



Dr Chris Llewelyn

Prif Weithredwr / Chief Executive

**Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru
Welsh Local Government Association**

Un Rhodfa'r Gamlas

Heol Dumballs

Caerdydd

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Ein Cyf / Our Ref: Petitions P-06-1327

Dyddiad / Date: 28 July 2023

Gofynnwch am / Please ask for: Sharon Davies

Llinell uniongyrchol / Direct line: 07917275203

Ebost / Email: Sharon.Davies@wlga.gov.uk

Dear Mr Sargeant,

Petition P-06-1327 Leisure Centre amenities free for children

Thank you for your letter of the 13th of June seeking the best estimate of the cost of providing free leisure centre services for young people, whilst considering the above petition.

The WLGA are supportive of the intention, however, it is a particularly tricky question to answer, but would offer the following observations:

- Providing activities free of charge will increase the number of people accessing leisure services. Any funding to cover use by children and young people would need to track the growth in their participation to ensure that costs are covered. Although numbers are increasing, many providers are still operating with levels of participation below where they were prior to the Covid pandemic.
- The true cost of providing leisure activities is higher than the price point of access, which are subsidised. To ensure such an offer was sustainable, then the principle of full cost recovery should be applied.
- Greater use of leisure assets will impact on their requirement for repairs, maintenance, and replacement. These impacts have a cost and should be factored into any funding equation.
- Any approved funding for this type of offer would need to be linked to annual budget pressures. It could not be a flat line such as the Free-Swimming Programme or the National Exercise Referral Scheme (NERS). This is

especially relevant with current pressure on leisure budgets where income is one of the key processes in dealing with financial pressure.

- Focusing on cost will not address all the barriers that determine whether a young person is physically active, consideration should also be given to:
 - a. Access to opportunities**
 - b. Facility provision particularly in a rural council**
 - c. Availability of transport**
 - d. Confidence to participate in activities.**

- To provide a “ballpark figure” it would be necessary to introduce some parameters so that there is an element of consistency to the information provided.

- We would like to offer the following parameters for consideration:
 - e. Clarification of what constitutes a “Leisure Centre,” does it include stand-alone Swimming Pools? What about the use of grass pitches and artificial turf pitches?**

 - f. Does the scope include leisure facilities outside the operation of local authorities e.g., Community operated facilities?**

 - g. Age range of the Young People being considered: is it 0-18 or 0-16 or 7-16 etc.?**

 - h. Grouping of Activities / Usage**
 - i. Activities Directly Delivered by the provider:**
 1. Learn to Swim
 2. Other Aquatic Activity
 3. Junior Activities (Pay & Play)
 4. School Holiday Programmes
 5. Junior Membership Packages
 6. Talented athlete support.

 - ii. Activities delivered by Community Groups / Facility Users**
 1. Facility Hire Charges.

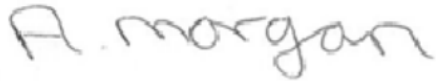
 - iii. Is school use of facilities included?**
 1. To support curricular activities.
 2. To support extra-curricular activities.

We welcome the Petitions Committee interest in this area and would welcome the

opportunity to provide the appropriate information once the above observations have been considered.

I hope this is helpful to the Committee's deliberations.

Your sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. Morgan". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Cllr Andrew Morgan OBE
WLGA Leader