

Minutes of the 88th meeting of
The Advisory Committee for Wales
Hybrid meeting on 28 February 2023

Present

Hywel Wiliam	Chair
Robert Andrews	Member
Tom Crick	Member

In attendance

Sian Phipps	Communications Consumer Panel Member, Wales
Eleanor Marks	Director, Ofcom Wales
Elinor Williams	Regulatory Affairs Principal, Wales, Ofcom
Meleri Evans	Regulatory Affairs Manager, Wales, Ofcom
Maeve MacRory	NED

Other Ofcom colleagues

Apologies

David Jones	Ofcom Board Member for Wales
Ruth McElroy	Content Board Member for Wales
Angharad Evans	Member
Aled Eirug	Member

Agenda items	Action
<p>1. Introduction</p> <p>The Chairman welcomed attendees to the 88th meeting of the Advisory Committee for Wales. Apologies received from David Jones, Ofcom Board Member for Wales; Ruth McElroy, Content Board Member for Wales; Angharad Evans, Member ACW and Aled Eirug, Member ACW.</p> <p>The Chair also welcomed Maeve MacRory from the Next Generation NED scheme.</p>	
<p>2. Declaration of Members’ Interests – verbal</p> <p>Sian Phipps noted that she had been invited to join the Senedd Cross Party group on consumer rights.</p>	
<p>3. Minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2022 and matters arising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Item 5 – to note the work Content Board on the terms of trade and codes of commissioning • Item 7 - Apple satellite mobile an interesting model (in relation to the work that Apple was doing that could enable emergency satellite calls from its handsets) • Item 8 – Public Policy – changes in UK governmental departments 	

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<p>4. Chairman’s Report – verbal</p> <p>The Chairman updated members on his meetings and events since the last meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electoral Reform Society Conference and AGM held on Cardiff on 3 December, which included useful presentations on the changes due for the next Senedd Elections, which will be electing 96 members as opposed to the current 60 members via a closed list PR system, • Ofcom’s Approach to Online Safety Regulation, held on 6 December at the Ofcom Wales Office • Welsh Community Radio Network (WCRN): Informal catch-up meeting on 7 December, with Steve Johnson, a lecturer at the University of South Wales and one of the network’s founder members. He described the practical challenges facing the sector in Wales. • Meeting with Maggie Carver, Chair Content Board, on 18 January to discuss the future participation of the Member for Wales at ACW meetings. 	
<p>5. Update - Public Policy</p> <p>Committee Members were updated on a number of Parliamentary developments and policy areas including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes at UK Government – the majority of Ofcom’s remit moves from DCMS to DSIT (Department for Science, Innovation and Technology): telecoms, spectrum, digital and online safety. Only broadcasting remains with DCMS. Postal services moves from BEIS to DBT (Department for Business and Trade). DCMS remains Ofcom’s sponsor department for the time being. • Accompanying ministerial reshuffle, the highlights of which are as follows:: Lucy Frazer MP has been appointed Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. Michelle Donelan MP has been appointed Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, having previously served as Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport since October 2022. Kemi Badenoch MP has been appointed Secretary of State for Business and Trade. • Draft Media Bill: Continue to support DCMS as it progresses work on the draft Media Bill. In January, DCMS announced its decision not to proceed with privatisation of Channel 4, and instead implement reforms to the broadcaster’s operating model which will be included in the Media Bill. • BBC – Ofcom remains closely engaged with DCMS on the BBC Charter Mid-Term Review. Separately, we plan to publish a statement on changes to the Operating Licence shortly on proposals to amend some of the BBC’s quotas on news and music programming. 	
<p>6. Update: Ofcom Content Board Member for Wales – apologies received</p>	
<p>7. Report – Wales Recent Developments</p> <p>Eleanor highlighted the following from her written report that had been circulated to members ahead of the meeting.</p>	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welsh Language Commissioner – our first meeting with Efa Gruffydd Jones was an open and honest discussion. Whilst Efa was sympathetic to some of the challenges we face she was clear that Ofcom was expected to fulfil its obligations as set out in its compliance notice. We cited the standards relating to social media and our plans to appoint an individual with responsibility for the Welsh language and social media which Efa welcomed. We noted the ongoing complaints, and we await the Commissioner’s final decision. We agreed that we would arrange to meet with Efa shortly to discuss developments in our work. • S4C and Netflix - S4C announced a new partnership with Netflix, which will see the streaming giant broadcast Dal y Mellt (Rough Cut) in Welsh in April this year. This is the first time that it will air a Welsh language drama and Netflix said that it hoped it could play a role in helping to "promote and preserve the Welsh language." • Recruitment - We are recruiting a number of roles in the Wales team to support our Welsh Language work including an individual to manage Ofcom’s work in the Welsh language on social media. Eleanor also noted vacancies for ACW roles. • We attended a meeting of local councillors and Openreach in Berriew, Montgomeryshire arranged by MS Russell George and MP Craig Williams. The area is very poorly connected, with some 3900 premises without access to decent broadband. Possible solutions to the poor connectivity were discussed including Openreach’s Fibre Community Partnership scheme and alternative technologies such as fixed wireless access. Better communication was needed so that communities like Berriew fully understood the options that are available to them. 	
<p>8. Discussion: 2G and 3G switch off</p> <p>The team introduced themselves to Committee Members and gave an update on the upcoming 2G and 3G networks switch off.</p> <p>The team said that while this is a decision by the mobile providers, we are monitoring the project to ensure that there is minimal disruption for consumers and are holding regular meetings with stakeholders, including industry.</p> <p>We are also communicating with our stakeholders and have published a guide for consumers and have set out what we expect from mobile providers when they turn off their 2G and 3G networks. The team confirmed that the mobile providers are also in the process of communicating with their customers.</p> <p>The team did not have a specific breakdown of the number of 2G and 3G handsets for Wales adding that the switch off would also impact on smart meters, telecare equipment and potentially some vehicles. The team added that the process will be completed by 2033.</p>	
<p>9. Update: Ofcom Board Member for Wales – apologies received</p> <p>Apologies were received and Members noted that it would be useful to receive a paper in advance of the formal meeting.</p>	

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<p>10.. Update - Communications Consumer Panel Member for Wales</p> <p>The Panel Member had submitted a paper in advance and drew attention to the following issues:</p> <p>PSTN The Communications Consumer Panel are monitoring the two current trials in England and are worried that it will leave people without a landline service. This could have an impact on both customers and business who might be unable to keep the same telephone number.</p> <p>The Panel are doing a piece of Market Research on disability. The Panel Member stressed that they were focused on the social model of disability rather than the medical model.</p> <p>The Panel are considering staging an in-person Hub Event, potentially to consider the issue of affordability and rurality.</p>	
<p>11. Discussion</p> <p>Committee Members considered their priorities as a Committee, discussed the efficacy of future meetings and their approach to responding to consultations.</p>	
<p>12. Consumer complaints update</p> <p>Contents noted</p>	
<p>13. Forthcoming Consultations & Publications</p> <p>Contents noted</p>	
<p>Any Other Business and future agenda items</p> <p>Members noted the ongoing work of the Expert Panel which is looking at the devolution of broadcasting to Wales.</p> <p>Future meeting dates confirmed as:</p> <p>13 June 2023</p>	

Chair
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Date: _____

