40

3 Welsh Government's International Strategy – Oral evidence – Panel 4

10:40 – 11:40



Derek Walker – Future Generations Commissioner for Wales

Najma Hashi – Office of the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales

Sarah Rees – Wales Overseas Agencies Group

4 Papers to note

11:40

4.1 Funding for sports

(Pages 16 – 19)

Attached Documents:

Correspondence from the Chair of Wales Rugby League: Raising concerns about the inequitable distribution of sports funding in Wales – 4 March 2025

4.2 BBC Sounds to end

(Pages 20 – 24)

Attached Documents:

Correspondence from Andy Bell: Raising concerns about the BBC's decision to end the BBC Sounds service for users outside the UK – 7 March 2025

4.3 Proposed closures at Cardiff University

(Pages 25 – 26)

Attached Documents:

Copy letter from the Chair of the Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee to the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Modern Languages: Responding to the request for an impact assessment of the proposed closures at Cardiff University – 1 May 2025

4.4 Issues facing the higher education sector

(Pages 27 – 28)

Attached Documents:

Letter from the Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee: Inviting a Member of the Committee to join an evidence session with Cardiff University on 12 June 2025 – 8 May 2025

- 5 Motion under Standing Order 17.42(ix) to resolve to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting.**

11:40

- 6 Welsh Government's International Strategy – Consideration of the evidence received**

11:40 – 12:00

Document is Restricted

Agenda Item 4.1

All,

Re: Inequality in Sports Funding in Wales – The Case for Rugby League

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the inequitable distribution of sports funding in Wales, particularly the systemic underfunding of Rugby League in comparison to other sports such as Rugby Union. This issue has long hindered the growth of our sport, despite its rich history, diversity, and the opportunities it provides to individuals from all backgrounds.

There is much talk about equality, diversity, and inclusion, yet this decision is the very opposite. It reinforces a culture of exclusion that many of us hoped was consigned to history. The legacy of the Welsh Rugby League codebreakers should have marked a turning point — but the systemic discrimination they faced appears to continue in modern-day Wales when it comes to funding.

I've attached links to recent documentaries and parliamentary discussions that highlight the sport's historical and ongoing struggles.

I urge you to watch and listen — it's a damning indictment that Rugby League is still fighting for fairness in 2025.

[BBC One - The Rugby Codebreakers, Welsh Rugby Codebreakers](#)

[BBC One - The Rugby Codebreakers, Clive Sullivan](#)

[Tides of History on X: "The campaign to get a knighthood for the great Billy Boston reaches the House of Commons... <https://t.co/eJg4FEUbGV>" / X](#)

Rugby League has faced historical challenges, often sidelined in favour of Rugby Union and other sports. Despite this, the sport has persevered and thrived through the dedication of volunteers and the passion of its participants. Rugby League has a proud tradition in Wales and continues to grow, with significant strides made across various programmes and age groups.

Currently, Wales Rugby League supports an extensive range of initiatives, including:

- Men's Senior Team (Higher World Ranking than our Rugby Union counterparts.)

- Women’s Team (qualified for the 2026 World Cup)
- Wheelchair Rugby League (ranked 5th in the World)
- Under 18’s (winners of a 3-game series against Ireland)
- Under 16’s (Home Nations champions with a historic victory over England at the Gnoll)
- Physical Disability Rugby League (PDRL)
- Dragonhearts (Amateur Team)
- A thriving community game with year-on-year increases in participation.

Our junior pathways are particularly noteworthy. Currently, 38 young players under the age of 18 are part of academy pathways with Super League clubs. Importantly, 80% of these young athletes come from deprived communities, demonstrating the vital role Rugby League plays in providing opportunities to those who might otherwise face significant barriers to participation.

Despite these achievements, Wales Rugby League operates largely on volunteer support and self-funded programmes.

The funding allocated to Rugby League is £47,023.00 annually, which pales in comparison to other National Governing Bodies as listed below.

