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Our Ref: 300764/dm/5

Bethan Jenkins AM
Chair
Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee
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15 May 2017

Dear Bethan,

Thank you for your correspondence of 16 February, regarding the Committee's recently published report on broadcasting in Wales, and for bringing my attention to the Committee's recommendations for the UK Government. I apologise for the delay in responding.

Recommendation 6 (S4C funding and review)

The Government is committed to the future of Welsh language broadcasting and of S4C. That is why we made a commitment to carry out an independent review of the broadcaster during 2017, covering S4C's remit, funding and governance, and it is why we announced earlier this year that we will be providing an additional £350,000 of capital funding to S4C for 2017/18. This funding will enable S4C to carry out upgrades to its technical and IT equipment, which are necessary for S4C to remain up-to-date in an increasingly competitive and fast-changing broadcasting market. As you may know, the Government is also investing in S4C's long-term future with a £10 million loan to enable the relocation of S4C's headquarters to Carmarthen and co-location of technical facilities with the BBC in Cardiff.

Recommendation 8 (EPG prominence)

The Communications Act 2003 gives Ofcom a duty to ensure that "appropriate

prominence” on the Electronic Programme Guide for linear TV is given to Public Service Broadcasters (PSBs) such as S4C.

As part of the Balance of Payments Consultation, the Government considered extending the Electronic Programme Guide (EPG) prominence regime for PSBs to include their on-demand services such as the BBC's iPlayer.

Our conclusion then - which remains our view – is that we have not seen compelling evidence of harm to PSBs to date. However, we recognise that this is a fast moving technological landscape which needs to be kept under review and therefore under the Digital Economy Act 2017, Ofcom has been placed under a new duty to publish a report which will look at the ease of finding and accessing PSB content across all TV platforms on both a linear and on-demand basis. Ofcom will also be required to review its broadcast EPG code by 1 December 2020 and publish its first report on accessibility and discoverability of PSB content before then.

There are at present no requirements on how PSBs' on-demand players should organise the content available within their services. So the prominence of S4C programmes within iPlayer is a matter for the BBC.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State for Wales, the Rt Hon Alun Cairns.

I hope that this is helpful.



The Rt Hon Karen Bradley
Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport