

Gwasg y Bwthyn  
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2 October 2024

To:

Cabinet Secretary for Education: Correspondence.Lynne.Neagle@gov.wales  
Minister for Children and Social Care: Correspondence.Dawn.Bowden@gov.wales  
Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language: Correspondence.Mark.Drakeford@gov.wales  
Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning:  
Correspondence.Rebecca.Evans@gov.wales  
Minister for Culture, Skills and Social Partnership: Correspondence.Jack.Sargeant@gov.wales  
Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing: Correspondence.Sarah.Murphy@gov.wales

and to the Members representing Gwynedd and North Wales – Gwasg y Bwthyn areas:

Sian.Gwenllian@senedd.wales  
Llyr.Gruffydd@senedd.wales  
Mark.Isherwood@senedd.wales  
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as well as a copy to the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee: SeneddCulture@senedd.wales

I am writing to you on behalf of Gwasg y Bwthyn to express our concern regarding the financial support for the publishing sector in Wales.

That sector is led by the Books Council of Wales, which saw its annual budget from the Welsh Government cut by 10.5 per cent in 2024-25. That came in the wake of years of zero budget uplifts; before the cut, the grant had remained flat for more than ten years – without taking into account the impact of inflation. The possibility of a further budget cut in 2025-26 worries us greatly.

Government support for the publishing sector in Wales is needed now more than ever:

**The publishing sector supports literacy** at the exact time when reading standards among 15-year-old school pupils in Wales have fallen to an all-time low – a situation that was exacerbated by the repercussions of the COVID pandemic. According to the PISA test results released in December 2023, Wales is the only country within the United Kingdom in which pupils' reading scores are lower than the international average.

**The publishing sector supports the Welsh language** and has a key role to play in reaching the Welsh Government's target of one million Welsh speakers by 2050. In terms of the use of the language and its viability, the role that it plays is as central as that of Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin, the National Centre for Learning Welsh and the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol – three national bodies that were protected from cuts in 2024-25. In the case of the National Centre for Learning Welsh and the Coleg Cymraeg, a decision was made on 'maintaining budgets at 2023-24 levels to cause the least disruption to the Welsh language sector'.<sup>1</sup>

**The publishing sector supports the Welsh economy**, and many publishers employ a number of freelancers – such as editors, designers and writers – who live and work in rural Wales.

**The publishing sector supports the health of the nation:** among its many other advantages, reading has proven benefits in respect of mental health and well-being. Here is a recent report from the National Literacy Trust, one of several pieces of research that confirm this important point: <https://literacytrust.org.uk/research-services/research-reports/reading-for-mental-wellbeing-in-2023/>

The Chancellor of the Exchequer in the new Labour Government pledged that there would be no more economic austerity. With the publishing sector in Wales still trying to cope with the devastating impact of the 10.5 per cent cut in 2024-25, we ask that you honour this pledge and ensure that no further cuts are made in 2025-26. That would constitute one step towards trying to ensure that an already challenging situation does not become a truly critical one.

Yours faithfully

H. Dylan Roberts

**Chair**  
**Gwasg y Bwthyn Board**

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<sup>1</sup>Welsh Government Draft Budget 2024-25 – Ministers' written evidence to Senedd scrutiny committees regarding the allocations within each Main Expenditure Group – December 2023, gov.wales, p. 339.