



Lucent Dreaming
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Dear Chair and Members of the Culture Committee,

Please note I have copied in the clerk for the Equality and Social Justice Committee to keep them informed.

Ahead of the Culture Committee's scrutiny of the Welsh Government's Draft Budget 2026-27, and following on from the Committee's previous work on the funding pressures we face in the Welsh publishing sector, I would like to share this article publicised by The Bookseller earlier this morning: <https://www.thebookseller.com/news/cardiff-indie-lucent-dreaming-restructures-and-urges-welsh-government-to-realign-funding>

My email to you today offers an introduction to the issues I have experienced since setting up as a publisher in Wales, for Wales. In the Bookseller article, and the original blog post published yesterday on the Lucent Dreaming website linked here: <https://lucentdreaming.com/thoughts-on-the-future-of-publishing-by-jannat-ahmed/>, we share that the inadequate core funding provision from Books Council Wales (funded by Creative Wales) has led to an existential crisis for creative workers, especially working class writers and staff, and writers and staff of colour, where the infrastructure we have inherited doesn't offer the best chances of success, nor a fair, living wage, for publishers and writers Cymreig.

I write in my post 'As is already happening, writers will be made to take Wales out of their work, and worse, to exoticise themselves and to fetishize their lived experiences, for a culture that prioritises profit, not cultural health. Our stories deserve to be treated with integrity, not as a trend. Unless fair, living wages are made a priority for independent authors and publishers, this will not change.'

I would like for the Committee to look again at the impact of standstill funding on the publishing sector; the Draft Budget 2026-27 shows Creative Wales' increased funding will be directed towards business rates relief for the film and TV sectors. Costs are increasing across all industries, so why has the Welsh Government's additional investment not been fairly distributed across all cultural sectors, including publishing? In the expectation that funding will not be increased enough for BCW to meet the needs of the industry, I believe anything less than a full inquiry on funding provision for the publishing sector in Wales will be insufficient to address systemic issues. I suggest in my post that the Future Generations Act should prioritise investment in the culture we share (literature, music, events, networks, etc.) for future generations to enjoy, as a culture that is accessible to them, both as audiences, and producers themselves.

I understand that the Minister for Culture, Skills and Social Partnership stated in response to a question on funding allocation to the publishing sector in previous draft budget (2025-26) that he would be working with BCW 'to mitigate any further impact on the sector and to preserve this important industry'. We anticipate a similar question will be presented to the Minister for Culture during your proceedings next Wednesday.

I would welcome a further conversation either to present oral evidence to the committee, and to meet the Chair and relevant members outside formal proceedings.

Please also expect further correspondence from me after the meeting on Wednesday which I will endeavour to follow.

Many thanks.

Jannat Ahmed
Co-founder and Director of Lucent Dreaming