



Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-1110  
Ein cyf/Our ref DET/03736/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS  
Chair, Petitions Committee

8 January 2021

Dear Janet

Thank you for your correspondence regarding a petition for the reinstatement of Free Swimming for pensioners.

While I appreciate that there may be ongoing concerns from some individuals, the broader picture of changes to Free Swimming centred on action taken in response to an independent review of the initiative commissioned by Sport Wales.

The review found that although the Free Swimming initiative enjoyed some significant successes in its early years, it had become no longer fit for purpose and was under utilised. In addition the scheme needed to be better aligned with Sport Wales' Vision for Sport in Wales and Welsh Government's Wellbeing objectives if it was going to reach those who would most benefit from it.

Young people and those over the age of 60 from deprived areas are the priority under the new scheme – Sport Wales and Swim Wales are working in partnership with Local Authorities and delivery partners to develop a programme of sessions in each public swimming pool which meet with the needs of these two target groups.

There has of course been significant disruption to the programme as a result of Covid-19 and although the programme had been largely reinstated across Wales with the majority of areas delivering against the minimum expectations of providing some free swimming opportunities for over 60s, unfortunately that has had to be paused.

Welsh Government and Sport Wales will continue to work with local authority partners on a return of the scheme as and where possible within the guidance around social distancing.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

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

[Gohebiaeth.Dafydd.Elis-Thomas@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Dafydd.Elis-Thomas@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Dafydd.Elis-Thomas@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Dafydd.Elis-Thomas@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.

Consideration of course will be given at that stage to the best way to facilitate the scheme to reach the priority audiences in the most convenient and impactful way.

In addition to Free-Swimming, Sport Wales and partners have also been looking at launching the 60 Plus Offer: Active Leisure Scheme. Originally anticipated to be launched in January across all local authorities, we are mindful of current Covid-19 guidance changing and will adapt timings accordingly. When launched this scheme will create additional opportunities for those 60 plus in Wales to be physically active and we will use the insight and learning from the three month delivery in 2020-2021 to inform future delivery methods in 2021-2022 and beyond.

I trust you will find this helpful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Elis-Thomas'.

**Yr Arglwydd Elis-Thomas AS/MS**

Y Dirprwy Weinidog Diwylliant, Chwaraeon a Thwristiaeth  
Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism