

National Assembly for Wales
Communities, Equality and
Local Government Committee

Participation levels in sport

March 2014



Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales

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Local Government Committee

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Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee

The Committee was established on 22 June 2011 with a remit to examine legislation and hold the Welsh Government to account by scrutinising expenditure, administration and policy matters encompassing: Wales's culture; languages; communities and heritage, including sport and the arts; local government in Wales, including all housing matters; and equality of opportunity for all.

Current Committee membership



Christine Chapman (Chair)
Welsh Labour
Cynon Valley



Leighton Andrews
Welsh Labour
Rhondda



Peter Black
Welsh Liberal Democrats
South Wales West



Jocelyn Davies
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Gwyn R Price
Welsh Labour
Islwyn



Jenny Rathbone
Welsh Labour
Cardiff Central



Rhodri Glyn Thomas
Plaid Cymru
Carmarthen East and Dinefwr

The following Members were also a members of the Committee during this inquiry:



Ken Skates
Welsh Labour
Clwyd South



Lindsay Whittle
Plaid Cymru
South Wales East

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Chair's foreword

It is widely accepted that keeping active is important in order to maintain a healthy lifestyle. As far as participating in sport is concerned, this is something that can have substantial knock-on benefits for our communities and the way we live our lives.

Conversely, the dangers of obesity and sedentary behaviour and the implications of this for our wellbeing are well documented, and are all too evident both within Wales and beyond. It has also been shown that young people living unhealthy lifestyles are also more likely to be excluded from social activities and education.

One of the current Welsh Government's key aims is to increase participation in sport in order to tackle some of these challenges. When we launched this inquiry, the Welsh Government had reported that participation in sports in Wales had shown 'a worrying decline for all age groups'. The Committee was therefore eager to test the way in which the Welsh Government was delivering on, and intervening in, getting more people more active, more often.

Our aim was to look at how opportunities are created for different groups of people in Wales to participate in sport. Of equal importance to us were the barriers that prevent various groups from doing so. Sport should be something that is available and accessible to all, regardless of age or ability. We need to ensure that a range of sporting opportunities are provided, both for those who wish to take part in sport within a formal or competitive setting, as well as those who favour recreational activities. We intended to assess the extent to which the Welsh Government was addressing difficulties in these issues, and to identify what more needs to be done. Of course, the Welsh Government isn't on its own in driving forward the sports agenda. Its key delivery agency in this context is Sport Wales, which in 2010 launched its new 'Vision for Sport in Wales'. This promised an 'unprecedented shift in culture' for Welsh sport, through which Sport Wales would be 'developing and delivering positive experiences for all'.

Local authorities are also important partners in providing sport opportunities and facilities, not only in our schools but also in our

communities more widely. With local government in Wales facing substantial budget cuts and changes over forthcoming years, the possible implications for the delivery of sport and leisure services was also a theme which featured prominently in our discussions.

We recognise the steps that have been undertaken by the Welsh Government and its partners to date to improve participation levels, but it is clear that progress has been slow in effecting change. We have made 12 recommendations in total. We look forward to hearing the Welsh Government's response, as this is an area of policy that can have a dramatic bearing on our future as a healthy nation. I wish to put on record my thanks to all those individuals and organisations that provided us with the benefit of their experience by submitting evidence and appearing before the Committee. I also wish to thank the Committee Members for their commitment to the inquiry.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Christine Chapman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Christine Chapman

Chair of the Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee
March 2014

Summary of conclusions and recommendations

The Committee's recommendations to the Minister are listed below, in the order that they appear in this report. Please refer to the relevant pages of the report to see the supporting evidence and conclusions:

Recommendation 1. We recommend that the Minister publishes the joint delivery plan produced by Sport Wales and Public Health Wales, along with a timetable for its implementation. This should include agreed outcomes by which the success of the plan will be measured. (Page 14)

Recommendation 2. We recommend that the Minister undertakes a review of all existing sources of data that measure participation levels in sport, including the methodology used in Sport Wales' surveys. The Minister's review should focus on addressing the concerns around the lack of data on how deprivation, demographics, protected characteristics and cultural barriers impact on participation levels. Any improvements that relate to the work of Sport Wales should be reflected in its future annual Remit Letters. (Page 21)

Recommendation 3. In relation to BME communities, we recommend that the Minister works with Sport Wales and relevant organisations to identify alternative and more effective means of data collection on levels of participation in sport within these communities. (Page 21)

Recommendation 4. We were concerned to hear about the lack of BME Physical Education teachers in Wales. We recommend that the Welsh Government gives further consideration to addressing this. (Page 30)

Recommendation 5. We recommend that the Minister works with Sport Wales to define and publish the outcomes by which the success of its Community Sport Strategy and Child Poverty Strategy will be measured. We further recommend that robust arrangements are put in place to monitor and evaluate the success of these Strategies, and to understand their impact on participation levels. (Page 30)

Recommendation 6. We recommend that the Minister works with Sport Wales to put in place a programme to identify and subsequently address the barriers to participation in sport that are specific to people

from BME backgrounds. This should include undertaking research to better understand what these barriers are. (Page 31)

Recommendation 7. We recommend that the Minister publishes an action plan setting out how he intends to improve participation levels among people in BME communities. This should include a set of measureable outcomes. (Page 31)

Recommendation 8. We recommend the Minister ensures that further work is undertaken to identify ways to encourage girls to participate in sport. This should include research into the types of sport or activities that appeal specifically to girls, and the factors affecting their participation. (Page 31)

Recommendation 9. We recommend that the Minister works with the Minister for Local Government and Government Business to assess the impact of the reductions in local authority budgets on sport and leisure services, in particular on access and affordability. (Page 36)

Recommendation 10. We recommend that the Minister and Sport Wales work with local authorities to identify opportunities to increase and improve access to leisure facilities across Wales. (Page 37)

Recommendation 11. We recommend that the Minister undertake a review of the Free Swimming Scheme in order to identify areas where take-up is low and the reasons for this, and report back to us on his findings. (Page 37)

Recommendation 12. We further recommend that the Minister works with local authorities to address the variance in the provision of free swimming across Wales. The Minister should also publish an action plan setting out how he intends to increase the number of children under the age of 11 who can swim. (Page 37)

Introduction

1. Widening participation in sport in order to increase physical activity is a key aim in the Welsh Government's *Programme for Government*. On 25 April 2013, the Committee agreed to undertake an inquiry looking at how the Welsh Government was performing in this regard.

