



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

**From:** WG Official  
Creative Wales

**Cleared by:** Joedi Langley, Interim Head of  
Creative Wales

**Date:** September 2025

**For decision by:** **Rebecca Evans MS, Cabinet Secretary for  
Economy, Energy and Planning**

**Jack Sargeant MS, Minister for Culture, Skills  
and Social Partnership**

<b>Subject</b>	Public Interest Journalism Fund – 2025-2026
<b>100 word summary</b>	To note the prioritised projects and agree the budget spend against the Public Interest Journalism Fund in support of Creative Wales' priorities for the journalism sector in Wales.
<b>Timing</b>	In the normal course of business
<b>Recommendation</b>	The Cabinet Secretary is asked to agree: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i) the Creative Wales 8 prioritised projects for funding support via the Creative Wales Public Interest Journalism Fund 2025-26 (<i>Redacted – section 43, commercial interests</i>).</li><li>ii) the budget allocation previously ringfenced for journalism as part of the Creative Wales Business Plan 2025-26 MA-RE-0803-25 for a total of £221,428 from Creative Wales BEL 3762</li></ul>
<b>Decision report</b>	This decision does require a Decision Report, which may be published at any point. The decision report will be based on the following:  “The Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning and Minister for Culture, Skills and Social Partnership have agreed to the spend for the Creative Wales Public Interest Journalism Fund 2025-26”

## ADVICE

### Introduction

1. As part of Creative Wales' responsibility for broadcasting and media policy in Wales, and to deliver against broadcasting and journalism commitments in the Programme for Government, the agreed 2025-26 Creative Wales Business Plan and Budget includes provision of £350k to deliver against broadcasting and journalism priorities.
2. Since agreement of the budget, discussions on how best to distribute this funding in support of the journalism sector have been held with the Wales Public Interest Journalism Working Group, which was established in late 2022 to facilitate discussion between industry stakeholders and the Welsh Government, and to identify the levers available to both industry and government to support a strong, sustainable journalism sector in Wales. In summer 2023, the Working Group published a recommendation report, *Of and For Wales – Towards a Sustainable Future for Public Interest Journalism*, outlining issues affecting the sector in Wales and the actions required for a more sustainable, inclusive, fit for purpose industry.
3. Discussions with the Wales Public Interest Working Group and the Minister for Culture, Skills and Social Partnership resulted in the launch of the Creative Wales Public Interest Journalism Fund on 6 June, a contestable fund for project proposals that directly deliver against the recommendations set out in *Of and For Wales – Towards a Sustainable Future for Public Interest Journalism*.

## **Purpose of Fund**

4. The aim of the Fund is to deliver against the Welsh Government's Programme for Government commitment to 'provide additional investment to develop enterprises to improve Welsh-based media and journalism' and the journalism priorities highlighted within the Wales Public Interest Journalism Working Group's *Of and For Wales: Towards a Sustainable Future for Public Interest Journalism* recommendation report published in July 2023.
5. Applications were sought for projects that benefit the sector more broadly rather than individual publications and organisations, that help to support systemic change across the industry, given issues with direct government intervention in journalism.
6. Examples of the types of projects sought include:
  - Projects designed to improve equality, diversity and inclusivity within the Welsh Journalism.
  - Projects that support media literacy.
  - Projects that address Welsh "news deserts".
  - Projects that identify and help to address the needs of news consumers in Wales.
  - Projects that support individual organisations or publications on an arms-length basis.
  - Projects that promote the use of the Welsh language in the provision of journalism in Wales.

7. The call for funding proposals for the fund opened on 6 June 2025 and closed to applications at midday on 15 July 2025.
8. The eligible funding period will cover the date of approval on the offer letter until 31 March 2026.

