



## S4C Unitary Board

### Programme Policy Statement 2023–24 (and Policy review 2022–23) July 2023

S4C serves the audience with content that entertains, excites and reflects Wales in all its diversity.

As a public service broadcaster we have a duty to create the platform and ecosystem to stimulate the creative industries in Wales, to create ambitious and unique content that appeals to all ages, backgrounds and linguistic abilities.

S4C aims to be a destination for creative, engaging and attractive Welsh-language content, available to enjoy on a variety of platforms in Wales and beyond.

## Programme Policy Statement 2023–24

### S4C is transforming

S4C is stepping into its 40s with confidence, passion and ambition as we create bold and powerful content that represents contemporary Wales.

Providing a voice for communities across Wales and beyond, we will reflect a diverse nation with comprehensive and popular content that welcomes new and existing Welsh speakers – inspiring people to hear, see and speak Welsh in Wales, the UK and beyond.

A lively, exciting offer will entertain our loyal viewers and engage with a new audience by providing a Welsh perspective on the world. We have a clear strategy to appeal to viewers in the 25–44 age group and the C2DE socio-economic group, which guides content commissioning decisions for 2023–24, as well as forward planning for content in 2024–25.

S4C will also be a creative, engaging partner for co-productions as S4C aims to attract younger and wider audiences.

Above all, we will target one of three purposes with content that:

- Educates;
- Inspires; and
- Offers escapism.

Recognising that our viewers face various challenges in their lives, as a public service broadcaster we will extend refuge and support through our content.

We will therefore create opportunities for our viewers – of whatever age – to understand more about the world around us – from living costs to climate change. We'll give a voice to inspiring stories and characters as we reach different communities, unique lives and locations. And we'll offer some escapism with exciting, innovative, ambitious and new content across our platforms.

While the linear channel will cater for all, our various platforms – offering opportunities to view S4C content on TV, on-line, on demand, and many others – will be available at any time and cater for different audiences.

### Create talked-about content

As we realise a content strategy that focuses on the audience in the 25–44 age group, new commissions are beginning to see success – such as **Goglebocs Cymru** which tripled the numbers watching through the catch-up platforms on a weekly basis since the launch of the first series this year.

We are therefore looking for well-known brands that can add to our entertainment provision, but offer a Welsh personality. In addition, we are investing significantly in the development of original new formats that appeal to the whole family.

The channel's well-known brands will continue, but with an emphasis on targeting a new audience. We therefore look forward to welcoming back **Am Dro, Gwesty Aduniad, Priodas Pum Mil, Jonathan** and **Sgwrs Dan y Lloer** over the coming months.

In response to the expectations of our target audience, we will be launching a number of new non-script formats that push the creative boundaries. As part of this, we will analyse topics through a different lens and challenge prejudices, as we increase the emphasis on commissions reflecting the diversity of Wales: from **Colli Cymru i'r Môr** that investigates the impact of climate change on Wales, to **Saith Person** which sees individuals revisiting those who have influenced their lives.

**Ni yw'r Cymry** will reflect what it is to be Welsh today, and in **Arwyr Anabl** (working title) we will be looking at the history of disability in Wales. These series offer us the opportunity to invest in exciting new talent and seek ways of developing well-known talent. This will build on **Stori'r Iaith**, a highly successful and noisy series led by **Alex Jones, Ellis James, Sean Fletcher** and **Lisa Jên**, while also giving us an opportunity to see new talent and voices in the series.

Our provision of **noisy premium content** will see investment with stunning **short series Gwir-Drosedd** telling amazing stories as we push creative boundaries with the history of **Y Twyllwr, Llofruddiaeth Niwclear**, and **Hoover: Lle ma' fy ngwylliau?**

Substantial commissions of popular series **Y Llinell Las** and **Y Fets** will give a different flavour of life in communities across Wales.

