



26 September 2022

Dear Russell

Thank you for your letter to the Minister for Health and Social Services of 8 July requesting follow up on the Fifth Senedd Health, Social Care and Sport Committee recommendations: Physical activity of children and young people. I am responding as it sits within my portfolio.

The pandemic has undoubtedly impacted upon the physical activity levels of young people. Despite this, since the committee's report was published back in March 2019, we have seen positive progress across the recommendations, and you will find updated actions against each of the agreed recommendations in Annex A.

Our Programme for Government commits us to investing in sport facilities and promoting equal access to sport and physical activity across the country. As a government we place great emphasis on the need to tackle inequalities, and it is at the forefront of the decisions we make. We have delivered initiatives including the School Holiday Enrichment Programme which saw an investment of £4.85million provide places for nearly 8,000 children to enjoy activities, healthy food and nutrition education during the school summer holidays; and the Summer of Fun and Winter of Wellbeing, which provided free activities for children and young people aged 0-25 to support their physical, mental, social and emotional wellbeing, including increased physical activity.

I hope you find this response to your satisfaction and can appreciate the hard work that is going in to supporting young people to lead healthy, happy lives in Wales.

Yours sincerely

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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.

Follow up on Fifth Senedd Health, Social Care and Sport Committee recommendations: Physical activity of children and young people

No.	Recommendation	Welsh Government update response – September 2022
1.	The Welsh Government should work with Sport Wales, Public Health Wales and other partners to develop an agreed national measurement framework for physical activity levels and fitness as a matter of priority, to standardise and improve data collection.	This action has been delayed due to the pandemic response. However, to support a newly established National Physical Activity Group (NPAG), which reports to the Healthy Weight Healthy Wales National Implementation Board, Public Health Wales will be leading a review of the physical activity data landscape in Wales. The aim will be to consolidate all current physical activity data and evidence on one platform. This will ensure a standardised approach to how data is interpreted and reported for a variety of uses. Development work will commence in autumn 2022.
2.	The Welsh Government should extend the Child Measurement Programme to monitor childhood obesity beyond age 4-5. We believe the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health’s recommendation of a measurement after birth, before school and in adolescence should be implemented as a minimum.	A commitment is set out within the 2022-24 Healthy Weight: Healthy Wales delivery plan to review the Child Measurement Programme. A national surveillance group chaired by Public Health Wales has been established to consider future actions and a paper is being prepared for autumn 2022 where future recommendations by the group will be considered for further action. However, the immediate priority in the short term has been to re-establish the CMP, where data was disrupted due to the pandemic response.
3.	We recommend that the Welsh Government’s recognition of the need to focus on family orientated approaches is taken forward in the final strategy to prevent and reduce obesity and includes ambitious targets and effective monitoring to	Through the Healthy Weight: Healthy Wales Strategy and its Delivery Plans a number of initiatives are taking place that have a range of targets attached to them that are focused on family approaches. For example, we have established system teams across Wales who will focus on prevention, working with communities to identify and find local solutions. We are also investing in three Children and Family Pilots (CFP) which have been developed with local partners. These have been established to adopt a whole systems approach which considers the multi-factorial drivers of overweight and obesity working through transformative coordinated action across a broad range of disciplines and stakeholders. A core part of this approach is the implementation of a secondary prevention Home Based Intervention for

