

**City and County of Swansea
Cultural Services**

What do we know about physical activity levels in children in Wales? How robust is the data on this issue?
Physical Activity levels have remained relatively static over the years. Accurate benchmarking and trend analysis is difficult to measure as the methods of recording have changed. The School Sport Survey is a useful tool and relatively robust. However the timescale for this survey has now changed which brings into question the validity of the data. The School Sport Survey is a very useful tool and we have had positive feedback from schools that have utilized the results within School development plans. The reports and infograms are beneficial and provide relevant information for grant applications and help inform planning. There are questions around the reliability of the results and the ease for schools to ensure that ‘sporty’ children complete the survey, which does not reflect the true picture of activity levels. The school sport survey does not reflect new CMO guidelines. With new areas of work around physical literacy and CMO guidelines of 0-5 years olds – there is no means to evidence baseline data or progression in Wales.
Differences in gender-based attitudes towards, and opportunities for, participation in physical activity in Wales.
Gender differences have been clearly identified throughout the AYP programme being delivered across Swansea. Current consultation with girls has identified that we need to deliver alternative opportunities in a fun, social, non-competitive environments e.g. Us Girls. There needs to be a greater understanding that programmes such as Us Girls are having a greater qualitative impact, rather than quantitative and the benefits are being seen through an increase in the number of opportunities being made available to young women and girls. The personal, social and well-being benefits are also significant and should be recognised to a greater extent through ‘good news stories’ and ‘snap-shots’.
The extent to which Welsh Government policies are aimed at whole populations and/or particular groups, and what impact that approach has on addressing health inequalities.

Best fit locally to impact on addressing health inequalities is ‘Creating an Active and Healthy Swansea’, which is based on ‘Creating an Active Wales’. WG policies/strategies such as Climbing Higher and CAW has helped raise the profile of active, healthy lifestyles and raised the issue of health inequalities.
Barriers to increasing the levels of physical activity among children in Wales, and examples of good practice in achieving increases in physical activity, and in engagement with hard to reach groups, within Wales, the UK and internationally.
Partnership working is key to increasing participation and improving well-being, yet this is becoming an ongoing challenge as a result of frequent shifts in focus or discontinuation of the organisations having the biggest impact in communities. This is having a negative impact on positive projects that are being established, where participants are not receiving the relevant, specialist input they need to continue to benefit from varied and meaningful opportunities in the long term.
Physical activity guidelines and how we benchmark physical fitness in children.
As above. Physical activity guidelines and benchmarking processes have changed so it is difficult to measure effectiveness and success over a prolonged period. CMO guidelines are welcomed but as they have changed over the years it is difficult to benchmark long-term Swan-linx and Dragon Challenge are examples in Swansea where useful primary data is identified, which can be benchmarked against the same age group over a period of years- further funding required to explore this area if it is to become a long-term opportunity/research project.
Measurement, evaluation and effectiveness of the Welsh Government’s programmes and schemes aimed at promoting physical activity of children.
As above. Accurate benchmarking and trend analysis is difficult to measure as the methods of recording have changed. The School Sport Survey is a useful tool and relatively robust. However the timescale for this survey has now changed which brings into question the validity of the data. A number of programmes have limited effectiveness due to the short-term nature of the funding. Although programmes may run for a number of years the funding is only confirmed annually which reduces the opportunity for effective long-term planning. A number of the programmes have initially been very prescriptive and have not allowed local solutions to local needs The changes of funding over the years in particular from PESS to PLPS, we have seen a noticeable impact across primary schools and an increase in demand from schools for support from AYP. Schools are looking for expert advice for schemes of work and the curriculum delivery. An area which AYP is not funded for but has supported in the past.

Recent positive changes in AYP funding has provided the opportunity to develop projects based on the needs of the community. The prescriptive nature (as above) of 5x60 and a pressure to increase participation in extra-curricular sports and physical activity deterred from the quality and ability to work with individuals who needed to support and remove the barriers (Inactive to Active). Positive investment has been made across the local authority including Community Chest, development grants, 3 G pitches, Calls for Action, AYP.
Value for money of Welsh Government spending to promote exercise in children.
Budget only allocated for one financial year, long term funding (3-5 years) would ensure that appropriate planning can take place. Staff uncertainty each year affects morale and has had an impact on the turnover of staff on WG funded programmes. The inconsistency of programmes and delivery ultimately has a negative effect on ability to promote exercise in children. Regional planning on certain programmes can add value and ensure that consistent messages are delivered across Wales. U16 Free Swim ‘splash’ sessions do not necessarily provide good value for money.
The role of schools, parents and peers in encouraging physical activity, and the role of Sport Wales, NHS Wales and Public Health Wales in improving levels of physical activity.
Collaboration of all partners is vital in improving levels of physical activity. Clear Everybody has a role to play. There does not seem to be a ‘golden thread’ between organisations. There is a lack of knowledge and understanding across all areas. Need to drive consistent key messages. We feel that teachers need to understand how to teach children to move. Currently there is a lack of confidence across schools to deliver sport and physical activity and even active/outdoor lessons. The outdoor learning network in Swansea is a great advocacy for learning with positive results/case studies to share with the sector. Many of the children entering our schools have poor physical skills. This is affecting how much physical activity they can and will do. We need a programme that teaches about how young children develop their motor competence. This foundation of good movement is vital if they are to be active throughout life and to help practitioners understand how to alter constraints relating to tasks and the environment so that pupils progress through the stages of development and become more competent, confident and more physically active. All teachers in the Foundation Phase need to understand how to teach children to move so that we can lay the foundations for all young people to be physically active for life.
Any recommendations for promoting and increasing physical activity of children

and young people

A greater emphasis on engaging and educating families as a whole is needed, to ensure that simple, key messages around physical activity, health and well-being are being delivered through achievable daily targets and focusses. Parents and older children can and should be encouraged to have a greater role in increasing physical activity, in the home, at open spaces throughout the community and also in schools, clubs and community groups.

This could be achieved by establishing more family focussed activity sessions in various locations, so that physical activity becomes the 'norm' and those simple, but key messages become a part of daily life. Also, a return to a more focused approach to encouraging parents to volunteer, which have been successful in the past, could be beneficial and could help to develop a culture change in attitudes towards physical activity.