Also among the broad slate will be new provocative series such as **Y Prif** and **Gwasanaeth Prawf**, that will provide special access to public services.

Offering the audience an opportunity to escape their daily lives will be new series following well-known faces. Former Wales player **Mike Phillips** will follow Welsh people overseas in **Croeso i Dubai**; while **Beti George** and **Huw Stephens** will be visiting unique hotels in luxury series **Cysgu o Gwmpas**.

We look forward to a second series of **Bywyd a Bwyd** with Colleen Ramsey; **Chris, Al and Kiri** will be travelling across New Zealand on an adventure; and a range of interesting factual series and documentaries will support the Rugby World Cup provision in the Autumn.

#### New voices

Following the success of documentaries like **Drych: Fi, Rhyw ac Anabledd** and **Ysgol Ni: Moelwyn** there will be an opportunity to reflect contemporary Wales in our documentary provision. We are looking for bold, challenging and emotional stories that push the discussion forward and give a different perspective on life.

We are keen to reflect more voices from the valleys and north-east Wales with programmes such as **Wrecsam: Clwb Ni** which looks at the history of the football club with Rob McElhenney and Ryan Reynolds.

Also, unique documentaries with familiar faces will provide an opportunity to meet unique characters with programmes on **Alex: Epilepsi a Fi**; and **Sage Todz: Brodyr Brodorol**.

Building on digital-first commissions, **Byw y Freuddwyd** will be a YouTube commission following a couple who have sold everything to fulfil their dream of living without a mortgage in west Wales. Two linear programmes will form part of 12 x 15' YouTube programmes.

#### HANSH: Creating trouble (in a good way!)

A platform for young Welsh voices and talent, Hansh will become prominent across S4C platforms from TikTok to Instagram, YouTube to Clic and the iPlayer.

Hansh has continued to grow in terms of viewers and followers month on month since its launch, and there will be further investment in S4C's digital offer for the young.

Hansh's campaign will take the brand's mischievous content beyond its loyal viewers, as we build our coverage of multi-genre mid- and long-form provision on the platform.

The new series **Mwy na Daffs a Taffs** will launch on Clic and iPlayer, following some of Britain's biggest influencers and trying to dispel their prejudices about Wales. In addition, the challenging love series **Tishio Fforc?** returns.

#### Home of Welsh sports

We saw the incredible success of the **Cartref Pêl-droed Cymru** campaign in autumn 2022 as we released a bumper slate of special content that supported the World Cup campaign. In the middle of a historic era for the

national team, S4C saw the best reach ever across our digital platforms, breaking every record for the platforms with our bold content.

From children's provision with the **Jambori** where more than 200,000 children in Wales sang in unity (and half of those in second-language schools) to documentary programmes **Yma o Hyd** and **Cewri Cwpan y Byd**, from **Cyngerdd Efrog Newydd** to **Gemau Byw**, S4C's content appealed around the world with millions of on-line viewing sessions, and succeeded in doubling the number of viewers compared to the previous Euro games.

We will launch the Cartref Chwaraeon Cymru campaign during 2023–24 to coincide with the Six Nations rugby contest, and the Rugby World Cup in France. This will respond to the passion of the nation with content such as a special documentary on **Ken Owens** as well as a new format **O'r Soffa i'r Sgrym** with Robin McBryde and his son who will be following a group of young lads from north-east Wales and the valleys coming together to play a game in France. Also, there will be two **Jonathan** programmes live from France.

In terms of our provision to coincide with the Rugby World Cup, we will be at the heart of the excitement in France, with **Jason Mohammad**, **Sarra Elgan** and **Mike Phillips** as the faces of our campaign.

#### From script to screen

This year we will launch the **Sinema Cymru** fund in partnership with *Creative Wales* and *Ffilm Cymru*, with the aim of investing in one film per year and developing exciting scripts with Welsh talent.

