

Close the gender gap in Welsh women's football: fund a national equality plan

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 24 Tachwedd 2025
Petitions Committee | 24 November 2025

Reference: SR25/12417/2

Introduction

Petition Number: Petition P-06-1561

Petition title: Close the gender gap in Welsh women's football: fund a national equality plan

Text of petition: Despite progress in recent years, Welsh women's football still lacks equal development pathways, funding, and visibility. Girls face barriers to progressing beyond the grassroots level, especially after U19. We need a national plan that ensures parity across youth and elite levels by 2030. Wales cannot afford to lose more talent to inequality.

More details

We call on the Welsh Government to provide the funding to enable the FAW and Sport Wales to deliver a 5-point plan:

- Create Women's U21 and U23 national teams
- Expand access through regional talent ID and outreach
- Guarantee equal media promotion



- Introduce a national player support scheme
- Publish a measurable 5-year national equality plan

This is about opportunity, fairness, and Wales leading the way in women's sport.

1. Background

As the Welsh Government's response to this petition explains:

National Governing Bodies of sports, including the Football Association of Wales (FAW), are independent organisations, and as such are responsible for their own governance, policies and procedures. It would therefore be for the FAW to decide on the appropriate player pathways for women's football at all levels, from the grassroots to the elite, and what age-grade teams should be established to support player development.

The Welsh Government funds Sport Wales (the national organisation responsible for developing and promoting sport and physical activity), which in turn provides funding for national governing bodies, such as the FAW.

The Welsh Government does, however, occasionally fund sport policies directly, or attempt to influence sports governing bodies. For example, in May 2025 the Minister for Culture, Skills and Social Partnership announced mental health support for football clubs. Previous Minister Dawn Bowden MS wrote to the Welsh Rugby Union expressing "concern" about its ban on transgender women competing in female only games.

2. Welsh Government action

2.1. Funding of Sport Wales

In comparison with the 2026-2027 revised baseline, revenue funding for Sport Wales increases from £23.19 million to £23.24 million in the 2026-27 draft budget (an increase of 0.2%). This compares to an average uplift of 2.2% to revenue budgets.

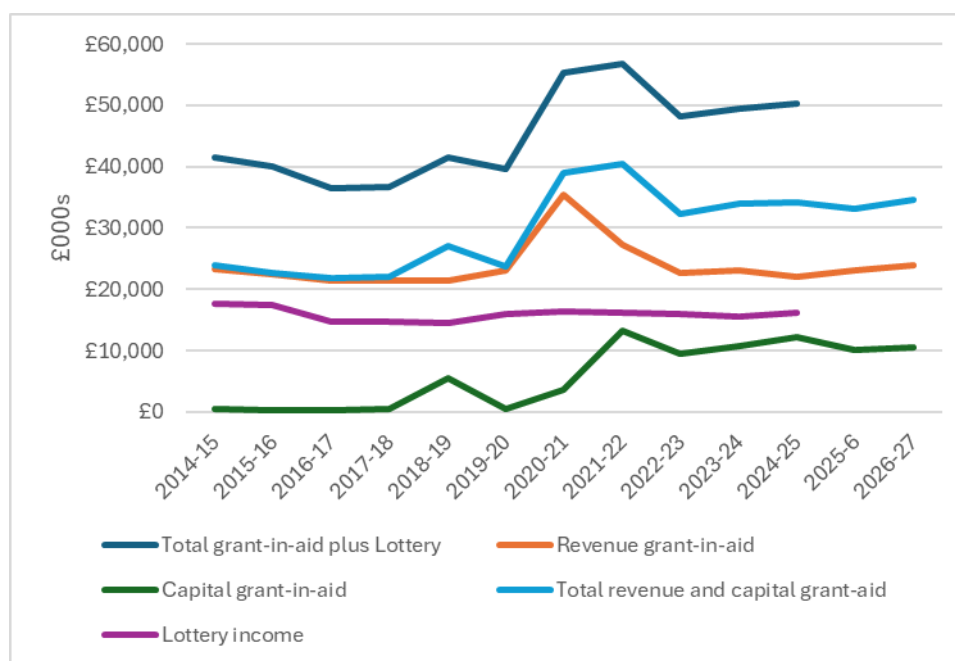
Over the same period, capital funding decreases from £10 million to £9.5 million in the 2026-27 draft budget (a decrease of 5%). This decrease is a result of £1m costs

of a capital loans scheme – the Sport Wales capital budget increases by £0.5 million.

In an October 2025 meeting with the Culture Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee, Sport Wales noted the low level of funding for Sport Wales compared with other sports councils:

The top-line figure to put us in a comparable state to the other home country sports councils would be about £20 million a year. To put us in line with the average for European countries, it would be £200 million.

Sport Wales funding 2014-15 to present



NB. All figures provided by Sport Wales, except 2026-27 which are taken from the 2026-27 Draft Budget.

2.2. International comparison

Senedd Research has analysed total government spending on culture and sport in Wales and other European nations (the previous year's data was included in the Committee's 2025 A decade of cuts: impact of funding reductions on culture and sport report).



The average spend on recreational and sporting services in these countries is £180.24 per person. In Wales the figure is £61.84 per person, or 34% of the average of these countries. This placed Wales second from bottom of the group of 25 nations.

3. Welsh Parliament action

In January 2025 the Senedd’s Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee published the report [A decade of cuts: impact of funding reductions on culture and sport.](#)

The Committee recommended:

The Welsh Government should increase funding for culture and sport until they are comparable (in terms of spending per head) with those of similar nations.

The Welsh Government accepted this recommendation in principle, saying:

Whilst we have an ambition to enhance budgets for these sectors in future years, this will be dependent on many other factors. Some of these factors are outside our control, including the UK Government's Spending Review to be concluded later this year.

The Scottish Government has taken a different approach, outlining a path in 2024 to investing "at least £100 million more annually" in culture by 2028-29.

The Committee will discuss the 2026-27 Draft Budget with the Minister for Culture, Skills and Social Partnership (whose portfolio includes sport) on 19 November 2025.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.