

Welsh Government response: Physical Activity of Children and Young People – HSCS Committee Report – March 2019

| No. | Recommendation | Welsh Government response |
|-----|--|---|
| 1. | The Welsh Government should work with Sport Wales, Public Health Wales and other partners to develop an agreed national measurement framework for physical activity levels and fitness as a matter of priority, to standardise and improve data collection. | <p>Accept</p> <p>A Welsh Physical Activity Partnership (WPAP) has been established between Sport Wales, Public Health Wales and Natural Resources Wales following the review of Sport Wales in October 2017. This has included a number of key areas for action, including improving measurement and reporting of population outcomes in relation to physical activity, which includes establishing a Physical Activity Observatory.</p> <p>Currently, large scale and validated child and adolescent physical activity data is collected through the National Survey for Wales, Health Behaviour School Aged Children Survey, Sport Wales School Sport Survey and the School Health Research Network. Part of the work to be undertaken by the Physical Activity Observatory is to consolidate all current physical activity data and evidence on one platform. This will ensure a standardised approach to how data is interpreted and reported for a variety of uses.</p> |
| 2. | The Welsh Government should extend the Child Measurement Programme to monitor childhood obesity beyond age 4-5. We believe the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health's recommendation of a measurement after birth, before school and in adolescence should be implemented as a minimum. | <p>Accept</p> <p>All children are already weighed at birth in Wales, and again at pre-school age (4 to 5) in Reception Year. These measurements taken in Reception inform the Child Measurement Programme. The Healthy Child Wales programme identifies other times during a child's early years when they will be measured, including contact at around 15 months, 27 months and 3 ½ years.</p> <p>An additional round of measurements would evidence the results of any activity taken between Reception Year and Year 4 (or 6) to combat obesity and overweight in school age children, as well as informing better planning of prevention or treatment services for adolescents in Wales. In England all children are also measured in year 6 (age 10 to 11). In Wales in both the original pilot for the Child Measurement Programme and again in a pilot in 2012, measurements were carried out in Year 4 (ages 8 to 9). The rationale for undertaking the Wales' pilots in Year 4 rather than later in adolescence is to mitigate against early puberty in children skewing the results.</p> <p>The consultation on Healthy Weight: Healthy Wales finished on 12 April, which included the consideration of a second measurement point. This could help to support a monitoring and evaluation framework for a final strategy, which will be published in October 2019.</p> |

| | | |
|----|---|---|
| 3. | We recommend that the Welsh Government's recognition of the need to focus on family orientated approaches is taken forward in the final strategy to prevent and reduce obesity and includes ambitious targets and effective monitoring to ensure tangible outcomes. | <p>Accept</p> <p>The Healthy Weight: Healthy Wales consultation document highlighted the need to work with families at high risk of obesity or where children are already obese. A number of proposals are being considered including more focused work through the Flying Start programme and family based approaches working closely with pre-school and school settings.</p> <p>The final strategy in October 2019 will include a monitoring and evaluation framework, which will set a range of targets to ensure tangible outcomes.</p> |
| 4. | The Welsh Government should require Sport Wales and Public Health Wales to work together to develop a programme which promotes the benefits of an active lifestyle, such as walking and cycling, for the whole family. | <p>Accept</p> <p>The Wales Physical Activity Partnership (WPAP) will jointly accelerate efforts to significantly increase the levels of physical activity in Wales, including walking and cycling. The Chief Medical Officer Guidelines on physical activity are being reviewed across the UK and will be published in September 2019. Welsh Government will be considering a range of opportunities to develop communications and programmes to support population health.</p> <p>The key priorities and actions to progress this commitment include a focus on healthy people and healthy settings, which align with key themes in Healthy Weight: Healthy Wales. A joint work programme is aimed at promoting the benefits of an active lifestyle for people of all ages. Engaging whole families is seen as an important catalyst for longer term, sustainable behaviour change across generations.</p> |
| 5. | We recommend that the Welsh Government takes further action in the new curriculum to ensure that every child in Wales is enabled to develop the essential Fundamental Motor Skills required at an early age in school, and ensure that current gaps in the foundation phase related to these skills are fully addressed. We would support investment for programmes such as SKIP Cymru to be rolled out across the country to ensure that every school in Wales is able to adequately support children to learn these skills. | <p>Accept</p> <p>The Welsh Government is committed to the promotion of health and well-being, and increasing access and opportunities for our youngest learners to be active. The Foundation Phase has seven Areas of Learning, one of which is Physical Development.</p> <p>The Foundation Phase curriculum ensures that children's physical development, enthusiasm and energy for movement, including Fundamental Motor Skills, are continually promoted by providing them with opportunities to use their bodies effectively by encouraging spatial awareness, balance, control and coordination and developing motor and manipulative skills. In the Foundation Phase, children are encouraged to enjoy all physical activity and the curriculum is designed to enable children to move around while they are learning both indoors and outdoors throughout the school day.</p> <p>Considerable consideration has been given to children's physical development in the new curriculum. The Health and Well-being Area of Learning and Experience (AoLE) has been developed around</p> |