**Y Sŵn** will lead the way into cinemas across Wales, telling the story of the establishment of S4C, before the film is broadcast on the linear service. Then a horror film **Gwledd** – which has already been on Hulu and in cinemas – will be shown on S4C on Halloween Night.

Following the success of our first joint-production with Channel 4, **Y Golau**, there is a strong slate of drama this year with **Rownd a Rownd** continuing to grow its audience, and **Pobol y Cwm** celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2024.

We will be launching the comedy drama series **Anfamol**, which is an adaptation of a popular theatre show, as well as **Creisis** following a young man in Pontypridd who is dealing with a crisis in his personal life and at work.

There will also be a joint-production of **Pren ar y Bryn** with BBC Cymru; as well as a spin-off series from the soap opera Rownd a Rownd - **Bariau**; and a second series of the popular drama **Stad**.

We continue to invest significantly in our dramas. 12 scripts / ideas were awarded development funding to foster new production and writing talent with companies *Ie Ie Productions*, *Fiction Factory*, *Three Tables*, *BBC Studios* and *Boom Cymru*. Furthermore, *Severn Screen* is committed to producing a drama each year for S4C for the next three years with the Welsh talent who is working extensively with Netflix these days, **Gareth Evans**.

We are also continuing to call for new ideas as we launch our **Interactive Drama** co-production with the **Wales Interactive** gaming company.

And our dramas continue to sell internationally, as Britbox buys **Yr Amgueddfa**, and Netflix offers **Dal y Mellt**.

#### Home of Wales live events - LWP

We will be revamping our live events provision. A range of content will be provided around **Y Sioe Fawr** as we extend the content across entertainment, food and competition, and stream elements across our platforms. **Eisteddfod yr Urdd** and the **Eisteddfod Genedlaethol** will also be streamed through our players.

With S4C sponsoring the **PRIDE Cymru** Welsh language stage, a lot of LGBTQ+ content will be part of our provision throughout the year, with coverage increasing further during the celebrations.

We will also be pushing our **LWP** brand as the home of contemporary Welsh music. As a result, we will take a leading role in events including **Tafwyl**, **Green Man**, and the **Eisteddfod**, while also developing the content of **Curadur**, **Uchafbwyntiau'r Haf**, **LWP Sessions** and **LWP Music Videos**. This will be a further significant investment for the Welsh music scene and will further develop new musical talent.

#### Welsh for all

With new appointments within the Content and Publishing team, the **Welsh Language Strategy Lead** and **Education Content Executive** will be assisting us to launch the **Welsh for All** campaign, which will welcome new speakers and learners to engage us through our content.

At the same time, we will look at how we can deliver content more effectively within the education sector, targeting mixed households, second-language parents, schools, colleges and universities.

## Review of Content 2022–23

### News and Current Affairs

As we emerged from the lockdown period, 2022–23 turned out to be a very significant year in the world of news and current affairs.

British and foreign stories dominated, with the **Newyddion S4C** reporting from Poland and Ukraine on the war between Ukraine and Russia. The programme's journalists were also among the first to arrive in Turkey to report on the crisis following the Turkey and Syria earthquakes.

There was dignified but balanced coverage around the death of Queen Elizabeth II.

The cost of living crisis was a key story at home, and the programme also managed to break several original stories that were picked up by other news channels and platforms.

The audience numbers for the Newyddion S4C programme remained higher over the last quarter of 2022–23 – around 7,000 higher the average over recent years. While majority of its audience remains in the 65+ age group, Newyddion S4C has recently performed slightly better among those aged 25–44.

The series **Y Byd yn ei Le** was relaunched with new presenter Catrin Haf Jones, with live programmes on Thursday evenings to analyse the big political stories of the week.

The **Byd ar Bedwar** series has now established itself in the Monday night schedule, and has experienced an increase in viewership amongst a younger audience.

Lifting Covid restrictions meant that **Pawb a'i Farn** could resume travelling around Wales to discuss important topics such as the cost of living, the sexual harassment of women, and the future role of the Prince of Wales.

