

Senedd Cymru | Welsh Parliament

Pwyllgor Diwylliant, Cyfathrebu, y Gymraeg, Chwaraeon, a Chysylltiadau Rhyngwladol | Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee

Cymryd rhan mewn chwaraeon mewn ardaloedd difreintiedig | Participation in sport in disadvantaged areas

CCWLSIR SDA 05

Ymateb gan Criced Cymru | Response from Cricket Wales



March 2022

Here follows a combined response from a number of Officers at Criced Cymru/Cricket Wales, a number of which are working in the community currently, delivering positive outcomes. Some comments are therefore written in the first person where they relate to specific personal experiences.

What are the main barriers to participation in sport in disadvantaged areas?

- Fearful of what others think of you playing sport
- Stigma associated to playing a sport
- Lack of confidence
- Lack of relevant skill level to play at

Cost for some parents especially where they have more than 1 child around the same age; To combat this we will be running 8 x Free All Stars / Dynamos programs in areas of high deprivation / Diverse communities.

We do have a lack of disability opportunities in some areas of Cardiff West / Bay area for example where we have no clubs.

The main barriers to participation in sport in disadvantaged areas I believe is the lack of provision, in the form of lack of accessible facilities. For example, in the Pillgwenlly area, speaking to community workers, there is a lack of sports hall, gymnasiums and community centres for kids and people in general to access. This then intersects with socio-economic status, as most families living in this area are unable to pay for hefty membership fees for local sports clubs and fitness centres for their children.

How do these intersect with other factors including:

- **AGE** – There is visible pressure placed on peers in the early high school age to play certain sports and mock others, unless you are already good at that sport.
- It's rare to see someone pick up a new sport that isn't football/rugby between the ages of 12-15 because of the stigma (particularly in boys)
- A lot of men/women stop playing sport around 18-25 as the pathway they are involved with ends.
- **SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS** – Can I afford kit/transport/match fees/subs/membership?
- **GEOGRAPHY** – How far are local sports clubs/facilities?

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How clear a picture do we have of current participation levels in disadvantaged areas? Does the current data enable policy interventions to be effective?

We have access to the ECB demographics tool we can use to cross reference data we hold to areas of deprivation.

But there is not enough data around participation habits, especially the 18-25 age range; This is a key age range to focus on making policy decisions – If you can keep a participant playing sport throughout this age range and after they will likely carry on playing that sport

How should public funding be used to increase participation in disadvantaged areas?

We would particularly encourage Welsh Government, through Sport Wales, to

1. work more closely with sports to further close the gender gap in participation.
2. work more closely with sports to get every child playing team sports, alongside individual activity – team sport builds other skills that individual activity cannot.
3. work with sports to develop a bespoke plan to tackle stubborn inequalities in participation among certain groups and the linked societal issues that come with this.
4. collaborate with sports to improve data collection, and research and analysis across the sport sector.
5. continue to invest in multi- sport facilities and other outdoor and indoor spaces where people can be active
6. use data gleaned by the School Sport Survey to inform strategic SW facility decisions. We do not have sufficient assurance this will be proportionately considered, especially in the context of Partner funding decisions being so heavily determined by it.

Funding should be apportioned to meaningful, long term sustainable projects such as Wicketz, or Chance to Shine Street – and to fund NGB's where clear outputs can be demonstrated.

We are very concerned there could be unintended consequence of the new, laudable but extremely rigid SW investment model, which will almost certainly significantly (over-(?) fund 'technical' medal sports eg rowing, triathlon, which are generally not accessed by (or are accessible to) disadvantaged communities.

We would continue to urge ongoing positive discussions to seek innovative solutions to this imbalance and map the facility availability to the most deprived areas and support this with proportionate funding.

Please also encourage partners such as Street Games to work in collaboration to deliver on long term sustainability.

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The best way for public spending to be used to increase participation is simply to put most of the funding towards community centres. This way, children will have access to participate in these sports all year round and access to a variety of sports will not be as big an issue it currently is.

Within disadvantaged areas, community centres play a huge role in keeping children occupied as well as providing opportunity to do a variety of activities.

We have seen first hand the amazing work at Butetown pavilion being done to increase participation in sport as well as educate children of what sports has to offer them. Whether that be in the form of; coaching, mentorship, officiating, management and being role models for others within the community.

