

Elin Jones MS
Llywydd
Senedd Cymru

Dyddiad | Date: 11 September 2020

Pwnc | Subject: **Report on the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on journalism and local media** Dear Elin,

I am pleased to enclose the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee's report on the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on journalism and local media.

During the inquiry we heard criticism of the lack of coverage of devolved issues by UK news providers. There were examples of misinformation and confusion over which government was responsible for COVID-19 mitigation activities. Aside from the immediate public health concerns this raises, those who contributed to the inquiry also wanted to highlight a wider issue around ensuring people in Wales are fully informed about devolved issues.

In particular, they highlighted the need to educate young people about devolution and the role of the Welsh Parliament in advance of the extension of the franchise to 16 and 17 year olds. Members have asked if there are any plans for an education or communication campaign aimed at young people to increase awareness and understanding before the election.

I would be grateful for any information you can provide us with.

Yours sincerely,



Helen Mary Jones

Chair of the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.



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Helen Mary Jones MS
Chair of the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee
Senedd Cymru

Our ref: PO982/EJ/RT

8 October 2020

Dear Helen,

Report on the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on journalism and local media

Thank you for enclosing the report of the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee on this important topic.

Throughout the development of the Senedd and Elections Act, stakeholders emphasised the importance of prioritising awareness raising and education alongside the changes to extend the franchise to 16-year-olds, and I have ensured that this is a core component of the reform programme, and a priority for the Commission.

Though education and awareness raising remain predominantly the responsibility of the Welsh Government, the Commission has worked with them and other organisations to help younger people go into next year's election as informed as possible.

To that end, the Commission has developed a communications campaign for the lead up to the election, allocating a budget of £150,000 for awareness raising related to votes at 16.



Working with Members of the Welsh Youth Parliament, other young people and educators, we have developed a range of materials – including short films – for the classroom and youth groups. During lockdown, these have also been adapted for home use. We are developing plans for (virtual) events around a democracy week in February and have sought feedback from teachers about what works best in a virtual setting.



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For the wider election campaign, staff are developing materials and plans to ensure our key message about the election – that voting in Senedd 21 is the way to get your voice heard in your Senedd – reaches all parts of Wales. While there will be a focus on those newly enfranchised by the Senedd and Elections Act, we will also be addressing traditionally underrepresented groups.

The campaign will include:

- Face to face engagement where possible, supplemented by virtual engagement sessions and online resources;
- Digital campaigns across all Senedd channels to include new original content and branding, potential use of new channels and use of local influencers and campaigners;
- Strong media campaign on local, regional and national level and collaborative partnerships with media stakeholders;
- Package of public information and educational resources for all audiences with supporting activities;
- Targeted paid promotional content across Wales and on digital platforms for specific audiences.

The effectiveness of the campaign is important, and the breadth of planned engagement is intended to reach a wide range of younger people in a variety of different ways. This is intended to address some of the very concerns raised by the Committee in relation to reaching the people of Wales.

Yours sincerely,



Elin Jones MS

Llywydd

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