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**SCHOOL SPORT SURVEY
STAKEHOLDER
CONSULTATION 2020
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

MARCH 2021



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INTRODUCTION

FOLLOWING THE 2018 SCHOOL SPORTS SURVEY, IT WAS IDENTIFIED THAT PARTNERS WHO USE, DELIVER AND SUPPORT THE SURVEY HAD IDEAS THAT COULD POTENTIALLY IMPROVE THE SURVEY FOR EVERYONE. THEREFORE, IN LINE WITH THE TIMELINE FOR THE 2021 SURVEY, BETWEEN AUGUST AND OCTOBER 2020, WE PLANNED AND CARRIED OUT A CONSULTATION IN ORDER TO LISTEN TO THESE IDEAS AND TRY TO CAPTURE AS MUCH LEARNING AS POSSIBLE FROM STAKEHOLDERS.

Sport Wales have found the school sport survey consultation process hugely beneficial. The feedback, constructive comments, and solutions proposed by partners through both the online questionnaire and roundtables are appreciated and will go a long way in informing and improving the next iteration of the survey.

Taken together, the feedback was extensive, and although often clear improvements are easy to identify and implement, there was also conflicting viewpoints. In order to address those conflicts, we have held to the following overarching principles which serve to provide clarity to particular issues, but have more importantly been informed by the wealth of feedback provided both formally and informally over the previous two years. These overarching principles are:

1. A shorter, simpler, and easier to complete survey, focusing on questions which are of most use and relevance to Sport Wales and its partners.
2. Minimum disruption to wording of questions and response options wherever possible, maintaining the integrity of trend data.
3. Reports, outputs, and additional resources produced and disseminated as quickly as possible, allowing for the insight's use in a timely manner.
4. Changes to be implemented must comply with official statistics guidance¹² from the Office of National Statistics and Welsh Government.

Put in very simple terms, this means that most of our commitments address one of the following three points:

1. Accessibility (appropriate timing, length and language – so that it is easy for all to complete)
2. Validity (survey methodology/results that partners trust in)
3. Buy-in from schools (so that schools value the survey and use their data/ insights for meaningful change)

¹ <https://osr.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/publication/regulatory-guidance-publishing-official-statistics-and-national-statistics/>

² <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/pdf-versions/2021/1/3/1610565118/statistics-and-research-release-practices-protocol.pdf>

WHAT WE DID

Between August and October 2020, a consultation was held with partners regarding for the next round of the School Sport Survey. The consultation comprised of:

- **An online survey** seeking feedback on specific changes that were being proposed for the future. The survey was live from 3 August until 14 September and 26 responses were received from a range of partners including National Governing Bodies, Local Authorities, national organisations and Welsh Government.
- Three **'Online Roundtable Discussions'** to obtain wider feedback and suggestions in relation to the survey. In total these three sessions were attended by over fifty partners.
- Additional feedback was also collected **via email**.

Note: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was not feasible to ask teachers, parents and children to participate in this consultation. The consultation covered four key aspects of the survey:

#1 FIELDWORK

the data gathering, where the survey is open, and responses are collected from over 1,000 schools across Wales.

#2 PARTICIPATION QUESTIONNAIRE

The survey filled out by students which captures which sports they have participated in and how often.

#3 PROVISION QUESTIONNAIRE

One teacher in each school completes a second survey to capture what sports and facilities are available in schools, how many minutes of sport a child receives access to in a week, and to gain a range of opinions about P.E. and sport provision at the school.

#4 OUTPUTS AND REPORTING

Once the survey is completed, the data is weighted and extrapolated into useful datasets and communication tools to help schools plan and develop their sports offering.

OVERARCHING THEMES

We have produced a full outcomes report, which goes into each element of feedback and details how we intend to change the survey and its processes where possible. We have looked at where feedback conflicts and given reasons as to why we have not been able to proceed with certain ideas. However, the majority of the feedback has been taken on board, and throughout the next year we will be implementing or investigating how to make the changes.

