

From: Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee | Pwyllgor Diwylliant, y Gymraeg a Chyfathrebu

To: BBC

Sent: 15 February 2019 18:36

Subject: National Broadcast Archive for Wales

Hello Non,

I wanted to thank Rhodri Talfan Davies and Rhys Evans very much for attending the meeting of the Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee on 13 February.

Our Members appreciated hearing more about the specific project to create a National Broadcast Archive for Wales and about the approach the BBC takes to archive material in general.

There was one point of clarification which I was hoping you could help me with. I understand that the requirement to archive material is set out in the Agreement which accompanies the BBC Charter. I have copied Section 69 here:

69. Archive

(1) The BBC must make arrangements for the maintenance of an archive, or archives, of films, sound recordings, other recorded material and printed material which is representative of the sound and television programmes and films broadcast or otherwise distributed by the BBC.

(2) Those arrangements-

(a) must ensure that every such archive is kept safely, to commonly accepted standards; and

(b) must give the public reasonable opportunities to visit the archives and view or listen to material kept there, with or without charge (as the BBC thinks fit).

(3) In making those arrangements, the BBC must consult such bodies as are engaged in maintaining sound, television and film archives as it considers appropriate which are not established or conducted for profit.

(4) The BBC must not destroy, sell or otherwise dispose of any material that it has broadcast or otherwise distributed which it decides not to preserve in any archive without first offering that material, free of charge, to such bodies as are engaged in maintaining sound, television and film archives as it considers appropriate.

(5) Where the BBC's offer is accepted by any body or bodies, the BBC must transfer the material to that body or those bodies

Can you confirm whether establishing the Welsh National Broadcasting Archive is part of the BBC's Charter requirements? Also, is there precedent for third parties to pay for the BBC to fulfil its Charter requirements?

Thanks

Martha Howells

11 March 2019

Dear Martha Howells,

I write in response to your letter of 15 February 2018 regarding the BBC's Charter obligations and the proposal to create a National Broadcast Archive for Wales in partnership with the National Library of Wales.

The establishing of the National Broadcast Archive for Wales is in keeping with the BBC Charter obligation to provide public access to its content. BBC Wales receives a number of requests from members of the public, academics and others who wish to view content for private research purposes. We accommodate these as far as is practically possible, but to date, our obligation to run a broadcast archive operation which meets transmission deadlines, coupled with a physical tape based archive collection, has meant that we have been limited in the amount of visits we've been able to manage. The digitisation of both the AV and audio collections and the creation of a National Broadcast Archive for Wales will make it possible to better deliver our Charter obligations by opening up the archive to the public across multiple geographical access points than has been possible to date.

As referred to in the BBC's committee evidence, BBC Archives centrally are not able to offer direct access to members of the public to its archive facility at Perivale, as this is for internal operational use only. The BBC has been working in partnership with the British Library and the British Film Institute over a number of years to ensure there is reasonable access to its archive collections in line with Section 2(b) of the Charter Agreement.

The British Library partnership has been in existence since 1964, and while there are approximately 190,000 programmes available for the public to listen to, there are many thousands more held in storage, deposited by different departments and individuals over a long period of time. This arrangement is on a 'no fee' basis between the BBC and the British Library.

Largely funded by the UK Department for Culture, Media and Sport, the BFI holds a proportion of BBC Archive Material as part of its national collection of television programmes and to help fulfil the BBC's Royal Charter objective to "establish, care for and develop collections reflecting the moving image history and heritage of our United Kingdom". Under the terms of a Deposit Agreement, the BFI provides physical storage space and preservation services for BBC network content and may digitise assets and make copies for viewing purposes,

although digitisation is not a requirement. The agreement allows for flexibility in the BBC assets the BFI retains, in consultation with the BBC. The BFI also has access to relevant BBC metadata in order to service requests by members of the public and other groups who meet the “legitimate access” criteria. The BBC makes a contribution towards these costs.

I hope you find this response helpful. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours faithfully,

Rhys Evans
BBC Wales Head of Strategy and Education