

Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb i ymgynghoriad y [Pwyllgor Iechyd a Gofal Cymdeithasol](#) ar [Atal iechyd gwael - gordewdra](#)

This response was submitted to the [Health and Social Care Committee](#) consultation on [Prevention of ill health - obesity](#)

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International approaches to ‘sport and public health’ policy initiatives, September 2024

The 2024/25 Sport Wales Business Plan has a commitment to: *Policy review of best practice ‘sport and public health’ policy initiatives.*

The purpose of this document is to give an insight into some international approaches and explore examples where governments have invested time and resources into sport-based policy outcomes and programmes with a health focus.

This information can be helpful in terms of speaking to global examples as part of the briefing for the preventative health Senedd event, our messaging on budgets and policy, and to adopt any learning to adapt current projects.

Relevant links are hyperlinked throughout.

Australia

The [Australian National Preventive Health Strategy 2021-2030](#) calls for:

- the Australian sport sector to play a greater role in preventive health action to **increase physical activity** and improve mental health within the community
- more Australians to be engaged in sport and active recreation throughout **every stage of life**
- communities to be encouraged and supported to deliver locally designed programs that support physical activity, which are inclusive and promote social connection

The Strategy means **investment in preventive health will rise to be 5% of total health expenditure** across Commonwealth, state and territory governments by 2030.

New Zealand

According to [New Zealand's Government Policy Statement on Health 2024-2027](#), prevention is a focus that needs to **sit across all health service delivery**: “It includes population and public health policies and interventions that prevents illness from occurring, right through to hospital and specialist services that prevent further harms. This includes preventing mental health and addiction issues, and preventing suicide, such as by promoting mental wellbeing.”

New Zealand has highlighted five specific diseases to focus on and acknowledges physical inactivity plays a role: “The Government is particularly focused on accelerating action to address five noncommunicable diseases: cancer, cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease, diabetes and poor mental health. Together, these conditions account for around 80% of deaths from non-communicable diseases in New Zealand and considerable health loss experienced by New Zealanders. Improved prevention of these non-communicable diseases will be achieved through addressing five modifiable risk factors: alcohol, tobacco, poor nutrition, **physical inactivity**, and adverse social and environmental factors.”

“As a system, and as an initial step towards strengthening prevention efforts, we need to better understand how current investment supports prevention, and how we can strengthen this focus going forward.”

To strengthen prevention in the health system, the Government will:

- **prioritise investment in the health system to support a stronger prevention approach**, across all forms of health system intervention
- continue to support improved health outcomes through a population-needs-based focus, including for groups with the highest health needs: Māori, Pacific peoples, disabled people, women, people living in rural communities, people on low incomes and people with mental health and addiction challenges
- ensure **early access to preventative interventions**, including timely access to screening, immunisation, early intervention and wellbeing/lifestyle supports

- prioritise investment in children to support a good start to life and to **prevent, or lessen, life-long impacts from poor childhood health**, which can also reduce future avoidable health costs
- prioritise the sustainability and quality of health services for **older people**. This includes ensuring aged care services and funding models support older people to live well, age well and have a respectful end of life in age-friendly communities
- shift decision-making and resources in the health system closer to communities
- ensure there is appropriate capacity, capability, and infrastructure in place to prevent and respond to future pandemics and other health security threats

Canada

The Canadian Sport Policy was renewed in 2023, with the new policy intended to focus on advancing sport for the next 10 years (2023-2033).

As part of the [What We Heard Report](#), one challenge highlighted was the “lack of cooperation within and across sectors” with the recommendation of “**directing a percentage of healthcare funding to sport for health promotion and disease prevention**”. The new policy is yet to be released.

Sweden

“The Swedish health care system is decentralised and has high public funding, universal coverage, an ambitious uptake of modern technologies and **efforts to prevent unhealthy lifestyles**. These attributes contribute to low levels of unmet needs, favourable health outcomes and good health status in the population compared with other countries.”

According to the [Sweden’s Health System Review 2023](#), there is an emphasis on prevention and person-centred services as close as possible to where people live. **Expenditures for preventive measures made up 3.3% of total health care expenditure, which is above the EU average (2.9%)** (OECD/European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, 2021). In addition, all regions state that the PCCs must work with health promotion and disease prevention initiatives, but some specify services that must be available such as the **prescription of physical activity** and support to quit smoking.

National efforts to promote physical activity and a healthier lifestyle include (for example) public awareness campaigns, targeted grants to the sports movement and health promotion in schools, as well as recommendations on Physical Activity on Prescription in clinical practice to adults who are insufficiently physically active. The PHA are coordinating a project to implement The Swedish Physical Activity on Prescription model in nine other European countries within the project European Physical Activity on Prescription (PHA, 2022g). Swedish employers also have the opportunity to give employees a deductible health promotion benefit [maximum of SEK 5 000 (EUR 470) per year in 2022] with the aim of encouraging the employees to participate in physical activities listed by the Tax Agency (for example, buying a gym card or participate in sports including golf and tennis).