

S4C: STATEMENT OF PROGRAMME POLICY

For the period 01 January – 31 December 2026

1. Introduction and scope

S4C is the United Kingdom's only dedicated Welsh-language public service broadcaster, occupying a unique and vital position within the broadcasting landscape. As a public service broadcaster, S4C has a distinctive responsibility to serve Welsh-speaking communities while contributing to the wider public service remit for television across the United Kingdom. This role extends beyond traditional broadcasting to include the promotion and normalisation of the Welsh language and culture through high-quality and diverse audiovisual content. In doing so, S4C plays a vital role in sustaining the Welsh language as a living, everyday means of communication, supporting its vitality, use and transmission across generations.

The Media Act 2024 has introduced significant changes to S4C's operating framework, reshaping how it fulfils its public service obligations. In particular, the removal of previous geographical restrictions enables S4C to make its services available across the United Kingdom through digital and online platforms, allowing it to serve Welsh-speaking audiences wherever they are located. These changes reinforce S4C's ability to deliver its remit in a digital environment, while maintaining the statutory requirement that a substantial proportion of its content is in Welsh.

This Statement of Programme Policy sets out how S4C intends to fulfil its public service remit across its relevant services. It reflects the updated legislative and regulatory framework, including the broader range of audiovisual services now recognised, and sets out S4C's approach to programme policy, accessibility and compliance. The Statement also demonstrates S4C's commitment to transparency and accountability in how it delivers public service content in a rapidly evolving media landscape.

2. S4C's public service remit

2.1. S4C's individual public service remit

S4C is a statutory public service broadcaster with a public service remit set out in the Communications Act 2003, as amended by the Media Act 2024. S4C's remit is to provide a broad range of high-quality and diverse audiovisual content, a substantial proportion of which is in Welsh. This remit applies across both S4C's linear television service and its internet programme services. In fulfilling this role, S4C contributes to the long-term sustainability of the Welsh language by ensuring it has a visible, meaningful and contemporary presence across modern media.

As the Welsh-language public service broadcaster, the overwhelming majority of content published by S4C fulfils its public service remit by definition, reflecting the central role of Welsh-language content across its services.

There are limited and clearly defined circumstances in which material made available by S4C may fall outside public service remit content. This may include, for example, occasional English-language commentary accompanying live sporting coverage, or other ancillary or contextual material. Such content represents a very small proportion

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of S4C's overall output and does not detract from the fundamentally public service nature of S4C's linear and on-demand services.

2.2. Contribution to the overall public service broadcasting remit

Through its role as the Welsh-language public service broadcaster, S4C plays a distinctive part in the wider public service broadcasting system. Its linear and on-demand services contribute to the delivery of information, education and entertainment in Welsh, reflecting life in Wales and supporting cultural expression and creative diversity across the UK.

This contribution includes Welsh-language news and current affairs, content for children and young people, educational programming, and a wide range of original drama, factual and cultural content. Working in partnership with other public service broadcasters and the independent production sector, S4C supports plurality and choice within the public service broadcasting landscape, ensuring that Welsh-language audiences are fully represented as part of the overall PSB system.

2.3. S4C's overarching goals and priorities for the year ahead

During the year ahead, S4C's overarching goals are focused on ensuring that its services continue to meet the needs of audiences and fulfil its public service remit.

Informed by audience research, insight and engagement, S4C will prioritise serving Welsh speakers, learners and wider audiences with an interest in Welsh-language content, with particular emphasis on priority audiences identified in the 2025–30 corporate strategy: *More than a TV Channel*. These priorities reflect changing demographics, viewing habits and the increasing importance of digital services in reaching audiences. Together, they guide how S4C will deliver a broad, accessible and relevant Welsh-language public service in the year ahead.

S4C will monitor delivery against these goals using a range of performance measures and strategic metrics – including content reach, audience demographics, engagement across platforms and usage of S4C Clic. These measures will inform commissioning, publishing and investment decisions throughout the year, supporting a balanced approach that combines audience growth, quality and distinctiveness.