NGB	2023/24 Total Offer
Angling Cymru	£35,000
Badminton Wales	£295,000
Basketball Wales	£65,000
Bowls Wales	£123,000
Canoe Wales	£377,000
Cricket Wales	£588,000
Football Association of Wales	£1,010,000
Hockey Wales	£588,000
RYA-Cymru Wales	£340,000

Snowsport Cymru Wales	£45,000
Squash Wales	£303,000
Swim Wales	£1,017,000
Table Tennis Wales	£289,000
Tennis Wales	£346,000
Wales Golf	£465,000
Wales Netball	£446,000
Wales Rugby League	£47,023
Wales Weightlifting	£294,000
Welsh Archery Association	£8,000
Welsh Athletics	£1,034,000
Welsh Billiards & Snooker Association	£24,000
Welsh Boxing	£534,000
Welsh Curling Association	£1,500
Welsh Cycling	£988,000
Welsh Fencing	£19,000
Welsh Gymnastics	£1,042,000
Welsh Judo	£261,000
Welsh Orienteering Association	£1,500
Welsh Rowing	£317,000
Welsh Rugby Union	Unknown due to governance issues
Welsh Target Shooting Federation	£242,718
Welsh Triathlon	£263,000
Welsh Wrestling	£18,000

This disparity places an unsustainable burden on our volunteers, who are often pushed to their limits to ensure the success of our programmes.

It is difficult to reconcile this reality with the often-discussed principles of equality and fairness in sports funding.

The impact of Rugby League extends far beyond the pitch. Clubs across Wales are deeply embedded in their communities, providing not only opportunities for physical activity but also fostering social cohesion, developing life skills, and offering a positive outlet for young people.

I respectfully request your assistance in raising awareness of the challenges faced by Rugby League in Wales. We ask that you advocate for a fairer allocation of funding, ensuring that our sport can continue to thrive and provide opportunities to individuals and communities across the country.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours sincerely

James Davies

Chairman

Agenda Item 4.2

ENGLISH VERSION BELOW

Cyfeillion - A charaid choir - Friends

Ysgrifennaf atoch fel arweinyddion gwleidyddol parthed y penderfyniad i atal gwrandawyr rhyngwladol rhag clywed BBC Sound, gyda sylw penodol i'r sawl sy'n medru'r Gymraeg a Gàidhlig.

Er y bydd Radio 4 a World Service yn dal i'w clywed yn fyd-eang, na fydd Radio Cymru na Radio nan Gàidheal ar gael, naill ai'n fyw neu -ac yn holl bwysig i gynulleidfaoedd ar draws y byd – 'ar-alw'.

Dylid nodi hefyd y byddai Radio Wales a Radio Scotland yn diflannu yn sgîl y penderfyniad hwn.

Fel cynhyrchydd "Rhaglen Cymru", podlediad wythnosol, a gynhyrchir yn Canberra, sy'n ymwneud â darlledu, yr wyf wedi bod wrth'n gohebu ar y sefyllfa ers y cyhoeddiad wythnos ddiwethaf

I'ch cynorthwyo, yr wyf wedi cynnwys dolenni i erthyglau o'm eiddo yn Gymraeg a Saesneg.

Gweler uchod hefyd, dolenni i ddatganiad y BBC am BBC Sounds, ac yr wyf hefyd wedi atodi datganiad a ddanfonwyd ataf ar ôl i mi ofyn tri chwestiwn penodol.

Mae'r penderfyniad hwn wedi dod fel sioc ac fe ddaeth yn gwbl di-rybudd. Dim ymgynghoriad o gwbl.

Gofynnaf i chi yn daer – cynrychiolwyr pleidiau gwahanol – ystyried godi'r mater gyda'r BBC a Bwrdd y BBC.

Er gwybodaeth yr wedi cysylltu âg aelodau seneddol yn San Steffan am y sefyllfa hon.

I am writing to you about the impending cessation of BBC Sounds services to international audiences, with particular reference to the impact of this decision on Welsh and Gaelic speaking members of the diaspora.

Whilst Radio 4 and World Service will still be available once the decision is implemented, Radio Cymru and Radio nan Gàidheal will no longer be available live or on-demand. The latter is especially important to those dwelling in many time zones.

I also note, this decision will also remove Radio Wales and radio Scotland from a global audience.

As the producer of a Welsh-language media podcast produced in Canberra, I have been reporting on this situation since the news broke last week.

To assist you, I include links to articles (in Welsh and English) where I am featured.

