

From: Caitriona Noonan <noonanc@cardiff.ac.uk>

To: Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee | Pwyllgor Diwylliant, Cyfathrebu, y Gymraeg, Chwaraeon, a Chysylltiadau Rhyngwladol
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Dear Chair and committee

At a meeting on the 13th October, as part of a panel I gave evidence on the subject of the future provision and funding of PSB. Over the course of that evidence we directed the committee to the Young Audience Content Fund – a fund set up several years ago to support the provision of content specifically for children and young people. Over the course of this fund, records suggest investment went to support Welsh language content or Wales-based indies. For instance, in the details about funding in 2019, Person/a (Cwmni Da Cyf) and Y Gyfrinach (Boom Cymru TV) were both awarded investment (Further research is needed about the proportionality of this relative to the overall investments made by the fund across the UK).

However, I wish to draw the committee's attention to the closure of that fund, announced here: <https://www.bfi.org.uk/get-funding-support/create-films-tv-or-new-formats-storytelling/young-audiences-content-fund/closure-young-audiences-content-fund>

I also wish to advise that the decision appears to have taken place without the "full evaluation" of the scheme which the government promised. Currently the Children's Media Foundation is gathering signatories as part of a petition on that issue: <https://www.thechildrensmediafoundation.org/the-young-audiences-content-fund-campaign#signatures> (full disclosure, I have signed that letter).

Setting aside arguments for the funds continuance, I do believe it is important that the process of evaluating such public interventions are appropriate, transparent and timely. Without such evaluation, it is difficult to deliver effective evidence-based policies. The question of appropriate models for funding PSBs are subject to much discussion and debate both within and outside policy circles in Wales, the UK and internationally. So it seems counterproductive to not use this opportunity to assess one apparently novel mode of support and to see whether this might be incorporated in the future.

It might be that the fund didn't achieve its stated aims, in which case specific lessons must be learnt and shared widely to enable greater precision regarding public funding in the future. If

the fund has been successful in its terms, then greater justification is needed regarding its closure, especially given the challenges facing public service broadcasting, the provision of domestic children's television and Welsh language content within that.

These challenges were aptly framed in the committee's letter on the 22nd January to the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport regarding the 'serious threat to the future of public service broadcasting in both English and Welsh languages in Wales'. The closure of the YACF, without due regard to its evaluation, is a further element in that threat to the sustainability of diverse and inclusive Welsh and English services for all, especially our young citizens.

Last year my colleagues Laura Sinclair and Dr Cindy Carter were commissioned by the BFI to conduct research on the children who participated in the See Yourself on Screen Challenge (which is also run by the BFI alongside YACF) and they concluded that the role TV shows play in the lives of young audiences in the UK remains vital. The press release attached, published by the BFI, points specifically to the success of the YACF for minority content:

<https://www.bfi.org.uk/news/young-people-uk-television-report>

I thank the committee for its time in considering this matter.

Kind regards

Caitriona

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Book with Prof Ruth McElroy: [*Producing British Television Drama: Local Production in a Global Era* 2019](#),
Palgrave Macmillan

Research Project: <https://smallnationsscreen.org/>