Terms of reference

2. The Committee agreed the following terms of reference:
- the extent to which the Welsh Government and Sport Wales are achieving the goals set out in the *Programme for Government*, the *Creating an Active Wales* action plan and the Vision for Sport in Wales with regard to participation levels in sport;
 - the availability of datasets and statistics to measure participation levels in sport, particularly those disaggregated by equality strand and socio-economic groups;
 - the opportunities and barriers to sports participation that exist for different groups of people, including by equality strand and socio-economic groups;
 - the links between programmes to develop sport in Wales and other Welsh Government initiatives to increase physical activity;
 - the impact of the Olympic and Paralympic legacy, the Ryder Cup and other high profile Welsh sporting events and achievements on participation levels in Wales.

Method

3. The Committee issued a call for written evidence and received 17 responses. The Committee held four oral evidence sessions on 19 June, 27 June, 3 July and 26 September 2013. A list of those who gave written and oral evidence is available at the end of this report.

4. The Committee is grateful to all those who provided evidence to inform its work.

1. Participation levels in sport – the current position

Background

5. During the inquiry, the Welsh Government published its latest Annual Review (June 2013) of its *Programme for Government*. This stated that ‘participation in sports has shown a worrying decline for all age groups, particularly in the light of the consequent health implications’. This made our inquiry timely and pertinent.

6. The Welsh Government sets out the general policy direction for sports and physical activity programmes in Wales. Most of the Welsh Government’s funding (currently around £24 million a year) is then provided to Sport Wales to deliver those objectives on its behalf.

7. The policy framework underpinning work in this area includes:

- the Welsh Government’s *Creating an Active Wales* (2010) action plan, which aims to make it easier for people to be more active, more often;
- Sport Wales’ overarching *Vision for Sport in Wales* (2010), explaining how it can deliver on the Welsh Government’s sport and physical activity agenda;
- Sport Wales’ Community Sport Strategy, Child Poverty strategy, and its strategies for volunteering and coaching and for elite sport.

Concerns about participation levels

8. In its evidence, Public Health Wales stated:

“Participation levels in sport have been static for a decade or more despite a range of promotions and incentives provided by Sport Wales. However, this is no different to the equally static trend in physical activity in the population generally which has also not shifted for many years.”¹

9. It stated that the reasons for this were ‘complex’ and that ‘future attempts to reverse the trend need to be directed not only at the whole

¹ Written evidence PS 17

population but need to recognise the different motivation of sub-groups, by developing a range of complementary approaches.’²

10. According to Sport Wales, the trends in participation have remained steady over the past 25 years. Men are more likely to participate than women, particularly in formal club sport. Adults in ‘higher social grade’ households are more likely to participate, and younger adults are more likely to play sport than older adults.³

11. The National Union of Teachers (NUT) pointed out that the situation was particularly bleak at school level. It reported ‘a decline in the percentage of primary and secondary school children participating in sport or active recreation, with a 12% decline in secondary school pupil participation from 2009 to 2011.’⁴

12. According to the NUT:

“It is quite plain to see that the Government is not achieving the goals it set out to achieve in the *Programme for Government* which was, through Sport Wales, to widen participation in sport and programmes targeted at increasing physical activity.”⁵

Links with other physical activity programmes

13. Public Health Wales emphasised that ‘sport is only one aspect of physical activity and sits alongside active play, active recreation, active transport and work as other key contributors to active living.’⁶ It stated:

“Whilst there are numerous potential links...it is probably fair to say that these have not been fully exploited or realised.”⁷

14. The Welsh Sports Association (WSA) said that ‘links and collaborative work right across government could be improved’ and that ‘sport cannot deliver the significant behavioural change needed to deliver the targets in *Creating an Active Wales* without greater

² Written evidence PS 17

³ Written evidence PS 09

⁴ Written evidence PS 13

⁵ *ibid*

⁶ *ibid*

⁷ Written evidence PS 09

collaboration with education, children's services, health, transport, economic development and planning'.⁸

Steps being taken to improve participation levels

15. In its evidence, Sport Wales outlined how it believed its *Vision for Sport in Wales* (2010) could contribute to improving participation levels and performance in Welsh sport. The *Vision* commits to a step change in delivery, with Sport Wales becoming a 'high challenge, high support' organisation in terms of working with partners.

16. Sport Wales said that the *Vision* focuses on working with the sports that make the biggest difference, providing opportunities to thousands rather than hundreds of people, with investment aligned to maximize impact. It emphasises the need to collaborate and focus on community-based activities.

17. Sport Wales said it was 'enthusiastic about tackling these challenges with our partners in order to achieve our aspirations for Wales and its communities'. However, progress would entail being 'much more unreasonably ambitious' and that organisations within the sector would have to 'significantly change'.⁹

18. Public Health Wales suggested that after several decades of increasingly sedentary behaviour, 'there are emerging good practices and opportunities to start to redress the balance'. However, it emphasised that effecting change would be a long-term process.¹⁰

Evidence of progress

19. Sport Wales' School Sport Survey 2013 was published on 9 October 2013, after we had completed our evidence gathering. As such, we were unable to take account of the Survey's findings in our questioning of witnesses. The Survey's main finding was that the numbers of young people taking part in sport or physical activity three or more times a week had risen from 27% in 2011 to 40% in 2013.

20. The WSA told us:

"In the last year, significant increases have been seen in participation levels in sports such as gymnastics (25%),

⁸ Written evidence PS 07

⁹ Written evidence PS 09

¹⁰ Written evidence PS 17

swimming (39%), cycling (24%), boxing (33%) and athletics (12%), as well as a 20% increase in disability sports clubs.”¹¹

21. It asserted that these increases were ‘mostly the result of systematic and sustained efforts to improve the way that sport is delivered’. However, the WSA emphasised that ‘while there are some great examples of good progress, the work involved and the time lag before results are seen should not be underestimated’.¹²

22. According to Sport Wales:

“Overall we believe that the sector is moving in the right direction to increase participation in sport, recognising the barriers and challenges along the way.”¹³

Evidence from the Minister

23. The Minister for Culture and Sport (the Minister) acknowledged that the Welsh Government had ‘not made the progress that we would have liked to see’ in sport participation levels.¹⁴

24. Asked why this was the case, the Minister stated that ‘these are difficult matters across the world’ and that it was ‘a constant effort to try and drive up participation in physical activity’.

25. The Minister accepted that further work would be required across the Welsh Government and the sport sector to bring about the improvements that the Government is seeking. He stated:

“It is clear that we need to overcome the significant difficulties that exist of engaging more young people in particular on a more regular basis in both sport and physical activity. To achieve this, we need to join up our policies in a more co-ordinated fashion which will help us to become a fitter and healthier nation. There are of course some good examples of collaboration across Welsh Government portfolios but we can improve in this area and I will be working with my ministerial

¹¹ Written evidence PS 09

¹² *ibid*

¹³ *ibid*

¹⁴ RoP, para 5, 3 July 2013

colleagues to ensure that we drive forward our shared aims and objectives.”¹⁵

26. The Minister pointed out that the Welsh Government had established a Physical Activity Executive Group, ‘which will set a new direction to increase levels of physical activity’. Membership of the Group included the Sports Minister, the Minister for Health and Social Services and the Chief Medical Officer. Its role was to identify ways of achieving behavioural change and accelerating progress.¹⁶

27. The Minister’s Remit Letter to Sport Wales for 2013-14 refers to the need to ‘explore how we further mainstream physical activity within each Government portfolio and develop joint working streams through cross-Government collaboration’. This would entail Sport Wales and Public Health Wales producing a ‘joint delivery plan’ to increase levels of physical activity.

