

BOOKS COUNCIL OF WALES
Tender
Welsh-language Digital News Service
April 2022–March 2026
Guidelines

1. OBJECTIVES

The aim of this scheme is to ensure a *consistent* and original digital news service through the medium of Welsh. The service will make a significant contribution to the plurality and professionalism of Welsh-language journalism and to the diversity in terms of content and media of the reading material available through the medium of Welsh, with the aim of increasing the number of people, and especially young people, who read the Welsh-language press.

2. THE SCHEME

2.1 The digital news service is expected to be able to:

(Contents)

- provide a digital news service which is regularly updated, with new stories, well written, carefully edited, and appropriately designed for the medium;
- provide editorial content which is primarily original Welsh-language material;
- provide news about Wales and beyond;
- cover a wide range of subjects such as the arts, science etc. as well as hard news and sport;
- discuss these issues as fully as possible within the resources available;
- provide a lively platform to discuss a range of perspectives, taking care not to prejudice anyone based on political opinion, religious opinion etc. (See conditions.)

2.2 The digital news service is expected to:

(Medium)

- maintain an interactive service, which has a central website, and which allows readers to share views and respond to stories;
- use a variety of digital platforms to communicate the news in a timely and effective manner and to make the service as interesting and lively as possible, including but not exclusive to platforms such as Twitter / Instagram / SoundCloud / Podcasts / Facebook / Snapchat etc;
- update its technology as standards and expectations develop;
- be flexible to adopt new platforms as they become established;
- reach a wide audience and maintain a quantitative and qualitative account of the range of different platforms.

For information: planning should be done in the first instance for a service aiming for average of 5,000 daily visits to the website at an average of at least 1 min. per visit.

3. WHICH CRITERIA ARE USED IN CONSIDERATION OF APPLICATIONS?

3.1	The depth and breadth of the journalistic experience, as well as the overall journalistic vision for the service.	35%
3.2	Vision and standards of editing, design and sharing content in a digital context, the staff commitments to realise that vision, and clear processes to ensure cyber security and data management.	30%
3.3	The robustness and viability of the financial and management model.	20%
3.4	Vision and plans to promote and grow the service amongst a diverse audience, particularly a young audience.	10%
3.5	Other schemes that can offer additional value for money to the grant.	5%

- 3.1 The depth and breadth of the journalistic experience, as well as the overall journalistic vision for the service. You should:
- Outline the overall editorial vision for the service and provide the names and CVs of the individuals who will be key to providing the journalistic content of the service, as well as details of the relevant management structures;
 - Explain how you will produce journalism that is relevant to all areas of Wales, and content that reaches audiences with diverse interests;
 - Explain how you will work with specific communities to ensure that the news produced is diverse and represents Welsh-language communities in all their variety;
 - Provide details of staff to be employed, and arrangements for regular training and appraisal.
- 3.2 Vision and standards of editing, design and sharing content in a digital context, the staff commitments to realise that vision, and clear processes to ensure cyber security and data management.
- Specification of the systems used or intended to be used to drive the website and core service;
 - Your plans to reinvest in website technology over the course of the project and adopt new platforms;
 - Editing processes to ensure language quality;
 - Details of other staff available to advise on elements such as images, rights and technology;
 - Plans for recovery from cyber attack or systems failure;
 - Full policies on inclusion, diversity and accessibility;
 - Processes to ensure cyber security and any accreditation you have.
- 3.3 The robustness and viability of the financial and management model.
- Summary of company/body budget for the next 4 years showing how the organisation's resources will be used to deliver the agreement, noting
 - Project income and expenditure account (digital news service) over the 4 years;

- A description of the resources (staffing, property and others) intended to be committed to the delivery of the plan. In drawing the description, a distinction must be made between elements that are solely attributable to the scheme and elements that relate to the other activity of the company or partnership, particularly where resources are shared between the two;
- How much additional income you expect to generate and from what sources (advertising, sponsorship, external projects);
- Risk assessment;
- Details of your investor/Board commitment;
- An estimate of how a 5%, 10% and 15% cut in grant level would affect the business model;
- A description of how funding will be managed, and how you can ensure that the grant is used for this agreement. Describe the financial management of the company, including systems and processes to ensure compliance with any legislation and best use of public funds.