I also include the BBC's announcement about the looming geo-block, and a statement sent to me by the BBC in response to three direct questions about the decision.

This decision has come, certainly to the Welsh-speaking diaspora, without warning or any consultation.

I note you are from different parties but would ask that you urgently consider raising this matter with the BBC and its board.

FYI I have contacted Westminster MPs from Wales and Scotland about this situation.

Andy Bell

Canberra, Awstralia

Podlediad/Podcast: <https://rhaglencymru.podbean.com/e/diweddariad-helynt-bbc-sounds/>

Erthygl BBC Cymru Fyw article :

<https://www.bbc.com/cymrufyw/erthyglau/c0l1nd2zg53o>

Erthygl Nation Cymru article: <https://nation.cymru/opinion/why-the-bbc-is-cutting-off-wales-and-the-welsh-language-to-the-wider-world>

QUESTIONS ASKED BY ANDY BELL TO THE BBC PRESS OFFICE IN LONDON & RESPONSE FROM BBC CARDIFF

I note reports that BBC Sounds will be "ending access to international users beginning Spring 2025 (sic)". This decision would remove access to Welsh and Gaelic language output from tens of thousands of expatriate Welsh & Scottish people. As the producer of a weekly Welsh language podcast on media I have a number of questions.

- 1) Was there any discussion with BBC Cymru/Wales & BBC Alba/Scotland about the impact of this decision?
- 2) Did the unique circumstances of Welsh & Gaelic broadcasting form any part of the decision-making process?
- 3) In light of the impact of this decision, will there be any review of its consequences to the diaspora?

RESPONSE – Original Welsh and my translation

Dywed llefarydd ar ran y BBC: "Yn dilyn lansiad yr ap newydd a BBC.com, bydd BBC Sounds ar gael i gynulleidfaedd y Deyrnas Unedig yn unig a bydd y gwasanaeth ar gyfer defnyddwyr rhyngwladol yn dod i ben ddechrau'r Gwanwyn. Bydd defnyddwyr sy'n mynd ar wyliau (y tu allan i'r Deyrnas Unedig) am gyfnod byr yn parhau i allu defnyddio ap BBC Sounds dramor gan gynnwys mynediad i BBC Radio Cymru. Ni fydd newidiadau i BBC Sounds y tu hwnt i'r Deyrnas Unedig yn effeithio ar y gallu i wrando ar Radio Cymru ar unrhyw lwyfannau amgen (trydydd parti)."

A BBC spokesperson said: Following the launch of the new BBC.com app, BBC Sounds will be available to UK audiences only and the service for overseas users will come to an end at the start of spring. Users who go on holiday (outside the UK) will continue to be able to use BBC Sounds overseas, including access to Radio Cymru.

The changes to BBC Sounds beyond the UK will not affect the ability to listen to Radio Cymru on any alternative platforms (third party)

YMHOLIDAU GAN ANDY BELL I SWYDDFA'R WASG Y BBC YN LLUNDAIN A'R YMATEB FROM

Dyma'r cwestinyau, wedi'u cyfiethu o'r Saesneg gan fod 'na dim modd cysylltu â'r swyddfa'n Gymraeg trwy'r ffurflen ar-lein.

UN – A oedd 'na drafodaeth gyda BBC Cymru a BBC yn Alban ynglyn ag effaith y pederfyniad hwn?

DAU – A wnaeth sefyllfa unigrwr eithoedd Cymraeg a Gaeleg gael unrhyw sylw wrth wneud y oenderfyniad hwn

TRI – O ganlyniad l'r effaith y bydd y penderfyniad hwn yn ei gael a fydd 'na arolwg o'l sgîl-ffeithiau ar y diaspora.

Dyma'r ymateb a gafwyd trwy law BBC yng Nghaerdydd,

Dywed llefarydd ar ran y BBC: "Yn dilyn lansiad yr ap newydd a BBC.com, bydd BBC Sounds ar gael i gynulleidfa oedd y Deyrnas Unedig yn unig a bydd y gwasanaeth ar gyfer defnyddwyr rhyngwladol yn dod i ben ddechrau'r Gwanwyn. Bydd defnyddwyr sy'n mynd ar wyliau (y tu allan i'r Deyrnas Unedig) am gyfnod byr yn parhau i allu defnyddio ap BBC Sounds dramor gan gynnwys mynediad i BBC Radio Cymru. Ni fydd newidiadau i BBC Sounds y tu hwnt i'r Deyrnas Unedig yn effeithio ar y gallu i wrando ar Radio Cymru ar unrhyw lwyfannau amgen (trydydd parti)."

