

Respondent's details
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Are you responding as an individual? No.
<p>If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please give the name of the organisation, a brief account of its membership and how the views of your colleagues were ascertained.</p> <p>Sports Council for Wales.</p> <p>The Sports Council's Board have individual and collective responsibility to the Assembly Government in relation to performance management, scrutiny and advocacy issues. The Council has a Chair (Mr Philip Carling), Vice-Chair (Professor Laura McAllister) and 9 other members, who come from a wide range of backgrounds. They are appointed for three-year terms by the Welsh Assembly Government.</p> <p>The Sports Council has 180 employees based within four regions and two national centres.</p> <p>The views of the Sports Council for Wales were ascertained through the following methods:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sports Council Board Meetings 2. Senior Management Team Meetings 3. Staff consultation through Department Meetings
<p>The Welsh Assembly Government intends to publish a summary of the responses to this consultation document. Normally, the name and address (or part of the address) of the author are published along with the response, as this gives credibility to the consultation exercise. If you do not wish to be identified as the author of your response, or if there is any information in your response that you do not wish to be disclosed, please indicate here.</p>

Key questions for your consideration
General Questions:
Do you agree with the Action Plan's overall aims? (please delete as appropriate)
Yes, we welcome the publication of the action plan and wish to work closely with the Assembly Government in seeking to achieve its aspirations of increasing the percentage of individuals achieving the physical activity targets of 5x30 for adults and 5x60 for children and young people.
If no, what should be included?
Does the Action Plan cover the issues you would expect? (please delete as appropriate)
The Action Plan is a step in the right direction and we would welcome more detailed discussion with officials about a number of areas of principle which we believe need to be taken into consideration if the Plan is to be successfully delivered.
If no, what should be included?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of specific action points have been identified for the Sports Council to lead on or be involved with. The Sports Council would welcome a discussion with the Assembly Government and partners as to the nature, objectives and intended outcomes of these. Gaining clarity on the more specific elements would help the Sports Council identify its active contribution to delivering the Plan. • The Action Plan contains a mix of actions, statements, principles, aspirations; the Sports Council would welcome consistency and reference to clear actions. • The Sports Council feels that detailing the top ten actions that <i>must</i> happen in order to make a difference might be a useful addition to enable partners to be clear about the priorities of the Assembly Government. Establishing priorities and focus is paramount. • The Sports Council would like to see the Plan be much more about setting the framework and allowing partners to determine the appropriate course of action, dependant on their local circumstances. Not all programmes and actions are appropriate everywhere. The Plan hints at this, but does not make such an approach explicit. This would then link with other Assembly Government policies, such as Making the Connections and the Spatial Plan. • The Sports Council would welcome additional contextual information in the document; this should set out the level of activity already being achieved and allow for a clearer link to be made between the existing evidence-base and the Actions.

- The Sports Council would advocate a more detailed account of the roles and responsibilities of key partners / stakeholders. This is particularly important in the *Action Sections* of the document where there is more than one “Lead” identified. It is also important to articulate to “Partners” what specific action they need to take.
- There is very little action for education within the Plan. The education sector has a fundamental role in this area and there needs to be some tangible actions for the sector that have the potential to have a huge impact on activity. The Plan only references ‘*quality PE*’ and ‘*whole school approach*’; we would like to see additional significant actions tied-in, for example: relating to the 5 x 1 hour measure for schools; opening up the school facilities in evenings and weekends; tackling the transport issues to ensure young people can take part in extra-curricular; Saturday morning activities in schools.
- Similarly, further and higher education institutions in Wales have a great deal to contribute to sport and physical activity; it would be opportune if there were additional actions for the sector within the Plan.
- The Sports Council welcomes the references to sustainability and continuity of activity; however, we feel that it would be useful to highlight how the Assembly Government intends to achieve this. The Sports Council advocates that a significant contributory factor to this is the development of skills. We, therefore, would like to see actions relating to fundamental movement skills and skill acquisition being reflected in the Plan. This again illustrates the important contribution not only of the education sector but also of voluntary sports clubs in our communities.
- The targets relate to increasing numbers of the Welsh population achieving at least 5x30/60; the Sports Council would, therefore, like to see the Assembly Government, within the Plan, prioritise actions relating to both sustaining and increasing the frequency of activity among the Welsh population. We feel strongly that it is vitally important to retain existing participants and these should not be forsaken in the quest for non-participants.
- The balance of our activity is split between retaining existing participants (80%) and attracting non-participants (20%). This 80/20 split allows us to prioritise our resources and skills where we can add the most value.
- Within the Plan it states that participation rates drop off with age, however, this is an overly simplistic view, it is more about the fact that frequency drops with age; the data shows that participation in 5x30 is fairly consistent until the age of 55. The Sports Council would like to see specific reference made to this intervention point.
- In addition to the two high-level targets detailed within the Plan, the Sports Council would like to see a series of process targets. This will enable the Assembly Government to monitor the progress against the implementation of the Plan.

