

William Powell AM  
Chair, Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA

Your ref: P-04-526  
Our ref: PO743/RB/HP

20 May 2014

*Dear William*

**Petition 04-526 – Please Make Senedd TV Accessible to Deaf People**

Thank you for your letter of 30 April which seeks clarification about the work undertaken with S4C to pilot the provision of British Sign Language interpretation of First Minister's Questions, and the future of the service.

As I outlined in my letter to you of 21 February, the service was welcomed by members of the Deaf community who were in contact with Assembly staff but there was some concern about the accuracy of the interpretation due to the pace and complexity of the subject matter of plenary proceedings. The speed of the proceedings and the need for interpreters to qualify large figures or finger spell acronyms to contextualise the discussions for Deaf users meant that sometimes the efficacy of the interpretation could be compromised.

The interpreters themselves were also concerned about the accuracy and quality of their provision due to the speed of proceedings and, as a result, they did not feel comfortable in having their work archived. This meant that there was no lasting record of First Ministers Questions with BSL subtitles. More significantly, because of these concerns, it had proved to be difficult to secure interpreters to continue this service and, regretfully, in conjunction with S4C, we decided to place the pilot on hold.

**Croesewir gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg/We welcome correspondence in both English and Welsh**

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Llywydd  
Presiding Officer

However, we have recently restarted discussions with S4C and the Wales Council for Deaf People on reintroducing the service, discussing how it can be improved based on the findings of the pilot and using interpreters that are comfortable with the requirements of the task. These discussions are at an early stage, and we will of course provide you with updates in due course. Members of the Deaf community will be consulted on the development of the service.

Also, we are working on a new Senedd TV service, which will have enhanced accessibility functions such as the ability to view transcripts of plenary meetings alongside archived videos, and captions identifying who is speaking in Plenary meetings.

As it stands, we feel our subtitled videos of First Minister's Questions, which are usually available within 24 hours, offer an accurate interpretation of proceedings.

I hope this provides the clarification you seek.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Rosemary'.

**Dame Rosemary Butler AM**  
**Presiding Officer**