

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru | National Assembly for Wales
Y Pwyllgor Iechyd, Gofal Cymdeithasol a Chwaraeon
Health, Social Care and Sport Committee
Ymchwiliad i weithgarwch corfforol ymhlith plant a phobl ifanc
Inquiry into physical activity of children and young people
Gohebiaeth gan Chwaraeon Cymru
Correspondence from Sport Wales

Dear Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to give evidence and I provide some additional information in follow up.

As discussed with the Committee, Sport Wales very much welcomes this Inquiry and role sport and physical recreation plays in supporting children and young people to lead physically active lives. Through our strategies we have prioritised, over a sustained period of time, interventions that support children and young people to be active through sport. This approach has been reinforced through the extensive consultation we have recently undertaken to develop a Vision for Sport in Wales, which is currently out to consultation.

In order to make significant improvements to the current rates of physical activity in children and young people, we believe there are several key drivers for change:

1. A single, coordinated physical activity plan:

- a) Going it alone will not work and there is a need to introduce a collective team approach – to include Government Ministers, Sport Wales, Public Health Wales, Health Boards, teachers, parents.
- b) It requires a single physical activity action plan across public bodies, with clear actions and published progress, reporting to a single Minister.
- c) The interventions should be targeted around prevention – therefore focused resources need to be developed for the early years and young people. The role of Education and a holistic approach to Physical Literacy is vital.
- d) It needs cross-government accountability recognised in remit or equivalent letters. Wellbeing statements are not enough - clear actions need to be identified and reported against annually. There needs to be Ministerial motivation across Health, Education, Communities, Children and Sport and other areas.

2. Education and the new Curriculum:

- a) The new curriculum could be a game changer – transforming our approach to support young people.

b) We know how important physical literacy is for children's physical and mental health, and that is why it is essential to firmly cement it at the heart of the new curriculum.

c) Schools can build better people – let's rethink the school day and stop this bad habit of locking the doors at 3pm.

3. Sugar tax:

a) We know a little money goes a long way in sport – we have delivery mechanisms across the whole of Wales – the sugar tax will be crucial in transforming young lives both physically and mentally.

b) To kick start the Physical Activity Plan, introduce an incentive fund or endowment to kick start low level local activities across communities.

c) It will be money well spent. Recent research by Public Health Wales shows that, more than anything else, sport builds resilience for children with adverse childhood experiences. The cross-government commitment to ACEs is a great move, and needs to be extended to the level of physical activity.

4. Media:

a) Women and girls make up 50% of the population but this is not reflected in national or local media reporting. The huge bias towards male sport in the media is severely impacting on coverage of fantastic female role models. Reporting on the split of male female coverage should be considered.

b) Role models come in all shapes and sizes. The media needs to reflect the diverse range of people in our communities, highlighting how sport and activity can bring far reaching benefits.

c) The focus on Commonwealth Games and Olympic success every four years to celebrate women in sport is not enough.

The Committee also asked whether Sport Wales had any data on the take-up of physical literacy resources for parents. A significant amount of resources are in a digital format and available to access free of charge and therefore it is very difficult to determine the take-up specifically from parents.

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I hope this is helpful.

Yours

Graham Williams

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