	ensure tangible outcomes.	<p>families of children in the early years from 3 – 7 years of age in line with the foundation phase. The pilot areas have been selected to consider different types of communities and settings in Wales where the prevalence of obesity and overweight is high</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Merthyr Tydfil, as a small valley’s local authority based around a town • Anglesey a small local authority with a more rural focus, Welsh speaking • Cardiff, a black or Asian minority ethnic community. <p>A revised All Wales Weight Management Pathway for children, young people and families was published in 2021. Local Health Boards are working with their local communities to establish a range of support and services, including specialised level 3 support. Whilst some Health Boards are further developed than their peers in this area, we are taking a coordinated approach and learning from good practices. For example, in Cardiff and Vale there are some examples of this in their programmes, Nutrition for Your Little One (NYLO) and Active Families, Active Lives (AFAL) which were launched in alignment with HWHW Strategy, to give children the best start in life. The pathway includes the development of defined data and monitoring arrangements.</p>
4.	The Welsh Government should require Sport Wales and Public Health Wales to work together to develop a programme which promotes the benefits of an active lifestyle, such as walking and cycling, for the whole family.	<p>Public Health Wales, Sport Wales and Natural Resources Wales previously established the Welsh Physical Activity Partnership which established key work programmes for collaborative working, this including delivery of the Healthy and Active Fund.</p> <p>A revised National Physical Activity Group (NPAG) has now been established through Healthy Weight: Healthy Wales with wider membership which aims to drive forward delivery and to consider how to enable and maximise opportunities and infrastructure across Wales. The group will have overview for delivery of all physical activity interventions referenced in the 2022 – 22 Healthy Weight: Healthy Wales Delivery Plan, which includes delivery of key areas such as the establishment of a Daily Active Schools Programme. This also includes linking with the Active Travel Board to consider opportunities for delivery across a number of areas which will support walking and cycling.</p>
5.	We recommend that the Welsh Government takes further action in the new curriculum to ensure that every child in Wales is enabled to develop the essential Fundamental Motor Skills required at an	<p>The Health and Well-being Area of Learning and Experience (Area) has been developed around progression in learning, with significant consideration given to physical development. The Curriculum guidance has been extensively informed by Physical Literacy experts in this area. It will provide the framework from which practitioners can select the most appropriate experiences to support a child’s learning, throughout the 3-16 continuum of learning.</p>

	<p>early age in school, and ensure that current gaps in the foundation phase related to these skills are fully addressed. We would support investment for programmes such as SKIP Cymru to be rolled out across the country to ensure that every school in Wales is able to adequately support children to learn these skills.</p>	
6.	Rejected	
7.	<p>The Welsh Government should ensure all secondary schools regularly consult pupils on the choice and range of physical activities available to them and ensure their views are taken into account.</p>	<p>The new curriculum will provide opportunities for parents and carers, learners, and the community to help develop and shape their school's curriculum. This includes consideration of the physical activities available to learners and to take their views into account.</p> <p>The School Sport Survey is an online, national survey, primarily interested in the attitudes, behaviours, and opportunities young people have with regards to sport. The survey not only helps Sport Wales and the sector understand who, where, and how young people take part in sport, but helps tell a compelling story of sport, and importantly for this iteration, gives insight into the impact of the pandemic. The Survey is one of the largest, per capita opportunities in the world for young people to have their say on sport. On March 28th 2022, the fifth iteration of the survey launched, inviting schools across Wales to take part. The survey recently closed on Friday 22nd July.</p> <p>Over 116,000 pupils and approximately 950 teachers took part in the 2022 School Sport Survey, providing detailed insight into the needs, demands and motivations of young people. The data is in the process of being analysed (July-August 2022). School level reports will soon be provided whilst LA level insight and national reports will be expected to be published in October. Teachers and schools who took part in the School Sport Survey will soon receive school level reports to ensure that their planning for sporting offers can be based on direct feedback from pupils.</p> <p>Sport Wales also want to ensure that young people in Wales have access to high quality sport and physical activity opportunities beyond the school day. To facilitate this, this year they have led and coordinated a 'pilot phase' of an Active Beyond the School Day initiative. This has been supported by a</p>

