

## Minutes of the 81<sup>st</sup> meeting of The Advisory Committee for Wales held via 'Teams' on 15 June 2021

### Present

Hywel Wiliam	Chair
Peter Trott	Member
Robert Andrews	Member

### In attendance

David Jones	Ofcom Board Member for Wales
Aled Eirug	Content Board Member for Wales
Sian Phipps	Communications Consumer Panel Member, Wales
Eleanor Marks	Director, Ofcom Wales
Elinor Williams	Regulatory Affairs Principal, Ofcom Wales
Meleri Evans	Regulatory Affairs Manager, Ofcom Wales

Other Ofcom colleagues

### Apologies

Andrew Board	Member
Ruth McElroy	Member
Rem Noormohamed	Member

Agenda items	Action
<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>1. The Chairman welcomed attendees to the 81<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Advisory Committee for Wales. Apologies were received from Andrew Board, Ruth McElroy and Rem Noormohamed.</p>	
<p><b>Declaration of Members' Interests – oral</b></p> <p>2. None</p>	
<p><b>Minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2021 and matters arising – Minutes ACW 80</b></p> <p>3. The minutes of the meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2021 had been previously circulated to Members. Following an additional amendment, the minutes were <b>APPROVED</b> as a true account of the meeting.</p> <p><b>Matters arising/outstanding Actions -</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visibility of the Advisory Committee on the Ofcom website</li> <li>• IWA Media Audit - circulate links to reports mentioned at the last meeting</li> <li>• National Infrastructure Commission for Wales – clarification that the commission's report published in December is not the Welsh Government's Digital Strategy</li> <li>• ACW proposed visit to BBC Cymru Wales Central Square - sometime in the autumn.</li> </ul>	<b>EW</b>

**Chairman’s Report – oral**

4. The Chairman gave an oral update of his activities since the last meeting including attending:

- Communications Consumer Hub - a joint meeting of all the nations hubs which focussed on PSTN switch-off was beneficial and highlighted the importance of continuing to communicate the switch off process especially in terms of the telecare sector and safeguarding vulnerable consumers.
- A member of the Ofcom Wales team mentioned the ongoing programme of work in raising awareness of the switch off despite Ofcom not having a formal role in the process.
- The CCP Member for Wales said that the switch to VOIP was at the forefront of the CCP’s forward looking agenda.
- Meeting with BBC Cymru Wales – will be covered in more detail under the Content Board Member for Wales update.
- Presentation to the Wales Internet Safety Partnership on Ofcom’s Children and Parent’s Media Use report.
- Taken part in a video as part of the recruitment drive for the Advisory Committee for Wales.

**Update: Ofcom Board Member for Wales – oral**

5. The Board Member for Wales gave a full oral update and a summary of key topics over the last few months. These included:

- The process of recruiting the Ofcom Chair has started again. This has been widely reported in the media. This means that the current situation with Maggie Carver as interim Chair continuing for a number of months.
- A few changes on the Content Board following Tim Suter stepping down from his Ofcom duties. Bob Downes has been appointed Chair and David Jones appointed to the Content Board.
- Presentation from Cardiff University’s Centre for Community Journalism, focussing on hyper-local journalism and its impact.
- Meeting with key executives at Ogi (formerly Spectrum Internet)
- Draft Online Harms Bill now published and at the pre-legislative scrutiny stage
- Chief Technology Officer appointed – joins from Amazon where he was influential in the creation of Alexa.

