

# Agenda – Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee

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Meeting Venue:

Committee Room 4, Tŷ Hywel

Meeting date: 23 June 2022

Meeting time: 11.20

For further information contact:

Lleu Williams

Committee Clerk

0300 200 6565

[SeneddCulture@senedd.wales](mailto:SeneddCulture@senedd.wales)

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## Pre-meeting registration

(10.50–11.20)

### 1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

(11.20)

### 2 Papers to note

(11.20)

#### 2.1 Additional information from Cricket Wales following the meeting on 4 May 2022

(Pages 1 – 13)

#### 2.2 Letter from the Minister for Tech and the Digital Economy, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, UK Government to the Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee

(Pages 14 – 16)

#### 2.3 Letter from the Deputy Minister for Arts and Sport, and Chief Whip to Mike Hedges MS regarding establishing a National Museum of Religion

(Pages 17 – 18)

### 3 Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to resolve to exclude the public from items 4, 6, and 8 of this meeting

(11.20)



**4 Legislative Consent Memorandum: Online Safety Bill:  
Consideration of draft Report**

(11.20–11.30)

(Pages 19 – 24)

**Public**

**5 Ministerial scrutiny**

(11.30–12.30)

(Pages 25 – 56)

Mark Drakeford MS, First Minister

Des Clifford, Director, Office of the First Minister, Welsh Government

Andrew Gwatkin, Director, International Relations and Trade, Welsh  
Government

Research Brief

Written evidence from the Welsh Government

**6 Private debrief**

(12.30–12.40)

**Lunch break**

(12.40–13.30)

**Public**

**7 Participation in sport in disadvantaged areas: Evidence session  
with the Welsh Government**

(13.30–14.30)

(Pages 57 – 81)

Dawn Bowden MS, Deputy Minister for Arts and Sport, and Chief Whip

Steffan Roberts, Deputy Director, Tourism Development and Sport

Neil Welch, Head of Sport

Research Brief

Written evidence from the Welsh Government

## **8 Private debrief**

(14.30–15.30)

## Cricket in Wales & impact of Sport Wales Funding model changes – Response to Senedd sub-committee Inquiry into Participation in Sport in Disadvantaged Areas (4 May session)

### Context:

- Female participation up 658% 2013-2021\*
- Open age membership 31% up – over half are women and girls (Girls now account for 22% of junior play)
- Junior participation up 63% since 2013
- Volunteer base increased 68% since 2018
- Current affiliated club membership among ethnically diverse communities – on average 10%
- Wales accounts for nearly 8% of all participants in All Stars (for 5-8yo) and Dynamos Cricket (8-11yo) across England & Wales;
- We are second only to Yorkshire in All Stars (Yorkshire has 4x the number of clubs and 2x the population of Wales); We currently have the highest number of 2022 Dynamos participants of all counties in England and we over-index significantly on female participants in both programmes.
- Primary School children reached in an academic year in Wales through the [Chance to Shine Schools](#) programme (delivered free to schools): 40,000
- Chance to Shine Street projects are due to launch in Wales in Summer 2022, for the first time, to provide more access to cricket where there is no club provision in underprivileged areas.

\*Summary audit findings (2021) can be found in appendix

The Current joint-strategy for Cricket in Wales, with Glamorgan Cricket, can be found here: [Strategy | Cricket Wales](#)

### Future funding:

Sport Wales indicative funding cut to Cricket from FY 2023/24, based on 2015 School Sport Survey data, is estimated to be 61% (from a current level of £603k).

We are not able to access performance funding as, despite being a major team sport, growing exponentially, by any measure or group, Cricket is not an Olympic or Commonwealth Games core sport, so has no track record in winning medals, nor has an opportunity to do so for the foreseeable future.

We believe this a very narrow measure of on-field success and does not equitably account for the potential to inspire young people to play a sport, especially one which is very relevant to, and widespread in, our communities in Wales - and enjoys a high-profile, especially with coverage of the Hundred on both BBC and Sky TV, with women's and men's games side-by-side.

Currently, we are one of a **very** small number of Welsh NGBs who can tell girls they can earn a living playing our sport, even as a domestic athlete.

**The estimated reduction in development funding will have a significant impact on our ability to continue to support the growth of women's and girls' cricket, to expand our ability to deliver in urban areas and support non-traditional cricket, which is played disproportionately by ethnic minority communities.**

**The planned cut to our performance funding could essentially end our ability to provide the best club cricketers (boys and girls) the opportunity to develop in regional cricket, and make**



their way onto the Wales Age Group programmes (which Glamorgan Cricket are funded by the England and Wales Cricket Board to deliver); Wales' vast geography makes this step in the pathway absolutely essential, to ensure players on the fringes or late developers are not lost – and that we can continue to support the explosion of girls' participation and growth of talented players in the pathway.

**Most of all, it will significantly hamper our availability to provide tailored, trusted support to our 190 affiliated clubs.**

Please feel free to consult the [ECB's mapping tool](#) which you can manipulate to show our clubs overlaid with demographic data – an example screenshot is in appendix.

The current model also does not allow for innovation and tactical opportunities to meet latent demand (eg through programmes such as women's soft ball), and the opportunity afforded by major events and tournaments – eg Welsh Fire playing on BBC Sport across the summer and the 2030 home nation Cricket World Cup, which will be hosted by Wales, Scotland, Ireland & England.

Nor is there any consideration given in the model to sports which are 'lifelong' – our sport can be played by 5 year olds to 75 year olds; 3 generations can – and often do – play in the same team in some communities. The advent of our flagship programmes has also engendered a whole-family approach in clubs, where all members can play, coach, volunteer often all at the same time, thus offering a holistic sport experience.

It is our strong belief that the new funding model will have unintended consequences of potentially over-funding technical and/or individual sports with multiple medal potential, without requiring any track record of success, or significant participation or diversity of participants, especially from disadvantaged areas.

#### Our Ask:

That the uniqueness of Cricket's position as an outlier of the proposed model, especially from a performance perspective (as a major sport which does not appear at Major Games – through no fault of Cricket Wales, or, indeed, the ECB), is rectified, and an equitable opportunity to access this stream of funding is put in place.

That the model is afforded flexibility to sustain dynamic sports with clear past and projected continued growth, and is proportionate to the number of thriving clubs and places to play, which already exist and must be maintained.

While we do not expect to retain the same levels of funding from Sport Wales, and we have already put in place efficiencies to mitigate some of the known loss, particularly around the performance programme, we believe we require £350-400k of Sport Wales investment pa to allow a sport of our size and potential to sustain our programmes and growth, and continue to provide opportunities to the target groups identified in our strategy; u18s (esp 5-11 yo), female participants and ethnically diverse groups.

- Cricket has clearly demonstrated its ability to engage with these groups and in the case of diverse communities, we believe we have the greatest potential of all sports; Please see an example of our whole-sport approach recently at Grange Pavilion, Cardiff: [Glamorgan: 'We want people from all across Wales playing cricket' - BBC Sport](#)

While we are afforded excellent support by the ECB in respect of facility investment, we would also welcome a matching arrangement, to advance our goals, and strategically invest into pavilions and playing areas (ie wickets, especially non-turf pitches which we would seek to place in schools and on local authority-maintained squares).



The average age of a pavilion in Wales is over 50 years and our indoor provision (both quantity and quality) is also very poor compared to the demand, which is ever-increasing, in line with the growth of female participation.

Cricket is also committed to its own goals of social inclusion; To this end, the Street programme will be match-funded by ECB and Chance to Shine in Wales and will have huge potential to provide access to participation in the most deprived areas of Wales, in non-traditional settings where there are barriers to tradition club membership (whether cost or accessibility/availability).

We would seek Sport Wales' support to expand and expedite the roll-out of [Chance to Shine Street](#), Cricket initiative, and ideally enhance the [Lord's Taverners' Wicketz](#) programmes, across Wales.

Street is Sport England-funded in England, and has not previously been possible in Wales, but we will have 2 initial projects (in Cardiff & Newport) start this summer. There is scope – and the realistic need - however, for up to 20 in the next 12 months.

An investment of just £35,000 pa from Sport Wales, with already committed matched-funding from C2S and ECB, would allow 20 Street programmes to start by April 2023 in Wales – an in turn, enhance our own opportunities to attract other public and private funding to expand the programme even further, in line with our strategy.

Leshia Hawkins

Chief Executive Officer

Cricket Wales

May 2022

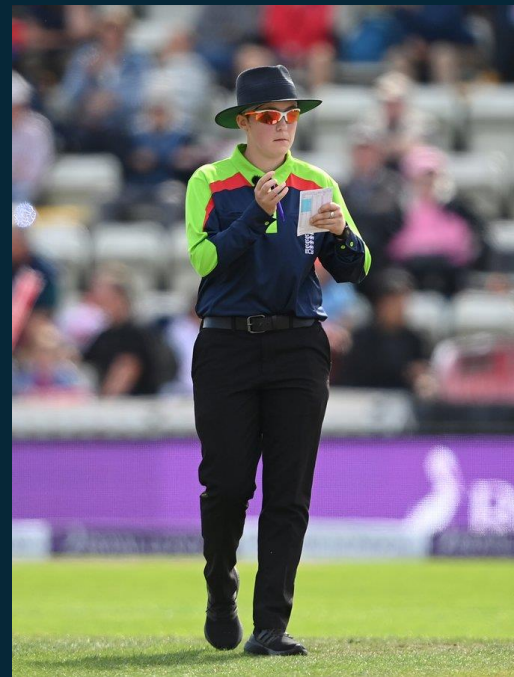
Appendices:

- 1) 2021 Affiliated Club Audit Summary
- 2) ECB Mapping data – illustrative example of cricket clubs in areas of deprivation in Wales



**CRICED CYMRU**  
**CRICKET WALES**

# The 2021 **Wales** Club Audit



Pack Page 4

# The **2021** Club Audit HEADLINES

Total Open-age membership is up **31%** since 2013 (half of this growth is female)

Junior participation is up **64%** since 2013

Trained volunteers increased, to meet growth, **+63%** since 2018

Our key programmes have driven overall growth of **49%** (7,140 people) since 2013 - with **MORE** to come; club demand for programmes is also growing.