3. Other relevant regulatory requirements

3.1. Programme quotas

Under the Media Act 2024, S4C has new programme quotas to meet with effect from 01 January 2026, with greater flexibility to fulfil these across S4C's linear channel and its designated on-demand programme service (expected to be S4C Clic). The new quotas are as follows:

S4C's annual quotas for Original Productions (all day), Original Productions (peak time) and Independent Productions are set out below:

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	<u>Quota (hours)</u>
Original Production - All day	5,200
Original Production - Peak time 1800-2230	1,390
Independent Production - All day	375

In addition, S4C has the following News and Current Affairs quotas, which remain unchanged:

	<u>Quota (hours)</u>
National and International News - All day	200
National and International News - Peak time 1800-2230	150
Current Affairs - All day	60
Current Affairs - Peak time 1800-2230	30

S4C also has annual quotas for European programming, European programming (independents) and European independent programming (recent works) as follows:

	<u>Quota (percent)</u>
European programming	50
European programming (independents)	10
European independent programming (recent works)	5

3.2. Commissioning arrangements

S4C has revised its Commissioning Code of Practice (subject to Ofcom approval) to reflect the changes introduced by the Media Act 2024 and Ofcom's revised Guidance. This Code is intended to provide guidance to the independent television production sector about the key principles and processes applied by S4C in the commissioning of content for publication on the S4C linear channel and/or on S4C Clic.

3.3. Significant changes

As S4C delivers its digital-first strategy, it will increasingly commission content for publication on S4C Clic before linear broadcast or for publication only on S4C Clic, where appropriate. Where permitted under statute or Ofcom's Guidance on meeting quotas, S4C intends to include digital-first or digital-only Welsh-language content on S4C Clic in delivering its quotas and public service remit.

4. Relevant services used to deliver the remit

4.1. Overview of relevant services

This section sets out the services through which S4C delivers its public service remit, including its linear television service and S4C Clic, and explains how programme policy applies across them. It also distinguishes these core services, which are relied upon for statutory delivery of the remit, from other platforms that support reach, engagement and discoverability of Welsh-language content.

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4.2. S4C's linear television service

S4C's linear television service remains a central means by which S4C fulfils its public service remit, providing regularity, universality and accessibility for audiences. Content broadcast on the linear service contributes directly to the fulfilment of S4C's public service remit, reflecting S4C's role as the Welsh-language public service broadcaster.

The linear service is widely available through a range of television platforms, including digital terrestrial television (in Wales), and satellite and cable services (across the United Kingdom), as well as internet-delivered television platforms. This ensures that audiences can access S4C through familiar and established routes, including prominent placement within electronic programme guides (EPGs) in Wales, supporting discoverability and regular viewing. Linear broadcast content is also streamed live on S4C Clic, strengthening the link between scheduled viewing and on-demand access.

The linear service continues to play an important role for audiences who prefer scheduled television and shared viewing moments, and for ensuring that Welsh-language content remains prominent and easy to find. Decisions about scheduling are made in the context of S4C's wider services, recognising the close relationship between linear transmission and digital distribution.

4.3. S4C Clic

S4C Clic is S4C's dedicated on-demand service, enabling audiences to access Welsh-language public service content in a digital environment. Content made available on S4C Clic contributes directly to the fulfilment of S4C's public service remit, alongside content broadcast on the linear service. The Media Act 2024 clarifies the concept of 'public service remit content' for internet programme services, reinforcing the position that S4C's on-demand provision is an integral part of how it meets its statutory obligations.

S4C Clic enables audiences to watch content at a time and on a device that suits them, extending availability beyond broadcast and supporting flexible viewing across connected TVs, mobile devices and web-based platforms. Public service remit content on S4C Clic is generally available for 30 days or more, with limited exceptions such as news content and some sports content, where availability may be shorter due to the time-sensitive nature of the material or rights considerations.

Increasingly, S4C is offering online-only live streamed content on S4C Clic to broaden its offering to audiences. This includes additional live streamed sports content and extensive coverage from national events such as the National and Urdd Eisteddfodau and the Royal Welsh Show.

Through S4C Clic, S4C is able to reach audiences who are less likely to engage with linear television, while providing a coherent and consistent public service offer across on-demand and live viewing. Clic plays a key role in supporting audience reach, engagement and the long-term sustainability of Welsh-language viewing.