- **The Sports Council agrees that the action plan should take into account issues of age, disability, gender, transgender, race, religion and belief, and sexual orientation in the development and delivery of physical activity. Low representation amongst these groups is reported; the Sports Council would, however, like there to be stronger reference to equality and equality characteristics within the strategic and underpinning themes.**
- **The Sports Council would like to see a summary of the Equality Impact Assessment on the Action Plan be included in the Annex.**
- **For information, the Women’s Sport Foundation is now called the Women’s Sport and Fitness Foundation.**
- **The Sports Council would welcome the identification of the cumulative resources made available to deliver the Action Plan across all Assembly Government departments. At a time of forthcoming financial pressures it will be essential that a value for money review is undertaken across all funding streams to ensure best use of existing resources and that funding is directed to those areas that can have the biggest impact on the high level targets.**
- **The Sports Council supports the creation of both a Strategic Board and Officials Group to oversee and support the implementation of the Plan. The Sports Council, however, would like to see within the Plan further details of the membership and decision-making roles of the two groups. The Sports Council would like representation on these groups.**

Questions relating to the individual action areas:

Key Theme 1 – Active Environment

Do you agree with the strategic aim for this section and the identified priorities?
(please delete as appropriate)

We agree with the strategic aim. Establishing an Active Environment is a precursor to an active society.

In terms of the identified priorities, please see section below.

If no, what should be included?

- **In terms of ‘local design and green space for informal activity’, the Sports Council would like this not to be restricted to walking and cycling activities.**
- **The Sports Council would like to see action on Local Authorities to consider their facility provision both in terms of the maintenance and renewal of existing stock. We would welcome synergy between the Assembly Government’s requirement for the Sports Council to consider elite provision (as per 2009/10 Remit Letter) and the ongoing provision of facilities for the general population.**

Please identify how you or your organisation can contribute to implementing the strategic aim for Active Environment.

- **The Sports Council is a statutory consultee for planning applications affecting playing fields. The revised TAN 16 necessitates the Sports Council to be involved in greater consultation on open spaces more generally. We would like to see our role in this area reflected in the Plan since not all planning authorities appreciate this function.**

Key Theme 2: Active Children and Young People

Do you agree with the strategic aim for this section and the identified priorities?
(please delete as appropriate)

We agree with the strategic aim. This is a particularly important section since we know that there is a greater probability that individuals will participate frequently in later life if they have developed and acquired skills at a young age.

In terms of the identified priorities, please see section below.

If no, what should be included?

In terms of priorities within the Plan, the Sports Council would like to see:

- **reference made of the importance of joining-up of activities;**
- **recognition of the importance of improving and sustaining activity levels of all children and young people;**
- **expanding on the role of education delivering PE (as described earlier), for example: increased time devoted to PE in the curriculum; increased priority given to ITET; increased priority given to CPD for teachers of PE;**
- **promoting increased use of school facilities during evenings, weekends and holidays;**
- **safe provision of sport and physical recreation is paramount to both children and those that work with them. There are significant links between standards of safeguarding, quality of provision and enjoyment of the experience. The Sports Council would like safeguarding to be considered as an underpinning theme within the action plan. The Sports Council already works with the NSPCC in this area and we feel that the NSPCC should be identified as a key stakeholder;**
- **the forthcoming Vetting and Barring legislation will have considerable implications on the delivery of the action plan. The Sports Council would like to see this recognised within the Plan.**

Please identify how you or your organisation can contribute to implementing the strategic aim for Active Children and Young People.

The Sports Council manages a range of programmes that: encourage children and young people to be physically active; helps to sustain their activity beyond school; develops their fundamental movement skills; and provide opportunities to develop their coaching skills as sports leaders.

The children and young people-specific programmes include: Foundation Phase; Dragon Sport; 5x60; PESS; Free Swimming U17. In addition, through our National Governing Body work, we are helping to support a sporting infrastructure that enables children and young people to continue to play competitive sport and develop their skills in a club environment.