| | | |
|----|---|--|
| | | <p>progression in learning, with significant consideration given to physical development. The draft AoLE guidance has been extensively informed by Physical Literacy experts in this area. It will provide the framework from which practitioners can select the most appropriate experiences to support a child's learning, throughout the 3-16 continuum of learning.</p> <p>Existing resources developed by Sport Wales during the period of the PE and School Sport programme and the Physical Literacy Programme for Schools - for example, Play to Learn and Dragon Multi-Skills and Sport - provide a platform from which Fundamental Motor Skills can be developed, but also provide a more sustainable and transferable pedagogical model for Physical Education in the early years and into Key Stage 2.</p> <p>Decisions on resources used to develop programmes of activity for Foundation Phase practitioners and any associated training are matters for individual schools and settings. However, the Welsh Government will explore the potential for developing a case study to highlight the work of the SKIP Cymru programme, which can be promoted to Foundation Phase practitioners through the Foundation Phase Excellence Network Zone.</p> |
| 6. | The Welsh Government should introduce a programme of investment in physical activity facilities for existing schools that are not part of the 21st Century Schools initiative. | <p>Reject</p> <p>The provision of facilities for physical activities in schools is a matter for local authorities. Those schools that are not engaged in the 21st Century Schools programme may be supported through the local authorities' General Capital Fund to implement work in developing or upgrading such facilities.</p> |
| 7. | The Welsh Government should ensure all secondary schools regularly consult pupils on the choice and range of physical activities available to them and ensure their views are taken into account. | <p>Accept</p> <p>The School Sport Survey undertaken by Sports Wales with the support of local authorities, already enables the process of consultation with learners on physical activity opportunities. Over 120,000 learners and 1,000 schools (including both primary and secondary schools) engaged in the Survey in 2018, and these results were disseminated by Sport Wales in reports to local authorities and schools.</p> <p>The new curriculum, through the mechanism of Achievement Outcomes, will enable schools to consult with learners on the choice and range of physical activities available to them. The Health and Well-being Area of Learning and Experience will not specify sports or areas of physical activity; the school, in consultation with learners, will decide. However, the learning outcomes specify the need for children and young people to experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • outdoor learning to support physical health and well-being; • a range of ongoing, daily opportunities to be physically active; |

| | | |
|----|---|---|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> opportunities to be physically active in a variety of environments (including indoor; outdoor; different surfaces; heights; in and around water); a range of physical activities, through fun and engaging approaches to learning. |
| 8. | We recommend that the Welsh Government makes the recommended 120 minutes of physical education in schools a minimum statutory requirement. | <p>Reject</p> <p>The new legislation to support the new curriculum is intended to reaffirm the principle of a new curriculum for Wales and define it through a broad set of duties which provide the freedom for practitioners to use their professionalism and creativity to meet the needs of all learners.</p> <p>The <i>Successful Futures</i> report made clear that decisions and plans for how Areas of Learning and Experience should translate into day-to-day activities should take place creatively at school level and are not timetabling devices.</p> <p>One of the four purposes of the new curriculum is that learners develop as healthy, confident individuals. A key characteristic of this purpose will be to support learners to apply knowledge about the impact of diet and exercise on physical and mental health in their daily lives. The four purposes are the starting point for all decisions in respect of the curriculum. The Welsh Government White Paper, <i>Our National Mission: A Transformational Curriculum</i> proposes there will be a duty on Welsh Ministers, Local Authorities, Governing Bodies and Head Teachers, to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum that is designed to meet the four purposes.</p> <p>It is also proposed that there will be a duty on the Welsh Ministers, local authorities, governing bodies and Head Teachers to deliver a curriculum that contains the named Areas of Learning and Experience, one of which is Health and Well-being.</p> <p>The Health and Well-being Area of Learning and Experience includes clear progression in physical literacy and activity and highlights the importance of learners experiencing a range of ongoing, daily opportunities to be physically active.</p> |
| 9. | We recommend that the Welsh Government gives physical education a greater priority in the new curriculum and makes this priority clear to Estyn, and that physical activity should be given greater priority in Estyn's inspection regime for schools. We believe that the inspection framework should include adherence to the 120 minute a week | <p>Accept</p> <p>Currently, Estyn considers curriculum breadth under Inspection Area 3 – teaching and learning experiences. Estyn's approach is to report on these matters by exception – it does not report on these aspects explicitly in every inspection report, or in relation to individual subject areas. Estyn also considers physical activity under '2.1: Well-being'. The inspection guidance identifies that: <i>Inspectors should consider the extent to which pupils feel safe and secure, and free from physical and verbal abuse. They should consider how well they are becoming healthy, confident individuals and understand, for example, how to make healthy choices relating to diet, physical activity and emotional</i></p> |

