

**Y Pwyllgor Iechyd a
Gofal Cymdeithasol**

—
**Health and Social Care
Committee**

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Chris Llewelyn
Chief Executive
Welsh Local Government Association

21 March 2025

Dear Chris

The Health and Social Care Committee has been undertaking an inquiry into the prevention of ill health – obesity.

We were hoping to hear from local authority representatives on a range of issues, including school meals, planning, active travel and leisure and recreation. Unfortunately, it has only been possible to arrange witnesses to talk about school meals, largely thanks to the efforts of Kaarina Ruta. This is disappointing, given the important role of local authorities in these areas, but rather than delay the completion of our evidence gathering any further, the Committee has agreed to seek written evidence on the outstanding issues instead. I would be grateful if you could facilitate a response to the issues set out in the attached annex by **Friday 18 April**.

Yours sincerely



Russell George MS
Chair, Health and Social Care Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg. We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

Annex 1

We would welcome your response to the questions set out below in relation to prevention of ill health – obesity by **Friday 18 April 2025**

Welsh Government strategy and consideration of obesity

1. What involvement have local authorities had in the Welsh Government's Healthy Weight: Healthy Wales strategy and associated delivery plans and should this involvement be increased?
2. What role could local authorities play in lowering obesity rates?
3. How is reducing obesity taken into account in local authority plans and policies and could this be strengthened?
4. Has there been any joint working between local authorities and health boards in relation to reducing the levels of obesity in Wales?

Opportunities for physical activity outdoors

5. What action is being taken to increase the opportunity for safe, active travel and what are the challenges in encouraging the public to take up these opportunities?
6. How are planning policies ensuring that all communities have equal access to open spaces to encourage regular participation in physical activity and outdoor activities?
7. What action is being taken to provide safe environments where children can play in the natural environment?
8. How do local authorities ensure that play areas and open spaces are accessible for everyone and how are these areas advertised to the public to make them aware of what's available?

Leisure and recreation facilities

9. What are the challenges for local authorities in maintaining and expanding leisure and recreation facilities, such as leisure centres, in communities, and what is being done to overcome these challenges?
10. In areas where leisure facilities have closed, to what extent is the health of the population taken into account in the decision-making process?
11. What measures are put in place to ensure equitable access to leisure and recreation facilities for all communities?
12. How are healthy options for food and drink provided and promoted in local authority owned leisure and recreation facilities?

Local food environment and local planning policies

13. What powers do local authorities currently have to control the number and location of fast food outlets in a particular area and to encourage the availability of healthier options?
14. What action can be taken when there is a saturation of fast food outlets and would further powers for local authorities be beneficial?
15. Is health and wellbeing taken into account as part of the planning application for new fast food establishments? Should this be strengthened?
16. What is the current planning policy in relation to fast food outlets in close proximity to schools and colleges and avoiding an excess supply of such outlets?
17. What action is taken to ensure there is not a disproportionate number of fast food outlets in deprived areas and to encourage equitable access to affordable, healthy food?
18. It has been highlighted to the Committee that local authorities from across the UK, including Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan, are progressing the development of healthier advertising policies on assets that local authorities own and control (such as bus stops and billboards). Are there plans for other local authorities to take a similar approach and would there be any barriers to implementation?