

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 06

Ymateb gan Sported Foundation | Response from Sported Foundation

Sported Foundation



Response to Senedd Cymru/Welsh Parliament

Participation in sport in disadvantaged areas

March 2022

Sported is **Wales' largest network** of community sports groups focussed on **tackling inequalities in deprived communities** and for marginalised groups.

Each of our **210 groups** in our network has a specific **focus to the social impact** of their sports in their communities. Collectively the Sported network in Wales impacts upon the lives of **30,000 young people**.

32% of our groups are working with young people living in poverty or located in the **20% most deprived communities** (as per Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation). **60%** of our groups are **entirely volunteer** led. **55%** of our groups have a turnover of **less than £10k** per annum.

Our Vision

We want every young person to have the same opportunity to fulfil their potential

Our Mission:

Helping community groups survive to help young people thrive

Our groups are deeply rooted in towns, villages and cities across the Wales. They are the experts at reaching and engaging young people in sport and physical activity, offering local solutions to local problems. We have over 10 years' experience of supporting these community groups to become stronger and more sustainable.

Few mediums have the power to engage, inspire and bring together young people as sport. Sported's groups all use sport and physical activity to impact on one or more of the following social outcomes:

- Education and employability
- Health and well-being
- Crime and anti-social behaviour
- Community cohesion

- Inequality in sports participation

The latest piece of Sported research (October 2021), based on answers from 437 grassroots sports groups across the UK, has found that far fewer young people are attending their sports groups since the Covid-19 pandemic started.

- **58%** of groups have less than **80%** of their young people attending
- **30%** of groups stating less than **60%** of their participants had returned since re-opening

The issue of encouraging young people to return to their groups seems to be one that is disproportionately affecting those from areas of high deprivation. Fewer young people have returned to groups located in areas of high deprivation than elsewhere and reported anxiety levels were higher in those areas.

Groups are also struggling to find places to carry out their groups' activities since re-opening.

- **43%** of groups have found it harder and 25% have found it much harder.

The most common reason given for those groups that have not yet re-opened, at **33%**, was no access or limited access to facilities.

The good news is that groups have mostly reopened:

- **97%** of groups have reopened
- **92%** of unopened groups expect to reopen in the next 6 months.

Sported regularly conducts research within its network, in order to fully understand the ever-changing challenges and barriers the groups face. The Community Pulse provides us with invaluable insight into the sector so that we can adapt to meet the immediate needs and provide support accordingly.

It can be suggested that current systems and methodologies for the distribution of public funding in the sports sector to increase participation in disadvantaged areas **has been unsuccessful**. A trend of resourcing National Governing Bodies of Sport and Local Authority/Trust Sports Development Teams to tackle this issue of participation in disadvantaged areas has **been largely unproductive** in creating **long term sustainable approaches** to increasing participation levels. It can be argued that short term project/campaign type activities delivered by these bodies are successful in creating short term spikes in participation, however these interventions are not sustainable beyond the life of the project and quite often not held in facilities and locations accessible to those most disadvantaged.

Sported advocates for more **direct investment** into long term, sustainable solutions into the **local, volunteer led community groups**. These groups are best placed, with the insight and relationships with young people in their communities to create the long term impact required. These **hyperlocal groups are a vital** component in enabling young people living with disadvantaged to access facilities and opportunities to **participate in sport in their own communities**.

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