

**Minutes of the 93rd meeting of  
The Advisory Committee for Wales  
Hybrid meeting on 12 June 2024**

**Present**

Aled Eirug	Chair (interim)
Robert Andrews	Member
Angharad Evans	Member
Karen Lewis	Member
Geraint Strello	Member
Amanda Rees	Member

**In attendance**

Clive Jones	Ofcom Board Member for Wales
Jonathan Rose	Director, Ofcom Northern Ireland (acting Director Wales)
Elinor Williams	Regulatory Affairs Principal, Wales, Ofcom
Meleri Evans	Regulatory Affairs Manager, Wales, Ofcom
Rhys Llewelyn	Senior Welsh Language Advisor, Ofcom Wales
Liz Nash	Administrator, Ofcom Wales
Rachel Burr	Communications Consumer Panel Member for Wales

Other Ofcom colleagues

**Apologies**

Ruth McElroy	Content Board Member for Wales
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**Agenda items**

**1. Introduction**

The Chairman welcomed attendees to the 93<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Advisory Committee for Wales. Apologies were received from Ruth McElroy.  
Aled Eirug explained that following Rob Andrew's resignation as Chair due to taking up a new full-time role, he had been asked by Ofcom to be acting Chair until a new appointment is made. RA will continue as a Member of the Committee.

**2. Declaration of Members' Interests – verbal**

Geraint Strello – BT shareholder and member of BT pension scheme.  
Amanda Rees – Board Member at Cwmpas Development Agency

**3. Minutes of the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> February and matters arising**

Following one small amendment the minutes were APPROVED.

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### 4. Chairman's Report – verbal

The Chair welcomed three new members Amanda Rees, Karen Lewis and Geraint Strello and thanked the outgoing Chair for his service.

He gave a short verbal update. An outstanding item for discussion was the possibility of holding the October ACW meeting out of Cardiff. Members discussed the suggestion of going to North Wales.

### 5. Update: Ofcom Board Member for Wales

Clive Jones gave an update on the Board's activities. Topics discussed included:

- 1) the General Election and Ofcom's purdah arrangements
- 2) The establishment of the Media Bill
- 3) Public Service Media
- 4) Channel 4 production quotas
- 5) the future of the Post Office

Jonathan Rose followed up on two actions from the last meeting:

- Update on GB news complaints – subsequent Broadcast Bulletins had reported the outcome of these investigations.
- Item 10 – consultation re network resilience – the requested extension was not required.

### 6. Media Act Implementation

The Chair welcomed Anthony Szykaruk and his team who had previously circulated an update report. A couple of items were highlighted from the report:

- The roadmap initially outlined in February has been superseded by events and timelines have shifted. The team is working to revise timelines in the coming weeks and aim to produce a revised Roadmap in September.
- Members remarked that the criteria governing listed events criteria is still a concern for the Committee especially now that the Act broadens the regime to capture a range of new providers including streaming services.
- There was a discussion around S4C and the provision of Clic on some devices. The team explained any changes affecting S4C are not for Ofcom to implement.

The team agreed to return to a future ACW meeting to update Members on developments following the General Election.

### 7. BBC Annual Report

The team had previously circulated a paper giving an overview of Ofcom's proposed approach to this year's report, in particular the sections relevant to the nations and regions and the BBC's output in Wales in 2023/4. The team highlighted the infographic page will be completed after data has been received over the summer. In answer to a question, the team explained how data is collected via in-depth focus groups (including young audiences);

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the Annual tracker and qualitative research from BBC using local media report specific questions around BBC across all nations and demographics.

The BBC will publish its Annual Report in July and Ofcom then plans to publish its Annual Report on the BBC in November alongside its Local Media Review.

### 8. Media Nations Wales Report

An update paper had previously been circulated and taken as read. Highlights included:

The PSM Tracker asked a new question this year – it asked its online respondents to rate the three most important attributes for PSBs to deliver for society overall.

- News consumption data will be included in this year's report and focussing more on programming produced in each nation.
- A member commented the sample size in Wales for the PSM tracker appeared very small and queried if this could be enlarged. The team commented this was broadly in line with last year but will take comments on board especially as currently tendering for new tracker provider for next year.

The report is due for publication on 31 July.

### 9. Media Literacy Strategy

The Making Sense of Media team gave a thorough presentation of 'the Media Literacy 3-Year strategy consultation' which closes on 24<sup>th</sup> June. The Strategy focuses on three areas – Research evidence and evaluation; engaging platforms and people and partnerships which they expanded on.

Members commented they were delighted that the team were hosting a series of roadshows around the UK with Cardiff taking place on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> June.

