

Calls 4 Action: Tackling Poverty

Why are we focussing on children living in poverty?

At Sport Wales, our aspiration is to get every child hooked on sport for life and for Wales to be a nation of champions. We strongly believe that sport has an important role to play in improving the life chances and raising the aspirations of children and young people living in poverty.

Poverty results in poorer educational, health and behavioural outcomes for individuals. Poverty imposes enormous costs on society from lower economic productivity, reduced social cohesion and increased demands on public services such as health care and children's services. The lower level of skills; poor health and poverty of ambition that deprivation brings with it are a brake on the potential of the Welsh economy¹. Eradicating child poverty by 2020 remains a fundamental priority for the Welsh Government and this commitment is reflected in their document 'Tackling Child Poverty: Guidance and Regulations for Welsh Authorities'².

Child poverty limits aspiration, curtails life experience and results in fewer opportunities for the future. Children growing up in poverty experience worse health outcomes, educational attainment and economic prospects than their more affluent peers.

We know that children and adults from more deprived communities are less likely to participate in sporting activities. Addressing poverty and inequality among children and young people is crucial not only to their own opportunity to make the most of their lives but to what they are able to contribute to wider society³. Sport Wales believes that everyone in Wales should enjoy the positive benefits that regular participation in sport brings, regardless of background and circumstances.

The current picture of participation

Since 2011, the School Sport Survey has captured frequency of participation, allowing us to explore the number of occasions per week pupils take part in organised sport and recreation, outside of the curriculum. In Wales, 40% of pupils across Years 3 to 11 take part in organised activity other than in curriculum time (i.e. extracurricular or club sport) on three or more occasions per week. The Vision for Sport in Wales refers to this as being '*hooked on sport*'.

Although greater numbers of pupils are now taking part frequently in sport, there are gaps and inequalities in participation levels and the ability to access sport that remain. In the School Sport Survey, 'Receipt of a free school meal' is used as a proxy measure of the socio-economic status of school children in Wales. Using data

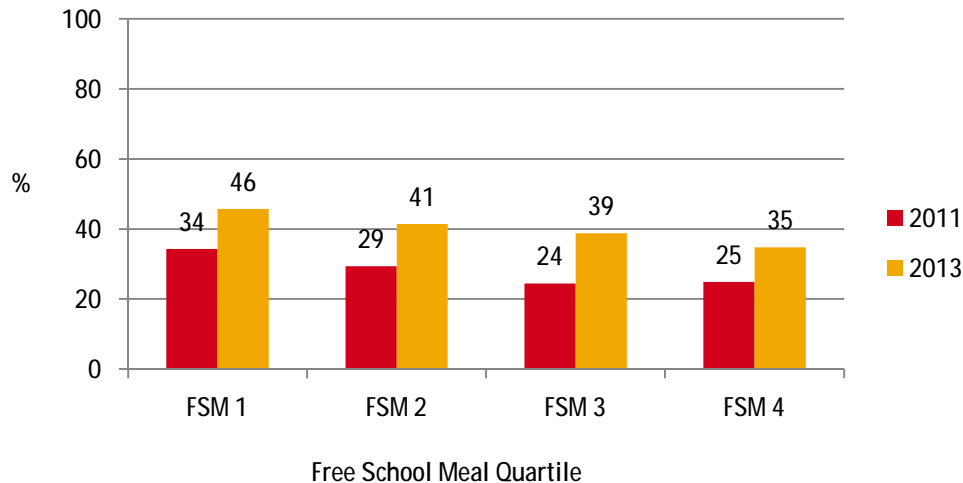
¹ Tackling Poverty Action Plan 2012-2016: <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dsjlg/publications/socialjustice/120625tackpovplanen.pdf>

² Tackling Child Poverty: Guidance and Regulations for Welsh Authorities: <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/childrenyoungpeople/child-poverty/tacklingchildpoverty/?lang=en>

³ Sport Wales Child Poverty Strategy 2012-2015

provided from the Welsh Government Pupil Level Annual School Census⁴, schools in the survey are placed into a Free School Meal (FSM) quartile. FSM quartile 1 has a low percentage of pupils who are eligible for a free school meal and FSM 4 has a high percentage of pupils who are eligible, and can be considered relatively more deprived. Figure 1 below shows the percentage of pupils who are hooked in sport according to the FSM quartile they are in.