3.4 Vision and plans to promote and grow the service amongst a diverse audience, particularly a young audience.

- Marketing and promotion plan which includes
 - clear evidence supporting the feasibility of the plan(s);
 - market research;
 - details of partnerships;
 - commitments from other funding bodies;
- This should include the names and CVs of individuals who will be key to promoting the service (beyond content sharing), how the various platforms are intended to reach and grow different audiences, and what elements of 'traditional' promotion you intend to adopt; as well as details of the relevant management structures and a summary of the overall vision for promoting the service, particularly to a young audience.

3.5 Other schemes that can offer additional value for money to the grant.

A summary of any other plans that may not be central to the news service but may provide added value to this grant (no more than 1 side A4).

It is expected that all applicants will be invited to interview, but if an applicant scores less than half the required mark in any of the criteria outlined in Section 3 above, the BCW reserves the right not to invite them to an interview.

4. WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?

Applications are welcome from any venture/corporate company, including current Books Council of Wales clients, companies that are not currently in receipt of public funds, and new companies. Joint applications from more than one partner are also welcome. In those cases, the application is expected to show how the partners will work together to ensure the success of the service, naming the main partner who will be responsible for administering the contract.

Applications cannot be considered from voluntary organisations, societies and other unincorporated groups, or individuals, including sole traders.

5. WHAT NEEDS TO BE SUBMITTED?

All applications should reach the BCW electronically in Word and/or Excell no later than **midday, Monday, 13 September 2021** (applicants are welcome to send additional PDF copies, but editable formats are essential for the administration of the application). This should be done by emailing arwel.jones@llyfrau.cymru. NEWS SERVICE TENDER should be noted in the text field and an acknowledgment can be expected within the hour.

Paper copies

3 paper copies will need to be received before **the end of the day on Tuesday, 14 September 2021**. NEWS SERVICE TENDER should be clearly marked on the pack and it should be addressed to Arwel Jones, Head of Publishing Development, Books Council of Wales, Castell Brychan, Aberystwyth, SY23 2JB.

All applications should include:

- the summary form (below), completed, dated and signed;
- specific sections on each of the five criteria outlined above (Sec. 3) bearing in mind the principles outlined in Sections 2.1 and 2.2 at all times.

Existing companies

For companies or partnerships already in place, the application should include:

- the company's income and expenditure accounts and balance sheet for the last three years, including the latest accounts;
- a full description of the relationship between the proposed activity and other company/partnership activities.

New companies

For new companies or partnerships, the application should include:

- robust evidence of the underlying investment that underpins the application.

6. FINANCIAL POSITION AND SIZE OF SPONSORSHIP

A budget of £ 200,000 per annum will be available for the period 2022–26. This money is part of the Publishing Grant that comes from the Welsh Government and is dependent on the continuation of that funding. The Publishing Grant may reduce during 2022–26, and any reduction in the level of the Publishing Grant will have a direct impact on this grant. Candidates should be aware of this. The application should be made on the basis of an annual grant of £200,000, but, as noted above, applicants should indicate how they would cope with a lower level of grant.

7. HOW WILL THE MONEY BE ALLOCATED?

The Books Council reserves the right to award the grant at the discretion of the Sub-committee, not to award the grant at all or to limit the duration of the tender.

8. HOW WILL THE APPLICATIONS BE ASSESSED?

The Books Council of Wales will establish a special panel to consider the applications, which will include members of the Welsh-language Publishing Grants Panel and independent experts. This panel will act on behalf of the Grants Panel. Applications will be assessed as

outlined above. If the highest scoring entry does not fully satisfy the Panel, the BCW reserves the right to discuss with the relevant applicant(s) any recommendations or conditions proposed by the Panel in order to be able to offer a service which would meet the requirements.

