

ROE 19

Ymateb gan: Chwaraeon Cymru

Response from: Sport Wales

Introduction

Sport Wales is the national organisation responsible for developing and promoting sport and physical activity in Wales at both community and elite levels.

We are financed by annual funding from the Welsh Government and from income generated from our own activities. We are the main adviser on sporting matters to the Welsh Government and are responsible for distributing Government and National Lottery funding to sport in Wales. Sport Wales is one of the smallest public bodies in Wales and our budget is comprised of running costs, grant funding for National Governing Bodies, national partners and local authorities to deliver sport, but also community sport – investing and growing local opportunities for clubs and societies to serve the needs of their local communities.

We are one of the 44 public bodies in Wales which are subject to the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act; we meet our duties under the Welsh Language Standards and care deeply about our place in Welsh society and culture. We work closely with the Older People's and Children's Commissioners and filter all our work through the lens of equality, diversity and inclusion.

We strive to be the best we can be and give the best we can offer to all people along the sporting pathway; from children starting out, to medal-winning athletes, to a diverse career path in the sporting sector, to older people staying fit, healthy and independent.

General Principles of the Residential Outdoor Education (Wales) Bill

Sport Wales supports the general principles of the Residential Outdoor Education (Wales) Bill. As an organisation, we believe that there are significant benefits to children and young people being exposed to outdoor educational experiences and we have followed the development of this bill with interest.

Several of the Bill's policy objectives align with Sport Wales' stance. For example, our strategic intent of 'giving every young person a great start' and that every young person has the skills, confidence and motivation to enable them to enjoy and progress through sport; giving them foundations to lead an active, healthy and enriched life is captured within the principles of this bill.

Later in the response, we will go into more detail around our own work in the education environment, including the Daily Active Offer programme, a collaborative work in progress between Sport Wales and Public Health Wales which we believe that this Bill compliments.

Some of Sport Wales' own policy aspirations around children and education include:

- Educational environments will help children and their families to understand the importance of and foster a love of sport and physical activity.
- School facilities in Wales are used to their full potential to deliver sport and physical activity to their communities to support the aims of giving every young person a great start.
- All children can access safe, nurturing sporting opportunities and don't experience barriers such as transport, access to kit, inability to participate through lack of skills (such as swimming or cycling proficiency).
- Sport is used to its full potential to help alleviate the ills of child poverty which mostly stem from a lack of opportunity and supports the aspiration that future generations will be healthier and more resilient.
- All children can access the sport or physical activity they want to do, and are listened to in schools and extracurricular settings about the types of activities they want to do.

We believe that the general principles of this Bill would align and support the delivery of a number of these policy aspirations. We therefore are supportive of the principles of the Bill.

As noted in our initial response to this Bill (17/03/23), *The Outdoor Education Adviser's Panel (OEAP)* establish 10 clear positive outcomes of outdoor education.

- **Enjoyment:** Young people enjoy participating in outdoor activities and adopt a positive attitude to challenge, learning and adventure.
- **Confidence and character:** Young people are developing personal confidence and character through taking on challenges and achieving success.
- **Health and Well-being:** Young people are learning to appreciate the benefits of physical fitness and the lifelong value of participation in healthy active leisure activities.
- **Social and emotional awareness:** Young people are developing their self-awareness and social skills, and their appreciation of the contributions and achievements of themselves and of others.
- **Environmental awareness:** Young people are becoming alive to the natural environment and understand the importance of conservation and sustainable development.
- **Activity skills:** Young people are acquiring and developing a range of psychomotor skills in support of their participation in outdoor pursuits, recreation and exploration.
- **Personal qualities:** Young people are demonstrating increased initiative, self-reliance, responsibility, perseverance, tenacity and commitment.

- **Skills for life:** Young people are developing and extending their key skills of communication, problem-solving, leadership and teamwork.
- **Increased motivation and appetite for learning:** Young people are displaying an increased motivation and appetite for learning that is contributing to raised levels of attainment and progress in other aspects of their development.
- **Broadened horizons:** Young people are broadening their horizons and becoming open to a wider range of employment opportunities and life chances, life choices and lifestyles.

We believe the Bill covers the majority of these areas and has also given an opportunity for interesting debates and insight into areas that might not have been brought to light.

One of the key benefits of outdoor play is the range of sensory experiences that children encounter. Children are exposed to nature and can connect with the environment in a more meaningful way. They also develop a wide range of physical skills including balance, coordination and dexterity, all in a natural environment.

Through these outdoor experiences, children can develop a range of new skills including resilience, teamwork, problem solving, communication and much more.

We know the value of being outside and participating in sport and physical activity, with data from the latest School Sport Survey (2022) highlighting 93% of young people have a demand to do more sport and 51% of pupils believe that PE lessons and sport help them 'a lot' to achieve a healthy lifestyle.