28. The Minister said that he has been considering the opportunities for improving access to the outdoors for physical activity, and that legislation may form part of the solution. Part of this agenda includes the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013, which seeks to make walking and cycling the normal way of making short journeys.¹⁷

Our View

29. Since we undertook our inquiry, we are pleased that the 2013 School Sport Survey indicates progress has been made in increasing sport participation rates among school children. We are also encouraged by the increases in participation in certain sports reported by the WSA.

30. We welcome the Minister’s commitment to joining up Welsh Government policies for physical activity. We would like further details from the Minister about the role of the Physical Activity Executive Group, including its aims and objectives and progress made to date in achieving these.

We recommend that the Minister publishes the joint delivery plan produced by Sport Wales and Public Health Wales, along with a

¹⁵ Written evidence PS 15

¹⁶ *ibid*

¹⁷ *ibid*

timetable for its implementation. This should include agreed outcomes by which the success of the plan will be measured.

31. We recognise the potential contribution the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 can make in terms of health and wellbeing. However, we reiterate the concerns raised during our scrutiny of the Welsh Government's 2014-15 draft budget about the effective implementation of the Act and accompanying Active Travel Action Plan with an allocation of only £0.3 million. We were disappointed that the Minister for Economy, Science and Transport was unwilling to discuss the Act in detail with the Committee, despite her Department being responsible for funding its implementation.

32. Finally, we welcome Sport Wales' aspirations around increasing participation in sport. Participation levels, in general, have remained static for a number of years and therefore we welcome the commitment to a step-change in delivery.

33. Nevertheless, we believe that further work is still needed to bring about the behavioural change required to fulfil the Welsh Government's commitment to widen participation in sport. While acknowledging that the problems are not unique to Wales, we believe that the Minister can take stronger action, and we were disappointed that his evidence did not seem to reflect the urgency with which this issue needs to be addressed.

34. Our report therefore makes a number of recommendations in three specific areas:

- datasets and statistics used to inform policies for sport;
- barriers facing specific groups of people from participating in sport;
- role of local authorities.

35. We believe that addressing these concerns could contribute significantly towards making Wales a fitter and healthier nation. In his response to this report, we expect the Minister to outline clearly what specific actions and steps he intends to take to address these issues.

2. Datasets and statistics

Sport Wales' surveys

36. Sport Wales runs two major surveys every other year: the Active Adults Survey and the School Sport Survey.

37. The latest School Sport Survey took place in the summer term of 2013 and canvassed the opinions of 110,000 school children from around 1,000 schools.

38. According to Sport Wales, the School Sport Survey 'is the largest survey of any kind of young people in the UK and is thought to be the largest survey of its kind in the world'. It is intended that data from this survey will enable Sport Wales and its partners 'to strategically monitor and track trends in sports participation and the provision of Physical Education (PE) and school sport'. The survey is also intended to provide 'a base of evidence from which to shape sports policy and practice'.¹⁸

39. The latest Active Adult Survey was commissioned by Sport Wales in 2012. The survey involves approximately 22,000 households and covers a number of topics including:

- participation in a range of sports and physical recreation activities;
- sports club membership and participation;
- volunteering in sport;
- participation in competitive sport;
- usage of leisure and fitness centres;
- barriers and motivation for participation in sport.

40. A range of demographic information is also collected for analysis, including gender, social class, age, disability and household structure.

41. According to Sport Wales, the Active Adult Survey is 'the most comprehensive source of information about the amount and types of sport and physical activity that adults in Wales do'.

¹⁸ www.sportwales.org.uk

Other surveys and data

42. The Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) explained that, in addition to the above surveys, data from the Welsh Health Survey, the Local Authority Partnership Agreement and the Wales Data Unit are also used to measure participation levels. It further explained that local authority 'Sports Development Data', which covered frequency of participation and provided analysis by age and gender, was fed into the Sport Wales research unit as part of the Local Authority Partnership Agreement.¹⁹

43. The WSA reported that National Governing Bodies' (NGBs) membership data is generally collected annually but only from people affiliated to NGBs or taking part in organised programmes. It explained that most sports can provide gender breakdown and an increasing number by disability and ethnicity, but socio-economic information is not normally collected.

44. According to the WSA, NGBs are increasingly using the data they hold to inform planning and decision making.²⁰ Sport Wales explained it had invested in shared research posts with NGBs to encourage them to identify and effectively use the data they hold.²¹

General comments on the surveys and data available

45. The Football Association of Wales (FAW) and Welsh Football Trust (WFT) emphasised the need for robust statistics to enable them 'to plan strategically by ensuring that time and resources are invested appropriately.' While both organisations used Sport Wales data as 'a basis to develop a picture of the current trends in Wales', they raised concern that 'it does not provide a strong enough base to implement strategic action at local level'.²²

46. Other concerns raised by the FAW and WFT in relation to the Sport Wales' surveys included the sampling methods used, the reliance on 'buy-in' from schools, the relevance of questions, and the frequency of the surveys.²³

¹⁹ Written evidence PS 05

²⁰ Written evidence PS 07

²¹ Written evidence PS 09

²² Written evidence PS 10

²³ *ibid*

47. While the FAW explained that it and other NGBs had been working with Sport Wales to review the questions in the surveys, it remained concerned that ‘there appears to be an unwillingness to move away from what has been done over the years’.²⁴

48. In commenting on the sample size used in the School Sport Survey, the NUT suggested they were insufficient to provide a true picture and that all primary and secondary school children should be included in the survey.²⁵

49. It believed that the surveys should be broken down into areas within each local authority in order to provide a clearer indication of who is participating and to help identify specific barriers to participation within those areas.²⁶

50. According to Public Health Wales:

“Improved higher quality, regular and comparable data would allow us to accurately identify the scope, scale, trends and comparators that should inform subsequent actions.”²⁷

51. It stated that recommendations on improving data collection had been made in the recent joint delivery plan prepared with Sport Wales.²⁸

52. Sport Wales reported it was aware of the criticisms in relation to the sample size used in its surveys but that it did not accept them. It explained that its School Sport Survey is ‘the largest survey of children that is undertaken in Wales on any topic’ and said that the sample size is significantly greater than that of comparative surveys conducted by the Welsh Government or its sponsored bodies.²⁹