| | | |
|-----|--|---|
| | <p>requirement, but also the quality of the physical education experience.</p> | <p><i>well-being, including how to keep themselves safe online. They should consider how well pupils use this understanding in their own lives in school and respond positively to opportunities to undertake physical activity, for example, during lessons, at break and lunchtime and through after-school clubs and activities.</i></p> <p>Estyn will continue to review its approach to inspecting the curriculum as the new curriculum evolves/develops.</p> <p>Periodic thematic inspection reviews are a helpful way to gather and evaluate specific information on subject areas or particular topics, to help inform the Minister for Education and the Welsh Government more broadly about how well policies and guidance are being implemented. Estyn is in the process of completing a thematic inspection report on whole-school approaches to health and well-being, which will be published in June 2019.</p> <p><i>We do not accept the section of this recommendation relating to the issue of 120 minutes a week for physical activity in schools (in line with the response to Recommendation 8).</i></p> |
| 10. | <p>The Welsh Government should ensure that greater emphasis is placed on physical activity in the Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programme and as part of all teachers continuing professional development.</p> | <p>Accept</p> <p>The Welsh Government developed and published in March 2017 new criteria for the accreditation of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes. Following independent accreditation, four ITE partnerships will be delivering programmes of ITE in Wales, from September 2019. As part of meeting the requirements of accreditation, these new programmes of ITE will ensure that new teachers are able to teach the four purposes of the new curriculum and the six Areas of Learning and Experience, ensuring that a greater focus on teaching of physical activity.</p> <p>The ITE Partnerships will also develop approaches to assist aspiring teachers to understand the importance of research-informed practice, so that teachers are taught the importance of keeping up-to-date with research, including research on learners' physical health and well-being, to inform their teaching practice on an ongoing basis throughout their working lives.</p> <p>The National Approach for Professional Learning (NAPL) was formally launched in autumn 2018. The NAPL is centred on the learner and embodies the four purposes of the new curriculum. The approach is designed to be responsive to school, local and national priorities and encompasses the individual learning journey of all practitioners. The new approach will also include a focus on supporting teachers to better understand and improve pupil mental health and well-being.</p> <p>Since October 2018, Professional Learning Pioneers have engaged with the emerging curriculum framework through professional enquiries supported by higher education institutions across Wales.</p> |

| | | |
|-----|--|--|
| | | <p>These enquiries are focusing on learning and teaching pedagogy, professional learning and the support and guidance that schools will require to implement the new curriculum.</p> <p>Cardiff Metropolitan University is currently supporting cycles of professional enquiry linked to the Health and Well-being Area of Learning and Experience. Enquiry cycles are now beginning to focus on the significant implications of the Areas of Learning and Experience for teaching and learning and the ways in which the skills of the wider workforce will need to be developed.</p> <p>Pioneers will deepen their enquiry focus on 'curriculum making' during the summer term to align with the launch of the draft new curriculum. Immediate professional learning implications will inform the regional professional learning offer.</p> <p>As practitioners become more familiar with the new curriculum, time will be required to further develop an understanding of the professional learning challenges associated with realisation in schools and the national approach will continue to evolve to meet these requirements, with a move to full implementation from April 2020.</p> |
| 11. | The Welsh Government must make Community Focused Schools a reality for everyone, and ensure consistency of access to school facilities for physical activity opportunities beyond school hours across Wales. The Welsh Government should report back to this Committee on progress within twelve months of the publication of this report. | <p>Accept</p> <p>The Welsh Government aspires to community-focused schools that provide a range of services and activities covering the school day and beyond, which meet the needs of pupils, their families and the wider community. We will report back to the Committee on progress in this area, in 12 months.</p> |
| 12. | The Welsh Government should share good practice, where schools are providing wider access to their facilities, including solutions for overcoming difficulties relating to governance, staffing and transport arrangements. | <p>Accept</p> <p>The Welsh Government is currently working with a range of stakeholders to identify and share good practice. Guidance and information will be provided on the Welsh Government website, and there will be engagement events to promote wider access and joined-up facilities.</p> <p>In addition to this, work is being undertaken to identify those barriers that limit access to school facilities and the scope of work required to remove these barriers.</p> |
| 13. | We recommend that the Welsh Government works with Estyn to ensure it includes, as part of its inspection regime, an assessment of the choice of activities available in schools, equality of access for girls and boys and | <p>Accept</p> <p>During inspection processes, Estyn inspectors look broadly at the appropriateness of the curriculum including whether schools enable equality for groups of learners, covering gender issues and how</p> |