- Facilities/Leisure centres – but Local Authorities should also be compelled to work with groups of sports (eg pitch sports) to ensure adequate provision vs demand – and have rolling Playing Pitch Strategies. This is even more important in disadvantaged areas
- More staff, more safe spaces, more equipment, more coaches.

How effective are current interventions at increasing participation in disadvantaged areas?

The Wicketz program in Llanrumney has been and continues to be a huge success with participants & parents. As a free offer this could be the only sporting opportunities the children get from the area. We need to look at how we evidence the impact of these seasons in the next 12 months and would with the funders on how to best do this in a way where it's not just Q&A to participants.

It's all about the age range – plenty of successful interventions aimed at children in primary school/high school; It's tough to get someone 18-25 playing a sport they don't want to know about. Innovation needed in this area.

Many initiatives being run by Street Games Wales, Sports Wales and Sports Cardiff are a great way of introducing children from disadvantaged backgrounds to sport. For example, the Summer of Fun project, that was being run across Wales. However, it would be interesting to see statistics on what happens next once an interest has been ignited.

Has the pandemic caused any persistent changes to participation levels in disadvantaged areas?

We have seen a gentle increase in participation at all of our community Hubs since the pandemic (lockdowns). This wasn't an instant increase, it took a number of weeks to get back to where we were pre pandemic. Since then, parents have appreciated the offers we currently deliver more.

Although it goes without saying that the financial constraints the pandemic has caused have had a huge effect on the number of children from disadvantaged backgrounds joining up with local sports clubs, due to membership fees.

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How effectively do different sectors (e.g. education and health) collaborate to improve participation in sport in disadvantaged areas?

I believe these sectors do a good job of providing opportunities for children from disadvantaged areas to play sport. My lived experience of this would be my secondary school education at Fitzalan High School, where children were encouraged and given opportunities to join in with extra-curricular activities, in the forms of swimming, hockey, rugby, cricket, football, table tennis, gymnastics, dance, basketball, netball and others. Many of these sports would not appeal to the ethnicities of the majority of students at Fitzalan High School, due to many factors such as expenses to participate in the sport, lack of role models within their ethnic background and access to facilities; for example many students may have never seen a hockey pitch until introduced to one by the school.

Are there examples of best practice, both within Wales and internationally, that Wales should learn from to increase participation in sport in disadvantaged areas?

It is interesting to see how other countries try to promote sport in disadvantaged areas, whether they have to manufacture something or if sport has such a big pull within inner city areas it just becomes something that happens naturally. Two countries who I believe excel in this field are America and France.

Especially the following sports for each country; basketball for Americans and football for the French. There seems to be a massive focus on 'street sport' within these countries, not only as agendas or programmes to increase sports participation but rather as competition, similar to the leagues that local clubs participate in Wales. However, without the hefty membership fees and in many cases, lack of accessible provision for those not living in the leafy suburbs.

An example for basketball in America in the famous 'Rucker Park' the concept of the park was ironically created by an influential teacher from Harlem named Holcombe Rucker and he organised a tournament within Harlem to bring children from communities together, through the power of sport. Through time, this same park has been a hub for some of the greatest natural talent to play the sport and grew so famous that players as famous as Kareem Abdul-Jabber, Wilt Chamberlain and Kobe Bryant have graced the court. Around America you will see many concepts that are similar to 'Rucker Park' and they are a brilliant initiative to promote sport within inner city areas.

Watching a documentary, a couple of years ago on French international footballer Ousmane Dembele (someone who grew up in a disadvantaged area). I was made aware of the popularity of street football within the deprived areas of France, many esteemed players within the documentary mentioned the wonders it does for participation in those areas, as well as the quality of talent.

It is no wonder that these two countries are at the upper echelons in terms of producing sporting talent from deprived areas and as a result also being arguably the greatest nations currently at their preferred sports.

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In terms of cricket, you only have to look at the popularity of street cricket in the form of tape ball cricket and the wonders it does for participation for people of a deprived background due to the lack of need for equipment and proper cricketing facilities, therefore, massively reducing costs.

[Wicketz](#) (Lord's Taverners funded, delivered in Wales by Cricket Wales) – for 8-18 age range and is scale-able.