53. It emphasised that, through its surveys, it was seeking to obtain information not only at a national or regional level, but at a local level, and in the case of the School Sport Survey at a school level, to enable

²⁴ Written evidence PS 10

²⁵ RoP, para 154, 27 June 2013

²⁶ RoP, para 152, 27 June 2013

²⁷ Written evidence PS 17

²⁸ *ibid*

²⁹ RoP, para 14, 19 June 2013

local authorities, their partners, and schools to use available data effectively.³⁰

54. In response to concerns that its surveys were not geographically representative, Sport Wales acknowledged that it was dependent on local authority and school buy-in, which varied ‘quite considerably’. It explained:

“We have put a lot more effort in this year to try and ensure that we get really comprehensive data in all of the authorities.”³¹

55. However, it went on to state that it was ‘struggling with a couple of the authorities’.³²

Data on participation amongst protected characteristic groups and discrimination

56. Diverse Cymru expressed concern about the ‘severe lack of information regarding participation levels’ of protected characteristic groups.³³

57. It also reported that there is ‘a perception that sexual orientation is irrelevant’ in the context of data collection and that ‘clubs do not know how to support LGBT individuals or promote that support’.³⁴

58. Show Racism the Red Card Wales queried the relevance of the questions in Sport Wales’ surveys and consultations to individuals from black and minority ethnic backgrounds.³⁵

59. It also questioned whether those involved in Sport Wales’ surveys and consultations reflected the diversity of the wider population in Wales.³⁶

60. Show Racism the Red Card Wales believed that the absence of research on discrimination in sport has been used as a reason not to tackle this issue. Show Racism the Red Card Wales had been advised that ‘to conduct a statistically viable survey would be too expensive’

³⁰ RoP, para 14, 19 June 2013

³¹ RoP, para 31, 19 June 2013

³² *ibid*

³³ Written evidence PS 02

³⁴ *ibid*

³⁵ RoP, para 12, 27 June 2013

³⁶ *ibid*

and it had also been unsuccessful in accessing research grant support. Despite this, it intended to undertake its own ‘small qualitative research initiative’ in relation to discrimination in sport.³⁷

61. Sport Wales confirmed that it did collect data in relation to black and minority ethnic groups and that the numbers involved were reflective of the ‘national average in terms of the numbers of individuals from a BME community’. However, it also acknowledged that ‘participation statistics on the BME population in Wales have always been difficult to obtain through the Active Adult Survey due to the small sample sizes in Wales’ and that ‘there is still room for improvement’.³⁸ The issue of discrimination in sport and barriers facing BME communities is considered in more detail in Chapter 4.

Evidence from the Minister

62. The Minister acknowledged the need ‘to take a very close look at the data that we generate – how useful they are, how specific they are to local circumstances and how broken down they are in terms of barriers to participation and different groupings in society’. He recognised that ‘there is a lot more information that could be provided’.³⁹ The Minister’s official acknowledged that surveys ‘are not, overall, giving us that level of confidence’ as to what the current trends are.⁴⁰

Our View

63. We recognise that there are a number of sources of data available for the purpose of measuring participation levels in sport, including the two surveys undertaken by Sport Wales. However, we are concerned about the differing views on the reliability of this data and the extent to which it can be used by organisations to plan strategically and to improve participation levels. In particular, we are concerned that our evidence suggests that the data available does not provide:

- sufficient detail that captures how deprivation impacts on participation levels;
- sufficient demographic analysis;

³⁷ Written evidence PS 04

³⁸ RoP, para 224, 19 June 2013

³⁹ RoP, para 23, 3 July 2013

⁴⁰ RoP, para 48, 3 July 2013

- sufficient detail on the participation levels of protected characteristic groups;
- sufficient analysis of the cultural barriers to participating in sport.

64. With specific regard to Sport Wales' School Sport Survey, we recognise the concerns raised by some respondents about the size, sample methodology and the reliability of data arising from the variance in response rates across local authorities. We also acknowledge the concerns raised about the relevance of the questions used within the surveys. We are aware that Sport Wales rejected these criticisms. However, in light of the evidence received, we believe that the methodologies used in conducting these surveys must be questioned.

65. We share the concerns raised in evidence about the lack of data about groups with protected characteristics. We would like to see more opportunities to engage with these communities being explored. In order to improve participation levels among BME communities, it is clear that it is important to identify and address their specific needs. This is unlikely to happen unless reliable data is available to inform this work. We understand that Public Health Wales has made recommendations about improving data collection in its joint delivery plan with Sport Wales.

In view of the above, we recommend that the Minister undertakes a review of all existing sources of data that measure participation levels in sport, including the methodology used in Sport Wales' surveys. The Minister's review should focus on addressing the concerns around the lack of data on how deprivation, demographics, protected characteristics and cultural barriers impact on participation levels. Any improvements that relate to the work of Sport Wales should be reflected in its future annual Remit Letters.

In relation to BME communities, we recommend that the Minister works with Sport Wales and relevant organisations to identify alternative and more effective means of data collection on levels of participation in sport within these communities.

3. Barriers and opportunities

Attitudes towards sport

66. The need for a cultural shift in attitude towards sport was identified as a key barrier to participation by a number of respondents.

67. Sport Wales referred to the need to ‘shift Welsh culture’ but acknowledged that changing sedentary behaviour would not be easy and that ‘sophisticated marketing and innovative programmes’ would be required, which go beyond traditional approaches.⁴¹

68. It outlined the need for providers to overcome three specific challenges, namely a lack of knowledge about what is available where; a lack of understanding or skills to participate in an activity; and access to appropriate equipment.⁴²

69. The WSA also highlighted the need for ‘significant attitudinal shift’ and for participation in sport to become ‘a social norm’. It believed that ‘significant campaigning and good cooperation right across public sector, third sector and commercial partners’ was required in order to effect change.⁴³

Sport in the school environment

70. Sport Wales emphasised the importance of school in shaping attitudes towards sport. It stated:

“The first experience of sport is absolutely crucial for planting the seeds for a lifelong participation and schools are absolutely central to this.”⁴⁴

71. It believed that good schools value sport ‘as part of a rounded curriculum, rather than simply as an add-on’.⁴⁵

72. Sport Wales reported that a significant number of children are dissuaded from participation in sport as a result of their experiences in school and, as such it was important ‘to get the offer [of sport] in and around school right’. To address this, Sport Wales emphasised the

⁴¹ Written evidence PS 09

⁴² *ibid*

⁴³ Written evidence PS 07

⁴⁴ Written evidence PS 09

⁴⁵ *ibid*

need to 'provide children and young people with the skills to participate in sport' and 'ensure that the delivery of sport in school is inclusive'. It also emphasised the role of the head teacher in 'setting the right ethos' and the need for confident, appropriately trained teachers.⁴⁶

