

sportwales  
chwaraeoncymsu



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Child Poverty  
**STRATEGY**

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# Foreword

**Sport unites our nation in a unique way, whether it is through the success of our athletes or the heroics of a hard fought win on the playing fields. When Wales wins everyone has a spring in their step.**

We want every child, young person and family to be able to reap the benefits that taking part in sport can bring. We do not accept that any barrier is insurmountable when it comes to providing high quality sporting opportunities to our communities, although we recognise that for some it will take time and a focussed commitment to overcome them.

At Sport Wales our aspiration is to get every child hooked on sport for life and for Wales to be a nation of champions. This embraces our two main remits to increase participation and improve performance in Welsh sport. 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. We want sport being viewed as a key component of any strategy to address child poverty, just as tackling this issue is central to achieving our aspirations.

We recognise that children, young people and their families living in poverty experience disadvantage in a number of ways. For them poverty is not just about not having enough money or clothes, access to play and leisure, regular balanced meals, access to services and support are all areas where they face potential disadvantage. In short 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 also know that they 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 society as adults. This is why we have not only produced this strategy, but also engrained it a key theme within our Community Strategy, ensuring that our work with the most deprived communities is intrinsic in our approach to community sport.

We recognise that living in poverty or in a deprived area can potentially present multiple barriers to participation or excelling in sport. This strategy outlines our commitment to ensuring that we at Sport Wales play our role. Through working together, sharing what works and listening to children and young people I believe that we can ensure that every child and young person is able to participate and share in the benefits of sport



**We want every child, young person and family to be able to reap the benefits that taking part in sport can bring**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. McAllister'.

**Professor Laura McAllister**  
Chair, Sport Wales

# A Vision for Sport in Wales

Sport Wales aspires to get every child hooked on sport for life. This means working with our partners to ensure that there are opportunities for children and young people to participate and that we are doing everything we can to ensure barriers that prevent this are overcome. We want Wales to be a nation of vibrant sporting communities, offering a range of opportunities that meet the needs and abilities of all.

In January 2010 we published the sector wide Vision for Sport in Wales<sup>1</sup>, which prioritises the areas that ourselves and our partners in the sport sector need to address in order to achieve our aspirations. These priorities form the strategic basis for our work in achieving Core Aim 4 of the Welsh Government's 7 Core Aims, which states every child and young person should "have access to play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities". The five priority areas that have been identified as part of the Vision are:

- **Sporting Innovation**
- **Skills for a Life in Sport**
- **Sporting Communities**
- **Sporting Success**
- **Skilled & Passionate Workforce**

We want to see a step change in the delivery of sport in Wales and the priorities in the Vision provide the direction for achieving this. We want to work with our partners to be more aspirational for their sports and the communities that they represent. In some cases this will mean creating an environment whereby thousands, not hundreds, participate in sport. We know that there are some groups that have lower participation levels than others, including those who are living in or at greater risk of living in poverty.

This child poverty strategy will not be solely delivered by Sport Wales, but outlines our commitment to making a difference to children, young people and their families who live in poverty. We recognise that much work is being undertaken by partners, particularly local authorities, to tackle child poverty and that this strategy will need to complement existing approaches. Whilst acknowledging that approaches need to meet local circumstances, we also need to be ensuring that successful practice is not just happening in parts of Wales, but that we are sharing information and experience to make this the norm for all children and young people who experience poverty. As a sector we need to commit to maximising sports potential to tackle poverty and inequality.

Beyond the traditional sports sector we also want agencies that focus mainly on tackling child poverty to share our aspirations and targets, so that there is mutual benefit to what we are aiming to deliver within communities. Finally we know the key role that parents and families can play in encouraging and facilitating a passionate interest in sport among children and young people. We need to be working together to not only encourage children and young people to get involved, but also with parents and family members to help them value the benefits of sport and encourage their children and young people to participate.

**As a sector we need to commit to maximising sports potential to tackle poverty and inequality**

<sup>1</sup> A Vision for Sport in Wales can be downloaded via: [http://www.sportwales.org.uk/media/506916/sport\\_wales\\_english\\_vision\\_doc\\_reprint\\_all\\_v3.pdf](http://www.sportwales.org.uk/media/506916/sport_wales_english_vision_doc_reprint_all_v3.pdf)

# The wider impact of sport

At Sport Wales we believe that sport makes a positive contribution to communities in its own right, but we also recognise the potential impact that it can have on other areas of public policy, such as health, education, economic development and community cohesion. These impacts themselves can improve the aspirations, experiences and long term outcomes for children and young people living in poverty.

The Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 underpins the Welsh Government's Child Poverty Strategy and names Sport Wales as one of the public authorities with a statutory duty under section 6 of the Measure to produce a child poverty strategy. Strategies must respond to one or more of 13 Broad Aims<sup>2</sup>. These aims recognise that poverty is multi-faceted in its impact on children and their families. Sport therefore contributes to a number of these aims, outlined in the table below:

## The contribution of sport to the Welsh Government's 13 Broad Aims:

### Reducing inequalities in health between children and between parents of children

Children and young people living in poverty are known to have poorer health outcomes than those that do not. Regular sporting activity has been proved to be effective in the primary and secondary prevention of several chronic diseases, meaning that sport can have an important role to play in improving the health of children and young people living in poverty.

Qualitative evidence also suggests that the greatest gains from involvement in activity relate to psychological health and increased feelings of well-being. There is growing evidence demonstrating that exercise can be effective in improving the mental well-being of the general public, largely through improved mood and physical self-perception.

Our approach of aiming to ignite a lifelong passion for sport from the earliest age is particularly important, as if we can instil a healthier lifestyle from the earliest age the likelihood of developing a chronic conditions is greatly reduced. Every child and young person is entitled to a healthy start to their life and sport plays an intrinsic role in delivering this.

### Promote and facilitate paid employment for parents of children

#### Provide parents of children with the skills necessary for paid employment

Research into sports related economic activity estimates that sport contributes £704 million of value added to the Welsh economy. Latest figures show that sport provides 23,200 jobs in Wales, an increase of almost 20% on the previous survey. This is without taking into account the thousands of people in Wales that volunteer on a weekly basis to develop sport in our communities and the skills that can be honed and developed through taking part in sport through coaching and volunteering.

<sup>2</sup> The Welsh Government's 13 Broad Aims for child poverty are listed within the Children and Families (Wales) Measure which can be found via [http://www.assemblywales.org/cf\\_measure\\_as\\_passed\\_pc\\_e.pdf](http://www.assemblywales.org/cf_measure_as_passed_pc_e.pdf)

Currently in Wales an estimated 113,000 people volunteer in sport, providing almost 17 million hours of support and encouragement. Volunteers make up the equivalent of 9453 full-time jobs, so without volunteers sport on a community level would grind to a halt. Getting involved in volunteering not only puts something back into the community it can also be a way to access training and qualifications, which increase employability or can lead to a career within sport.

As well as an employer sport can also contribute to economic development through the hosting of major sporting events, be it in the resulting tourism spend or in local companies securing contracts to deliver products and services associated with staging the event itself. Sport is a significant contributor to the economy in terms of value added.

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### **Reduce inequalities in educational attainment between children**

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#### **Help young person's participate effectively in education and training**

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#### **Help young person's take advantage of opportunities for employment**

With the Welsh Government we want every child to have a flying start in life with the opportunity to maximize their potential and enjoyment of sport. We recognise that children and young people living in poverty often experience lower educational attainment and we believe that sport can help to improve this. This is not solely through the development of new skills, but also its ability to keep engaged those young people who may be at risk of disengaging with the education system altogether.

We want to ensure that every child leaves school with the basic physical competency to enjoy sport and the confidence and motivation to seek out opportunities to develop their participation. We believe physical development is as fundamental to a child or young person's educational experience as learning to read and write.

As well as developing physically competent and confident young people sport can also support the development of softer skills such as the ability to perform under pressure, to problem solve, to set and achieve goals, to self-motivate, negotiate and lead others. The development of these skills can then have a positive impact not only on academic achievement, but also future employment prospects.

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### **Ensure that all children grow up in safe and cohesive communities**

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#### **Help young person's participate effectively and responsibly in the life of their communities**

The potential of sport to enhance social capital is demonstrated by the fact that 23% of voluntary, community and not-for-profit organisations on the All Wales Database, are sports and recreation bodies, by far the largest group. In practically every community in Wales there is some form of sports club, which often provides the focal point for that community. The pride in your local area that sport provides can be harnessed to bring a community closer together. As young people travel through sport as well they may well look to coach or volunteer to continue the development of sport in their community, not only providing them with new skills, but keeping that link to their area.