9. TIMETABLE

Advertising: w/c 24 May 2021

Closing Date: 13 September 2021

Date of Interviews: w/c 27 September 2021

10. FURTHER QUESTIONS

If you wish to discuss the tender please contact Arwel Jones, Head of Publishing Development, on 01970 624151 or email arwel.jones@llyfrau.cymru

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2022–26
Conditions

1. The grant offer is made based on the information in the application and any supporting correspondence. The Books Council of Wales (BCW) reserves the right to reconsider the grant awarded in cases where the work being funded does not match the timetable or other details given on the application form, or otherwise agreed.
2. If the purposes for which the grant has been offered are not carried out in a timely manner, or where there is no compliance with the relevant conditions, the BCW may require the recipient to return the whole or part of any grant that may have been paid.
3. The grant recipient will comply with any additional conditions and requirements for the scheme, which are set out in the formal grant offer or in any covering letter. The Publisher should refer to the individual funding agreements/reports.
4. The following acknowledgment must be clearly displayed in a location agreed in advance with the Publishing Grants Department: 'The publisher acknowledges the financial support of the Books Council of Wales.' In addition, when the logos of other funders/sponsors/supporters appear in the publication, the publisher must also include the BCW logo, as well as the above words. Recognition should also be given to the financial support of the BCW at all public events that promote or market the service. Failure to include appropriate acknowledgment could result in a reduction of up to 10% of the grant payable. Acknowledgment of this grant and any other references to the BCW should not be used in any way which implies that the BCW undertakes responsibility, or accepts responsibility, to a third party for the grant recipient's debts or liabilities (see number 8).
5. The BCW reserves the right to request further evidence of expenditure, and if the information is insufficient, to carry out an audit of any financial information.
6. The Council should be informed of any financial support received for running the service from any source other than the BCW.
7. The standard of editing and design and the overall effectiveness of the technology will be considered when determining the grant offered and the final grant paid. In cases where the editing or design work or the operation of the technology is below the acceptable standard, the grant may be reduced. Underperformance, e.g. in the field of editing, design or technology, may lead to further discussion with the Books Council. If the standard is not acceptable, the BCW reserves the right to place the tender under special measures, under which it will receive regular monitoring until the quality meets the acceptable standards. Any such failure will be considered when discussing future grant applications.

8. The publisher agrees, with the Publishing Grants Panel, and their successors in title, that (s)he, the publisher, shall at all times save and indemnify the Panel against all costs associated with any act which could result in a breach of any of the laws of England and Wales.
9. The Council will retain, use or process personal data and, possibly, sensitive personal data, about you, as these terms are defined in the Data Protection Act 2018.
10. If there is a change in the Publishing Grant awarded to the Books Council, the Books Council will give notice of the possible change to the grant awarded in accordance with this agreement as soon as possible, and give the precise details of any changes to them at least one month before that change is implemented.
11. The Books Council provides a grant, which is therefore free of any Value Added Tax, but any applicant should consider the effect of this on their financial situation, and the Books Council of Wales takes no responsibility for losses as a result of Value Added Tax.
12. In accordance with the Welsh Language Measure 2011, it should be ensured that any services provided do not treat Welsh less favourably than English.
13. No money provided should be used for:
 - promoting a political party
 - promoting religious or anti-religious views
 - gambling
 - pornography
 - offering sexual services
 - the purchase of capital equipment (other than where clearly stated in the application)
 - any legal advice relating to the application
 - any preparation costs for the application
 - any illegal activity
 - any activity, beyond fair and impartial journalism, which may bring the Books Council into disrepute.

Welsh Digital News Service 2022–26 Grant Application: Summary Form

The Applicant

Name of company applying for grant:	
Address:	
Contact Name	
Position:	
Phone Number(s):	
Email:	

Signature:

Name:

Function:

Date:

The Scheme:

1 side of A4 introducing the scheme and what it is hoped to achieve with the grant over the tender period.