| | | |
|-----|---|---|
| | whether pupils are being consulted on the activities being provided. | <p>well schools include pupils' views in planning and evaluating the curriculum. Estyn reports on these matters by exception and not in relation to individual subject areas.</p> <p>Estyn's 2019-20 Annual remit, setting out the thematic reviews that the Welsh Government has commissioned the body to undertake over this period, has recently been approved. The Welsh Government will discuss with Estyn whether there is scope to undertake a thematic review in this area, and if so, identify a suitable timescale.</p> |
| 14. | The Welsh Government should work with Sport Wales to raise the profile of women's sport. This could include a programme of "female sporting role models" visiting schools to talk about their experiences and encourage more girls to participate in sporting activities. | <p>Accept</p> <p>The Welsh Government will work with Sport Wales to support the further development of campaigns such as <i>Our Squad</i> and <i>#WatchHerGo</i>, to encourage wider participation in sports by girls.</p> |
| 15. | The Welsh Government and Sport Wales should stipulate in funding applications for physical activity programmes that investment will only be made in programmes which emphasise a genuinely inclusive approach to the provision of physical activity and include equality impact assessments which ensure that considerations for disabled children and young people are incorporated from the outset. | <p>Accept in principle</p> <p>We welcome the intent of this recommendation. Sport Wales always ensures that its funding is focused on including a genuinely inclusive approach to the provision of physical activity.</p> <p>As part of its new strategy, Sport Wales will be bringing forward a new resourcing model. The model, and its strategic intent, will have several areas of focus which will put the person at the heart of the delivery, thus ensuring barriers to inclusivity are tackled. We have identified that a key area of priority should be in supporting those groups who are infrequently active but who want to become more active. Of course, in supporting this cohort of our society, or indeed with any investment, consideration will be given to issues of tackling inequality and we would expect any application for funding to outline how they will provide the right opportunities, resources and access to sporting offers. Children and young people will be at the heart of the new strategic approach, ensuring that this recommendation is reflected both in the way Sport Wales utilises its resources as well as in its approach across all activities.</p> <p>Investments in the Healthy and Active Fund, co-produced by the Welsh Government, Sport Wales and Public Health Wales, are already showing a clear commitment to inclusivity of provision of physical activity. These will be evaluated for their effectiveness over time as a way of establishing any potential larger scale actions that may follow.</p> |
| 16. | The Welsh Government should explore how the Pupil Development Grant could be utilised to help address the deprivation gap in physical activity levels. | <p>Accept in principle</p> <p>It is not acceptable for children's success to be determined by their social or economic circumstances. Underpinning all of the Welsh Government's work is a belief that someone's ability to</p> |