73. The NUT suggested that the provision of suitable facilities was crucial in improving participation levels and that funding was the 'main crux of everything'.⁴⁷ It raised concern that future constraints in school budgets will mean that head teachers are unable to provide high-quality facilities.⁴⁸

74. The NUT believed that, in order to engage children and young people, it was important for schools to offer a wide range of physical activities and sports that they enjoyed, particularly when trying to engage older girls. However, it cited 'workload pressures' of teachers as why they were unable to focus their efforts on 'increasing participation levels in lessons and extracurricular activities'.⁴⁹

75. The WSA believed that greater priority should be given to sport in schools given its importance in 'establish[ing] skills and habits that provide the basis for their adult behaviour'.⁵⁰ It suggested a number of ways in which this could be achieved, including improved time for PE in initial teacher training and better links between schools and local clubs.⁵¹

Barriers for women and girls

76. A number of witnesses referred to the need to address participation levels among older girls. According to the School Sport Survey 2011, there was a 'dramatic tail off in enjoyment of school sport from female pupils'.⁵² The trend was again evident in the 2013 School Sport Survey, which showed that 44% of boys are taking part frequently in sport compared with 36% of girls.

⁴⁶ Written evidence PS 09

⁴⁷ RoP, para 89, 20 June 2013

⁴⁸ RoP, para 168, 20 June

⁴⁹ RoP, para 97, 27 June 2013

⁵⁰ Written evidence PS 07

⁵¹ *ibid*

⁵² Written evidence PS 09

77. Sport Wales reported that, while sport may be valued by female pupils, it is not meeting their needs as they get older.⁵³

78. Reasons given for this included having fewer sports available (so they became repetitive and boring); less of an emphasis on enjoyment and more on technical skills; and a focus on competitiveness that went against their preference for enjoyment and sociability.⁵⁴

79. According to Sport Wales, this needs to be addressed by ‘firstly not losing [them] from sport, and secondly ensuring that there is an offer that enables them to return if they do drift away for a time’. It reported that ‘Women and Girls’ was Sport Wales’ ‘corporate priority theme’ for the coming year. It was establishing a task and finish group ‘to scrutinise [its] work’ and was working with NGBs and local authorities to identify ways to meet the needs of women and girls.⁵⁵

80. The NUT explained that, while younger girls (years 7, 8 and 9) were ‘really keen’ to participate in hockey and netball, by years 10 and 11, they tended to drop out.⁵⁶ The NUT believed that the main reasons behind this were body image and the lack of availability of their preferred activities, such as ‘fitness work or dance’.⁵⁷

Barriers for disabled people

81. Disability Sport Wales emphasised that there had been considerable growth in sport provision for disabled people over recent years.⁵⁸

82. Despite this progress, Disability Sport Wales reported that a number of barriers remained, including costs; the location of facilities; the need to increase the capacity of mainstream clubs; perceptions around disability and sport; dependency on others for transport; media representation and coverage; marketing materials; and accessibility and carer attitudes.⁵⁹

83. In addition, Disability Wales stated that provision of sport in schools for disabled people was a ‘critical issue’ and a key area for

⁵³ Written evidence PS 09

⁵⁴ *ibid*

⁵⁵ *ibid*

⁵⁶ Written evidence PS 13

⁵⁷ RoP, 27 June 2013, para 93

⁵⁸ Written evidence PS 14

⁵⁹ *ibid*

development.⁶⁰ Similarly, the NUT expressed concern that cuts to schools' budgets meant it was 'very difficult for schools to spend what is required in order to ensure that they can provide the same [sporting opportunities] for disabled and non-disabled pupils'.

84. In commenting on barriers to participation for disabled people, Diverse Cymru stated:

"not only is there still a lack of understanding of the variety of sports which cater for different impairments and individual skills, but many sports clubs assume that disabled people can only play disability sports."⁶¹

85. It suggested that meant a lack of consideration by mainstream clubs to issues such as accessibility and inclusion. It emphasised the need for stronger communication and links between disability sport organisations and mainstream sports clubs.⁶²

Barriers for poorer socio-economic groups

86. According to Sport Wales' surveys, 'young people living in deprived areas are less likely to participate in sport than their peers'.⁶³ Similarly, Public Health Wales stated:

"sport participation is influenced by a range of factors but there is good evidence to suggest a relationship with social and economic demography as those from deprived communities tend to have lower participation rates than those from more affluent communities."⁶⁴

87. It believed that the reasons for this were 'complex' but that it was 'reasonable to assume' that the costs of club membership, facilities and equipment were contributing factors.⁶⁵

88. Sport Wales explained that one of the aims of its Child Poverty Strategy (2012) is to increase participation levels of children and young people living in poverty.

⁶⁰ RoP, para 267, 19 June 2013

⁶¹ Written evidence PS 02

⁶² *ibid*

⁶³ Written evidence PS 09

⁶⁴ Written evidence PS 17

⁶⁵ *ibid*

89. Sport Wales reported it had increased its funding to £150,000 per year for the StreetGames initiative, which delivers opportunities for the most deprived children and young people in Wales. In addition, it was exploring the possibility of work on 'changing behaviour and approach to sport' in Communities First areas, and was working closely with the charity sported., which seeks to provide funding for sporting activities in deprived communities.⁶⁶

90. The NUT believed that, if successful, Sport Wales' Community Sport Strategy 'could have a major impact' on participation levels in sport and provided a 'great opportunity...to get children who come from low income families and who are living in poverty active and into sport'.⁶⁷

91. Like Sport Wales, Public Health Wales emphasised the need to address the 'general lack of awareness of local facilities and opportunities' amongst those living in deprived communities'. As such, it was 'crucial' to provide 'easily identifiable and accessible accurate, trusted and comprehensive local information' to communities in order to encourage participation. Public Health Wales reported it had made recommendations to this effect in its joint delivery plan with Sport Wales.

