**Health, Social Care and Sport Committee**

**Inquiry into the Physical Activity of Children and Young People – focus group discussion with stakeholders, Jan 25th 2018**

**Committee Discussions with representatives of Welsh Rugby Union, Welsh Sports Association, Glamorgan Cricket & Cricket Wales, and Welsh Netball**

**More information is available here:**

**[Senedd Committee Inquiry into Physical Activity of Children and Young People](http://senedd.assembly.wales/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=19490)**

**Experiences for children**

* The first experience for a young person is key, and that first experience is often within the school environment.
* Sport and activity should be fun, social and enjoyable and then children will continue doing it.
* We need to encourage children to ‘have a go’, and we need to encourage and promote team work.
* The majority of children won’t end up on a podium so it’s important that there is a focus on fun activities for the majority.
* There should be less emphasis on technical skills.
* It’s important to highlight and talk about personal success and achievement.
* We need to enable children to feel personally responsible for getting their 1 hour of activity done each day.
* We need to signpost schoolchildren to activities outside of school.

**Traditional gender defined roles and how to increase participation by girls**

* Times have changed and we shouldn’t now have boy sports and girl sports.
* Women role models are really important to encouraging girls to take-up and continue with sports and other activities.
* For girls in particular, the activities have to be fun and sociable.
* We need to consider the language and terms used, i.e. refer to ‘activity’ and not ‘sport’ when talking to girls.
* Buddy systems are really important, particularly for girls.
* Our Squad – evidence shows girls are more likely to do something if they have a buddy. WRU developed a ‘bring your bestie’ hashtag for social media when promoting events.

**The parents and family**

* Parental experience has a massive impact on the participation and enthusiasm of children. Dr Camilla Knight (Swansea University) is looking at parental experiences and parental engagement.
* We really need to educate the parents.
* We need to break down traditional role expectations, i.e. a dad can be a netball coach
* Family support is needed; you cannot just look to improve the school experience.

**The school experience**

* In terms of the school experience we need to concentrate the efforts on primary schools, where the number and quality of opportunities need to improve.
* Culture of schools and the quality of provision is critical.
* There’s a limited menu of sporting activities on offer in schools; a broader menu is needed.
* There’s a postcode lottery with schools; leadership is really important and can have an adverse or positive impact.
* KPIs needed - quantitative measuring of how much schools are delivering; qualitative measuring of what the schools are offering and what is the feedback from children.
* A holistic school commitment is needed.
* Schools should be incentivised to deliver more physical activity.
* Afterschool childcare acts as a barrier for parents; schools could deliver activity opportunities after school for free.
* Enhanced school day should be investigated, not just for PE, but time should be made available for exposure to varied physical and cultural activities.
* PE mustn’t be seen as a chore; it must be fun.
* Daily mile should be linked with technology, i.e. class Fitbit, and carry results through to other lessons for investigation, i.e. IT lessons.
* Class Fitbit – e.g. how many steps has Charlie done today; can we work out which lessons he was in when he walked the most.
* Pilot in a school in Monmouthshire – the IT department has offered drones to monitor activities in PE lessons.
* We should investigate incentivising extra-curricular/general involvement from children in physical activity.

**The role of teachers**

* One main problem = not all teachers in primary school are qualified PE teachers, or have adequate training, and aren’t able to deliver quality experiences.
* Activity levels in primary schools is varied and patchy, and dependent on the training/experience of the responsible teacher(s).
* Teacher training is key.

**The curriculum**

* Physical literacy is key.
* Physical literacy should be embedded into the school curriculum; this would deliver the requirements and follow the spirit of the Well-being of Future Generations Act.
* Sport and physical activity should be part of the core curriculum, and assessed by Estyn.
* If schools aren’t assessed on something they’re not pushed to deliver.
* Opportunities for physical activity shouldn’t be confined to PE lessons.

**The role of sports groups/organisations**

* Sports groups/organisations focus on experiences in the community.
* Collaborative working across all sporting groups is needed.
* StreetGames and Parkrun are great initiatives; we need more of these.
* There’s a need to define what each sport could do really well to improve the common experience for all children.
* Schools should allow sports groups/organisations into schools to deliver/support classes.
* Sport groups/organisations can help with more formal education; they can go into schools to deliver sport/activity lessons.
* Example – one Cardiff cricket club offered to go into schools in Cardiff to deliver cricket lessons/cricket-based activities, however only two replied; one said ‘no thanks’ and the other did not accept the offer because ‘cricket’ wasn’t something Estyn assessed.
* Sport Wales is pushing physical literacy.
* Sports groups could work with the BMA and RCN to educate staff, who can then inform their patients.

**The role of the community**

* We should open schools up to the community, and turn the school into a hub.
* Holland, New Zealand and Australia use the community as a hub.
* Great example in Hampshire – school building keys are handed over to a social enterprise at the end of the official school day, and the enterprise then arranges and hosts activities for the community. This example has proper legal and governance structures in place
* Schools should open-up facilities to the community; we know there is resistance from schools to do this.
* We should map the facilities on offer in our communities.
* Local authorities closing local recreation facilities isn’t helping the wider problem.

**The role of technology and the media**

* Social media is really important; this has already been evidenced in American public health research.
* We need to make more use of technology.
* We need a national ‘big picture’ campaign which appears in traditional media and social media.
* Our Squad needs better funding to make it a national campaign that gets into every home.
* More media coverage is needed to promote good examples; the red button coverage has shown to work with netball.

**The role of Government and public bodies**

* Schools/Government need to listen to children and what they want to do.
* We need change on a national level in order to achieve dramatic impact. • Infrastructure isn’t conducive to cycling or walking as commuting options.
* National Resources Wales, Public Health Wales and Sport Wales are coming together but it’s too slow and needs to happen quicker.
* Public Health Wales hasn’t co-ordinated the effort to join things up; it isn’t interested in what sport/physical activity can offer. The MoU between Public Health Wales and Sport Wales has no effect.
* Public health priority isn’t prevention; it’s very risk averse.
* The health sector wants more and more evidence that physical activity works as a prevention measure.
* Social prescribing is important; we should sign post people to activities in their area. Frontline NHS staff are an untapped resource.
* Cost is a huge barrier, but the activities needn’t be expensive, and we need to work smarter because it’s not all about more money.
* Red/amber/green labelling is needed for sport and activities, i.e 30 minutes of tag burns enough calories for a chocolate bar.