Clubs are **thriving** and are centres of their communities

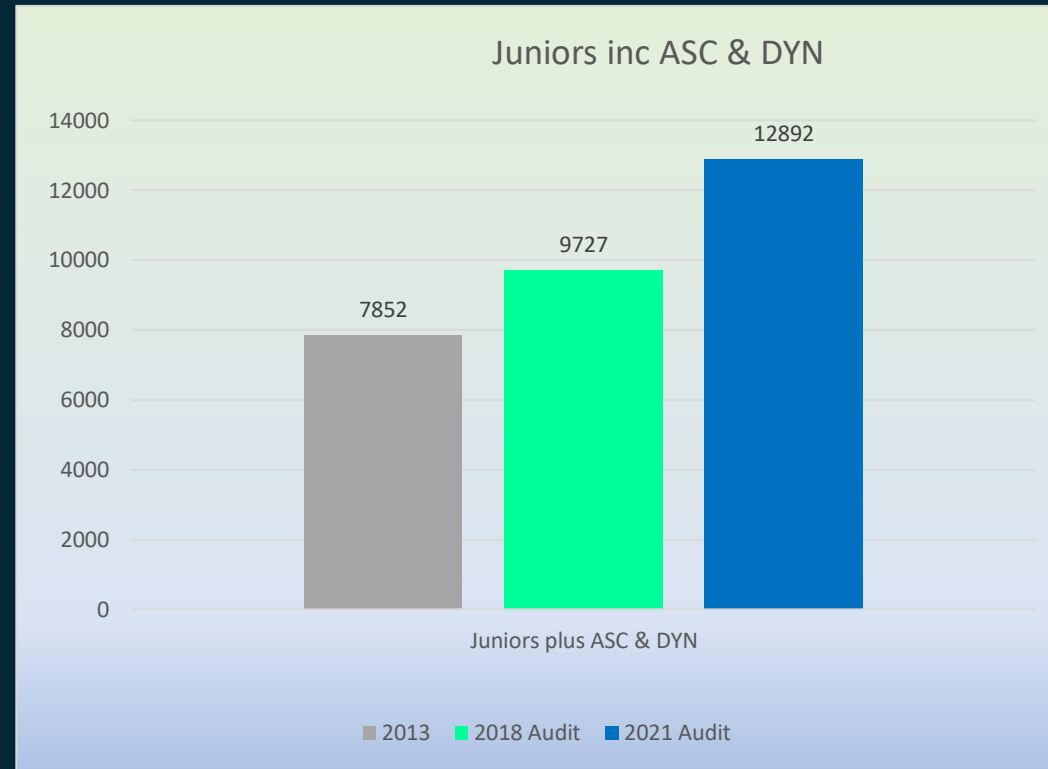




# The **2021** Club Audit

## Focus on Female Participation Growth

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Proportion of female club members has grown from 2% in 2013, to 6% (2018), to 13% (2021).

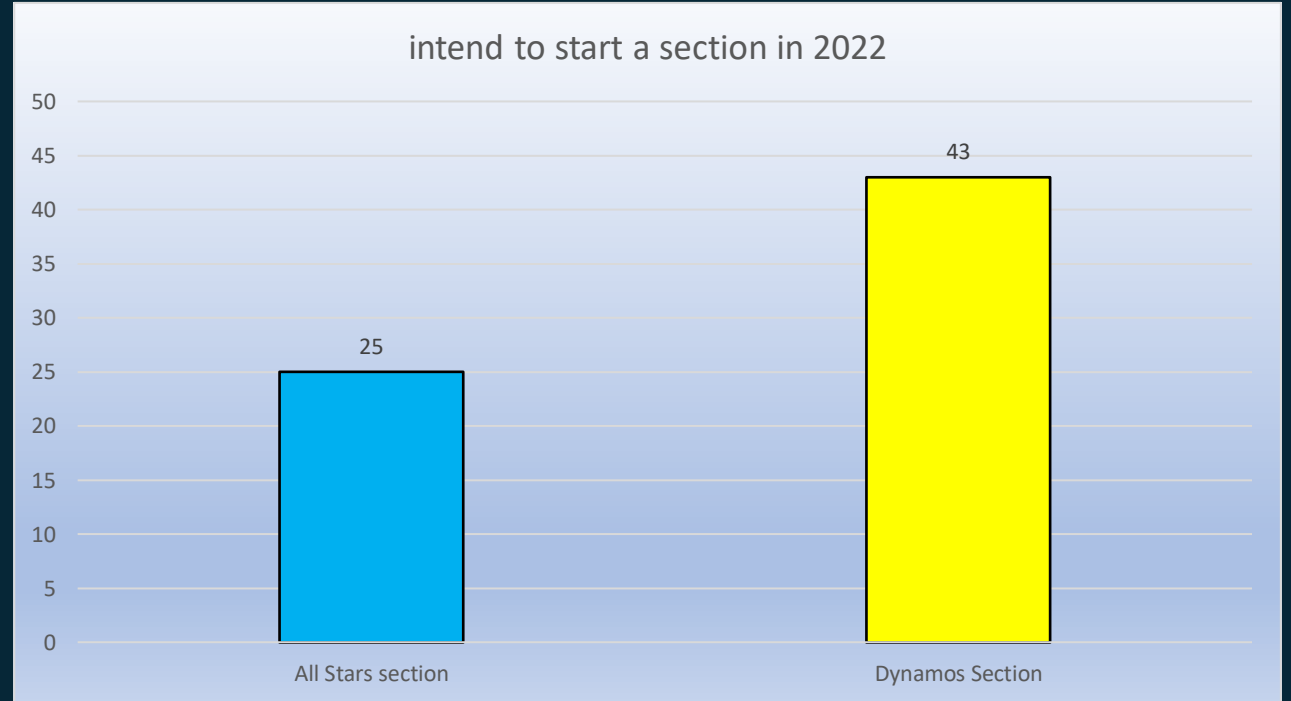
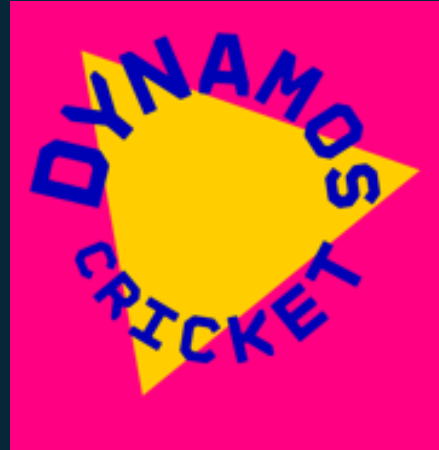
Girls' participation proportion has increased from 10% to 2013, to 17% (2018) to 22% (2021).

*Nb overall participation has also grown in this time.*

*Again, overall membership has also grown.*

# The 2021 Club Audit

## Giving Every Young Person a Great Start



118 Clubs in Wales already run All Stars – with the addition of the 25 above, the programme will be run in 93% of clubs with juniors.

Dynamos was run for the first time in 2021; Wales' proportion of participants was just under 10% of all of England & Wales' clubs (30% of our participants were girls).

Only Yorkshire (4x club numbers and 2x population of Wales) recorded more children in National Programmes in 2021.



# The **2021** Club Audit Focus on Diversity

Cricket in Wales  
is **undoubtedly**  
increasingly  
diverse

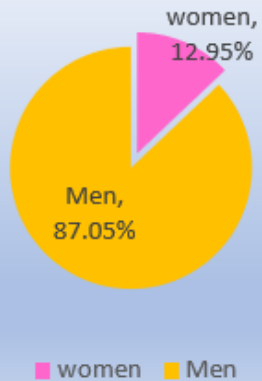


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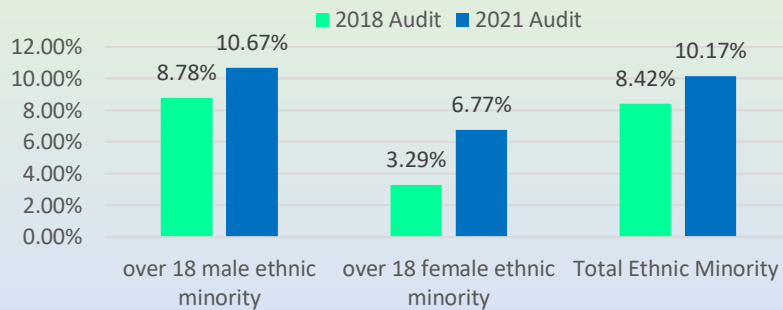
# The 2021 Club Audit

## Focus on Diversity

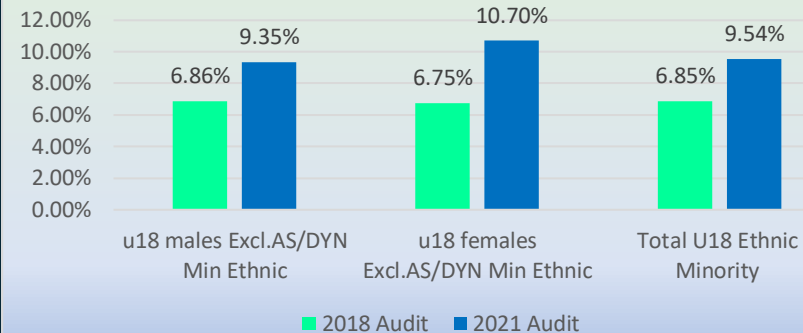
Men & Women



18+ membership by ethnic minority



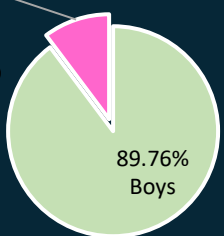
U18 membership by ethnic minority excl. ASC & DYN



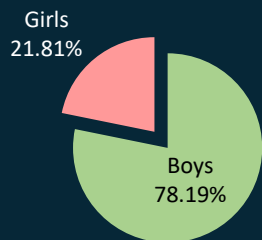
NB Ethnic minority participation in cricket is approx. 2x the national representative average population in Wales and these stats hold through the Welsh talent pathway.

