

**Minutes of the 95th meeting of
The Advisory Committee for Wales
held via Teams/ some in-person on 26th November 2024**

Present

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| Aled Eirug | Chair |
| Amanda Rees | Member |
| Geraint Strello | Member |

In attendance

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| Ruth McElroy | Content Board Member for Wales |
| Clive Jones | Ofcom Board Member for Wales |
| Rachel Burr | Communications Consumer Panel Member for Wales |
| Philip Henfrey | Director, Ofcom Wales |
| Elinor Williams | Regulatory Affairs Principal, Wales, Ofcom |
| Meleri Evans | Regulatory Affairs Manager, Wales, Ofcom |
| Ella Breeze | Regulatory Affairs Administrator, Ofcom Wales |
| Rhys Llewelyn | Senior Welsh language Manager, Ofcom Wales |

Apologies

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| Angharad Evans | Member |
| Karen Lewis | Member |

Agenda items

External Presentation by Openreach

Martin Williams, Director of Partnerships, provided an update on the deployment of full fibre across Wales. The presentation reported on the success of the UK Government's Gigabit Voucher scheme in Llanbrynmair and identified the need to raise awareness of the other areas across Wales that could benefit from the scheme. A member suggested increasing public awareness of the schemes by promoting them on social media. Another member asked about the copper switch off plans and the effect this will have on remote areas.

1. Introduction

The Chairman welcomed attendees to the 95th meeting of the Advisory Committee for Wales. Apologies were received from Angharad Evans and Karen Lewis.

2. Update declaration and conflicts of interest

A member reported that they are now the Chair of Film Cymru.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 3rd October 2024 and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting held on 3rd October 2024 had been previously circulated to Members.

Agenda items

A member had some suggested amendments for the minutes and would provide them to the Executive by email. Subject to those amendments the minutes were approved.

4. Chairman's Report – oral

The chair provided a verbal update to the committee. Members noted that he had met with the chairs of the Advisory Committees for Northern Ireland and for Scotland.

The Communications Consumer Panel would be holding its first out of London meeting in February in Wales at the Ofcom office in Cardiff on the 12-13th of February and members of the ACW would be invited to engage with the Panel.

5. Update: Ofcom Board Member for Wales

The Content Board Member for Wales had previously circulated an update paper.

ACW members discussed the state of play of the independent production sector in Wales and the importance of the new Media Act was noted. It was noted that YouTube and Netflix were steaming ahead with production but perhaps not enough to pick up the slack of PSB schedules.

A member reiterated the importance of promoting production in Wales and a strong case needed to be made.

In discussion the decline in production was raised and the issue of how it would affect particular demographics, some more than others.

6. Update: Wales Recent Developments

An update paper had been shared with members. There was discussion of key items.

Telecoms Access Review

It was noted that Welsh Government officials had said that their focus was on ensuring that regulation continued to work well in Area 3.

Ogi

The internet provider was backing the launch of a bespoke Welsh language service built-in to the latest Eero wi-fi software, enhancing the broadband experience for Welsh-speaking users everywhere.

Shared Rural Network

Seven 4G mobile sites had been upgraded across Wales as part of the Shared Rural Network initiative. The upgrade was supporting the UK Government's mission to break down barriers to opportunities and boost economic growth.

Vodafone/ Three – proposed merger

It was noted that the deadline for the CMA's decision on the merger was the 7th of December 2024.

S4C

Agenda items

A broadcast standard decision related to S4C's Can i Gymru was noted as a reminder of Ofcom regulatory duties in relation to S4C.

Members noted that Geraint Evans had been appointed as Chief Executive of S4C, effective from January 2025.

The prominence of S4C programmes/ content on iPlayer/ ITV X and the impact this has on the Welsh language continued to be an area of interest and discussion.

7. Update: Public Policy

The Committee noted that the Public Policy team continued to work on building relationships with UK Government and to engage with new MPs, on various issues across Ofcom's remit, including Online Safety policy. The appointment of the new DCMS and DSIT select committee members was discussed, and it was noted that there would be a Welsh speaker among them.

The committee discussed the Shared Rural Network (SRN) update and how on review of additional data Three had met their obligation to deliver UK-wide coverage.

The news of Natalie Black's appointment as Group Director of Networks and Communications in mid-November was well received by the committee.

8. Review of Public Service Media (PSM)

It was noted that the PSM Review team had joined colleagues in Cardiff for a series of impactful meetings with key stakeholders in Wales. Members thanked Elinor Williams for arranging the sessions.

A member raised concern that Welsh content was being lost on online platforms due to algorithms and the impact these had. It was suggested that the key players needed to engage in discussion about this matter.

9. Update - Communications Consumer Panel Member for Wales

The Panel member provided an update paper for committee identifying their priorities for 2024/25. These priorities included Connectivity, Affordability, Accessibility, and Trust and Reliability. Issues of interest during the meeting included the Future of Wireless Connectivity and the provision of funding to support consumers who need additional assistance. The committee was also keen to learn more about the plans to ensure that Communications Provides maintain affordability for consumers.

A concern for the Panel was the difficulty in connecting the remote areas of Wales. In relation to Openreach, it was flagged that Llanbrynmair was now the first telephone exchange area in the UK to have 100% full fibre.

10. Update: Content Board Member for Wales

Ruth McElroy reported on recent Content Board discussions. The importance of the PSM Review was highlighted and it was suggested that there was a need for S4C to be its own ambassador. She expressed interest in taking part in any future meeting with S4C to discuss PSB.

Agenda items

11. Forthcoming Consultations & Publications

In due course, the Committee would engage with a number of Ofcom consultations and reports, including the forthcoming consultation on the Postal service, the annual Online Nation research report, Ofcom's annual report on the BBC and the annual Connected Nations research report.

12. Complaints data for Wales

The report was noted but no issues were raised.

Any Other Business and future agenda items

There was no other business.

Members noted that 2025 ACW meeting dates had been confirmed as follows:

Thursday 6 March

Tuesday 10 June

Wednesday 1 October

Tuesday 9 December