		<p>£300,000 Welsh Government investment and is specific to work outside of the curriculum.</p> <p>The development of the Daily Active Schools Programme will embed pupil and schools voice in the development of future approaches. Insight work has begun to consider initial views to help develop next steps, which is being led by Public Health Wales.</p>
8.	Rejected	
9.	<p>We recommend that the Welsh Government gives physical education a greater priority in the new curriculum and makes this priority clear to Estyn, and that physical activity should be given greater priority in Estyn's inspection regime for schools. We believe that the inspection framework should include adherence to the 120 minute a week requirement, but also the quality of the physical education experience.</p>	<p>The new Curriculum for Wales will be introduced from September 2022. At the heart of the Curriculum for Wales framework there are four purposes which are central to every decision made about the new curriculum. One of the four purposes is to support children and young people to become 'healthy confident individuals. Central to the new curriculum will be a Health and Well-being Area of Learning and Experience and aims to ensure that learning and support around issues such as physical, mental and emotional health are provided to all young people in Wales. For the first time, Health and Well-being will have equal status in law to other important areas of the school curriculum.</p> <p>The Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act contains a range of provisions aimed at ensuring that health and well-being will form part of the curriculum for every school and setting. Developing physical health and well-being is included as a key concept within the mandatory What Matters code, and it is specified in the following terms: Developing physical health and well-being has lifelong benefits.</p> <p>Learners will be encouraged to develop the confidence, motivation, physical competence, knowledge and understanding that can help them lead healthy and active lifestyles which promote good physical health and well-being.</p> <p>Considerable consideration has been given to children's physical development in the new curriculum.</p> <p>There is a range of support and guidance available for schools, including a National Network that has been established to bring together teaching professionals, experts, stakeholders, policy makers and enabling partners to identify and address the barriers to, and opportunities for, the implementation of Curriculum for Wales, including Health and well-being. The conversations will provide a key opportunity to discuss a national approach to resources, supporting materials and professional learning needs.</p>
10.	<p>The Welsh Government should ensure that greater emphasis is placed on physical activity in the Initial Teacher Education</p>	<p>The Welsh Government developed and published in March 2017 new criteria for the accreditation of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes. All programmes of ITE delivered in Wales since September 2019 have been required to be independently accredited against these criteria. As part of meeting the requirements of accreditation, these new programmes of ITE will ensure that new teachers</p>

	(ITE) programme and as part of all teachers continuing professional development.	<p>are able to teach the four purposes of the new curriculum and the six Areas of Learning and Experience, ensuring that a greater focus on teaching of physical activity.</p> <p>The ITE Partnerships will also develop approaches to assist aspiring teachers to understand the importance of research-informed practice, so that teachers are taught the importance of keeping up-to-date with research, including research on learners' physical health and well-being, to inform their teaching practice on an ongoing basis throughout their working lives. We are currently undertaking a refresh of the criteria for the next round of accreditation for programmes commencing in September 2024. The mental and physical health and well-being of both school staff and learners is one of the areas that will be strengthened during the refreshed process.</p>
11.	<p>The Welsh Government must make Community Focused Schools a reality for everyone, and ensure consistency of access to school facilities for physical activity opportunities beyond school hours across Wales. The Welsh Government should report back to this Committee on progress within twelve months of the publication of this report.</p>	<p>Research and inspection evidence is clear that schools which build upon effective learning and teaching and operate as Community Focused Schools, are those which have the greatest success in overcoming the impact of poverty on educational attainment. As such, we need to ensure that our schools operate as Community Focused Schools, reaching out to parents and carers and engaging with the whole community.</p> <p>Over the coming months we will invest £3.84m in increasing the number of Family Engagement Officers employed by schools with part of their role to be focused on improving pupil attendance. We will also provide £660k funding to trial the appointment of Community Focused Schools Managers and £20m capital investment to allow schools to develop further as community assets.</p> <p>There will be three key aspects to community focused schooling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Engagement - whereby schools communicate well with families and involve parents in supporting their children's learning. • Community Engagement - where the facilities of the school are used as the basis for family, adult and community learning and a range of community activities. • Multi-Agency working – where public services are joined up in the support of children and young people from low-income households. This might involve healthcare, mental health support and third sector agencies. By creating better partnership working across different areas we are more like to provide better support for children and their families who are experiencing difficulties.
12.	<p>The Welsh Government should share good practice, where schools are providing wider</p>	<p>As part of our work to promote Community Focused Schools we will continue to highlight examples of good practice through our communications activities and any guidance produced.</p>