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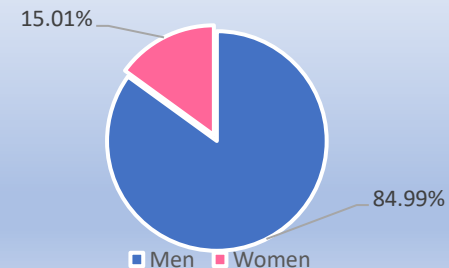
Boys & Girls 2013



Boys & Girls 2021



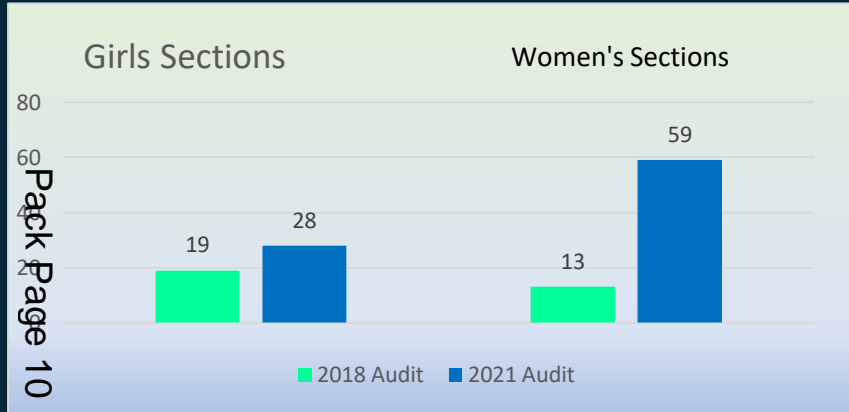
Women & Men on Club Committees



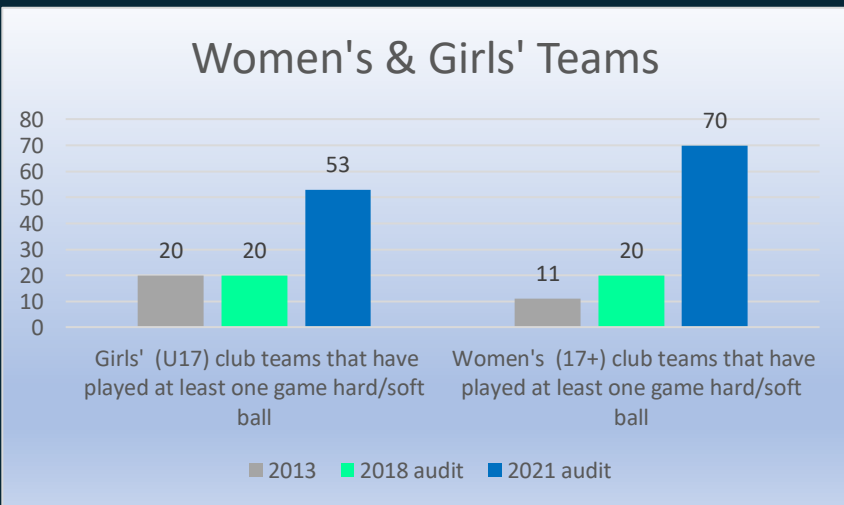
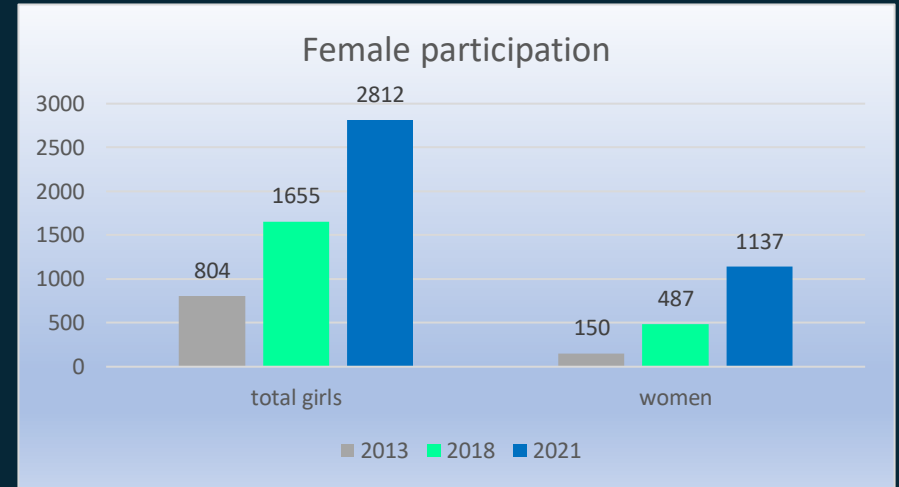
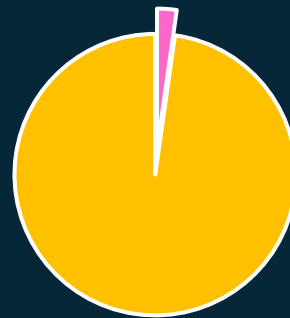
# The 2021 Club Audit

Girls' participation up 249% since 2013 (69% since 2018)

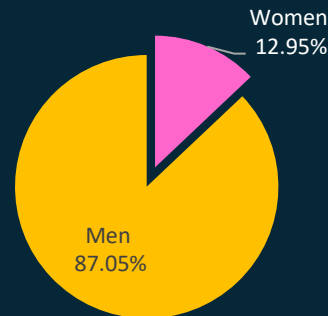
Women's participation up 658% since 2013 (133% since 2018)



Men & Women 2013



Men & Women 2021

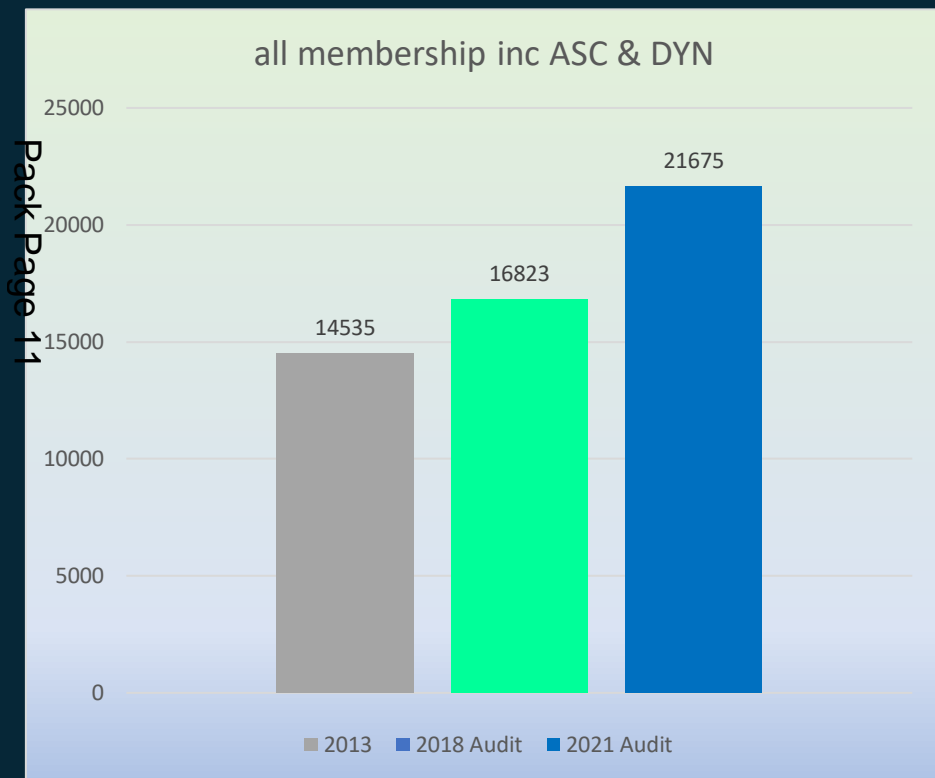


And there is MORE to come....