Whilst these are important by-products of sporting activity, which can in turn help to tackle child poverty, our core business is ensuring that children, young people and adults are participating in sport and, where appropriate, have the support to excel. We believe that first and foremost we should focus on our core business and ensure that we are proactively working with our partners to address any barriers to participation or maximising potential talent in sport for children and young people living in poverty. In light of this our main focus for our first strategy will be on delivering against outcome (j) of the 13 Broad Aims:

**(j) To reduce inequalities in participation in cultural, sporting and leisure activities between children and between parents of children (so far as necessary to ensure the well-being of their children)**

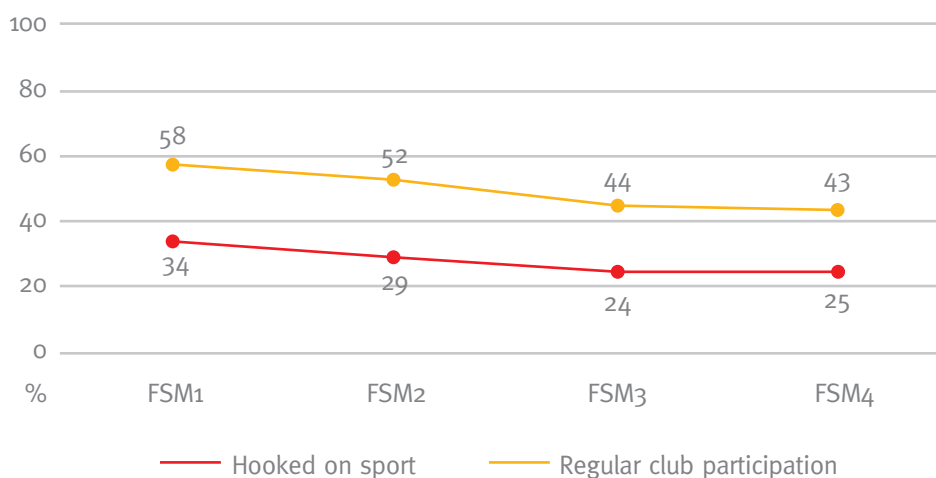
Data from our surveys indicate that adults living in more deprived areas are not only less likely to participate, but also less likely to volunteer in sport as well.

**Sport Wales Active Adult Survey 2008-09**

	Social grade of individual					
	A	B	C1	C2	D	E
<b>Any participation in the previous four weeks (%)</b>						
Any participation	77.7	71.9	63.7	56.5	53.1	34.9
<b>Any volunteering in sport (%)</b>						
Any volunteering in sport	15.3	8.7	5.6	4.2	2.6	2.7

Our recent School Sport Survey also identified pupils in schools with a higher percentage of free school meal take up are less likely to be frequent participants in sport. They are also less likely to participate in regular sport at a club or to visit a leisure centre. Schools in the survey are placed into a Free School Meal (FSM) quartile – quartile 1 having a low percentage of FSM take up and quartile 4 having a high percentage of take up. In the graphs below 'Regular' club participation is classified as being at least once a week, with 'Hooked' being three or more occasions of extra-curricular or club sport a week.

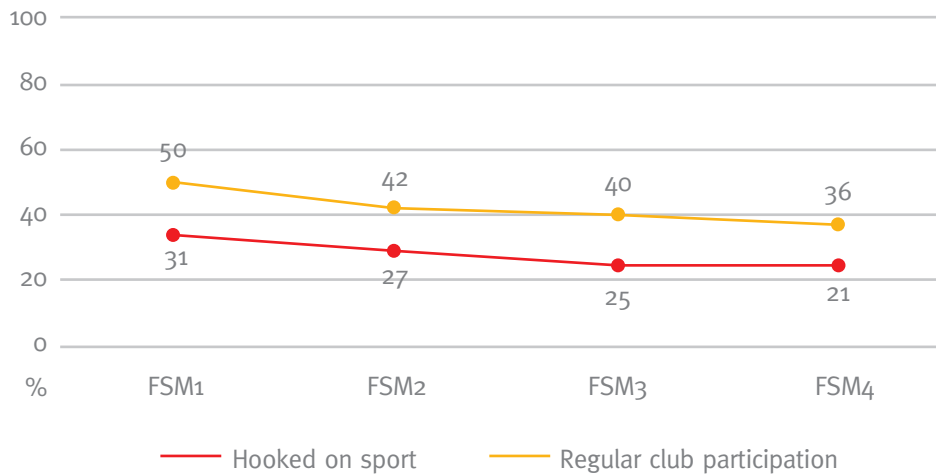
**Free school meal quartile and participation – primary pupils**



Source: School Sport Survey 2011

Base: All respondents in school years 3-6. (n=16,323)

### Free school meal quartile and participation – secondary pupils



Source: School Sport Survey 2011

Base: All respondents in school years 7-10. (n=23,404)

We do not accept that these lower participation figures are inevitable and we are committed to continuing to work with our partners to deliver a step change that ensures sporting opportunities are accessible to all and are actively encouraged as part of a broader life experience.

