

## Cafodd yr ymateb hwn ei gyflwyno i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Iechyd a Gofal Cymdeithasol](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)

This response was submitted to the [Health and Social Care Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)

HSC PSS 113

Ymateb gan: | Response from: [Chwarae Cymru](#) | [Play Wales](#)

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### **Blaenoriaethau cychwynnol a nodwyd gan y Pwyllgor** **Initial priorities identified by the Committee**

Mae'r Pwyllgor wedi nodi nifer o flaenoriaethau posibl ar gyfer ei waith yn ystod y Chweched Senedd, gan gynnwys: iechyd y cyhoedd a gwaith ataliol; y gweithlu iechyd a gofal cymdeithasol, gan gynnwys diwylliant sefydliadol a lles staff; mynediad at wasanaethau iechyd meddwl; arloesi ar sail tystiolaeth ym maes iechyd a gofal cymdeithasol; cymorth a gwasanaethau i ofalwyr di-dâl; mynediad at wasanaethau adsefydlu i'r rhai sydd wedi cael COVID ac i eraill; a mynediad at wasanaethau ar gyfer cyflyrau cronig tymor hir, gan gynnwys cyflyrau cyhyrsgerbydol.

The Committee has identified several potential priorities for work during the Sixth Senedd, including: public health and prevention; the health and social care workforce, including organisational culture and staff wellbeing; access to mental health services; evidence-based innovation in health and social care; support and services for unpaid carers; access to COVID and non-COVID rehabilitation services; and access to services for long-term chronic conditions, including musculoskeletal conditions.

#### **C1. Pa rai o'r materion uchod ydych chi'n credu y dylai'r Pwyllgor roi blaenoriaeth iddynt, a pham?**

##### **Q1. Which of the issues listed above do you think should be a priority, and why?**

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In respect of the priorities, it is Play Wales' view that the focus might reasonably be on evidence-based innovation and covid recovery. We are in unprecedented times that warrant the consideration of innovation to address the challenges arising from the pandemic and the impact of the actions that have necessarily been taken to mitigate the impact.



## **Blaenoriaethau allweddol ar gyfer y Chweched Senedd**

### **Key priorities for the Sixth Senedd**

**C2. Yn eich barn chi, pa flaenoriaethau allweddol eraill y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd mewn perthynas â:**

- a) **gwasanaethau iechyd;**
- b) **gofal cymdeithasol a gofalwyr;**
- c) **adfer yn dilyn COVID?**

**Q2. In your view, what other key priorities should the Committee consider during the Sixth Senedd in relation to:**

- a) **health services;**
  - b) **social care and carers;**
  - c) **COVID recovery?**
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### **Adfer yn dilyn COVID**

#### **COVID recovery**

The benefits of play are widely recognised, and cut across physical and mental health, well-being and child development. Play is both a way for children to keep healthy, and a process that helps them to deal with everyday uncertainties, stresses and anxieties.

During the coronavirus pandemic and its associated lockdowns, access to outdoor play was particularly important, because of the sense of freedom and control that children can enjoy and because it allows for children to be energetic and physically active. Play is a form of physical exercise for children. However, at some points of the pandemic, the focus on the importance of exercise outdoors failed to recognise this, and the examples given for exercise tended to be adult-centric and restrictive.<sup>i</sup>

Emerging evidence suggests that prolonged school closure, staying at home and social restrictions during outbreaks of disease could have serious consequences for children's physical and mental health. A key conclusion from the rapid review<sup>ii</sup> notes that play may be one of the most important areas to focus on to promote health and well-being.

With the uncertainty caused by the coronavirus pandemic, opportunities to play are vital to helping children make sense of their experiences, problem-solve, reconnect with their peers, and promote their own well-being. As we develop interventions and initiatives to support children emerging from the pandemic and its related restrictions, play may be one of the most important areas of focus to promote children's health and well-being.