- 24 clubs intend to start a Girls' section in 2022
- 26 clubs intend to start a Women's section in 2022

# The **2021** Club Audit Focus on The Future

National Programmes has already fuelled overall growth of **49%** since **2013** ... with **MORE** to come;



We have the following clubs intending to start a **NEW** programme/section in 2022

**Dynamos Cricket – 41**

**All Stars Cricket – 25**

**Girls' section - 24**

**Women's section – 26**

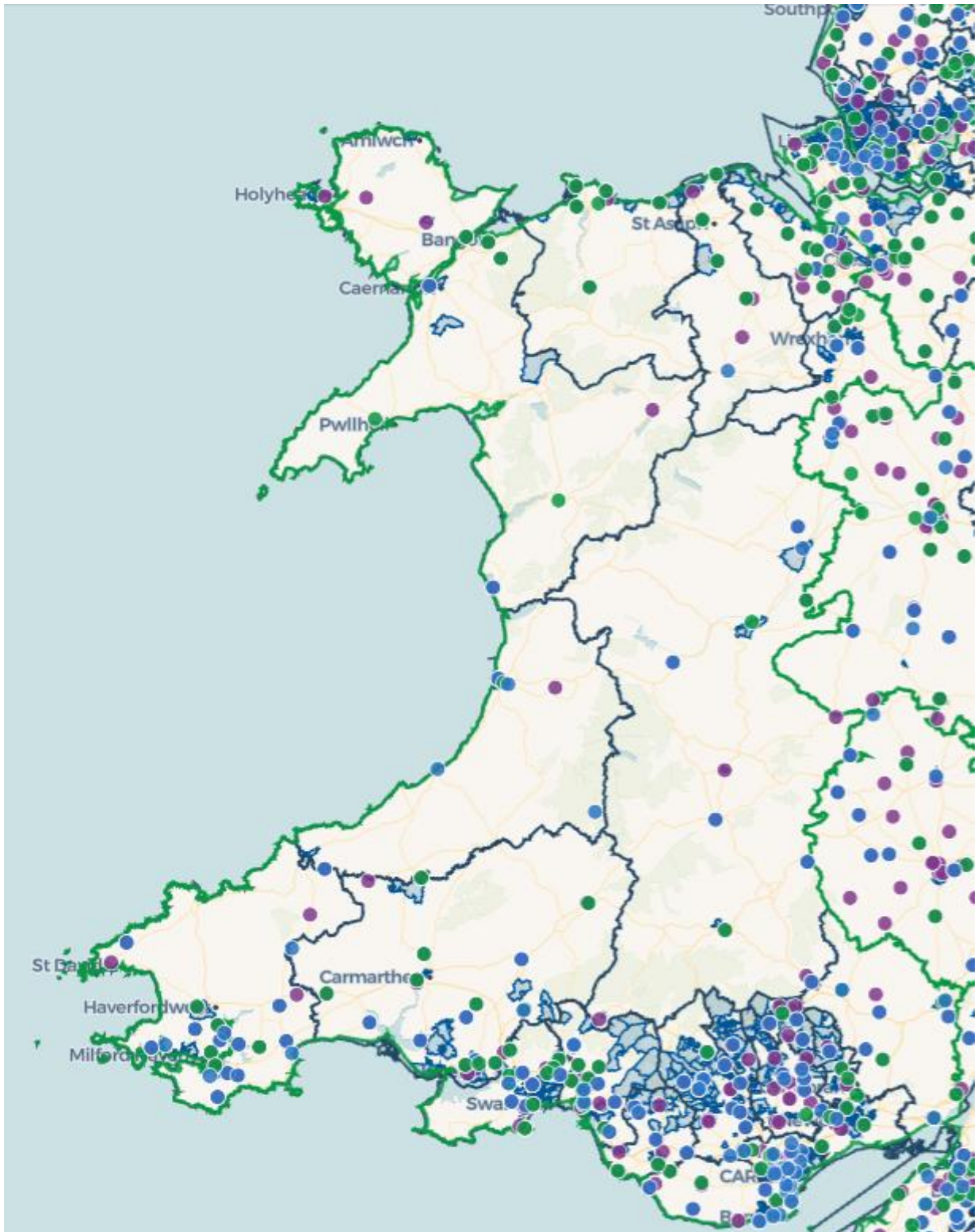


**CRICED CYMRU**  
**CRICKET WALES**

# Enabling Cricket in Wales to Thrive



Page



- Green dot – Clubmark accredited, affiliated club
- Blue dot – affiliated club (non-Clubmark)
- Purple dot – grass pitch (including LA-owned or maintained)
- Blue shaded area = Top 30% Deprivation



# Agenda Item 2.2



Department for  
Digital, Culture,  
Media & Sport

Chris Philp MP  
Minister for Tech and the Digital  
Economy  
4th Floor  
100 Parliament Street  
London SW1A 2BQ

E: [enquiries@dcms.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@dcms.gov.uk)

[www.gov.uk/dcms](http://www.gov.uk/dcms)

Jayne Bryant MS  
Chair of the Children, Young People and  
Education Committee  
Welsh Parliament

13 June 2022

MC2022/08202/DC

[SeneddChildren@senedd.wales](mailto:SeneddChildren@senedd.wales)

Dear Jayne,

I was concerned to read about the findings of your ongoing inquiry into peer on peer sexual harassment among learners. The impact of this harmful activity online can be particularly damaging for children and young people, and can impact on their mental health and wellbeing.

Your letter asks how the Online Safety Bill may address these concerns. Let me reassure you that the strongest protections in the forthcoming Online Safety Bill are for children and the legislation will make the UK the safest place to be a child online. All companies in scope will need to do far more to protect children from illegal content and activity on their services. In addition, services which are likely to be accessed by children will also need to introduce measures to protect children from content and activity which is legal but harmful to children, such as pornography, and bullying.

We expect companies to use age verification technologies designed to prevent children from accessing services which pose the highest risk of harm to children and age assurance technologies and other measures to provide children with an age appropriate experience on their service.

I have addressed each of the students' individual concerns in turn in further detail below.

## **Social media and social networking websites have made sharing explicit and inappropriate images more common among young people.**

I know that self-generated explicit images can have a devastating impact on young people, putting them at risk of blackmail, coercion and abuse. That is why we are already working across government and with partners and industry to prevent and tackle this issue. Our response to COVID-19 has included amplifying messages to help teachers, parents and carers to help children to stay safe online. We also support the IWF and the NSPCC in developing their Report Remove initiative which will enable children to self-report images and videos of themselves with the aim for it to be taken down. We believe this could be a really important tool in the fight against the spread of this imagery online.

The Online Safety Bill will also ensure that platforms take action to remove self-generated indecent imagery of children circulating. If they do not do this then they will face tough enforcement action by Ofcom, the independent regulator. This will not change existing law enforcement processes to help ensure that children are not criminalised for sending explicit images of themselves. Parents and children will be able to report self-generated explicit images to the platform, and should expect to see platforms take appropriate action in response to reports.

**The companies responsible for social media platforms, websites containing pornographic material, gaming platforms and social networking websites have a duty of care to protect children and young people from inappropriate content. Largely, we have heard concerns that they are not discharging that duty of care effectively.**

I agree with you and your students - social media companies must do more to keep their users safe online. Social media platforms, websites and gaming platforms which allow user-to-user interactions will all be in scope of the Online Safety Bill. They will all have responsibilities to remove and limit the spread of illegal content and, where they are likely to be accessed by children, provide safety measures for child users. In addition, all websites containing pornographic material will also have to prevent children from accessing this content.

We expect Ofcom to prioritise its enforcement action to ensure the strongest protections possible for children. They will have a range of robust enforcement powers to tackle companies which are not complying with their duties and putting children at risk of harm online. This includes fines for companies of up to £18m or 10% of qualifying annual global turnover (whichever is higher) and business disruption measures. Ofcom will also be required to set out in enforcement guidance how it will take into account any impact on children due to a company's failure to fulfil its duty of care.

Once the regime is in force, if a child does encounter harmful content and activity, parents and children will be able to report it easily and, where appropriate, receive support. Our new laws will raise the bar on how companies respond to complaints, as Ofcom will set clear expectations for user reporting mechanisms.

**It is often not clear enough for children and parents when particular platforms, services or websites have minimum age limits. Where age limits are in place and are clear, they are not enforced effectively.**

If a service says in its terms of service that it is for adults or for children over a certain age, then they will have to enforce those terms of service consistently under the Bill's requirements. The Bill will also prevent companies saying their service is for users aged 13+/16+, and doing nothing to prevent younger children accessing it. Ofcom will set out in its codes of practice the steps service providers need to take to deliver this objective.

Where children are likely to access a service, providers will have to set out in terms and conditions their approach to tackling harmful content to children, and ensure that these terms of service are easily accessible and consistently applied.

I hope that the above has reassured you that the protection of children and young people is at the heart of the Online Safety Bill. The Bill is currently undergoing passage in Parliament and has now passed second reading. I look forward to continuing to work with you as we progress this vital legislation.

My officials will be in touch separately in regards to arranging a technical briefing on the Bill and its provisions.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Philp', written in a cursive style.

Chris Philp MP  
**Minister for Tech and the Digital Economy**

Dawn Bowden AS/MS

Dirprwy Weinidog y Celfyddydau a Chwaraeon, a'r Prif Chwip  
Deputy Minister for Arts and Sport, and Chief Whip



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Mike Hedges MS  
Welsh Parliament  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

Mike.Hedges@senedd.wales

16 June 2022

Dear Mike,

Thank you for your contribution to the Member debate on disused religious buildings on 23 March, where you raised the issue of establishing a National Museum of Religion.

Clearly initiatives that raise the profile of our nation's faith history, the diversity and multi-faiths of Wales and historic places of worship, that draw attention to their value as a precious part of our heritage, and foster interest in them are to be welcomed.

The network of open places of worship across Wales tells a story of religion in Wales. Amgueddfa Cymru National Museum Wales and many of the c.100 local museums (local authority and independent) already have items relating to religion, faith and places of worship within their collections and displays. Similarly, the National Library of Wales and the 13 Welsh local authority archive services have collected archival material from religious communities across Wales for many years. These collections are held close to their local communities and are heavily used for family and local history research. Both Cadw and Amgueddfa Cymru's St Fagans site care for religious buildings and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales records and photographs significant buildings at risk, including religious buildings, and maintains a database of all chapels in Wales.

There are also numerous initiatives which promote faith tourism, both at a local and national level; encouraging visitors to places of worship and helping to make the story of religion in Wales accessible. Visit Wales and the National Churches Trust both promote faith tourism at the national level, and there are numerous local initiatives, such as the *Saints and Stones Pilgrimage* (Pembrokeshire), *Sacred Doorways* (Conwy valley), *Meini Bywiol Living Stones* (North Montgomeryshire), *Peaceful Places* (North Ceredigion). Faith tourism will be a key theme within the planned review of the strategic action plan for places of worship which is being led by the Historic Places of Worship Forum. The Secretary of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (a Welsh Government sponsored body) chairs this Forum, and Cadw funds the National Churches Trust to organise the Forum's meetings.

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:  
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

[Gohebiaeth.Dawn.Bowden@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Dawn.Bowden@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Dawn.Bowden@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Dawn.Bowden@gov.wales)

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

There is clearly a lot of activity already being undertaken by various organisations and communities. The review of the Historic Places of Worship Forum action plan provides an opportunity to explore how these existing initiatives might be better coordinated so as to raise the profile of historic places of worship and the story of religion in Wales. Supporting this existing activity and encouraging greater connectivity is arguably a more effective way to raise the profile of historic places of worship and the history of faith than by creating a new museum. Our commitment to ensure the history and culture of our Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic communities are properly represented in our cultural sector and museum network and the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan will also play a part in ensuring Wales' faiths are collected and interpreted in our nation's museums, archives and cultural venues.

The current Programme for Government already contains an ambitious agenda for the development of our museums for this Senedd term, including major new developments such as the Football Museum for Wales based at Wrexham Museum, the National Contemporary Art Gallery (a distributed model across 10 sites in Wales), and the redevelopment of the National Slate Museum at Llanberis, which will include establishing a Museum of North Wales. With this in mind, and acknowledging that the costs attached to establishing new museums are significant in terms of initial capital expenditure and the on-going revenue needs, I do not believe that we can progress plans for a physical National Museum of Religion at this time.

I am copying this letter to Delyth Jewell MS, Chair of the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dawn Bowden'.

**Dawn Bowden AS/MS**

Dirprwy Weinidog y Celfyddydau a Chwaraeon, a'r Prif Chwip  
Deputy Minister for Arts and Sport, and Chief Whip

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Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

# Annual Report on the Overseas Network

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## 2021-22



# Contents

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1. Overview
2. Regional Focus
  - 2.1 Europe
  - 2.2 North America
  - 2.3 Middle East and Asia

## Annex A – Case Studies

- a) Wales Ireland Joint Statement
- b) Dubai World Expo 2020
- c) Wales in Germany 2021

# Overview

Since the opening of the first overseas office in Tokyo in the mid-1980s, the Welsh Government's overseas network has grown to 21 offices across 11 countries today.

Much has changed globally throughout that time and our overseas offices have been vital in helping Wales keep pace with the challenges of ever-changing international markets, promoting Wales' offer to the world now and in the future.

## Current Priorities

Each office has a [remit](#) to deliver the aspirations within the [International Strategy](#), launched in January 2020, and its associated [action plans](#). The Strategy sets out our ambitions to:

- Raise Wales' international profile;
- Grow our economy through increased exports and attracting inward investment; and
- Establish Wales as a globally responsible nation.

Each of the international offices applies a differing level of focus to each ambition to reflect the potential return and relevance to the country in which they operate. Each office, however, has a common remit to source inward investment opportunities, identify trade opportunities and build strong diaspora networks within its country. The offices continue to engage and work closely with in-market partners, including the Department for International Trade (DIT), to share intelligence and encourage joint working and collaboration to amplify Welsh strengths and maximise opportunities.

## How are we reconnecting with the world post-Covid?

The world continues to face a number of global challenges, including COVID-19. The UK's economy is recovering faster than some but all global economies have been affected by the pandemic and many continue to face significant challenges. Some of our overseas staff have been more adversely impacted by the pandemic than Wales-based staff, yet they have continued to deliver Wales' international priorities. This has included sourcing of PPE, supporting virtual trade missions, maintaining contact with companies in their respective territories and providing vital intelligence on global responses to the pandemic to inform policy here in Wales.

As we recover from the pandemic, the role of the overseas teams will be even more vital in selling Wales to the world. They have undertaken a variety of activities already to deliver Wales’ international ambitions. This has included engaging with international partners and potential investors, supporting virtual trade missions and representing Wales at key global events such as the World Expo and COP26. This activity is driving forward a number of actions within the International Strategy and meets wider Welsh Government priorities, including the Programme for Government.

## Office locations



Asia	Europe	North America	Middle East
Beijing	Brussels	Atlanta	Doha
Chongqing	Berlin	Chicago	Dubai
Shanghai	Düsseldorf	New York	
Bangalore	Dublin	San Francisco	
Mumbai	Paris	Washington DC	
New Delhi	London	Montreal	
Tokyo			

# Regional Focus

Our network has three regions: Europe, North America and the Middle East and Asia. Each region has a focus tailored to its strengths as outlined in the remits. This section sets out highlights of activity undertaken by each of the regions during 2021-22.

## Europe

Our offices adapted their engagement with partners across Europe following the UK's exit from the EU, providing support across the Welsh Government for ongoing issues as a result of the end of the transition phase. They have been proactively engaging European partners to demonstrate Wales remains an active part of Europe. The office in Brussels is involved in the continued impact of EU policy on Wales and the office in Ireland provides support around the impact of the Northern Ireland protocol and border issues. In January 2021, the Welsh Government appointed a Welsh Government Representative on Europe, who works closely with the European offices, and particularly the office in Brussels.

The *Ireland-Wales Shared Statement and Action Plan 2021-2025* was signed in March 2021; this is the first year of its delivery, including the inaugural Ireland-Wales Ministerial Forum in Wales in October (see Annex A).

The first "Wales in ..." initiative took place in 2021, with *Wales in Germany 2021*. This covered delivery across all aspects of the International Strategy (see Annex A).

The offices continued to work closely with our regional partners across Europe – in particular Brittany, Basque Country, Flanders and Baden-Württemberg. We updated the Action Plan with Brittany and extended the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Basque Country. We continued discussions with Flanders and Baden-Württemberg on MoUs. A [partnership agreement](#) was signed between Techspark Wales / Tramshed Tech and Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines (SQY) in France across a range of tech and digital disciplines.

Wales engages in various European networks sharing our interests and values and providing forums for dialogue and information sharing. This year, these included:

- Vanguard Initiative Innovation network (40 regions from 14 European countries):
  - Strengthening collaborative innovation
  - Raising the profile of Wales' research and innovation expertise and assets

- Engaging EU institutions, supporting our ability to analyse impact of EU policy on Wales
- Conference of Peripheral and Maritime Regions (CPMR):
  - General Assembly and Conference on the Future of Europe Declaration
  - Atlantic Arc Commission (AAC) around feasibility of an Atlantic Macro Region
- European health networks such as EUREGHA, particularly relevant given COVID-19

Europe continues to be our largest export market, including Germany, France and Ireland. During 2021-22, all offices provided Welsh companies with trade support, including trade missions to Europe from Wales, such as a trade visit to Dublin under the Welsh Government's New Exporter Programme in March, the World Nuclear Exhibition (France) and Medica (Germany).

Europe is also a major donor for inward investment where our investment related focus is aligned to the sectors identified within the International Strategy, along with those that add real value to the Welsh economy, including renewable energy and advanced engineering in countries where there are strong links with Wales. For example, the France office has focussed on cyber, tech and compound semiconductors to develop trade and investment opportunities and used tech as a vehicle for public diplomacy. As part of this work, there was strong Welsh presence at the Forum Internationale Cyber in Lille and at European Cyber Week in Brittany, with Welsh speakers at the Women in Cyber event.

The Europe offices worked with the Welsh Government's Innovation team on international innovation cooperation and Wales' innovation profile, supported by our membership of European innovation networks such as the [Vanguard Initiative](#), [ERRIN](#) and [CRIQUE](#). Cooperation activities have helped lay the groundwork for potential consortium funding with strong connections to trade and investment activity. We have enhanced innovation cooperation with the Basque Country in the context of our MoU, with a focus on marine energy, advanced manufacturing and life sciences.

Discussions in the Vanguard Initiative have led to more detailed engagement with eMobil (e-mobility agency) in Baden-Württemberg. Clwstwr is working with Minalogic in Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes to facilitate R&I focussed trade and invest opportunities.

Taith has been warmly received by stakeholders across Europe and the offices have promoted it to a wide range of EU institutional, Member State and regional stakeholders. In March, the Brussels team hosted an event on Taith and European education mobility policy, with 15 panellists from European mobility organisations.

All offices used St David's Day to promote Wales. The [First Minister visited Brussels](#) to take part in a programme of events. In Paris, a reception at the UK Ambassador's residence celebrated Wales/France links. A dinner at the UK Ambassador's residence in Dublin with key Irish stakeholders celebrated Wales/Ireland links and all offices engaged in the Welsh Government's Random Acts of Welshness campaign.

## North America

Following Wales in Germany 2021, the North America region has been promoting Wales' relationship with Canada through the second of our themed years - Wales in Canada 2022 - with reciprocal celebrations by the Canadian High Commission in its [Canada Goes Cymru](#) initiative. There are plans for a third Wales-Quebec Call for Proposals in 2022, including in research and development.

In the US, the region supported the Urdd to promote the peace message during its [visit to Alabama](#) through meetings with influential people in the civil rights movement. The trip showcased Welsh talent and enabled the region to host events for the business and diaspora community to further strengthen the Alabama-Wales link. The region's relationship with UN agencies resulted in the [peace message](#) being supported by UN Women and Penderyn was promoted at a UN Ambassador's club.

The region is an active member of business associations such as [BABA](#). Around COP26, the region jointly hosted an event on carbon reduction with BABA in Philadelphia [with a speaker from the Future Generations Commissioner's office](#) and facilitated ministerial meetings with the Québec government at COP26.

During 2021-22, all offices provided Welsh companies with trade support, including supporting virtual export missions to Canada and the East of the USA and trade missions to Game Developers Conference and the Canadian Nuclear Association Conference.