Barriers for LGBT people

92. Diverse Cymru stated there was 'an urgent need to place tackling homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in sports on the same footing and priority as tackling racism in sport'. It identified the lack of LGBT role models amongst professional sportsmen and women as a key barrier and pointed out that 'many sports professionals are still fearful of the reaction of fans if they come out'.⁶⁸

93. Sport Wales reported that, it had undertaken qualitative research with Stonewall Cymru on the views of LGBT individuals about sport in Wales. According to Sport Wales:

"research revealed that whilst many lesbian, gay and bisexual people are interested in sport (94% of those who responded), they have also been put off by negative experiences or the

⁶⁶ Written evidence PS 09

⁶⁷ Written evidence PS 13

⁶⁸ Written evidence PS 01

perception that it is an unpleasant and unsafe environment for gay people.”⁶⁹

94. It said more needed to be done to encourage clubs ‘to become more LGBT friendly’ and to create ‘more LGBT specific clubs where there is demand’. As a result of its research, Sport Wales said that it was launching a Sport Charter and had already established an LGBT Sport Forum, which included representatives of most major sports in Wales. These were intended to ‘act as a platform for discussion and action on issues relating to sexuality in sport’.⁷⁰

Barriers for BME people

95. Sport Wales said its research had identified a number of factors that appear to create barriers for BME communities in accessing sporting opportunities, including: facilities at some leisure centres were unsuitable for women of certain faiths; family responsibilities and childcare was a barrier for some women; and discrimination. It had also highlighted the need to develop more family-based activities to raise participation.⁷¹

96. Sport Wales reported it had recently set up a BME forum in South East Wales (working with StreetGames) to bring together partners delivering sport to BME communities, in order to share good practice and support access.⁷²

97. However, Show Racism the Red Card Wales said that the barriers facing those from BME backgrounds from participating in sport in Wales is a complex issue and that ‘there is a tendency to simplify and stereotype the different communities without a real comprehension of these communities’ aspirations and culture.’⁷³

98. It outlined a number of factors affecting the participation of minority ethnic communities in sport. These included racism and discrimination, and the unwillingness of institutions to tackle discrimination on and off playing areas; the lack of role models and safe play environments; the struggle between eastern and western aspirations for young minority ethnic people; and the failure of sports

⁶⁹ Written evidence PS 09

⁷⁰ *ibid*

⁷¹ *ibid*

⁷² *ibid*

⁷³ Written evidence PS 04

organisers to adapt and amend their practices to the cultural and religious beliefs of communities and families.⁷⁴

99. In providing sporting opportunities for BME communities, Show Racism the Red Card Wales emphasised the need ‘to engage these communities on their own terms’.⁷⁵

100. It also believed strongly that sports organisations and governing bodies needed to acknowledge and tackle racism and discrimination. It asserted that ‘the problem is a lack of leadership, and unwillingness to accept that racism exists and organisations who hope the matter will go away even when it is raised with them’.⁷⁶

101. Show Racism the Red Card Wales reported that sport organisations in Wales are not being directly challenged on actions they are taking to address discrimination;⁷⁷ that Sport Wales’s advisory group of 14 did not have one BME representative;⁷⁸ and that there has never been a detailed programme to target BME communities in terms of sport and physical activity.⁷⁹

102. It emphasised the need for a thorough investigation into why people from BME backgrounds are not participating in sport, including the links between this and wider health issues facing those communities.⁸⁰

103. Show Racism the Red Card Wales reported that ‘there is only one BME physical education teacher in Wales’.⁸¹

Evidence from the Minister

104. In commenting on the significance of the school experience to improving participation levels, the Minister emphasised the work of the Schools and Physical Activity Task and Finish Group, which he believed would help ‘future proof’ sport in education. The Group has recommended making sport a core part of the school curriculum in

⁷⁴ Written evidence PS 04

⁷⁵ *ibid*

⁷⁶ *ibid*

⁷⁷ *ibid*

⁷⁸ RoP, para 12, 27 June 2013

⁷⁹ RoP, para 58, 27 June 2013

⁸⁰ RoP, para 76, 27 June 2013

⁸¹ RoP, para 31, 27 June 2013

Wales. The Minister advised that the Welsh Government would provide its response to the findings of the Group in due course.⁸²

105. The Minister stated that Sport Wales' Community Sport Strategy and Child Poverty Strategy 'lay solid foundations which will help to meet our challenge of increasing participation rates' in deprived communities.⁸³ He emphasised the need to ensure that 'evaluation, monitoring and target-setting indicators are robust' in order to measure the effectiveness of the Strategies in improving participation levels.⁸⁴

106. The Minister said that Sport Wales was undertaking further research on barriers to participation for BME communities, which would enable the Government to 'be in a more evidence based position to take policy forward' in this area.⁸⁵

107. The Minister recognised that raising awareness among key partners and governing bodies of the barriers to participation for BME communities was 'a starting point'. He acknowledged that work would be required 'over a sustained period of time' to address these barriers. The Minister stated he would be interested to work further with Show Racism the Red Card Wales on these matters.⁸⁶

108. The Minister provided assurance that the Welsh Government took allegations of racial discrimination in sport 'extremely seriously' and 'would require it to be dealt with in no uncertain terms'.⁸⁷

109. The Minister welcomed the progress made with regard to disability sport and the 'impressive increases in participation generally'. However, he acknowledged 'there is further work to be done and further improvement to be made'. He believed that the report of the Schools and Physical Activity Task and Finish Group, and subsequent work, 'will address sport and physical education in schools across the piece for all pupils'.⁸⁸

110. The Minister said that Sport Wales had undertaken some 'interesting' and 'valuable' work on sexuality and participation in

⁸² RoP, para 7, 3 July 2013

⁸³ Written evidence PS 15

⁸⁴ RoP, para 69, 3 July 2013

⁸⁵ RoP, para 27, 3 July 2013

⁸⁶ RoP, para 84 - 90, 3 July 2013

⁸⁷ RoP, para 86, 3 July 2013

⁸⁸ RoP, para 95, 3 July 2013

sport, working with Stonewall, to ensure that LGBT people ‘can enjoy participating in sport and they can feel safe, welcome and free from discrimination’.⁸⁹

Our View

111. We note that the Welsh Government is considering whether to make Physical Education (PE) a core subject on the Welsh curriculum in schools. We believe that this decision is crucial in increasing the importance of sport in schools for pupils. We look forward to the Government’s response and ask the Minister to report back to the Committee at the first available opportunity.

112. We note the suggestion that there is a need for improved teacher training in PE and for schools to seek ways to engage all pupils in sport and physical activity. We expect these matters to be addressed by the Government in its response to the Schools and Physical Activity Task and Finish Group report.

We were concerned to hear about the lack of BME Physical Education teachers in Wales. We recommend that the Welsh Government gives further consideration to addressing this.

113. We also believe that Sport Wales and the Welsh Government should consider whether sufficient opportunities are available to children and young people to take part in sporting activities through the medium of Welsh.

114. We share the concerns raised about the barriers to participation in sport faced by lower socio-economic groups, particularly financial barriers. We welcome Sport Wales’ Community Sport Strategy and Child Poverty Strategy, which we agree have the potential to address some of the barriers identified in evidence.

To this end, we recommend that the Minister works with Sport Wales to define and publish the outcomes by which the success of its Community Sport Strategy and Child Poverty Strategy will be measured. We further recommend that robust arrangements are put in place to monitor and evaluate the success of these Strategies, and to understand their impact on participation levels.