Our lottery grant programme also provides opportunities for clubs and organisations to apply for grants to support this area of work.

A priority over the next year is to improve the way we and our partners approach our work with young people. We will encourage a joined-up approach between our partners. The purpose of which is to get more young people taking part and staying in sport and physical recreation. It is designed to enable all activities and programmes to be joined up and to ensure organisations work effectively together.

Key Theme 3: Active Adults

Do you agree with the strategic aim for this section and the identified priorities?
(please delete as appropriate)

We agree with the strategic aim.

In terms of the identified priorities, please see section below.

If no, what should be included?

In terms of priorities within the Plan, the Sports Council would like to see:

- **reference made of the importance of empowering partners/organisations to adopt a flexible, locally-determined approach to activity with the adult population; and**
- **recognition of the importance of improving and sustaining activity levels of all adults.**

Please identify how you or your organisation can contribute to implementing the strategic aim for Active Adults.

The Sports Council's approach to encouraging adults to become more active involves a range of interventions and opportunities that are inherently flexible and locally determined.

The main vehicle to drive activity has been the Sports Council's agreements with all 22 Local Authorities in Wales – Local Authority Partnership Agreements (LAPAs). Local authority leisure departments have been engaging with other departments plus, as appropriate, the voluntary and private sectors locally to improve co-ordination of activity.

Whilst much of the Sports Council's work with Active Adults will be to consolidate existing projects and programmes; it is also important to identify new sport and physical recreation opportunities. This will be a matter for each LAPA.

The development and delivery of these opportunities will be in partnership with the public, voluntary and private sectors.

We are adopting an informed and targeted approach to our investment and work with the adult population, which will be facilitated by the further development of our role in advocating good practice and sharing learning more generally.

Key Theme 4: Sport for All

Do you agree with the strategic aim for this section and the identified priorities?
(please delete as appropriate)

We agree with the strategic aim.

In terms of the identified priorities, please see section below.

If no, what should be included?

In terms of priorities within the Plan, the Sports Council would like to see performance sport and club development referenced.

Please identify how you or your organisation can contribute to implementing the strategic aim for Sport for All.

Involvement in sport for many people is through clubs and formal structures, not just informal recreation. Such participants invariably have some of the highest frequency of physical activity since they have empathy for the issue; it is not, therefore, desirable to separate performance from Sport for All.

The Sports Council will continue to work with National Governing Bodies in Wales to ensure they have the people, plans and programmes to deliver international success at the top and participation at all levels of adults and children locally.

In terms of developing sport, we will continue to work with all key agencies involved in the delivery of sport such as National Governing Bodies, Local Authorities, and community groups to ensure we support the development locally of clubs, competitions and coaches.

We will also continue to ensure Wales is successful on the international stage by putting in place world class systems and structures, directed and led by those that can deliver success for Wales. This includes: developing talent; providing top class coaching; delivering medals; and supporting athletes.

Underpinning Themes

Do you agree with the underpinning themes? (please delete as appropriate)

We agree with the underpinning themes.

We would, however, like to take this opportunity to share our comments on some of the detail.

If no, what should be included?

Local Activity

- **The Sports Council is pleased to see that an initiative that we have developed – the LAPA – forms such a fundamental part of how the Assembly Government see the Action Plan being delivered, and that it has been recognised that it is one of the main drivers for change at a local level.**
- **The Sports Council's LAPA process is very much in its infancy. The time it takes to develop links, embed sport and physical recreation in the Authority, change the behaviour of the organisation should not be underestimated. To change and expand this too quickly may jeopardise the work done to date.**
- **A key part of the LAPA process is the developmental aspect; the Sports Council has the expertise and resource to ensure that this localised approach to sport and physical recreation is maximised.**
- **The ethos of this partnership approach is devolving decisions to local authorities and empowering them to manage and shape their LAPA according to their local needs. This has, inevitably, resulted in a plethora of approaches; to advocate one single approach would curtail local authorities' local flexibility.**
- **The Sports Council would welcome the opportunity for further engagement following the consultation period in respect of ensuring better co-ordination of activity at a local level via the LAPA. The Assembly Government can have a significant role in influencing non-sport local authority departments through guidance and direction. The Sports Council believes it will be important to ensure that the findings of the Sports Council's report to the Assembly Government on LAPAs (May 2009) forms the basis of the review and forward planning for enhanced LAPAs.**

Developing the Evidence Base

- **The Sports Council would welcome clarity on what age group the 5x60 target relates to. We currently run three surveys, each of which measure 5x60: 7 & 8 year olds; 9-11 year olds; and 11-16 year olds.**
- **Over the past year, we appointed the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen)**

to undertake rigorous cognitive testing of our surveys for children and young people, which included testing of the physical activity question. There were some notable findings particularly around issues of recall and capturing informal activity. We have already shared the final report by NatCen with colleagues in the OCSRO and the Statistical Directorate, and we hope that these research findings will be reflected when utilising 5x60 as a measure.