We anticipate that there is a lot of work attached to this and whilst our intention is to deliver each change we have committed to, we will release a summary document of changes that have been implemented when we launch the fieldwork for the next survey to confirm the changes that have been made. We have identified key themes which came out of the consultation feedback:

- **EXPLORE OPTIONS TO IMPROVE OR ADD NEW SURVEY QUESTIONS.**
- **REMOVE LESS IMPORTANT SURVEY CONTENT AS IT IS DESIRABLE TO KEEP SURVEY TIME TO A MINIMUM.**
- **DEVELOP A RANGE OF NEW QUALITATIVE RESEARCH TOPICS.**
- **DEVELOP AND TEST A NEW QUESTIONNAIRE AND CREATE AN EASY READ VERSION BASED ON THIS CONTENT.**
- **SURVEY OUTPUTS: SEEK TO RETAIN THE LEVEL OF DETAIL BUT CONSIDER NEW USEFUL AGGREGATIONS OF THE DATA.**
- **MAXIMISE THE REPORTING OF THE PROVISION SURVEY RESULTS.**
- **IMPROVE THE WAY WE DELIVER THE SURVEY.**
- **IMPROVED GUIDANCE & COMMUNICATION STRATEGY.**

COVID-19



Since we carried out the survey, however one important change has taken place due to the continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey was due to launch in April 2021, and given that it is still unclear at the time of publishing the outcomes from the survey when schools will return to full-time participation and what effect this will have on schools' ability to facilitate children's sports as they would have done prior to the outbreak, as well as the last academic year having been hugely affected by the crisis, it is clear it is both undesirable as well as potentially unfeasible to run it in the planned timeframe.

The first main commitment is therefore that we have postponed the survey to 2022.



SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK AND COMMITMENTS IN EACH THEME

EXPLORE OPTIONS TO IMPROVE OR ADD NEW SURVEY QUESTIONS



The School Sports Survey is the leading study into children's participation and demand for physical activities in the school setting. For this reason, the plethora of information that could be gleaned from children is somewhat limitless. A number of participants in our consultation suggested new questions or variations of questions which would be useful to provide a deeper understanding of all areas of participation and demand.

However, we also received feedback which pointed to the extra work the survey generated for schools and teachers, and that students already found the length of the survey challenging.

We have therefore committed to reviewing all of the questions that have been suggested, as well as ones which are already asked to understand what may be added or improved, and what may be taken away to facilitate this, without losing too many, to ensure that the robustness of a tracking survey is maintained.



DEVELOP A RANGE OF NEW QUALITATIVE RESEARCH TOPICS



Similarly to the requests to add additional questions, a number of new research areas which would be helpful have been proposed. Six key areas were proposed: motivations for participating/dropping-out – understanding the ‘why’; latent demand detail – in what format children would like to play sports; routes into participation; retention – whether children have continued to play a sport from one year to the next; enjoyment of individual sports; and finally, facilities available to each year group.

Each of these topics is potentially quite an extensive qualitative research project in their own right, but we feel could potentially support better understanding in the long run of children’s participation, enabling the growth and maintenance of children playing sport. We will therefore be reviewing if we are able to undertake these projects ourselves or if there are other partners we can work with to understand more about each topic.



REMOVE LESS IMPORTANT SURVEY CONTENT AS IT IS DESIRABLE TO KEEP SURVEY TIME TO A MINIMUM



A number of consultees told us that children found the length of time the survey took to be arduous and often resulted in clicking through to finish as quickly as possible. We also heard that some of the ways in which questions were presented such as which sports a child had participated in and how often may not be as effective in capturing accurate data. Some consultees also told us about the difficulties they had in ensuring that they had the requisite number of children participate because of the time of year.

There is a conflict here where sub-categories of sports will make the information gathered from the survey more rich for sports to understand participation, however this will also mean that the survey becomes longer as well as children not necessarily understanding the difference between different sub-categories, or the numbers of participants being too small to facilitate meaningful conclusions.

We therefore want to explore how less important survey content can be removed to keep down survey time, but also to improve the presentation of the questions to enable the survey to be as robust as possible, and to ensure as many children as possible may participate.



DEVELOP AND TEST A NEW QUESTIONNAIRE AND CREATE AN EASY READ VERSION BASED ON THIS CONTENT



A number of different ways to include children with additional learning needs in the survey have been trialled over the last couple of iterations of the survey. However, these have not been comparable with the 'main' survey, which is at odds with Sport Wales' values and strategic intents and vision of inclusivity. Having researched the comparability of easy-read data sets against non-easy-read, we are not aware of any robust studies into this, and therefore, working with Disability Sport Wales and Learning Disability Wales we hope to trial datasets to understand if the two can be compared successfully.

However, we are also aware that an accessible survey for all is the most appropriate option, which recognises that children of younger school ages and others may find an easy-read survey easier to understand, as well as technology such as iPads meaning that a touch-screen survey and imagery would be easier for all. We will therefore prioritise this research and development over the coming year.