	access to their facilities, including solutions for overcoming difficulties relating to governance, staffing and transport arrangements.	
13.	We recommend that the Welsh Government works with Estyn to ensure it includes, as part of its inspection regime, an assessment of the choice of activities available in schools, equality of access for girls and boys and whether pupils are being consulted on the activities being provided.	<p>Estyn introduced revised inspection guidance for schools and PRUs in Spring 2022. Opportunities for inspectors to consider pupil's physical development and opportunities for physical activities are noted in four of the five inspection areas. Estyn's inspection reports of individual schools very rarely include details relating to differences in the provision for, or experiences of, pupils based on their sex or gender. Due to the broad scope of what Estyn inspects, Estyn reports by exception where the provision is particularly strong or where there is significant cause for concern.</p> <p>Through Estyn's thematic work they are able to consider specific issues in depth and are keen to review the implementation of Curriculum for Wales through a series of thematic reports looking at the areas of learning and experience. This could include a thematic review relating to the health and well-being area of learning and experience. Working with Estyn, Welsh Government officials will develop this as an option when considering priority areas for Estyn's 2023-24 annual remit.</p>
14.	The Welsh Government should work with Sport Wales to raise the profile of women's sport. This could include a programme of "female sporting role models" visiting schools to talk about their experiences and encourage more girls to participate in sporting activities.	<p>Sport Wales have been working in partnership with the International Working Group on Women in Sport which is being hosted in the UK from 2022 - more information about the IWG can be found at: https://iwgwomenandsport.org/. This collaboration is the world's largest network dedicated to advancing gender equity and equality in sport, physical education, and physical activity. The partnership will promote the profile of women in sport and build learning and capacity for the sport sector in Wales.</p> <p>Sport Wales also works in partnership with several National Organisations who help deliver and promote sport for a range of communities – including specifically working with women and girls. One example is Street Games Wales 'Us Girls Programme.' which was launched in Wales in 2015.</p> <p>The Young Ambassadors programme, funded by Sport Wales and the Youth Sport Trust, supports more than 4000 Young Ambassadors in schools, colleges and universities across Wales who create and deliver opportunities for their peers and even adults to be physically active through sport. In turn, the programme is providing young people with confidence and skills to be the sporting leaders of the future. More information about the programme can be found here.</p> <p>In 2021 the Welsh Government provided the Urdd with funding under the Winter of Wellbeing to support</p>

		<p>a national netball competition and the #FelMerch Conference. The national netball competition saw over 2,000 girls from 120 teams competing in a one day event, promoting the benefits of participation, exercise and healthy and active lifestyles. The #FelMerch Conference was a two day residential experience for women and young girls, building on the momentum of the wider #FelMerch programme. #FelMerch aims to inspire, support and empower girls and young women between the ages of 14 and 25 to become active through sport within a safe and welcoming environment.</p>
15.	<p>The Welsh Government and Sport Wales should stipulate in funding applications for physical activity programmes that investment will only be made in programmes which emphasise a genuinely inclusive approach to the provision of physical activity and include equality impact assessments which ensure that considerations for disabled children and young people are incorporated from the outset.</p>	<p>The new Sport Wales funding approach has been implemented. This specifically utilises data that ensures investment is driven by inclusivity. The approach has embedded equality within the distribution of investment to ensure that all recipients of Sport Wales partnership funding must be able to impact on equality objectives.</p> <p>Further to this, Sport Wales has been working with the Centre for Digital Public Services to broaden its approach to community funding. This has taken a user research approach, speaking directly to hundreds of individuals and organisations to remove barriers to accessing funding, particularly for the most underrepresented groups. The implementation of a Crowdfunder approach has also built-in inclusivity by prioritising investment by areas of deprivation.</p> <p>There is currently an open capital funding investment approach, with the organisation developing a strategic approach to this funding element as part of the £8m capital investment provided by the Welsh Government. Priority will be given to deprivation and equality agendas in how this future funding will be distributed.</p>
16.	<p>The Welsh Government should explore how the Pupil Development Grant could be utilised to help address the deprivation gap in physical activity levels.</p>	<p>Year on year, we have extended the Pupil Development Grant (PDG). It now supports even more of our most vulnerable learners. As well as the free school meals element, the PDG suite now includes looked-after children, those in the early years, those in pupil referral units, and those in education other than at school provision. The newest element – PDG-Access – has been introduced to support parents with some of the costs of the school day, including sporting activities.</p> <p>The PDG funding is given directly to schools and is it up to them on best use of spend as they know their locality best. The Pupil Development Grant is being used in some schools to promote sporting activities. Many operate after-school clubs and some provide transport to the local swimming pool. In previous years at Ysgol y Foryd Infants School, Rhyl, the learners have benefitted from the support of the grant being used for physical activities. The school was a pilot for the new curriculum delivery of the Physical Literacy programme. The programme included Bike-ability skills and outdoor education,</p>

