

**Written Response by the Welsh Government to the report of the Children, Young People and Education Committee entitled National Assembly for Wales Children, Young People and Education Committee Inquiry into Childhood Obesity March 2014.**

**9 May 2014.**

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The Welsh Government welcomes the report produced by the Children, Young People and Education Committee following its inquiry into Childhood Obesity in Wales. The Committee's findings, together with its set of recommendations and conclusions are generally in line with the Welsh Government's approach and will be helpful giving further focus and direction in tackling this challenging area in the future. The Welsh Government has already made some significant steps since the inquiry took place, detail of which is set out in the recommendation responses below.

**Detailed responses to the reports recommendations are set out below:**

<p><b>Recommendation One</b></p> <p>The Committee recommends that Welsh Government should conduct a review of the progress of Health Boards in meeting the minimum service requirements of each level of the All Wales Obesity Pathway. Welsh Government should publish the results of that review in a timely fashion, including a timetabled action plan to address any gaps that are identified.</p>
<p><b>Response: Accept</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This year we have changed the assessment process and undertaken a more formal assessment of the pathway. In January 2014, officials wrote to the seven Health Boards requesting evidence against the minimum service requirements for each level of the pathway.</li><li>• This evidence has been analysed using a red / amber / green rating and we wrote to each Health Board to; ensure that they were content with the assessment that has been made; include in their response additional metrics; and detail what actions they will be undertaking to areas assessed in need of further development. Health Boards have now responded and we will publish the results at the end of May 2014.</li></ul> <p><i>(Minister for Health and Social Services).</i></p>
<p><b>Financial Implication</b></p> <p>None. There are no direct financial implications associated with the publication of the review.</p>

**Recommendation Two**

Welsh Government should ensure that level three services for children are put in place across Wales. The Minister should report back to the Committee on progress in a timely fashion.

**Response: Accept**

- Public Health Wales, working with key dietetic stakeholders, have developed a draft National Obesity Level Three Service Specification and Clinical Access Policy for adults. These documents have been developed in collaboration and based on consensus, and will be published by the end of June 2014.
- Building on this work, we will ask Public Health Wales to develop a draft National Obesity Level Three Service Specification and Clinical Access Policy for children.

*(Minister for Health and Social Services).*

**Financial Implication**

None.

**Recommendation Three**

Welsh Government should develop and publish an evaluation framework for its strategies relating to childhood obesity to ensure that the performance of strategies can be reliably monitored against outcomes.

**Response: Accept**

- We have asked Public Health Wales to develop such a framework, including a core minimum data set, as part of their 2014/15 work plan.

*(Minister for Health and Social Services).*

**Financial Implication**

None.

**Recommendation Four**

Welsh Government should continue with, and extend, the Child Measurement Programme, and indicate clearly how the data will be used to monitor and evaluate childhood overweight and obesity programmes.

**Response: Accept partially**

- The first report of the Child Measurement Programme, based on data collected during the 2011/12 School year from reception pupils, was published by Public Health Wales on 4 July 2013
- The second year report, utilising data collected during the 2012/13 School year is being prepared with the results expected in the summer. The third year of measurements is currently being undertaken. The data will be used by the Welsh Government and Public Health Wales to monitor changes in obesity levels in reception year children, in order to make decisions on future work.
- Public Health Wales has run a pilot programme for the measurement of Year 4 children in one Health Board. Both the costs and practical benefits of a more general extension to year four will need to be considered before a decision on roll out is taken.

*(Minister for Health and Social Services).*

**Financial Implication**

None. The measurement programme in reception year can continue at no additional cost. However, any decision to extend the programme to Year 4 would have financial implications.

**Recommendation Five**

Welsh Government should publish in a timely fashion a report on the actions taken by the new Welsh Government Cabinet sub-Committee looking at encouraging children and young people to participate in more physical activity, with reference in particular to: the impact of budgetary constraints on the provision of local authority leisure facilities; and the actions being taken to ensure that Welsh Government is working across departments to increase participation levels.

**Response: Accept**

- The Physical Activity Executive Group (PAEG) is working to develop options to motivate the least physically active people to become more active, exploring how physical activity can be encouraged and monitored throughout the life course.
- A proposal for the future structure and operation of PAEG has been agreed by the Ministers for Health and Social Services and Culture and Sport. This will see the development of an Executive Stakeholder Group to ensure that joined up progress is made against PAEG directions.
- The PAEG will publish an action plan in the Summer.

*(Minister for Health and Social Services).*

**Financial Implication**

None.

**Recommendation Six**

Welsh Government should explore how forthcoming legislation, such as the Future Generations, Planning and Public Health Bills, can be used to address childhood obesity. The Minister should report back to this Committee on his conclusions at the earliest opportunity.

**Response: Accept**

- We recognise that legislation can play an important role in addressing childhood obesity and other public health issues. The Welsh Government has already taken steps through legislation such as the Active Travel Act to shape social conditions which enable people of all ages to have active healthy lives.
- Other Welsh Government legislation will make a significant contribution. For example, the forthcoming Future Generations Bill (working title) will play an important role by placing good health at the centre of the Wales we want to create for the future.
- The Minister for Health and Social Services published a Public Health White Paper on the 2 April which outlines a series of legislative proposals for addressing specific public health concerns. The White Paper includes a proposal to build on previous work undertaken in schools and hospitals by developing nutritional standards in specified settings, such as pre-school settings. The consultation period is due to end on 24 June.
- However, a number of potential areas for legislative action are restricted to the UK / EU level, and for this reason the Welsh Government works alongside the other Health Departments in the UK to influence the food and drink industry, whether through voluntary collaboration or regulation. Any legislative action in Wales can only be taken within the current legislative competence of the National Assembly for Wales.

*(Minister for Health and Social Services).*

**Financial Implication**

None.