Securing new food and drink export wins is a priority and the region has been working with partners to [secure market access](#) for lamb into the United States. We have also promoted Welsh products by showcasing them at our events and working with DIT to get more Welsh products in front of Canadian buyers through tasting boxes, including as part of trade missions to North America from Wales.

Investment focus across North America is aligned to key sectors in the International Strategy but with the addition of country-specific priorities taking account of regional strengths and opportunities. In Canada, this includes the nuclear and renewable energy sectors where there are strong links between the clusters in Wales and the target market. Creative industries were supported by sponsoring [FOCUS Wales in SXSW](#), the [premiere of a Welsh language film](#) in Los Angeles and BreakOut West in Canada.

The region attended various other conferences to highlight Wales as an inward investment location including showpiece fintech and compound semiconductor conferences, key life sciences conferences, World Trade Days, scaleup events and regular lead generation meetings.

The North America region worked with Swansea University on the [Hillary Rodham Clinton Global Challenges Summit](#). 300m people were made aware of the Summit, with [a tweet about the Summit](#) being the most “liked” of any tweet within Welsh Government that week.

The region worked with a diaspora organisation to secure [new scholarships](#) for students from North America to study in Wales. As part of Wales in Canada, Canada is now one of Global Wales’ priority countries, meaning scholarships are now available to Canadian students.

The region sponsored the North America Festival of Wales and held [sessions](#) about the work of the Welsh Government as well as diaspora events such as:

- The Welsh Society of Philadelphia’s St David’s Day reception
- [Celtic Classic](#), the largest free Celtic festival in the USA
- Alumni events to identify more Welsh diaspora in the USA and Canada and [worked with Welsh Universities](#) on such events.

The region collaborated with Wrexham AFC, S4C and FX/Disney+ to celebrate St David’s Day in Los Angeles with Rob McElhenney as guest of honour. A significant proportion of the guests came from the creative industries enabling discussions on inward investment opportunities. The event appeared across Welsh and US media and was the [highest ‘liked’ tweet](#) in the international network this year (3.7k engagement).

In New York City, events brought [diaspora and business together](#) with live Welsh language music. A separate event promoted Welsh whisky to 40 UN ambassadors. In Chicago, celebrations brought diaspora, business and academia from the Mid-West together [along with a delegation from Cardiff University](#). In Washington DC, as part of the “Random Acts of Welshness” campaign, Welsh cakes were given to stakeholders and a [breakfast with the Friends of Wales Caucus](#).

In Canada, St David’s Day provided the perfect opportunity to physically launch the Wales in Canada 2022 initiative at the High Commission in Ottawa, following a virtual launch in January due to COVID-19 restrictions. The events raised awareness of Wales in Canada amongst the diplomatic corps in Ottawa, connected with key contacts for Wales in Canada, and promoted Welsh products. Following the event, the UK government has decided to add one of the popular Welsh products for use at its events.

## Middle East and Asia

The teams across the Middle East and Asia have a wide remit. During 2021-22, they have focussed on activity ranging from the delivery of the Welsh Government's programme at the World Expo in Dubai (see Annex A), forging strong educational links in India and China and extensive legacy work following the 2019 Rugby World Cup, which resulted in the signing of a [Memorandum of Understanding with the Oita Prefecture in Japan](#) in March. The MoU is the culmination of three years of activity in Japan to formalise links between Wales and Oita.

The region has continued to forge stronger relationships with partner regions and countries this year. Teams across the region have worked directly with stakeholders in Wales, from universities and colleges to sporting groups, cultural groups, and business networks to facilitate international connections.

The region has secured new partnerships, including [signing a wide-ranging MoU with the Oita Prefecture in Japan](#) on collaborative working across sport, art and culture, academia, tourism and the food and drink sector and education-focussed MoUs signed in India and China between academic institutions.

The teams in the Middle East and Asia continue to have a strong focus on trade and investment. The region has provided export support to Welsh businesses and delivered virtual market-preparedness webinars and direct support through physical trade missions in the life sciences, food and drink, tech and cyber sectors. During 2021-22, all offices provided Welsh companies with trade support, including as part of virtual export market visits to India and Qatar and a physical trade mission to the UAE/Abu Dhabi.

As well as investment focus being aligned to the International Strategy, country-specific priorities take account of regional strengths and opportunities in tech, renewable energy, and the life science sectors.

The offices have delivered many virtual online activities during the year, including highlighting opportunities in the Indian life sciences sector illustrated by the success of Indian vaccine producer Wockhardt in Wrexham through to offshore energy opportunities with port authorities and the Welsh supply chain in Japan.

With offices returning to in person activities, the teams have represented Wales in key sector exhibitions including promoting the semiconductor sector at Asia's leading show in Tokyo and the Welsh food and drink sector in China.



All offices across the region have continued to reach out and build the Welsh diaspora network; teams in China and India have focused on Welsh alumni and building academic connections. All teams have delivered physical activities to develop the diaspora network and, in Dubai, the team delivered a series of events utilising our appointed envoy and Future Generation Commissioner's visits to secure new relationships.

The education sector is key to the Middle East and Asia markets and the region has provided direct support to many Welsh universities and colleges to progress international ambitions on student recruitment and research collaborations. The offices have supported Welsh academic institutions to develop MoUs with partners in Qatar, China and India. The team in India has supported the [delivery of the medical exchange programme](#) between the Welsh medical schools in Cardiff and Swansea and medical colleges in Mumbai; whilst, in China, the network supported Cardiff and the University of South Wales to secure partnership agreements with Zhengzhou University, Henan University of Technology and Luoyang Institute of Science and Innovation.

St David's Day was an opportunity to build new relationships and reconnect with businesses and key stakeholders across the region. All of the offices worked directly with [UK Ambassadors](#) and Consul Generals in their respective countries who supported and amplified key Welsh messages during the national day and hosted activities at the official residences. The teams in China and [India](#) held a range of events, from a touch rugby match in Chongqing with Welsh alumni, through to [business roundtables in Mumbai](#) attended by existing and potential investors.

The team in Dubai held a series of activities targeted at different groups at the World Expo, which celebrated the business and cultural strengths of Wales featuring live performances and a keynote speech by the Minister for Economy who was visiting Expo as part of a wider Middle East programme; the first overseas Ministerial visit in more than two years.

# Wales Ireland Joint Statement

On St David’s Day 2021, the First Minister signed the Ireland Wales Shared Statement and Joint Action Plan with Simon Coveney TD, Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs.

This sets out our commitment to deepen cooperation between Wales and Ireland from now until 2025 and how we intend to build on the strong and positive history of age-old connections and deep cultural understanding.

The Statement is ambitious but crucially important as Wales looks to strengthen relationships with its European neighbours following the UK’s departure from the European Union. It focusses on six areas of cooperation for which the Welsh Government has devolved responsibility:

- 1. Political and Official Engagement
- 2. Climate and Sustainability
- 3. Trade and Tourism
- 4. Education and Research
- 5. Culture, Language and Heritage
- 6. Communities, Diaspora and Sport

## Ministerial Forum

A key commitment within the Statement is to hold an annual Ireland Wales Ministerial Forum. The First Minister hosted the inaugural forum in Cardiff on 22 October 2022. Cabinet colleagues in attendance were the Minister for Economy, Vaughan Gething MS; the Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales, and Trefnydd, Lesley Griffith MS and the Deputy Minister for Climate Change, Lee Waters MS.



The Irish Ministerial delegation was led by Minister Coveney, accompanied by the Minister of State for Trade Promotion and Digital Services, Robert Troy TD with the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications, Eamon Ryan TD joining virtually.

The Forum had an overarching theme of green recovery, with substantive discussions around:

- Bilateral relations and major political developments
- Trade promotion & economic development
- Energy and climate action

Discussions on energy and climate action focused on the importance of renewable energy and the potential opportunities for cooperation. We continue to explore this, particularly around the economic development of the Celtic Sea.

The Forum provided a wider opportunity to engage with key stakeholders such as the National Museum of Wales, where the First Minister hosted invited guests including members of the Future Generations Leadership Academy and the Future Generations Commissioner. Building on a range of work already delivered in Ireland to promote the Well-Being of Future Generations Act, this provided a platform to update Irish Ministers on the progress of the Act, an overview of the advocacy priorities of young people in Wales for COP26 and a discussion on how to engage future generations using the Statement.

Discussions around trade promotion and economic development focused on the North Wales trade corridor. In March 2022, the Welsh Government's Dublin office, in partnership with the Guinness Enterprise Centre, was pleased to welcome a delegation of companies from Menai Science Parc on a trade visit to Dublin. The visit was funded through the newly established SCoRE Cymru bilateral Wales-Ireland fund.

## Forward Look

In 2022-23 the Welsh Government team in Ireland will deliver:

- A follow up visit to Wales by Irish Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications, Eamon Ryan TD.
- The inaugural Ireland Wales lecture series in Dublin, as committed to in the joint action plan.

- A learning exchange to Ireland for members of the Future Generations Leadership Academy.
- A series of business development activities on key sectors, creative industries, renewable energy and ongoing support for new exporters.
- Support for the second Ministerial Forum in autumn (taking place in Ireland).

# Dubai World Expo 2020

1 October 2021 – 31 March 2022

Through its official partnership with the UK Pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai, the Welsh Government was able to showcase the best of Wales on a global stage and contribute to all three ambitions of Wales’ International Strategy.

Our programme of activity at Expo focused on areas where Wales is world leading, with creativity, sustainability, science, and technology as overarching themes.

The Middle East team secured strong Welsh representation throughout the UK programme for the duration of Expo whilst delivering tailored Welsh messages and themes on focused Wales days. Welsh businesses, sector organisations, academic leaders and stakeholders from across Wales utilised the Expo platform to further their outreach and international ambitions. Welsh representatives from academia and industry secured participation in the wider UK Programme.