Our digital news service (**NS4C**) continues to grow. During the 2022–23 financial year, some 340,000 users visited the website – an increase of 69% on the previous year.

**NS4C**'s video content was viewed 5.5m times on Facebook, and 5.9m times on Twitter.

### Children

As one of the pillars of S4C's strategy, our children's service continues to attract our younger viewers with great content that entertains and educates, with the intention of building on this further over the coming years.

Through our popular **Cyw** and **Stwnsh** brands in terms of age, we launched new **Cywion Bach** content for babies and their parents on our screen in 2022, with an app and a book based on the series being published during spring 2023.

For the first time since before Covid it was possible to produce popular studio shows such as **Pigo dy Drwyn**, offering an for children less fluent in Welsh the opportunity to be part of our content.

The dramas **Y Goleudy** and **Itopia 2** were popular as we published them as boxsets for the 7+ audience.

Deian and Loli fans were entertained with the film **Deian a Loli ac Ysbryd y Nadolig** and **Sir Bryn Terfel** voiced his first ever animation with the wonderful Christmas film **Y Miwsiffantod**.

Collaboration with partners has also been important. **Cyw a'r Gerddorfa** – in partnership with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales – attracted thousands of children to Venue Cymru in Llandudno, with hundreds of children also enjoying watching a live stream of the show.

And by working together with the Urdd, thousands of children were able to enjoy the **World Cup Jambori** through live streaming across schools in Wales and beyond.

## Sports

2022–23 was an important sporting year as Wales went through to the Qatar World Cup for the first time in 64 years. S4C was a central part of 'Team Wales' with the Football Association of Wales in broadcasting the **Home of Football Wales Campaign**. The live games managed to attract double the number of viewers compared to the Euros tournament.

There was a cross channel campaign to turn the channel red for lead-up games and during the World Cup campaign which was extremely successful with content from all genres being included in the campaign. From the **Jambori with the Urdd to Y Wal Goch** and documentaries about the team – there was something for everyone.

S4C managed to get the rights to broadcast the **FA Cup** Wrexham v Coventry game which attracted the same audience as the international football matches we broadcast. This underlines the importance of our strategy to broadcast sport – such as the Wrexham women's football matches – on YouTube.

48 live games were broadcast across the women's and men's competitions by **Sgorio** during 2022–23, whether on the linear service, or on Clic, YouTube, or Facebook.

28 live games from the **Indigo Premiership** were broadcast on Facebook, YouTube, CLice and the linear service, as well as three women's final games.

**Rygbï Pawb** broadcast 20 live games, as well as the men's and women's Varsity.

The excitement of the **Tour de France** and **Giro d'Italia** had a strong response, together with the **Marathon Eryri, Ras yr Wyddfa** and the **Commonwealth Games**.

## Drama

As one of S4C's strategic priorities, investment in drama and scripted content has increased across co-productions and sole S4C productions.

2022–23 started strongly with a joint production with Channel 4 – **Y Golau** / A Light in the Hall – with Alex Roach, Joanna Scanlan and Iwan Rheon performing strongly and attracting considerable press attention. The first two episodes were published at the same time on Clic and iPlayer, to coincide with the linear broadcast of the first episode, to give people an opportunity to watch the next episode in advance.

The new **Dal y Mellt** series was launched in September based on Iwan 'Iwcs' Roberts' book about the ups and downs of the main character Carbo in a fresh 'heist' series that was full of humour and excitement. It was launched as a boxset on Clic and iPlayer, and there was considerable attention a few months later when Netflix UK purchased the right to publish the series – the first Welsh-only production to be purchased by a streamer in the UK.

Although the trend is to watch fewer soaps, **Rownd a Rownd** increased its audience – mainly as a result of catch-up viewing through Clic and iPlayer. There was also an increase in relate content published on social media such as TikTok, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. The 'spin off' series **Copsan** was published on YouTube.