4.4. Other services and platforms supporting delivery of the remit

In addition to its linear television service and S4C Clic, S4C makes content available across a range of other services and platforms in order to support reach, engagement

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and discoverability of Welsh-language content. These include third-party platforms and services that are not operated or controlled by S4C, such as the BBC iPlayer, YouTube and social media platforms, as well as S4C's own website and associated digital services – including *NS4C*, S4C's digital Welsh-language news service, available via a website and app.

These services play an important role in helping audiences find and engage with S4C content, particularly in digital environments where viewing habits are increasingly fragmented. They also support audience development, promotion and engagement with Welsh-language content beyond S4C's core services.

However, for the purposes of this Statement of Programme Policy, S4C's statutory delivery of its public service remit is fulfilled through its linear television service and S4C Clic (assuming this will become S4C's Designated Internet Programme Service). While other services and platforms support and complement this delivery, they are not relied upon for the purposes of meeting statutory programme policy obligations.

5. Programme policy for 2026

5.1. Meeting the needs of the audience

S4C's programme policy is shaped by a clear understanding of the audiences it serves and the ways in which they engage with Welsh-language content. This includes Welsh speakers, people learning Welsh and wider audiences with an interest in content from Wales, across both linear and digital services.

Audience insight plays a central role in informing decision-making. S4C draws on a combination of audience research, viewing and usage data across platforms, qualitative insight and audience feedback, alongside ongoing engagement with audiences and stakeholders. This helps S4C understand differences in viewing behaviour by age, confidence in using the Welsh language, and preferred platform; and to respond to changing patterns of consumption.

In line with its 2025–30 corporate strategy, S4C places particular emphasis on reaching and engaging key audience groups, including younger audiences, audiences aged 25–44 and 45–64, audiences in mixed-language households, and less confident Welsh speakers and learners. Focusing on these audiences supports the long-term sustainability of Welsh-language viewing and reflects wider demographic change and the growth of digital-first viewing habits.

A range of strategic KPIs and performance measures are used to monitor how audiences are engaging with S4C's content. These include measures of content reach, audience demographics and engagement across platforms, as well as indicators relating to the use of S4C Clic, such as user registrations and viewing behaviour. Together, these measures provide evidence to inform commissioning, publishing and scheduling decisions.

Audience insight and performance data influence investment across genres and formats, decisions about innovation and new ideas, and how content is curated and made prominent on both the linear service and S4C Clic. In doing so, S4C seeks to balance the needs of established audiences with the opportunity to attract new viewers, while maintaining quality, distinctiveness and public value.

5.2. Availability

Making Welsh-language content easy to find and access is a key part of S4C's corporate strategy. S4C seeks to ensure that audiences can watch content in ways that reflect changing viewing habits, while continuing to offer a universal linear service.

As audience behaviour continues to evolve, the growth of on-demand viewing and the increasing importance of connected TV platforms influence decisions about where and how S4C's content is made available. Alongside a strong linear offer, S4C intends during 2026 to continue improving the availability of its content, with a particular focus on increasing the reach and usage of S4C Clic. This includes expanding the availability of Clic across additional platforms, improving access to live and on-demand content, and ensuring a consistent experience across devices.

In light of the Media Act 2024, S4C has already commenced discussions with additional platforms to increase the availability of S4C Clic and prominence of S4C content. These discussions are taking place within the evolving regulatory framework, and S4C expects negotiations to conclude once Ofcom has issued its final code and guidance. S4C also intends to apply for Designated Internet Programme Service (DIPS) recognition for S4C Clic during 2026.

Through this approach, S4C aims to support increased reach and engagement, while ensuring that Welsh-language content remains central, visible and valued across platforms.

5.3. The Welsh language

The Welsh language underpins all of S4C's activity. S4C's purpose is "to show our world through the Welsh language", and this informs decisions about commissioning, scheduling and publishing across its services. Through a broad range of high-quality and diverse content, S4C provides a space where Welsh is heard, seen and used as a natural part of everyday life.