		incorporating a residential visit for Year 2. The extension of Physical Literacy work in this way has seen a positive impact on pupils' health and lifestyles and has increased their engagement in learning generally which has impacted positively on standards.
17.	The Welsh Government should review Sport Wales' efforts to reduce the deprivation gap in physical activity levels given the lack of progress.	<p>Sport Wales are currently leading an innovative approach to establish five Sport Partnerships within Wales. Sport Partnerships will transform the way community sport is developed, delivered, led, and funded - responding to the needs of each community within the five regions.</p> <p>A Sport Partnership brings together a collaboration of key stakeholders within a defined region, who understand the importance and have a focus on delivering the benefits of sport and physical activity. Led by insight, they will provide strategic leadership and planning at a regional level, with a common purpose that at a local level, everyone can be involved in sport and physical activity through a range of opportunities that best meet their needs.</p> <p>Through Sport Partnerships, we are planning for future generations by taking steps to prevent inequalities in participation in sport and physical activity across Wales. Tasked with bringing about system change they will be the catalyst to tackling two long standing issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring there is the right support and opportunities in place for those who are not regularly physically active, with a clear focus on removing barriers for those who need the most help. • Taking steps to meet the high latent demand from those who are active but want to do much more.
18.	We recommend that the Welsh Government makes arrangements to put in place longer-term funding arrangements to enable Sport Wales and its partners to plan more strategically.	<p>In March 2022, the Welsh Government provided Sport Wales with a term of government remit, supported by a three year budget for 2022-23 to 2024-25. The budget includes a capital allocation of £8m per annum to invest in sports facilities.</p> <p>The new investment approach will provide indicative funding offers over a multi-year period for all National Governing Bodies and Regional Sport Partnerships. The National Partner funding approach is also in development with the aim to provide multi-year offers. The funding commitments will naturally be contingent on the funding delivered by the Welsh Government to Sport Wales.</p>
19.	We recommend that the Welsh Government review the use of Section 106 agreements to	Collection of data for the Sustainable Development Indicators was paused during the pandemic. We will look to resume data collection to see how local authorities are delivering open and green spaces through the planning system, in line with national policies in Planning Policy Wales.

	<p>see if they are being utilised by local authorities to ensure the provision of safe and accessible green spaces in new housing developments.</p>	
20.	<p>We urge the Welsh Government to reconsider its position on the use of consequential funding from the soft drinks industry levy and commit to utilising it to increase physical activity and reduce the burden of obesity in Wales, as has been done in other parts of the UK.</p>	<p>As with all consequential funding, the sum is added to the overall Welsh Government budget and allocated in line with our priorities. Promoting good health and well-being for everyone is one of our key priorities which is why we continue to support people to adopt healthy lifestyles, breaking down the barriers that ill-health place on employment and opportunity, and tackling the generational cycle of poor health and inactivity.</p> <p>We have invested over £13m in 2022-24 to help deliver the aims of the Healthy Weight: Healthy Wales strategy. The two-year delivery plan which is supported by this funding has a focus on prevention and early years to support a number of areas across government to enable change.</p>