

Helen Mary Jones MS  
Chair  
Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee  
Senedd Cymru  
Cardiff Bay  
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Our ref: EJ/AJ

8 December 2020

Dear Helen Mary,

I have followed with interest the Committee's recent work looking at the impact of COVID on journalism.

I have been struck by the scale of the issues uncovered by the Committee in the inquiry, and its previous work in this field. Engaging with all the people of Wales is one of the Commission's strategic priorities and I have been giving some thought to practical ways in which the Senedd could make a difference.

### Legal situation

The Government of Wales Act 2006 (GOWA) provides that the Senedd Commission '...may do anything which appears to it necessary or appropriate for the purposes of, or in connection with, the discharge of its functions'. GOWA further says that the Commission must provide to the Senedd (or ensure it is provided with), the '...property, staff and services required for the Senedd's purposes'.

A strong, independent media is vital to any democracy. Despite the best efforts of journalists currently working in Wales, we have long since suffered due to a lack of media plurality, and current economic issues are only making matters worse.

Promoting the Senedd's work and holding the government to account on behalf of the people of Wales are key objectives for both Members and the Commission. I believe there is a valid argument that supporting journalism in Wales falls within this objective.



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I have asked officials to explore practical options which would give the Senedd Commission an opportunity to achieve its objective and help support independent journalism in Wales.

Any such arrangements would require support from Commissioners and by Members across the Senedd of course.

It is worth noting that Commissioners agreed to establishing a pilot for an independent arms-length news wire service in December 2017, following the recommendations by the Digital News and Information Taskforce, chaired by former Minister, Leighton Andrews.

In the meantime I would like to thank the Committee for the work it has and continues to do to highlight this important issue for us all.

Yours sincerely,



**Elin Jones MS**

Llywydd

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg / We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English