As the only dedicated Welsh-language public service broadcaster, S4C plays a critical role in sustaining the Welsh language itself. By providing a continuous, visible and accessible Welsh-language media presence across genres and platforms, S4C supports the vitality of the language, its everyday use, and its transmission between generations. This contribution is structural rather than symbolic: S4C helps ensure that Welsh remains a living, usable language within modern public and cultural life.

S4C seeks to portray Welsh as a living, contemporary language across all genres, reflecting modern Wales and its communities. S4C content aims to inspire confidence and pride in the language, while remaining accessible and relevant to fluent speakers, learners, younger audiences and people living in mixed-language households. As more people encounter Welsh through education rather than the home, S4C's role in normalising everyday language use continues to grow in importance.

Content for children and young people is particularly significant in this context, supporting language acquisition, confidence and intergenerational transmission. S4C also recognises the importance of ensuring that Welsh-language content is prominent and discoverable in digital environments, where English-language content dominates.

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Through its publishing approach, including the development of S4C Clic, S4C seeks to bring the Welsh language to the forefront across platforms.

5.4. Accessibility

S4C is committed to ensuring that its content can be accessed and enjoyed by as wide a range of audiences as possible. Accessibility is considered across both broadcast and on-demand services.

Subtitling, audio description and signed content are provided on the linear service, exceeding regulatory requirements, and are also reflected in the publishing of content on S4C Clic, enabling audiences to benefit from accessible content whether watching live or on demand. S4C widely offers subtitling in the Welsh and English languages, giving audiences the option to select their preferred language.

Accessibility is not limited to content formats alone. The usability and accessibility of the S4C Clic service itself are also important considerations, including ease of navigation and clarity of presentation across devices such as connected TVs, mobile devices and web browsers. During 2026, S4C will continue to develop and enhance Clic to support accessibility and usability across platforms, keeping provision under review as technologies, audience expectations and viewing habits evolve.

5.5. Range of genres

S4C operates as an all-purpose Welsh-language service, offering content for audiences of all ages and interests. Its mission “to inspire, entertain and reflect Wales with great content for everyone” shapes the range of genres offered across its services.

S4C provides a broad and balanced mix of high-quality genres, including news and current affairs, drama, comedy, factual and documentary programming, sport, entertainment, children’s and young people’s content, and cultural and arts programmes. This breadth supports S4C’s universal role and helps ensure that Welsh-language content remains relevant and engaging to a wide audience.

Sport in particular plays an important role in engaging audiences with Welsh-language content and reflecting shared cultural moments and national life in Wales. Its inclusion within our offer helps attract and retain a wide range of viewers, including those who may be less confident Welsh speakers or who are yet to commence their language learning journey. Through live presentation and commentary, our sport coverage provides opportunities for audiences to be exposed to the Welsh language in accessible and familiar contexts, supporting engagement and connection with S4C’s wider Welsh-language offer.

Across all genres, content is delivered with a distinctive Welsh voice and perspective, reflecting life in Wales, its communities and its culture. The mix of genres continues to evolve in response to changing audience expectations and viewing habits, while maintaining a balance between established formats and innovation.

5.6. News and Current Affairs Content

News and current affairs play a central role in S4C’s programme offer, supporting civic understanding and informed debate through Welsh-language provision.

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S4C broadcasts regular Welsh-language news on its linear service. This broadcast news content is provided by the BBC, ensuring a trusted and authoritative source of Welsh-language news. Linear news programmes are streamed live on S4C Clic and made available on demand for a limited period.

Welsh-language current affairs programming is primarily commissioned from ITV and provides depth, analysis and context, complementing daily news coverage and enabling more detailed exploration of political, social and cultural issues relevant to audiences in Wales. S4C also serves the agricultural community by providing a long-standing agricultural current affairs series.

News and current affairs content is given clear prominence on S4C Clic through clear categorisation and presentation, helping audiences to find trusted news easily in a digital environment. Through this output, S4C also contributes to media literacy by helping audiences to understand complex issues, assess information critically and navigate misinformation and disinformation, underpinned by high editorial standards and impartiality.

