

Rt Hon Lucy Frazer MP
Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport
UK Government

11 January 2024

The working environment and atmosphere at S4C

Dear Lucy,

I am writing to you following the Committee's evidence session with Rhodri Williams and Chris Jones, as Chair and Lead Non-Executive Member of the S4C Board, today (11 January 2024).

S4C is a unique institution, and its success is key to Wales as a nation. The channel's work over the past four decades in providing Welsh language content is vital, as is S4C's role in supporting the cross-party aim of ensuring that there are a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

As a Committee, we believe that recent events at the channel represent an appalling episode in the history of S4C. It has become apparent from recent events that there has been serious failures in both the executive and non-executive levels of leadership at the channel. This has already seen two senior executive leaders leave the organisation. Leadership of the organisation, however, is not only limited to the executive team.

The Board, in our mind, also has a role in providing leadership. There are clear examples whereby the Chair of the Board should have been aware of the working environment at the channel. In an organisation the size of S4C, it should have been apparent to the Chair that there were significant problems. The high numbers of staff leaving the channel should have rung alarm bells. The fact that this did not happen suggests a failure of oversight and governance on the Chair's behalf. In that regard, we recommend that a new Chair should be appointed to lead the Board of S4C as it seeks to repair and renew its reputation.

Furthermore, we find it wholly unacceptable that neither you, as Secretary of State, nor indeed your predecessors, have seen fit to meet the leadership of S4C, a UK public service broadcaster, over whose governance you have ultimate responsibility. As was made clear to us today, requests were made for a meeting to be held between S4C and the Secretary of State to discuss the ongoing situation. We were astonished to find out that those requests were not accepted. In our view, the principle of S4C's governance being a matter reserved to the UK Government has been undermined by this apathy. We would therefore urge you to ensure that the Welsh Government has a formal role in the appointment of the next Chair of S4C, so that there is a joint responsibility between DCMS and the Welsh Government for making the appointment.

Yours sincerely,



Delyth Jewell MS
Committee Chair

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.