



## **Statement of Programme Policy 2021 and Annual Review of 2020**

### **SECTION 1: ANNUAL REVIEW 2020**

#### **Introduction and Strategy**

The Covid-19 pandemic was the defining story of 2020 - and the biggest challenge that any of our programme making teams have faced in their professional career. During March 2020, ITV Cymru Wales took four vital early strategic decisions in planning its news and current affairs programming as the Coronavirus pandemic approached.

- Firstly, the health and safety of staff and contributors would need to be paramount;
- Secondly, content would need to be reformatted and recalibrated to ensure it could be maintained for however long the pandemic lasted - and however severely our teams and our communities around Wales were affected.
- Thirdly, we knew we would need to capitalise on our long term investment in mobile newsgathering technologies and production techniques to enable our journalists to work from home.
- Fourthly, ITV Cymru Wales worked with colleagues across ITV News to develop new risk assessments to cover news gathering, programme making and broadcasting. Health and safety measures remain under regular review, a year on from the start of the pandemic to reflect changing risk profiles and also the guidance of the Welsh Government which sometimes differs from other administrations across the United Kingdom.

#### **Tier 2 Arrangements**

We broadcast four hours of news programmes a week for ITV audiences in Wales, including our flagship Wales At Six at 18:00 on weekdays. We maintained regular daily bulletins during weekdays (early,

lunchtime and late) and at weekends, adjusting exact minutage, where necessary, to ensure that they continued to serve audiences when they choose to watch - while remaining sustainable for teams working in the more challenging circumstances of various lockdowns.

Our current affairs and factual programming schedule was reorganised as the scale of the pandemic emerged to ensure we were able to maintain a range of live or near live programming reflecting the most up to date information on the pandemic and the many ways it was being tackled by Wales' devolved institutions. It included regular and in depth interviews with key decision makers from across Welsh politics, a wide range of NHS organisations and independent experts

### **Significant change**

There was no significant change to the licence.

### **Innovation, Experiment & Creativity**

The pandemic sparked a wide range of innovation, experiment and creativity in focussing and adapting news gathering and programme making in ways which ensured Covid safe working for our teams and our programme participants. One example is the reduction in the numbers of people working in our studios in Cardiff Bay from nearly a hundred to barely a dozen at any time on a typical day.

This need to ensure Covid safe work practices accelerated the uptake of remote technology across ITV News. Journalists who previously came into the newsroom to edit reports began working fully from home. Programme producers who had never previously edited remotely were also given the tools to allow them to prepare whole programmes from home. Craft editors who also had always been based in the office also used new technology to remote into the office system to continue working.

### **News**

ITV took an early decision to maintain comprehensive news coverage across the morning, lunchtime and late evening of our schedule - recognising the importance of reaching viewers who might not watch the main early evening broadcasts. Running orders rapidly changed to concentrate on the impact of Coronavirus, how it was being tackled and important public health information that viewers needed to know. Live interviews on *Wales at Six* with key figures across the health and other emergency services frequently ran to several minutes - allowing full and clear explanations of policy decisions and stories from the 'front line' of how the pandemic was being tackled. The extended coverage and scrutiny allowed the broadcaster to highlight to viewers and website users the emerging differences between the approach of the Welsh and other UK administrations.

This approach enabled us to document the impact of the pandemic across Wales with a wide variety of highly informative, deeply moving and even, on occasion, amusing ways. One of the things that makes ITV's approach distinctive is to tell its stories through the people who are affected. Many families shared

their stories of loss - and survival. Senior medical figures talked in detail about how they were tackling the virus on their wards. The news programmes carried early warnings from care home owners about the lack of personal protective equipment. It provided early detailed coverage of the concerns being raised within the BAME community about the disproportionate effects of the virus.

An early report, widely praised on social media across the UK, showed the difficulties of one correspondent in explaining the importance of shielding to his elderly mother and disabled uncle. ITV cameras and mobile phone pictures from viewers showed the weekly Clap for Carers in communities across Wales. A significant proportion of coverage was devoted to reassuring and uplifting stories. Images of wild goats roaming through the empty streets of Llandundno appeared on programmes across the UK and as far away as the Middle East. Pictures of one village turning out for a daily, socially distanced dance and exercise routine were also seen by viewers across the UK. And pretty much every programme featured stories of people helping each other and raising funds for the NHS.