## Project Appraisal

9. All projects were appraised in two stages:
  - First stage Checks undertaken to ensure that all basic eligibility criteria were met including alignment of the project with the key principles set out in the *Of and For Wales: Towards a Sustainable Future for Public Interest Journalism* recommendation report. Applications / projects that do not meet all of the eligibility checks or do not meet our strategic objectives for funding are rejected.
  - Second stage – All submitted applications which met the eligibility criteria were appraised. Due to the scheme being competitive and due to budget availability only the highest scoring projects, reaching the 16pt base score have been recommended for support.
  - All applications and supporting information were subject to full due diligence and financial checks. This included a review of financial projections, a fraud check, and checks on Directors of the applicant company.
10. Following the call for applications, 20 enquiries were received which resulted in 10 applications being submitted for full project appraisal.
11. Following assessment, 10 applications were considered at the internal panel of which 8 were recommended for approval and 2 rejected. Appraisals have been completed and scored in line with public guidance notes issued at the opening of the fund.
12. The projects recommended for approval are included in **Doc 1**, examples include:
  - Online open access database of magistrate’s court cases across Wales.
  - Research into the audience needs of public interest journalism in Wales.
  - Reuters Institute placement, addressing issues of inclusivity in the sector in Wales.
  - Practical journalism skills development.
  - Addressing “News Deserts”.
13. The financial breakdown based on region in which the applicant is located can be seen in the table below. All proposed projects will have a pan-Wales impact.

South East	South West	North	Mid	Total
£132,228	£50,000	£0	£39,200	£221,428

## **Advice**

14. This advice seeks to secure Ministerial agreement to approve the 8 recommended projects for 2025-26 and provide the required grant funding of £221,428
15. *Redacted under Section 43, commercial interests.*
16. Alongside delivery of the Fund, discussions are ongoing regarding the need for an additional arms-length fund, which will be open to individual publications, in recognition of this need in the sector, as well as funding for another round of the Senedd Reporter role. Advice on this will follow in coming weeks.

## **Financial implications, Governance and Value for Money**

17. The expenditure for support for journalism was set out in Creative Wales' Business Plan 2025-26 (MA -RE-0803-25), The proposals will be managed within the available Creative Wales BEL 3762.

## **Legal Obligations**

18. This submission contains no issues which raise the need for legal advice and therefore no legal advice has been sought.
19. Under section 61 of the Government of Wales Act 2006 Welsh Ministers may do anything they consider appropriate to support cultural activities in Wales. Under section 71 of the Government of Wales Act 2006, Welsh Ministers may do anything which is calculated to facilitate or is conducive to or incidental to, the exercise of their functions.
20. Delivering this funding is considered to support Programme for Government objectives by delivering against the commitment to 'provide additional investment to develop enterprises to improve Welsh-based media and journalism'. Projects recommended for support also deliver against priorities to improve diversity and representation, support skills development and inclusive pathways into the journalism sector, and represent a good geographical spread.

## **Communications and media handling**

21. Officials will bring the support to the attention of relevant stakeholders and liaise with Press Office to develop positive communications around this funding.

## Annex 1: ASSURANCE AND COPY RECIPIENTS

### CLEARANCE TRACKING

Aspect	Tracking	Yes	No	N/A	Clearance no.
Finance	Financial implications over £50,000?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Cleared by Group Finance?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	EET/CF/25/132
	Cleared by Budget & Government Business Division?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Cleared by Local Government Finance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Legal	Legal issues?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Cleared by relevant lawyers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Governance	Novel and contentious issues?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Cleared by Corporate Governance Centre of Excellence?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

#### DIRECTOR, STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE

In clearing this MA, I confirm that I, Joedi Langley, have assured the quality of this advice, ensuring it is provided on the basis of evidence, accurately presents the options and facts and I am accountable for the recommendations made.

I am satisfied that the recommended decision or action, if agreed, would be lawful, affordable and comply with all relevant statutory obligations. Welsh Government policy priorities and cross-portfolio implications have been fully considered in line with delivery of the government objectives.

I have fully considered the statement of assurance contained in the MA guidance to ensure all relevant considerations have been taken into account and that the actions and decisions take account of regularity, propriety and value for money.

#### COPY LIST

All mandatory copy recipients (as indicated in the guidance). Additional copy recipients specifically interested in this advice:

- Jason Thomas
- Joedi Langley
- Leanne Plews
- REDACTED – *under Section 40, personal data*
- Melanie Kinsey
- Lynsey May
- Stephanie Woodward
- Hywel Owen
- Creative Wales Government Business Mailbox
- EET Finance

- ETT Finance and Governance
- Budget & Government Business Division
- ETT Submissions