The UK Pavilion attracted approximately 1.1 million visitors.

### Key visitors from Wales

- Welsh Government Minister for Economy, Vaughan Gething MS
- Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, Sophie Howe



These visits provided an invaluable opportunity to engage key UAE stakeholders in person, including the UAE Minister of State for Foreign Trade, UAE Minister of State for Youth Affairs, UAE Minister State for Government Development and the Future, a Sovereign Wealth Fund, MASDAR (a renewable energy and sustainability developer), and the Dubai Future Foundation.

Expo provided a platform for Wales to forge new relationships with target countries and regions and further strengthen Welsh Government's priority international relationships with [Canada](#), Ireland, and [Baden-Württemberg](#) by linking up with events being held at their respective Expo Pavilions.

### Welsh Government Business Programme

The programme targeted collaborative partnerships in research, investment and exports including two hybrid events:

- Life Sciences and Healthcare Summit promoted the sector in Wales and the relationship between government, academia, and industry.
- Future Mobility Technology Summit promoted Wales' compound semiconductor, cyber security and fintech clusters. The Minister for Economy gave a keynote speech at the event.

Food and drink exports promotional activity included:

- A showcase representing 10 companies and promoting Wales' sustainable brand values.
- A dinner prepared by Welsh Chef, "Lambassador" Chris Roberts, hosted by the Minister for Economy and supported by Hybu Cig Cymru and Lobster Pot promoted Welsh Lamb, seafood, yoghurt, cheese, honey, water, spirits and non-alcoholic drinks.

Export Market Visit:

- Nine technology-focused Welsh exporters visited the UAE and engaged with Abu Dhabi's Hub 71 and Dubai's Fintech Hive.

## Welsh Government Cultural Programme

- The Welsh National Opera (WNO) held outreach workshops for schoolchildren.
- Welsh diaspora attended a networking reception to celebrate Dydd Miwsig Cymru.
- Bilingual performances by Welsh folk singer-songwriter, Eve Goodman and Welsh of the West End attracted crowds at the UK Pavilion and across the Expo site.

## Expo Programme

- The UK Pavilion hosted three “[World Majlis Series](#)” events featuring panellists from Wales:
  - Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, Sophie Howe.
  - Professor Yacine Rezgui, Building Research Establishment (BRE) Centre, Cardiff University.
  - Dr Alex George, UK Youth Mental Health Ambassador.
- [The first Emirati opera, “Al Wasl”](#), commissioned by Expo, was produced and performed in collaboration with the WNO.

## Social Media

Wales in Middle East & North Africa LinkedIn followers increased by 212% and @Walesinmena Twitter followers increased by 17%.

LinkedIn	
Engagement	5.8k
Page Clicks	25k
Page Reach	115k
Post Impressions	210k
Page Impressions	211k

Twitter	
Tweets	543
Engagement	2.4k
Traffic	2.3k

## Outcomes

The outcomes from Wales' participation in Expo 2020 will be ongoing and realised directly in international trade and potential investment opportunities. Many will be realised in the coming months and years by the Welsh organisations and stakeholders who were able to reach international audiences and establish new connections.

As well as raising the profile of Wales and promoting Wales as a globally responsible nation, two major outcomes are return visits to Wales in May 2022 by the UAE Minister for Foreign Trade and a Sovereign Wealth Fund. These are crucial to strengthening our trade and investment relationships with the UAE.



# Wales in Germany 2021

The ‘Wales in...’ themed years are designed to strengthen the relationship between Wales and the partner country and use the themes set out in the International Strategy to provide a strategic focus to our activity. They are about building connections.

[Wales in Germany 2021](#) (WiG2021) was the first of our themed years. Much of the activity was delivered under strict COVID-19 restrictions, either in Wales or in Germany, with many physical events moving to a virtual platform.

## Raising the Profile of Wales

The following public diplomacy activity was undertaken across the year:

- Two-day Wales Literature Seminar on language and diversity organised by British Council Wales/Germany, Literature Wales and Literaturhaus Stuttgart.
- Wales Arts International new partnership with British Council Germany – Fonds Soziokultur – which supports community-based arts projects in deprived areas.
- National Museum Wales visited Berlin and forged a new partnership with the National History Museum and the Humboldt Forum.
- Cardiff/Bremen University Alliance held three events.
- Osnabrück and Literature Wales online theatre, literature, and music exchange.



- Four online community and diaspora events:
  - German Community in Wales Launch event
  - Diaspora in Germany
  - Welsh food and drink 'Cook-Along'
  - Green Journey through Wales

Overall, we reached over 40,000 contacts, including contacts from Wales' 26 twin towns in Germany.

## Trade & Investment

The initiative provided a platform for developing economic links:

- New relationships with 18 German companies and 15 who have operations in Wales and added additional value by brokering other relationships in Wales.
- Lead generation digital campaign to target key business sectors such as cyber security, compound semiconductors and food and drink. This was complemented by a PR campaign reaching over 1,050,000 contacts.
- Digital compound semiconductor PR campaign reached over 1,760,000 contacts, social campaign reached 385,000 contacts, 120,300 engagements.
- Supporting the setting up and launch of British Chamber of Commerce in Germany's new Wales-Midlands Alliance.
- Supported 56 Welsh companies looking to export to Germany.
- Facilitated 14 cluster network exchanges between Wales and Germany.
- Clwster Creadigol signed a partnership with creative agency, MFG Baden-Württemberg.

## Globally Responsible Nation

The themed year also demonstrated Wales' commitment to global responsibility:

- Wales' Future Generations Commissioner met UK-German Connection. Discussions on a youth exchange with Wales Democracy Box and B-W Youth Councillors in 2022.
- Future Generations Commissioner's Office attendance at the One Young World Conference.

- Future Generations Young Leader filmed with the UK Ambassador to Germany, discussing climate change for a pre-COP26/One Young World Germany campaign. The film was promoted digitally with a campaign by FCDO on Google/social networks achieving wider impact.
- Introduced Academi Heddwch to the German Peace Research Organisation and German Peace Town Osnabrück.
- Connected the Urdd with UK-German Connection who promoted its annual peace message.

## Regional Relationship with Baden-Württemberg

Meetings were held throughout the year between Welsh Ministers, the State Chancellery / Ministries of Baden-Württemberg. The initiative was the platform for discussions on a Shared Statement between Wales and Baden-Württemberg to cover areas such as: political relationships; trade and entrepreneurship; science and innovation; civic/youth mobility; climate and sustainability.

## Relationship with German Embassy

We strengthened our relationship with the German Embassy through a series of activities throughout the year. This included:

- Virtual and physical visits to Wales by the German Ambassador to the UK.
- New relationships with bilateral agencies such as the UK-German Connection (youth mobility).
- Discussions around Taith.
- Introductions to the Urdd and the Future Generations Commissioner.

As a direct result of the Wales in Germany 2021 initiative, the German Embassy has committed to launching its flagship 'UK German Recruitment Fair' in Wales in 2022 – the first time the project will be held outside London in its 10-year history.



Document is Restricted

## **Welsh Government's evidence to the Committee's inquiry into participation in sport in disadvantaged areas**

### **Context**

1. Since devolution, the Welsh Government has committed significant investment to a range of policies and programmes to promote prosperity, prevent, and mitigate poverty. Despite this, poverty levels have remained relatively stagnant in Wales for over 15 years and any progress has been challenging, particularly in some of our post-industrial communities. This has not been aided by over a decade of UK driven austerity and welfare cuts have constrained WG budgets and reduced household budgets and disposable income. The impact of the pandemic followed by the cost of living crisis will deepen the challenges in these communities. Whilst the most recent Welsh Government action on poverty has focussed on mitigating the impact of poverty, wider efforts will also require the need to build future resilience.
2. The Programme for Government sets out clear ambitions to deliver a more prosperous and a more equal Wales and to create better outcomes for people now and in the future. Tackling poverty and associated inequalities is at the heart of these ambitions. In March of last year, the socio-economic Duty was commenced, placing a statutory commitment on Welsh Ministers, and certain public bodies, to ensure their strategic decision-making considers socio-economic disadvantage.

### **The importance of sport**

3. Sport is vital to our national life. It has a powerful influence on our national identity; it unites us as a nation and gives us an enviable presence on the world stage. Sport is also key to our health and wellbeing as a nation with our vision of an active nation where everyone can have a lifetime enjoyment of sport.
4. Sport has a significant contribution to make in delivering our Programme for Government, with its reach and influence extending beyond the specific commitments on enhancing equal access, improving participation and building on our provision of sporting facilities across the country. Sport has a key role to play in delivering our commitments around a more prosperous, greener, healthier and more equal nation.
5. In this context, the Welsh Government, working with Sport Wales, will continue to lead the sector and encourage collaboration with others to nurture and facilitate a population increase in physical activity and to invest effort and resources where it is needed most; where there are significant variations in participation and where there is a lack of opportunity or aspiration to be active.

### **Challenges facing sport and leisure**

6. The health, social and economic value of sport is widely recognised, and that is why the Welsh Government continues to invest in sport through its preventative power.