#### **Play Wales recommends that during the sixth Senedd, the Committee:**

Ensures that access to play is included in any Covid pandemic recovery plans it scrutinises.

Ensures that interventionist programmes for children intended to support Covid-19 recovery are complemented by a focus on supporting children to be active participants in building their own

resilience. Any programmes that support children’s physical and mental health should be scrutinised to ensure that they feature opportunities and time for self-directed play.

## Unrhyw faterion eraill

### Any other issues

#### **C3. A oes unrhyw faterion eraill yr hoffech dynnu sylw'r Pwyllgor atynt?**

#### **Q3. Are there any other issues you wish to draw to the Committee's attention?**

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The previous Health, Social Care and Sport Committee undertook an *inquiry into the Physical Activity of Children and Young People*. In our response, Play Wales expressed concerns about play and break times. In particular, we highlighted issues regarding the withdrawal of playtime (including lunch time play break) to shorten the school day, or, as part of a behaviour management policy.

It is important and pleasing to note that Welsh Government's *Framework on embedding a whole school approach to emotional and mental well-being*<sup>iii</sup> now makes it explicit that playtime is important and should not be removed from children at school as a form of punishment. However, this is fairly recent guidance and it is not clear how it is being implemented, monitored or inspected.

In its inquiry report<sup>iv</sup> the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee expressed disappointment to hear that reductions in lunch breaks and break times (which provide daily opportunities to get active) are common in schools. It urged the Welsh Government to review how widespread this practice is in schools across Wales. Play Wales is not aware of such a review taking place.

In our inquiry response, we also highlighted that school grounds are useful community assets that could be used to better effect for children's play and recreation when the school day ended. We highlight the benefits of this in our Play Wales manifesto, *Wales – a play friendly place*<sup>v</sup> and accompanying factsheet.<sup>vi</sup>

Welsh Government has recently provided funding to Sport Wales and the Arts Council of Wales to enable them to develop a series of pilots looking at how to provide sporting and cultural activities around the school day. We hope that making school grounds available for play that is initiated, controlled and structured by children can be included in these pilots.

**Play Wales recommends that during the sixth Senedd, the Committee:**

Reviews progress on recommendations made in the previous inquiry into physical activity of children and young people.

Liaise with other committees as necessary to ensure that work being undertaken to increase the community use of schools and school grounds provides opportunities for play

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<sup>i</sup> Russell, W. and Stenning, A. (2020) Beyond active travel: children, play and community on streets during and after the coronavirus lockdown, *Cities & Health*, DOI: [10.1080/23748834.2020.1795386](https://doi.org/10.1080/23748834.2020.1795386)

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<sup>ii</sup> Graber, K. M., Byrne, E.M., Goodacre, E. J., et al. A rapid review of the impact of quarantine and restricted environments on children's play and the role of play in children's health. *Child Care Health Dev.* 2021; 47: 143– 153. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cch.12832>

<sup>iii</sup> <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-03/framework-on-embedding-a-whole-school-approach-to-emotional-and-mental-well-being.pdf>

<sup>iv</sup> National Assembly for Wales Health, Social Care and Sport Committee (2019) *Physical Activity of Children and Young People*. Cardiff: National Assembly for Wales Commission Copyright 2019.

<sup>v</sup> Play Wales (2021) *Wales – a play friendly place*. Cardiff: Play Wales.

[www.playwales.org.uk/eng/playmanifesto](http://www.playwales.org.uk/eng/playmanifesto)

<sup>vi</sup> Play Wales (2021) Factsheet: Wales – a play friendly place. Cardiff: Play Wales.

[www.playwales.org.uk/login/uploaded/documents/Play%20Policy/Factsheet%20-%20Wales%20a%20play%20friendly%20place%202020.pdf](http://www.playwales.org.uk/login/uploaded/documents/Play%20Policy/Factsheet%20-%20Wales%20a%20play%20friendly%20place%202020.pdf)