This approach continued across the year - varying where necessary to explain areas of divergence between the UK governments about easing lockdown restrictions and then re-imposing measures as the pandemic worsened again during the autumn.

### **Current Affairs and other programmes**

It quickly became clear that there was a need and an interest in dedicated current affairs programmes examining policy decisions about the pandemic and the responses to it across Wales. These were scheduled to broadcast in peak-time slots to maximise the audience reach on both ITV Cymru Wales and S4C. Well known and established brands - *Wales This Week*, *Y Byd ar Bedwar (The World on Four)* and *Y Byd yn ei Le (The World in its Place)* were re-formatted to become studio-based programmes to reflect the dynamic and fast moving nature of the story.

Our long running political series *Sharp End* gained a new presenter and a new look in September 2020. ITV Cymru Wales National Correspondent, Rob Osborne, took over the presenter's chair from our Political Editor, Adrian Masters, giving the latter more time to concentrate on daily news coverage in the countdown to the Welsh Senedd elections - while also developing a new political podcast, *The New Normal with Adrian Masters*. *Sharp End* has meanwhile broadened its range of storytelling, making greater use of special reports from ITV Cymru Wales team of correspondents along with interviews from a wider range of guests, including more who are not full time politicians.

Other notable programmes included our long running rural interests series *Coast & Country*, a one off special featuring adventurer and former rugby player Richard Parks: *Can I be Welsh and Black?* and Six Nations specials with Mike Phillips and James Hook.

*Y Byd ar Bedwar* focussed on the human impact of the pandemic on families and key workers, looked at the rise in domestic abuse, the failings within the elderly care sector and the tensions surrounding restrictions and second home owners.

*Y Byd yn ei Le* provided a weekly live political debate from the studio with presenter Guto Harri analysing and discussing both governments' response to the Covid crisis. In a new peak time slot in the S4C schedule, the series proved a crucial forum for viewers as the increase in the appetite for news and current affairs became clear throughout the year.

Our countryside series *Cefn Gwlad* managed to combine archive and special features in a warm, uplifting series during the summer of 2020. And then in Dec 2020 - a special programme to celebrate veteran presenter Dai Jones' career for S4C and his contribution to public life in Wales was a real highlight for the year.

We produced a special, access-led crime documentary for S4C in the autumn of 2020. *Llofruddiaeth Michael O'Leary (The Murder of Michael O'Leary)* followed the Dyfed Powys Police investigation into the murder of a Carmarthenshire man Michael O'Leary. Following the trial of local man Andrew Jones, the documentary drew large audiences for S4C and was widely praised for its sensitive storytelling.

Before the start of the pandemic, programme makers from ITV Cymru Wales had been honoured to receive two key prizes in the Royal Television Society Cymru Awards 2020. *Code Blue: Murder*, a network series made under ITV's MultiStory Cymru brand, won the award for best factual programme. *Y Byd ar Bedwar (The World on Four)*, won the News and Current Affairs Award for an investigation into historical child abuse in a religious establishment in west Wales.

### **Online and across social media**

Audiences turned in substantial numbers to the website and social media services of ITV Cymru Wales to find trusted public service content online during the pandemic. During 2020 we saw substantial growth in every area of our digital operation including 40 million views of our video content and 20 million page views of our website. That was an increase of 11 million since 2019.

Slightly more female than male users consume our online content (56% : 44%). A quarter are aged 25-34. This means that we are growing substantial audiences for trusted public service content among younger age groups than might be typical for our on air demographic.

This has been especially important in communicating information and advice from devolved Welsh governmental and health organisations. Daily Welsh Government news conferences - along with incisive analysis and comment have reached fresh and substantial audiences on ITV's social media platforms. A team of online journalists have selected the key information from each session and uploaded it, along with supporting context as the conference is taking place. A feed of the full proceedings is also carried live.

