

Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg](#) ar [Flaenoriaethau'r Chweched Senedd](#)

This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) consultation on [Sixth Senedd Priorities](#)

CYPE SP 97

Ymateb gan: Tessa Marshall , Cynorthwy-ydd Polisi, Chwaraeon Cymru

Response from: Tessa Marshall , Policy Assistant, Sport Wales

Beth yn eich barn chi yw'r prif flaenoriaethau neu'r materion y dylai'r Pwyllgor eu hystyried yn ystod y Chweched Senedd? Os oes modd, nodwch eich barn o ran sut y gallai'r Pwyllgor fynd i'r afael â hyn.

What do you consider to be the main priorities or issues that the Committee should consider during the Sixth Senedd? Where possible, please set out your view about how the Committee could address them.

Overview

Sport Wales is the national organisation responsible for developing and promoting sport and physical activity in Wales. As the main adviser to the Welsh Government on sport and the delivery of the Vision for Sport in Wales, we welcome the opportunity to respond to this consultation on the Children, Young People, and Education committee's priorities for the sixth Senedd.

In this response, we seek to highlight key areas of work advocating for the influence of sport in driving education, health, and wellbeing outcomes for children, young people, and education. We ask the committee offers support to this work through its scrutiny of the implementation of the curriculum for Wales and changes to the school day and year, which will see the opportunity for physical activity to be more substantially embedded in school-age children's lives.

Our work is evidence-based and supports the Programme for Government. We hope the committee will be able to:

- **Support** our work by advocating for the importance of physical activity in the new curriculum; acknowledging and supporting the important role of physical activity and sport within the health and wellbeing AOLE and enhancing other areas of learning, supporting the achievement of all four purposes, and increasing the impact of the Curriculum for Wales with physical literacy-informed learning.



- **Scrutinise** the offer for physical activity in schools and education settings by supporting the upskilling of teachers, in preparation for the new Curriculum for Wales.
- **Review policies on enhancing** the school day to ensure it provides real benefits for children and young people, improving education, health, and wellbeing outcomes for all.
- **Collaborate** with children and young people, including by working with our Youth Panel and Young Ambassadors, and our other working and focus groups to support and enhance the provision of sport and physical activity for children and young people across Wales.

Sport Wales' strategic intents – to be person centred; to give every young person a great start; ensuring everyone has the opportunity to be active through sport; to bring people together for the long term; showcase the benefit of sport; and to be a highly valued organisation – are directly informed by our commitments to children, young people, and future generations.

We want Wales to be a healthy and active nation, and this must start with children and young people, their teachers, parents or carers, and their communities, to deliver lifelong relationships with physical activity. We ask the committee to scrutinise the provision of sport and physical activity for children and young people, to ensure this can improve the health and wellbeing outcomes available, and to work with us to ensure these mental health, physical health, wellbeing, cultural, educational, and economic benefits can be felt by all.

Thema 1: Addysg oedran ysgol | Theme 1: School-age education

Sport Wales believes there is an important role for this committee in scrutinising the enhancement of the sporting and physical activity provision for children and young people during their school-age education. We have worked with Government and education providers to support the development of the Curriculum for Wales, a crucial change modernising our education system in Wales. Sport and physical activity makes up a key element ensuring learners achieve the four purposes, with a focus on Healthy and Confident Individuals, and we are keen that the Area of Learning and Experience for Health and Wellbeing, which has physical activity clearly embedded within it, is firmly embedded in the delivery of the new curriculum and that the committee's scrutiny of the curriculum's delivery draws out where this is working and where it isn't.

Sport Wales' aim is to gain a better understanding of the infrastructure of the new Curriculum to improve the capability, capacity and confidence of teachers, as we know that teachers' confidence in supporting the development of physical activity skills is paramount to a child's learning and understanding of being physically active.



Further, in the Sixth Senedd, Sport Wales would like to see active education systems where the new curriculum combined with an enhanced school day will ensure every child has access to sport and physical activity opportunities beyond the school day, and that schools utilise their facilities when necessary to serve the needs of their community. The Welsh Government, alongside its Summer of Fun, has provided us and the Arts Council funding to trial what works and what are the barriers in delivering such a policy.

The Curriculum for Wales

Through our engagement in the development of the new curriculum, we have advocated for a move away from sport and physical activity as 'just' a PE lesson.

