



Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru **The National Assembly for Wales**

Y Pwyllgor Cymunedau, Cydraddoldeb a **Llywodraeth Leol** **The Communities, Equality and Local Government** **Committee**

Dydd Mercher, 19 Mehefin 2013
Wednesday, 19 June 2013

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Motion under Standing Order No. 17.42 to Resolve to Exclude the Public from the Meeting

Cofnodir y trafodion yn yr iaith y llefarwyd hwy ynndi yn y pwyllgor. Yn ogystal, cynhwysir trawsgrifiad o'r cyfieithu ar y pryd.

The proceedings are reported in the language in which they were spoken in the committee. In addition, a transcription of the simultaneous interpretation is included.

Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol
Committee members in attendance

Peter Black	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru Welsh Liberal Democrats
Christine Chapman	Llafur (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) Labour (Committee Chair)
Janet Finch-Saunders	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Mike Hedges	Llafur Labour
Mark Isherwood	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig Welsh Conservatives
Gwyn R. Price	Llafur Labour
Jenny Rathbone	Llafur Labour
Kenneth Skates	Llafur Labour
Lindsay Whittle	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales

Eraill yn bresennol
Others in attendance

Michelle Daltry	Rheolwr Partneriaethau, Chwaraeon Anabledd Cymru Partnership Manager, Disability Sport Wales
Anne Hamilton	Rheolwr Cyffredinol, Cymdeithas Chwaraeon Cymru General Manager, Welsh Sports Association
Dr Huw Jones	Prif Weithredwr, Chwaraeon Cymru Chief Executive, Sport Wales
Jon Morgan	Cyfarwyddwr Gweithredol, Chwaraeon Anabledd Cymru Executive Director, Disability Sport Wales
Sarah Powell	Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol, Chwaraeon Cymru Corporate Director, Sport Wales

Swyddogion Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru yn bresennol
National Assembly for Wales officials in attendance

Sarah Bartlett	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Rhys Iorwerth	Gwasanaeth Ymchwil yr Aelodau Members Research Service
Marc Wyn Jones	Clerc Clerk

Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 9.15 a.m.
The meeting began at 9.15 a.m.

Cyflwyniad, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon Introductions, Apologies and Substitutions

[1] **Christine Chapman:** Bore da, and welcome to the Assembly's Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee. I remind Members to switch off any mobile phones or BlackBerrys, as they do affect the transmission. We have received apologies this morning from Rhodri Glyn Thomas.

9.16 a.m.

Ymchwiliad i Lefelau Cyfranogiad mewn Chwaraeon—Sesiwn Dystiolaeth 1 Inquiry into Participation Levels in Sport in Wales—Evidence Session 1

[2] **Christine Chapman:** The first item on the agenda is our inquiry into participation levels in sport in Wales. This is the first evidence session of this inquiry, so I know that Members are looking forward to this very much. I welcome Dr Huw Jones, chief executive of Sport Wales, and also Sarah Powell, corporate director at Sport Wales. I welcome you both. I also thank you for sending evidence in advance, which Members will have read. If you are content, we will go straight into questions and we can then have a discussion on the points that you have raised in your paper.

[3] I read the headline results from your last survey and there were some quite concerning things there. One example was a drop in secondary school pupils taking part in extra-curricular and club sports, with those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and secondary school girls particularly less likely to take part. Obviously, there may be some progress, but there are some things that we still need progress on. What do you think are the main reasons why physical activity levels have not increased over the last decade in the way in which the Welsh Government had hoped?

[4] **Dr Jones:** Thank you, Chair, and thank you very much for the invitation to be here; we are delighted to be here. I have been chief executive of Sport Wales for 16 years, and when I first came to give evidence here back in 1999, you would have seen a very different organisation to the one that you see before you now. The reason for that is part of the answer to the question that you have posed. We need a very significant culture change in Wales, both in terms of how we change the behaviour of individuals, particularly children and young people, to start off with, but also in the way in which we deliver sport and physical recreation. If we keep on doing what we have always done, we will always get what we have always got. When you have a look at our vision for sport in Wales, the real underpinning theme of that vision is not what we want to do, but how we actually go about doing it. The organisations that make up the sport sector, including ourselves, need to significantly change. We need to be much more ambitious in what we do. We need to be much more unreasonably ambitious, as we set out in the document. We need to be much more innovative and we need to be much more developmental in what we do, otherwise we will keep on delivering an offer that is not what people actually want. That is what we have been trying to do to address this big culture challenge that we face here in terms of people in Wales.

[5] There are three big issues that we need to fundamentally address before we get into the nitty-gritty of particular groups. I will ask Sarah to address the three points that we think are absolutely fundamental in terms of making a difference.

[6] **Christine Chapman:** As you said, it is a cultural change, but could you be specific as to who should be achieving this and who should be taking action on this? That would help as well, Sarah.