2020 also proved to be a successful year for digital content in the Welsh language as we launched a new brand of digital content for young people aged 16-30. GRID was commissioned as a digital first

commission for S4C, and a series of 10-12 min 'mid-form' current affairs documentaries for the youth of Wales on Youtube. The series focuses on identity, explores current themes and gives a voice to diverse young people from around Wales to highlight prejudices within their lives.

Following the success of our journalist traineeship for youth platform Hansh, the partnership with S4C was carried on again in October 2020, with two new Welsh speaking journalists recruited to the team. They have been creating bespoke digital content for S4C's social platforms, making politics and current affairs accessible to new audiences around Wales.

### **ITV network commissions from Wales**

Despite the significant challenges of 2020, programme making from Wales has offered some high profile contributions to the ITV network schedule.

*Wonders of the Coast Path*, a six-part series presented by Sean Fletcher celebrated some of the many highlights from along the 870 mile Wales Coastal Path. It had its network airing beginning in late July as the Welsh countryside was able to welcome visitors during the relaxation in Covid restrictions. *Harbour Cops* gave viewers across the UK an insight into some of the joys and challenges of policing the popular Pembrokeshire resort of Tenby. During the autumn of 2020, ITV Cymru Wales took over production of the popular Sunday morning series *All Around Britain* for the ITV network. The series is presented from a different location each week, while also sharing some of the best uplifting features made across ITV's nations and regions newsrooms.

Also during the autumn there was widespread praise for ITV's decision to bring the hit series *I'm a Celebrity* to Gwrych Castle near Abergele on the north Wales Coast. The series became the biggest television show of 2020 with an average of 11.2 million viewers watching across the series. It also made a significant contribution to the local economy both in terms of the direct and indirect spend with local businesses and the promotional benefit of key Welsh tourist attractions being featured across prime time television.

### **Cultural and other Diversity**

ITV Cymru Wales sought to support a range of cultural and diversity partners despite the pandemic restrictions across 2020. We operate two Diversity Panels at ITV Cymru Wales - one in North Wales and one in South Wales - who meet several times a year. The panel members act as 'critical friends' to programme-makers and our online service. They let us know if we get something wrong, but also offer praise for coverage that they feel stands out. They also help flag stories in their communities and find us diverse contributors. Members range across a broad reach of NGOs and individuals whose expertise covers LGBT+, Race, Mental Health and Disability, to name just a few

The diversity panels have continued to meet virtually during lockdown and provide support and advice to the team. We brought the North and South Wales panels together for an extended virtual meeting

following the Black Lives Matter protests. The virtual meeting meant that more people than ever were able to join, both from ITV Wales staff and new panel members. The powerful accounts given during that meeting inspired the team to commission a week of special coverage - Racism: Everyone's Problem on Wales At Six. The panel were also particularly helpful with suggesting contributors for a series of special reports from journalist, Charanpreet Khiara, looking at the unequal impact of coronavirus on BAME communities in Wales and BAME health workers.

We worked throughout the year with the Welsh gender equality organisation, Chwarae Teg (Fair Play), as media partner to their Womenspire Awards. This involved on air, online and social media coverage of the launch of their search for nominations and a series of special reports highlighting the work of some of their finalists. Our weather presenter, Ruth Dodsworth, hosted two online media familiarisation days for the finalists to better understand how to gain coverage of their many different community projects. Our news presenter, Andrea Byrne, then co-hosted the Awards virtual event which we carried on our own social media channels. This allowed us to offer extended coverage of the work of the wide variety of finalists who had been nominated by many diverse communities.

We also hosted virtual media familiarisation workshops for the leadership mentoring programme of the Ethnic Minorities & Youth Support Team Wales and for members of the Women's Equality Network Wales. These sessions were followed up with the addition of attendees details to a database of potential news interviewee, further extending the diversity of our on air interviewees.

In the week leading up to International Women's Day in March 2020 we hosted an evening reception called 'Women in News - Celebrating the Female Voice'. The UK wide event was co-hosted in Cardiff, London and Manchester with both a live audience in our studios and a shared video feed featuring the discussions from each location and videos celebrating examples of best practice.