**Update: Ofcom Content Board Member for Wales**

6. The Content Board Member for Wales had previously circulated an update paper. Highlights included:

- Noting that Tim Suter had stood down from his Ofcom duties in light of the findings of the Dyson Report. His valuable contribution was noted.
- Senedd Elections – quiet from a regulatory perspective. Noted that a meeting of the Election Committee had been convened to consider one complaint.
- Network news research – work had been commissioned
- PSM – Ofcom will publish its statement (advice to UK Government) over the coming weeks. Considerable press coverage given recently to the importance of prominence and the fact that ministers will clear legislative time to focus on prominence.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online harms – Ofcom announced that it will open a new hub in Manchester that will accommodate a number of key roles on online safety. Content Board Member for Wales highlighted online safety as an opportunity for the Ofcom Wales team to bid for roles to be located in Cardiff.</li> <li>• Diversity in broadcasting report – the 5<sup>th</sup> report will be published shortly.</li> </ul> <p>In response to the update, a member raised the importance of home-screen prominence and where nationality and regionality is positioned within the BVOD world.</p>	
<p><b>Report – Public Policy</b></p> <p>7. The Chair wished to thank the Director of Public Policy for her input to the Advisory Committee for Wales as she moves to a new role with the Food Standards Agency. The Director had previously circulated an update report outlining key UK Government and Parliamentary developments since the last meeting. In addition to topics already mentioned, additional highlights included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online Harms Bill was now published in draft which was a considerable milestone for Ofcom and UK Government. The bill will now be subject to detailed scrutiny by ministers which would undoubtedly take a significant amount of time and energy.</li> <li>• Chief Technology Officer appointed.</li> <li>• Scams – considerable attention given to scams lately and calls for the subject area to be covered within online harms. Ofcom’s work continues to try and address the complexities involved in addressing scams and to work with the key players in order to work towards resolving the matter.</li> <li>• PSM – DCMS trying to get a Media Bill launched next year and would like Ofcom to be as detailed as possible in its advice to Government especially in terms of prominence.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Communications Consumer Panel Update</b></p> <p>8. The Communications Consumer Panel Member for Wales had previously circulated an update report on the Panel’s activities since the last meeting. Key highlights as mentioned during the meeting included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Importance of having a sustained communications campaign around the switch-off of PSTN as had already been discussed under other agenda items during the meeting.</li> <li>• Panel considering a piece of work on the regulation of smaller broadband providers.</li> <li>• Improving the granularity of complaints data and refining it to better reflect the position in the nations.</li> <li>• Older People’s Commissioner has <a href="#">published a report</a> on the portrayal of older people in news stories. The Commissioner finds that over two-thirds of news stories portray older people in a negative light. The CCP Member for Wales is hoping to meet the Commissioner shortly to discuss the findings in greater detail.</li> <li>• The Panel will discuss potential areas for research during its next meeting. Switching is one suggestion - how much of it is happening and is the regime succeeding to stimulate better services?</li> <li>• Fixed Wireless Access was discussed as an alternative technology that could have considerable impact in ensuring that those consumers living in very hard to reach areas are connected. A member emphasised the importance of this being a consideration in Ofcom’s spectrum management strategy.</li> </ul>	