We firmly support the view that poverty should not only be viewed in purely economic terms, but that we should also address poverty of opportunity and poverty of aspiration. This strategy is our commitment to working with our partners to achieve improved outcomes for children and young people living in poverty.

### Our long term outcomes are:

**To see an increase in participation amongst children and young people living in poverty, contributing to our wider aspiration of all children and young people being hooked on sport for life;**

**To see an increase in volunteering amongst adults in lower social grades, contributing to our target of getting 10% of the adult population in Wales volunteering in sport by 2016;**

**For sport to be considered a key partner in the effort to tackle poverty in Wales, with poverty and participation targets being shared across partners.**

In order to determine our progress we will use evidence and data from our Active Adult Survey and our School Sport Survey to measure trends, as well as relevant qualitative information collected from partners.



# Sport Wales' commitments to tackle child poverty

## Developing and providing the evidence base

### Our shared Vision places significant emphasis on utilising data and evidence to underpin the decisions made about sport.

Currently Sport Wales runs the largest survey of children and young people in Wales with over 40,000 children and young people responding to our 2011 School Sport Survey. Alongside this we also run our Active Adults survey on a biannual basis. These two surveys provide us with a vast amount of information in relation to participation in sport in Wales. We need to ensure that we are providing clear disaggregated data relating to participation levels for children, young people and their families living in poverty, so that we and our partners can track the impact that we are making on the poorest in Wales. We will also work with other agencies and the Welsh Government to ensure that data is shared and pulled together to provide a wider picture of the lives of those living in poverty.

As previously stated we are already aware that both participation levels and volunteering levels within deprived communities are lower than the national average. Currently we have some evidence on how to tackle participation in deprived communities through the evaluation of our Regeneration Challenge grant scheme and the Mentro Allan project. These provide us with some useful insights into how we can increase participation, but we need to develop a more comprehensive understanding. We will bring together research into what the necessary conditions are to increase participation within deprived communities and commission further research if necessary. This would provide extra insight into how to approach engaging more people in sport.

We have an important role in driving the sharing of best practice and what works in developing sport in Wales. As part of this we are looking to develop a system whereby our partners can easily access evaluated best practice and also hear about the different approaches being taken. We will also seek to share this beyond the sport sector via the Child Poverty Solutions website. As part of this we will prioritise the identification of best practice relating to increasing participation in deprived communities and lead the sharing of this information.

Once we have pulled all this information together we will also utilise it to make the case for the impact that sport can have on children and young people living in poverty, advocating at a national level for sport to be included as a key component of any approach to eradicating child poverty.

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### In summary we will:

Ensure that the data we collect through our national surveys of adults, children and young people provide us with a robust statistical basis for evidencing participation levels in deprived communities.

Bring together research to explore the barriers to participation from deprived communities and what are the necessary conditions in order to increase participation from these communities, to aid our partners understanding of different approaches.

Prioritise the dissemination of best practice around increasing opportunities and participation in deprived communities as part of Sport Wales wider role of producing an evidence base for developing sport.

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### Child poverty outcome:

These actions will allow us to track progress on participation, support the sector with examples of effective interventions and advocate for sport's role in tackling child poverty, developing an evidence base for making a difference for children and their families living in poverty

## Maximising the impact of sport on children and young people living in poverty

Sport Wales has a strategic role in driving the development of sport in Wales, working with our partners to develop sport at a community and elite level. As such we have built relationships with our key partners, namely Local Authorities and National Governing Bodies of Sport, in order to share local targets for sport development that will contribute to the larger national targets of increasing participation and improving performance. This would be the approach we would take with child poverty, in particular with our local authority partners where child poverty plans and targets will already be in place. We will ensure that tackling child poverty will be a core theme in all our joint planning and work with our partners to identify and break down the barriers to participation, particularly for those most at risk of living in poverty and the hardest to reach groups of children and young people.

Our Vision also encourages sport to look beyond the traditional partnerships, looking to engage with the private and voluntary sectors more in order to bring fresh thinking to the development of sport. As part of this we will seek to identify and work with a wider range of partners in order to provide increased sporting opportunities within deprived communities. Whether this be further work with organisations, providing support to individuals and entrepreneurs within communities or looking at how we can work on a more co-ordinated level with future Communities First areas, we will look to identify those who can help us make the biggest difference to the lives of children and young people living in poverty.

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### In summary we will:

Work with our partners to ensure that tackling child poverty is a core theme of our joint planning, reflecting any local child poverty plans already in place.

Identify and prioritise work with local partners, statutory, voluntary and private, that are working within deprived communities in order to maximize the benefits of sport on the lives of children, young people and families within those communities.