DATGANIAD I'R WASG GAN Y BBC/BBC PRESS RELEASE

BBC Studios to make podcasts available to international audiences via BBC.com and the BBC App

Newly launched audio section will make the BBC's vast portfolio of current and archived podcasts easier to find

Published: 02:00 pm, 24 February 2025



Fans of BBC podcasts outside of the UK now have an all-new listening experience on BBC.com and the BBC app. The newly launched audio section of BBC.com and app is curated with international audiences in mind, making the BBC's vast portfolio of current and archived podcasts, including hits like Global News Podcast, World of Secrets, and Infinite Monkey Cage, plus BBC Radio 4 and World Service radio stations, easier to find.

For the first time, audiences globally can enjoy a fully integrated experience on BBC.com and the app where the BBC's award-winning audio content sits alongside our renowned journalism and storytelling. Through this new user experience, listeners can explore deeper context and analysis on select topics, gaining a richer understanding of the issues that matter most—all without leaving the platform.

As part of this launch, the BBC will also be making BBC Sounds available exclusively to UK audiences and ending access to the service for international users beginning Spring 2025. UK users who go on holiday (outside the UK) for a short period of time will still be able to use the BBC Sounds app abroad.

This new audio experience is the latest in a series of enhancements that we have been making to BBC.com and the BBC app. Stay tuned for more updates as we continue to build a single, one-stop destination for the best of BBC journalism and storytelling.

BBC Studios is responsible for the monetization of digital news and factual products including BBC.com, the BBC app, BBC Select and BBC Podcast Premium, whose profits help continue to fund the BBC's world-renowned journalism and reporting.

Tonia Antoniazzi MP
Chair, All-Party Parliamentary Group on Modern Languages

Baroness Jean Coussins
Co-Chair, All-Party Parliamentary Group on Modern Languages

1 May 2025

Dear Tonia and Jean,

Proposed closures in languages and cultures at Cardiff University

Thank you for your letter of 3 April regarding the proposed closure of degrees in languages and cultures at Cardiff University.

While we note your concerns it is not the responsibility of Senedd Committees to carry out economic impact assessments.

You may be aware that the Senedd's Children, Young People and Education (CYPE) Committee and the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations (CCWLSIR) Committee are carrying out inquiries which relate to the issues you have raised. The CYPE Committee is carrying out a short inquiry into issues facing the Higher Education Sector, and is due to receive evidence from Cardiff University in June.

We are currently keeping a watching brief on the situation in Welsh Higher Education and intend to follow the work of these Committees, and will pursue issues as necessary regarding any concerns raised around the potential economic impact of the proposed closures.

I have copied this letter to Buffy Williams MS and Delyth Jewel MS in their roles as Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee, and the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee respectively.

Kind regards,

Andrew RT Davies

Andrew RT Davies MS

Chair: Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English

CC:

Chair, Children, Young People and Education Committee

Chair, Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee



Delyth Jewell MS,
Chair, Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and
International Relations Committee

08 May 2025

Issues facing the higher education sector

Dear Delyth,

We are currently looking at the issues facing the higher education sector in Wales. While this work started because of the proposals for changes at Cardiff University, it has broadened out to look more widely at the issues facing the sector as a whole.

We are aware of your particular interest in the issues surrounding the proposal to cease the subjects and programmes in modern languages and translation

The President and Vice-Chancellor, Professor Wendy Larnar, will be coming to Committee on Thursday 12 June. Due to your likely interest in this particular issue, would like to invite one members of the Committee to attend the session under Standing Order 17.49.

Please can you let the Clerk know no later than 2 June if any of your Members wish to take up this offer along with the names of those Members. If none of your Members are able to attend but there are specific issues you want us to raise with the President and Vice-Chancellor, please let me know.

Yours sincerely,



Buffy Williams MS

Chair
Children, Young People and Education Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.