**Pobol y Cwm** continued to broadcast three episodes a week, and new faces joined the villagers. Preparations are now underway to celebrate the series' 50<sup>th</sup> birthday during 2024.

At the beginning of the year, the second series of the popular drama **Yr Amgueddfa** by Fflur Dafydd was published. This time, the series relocated from the capital to some of the most iconic locations in Carmarthenshire.

Furthermore, during the winter, many popular dramas from the archive were released as boxsets on Clic, including **Un Bore Mercher, Bang, Craith**, and **Y Llyfrgell**.

## Entertainment

Following Covid, this was the first full year of live events which did not need to be held under any restrictions. There was therefore an opportunity to celebrate the summer's live events, and broadcast more events than in previous years.

The **Urdd Eisteddfod** streamed the three Coch, Gwyn and Gwyrdd pavilions; as well as the Royal Welsh streaming competitions live on YouTube, Facebook and Clic. Indeed, publishing the content on a variety of platforms led to an 8 per cent increase in viewers under 44 years old.

The number of viewers increased for the **Eisteddfod Genedlaethol** as well as we broadcast more than ever before from the maes.

We saw more content under our music brand **Lwp** at live events across Wales during 2022–23, and this will remain the strategic priority in the year ahead to make S4C the home for contemporary Welsh music.

A new **Gogglebocs Cymru** series was launched with S4C entering homes across Wales. It quickly became one of our most popular series, reaching the top 10 programmes of 2022–23.

Established series also increased in viewership and appreciation – including **Sgwrs dan y Lloer**, **Priodas Pum Mil**, **Y Wal Goch**, and **Jonathan**.

This year's **Can i Gymru** attracted our biggest ever audience and we launched a new **Pencampwyr** sports quiz series. **Cymry ar Gynfas** and **Radio Fama** returned; and we followed Chris to New York in **Chris a'r Afal Mawr**. A new face was also introduced to the channel with the series **Colleen Ramsey: Bwyd a Bywyd**.

#### Factual

2022–23 was full of popular returning series, with **Llinell Las**, **Gwesty Aduniad**, **Am Dro** and **Cefn Gwlad** performing strongly in a strong slate of factual content that reflected contemporary Wales.

**Symud i Gymru** sparked challenging debate, while **Plant y Sianel** reflected the lives of those born the same year as S4C.

As part of the World Cup slate, we followed the story of the **Tîm tu ol y Tîm** in Qatar, and the story of Dafydd Iwan in the documentary **Yma o Hyd**.

With the short series **Wrecsam: Clwb Ni**, we followed the story of the club's new owners, which performed strongly across the different platforms.

One of the highlights of the year was the history of the Welsh language – **Stori'r Iaith** – as four familiar faces interpreted the history of the language through different periods and their personal experiences. The series was launched at the same time as a Memorandum of Understanding to support the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 strategy.

The **Drych** Strand reflected the lives and experiences of individuals through emotional and inspiring stories.

And special crime programmes **Logan Mowangi** and **Llofruddiaeth Jack Armstrong** offered powerful documents that reflected national tragedies.

#### Hansh

In line with the strategy of developing content for the young age, Hansh received more investment.

The series **Mwy na Daffs a Taffs** saw British influencers being challenged on their preconceptions of Wales. Social content relating to the series managed to attract attention, with a clip featuring Gemma Collins receiving 7.1 million views.

The love series **Tishio Fforc?** won a New Voices award, and continued to grow Hansh's audience as well as the successful documentary **Cwîns Cwm Rag**.

As part of the World Cup provision came a popular strand **Pa fath o bobl? ...Cwpan y Byd** which provided a peek into the work of Welsh fans.

A second series of **Pen Petrol** returned, and documentary series **Grid** continued to push boundaries by discussing the world of The Furries, and the cost of living challenge.