Physical activity is a skill, and a crucial aspect of personal development which can ensure children and young people are **physically literate, physically and mentally healthy, have high levels of wellbeing, and can be healthy and active for life**; easing pressures on the health service in the long term, building community cohesion, and strong local economies.

Therefore, it is important to ensure adequate physical literacy-informed formal teaching through sport as part of a clear and expected component within the new curriculum. Physical literacy and **daily engaging and positive forms of physical activity can contribute to lifelong physical and mental health benefits**, decreasing social isolation and loneliness, enhancing physical health and wellbeing, and improving all learning during the school day.

Through insight and research, it is clear that enhancing the physical activity offer at school and within the curriculum is paramount:

- Just 9% are physically active for over 60 minutes a day (Youth Sport Trust (YST) *Evidence Paper, the Impact of Covid-19 Restrictions on Children and Young People*, 2020: YST).
- 49% felt it was harder to be physically active during the pandemic (YST).
- 81% of young people want to be active with their friends (YST).
- 63% of pupils enjoy PE 'a lot' (*School Sport Survey*, 2018).
- 56% of pupils felt school sports and PE lessons helped them 'a lot' to have a healthy lifestyle (SSS).

Further, our most recent survey into adult physical activity attitudes and behaviour – wave 4 (Sport Wales and ComRes) found adults reporting their children were typically doing more physical activity than they would typically before the Covid-19 restrictions were introduced in March 2020.



These figures support the need to ensure support for children and young people to be physically active within school-age education.

A key challenge to successfully improving the sporting and physical activity provision is the **gap in teacher confidence around the delivery** of sport and physical activity in schools. There is a significant variability in the access pupils have to physical education depending on where they live in Wales. Schools in one local authority area may have differing amounts of time dedicated to physical activity than those in a neighbouring area, and this can be impacted by socio-economic deprivation. We know that in Primary schools, provision of sport and physical activity is often dependent on the headteacher and their interest in sport. Yet:

- 91% of practitioners believe it's very important to re-engage children and young people in physical activity (following Covid-19) (YST).
- 3 out of 10 practitioners do not feel prepared for the new curriculum (YST).

Sport Wales would like to see the Children, Young People and Education committee work closely with the Health and Social Care Committee and the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language Sport, and International Relations Committee to ensure the new curriculum has the best possible, and consistent physical activity and sport provision for all children.

Scrutinising the level of professional learning and guidance materials available to teachers and local authorities, as well as in person upskilling for those facing significant change in their workload or who lack confidence in the delivery of sport and physical activity, would support the implementation of the new curriculum and its success in developing healthy and active young people.

The School Sport Survey

Our School Sport Survey for 2022 will support and update insight into what the physical activity and sporting offer is that young people want at school, as well as shed light on the provision of this offer at schools across Wales, and the confidence of our teachers. This insight will further inform our work, and we hope the data, along with other research and insight, will help inform this committee's priorities for the current term.

Community Focused Schools

As mentioned already, Sport Wales would like to see active education systems where the new curriculum combined with an enhanced school day will see a focus on **schools becoming hubs of physical activity for the whole community.**

We know schools host a number of facilities which are close to communities across Wales. Our School Sport Survey has consistently shown that pupils would like to do more sport and physical activity, and that the school setting remains the most



effective and impactful environment in which to structure a cultural wellbeing offer. Reasons for not doing more sport relate to:

- Not being able to get to activities (20%, SSS 2018);
- Wanting friends with them (35%, SSS 2018),
- Having more time available to do so (30%, SSS 2018).

Opening schools up to enhance the sporting offer to children and the community will take steps to address these barriers to engagement in sport and physical activity.

The Welsh Government awarded £450,000 for Sport Wales and the Arts Council for Wales to develop a series of pilots looking at how to provide sporting and cultural activities around the school day, over the course of the next school year. By piloting the enhancement of the school day, we will be testing what works and what doesn't, identifying barriers to provision. The project will enhance the Curriculum for Wales approach to ensuring healthy, confident learners, will allow for more community provision in buildings and facilities which often stay closed for long periods of time, and reduce barriers to participation for those living in areas of multiple deprivation.