ITV Cymru Wales once more broadcast the St David Awards - the Welsh Government sponsored and all-party supported celebration of achievement right across Welsh life.

Our award-winning apprenticeship programme has gone from strength to strength. In 2019, ITV Cymru Wales partnered with Cardiff and Vale College to create a first-of-its-kind apprenticeship scheme focusing on digital journalism. We hired two digital journalism apprentices, both from culturally and ethnically diverse backgrounds. They have contributed significantly to the company after receiving NCTJ-standard training both academically and in our newsroom.

We continued our partnership with Eastern High School in Cardiff for a fourth year through the Business in the Community initiative. Previous years have seen us support students with their English GCSEs and Media and Communications courses, CV writing and interview skills, as well as visits to our studio in Cardiff Bay. Little of that was possible during 2020 because of restrictions on visiting the school and our own studios. We look forward to their resumption, should pandemic restrictions allow, in 2021.

Other areas where we deepen our cultural and other diversity, such as our coverage of Welsh language culture from the Eisteddfod, rural affairs from the Royal Welsh Show and LGBT+ issues from Pride Cymru could not go ahead in 2020 because the pandemic restrictions forced the cancellation of the events themselves.

### **Media Literacy**

Pandemic restrictions prevented us hosting our regular programme of studio visits and community outreach work. The cancellation of public events including the National Eisteddfod, the Royal Welsh Show and face to face careers events also limited our media literacy work during 2020. We look forward to a gradual re-introduction of these projects and Covid restrictions ease.

### **Public Input**

Our strong and growing social media presence is increasingly allowing us to identify stories and contributions from our online audiences. Audience questions have also shaped some of our interviews with Welsh political leaders - and with experts on the pandemic. We run a regular series of polls of voting intentions, our 'Welsh Political Barometer' in partnership with Cardiff University.

## SECTION 2: STATEMENT OF PROGRAMME POLICY 2021

### Introduction and Strategy

ITV Cymru Wales enters 2021 with a renewed determination to bring trusted news, programming and online content to audiences in a Covid safe manner. Widespread pandemic restrictions in communities across Wales mean that many interviews are conducted online, with face to face filming only permitted when safe to do so.

### News

Three major, and in some ways overlapping stories seem set to dominate the Welsh news agenda during 2021. First is the ongoing impact of the coronavirus pandemic and the attempt to reduce its devastation through the vaccination programme. Second is the Welsh Senedd elections, including the participation of 16 and 17 year olds for the first time, and the shape of the new Welsh Government. Third is the longer term economic impact of Brexit on communities large and small right across Wales.

All of these crucial stories will be approached in the same way by the editorial team, by focusing on the people in our communities who are directly affected. We will be embedded in communities, offering a voice to those who often go unseen or unheard and putting their issues and concerns to politicians. The success of our approach in the Welsh Government covid press briefings, where the use of technology allows us to speak to politicians directly from communities, will form a large part of our planning and thinking in telling the big stories this year.

### Current Affairs and other programmes

ITV Cymru Wales is planning a full range of current affairs and factual programmes in English and Welsh across 2021.

In English, more than a dozen different series are planned, ranging from long standing and returning strands such as *Wales This Week* and *Coast & Country* to new series which celebrate some of Wales finest attractions.

Our political coverage will again be to the fore as we plan bespoke content around the Senedd Elections. Our weekly series *Sharp End* will run through most of the year when parliaments are meeting in Wales and Westminster. It will be joined by special and peak time *Wales This Week* programmes looking at the issues and the political leaders who will seek to attract viewers' votes. Other special programmes are planned for the night the election takes place and across the following day as the votes are counted and the shape of the new Welsh Government emerges.



The issues which emerge will also be covered in the Welsh language with Guto Harri reporting from across Wales for a special series of *Y Byd yn ei Le (The World in its Place)* during April with other coverage of Welsh politics planned as part of the same strand across the year.

