

Sport Wales National Centre

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Annwyl Cadeirydd,

Thank you for your letter dated 13 December and for the recent opportunity to provide evidence to the Committee. Your request for additional information is welcome, and I have added the relevant answers in this letter to your queries around 'sports facilities behind school gates', 'integrity units' and 'issues relating to the Welsh Government Draft Budget'. I hope you find the answers useful and insightful.

Sports Facilities

With regards to information requested about the percentage of sports facilities that are located behind school gates, we don't currently hold definitive data on this in Wales. Whilst it is well known that a lack of access to school facilities for community use has been a barrier to increased participation, the extent of the challenge remains unquantified. We are currently working with the Welsh Government in relation to the publication of a facilities map on [DataMapWales.](#)

In summary, we are mapping artificial pitches across Wales of all types and all sizes. As part of this work, we will be able to identify the location of each pitch and as such, would be able to highlight those facilities open to the community (or not, as the case may be) on school or education sites. This is expected to be made public in the New Year and will help identify local community facilities, including those located within school sites.

Welsh Government Draft Budget 2024/25:

With the news of the Welsh Government's Draft Budget 2024-2025, we are looking at a difficult landscape as we move into 2024. A 10.5% reduction in our budget will likely see an enormous impact, including potential redundancies within the sector, significant programmes being delayed or cancelled altogether and tough decisions having to be made for many organisations, leading to a disproportionate impact on the nation's most underserved groups.

As the committee's own [Levelling the Playing Field](#) report noted, 'Sport can be the nation's most effective preventative health tool.'

The proposed cuts to Sport Wales's budget will also seriously impact upon our ability to ambitiously deliver on the wider elements of the Well-Being of Future Generations legislation. We know from experience that the wider public sector recognises that sport has an ability to touch the lives of individuals in Wales like few other sectors. We are fully committed to sport being harnessed to deliver the Government's ambitious public health, equality, child poverty and social justice programmes, as we are a proven deliverer against these vital agendas. We would want to see investment in sport sustained that enables our sector to continue to deliver on these outcomes. We firmly believe that Sport Wales can be a champion for modernisation and delivery of the Well-being of Future Generations Act for the wider Welsh public service.

Whilst we are currently working on how we can absorb as much of these cuts as possible, there will invariably be costs that will be passed on to partners. We have instigated early discussions with our partner network to identify the scale of the challenge to each of them, as well as what support Sport Wales can make available to help in any transition. As an organisation we are also reviewing our own capacity and programmes in light of the funding situation.

Whilst the funding cut of 10.5% in the forthcoming financial year will be incredibly challenging for Sport Wales and the sport sector, the bigger concern would be a compounding effect of a similar cut in future years. Sport Wales will absorb as much of this funding cut as possible in order to protect our partners in their ability to retain staff and programmes.

If this trend continues and future financial years see sizable funding cuts, there will be little scope for Sport Wales to protect our partners and this will inevitably have critical consequences for the sport sector in Wales, as well as the communities and individuals that they support.

The financial situation also means that programmes with a significant preventative health impact which have been planned or are underway for targeted groups may not be able to start or continue, and we fear for the long-term impact that may have on the health and wellbeing of people in Wales. As outlined in our previous letter to you, the recently published Social Return on Investment Study highlighted that the health sector in Wales benefits to the tune of £621m as a result of sport's impact on ill-health prevention. It is hugely concerning that any future reductions in sport funding, and the associated impacts on participation, will reduce this figure, adding a greater long-term pressure on health services in Wales, at a time where it is more important than ever that we move to a truly preventative approach to the nations well-being.

Our recent SROI study shows that for every pound spent on sport in Wales there is a massive £4.44 return to people's health, wellbeing and the economy.

We are grateful that our budget has not been cut to the extent other bodies have faced, and we recognise the Welsh Government's incredibly difficult choices in this period. However, we are firm believers that sport and the work of Sport Wales contributes far beyond the culture and economy brief, and we will continue to push for the need for sport to be considered in all policy briefs and for other portfolios to maximise the impacts of sport and physical activity.'

With regards to the Welsh Government's Draft Budget 2024-25 consultation, we responded to the finance committee's initial consultation into the draft budget, where our response can be found here:

[Sport Wales response](#)

We discussed some of the points during the scrutiny session but the key points that emerged for us were:

- We believe sport should be maximised across Government portfolio areas, and the unique benefit sport can play in delivering for Wales is understood and recognised in the budget.
- We wish to see health prevention budgets consider sport and physical activity as a method for delivering their outcomes and pool budgets where others are better placed to deliver activity.
- We believe there is a need for a continuous long-term view on budgeting with a bigger focus on prevention.

Integrity units:

During the session we also touched on integrity units, and I have added some additional information on these here in answer to your request.

Below I have shared links to all three of the integrity units mentioned during the scrutiny session. These have all been set up within the context of these individual nations so accordingly have a different focus.

Canada: <https://sportintegritycommissioner.ca/>

Australia: <https://www.sportintegrity.gov.au/>

New Zealand: <https://sportnz.org.nz/integrity/>

On a UK level the landscape is slightly different with all five sports councils across the UK exploring mechanisms by which we can be both more effective and efficient in this space. We believe there are sufficient synergies across the UK sporting landscape to warrant a joined-up approach while ensuring Wales's particular interests are well served.

I hope you find all of this information useful and as always, I am more than happy to answer any additional questions you might have. Again, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to talk to the committee in November and I look forward to working closely with you and the other committee members during 2024 and beyond.

Diolch



Brian Davies

Chief Executive / Prif Weithredwr

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