⁸⁹ Written evidence PS 15

115. We note that the joint delivery plan to increase levels of physical activity prepared by Public Health Wales and Sport Wales includes recommendations to address the lack of local information within deprived communities on leisure facilities and opportunities to take part in sporting activities. We refer to our request for the publication of the plan, which should include details on the Government's response to recommendations to improve the provision of information within deprived communities.

We recommend that the Minister works with Sport Wales to put in place a programme to identify and subsequently address the barriers to participation in sport that are specific to people from BME backgrounds. This should include undertaking research to better understand what these barriers are.

Following on from this, we recommend that the Minister publishes an action plan setting out how he intends to improve participation levels among people in BME communities. This should include a set of measureable outcomes.

116. We recognise the concerns from witnesses about the need to tackle homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in sports. While we welcome the work being undertaken by Sport Wales, it was clear from their evidence that they acknowledge the need for further work on this. We believe it will be important for Sport Wales to build on the work it has undertaken to address barriers to participation for LGBT people, and particularly in the way it engages with National Governing Bodies in this respect. We look forward to seeing further progress in this area.

In relation to women and girls, we recommend the Minister ensures that further work is undertaken to identify ways to encourage girls to participate in sport. This should include research into the types of sport or activities that appeal specifically to girls, and the factors affecting their participation.

117. We welcome the inclusion of women and girls' participation in sport as a corporate priority for Sport Wales and look forward to progress being made in this area.

4. The role of local authorities

Financial pressures

118. The WLGA told the Committee that ‘cuts over the last few years do not appear to have had a major impact on the use of [leisure] facilities’⁹⁰ as authorities ‘have been identifying more efficient and effective delivery models for their sport and leisure services’, including outsourcing services to contractors or trusts.⁹¹

119. The WLGA recognized the concern that leisure services were vulnerable to budget cuts, but it made clear that authorities ‘value them highly’ and understand the importance of these services to the public.⁹²

120. However, the WLGA did acknowledge that future budget reductions could impact on service provision and that of particular concern was ‘whether [local authorities] will have people on the ground’.⁹³

121. The WSA raised concern that, as budget pressures increase, local authority sport and leisure provision would be ‘at risk of being further diminished simply because it is an easy target for cuts’. It suggested consideration should be given to placing a statutory duty on local authorities to provide sport and leisure services.

Collaboration to deliver sport and leisure services

122. Sport Wales highlighted the need for greater collaboration between local authorities both at a regional and national level in the delivery of sport and leisure services.⁹⁴ It stated that increased budget reductions had led to some local authorities ‘doing things differently and working more collectively’, but that this was ‘not common across Wales’.

123. Sport Wales reported that some progress had been made with Chief Officers of Recreation and Leisure agreeing outcome based indicators for sport in terms of local authority collaboration. It referred to the establishment of a National Peer Group to scrutinise this work.

⁹⁰ RoP, para 191, 27 June 2013

⁹¹ Written evidence PS 05

⁹² RoP, para 193, 27 June 2013

⁹³ RoP, para 191, 27 June 2013

⁹⁴ Written evidence PS09

However, it stated that in general ‘progress has probably been slower than we would have liked’.⁹⁵

124. Sport Wales thought that improvements in collaboration will require ‘in many instances, a ministerial lead’ and will be determined by political decisions in relation to the future modelling of local government.⁹⁶

Increasing provision of sports facilities

125. Many witnesses emphasised that the availability of community facilities was critical to participation levels.

126. Public Health Wales stated:

“Fundamentally, there needs to be a major push on providing access to a wide range of community sports, recreation and physical activity opportunities that are cheap, easy to get to, [and] run by enthusiastic champions.”⁹⁷

127. The WSA emphasised the importance of a whole community approach to the planning of leisure facilities to ensure that the needs of communities were met.⁹⁸

128. Sport Wales also said that it was encouraging NGBs to collaborate ‘across sports and with local authorities’, in particular when planning future facilities.⁹⁹

129. On the issue of community-focused schools opening up their provision for community use, the NUT highlighted that teachers should not be expected to staff facilities after school hours. It believed that providing wider community access to school sport and leisure facilities was the responsibility of local authorities.¹⁰⁰

130. The WLGA stated that schools were ‘an important resource in the local community’ and that ‘there are exceptionally good examples where access for the local community has been highly successful’.¹⁰¹ According to the WLGA, ‘much of the investment that has gone on in

⁹⁵ Written evidence PS 09

⁹⁶ RoP, para 56, 19 June 2013

⁹⁷ Written evidence PS 17

⁹⁸ Written evidence PS 07

⁹⁹ Written evidence PS 09

¹⁰⁰ RoP, para 174, 27 June 2013

¹⁰¹ RoP, para 196, 27 June 2013

the past few years in some authorities has been very much around that community focus'.¹⁰² It explained that authorities worked closely with schools with on-site sport and leisure facilities and had service level agreements in place, which were regularly reviewed.¹⁰³

Free Swimming Scheme

131. The Welsh Government's Free Swimming Scheme was launched in 2003. The Government currently spends £3.5 million a year to provide free swimming for those aged 16 and under during weekends and school holidays, and people aged 60 and over outside school holidays. There is a commitment in the *Programme for Government* to extend the Scheme to veterans and serving armed forces personnel on leave.

132. The *Programme for Government's* latest annual report stated that while the take up of free swimming for the over 60s has continued to increase, 'it has declined for children as the approach has shifted to the promotion of formal sessions such as swimming lessons'.

133. Several respondents highlighted the valuable contribution of the Free Swimming Scheme with the aim of increasing participation levels.

134. The End Child Poverty Network (ECPN) Cymru stated:

"Participating in free swimming lessons for children and young people can potentially set a lifelong trend to being physically active and healthy."¹⁰⁴

135. It reported that 4.3 million free swimming sessions for children and young people had been undertaken between 2004 and 2010. However, it also acknowledged the recent drop in participation levels, which showed that the number of free public swims by those aged under 16 had decreased from 807,837 in 2004-5 to 421,076 in 2012-13.¹⁰⁵

136. As a result of work it had undertaken on participation levels, the ECPN Cymru recommended that the Welsh Government undertake a full evaluation of the Free Swimming Scheme. It also recommended that the Government should address the variance in application of the Scheme in different local authorities. It called on local authorities to

¹⁰² RoP, para 195, 27 June 2013

¹⁰³ RoP, para 196, 27 June 2013

¹⁰⁴ Written evidence PS 12

¹⁰⁵ *ibid*

address the additional costs of swimming outside the scheme. It further called on the Government to monitor the impact on the Scheme of leisure centre closures and the outsourcing of leisure services.¹⁰⁶