Figure 1: Hooked on sport by relative level of deprivation



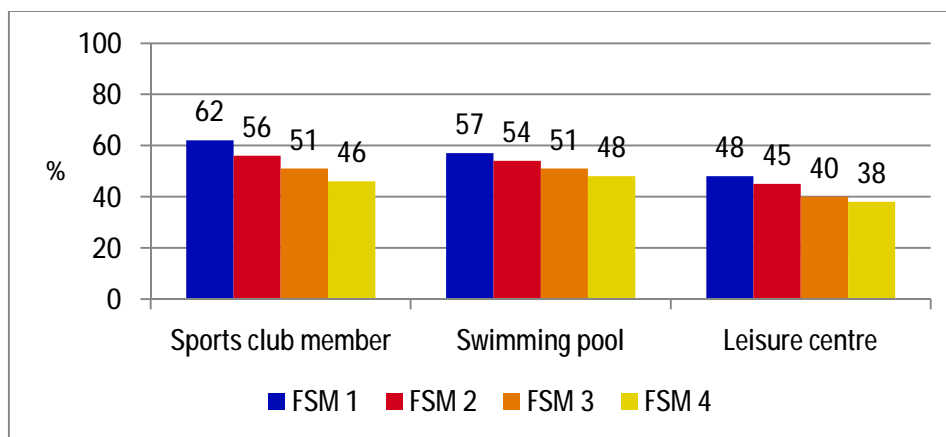
Despite the increases seen since 2011, pupils who attend schools that are relatively *more* deprived are less likely to participate in sport on three or more occasions a week.

What do we know about children’s access to sport and level of deprivation?

Schools currently play a vital role in providing formal sports opportunities for pupils who may not be able to access them in the community by providing curricular physical education and extracurricular sports opportunities. This can help provide access in a school setting but we know there is more to be done to ensure all pupils are able to access sport in the community. For example, pupils who attend schools with a high percentage of the school population eligible for free school meals are far less likely to be members of a community sports club than pupils in less deprived schools, with a gap of 16 percentage points between FSM 1 and 4. Access to sports clubs is not the only issue – pupils in relatively more deprived schools are also less likely to use swimming pools or leisure centres for sport and exercise. Figure 2 below shows the differences according to level of deprivation.

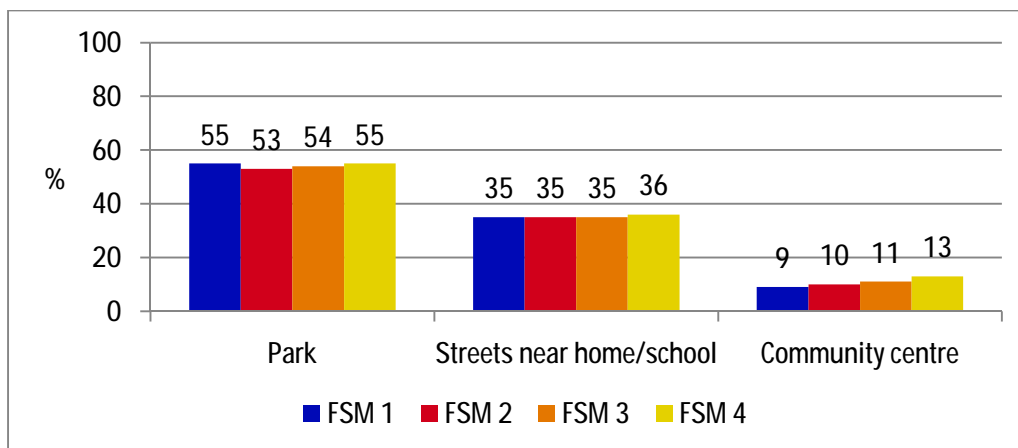
⁴ <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/schooldata/ims/datacollections/pupillevelannualschoolcensus/?lang=en>

Figure 2: Access to facilities for sport or exercise and relative level of deprivation



In contrast, other types of facilities are equally likely to be accessed for sport and exercise. Similar proportions of pupils use parks, streets and community centres for sport and exercise, and pupils in schools with higher proportions of pupils eligible for free meals are slightly more likely than others to use a community centre for sport/exercise. Figure 3 shows the results.