<p><b>Report – Wales Recent Developments</b></p> <p>9. Members noted the contents of an update paper previously circulated commenting on topics including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The opportunities made available by the additional powers given to Ofcom in relation to online safety, to the Ofcom Wales team in securing more roles to be based in Cardiff.</li> <li>• Shared Rural Network – a member asked for clarity on the public announcement on coverage due shortly. It was agreed that the announcement would be shared with members accordingly.</li> <li>• Global Centre for Rail Excellence – a member of the Wales team gave an overview of the discussion at the meeting facilitated to discuss the Global Centre of Rail Excellence with Welsh Government officials and colleagues from Ofcom’s spectrum team. Welsh Government is keen to ensure that Ofcom is aware of the project and of its spectrum requirements to ensure application and allocation of the right type of spectrum as well as regulatory compliance.</li> <li>• Members were given an update on the licence transfer for Calon FM – the community radio station based in Wrexham. Further update to be given at the next meeting.</li> <li>• It was suggested that Local TV be discussed at a future meeting.</li> </ul>	<p><b>EW</b></p> <p><b>EW</b></p>
<p><b>Consultation responses – feedback from members</b></p> <p>10. <i>The following publications were noted by the committee: -</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ofcom review of proposed BBC Three television channel (C)</li> <li>• Request for change of licence conditions relating to the provision of news output on Channel 5 (C)</li> <li>• Affordability of communications services report</li> <li>• Small Screen: Big Debate Statement: Recommendations to Government on the future of PSB</li> </ul>	
<p><b>PACT update – John McVay, CEO</b></p> <p>11. John McVay gave a verbal briefing to the Committee, outlining the key issues facing PACT members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On our Public Service Media (PSM) Review, he questioned the need to review quotas and terms of trade for commissioning while the independent sector was still in post-Covid recovery</li> <li>• He expressed concerns that the UK Government intends to privatise Channel 4 and the impact that would have on the future of the independent sector</li> <li>• He stressed the importance of the independent sector to pre-sell rights based on sales, especially given the investment in content by streamers such as Netflix and Disney+</li> <li>• In response to a question from the Committee on how many members PACT had in Wales, he stated that it had 27, adding that more were joining as they secured more commissions</li> </ul>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asked about the importance of prominence for PSM and access to PSM content on new platforms, McVay said that the UK Government should legislate to ensure prominence, adding that it would benefit PSBs especially S4C.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Media Nations 2021</b></p> <p>12. Ofcom colleagues joined the meeting and gave the Committee an update on its Media Nations report which will be published in August.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colleagues confirmed that this year’s report will include a traditional state of the market narrative and emerging trends in 2020/21 with less of a focus on Covid. The Committee welcomed the focus on the report being as topical and relevant with as much Wales specific information as possible</li> <li>• Colleagues said that despite there being a lack of data from Rajar due to it having suspended its research during Covid there would be data available from the tech tracker and other research</li> <li>• One emerging theme is that media consumption is growing across platforms, after a general decline in recent years</li> <li>• The Committee noted the importance of the Media Nations report to stakeholders in Wales.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Channel 4</b></p> <p>13. Colleagues from Channel 4 joined the meeting for its annual session with the Advisory Committee for Wales. A slide deck had been circulated in advance of the meeting.</p> <p>Colleagues from Channel 4 joined the meeting for its annual session with the Advisory Committee for Wales. A slide deck had been circulated in advance of the meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On commissioning from Wales based indies, Channel 4 said that it had recommissioned series 2 and 3 of Great House Giveaway from Chwarel, totalling 60 hours, including 10 hours in peak-time. Channel 4 noted that the series had recently won a Bafta award for Chwarel, and that the programme was a co-commission with S4C. Avanti has also been commissioned to provide 20 episodes of Perfect Pitch, which they are currently filming in Pembrokeshire. Outline Wales have been commissioned to make another series of Life in the Country with Sarah Beeny. Channel 4 noted that this was the highest rating 8.00pm show in 2020. The programme is edited in Wales by Gorilla. And Cardiff Productions will be producing Britain’s Remarkable Rivers.</li> <li>• Asked by the Committee about commissioning drama in Wales Channel 4 said that Gwawr Martha Lloyd was the Drama Commissioner based in Bristol and pointed to the success of It’s a Sin by Swansea-born writer Russell T Davies.</li> <li>• Channel 4 outlined its three strategic priorities, which included developing skill in the sector through 4Skills in the nations; supporting indies through its emerging indies fund; and promoting 4Studio - short form content on social and digital platforms for young audiences</li> <li>• The Committee noted the coverage given to the Senedd and its recent Elections, as well as recent stories on Covid in Wales on Channel 4 News</li> </ul>	

<p><b>Mobile Strategy</b></p> <p><b>14.</b> Ofcom colleagues joined the meeting to update the Committee on our Mobile Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colleagues noted that as consumers were changing the way they buy mobiles, it was important to take stock of the market, technological advances and the framework for making regulatory decisions. Coverage and access to services would also be part of the work. A discussion paper will be published later in the year.</li> <li>• The Committee noted that the advent of new e-sims could offer options for consumers to change providers and could potentially be an answer to poor coverage in some areas of Wales. It noted that certain sectors, such as agriculture, transport and academia, would be interested stakeholders in this policy area. It noted that the environmental and planning aspects were also important areas to consider and the Committee drew attention to the Wales National Infrastructure Committee’s work in this area.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>DCMS Call for Evidence on Very Hard to Reach Areas</b></p> <p>15. It was agreed that the Advisory Committee would respond to the DCMS Call for Evidence on Very Hard to Reach Areas. The closing date for responses is now 25<sup>th</sup> June. A draft will be circulated based on key issues which have been identified by the committee in the past – barriers to roll out and take up of available services, communication of services available to consumers, impact and viability of alternative technologies and effective communication of these to consumers.</p> <p>It was suggested and agreed that the ACW response would be shared with the other advisory committees.</p>	
<p><b>Consumer complaints update</b></p> <p>16. Contents <b>NOTED</b>.</p>	
<p><b>Forthcoming Consultations &amp; Publications</b></p> <p>17. Noted</p>	
<p><b>Any Other Business and future agenda items</b></p> <p><b>AOB – None</b></p> <p>Meeting came to a close at 3.20 with the Chair thanking members for their contribution and wishing them a restful summer.</p> <p><b>Future meeting dates confirmed as:</b></p> <p>Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> September</p> <p>Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> November</p>	