Two of the most popular and long standing series that we make for S4C will return in 2021. The multi award winning *Y Byd ar Bedwar*, a cornerstone of Welsh language current affairs since the founding of the channel in 1982 will feature Dot Davies and Sion Jenkins investigating stories that matter to the people of Wales. *Cefn Gwlad (Countryside)* another of the channel's longest running series will also return with a short run during the summer and a longer series later in the year. Mari Lovegreen and new presenter, Ifan Jones Evans, will be anchoring the series.

### **ITV network commissions from Wales**

2021 began on the ITV network with a hugely successful series, *The Pembrokeshire Murders*, a three-part true crime drama, followed by an hour long network documentary *The Pembrokeshire Murders: Catching the Gameshow Killer*. The drama series, co-produced by World and Wales-based Severn Screen, was watched by 11.2 million viewers in the first week after it was broadcast. The audience was the biggest new ITV drama launch since 2006. The documentary, made by ITV Cymru Wales brought in a consolidated audience of 5.7 million consolidated. It was the biggest crime factual audience since 2013!

ITV and ITV Cymru Wales are building on their success in co-commissioning factual series that celebrate Welsh communities and cultures for both Welsh and UK wide audiences. Four factual series are being developed this year for broadcast on both services. One of them is a three way commission, the first ever, between the ITV network, ITV Cymru Wales and S4C.

### **Online and across social media**

ITV has a number of exciting plans for our digital services in both English and Welsh over the coming twelve months. A key development is a Digital News partnership with S4C - with the exciting development of S4C's digital news platform. ITV Cymru Wales will ensure plurality is offered on the service, as we share various News content from ITV Cymru Wales with S4C for their new website and app. The launch is expected in the first half of the year. This follows on from the growth of our online current affairs content aimed at younger audiences under S4C's Hansh brand.

In the English language, our digital team will continue to build on the massive growth in audience noted above during 2020. Ongoing pandemic restrictions and the rollout of coronavirus vaccines are maintaining a very strong interest in trusted, accurate reporting of the impact of communities across Wales and clear, accessible advice on what the many issues mean for individual members of our audience and their families.

The online team's focus will remain on informing, educating and updating viewers of the big news events that affect them, but also champion more local and human interest stories from underrepresented

communities through bespoke digital series aimed at a younger audience such as The Crunch and My Wales. Social media remains a critical tool in gaining the trust and interest of the younger generation as well as the online news service our website provides.

### **Innovation, Experiment and Creativity**

ITV Cymru Wales will use all the lessons learned from more than a year of remote working and covid safe programme making to deliver a wide range of bespoke programming on air and online across the 2021 Senedd elections. Our election debates and results programmes are often the biggest and most complex broadcasts of our year. They will be designed for broadcast in a covid safe way whatever restrictions are in operation at the time of broadcast in the spring.

We will also be providing an extended election news service online and across social media.

### **Cultural and other diversity**

We will continue to carry out a wide range of cultural and other diversity initiatives where it is safe and sensible to do so despite ongoing pandemic restrictions.

We will continue our partnership with the equality organisation Chwarae Teg for the Womenspire 2021 awards. Chwarae Teg is a charity which has worked since 1992 to ensure that women across Wales can enter the workplace, develop their skills and build rewarding careers.

We are also planning to maintain our links with the St David Awards - especially given the wide range of work which will no doubt be celebrated among the many thousands of professionals and volunteers helping us all to deal with the pandemic.

We hope to continue with online media familiarisation days for diverse community groups across Wales and will take part in other media literacy projects and careers events where possible.

We will also continue to meet with our Diversity Panels in both North and South Wales, listening to their feedback as 'critical friends' to further shape our story choice and programme making decisions to respond to the needs of all our audiences

We will once more lose other cornerstones of our work in deepening our cultural and other diversity during 2021 because of ongoing Covid restrictions. This includes our coverage of Welsh language culture from the Eisteddfod and rural affairs from the Royal Welsh Show, both of which have been cancelled. We await a decision around our media partnership with Pride Cymru.

### **Public Input**

We will continue to use social media to engage our audience in a two way conversation about our content and story choices.

Our regular 'Welsh Political Barometer' poll will continue in partnership with Cardiff University's Wales Governance Centre.