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### Child poverty outcome:

Child poverty will become a core element of the plans that we develop with agencies that we fund, raising the profile of the issue within the sector and enhancing the impact we can make together on children, young people and their families living in poverty

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### **Provide training and support to our staff and the wider sector**

In order to ensure that our staff are equipped to challenge the plans of our partners appropriately we will commission training for all sport facing staff on child poverty, which will include reference to the duty on Sport Wales. This is to ensure that all Sport Wales staff that are working with partners on this issue have an opportunity to explore their understanding of child poverty, some of the barriers to participation as well as potential solutions.

Following this training it may be appropriate to roll out to other Sport Wales staff and also make training available to partners as part of the support we provide them with.

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#### **In summary we will:**

Provide training initially to all sport facing Sport Wales Senior Officers working with partners on child poverty, the duty on Sport Wales and how we can work with our partners to maximise sports contribution. This training can then be made available to partners as appropriate and necessary.

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#### **Child poverty outcome:**

Greater level of awareness and understanding of child poverty issues and the role that sport plays in alleviating the effects of poverty

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### **Maximise sporting potential to deliver elite success**

We want Wales to be viewed globally as a successful sporting nation. One that not only has a population that gets behind its sporting teams and athletes, but one that has a focus and a commitment to success. We want to be emulating Australia and New Zealand, both countries who have an ingrained culture of high performance in sport, with an infrastructure that supports excellence at all levels. We want to share and encourage this culture of excellence and ensure that no talent goes unnoticed or undeveloped. We recognise that at present there are "cold spots" where we are not seeing as much talent coming through as we would maybe expect considering population size. Some of these are also areas of high deprivation, so we will work with our partners on a national and local basis to identify why this is the case and what needs to be put in place to ensure that we are developing talented athletes' right across Wales.

Where we have identified a talented athlete, finance should not be an issue in ensuring that they are supported to access high quality coaching and an appropriate training environment. We will continue to work with our governing bodies to ensure that this is the case, particularly for those sports identified through our elite sports strategy as providing our best hopes for achieving our medal targets for 2014 and beyond.

Where sports are looking to establish talent academies or outreach programmes we will work with them to identify the most appropriate location, taking into account current demand and also potential to grow participation and elite performance.

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#### **In summary we will:**

Work with our governing bodies to ensure that living in poverty is not a barrier to talent and developing that talent, including looking at location of talent academies and access to appropriate coaching and support.

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#### **Child poverty outcome:**

Partners take proactive measures to ensure that talent is identified and nurtured in deprived communities

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### **Growing the sporting workforce**

Sport Wales' Coaching and Volunteering Strategy has set a target of engaging 10% of the Welsh adult population in volunteering in sport by 2016. This is a challenging target and means that we are working with our partners to encourage them to reach out to new groups and consider non-traditional ways of recruiting that includes recruitment from pockets of deprivation and low income communities in order to deliver more volunteers.

We are conscious 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 would want to work with different partners within communities in order to identify adults who could benefit from the development of new skills.

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 Wales. We will continue to work with and develop the Young Ambassador movement in Wales, as this has provided an opportunity for a number of young people from a variety of backgrounds to learn new skills and for some turn their passion for sport into a career.

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#### **In summary we will:**

Work with partners to encourage them to develop volunteering strategies that look beyond traditional recruitment and towards new partnerships that can provide new skills to those living in deprived communities as well as improve future employment prospects.

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#### **Child poverty outcome:**

Coaching and volunteering opportunities will be accessible to a wide range of backgrounds and there will be an increase in the number of volunteers from lower social grades

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**Working with our partners, both traditional and non-traditional, we will ensure that sport plays its part in eradicating child poverty and becomes a more intrinsic part of the Welsh Governments strategy to achieve this.**

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# Opportunity for all

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We believe that our first child poverty strategy should put in place the building blocks necessary to ensure that we and our partners are fully informed on the role that sport plays in improving the aspirations and life chances of children and young people living in poverty.

During the lifetime of this strategy we will seek to ensure we have data and evidence in relation to our, and our partners, impact on those living in poverty, as well as ensuring that our staff have the knowledge and skills to be able to effectively support and challenge partners in their delivery of sport. Whilst this strategy is for three years, it forms part of a wider approach to community sport outlined in our Community Sport Strategy. Enabling and encouraging children, young people and their families living in poverty to access and value sport is a long term commitment from Sport Wales. We realise that whilst there will be some areas that we can improve upon quickly, in other aspects we are going to need a concerted effort over a longer period to change attitudes and perceptions.

Working with our partners, both traditional and non-traditional, we will ensure that sport plays its part in eradicating child poverty and becomes a more intrinsic part of the Welsh Government's strategy to achieve this.

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