7. The inequalities of sporting activity during the lockdown period have been shown clearly by successive studies commissioned by Sport Wales since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. During the strict lockdown period, people from lower socio-economic backgrounds were much more likely to have reported a drop in their physical activity levels. Most worryingly, people who reported their children were not doing any physical activity or exercise on a typical day was 9% but this rose to 14% for children from lower socio-economic backgrounds.
8. As we turn our sights to our recovery from the pandemic, expanding on the opportunities to increase participation to support our mental and physical health will be more important than ever. However, the legacy of the pandemic is already being seen as efforts focus on gearing up facilities, rebuilding memberships and regaining consumer confidence. These are some of the examples impacting income given to us by the leisure centre operators and trusts which then affects their ability to recruit and retain staff to provide the range of services that was on offer pre-pandemic.
9. Additionally, the cost of living crisis is compounding an already difficult position with energy costs and inflation affecting families' spending power. This will probably affect those in disadvantaged areas more than others and we know that vulnerable groups, such as single parents, young children, disabled people, and minority ethnic groups, are more likely to live in poverty.
10. Participation in sport can be challenging for a whole host of reasons, such as the cost of specialist clothing and equipment, and travel to facilities. We know from research that the lack of opportunities people have to be physically active can be the root of inequality and poor motivation, and that physical activity levels can be related to socio-economic status based on recent research by Public Health Wales.

### **Welsh Government actions**

11. During the pandemic, the Welsh Government provided £66.5 m in funding to support the sport and leisure sector to address the impact of the necessary restrictions. This included an additional £16.5m for the Sport and Leisure Recovery Fund to support national organisations, local sports clubs, leisure trusts and independent/self-employed providers of sport, fitness and leisure services, and £20.1m for professional sports clubs affected by the restrictions that required sports events to be played behind closed doors. There is no doubt that without this financial support, the sector would have suffered irreparable damage that would have had a long-lasting impact on the health and wellbeing of the nation.
12. The vast majority of Welsh Government funding for sport is channelled through Sport Wales, our delivery partner for sport. Sport Wales is expected to use this funding – and the funding it receives via the National Lottery – to deliver the objectives set out in its Term of Government remit letter. We will be investing more than £75m over the next three years for Sport Wales to deliver on its aims and objectives.

13. As we recovered from the pandemic the Welsh Government has provided funding for the successful Summer of Fun and Winter of Wellbeing programmes. These programmes have delivered free play, sporting and cultural activities for children and young people aged 0-25 to address the social, emotional and physical impacts of the pandemic. Through the Winter of Wellbeing programme, more than £1m has been invested in sports organisations to deliver free activities across Wales. They include the Urdd's provision of sport and physical activity through the medium of Welsh in areas of rural and social deprivation, Colegau Cymru's programme to upskill college students to deliver sport and active recreation to their peers and to children and young people, and taster sessions for children in the sports of Athletics, Racket Sports, Bowls, Cycling and Weightlifting through their clubs and academies.
14. Supporting our community sports clubs across Wales is a priority for this Government at both the elite level and at the community level, as is investing in our nation's sports facilities so we can unlock more of our potential as a nation. If we are going to unleash the benefits of sport for everyone, from the grassroots to elite sportspeople, it is vital that we make facilities for sport and physical activity accessible to everyone. Modern, accessible and sustainable facilities are crucial to encourage people into sport, or back into sport. We have already committed to investing £24m of capital funding over the next three years in our sporting facilities which is in addition to the £13.2m capital investment in 2021-22. Sport Wales has recently established a Strategic Capital Investments Group to develop a strategic plan to direct and prioritise capital investment in facilities at those projects that address inequalities. Sport Wales successfully piloted a new funding initiative last year, Crowdfunder. This fund, which is continuing this year, disproportionately targets deprived communities - with funding provided at a higher percentage to those clubs in the most deprived areas based on Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation data. This new investment stream is a great way to encourage community cohesion and upskills those attached to the community club as support is given throughout the process by Sport Wales and Crowdfunder staff.
15. The Welsh Government will continue to invest in sports facilities across Wales in a sustainable and globally responsible way to ensure equal access and to support our talented athletes and coaches, wherever they live and whatever their background. We have already had positive and constructive dialogue with some of our national partners about delivering those objectives together.
16. Sport Wales has provided significant amounts of funding for many different sports across Wales. There are many examples across a range of sports, from improvements to the pitches at Gwernyfed Rugby Club and Denbigh Town Football Club; to new tennis courts in Chepstow, enabling disabled access at Beechwood Bowls Club in Newport. There are new practice nets for Pembroke County Cricket Club, new equipment for Bala Canoe Club and new mats for a Brazilian Ju-Jitsu Club in Ystradgynlais. Additionally new learn to ride parks in Dare Valley Park and Wattstown Memorial Park will regenerate land previously used for other purposes, and turn them to areas for young children to learn to ride their bicycles, encouraging the teaching of children how to cycle, as well as basic road safety.



17. We should also recognise that investing in sporting facilities is also now being undertaken by the UK Government. The UK Government has decided to actively undermine devolution by taking decisions on devolved matters, including sport with funding announcements regarding tennis and football serving as recent examples. The financial assistance powers provided in the UK Internal Market Act allows UK Ministers to take decisions on devolved matters without a mandate and with no accountability to the Senedd and its Committees. The UK Government's approach does not have regard for the legislative context within which it is directing public money and no work has been undertaken to prevent duplication. It also remains unclear how the UK Government will ensure that audit processes are satisfied in a manner that allows for proper accountability and how spend in devolved areas will be subject to Welsh parliamentary scrutiny. This incoherent approach is a threat to devolution that risks outcomes that poor value for money as a result of ill-informed policy development. The UK Government's approach to Levelling Up will leave Wales with less say over less money and we remain concerned at the UK Government's failure to prioritise need in their methodologies and allocations. There is currently no identifiable Levelling Up benefit for Wales as EU structural funds are replaced with less funding within a more regressive and centralised model that is owned entirely by Whitehall. These factors will ensure that less money is targeted where it is needed most.
18. This is only part of the picture though. The sport portfolio also works with other areas of the Welsh Government to deliver the best outcomes for sport that we can and have a direct impact on delivery of sporting opportunities.
19. Sport has a role to inspire. Our investment at the elite level, investing in world-class sports facilities to support our nation's sporting success on the international stage, is key to inspiring the next generation. It also increases the potential opportunities we have to host national and international events, which in turn further our global reach and can encourage participation.
20. The Healthy and Active Fund is an established, collaborative programme of work co-managed by the Welsh Government (health and sport), Sport Wales and Public Health Wales. Sport Wales manages the grant programme which has invested £5.9m in a variety of projects across Wales since 2018 to pilot new, innovative ways of increasing participation in physical activity and to improve people's mental wellbeing. The projects seek to reduce inequalities in outcomes and barriers in a variety of ways, from intergenerational approaches to gardening, encouraging families to get active with their new born babies, to increasing physical and social activities for people living in care homes. There are other projects that look to support people with mental health issues to lead independent and long-term active lifestyles, and one that uses sporting memories to help people with dementia.
21. The Welsh Government's Healthy Weight: Healthy Wales strategy sets out our plans, over a ten-year period, to transform the way decisions are made in everyday life which impact upon our weight and wellbeing. Among the interventions supported through the Delivery Plan are an over 60s Active Leisure Scheme, funded with Sport Wales, which is focussing upon health inequalities

and working through leisure centres to increase outreach. We are also continuing to deliver our National Exercise Referral Scheme with Public Health Wales and this has continued to adapt to offer additional opportunities through digital options and outdoor based activities. We also continue to invest in the Free Swimming Initiative and the Armed Forces Free Swimming Scheme to provide free access to local authority swimming pools for children and young people, people aged 60 and over and our veterans and armed forces personnel. The Free Swimming Initiative also supports our national efforts to provide children and young people with important life skills through the 'learn to swim' element of the provision.

22. Community owned and operated facilities can also play an important part in empowering local people, providing local jobs as well as opportunities to socialise - tackling loneliness and isolation and improving general health and wellbeing. A Community Facilities Programme budget of £6.5m has been allocated for 2022-23. Our Community Facilities Programme is designed to improve community facilities, which are useful to, and used by, people in the community. Community facilities, including sporting facilities, play a vital role, acting as a focus for community events, providing opportunities for volunteering and enabling local access to services. This can be even more important in rural areas. Grants awarded so far this year have supported Garndiffaeth Bowls Club, Boxing Community Action and Merthyr Tydfil Sailing Club.
23. The education estate, through our schools and colleges, also provides an important platform to our sporting facilities. Our Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme has a significant role to play in providing sports facilities. The Programme makes it clear that we expect schools and colleges in Wales to support both our learners and wider communities. Our aspiration is that all facilities receiving investment commit to making assets available for community use where local demand exists. This has resulted in the provision of excellent sporting facilities benefiting all age groups, such as at Ysgol Bro Teifi in Llandysul, Ceredigion. This is a new ages 3 to 19 Welsh medium school which has streamlined education in the area to support learners from primary age through to secondary education while ensuring their state of the art sports facilities, which includes an all-weather pitch and a sports hall, are readily available to the surrounding community outside the school day. We expect all projects that receive funding support to show how their school facilities can support the community around them. This includes extending the use of physical assets such as sports facilities for community use, both during and outside school hours. It is also vitally important to ensure there is join-up in how pupils access schools and we are investing in the active travel infrastructure across Wales with funding of £220m over this and the following two financial years.

### **Conclusion and next steps**

24. Ensuring equal access to sport is a key commitment for this Welsh Government which is being addressed and supported in many various ways. However, we also recognise that it is not something we can achieve alone, and we need to work closely with the wider sporting family and key stakeholders such as local authorities and community groups to make further progress.

25. As we continue to recover from the pandemic and as we grapple with wider challenges, such as the cost of living crisis, it is our intention to host a Sport Summit later this year with a key focus on exploring how sport can drive increased participation in our most disadvantaged communities and with our harder to reach groups. This Summit will aim to build on the excellent spirit of collaboration we saw during the height of the pandemic and aim to forge new relationships and partnerships. We hope the Committee's work in this area will help shape and influence that forward work programme.

Dawn Bowden MS

Deputy Minister for Arts and Sport, and Chief Whip

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