This work makes up an aspect of the Welsh Government's commitment to 'explore reform of the school day and the school year to bring both more in line with contemporary patterns of family life and employment,' within the *Programme for Government 2021-26*, and in the Minister for Education Welsh Language's *Renew and Reform Covid-19 Recovery Plan*. Therefore, this area of work could make up a significant priority for scrutiny by this committee in the Sixth Senedd.

Community Focused Schools contribute to wider agendas/actions such as Welsh Government commitments and the *Renew and Reform Plan*.

Thema 2: Addysg bellach ac addysg uwch | Theme 2: Further and higher education

There are many opportunities for children and young people to progress through the education system, with a focus on sport, health, and wellbeing. Sports makes a significant contribution to the Welsh economy, with the Economic Importance of Sport in Wales 2016/17 report finding the industry was worth £1,142m, and contributed 29,700 jobs in the same year.

There is a demonstrable opportunity for the committee to analyse the opportunities available to children and young people in terms of work experience in the sector, and how this could be expanded in the new curriculum. Such work could enhance the volunteering workforce, which we understand has been hit hard by the Covid-19 pandemic.



Furthermore, we understand there is an opportunity to analyse the applicability of higher education qualifications to the sector. Wales has a proud sporting history, and our further and higher educational offer should enable children and young people to become highly valued members of the sector, with clear and accessible career paths available to them from school-aged education to the workplace and facilitated effectively by our further and higher education settings.

Thema 3: Iechyd a lles, gan gynnwys gofal cymdeithasol (i'r graddau y maent yn ymwneud â phlant a phobl ifanc) | Theme 3: Health and well-being, including social care (as they relate to children and young people)

One of our five key policy areas which are strategically important to the delivery of an active nation, alongside our aims in supporting them, is '**Active and Resilient Young People.**'

An enhanced offer to young people must be made to make progress against both the Future Generations Wellbeing Goals and the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#). The international examples of this success, such as the [Norwegian Rights of the Child](#), are a positive example of how sport can put developing young people at the heart of its agenda.

Creating good quality, equal opportunities for young people to access physical activity in the from the earliest age, supporting teacher training, and an opportunity to rethink schools' place at the heart of communities are opportunities to enhance the wellbeing of children and young people in the Sixth Senedd.

Therefore, in the Sixth Senedd, Sport Wales would like to see active education systems where the new curriculum combined with an enhanced school day will see a focus on schools becoming hubs of physical activity for the whole community, enhancing the health and wellbeing of children and young people. We would like to see the Children, Young People and Education Committee working in partnership with the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee and the Health and Social Care Committee to review how this policy is being implemented.

Local Provision

Many local authorities have embraced this holistic sporting provision, enhancing their offer to be more than 'sport for sports sake,' by working with social services, housing associations, and police and crime commissioners to deliver activities. This collaborative way of working has enabled the use of local knowledge to build productive relationships and improve the health and wellbeing of vulnerable and



disadvantaged children and young people, creating significant benefits. Scrutinising this provision and identifying the barriers to expanding the holistic provision of sport will improve the health and wellbeing of young people across Wales.

Thema 4: Plant a phobl Ifanc | Theme 4: Children and young people

We welcome the committee's decision to inform its priorities by running activities with children and young people. We would also advocate for the committee to inform its priorities by using data, such as that gathered by the school sport survey, to ensure the priorities reflect the needs of a diversity of young people from across Wales.

We work closely with our partners to ensure these intents can be felt within communities and schools across Wales. We are also working with children and young people through our Young Ambassador programme with the Youth Sport Trust.

In addition, we have worked with the Young Ambassadors, and YST to create a youth panel, who have opportunities to inform and scrutinise the decision making and programme of work of Sport Wales, and with forewarning, the panel could support this committee by engaging in consultations and calls for evidence by this committee.

We engage with young people in myriad ways to meet our strategic intents, including:

- Prioritising investment in young people's physical activity.
- Introducing a new delivery model for community sport with community focussed schools.
- Supporting and delivering guidance for the new curriculum.
- Providing a strong evidence base on young people's activity levels and their motivations.
- Develop key partnerships with those who share our goals. We are already doing this by working with Local Authorities, National Governing Bodies, and wider partners such as the Urdd, Street Games, and WCVA.

Working with children and young people from a wide variety of backgrounds, including socio-economic disadvantage, welsh speaking, and from ethnically and culturally diverse communities to ensure our sporting offer meets the needs of all children and young people across Wales.