Figure 3: Percentage of pupils using facilities for sport or exercise, and relative deprivation



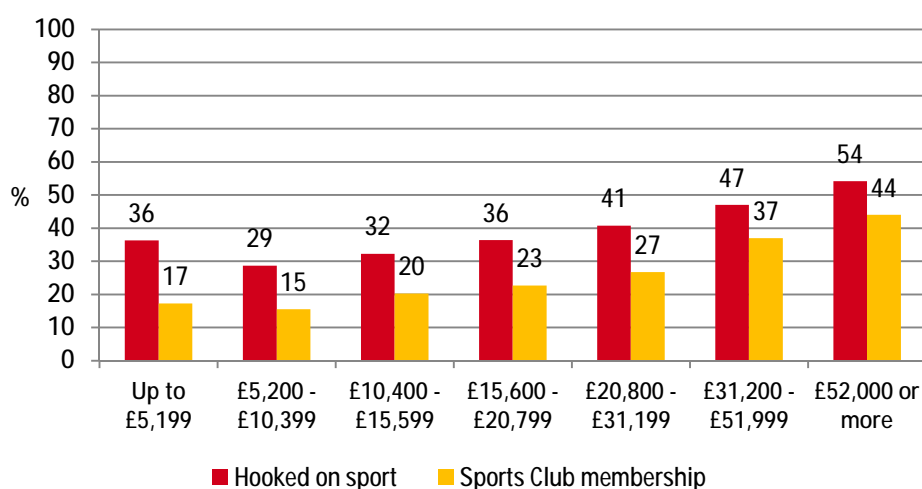
This more equal picture of access to facilities where sport and exercise can take place suggests that the opportunities offered via these settings are as important as sports clubs in providing accessible sports opportunities in more deprived areas. Nonetheless, there is still a need for clubs, leisure centres and swimming pools to consider how they can best provide opportunities for sport for all, regardless of background and circumstances.

Adult sports participation and poverty

Our School Sport Survey showed that parent and peer influence is an important factor in the likelihood of a pupil being 'hooked on sport'⁵ with there being an increased chance of a pupil being involved in sport if their parents and friends are also involved. Pupils are 32% more likely to be 'hooked on sport' if their father takes part in sport, 27% more likely if their mother does sport and 23% more likely if their friends take part in sport.

Clearly, family influence plays a strong role in creating opportunities for children to get involved, but we also know that adults with lower income levels are less likely to be taking part in sport. Families who are experiencing poverty may be facing multiple barriers to increasing their access to sport and physical recreation. Figure 4 below shows the link between income and sports participation and club membership.

Figure 4: Active Adults 2012 - Hooked on sport and sports club membership and household income



There is a clear pattern of increased participation levels according to increased income, and there is also increasing levels of sports club membership⁶. This pattern directly reflects the picture shown for children and young people via the School Sports Survey.

The Active Adults Survey 2012 also shows that broadly the percentage of adults who volunteer in sport increases according to income level. With volunteers providing a crucial part of the workforce needed in order to support the delivery of sport, this means that in more deprived communities there may be a lack of capacity to provide the increased numbers of opportunities needed in order to address these participation gaps.

⁵ <http://www.sportwales.org.uk/media/1194537/theme2.pdf>

⁶ We note that there are higher levels of participation in the first income band compared with the second. There are higher proportions of students in this income band, and we know that young adults are more likely to be sports participants than older adults. There may also be discounted opportunities to access sport for people in this band that could account for this slight difference.

What are we doing to address these issues?

Sport Wales has produced a Child Poverty Strategy for 2012-2015. We note that families experiencing 'in work' poverty may be time poor as well as cash poor, due to working patterns or lack of child-care, so we need to explore how volunteering can be made accessible and inclusive. We know that volunteering can also support the development of new skills and increase employability.

We also need to acknowledge the crucial role that coaches and volunteers play in facilitating sport for children and young people living in poverty. Whether it is setting up a new team in an area or providing help with transporting a child or young person to the opportunity, they can play a critical role in making sporting opportunities accessible. The sport sector is a significant employer in Wales and we would want to continue to strive to develop a highly skilled workforce in Wales⁷.

Calls 4 Action Funding

Via the *Calls 4 Action* programme, Sport Wales is now seeking applications to fund innovative, high impact projects that will make a real difference in breaking down the barriers that prevent these underrepresented groups from regularly participating in sport, creating a lasting legacy opportunity from Glasgow 2014 for everybody in Wales. Sport Wales wants bold, new approaches, and wants to provide assistance to individuals and organisations that bring fresh ideas and ways of getting more people involved in sport.

Inequality in participation between differing groups is not inevitable and can and must be tackled. This year the whole of Wales has the opportunity to get behind our Commonwealth Team and be part of a team three million strong. *Calls 4 Action* will look to ensure that everyone one of us also has the opportunity to take part in sport on a grassroots level.

For further information, please go to the Calls 4 Action webpages:

<http://www.sportwales.org.uk/funding--support/our-grants/calls-for-action.aspx>

⁷ Sport Wales Child Poverty Strategy 2012-2015