

**Pwyllgor Diwylliant, Cyfathrebu, y Gymraeg,  
Chwaraeon, a Chysylltiadau Rhyngwladol**

**Culture, Communications, Welsh Language,  
Sport, and International Relations  
Committee**

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Sarah Murphy MS

Minister for Social Partnership

Welsh Government

27 June 2024

## **Books Council of Wales visit and ongoing impact of funding cuts**

Dear Sarah

Thank you for your letter on 17 June 2024. Further to that letter, the Committee is writing to express our continued concern regarding the cuts to Books Council of Wales's funding and to request further information about your recent visit to the Books Council.

On 18 June 2024 you gave a statement in Plenary which re-iterated the Welsh Government's ongoing commitment to supporting creative skills. This statement highlighted the support provided by the Creative Skills Fund to Creative Wales's three priority sectors: namely, music; screen, and games, animation and immersive technology. You noted that funding cuts to this support stream have been minimal, and have provided assistance to 17 projects this year, as in previous years. The Committee welcomes the Welsh Government's ongoing support for these sectors. Your statement, however, also highlighted areas of the portfolio which have suffered reductions, with the Books Council of Wales as an example.

In recent months, this Committee has received numerous items of correspondence raising concerns about the effect of funding cuts to the Books Council of Wales. In August 2023, an open letter to the Welsh Government, Creative Wales and the Books Council of Wales to save Welsh Magazines & Websites highlighted poor working conditions for many in the publishing sector. This letter cites Emily Trahair's editorial for Planet magazine in 2022, which states that despite being paid to work only 27 hours a week, she was in fact working between 40 and 70 hours, 'and occasionally well over 80....necessitated by the grant franchises and cuts.' As you will be aware, Planet magazine has now ceased publication entirely. These examples highlight the huge effect that the ongoing cuts to the



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Books Council's funding have had for those working in the publishing industry, particularly in terms of working conditions and associated health and wellbeing.

In October 2023, the Committee published its report, [Behind the scenes: the creative industries workforce](#). My foreword to this report stated that 'with the right interventions, we hope to see more workers participate in all sectors of the creative industries, leading to its continued growth.' This highlights the need to improve working potential across all creative sectors. The report made 13 recommendations, including:

Recommendation 8. We recommend that the Welsh Government increases the funding available through the Creative Skills Fund and works with the industry to identify future skills gaps.

The Committee asks what consideration has been given to expanding the support offered by the Creative Skills Fund to similarly benefit the publishing industry. We would also be grateful if you would provide details of your recent visit to the Books Council of Wales, with particular reference to the impact of the ongoing funding cuts and the future of the organisation.

Yours sincerely



**Delyth Jewell MS**  
**Committee Chair**

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.