This work is supported by wider initiatives such as *Newyddion i Bawb*, a research project involving S4C that is examining how different audiences engage with news and journalism, and how more inclusive and accessible approaches can strengthen understanding, trust and participation. The project, which is expected to conclude during 2026, will generate insight and learning to inform S4C's approach to news provision and media literacy, helping to ensure that Welsh-language news content continues to support informed engagement and confidence among audiences, particularly those who may feel less well served by traditional news formats.

5.7. Children's Content

Content for children is a core part of S4C's offer, supporting early engagement with the Welsh language and encouraging confidence and regular use of Welsh from a young age.

S4C provides a wide range of high-quality Welsh-language content for pre-school, primary-age and older children. Content is designed to be age-appropriate, engaging and culturally relevant, reflecting children's lives in Wales and supporting learning through entertainment and information.

Children's news content forms an important part of this provision, helping younger audiences to understand current events in an accessible and age-appropriate way and supporting curiosity and engagement with the world around them. This includes *Newff-ion*, a news programme for children up to the age of six that combines entertainment and learning, and *Newyddion Ni*, a news programme for older children, providing context and explanation of current affairs in a format suited to their age and understanding.

More broadly, children's content contributes to media literacy by helping children develop critical thinking skills appropriate to their age and level of understanding. Content is available across both the linear service and S4C Clic, recognising the importance of flexible, on-demand access for families. Through this provision, S4C seeks to provide a safe and trusted Welsh-language environment for children – including the option to create child profiles on S4C Clic – supporting parents, carers and educators in encouraging the use of Welsh in everyday life.

5.8. Educational Content

Within S4C's public service remit, education is understood in a broad sense, encompassing lifelong learning, language learning and cultural understanding, rather than formal curriculum delivery alone. Educational content therefore supports learning and understanding across a range of audiences and life stages. Through Welsh-language programmes, S4C helps audiences engage with the language, culture and society of Wales in accessible and meaningful ways.

For children and young people, educational content supports learning through programmes that combine creativity, information and entertainment, complementing both formal education and informal learning at home. This content helps build confidence in using Welsh across different contexts.

Welsh learners are also a key audience. S4C's content provides regular exposure to Welsh in everyday and cultural settings, supporting listening skills, comprehension and confidence beyond the classroom. This includes provision for learners at different stages and for less confident Welsh speakers.

Alongside content with a clear educational focus, S4C also includes informational content with educational value, such as factual and explanatory programmes that support understanding of Welsh culture, history and society. Educational content is available on both the linear service and S4C Clic, supporting flexible access for learners, families and educators.

5.9. Reflecting Wales in all its Diversity

Reflecting Wales in all its diversity is a core element of how S4C fulfils its public service remit. S4C therefore seeks to reflect contemporary Wales in all its social, cultural and geographic diversity, ensuring that audiences can see their lives, communities and experiences represented through the medium of Welsh.

Representation across S4C's content spans a wide range of genres and perspectives, portraying different identities and lived experiences and ensuring that diversity is embedded across the schedule and on-demand offer. S4C also recognises the importance of diversity behind the camera and works with the independent production sector to support inclusive practices within production teams.

This approach is informed by S4C's wider social purpose work, which supports understanding of impact, strengthens connections with communities and informs editorial decisions. Through its content, S4C aims to contribute to social cohesion, inclusion and cultural confidence, reflecting life across Wales, including urban and rural communities and the country's cultural life.

To support transparency and learning, S4C keeps its approach to representation under review. During 2025, S4C withdrew from Diamond, the industry-wide diversity monitoring system operated by the Creative Diversity Network. S4C intends to introduce a new monitoring approach developed in-house, in consultation with the Welsh production sector, during 2026, tailored to its remit, audiences and production landscape. This approach will be informed by the most recent Census data, helping to ensure that representation both on screen and within production crews broadly reflects the diversity of Wales.

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Monitoring and insight will be used to support learning and continuous improvement, informing commissioning and editorial decision-making over time and ensuring that S4C's content continues to reflect Wales in all its diversity.

6. Future Review Arrangements

S4C will review and publish its Statement of Programme Policy annually, including a review covering the previous year, in line with statutory and regulatory requirements. Both the Statement of Programme Policy and the annual review will be considered by the S4C Board.