IMPROVE THE WAY WE DELIVER THE SURVEY



The timing of the survey is particularly difficult for schools, as it takes place in the summer term. Many schools who are supporting their older students in their GCSEs find that time is scarce and would like it to take place at a different time. For a number of different reasons, such as the timing of the publication of pupil level annual school census data (PLASC) which we use to weight the school sports survey against, and the need to understand the pupil's experiences over the academic year they are close to completing mean that the timing is somewhat fixed. We will, however, look into the possibility of launching it a few weeks earlier, giving schools more time to take part. We also want to provide additional support before the launch, ensuring that partners who help to deliver the survey in schools are prepared, and important stakeholders such as Directors of Education and Estyn are aware of the surveys launch.

We were pleased that most respondents were happy with the support we delivered to them such as our telephone helpline and live monitoring system. We can go further by creating dummy links and communicating to local authorities and schools in advance to give them time to plan, and we want to ensure that our support is consistent and supportive. Finally, we will look to provide best practice where possible to help all schools understand the importance of the survey.

With regards to the support given to teachers, some respondents reflected that there were sometimes issues with how teachers interpreted questions as they supported children to complete the survey. In particular the recording of ethnicity data, can be difficult for teachers to support students with. Within our current strategic work aiming to reduce inequalities, recording a students' ethnicity is increasingly important. We want to support teachers in delivering it and ensure they are confident to support students. The Sport England school survey recently also asked learners to take the survey at home due to the pandemic, which supports the possibility that parents may be able to support their children to answer this question more accurately.

MAXIMISE THE REPORTING OF THE PROVISION SURVEY RESULTS



We ask one teacher in each school to complete the provision survey to build a context to pupils' answers to the participation survey. This approach received a number of comments related to the knowledge a single teacher could have of the facilities available and the number of minutes children participated in sport in a week. The main proposal we have here is that we recommend to teachers that they discuss their answers with colleagues across the school to ensure an accurate picture can be gleaned. Asking more than one teacher to complete it would be arduous and potentially lead to discrepancies.

There were also a number of comments which related to questions that either do already exist or with small changes could ensure the data provided is more useful. The main use of the provision survey in previous years has been to report on the number of minutes of physical education children receive per week. However, there are many other potential uses for the data, and given that many were not aware of the questions that were asked, we will seek to maximise the reporting and use of the survey results.





SURVEY OUTPUTS: SEEK TO RETAIN THE LEVEL OF DETAIL BUT CONSIDER NEW USEFUL AGGREGATIONS OF THE DATA



Many respondents to our consultation discussed the way in which data was produced and shared, with some wanting more data tables and further disaggregation of datasets to drill down within a given subject. How data is used by schools, local authorities and regions was also a subject of feedback, largely with regards to the timing of publication of reports. We have committed to attaining instant reports for schools which will help them to plan for the upcoming future year and support any facilitation of delivery at a local level which partners may be able to support schools with.

We will also be looking at whether we can produce a dashboard that partners will be able to access to review the data by filters which are useful to them, providing web links to individual datasets as well as tutorials and training in how to navigate the tables; and align data where possible to the new curriculum to help all partners in their planning.

IMPROVED GUIDANCE AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGY



Awareness of the survey and its results, whether from the provision survey or knowledge of the survey amongst different groups could be improved. We plan to integrate our communications to all partners from the very beginning of the process, releasing guidance and information notes around the survey itself to how we report. There is no reason for schools not to receive their action plan template at the beginning of the process, to enable earlier planning and assist learning from each schools' results.

We received many comments on the infographics and other media that we use to communicate the results, and want to ensure that these are accessible to all audiences who will use them. We have previously held sessions with any partner who wanted to better understand their results and we will continue to offer this. We will also look to engage partners and schools earlier to understand what outputs would be most useful to them, developing resources where possible and appropriate. Finally, we are keen to produce recommendations with appropriate signposting after the close of the survey.

OVERALL, WE ARE PLEASED TO BE ABLE TO REVIEW MANY OF THE THINGS THAT WERE RAISED WITH US IN THE CONSULTATION. THE SCHOOL SPORT SURVEY - STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION 2020 - OUTCOMES REPORT PROVIDES OUR RATIONALE AND ANALYSIS BEHIND EACH AREA WE REVIEWED.

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