| | | |
|-----|---|---|
| | | <p>benefit from education should not be determined by where they live, what their background is, or what the income of their parents is. We are investing unprecedented amounts – over £190m this year (2018-19) and next (2019-20) – supporting leaders in our schools, to improve outcomes for our disadvantaged learners.</p> <p>Breaking the cycle of poverty and disadvantage is a long-term commitment, and we have been clear on this Government’s commitment to the Pupil Development Grant (PDG) for the remainder of this Assembly term. Year on year, we have extended the PDG. It now supports even more of our most vulnerable learners. As well as the free school meals element; the PDG suite now includes looked-after children, those in the early years, those in pupil referral units, and those in education other than at school provision. The newest element – PDG-Access – has been introduced to support parents with some of the costs of the school day, including sporting activities.</p> <p>The Pupil Development Grant is being used in some schools to promote sporting activities. Many run after-school clubs and some provide transport to the local swimming pool. In previous years at Ysgol y Foryd Infants School, Rhyl, the learners have benefitted from the support of the grant being used for physical activities. The school was a pilot for the new curriculum delivery of the Physical Literacy programme. The programme included Bike-ability skills and outdoor education, incorporating a residential visit for Year 2. The extension of Physical Literacy work in this way has seen a positive impact on pupils’ health and lifestyles and has increased their engagement in learning generally which has impacted positively on standards.</p> |
| 17. | The Welsh Government should review Sport Wales’ efforts to reduce the deprivation gap in physical activity levels given the lack of progress. | <p>Accept in principle</p> <p>Tackling the physical activity deprivation gap is already a priority for Sport Wales. This has been a signature area of interest identified through our evidence in the school sport survey and is at the heart of the development of our focus areas within the new Sport Wales strategy. However, it is also important to recognise that Sport Wales is not the only organisation responsible. Tackling society wide issues such as poverty cannot be undertaken in isolation. Therefore, the Vision for Sport in Wales was launched to detail how physical activity can deliver outcomes on a cross portfolio basis.</p> <p>Through the Wales Physical Activity Partnership, Sport Wales, Public Health Wales and National Resources Wales have been focused on tackling physical activity issues across the sport, health and environmental agendas. As an organisation Sport Wales are also focused on working with a range of other partners, traditional and non-traditional, to wider to scope of how physical activity can be supported. This is typified by the approach being pursued through the regional model of Sport North Wales, bringing together organisations in local government, housing, health and education as a way of taking a holistic and whole systems approach to delivering physical activity and will mark a significant shift in approach to how this is being done in Wales. Rolling this approach out in the North</p> |

| | | |
|-----|---|---|
| | | Wales region, and beyond, with support from Welsh Government and a range of other partners, is a key component to delivering this recommendation. |
| 18. | We recommend that the Welsh Government makes arrangements to put in place longer-term funding arrangements to enable Sport Wales and its partners to plan more strategically. | <p>Accept</p> <p>We share the concerns raised by the Committee.</p> <p>To start to address these challenges, we have embedded increased collaboration and shared use of budgets across a range of sectors: healthy, education and transport as well as sport. A key example of this is the new Sport North Wales model for the delivery of community sport through the establishment of new region entities. The Healthy and Active Fund has also been allocated a budget of £5 million over the next three years and is funded 50% from Public Health and 50% from Sport Wales.</p> <p>We intend to pursue this way of working as looking to pool budgets is a sustainable way of working effectively in these difficult financial times.</p> |
| 19. | We recommend that the Welsh Government review the use of Section 106 agreements to see if they are being utilised by local authorities to ensure the provision of safe and accessible green spaces in new housing developments. | <p>Accept in principle</p> <p>The Welsh Government already monitors the provision of new open space, and the loss of open space, through the annual Sustainable Development Indicator process, which gathers data from the 25 Welsh local planning authorities (LPAs). The same monitoring process highlights the amounts collected by every LPA through Section 106 and the Community Infrastructure Levy. National planning policy, set out in Planning Policy Wales, is focused on how the planning system can help improve the well-being of people in Wales through local planning policies and development management decisions. This document sets clear expectations that new and improved open and green spaces will be provided as part of housing and other developments.</p> |
| 20. | We urge the Welsh Government to reconsider its position on the use of consequential funding from the soft drinks industry levy and commit to utilising it to increase physical activity and reduce the burden of obesity in Wales, as has been done in other parts of the UK. | <p>Accept in principle</p> <p>As with all consequential funding, the sum is added to the overall Welsh Government budget and allocated in line with our priorities. Promoting good health and well-being for everyone is one of our key priorities in our national strategy, <i>Prosperity for All</i>, which is why we continue to support people to adopt healthy lifestyles, breaking down the barriers that ill-health place on employment and opportunity, and tackling the generational cycle of poor health and inactivity.</p> <p>Wales received £56.757m over the four-year period for which we had a revenue settlement (2016-17 to 2019-20). In our budget for 2019-20 we have allocated £13m for health improvement and healthy working to support a range of schemes which emphasise the principles of prudent healthcare and</p> |

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| | | <p>support people in making positive lifestyle choices. In our 2019-20 budget, we are also investing in areas such as food and nutrition in schools (£3.4m), sports and physical activity (£22.3m), and active travel (£25m), enabling more everyday journeys to be made by walking and cycling, with resulting individual and societal health benefits.</p> <p>'Healthy Weight: Healthy Wales', will consider a range of proposals to tackle obesity. A final strategy will be launched by October 2019. We will consider the funding requirements to support the delivery of the plan in allocating future budgets.</p> |
|--|--|---|