137. The WLGA explained that variance in local authority delivery was sometimes due to the type of pools available. It asserted that all authorities were ‘actually performing, in terms of delivering free swimming, way beyond any budget given.’ It pointed out that percentages of children in Wales under the age of 11 who can swim had increased substantially, and that ‘the picture in Wales has changed quite radically over the last two or three years’, especially if you compare the percentages for Wales against those for England.¹⁰⁷

138. Sport Wales pointed out that the National Curriculum expects all children to be able to swim by the age of 11, but that this expectation was not being met. It believed that this was an issue of prioritisation, which was ultimately a matter for Ministers.¹⁰⁸

139. Sport Wales also reported ‘quite significant differences across local authorities’ in the number of children who could swim. However, it said that authorities had ‘made a commitment to address the issue’.¹⁰⁹

Evidence from the Minister

140. The Minister said he was ‘very concerned’ about the financial challenges faced by local authorities and the implications of these on the provision of leisure facilities. He stated that authorities were ‘very committed’ to the provision of sport and leisure services but emphasised the ‘pressing need’ for them to find better ways of delivering services.¹¹⁰

141. In commenting on the role of the Welsh Government in encouraging collaboration between local authorities in the provision of sport and leisure services, the Minister explained he was ‘trying to drive forward’ the Simpson agenda. He stated that changes were taking place and that these were, in part, being driven by the current financial climate. However, he recognised that further work was

¹⁰⁶ Written evidence PS 12

¹⁰⁷ RoP, para 207 – 208, 27 June 2013

¹⁰⁸ RoP, para 100, 19 June 2013

¹⁰⁹ *ibid*

¹¹⁰ RoP, para 53, 3 July 2013

required to improve collaboration and joint working across authorities.¹¹¹

142. The Minister accepted that the extent of community-focused schools varied across local authorities. He emphasised that, in light of existing financial pressures, it made ‘perfect sense to use our existing [school] buildings to a greater extent for sport, leisure and physical activity’. The Minister recognised that improvements could be made in the use of school facilities by the wider community and stated he would be ‘keen’ to work with the Minister for Education and Skills on this matter.¹¹²

143. The Minister also highlighted the need for Sport Wales, governing bodies and local authorities to work together when considering the provision of facilities.¹¹³

144. The Minister acknowledged that ‘patchiness between local authorities is an issue’ in terms of the number of 11-year-olds who can swim and the need to ensure greater consistency across all local authorities.¹¹⁴

Our view

145. In the current financial climate and the context of the Local Government Settlement for 2014-15, it is clear that authorities will be expected to work with reduced budgets for the foreseeable future. We are therefore concerned about the implications of budget reductions for the provision of sport and leisure services and any subsequent impact on participation levels.

146. Despite there being no statutory duty on local authorities to provide sport and leisure services, we note that there is widespread agreement that spending on such services can form a major part of preventative strategies, particularly with regard to health.

In view of this, we recommend that the Minister works with the Minister for Local Government and Government Business to assess the impact of the reductions in local authority budgets on sport and leisure services, in particular on access and affordability.

¹¹¹ RoP, para 51, 3 July 2013

¹¹² RoP, para 60, 3 July 2013

¹¹³ RoP, para 77, 3 July 2013

¹¹⁴ RoP, para 103, 3 July 2013

147. Whilst we await the Welsh Government's response to the report of the Commission on Public Service Governance and Delivery, we believe it is essential for the Minister, along with the Minister for Local Government and Government Business, to provide a clear steer to local authorities with regard to the provision of sport and leisure services.

148. Given the importance of ensuring that communities have access to leisure facilities that meet their needs, we believe that more could be done to ensure that maximum use is made of community and public facilities to provide sporting opportunities for all (e.g. the use of school facilities outside school hours).

We recommend that the Minister and Sport Wales work with local authorities to identify opportunities to increase and improve access to leisure facilities across Wales.

149. In relation to the Free Swimming Scheme, we note the differing views on the success of the Scheme and of progress made to date in improving the number of children under the age of 11 who can swim. We are concerned about the evidence of variance in provision across local authorities.

We recommend that the Minister undertake a review of the Free Swimming Scheme in order to identify areas where take-up is low and the reasons for this, and report back to us on his findings.

We further recommend that the Minister works with local authorities to address the variance in the provision of free swimming across Wales. The Minister should also publish an action plan setting out how he intends to increase the number of children under the age of 11 who can swim.

Witnesses

The following witnesses provided oral evidence to the Committee on the dates noted below. Transcripts of all oral evidence sessions can be viewed in full at:

www.senedd.assemblywales.org/mglIssueHistoryHome.aspx?lId=1306

19 June 2013

Dr Huw Jones, Chief Executive	Sport Wales
Sarah Powell, Corporate Director	Sport Wales
Anne Hamilton, General Manager	Welsh Sports Association
Jon Morgan, Executive Director	Disability Sport Wales
Michelle Daltry, Partnership Manager	Disability Sport Wales

27 June 2013

Sunil Patel, Campaign Manager	Show Racism the Red Card Wales
Ashok Ahir, Welsh Advisory Committee Member	Show Racism the Red Card Wales
Stuart Williams, Unions Principal Officer	National Union of Teachers
Peter Gomer, Policy Advisor, Leisure, Culture and Heritage	Welsh Local Government Association
Iwan Davies, Head of Culture, Tourism and Recreation	Welsh Local Government Association

3 July 2013

John Griffiths AM	Minister for Culture and Sport
Huw Brodie, Director, Culture and Sport Division	Welsh Government
Jon Beynon, Senior Sports Policy Advisor	Welsh Government
Edwina Hart AM	Minister for Economy, Science and Transport

26 September 2013

Jonathan Ford

Chief Executive, Football
Association of Wales

Neil Ward

Chief Executive, Welsh Football
Association Trust

Llyr Roberts

Research & Evaluation
Manager, Football Association
Wales

List of written evidence

The following people and organisations provided written evidence to the Committee. All written evidence can be viewed in full at:

www.senedd.assemblywales.org/mglIssueHistoryHome.aspx?Ild=6360

Organisation	Reference
Bridgend County Borough Council	PS 01
Diverse Cymru	PS 02
Pembrokeshire County Council	PS 03
Show Racism the Red Card Wales	PS 04
Welsh Local Government Association	PS 05
Powys County Council	PS 06
Welsh Sports Association	PS 07
Sported.	PS 08
Sport Wales	PS 09
Football Association of Wales & Welsh Football Trust	PS 10
Cricket Wales	PS 11
End Child Poverty Network Cymru	PS 12
National Union of Teachers	PS 13
Disability Sport Wales	PS 14
Minister for Culture and Sport	PS 15
Minister for Economy, Science and Transport	PS 16
Public Health Wales	PS 17