Full results from the most recent School Sport Survey can be found here:
<https://www.sport.wales/school-sport-survey/>

T.O.R: Whether there are any unintended consequences arising from the Bill and

T.O.R. The financial implications of the Bill (as set out in Part 2 of the Explanatory Memorandum);

The development of this Bill is happening during a period of financial pressures for multiple sectors across the country. The Welsh Government's Draft Budget 24/25 has highlighted the complex decisions having to be made up and down the country – with many within the sports sector. So, whilst we agree with the principles of the Bill we would question whether the timing is suitable.

With the news of the Welsh Government's Draft Budget 2024-2025, Sport Wales are looking at a difficult landscape as we move into 2024. A 10.5% reduction in our budget will 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. Given that the most recent findings from the National Survey for Wales (NSW) shows that there is still an 11 percentage point gap between the most and least deprived areas of the country with regards to participation, we know that many people may be further impacted by resources being scant.

We know from experience that the wider public sector recognises that sport and physical activity has an ability to touch the lives of individuals in Wales like few other sectors and we are fully committed to sport and physical activity 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.

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.

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., the recently published Social Return on Investment Study [SROI study](#) highlighted that the health sector in Wales benefits to the tune of £621m as a result of sports' 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 SROI study also 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.

It is clear that financial implications and the current climate would need to be considered when progressing with this Bill and that budget is in place and available in order for the Bill to be effectively put into practice.

A wider discussion is also needed around the models of delivery for this proposal and the financial impact in turn that these could have.

For example:

- Are there enough outdoor education centres across Wales to cater for all the schools to attend across the school year?
- Is there an adequately trained workforce in place, and if not how would training be funded?
- How are transport costs sustained? (Recent figures suggest £15pp for a 10-mile round trip).
- Are there additional resources for kit/clothing in order for children to participate in outdoor experiences?
- What are the exit pathways so young people and teachers can build on what they have learnt?

There is a worry that this Bill could also be seen as the 'physical' box ticked for the year group and not an opportunity for enrichment. Outdoor learning and consequential physical activity need to be an integrated part of their day with this opportunity seen as an enrichment to develop and build on important life skills needed in an inclusive environment.

One of Sport Wales' clear priorities in ensuring that our strategic intent '[To give every young person a great start](#)' is delivered on, is that The Daily Active Offer (DAO) is realised fully, after piloting and evaluation, in all schools across Wales. In the children's commissioner's annual report one of the key recommendations was that '[The Daily Active offer should progress without further delay](#)'.

Daily Active is a cross policy, multi-agency initiative to promote a whole school approach to physical activity which will shape a revised and refreshed approach for schools. Daily Active is not a specific programme but an approach which encapsulates all the opportunities where physical activity can be delivered across the school day, providing a package of support to allow them to develop a bespoke plan for their school based on insights and pupil feedback.

Our upcoming work on the Daily Active Offer (DAO) in schools is an example of how inclusive education environments can be created and we believe this Bill would sit neatly into the aspirations of this programme. This is a critical component in delivering opportunities for children which can alleviate the impacts of deprivation. This is not simply a sporting objective, but a way of enhancing the physical and mental wellbeing of pupils, increasing communication skills, confidence and social cohesion within a school and community setting, which again aligns with the aim of this Bill.

Similarly, to the messaging in this Bill, we believe that schools are the only setting that can potentially impact on every child regardless of income and thus gives young people opportunities that they might not otherwise be able to participate in.

We hope to see the roll-out of the DAO in 2024, subject to funding for a coordinator, and are confident that it will make an impact on ensuring that all children can be active throughout the school day, in line with curriculum aspirations.

The DAO will help to deliver on the Welsh Government's aspiration that sport can be the most effective preventative health tool in the country.

Prior to the establishment of the Daily Active Offer, Sport Wales established the 'Active Education Beyond the School Day' (AEBSD) programme.

The Welsh Institute of Physical Activity Health and Sport (WIPAHS) were commissioned by Sport Wales to support the evaluation of the programme and draw insight from the data collected in order to provide recommendations for future implementation. This report covers the data collected by Sport Wales from January 2022 and analysed by WIPAHS until August 2022.

The full Evaluation of Active beyond the school day - [Evaluation Of The 'Active Education Beyond The School Day' Programme | Sport Wales](#)

Summary

In summary, Sport Wales agrees with the principles of this Bill and values the insight, debate and conversations that it has generated. There is further debate needed around the financial implications of the bill, with the current climate posing difficult

questions to the Government as to where money is and should be allocated in the future.

We believe strongly that every young person should have the opportunity to be given great start in life. All children should be able access safe, nurturing sporting and extra-curricular opportunities and shouldn't experience barriers such as transport, access to kit or the inability to participate through lack of skills. We wish to progress our work with the Daily Active Offer in schools and believe that the outcome of this bill strongly aligns to that work.

We look forward to seeing how this Bill develops in the future and would appreciate being a part of future conversations.