- The Sports Council advocates utilising research expertise throughout the UK (not just those from within Wales) to become engaged in the sport and physical activity agenda. We are currently managing two separate pieces of research that engage higher education institutions in Exeter, Gloucester, and Sheffield.
- Utilising PHIRN and DECIPHer provides evidence from a public health perspective; the Sports Council would welcome broadening this to ensure that we encapsulate the plethora of other research areas that will provide an evidence-base for sport and physical activity (e.g. sport, skills, social justice, regeneration etc.).
- The Physical Activity Network is an important forum to disseminate evidence and research outcomes; we would, however, advocate broadening the methods of dissemination to ensure that evidence and research outcomes are disseminated as widely and effectively as possible.

Communications

- The Sports Council is pleased that the Assembly Government recognise the importance of social marketing and would welcome an action in the Plan for the Assembly Government to take this forward.

Please identify how you or your organisation can contribute to implementing the underpinning themes.

Workforce Development

The Sports Council aims to improve the numbers and skills of volunteers and professionals involved in the delivery of sport and physical recreation, and create a culture that encourages innovation and enterprise within the workforce.

We endeavour to do this by promoting the importance of improving the skills, knowledge and understandings of people involved in delivering sport and physical recreation, and help our key partners find ways to do this.

We will also continue to provide training and support for people involved in delivery of sport and physical recreation.

Local Delivery

Through the Sports Council's regional teams, we have developed a bottom-up understanding in order to address local needs, planned and delivered in partnership with local people and organisations. Each local authority is required to produce a sport and physical activity delivery plan, which demonstrates, on a needs-basis, how sport and

physical activity should be developed and delivered locally.

We are also supporting the development of integrated sport and physical recreation plans. This brings together the work of local authorities and national governing bodies to develop and deliver sport locally.

Communications

The Sports Council currently conducts tactical campaign work to communicate the work of the organisation, the Sports Council's product portfolio and sporting success stories; community and elite, to a wide range of audiences.

Our corporate PR and Marketing Strategies, are supported by regional action plans that help deliver elements of the Sports Council's 3 Regional Plans and 22 Local Authority Partnership Agreements (LAPAs).

In addition, the Sports Council effectively packages and presents data to key stakeholders, as well as identifies good practice for both sport development and PR purposes.

We see ourselves ideally placed to help foster two-way communication. We have strong relationship with partners and are ideally placed to do this.

Partnerships

Partnerships are at the core of the Sports Council's work. Through our partnerships, we are able to maximise our contributions to sport and physical recreation. Realising the benefits of sport and physical recreation is therefore a shared goal.

The Sports Council has a plethora of partnerships ranging across the public, private and voluntary sectors. Our partnerships also vary in terms of the scale and purpose within which they operate; some will be localised in their nature, whilst others will involve a range of UK sporting partners driving forward a strategic agenda.

The Sports Council is, therefore, well-placed to both advise and facilitate action.

Developing the Evidence Base

Research and evaluation is embedded in the work of the Sports Council and provides high quality evidence on issues, processes, and outcomes to inform the development and delivery of policy. This includes the identification and exploration of gaps in knowledge, together with the utilisation and reporting on various methodological. The Sports Council is in a strong position to influence both policy and academic debate.

Evidence-based approaches are central to the development of an active Wales and in shaping ongoing improvements. The Sports Council has an integral role to play in terms of:

- **Evaluating the projects/programmes – this involves a combination of both process and case study evaluations;**
- **Identifying critical success factors;**

- Identifying 'good practice' examples which can be utilised in advocacy work;
- Providing advice and support to colleagues and partners in terms of monitoring outputs;
- Identifying and exploring gaps in knowledge; and
- Analysing and reporting on data.

The Sports Council has developed a comprehensive programme of research and evaluation which is aligned to the Council's projects/programmes and future direction.

Please provide details of any examples of good practice in this area.

The Sports Council has many examples of good practice across all areas of sport and physical recreation that we are more than happy to share with you. For further information, please contact: research@scw.org.uk