Following discussion and a previous comment by the Content Board Member for Wales, the team confirmed that there will be discussion with Welsh Government regarding a possible communications engagement plan and hope to discuss in greater detail at Friday's event. It was felt this could be combined with Online Safety awareness campaign.

### 10. Public Policy

An update paper had previously been circulated. Kate Davies has now returned from maternity leave. The Chair thanked Kate Biggs for all her support over the previous months.

The team's main focus has been the run up to the General Election. In answer to a question, KB explained that Ofcom continues to engage with shadow ministers and government officials. The team will monitor announcements, speeches and manifestos in the run up to the election, continue to work with officials as appropriate and, once a new Government is in place, it will work to quickly understand any implications for Ofcom's areas of work.

A member commented that the PPT report stated that the first set of SRN licence obligations, relating to Partial Not Spots, are due in June 2024 and asked for further information. KB advised it was too early to comment and the team will provide a further update at the next ACW meeting in October.

There was a discussion around whether the Committee should produce an annual summary of its activity and advice. JR advised that the Scotland Committee has produced such a

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report and shared it with Ofcom. The England and Northern Ireland Committees were considering whether to do the same.

### **11. Report: Wales Recent Developments**

An update report had previously been circulated by the Ofcom Wales team and Meleri Evans drew attention to key topics which included:

- A recent meeting with the Childrens' Commissioner's office to discuss Online safety and Ofcom's protection of children consultation.
- Election period – details of party manifestos being released including Plaid Cymru's proposed creation of a rural broadband infrastructure company. Members queried how this would work with the current UK government's Shared Rural Network agreement. EW advised the current contract expires in 2025 and discussions are ongoing with Welsh Government.
- Latest development with the Welsh Language Commissioner regarding Standards 33 and 54 around social media content. Members were pleased to note that the Commissioner had approved an application to amend Ofcom's standards in line with its approach to publications. The Chair congratulated the Ofcom Wales team.
- It was noted that Ofcom had provided a response to The Senedd Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee report The State of Play: Public Service Broadcasting in Wales.

### **12. Update - Communications Consumer Panel Member for Wales**

The Communications Consumer Panel Member for Wales had previously submitted a paper and drew attention to the following key issues:

- Rick Hill concluded his term as Chair in May and Helen Froud has succeeded him. The Panel is currently recruiting for three vacancies – a general Panel Member, Member for Northern Ireland and Member for Scotland.
- The Panel's 2024/25 Priorities are:
  - Affordability of communications services and consumer debt
  - Migration to VoIP
  - 2G/3G switch off
  - Future of the Universal Postal Service

RB gave further detail behind each priority.

Members discussed the advantage of having an independent report for each Nation which they felt would be beneficial in highlighting unique issues in each nation. RB to take suggestion forward.

RB highlighted the Panel's concern re the current Broadband Universal Service Obligation (USO) – it is felt 10mbs is not sufficient for an average family. EW advised that a high number of households are now connected to full fibre and offered to circulate current stats from the Connected Nations Report.

Members were pleased to note that RB would be engaging with the Digital Inclusion Alliance for Wales.

### **12. Update: Content Board Member for Wales**

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In her absence the Content Board Member for Wales had provided an update report prior to the meeting and highlighted the following:

- She attended a meeting re Channel 4 licensing with the Ofcom Board Member for Wales and Ofcom staff where a full discussion took place around C4's quotas for nations and regions. She invited the Committee to respond once the minutes of that meeting are available and suggested the team attend a future ACW to provide an update.
- Following on from February's meeting she also encouraged ACW/Ofcom to consider the suggestion of implementing a communications and engagement plan to share insights with key stakeholders around Online Safety.
- CJ confirmed Ofcom will be trying to focus on looking forward on key topics and how they will impact the different nations – and would encourage a proactive conversation. The aim would be to give ACW advance notice.

### 13. Protection of Children Consultation

The team gave a detailed presentation and overview of the current consultation which closes on 17<sup>th</sup> July. Gwenno Thomas updated the Committee on current engagement with stakeholder in Wales such as preparing packs for schools etc. and arranging future workshops. This area of work is now part of the Welsh Government's Digital Resilience and Education team.

It was agreed that 2/3 members would meet to discuss the consultation and consider drafting a response. Ofcom Wales to arrange a Teams call w/c 1 July. The Chair will then collate a written response on behalf of the Committee, if required.

### 14. Information items (noted)

Members agreed receiving complaints data at meetings was useful and asked if anomalies for Wales could be highlighted in some way.

### Date of next meeting:

2nd October 2024, venue TBC.