[7] **Ms Powell:** On the three key areas going forward, we need to take a cross-sectorial approach. As you have already highlighted, schools and physical education will be absolutely fundamental to that. Hopefully, the taskforce report that will be published soon will address that in a significant way. The other area will be collaboration, which needs to be across the whole of the sector. We had our fourth conference on Monday, where the Minister committed to education and health being part of the solution going forward to physical activity and school sport. As Huw has already highlighted, the other area is behavioural change, which involves behavioural change not only among the individuals who we are trying to work with, but among the leaders and the people who we are working with to take sport and physical activity forward. That means how they approach their work, and how they put forward their own visions and plans. We will be expecting a change within the sector, but also among the individuals who we are actually trying to work with.

[8] **Christine Chapman:** What, do you think, could be different in this approach? You mentioned the last 13 years. What would make the difference?

[9] **Dr Jones:** Perhaps we could give you a few real examples of good practice. With hockey, for example, most people, I suspect, would think of hockey as generally a girl's sport, with 11-a-side, jolly hockey sticks et cetera. It has actually changed fundamentally in recent years. The offer is now very different in terms of four, six, eight and nine, and the various small-sided games that they are trying to produce. They have moved away from a situation where they were saying, 'If you want to play hockey, you have to turn up for training on a Tuesday and, if you do, we might give you a game on a Saturday'. That fundamentally does not fit into a modern society. So, there are much quicker versions of the game and much more recreationally based variations of the game. There are lots of sports now that are beginning to look at those different types of models, in terms of what they actually need to do to attract people to and to market their sport.

[10] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. Thank you. We will now look at quite a lot of specifics in this, so I will ask Peter Black to come in on the next issue.

[11] **Peter Black:** I am concentrating on data and statistics, which are the really interesting part of sport. Actually, it is quite crucial because I understand that you have two major surveys in the field at the moment: the school sport survey and the active adult survey. Do you have any early indications as to what those surveys are showing in terms of increased participation?

[12] **Dr Jones:** Not at the moment.

[13] **Peter Black:** There have been a number of criticisms about the availability of data. The Football Association of Wales is critical about the methodology used in major surveys—not necessarily your survey—particularly regarding the dependence on the buy-in of schools and relying on schools to fill them in and send them back. It says that there appears to be an unwillingness to move away from what has been done over the years. The Welsh Sports Association is critical because these surveys are done only every two years. Diverse Cymru is critical because it thinks that there is a severe lack of information about participation levels among protected characteristic groups. Are you aware of those criticisms, and have you started to address them?

[14] **Dr Jones:** Yes, I am aware of those criticisms, but I do not actually accept them. In most instances, we are the victims of our own success. When you look at the school sport survey, for example, you will see that it is the largest survey of children that is undertaken in Wales on any topic. It is now at a stage where—we are conducting it at the moment—we already have 50,000 children who are taking part in that survey. That is a very significant amount of information. The vast majority of large-sample surveys that are conducted by the

Government or various Welsh Government sponsored bodies are done on a sample basis. The vast majority of them use around 1,000 people. What we are trying to do is not just do a national based survey, a regional based survey or even a local authority based survey, but to actually give schools that information so that it is very school specific, so that the school can utilise those data in terms of its Estyn inspections and take action in terms of how it links with extra-curricular and community activity. When you are that ambitious in terms of what you actually want to do, there will always be issues and challenges around this.

[15] Our active adult survey, which covers 18,000 to 20,000 people, is again one of the largest surveys conducted. The general household survey, which used to be conducted across the whole of Britain, used to be that size. We are trying to get this at local authority level, so that our local authority partners can utilise the information for local decision making and make plans based on not national or regional statistics, but local statistics. I think that we are the only organisation in Wales that does that. I do not think that you will find another organisation in the public sector at national level that seeks to get information at that local and very school based level.

[16] **Peter Black:** What about this issue about protected characteristics groups that are disadvantaged? How are you surveying those and getting information about their participation?

[17] **Dr Jones:** These are large-sample surveys, so all parts of the population will be represented. With the protected characteristics groups, there are obviously small numbers within those and, because of sample sizes, you are not always going to get information on particular groups of black and minority ethnic individuals or lesbian, gay and bisexual individuals. What we have tried to do in those instances is to do some specific work around them. For example, we mentioned the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender research that we have been doing separately in relation to that.

[18] **Peter Black:** So, you say that you are doing some specific work. Are those specific research projects?

[19] **Dr Jones:** There is a specific research project to look at that. However, the important issue here is that, sometimes, when you actually do these things for people, people think that it is not their responsibility to collect this information. There is sometimes a bit of an attitude in that regard of, 'Well, Sport Wales hasn't given us this information in terms of our community'. Actually, it is not our responsibility. We seek to help people, but they have to take responsibility for collecting that information locally as well. This is not instead of; this is to supplement what they do. That is part of the culture of performance management that we want to see.

[20] **Peter Black:** I understand that, but when are the research projects on protected characteristics groups likely to be available?

[21] **Dr Jones:** The LGBT one is available. We have published that, and it is available on our website.

[22] **Peter Black:** What about other groups?

[23] **Dr Jones:** It depends which ones you are speaking about.

[24] **Peter Black:** Well, which other ones have you got?

[25] **Dr Jones:** There are all sorts of issues regarding gender and things. We have a lot of research on gender. It is more difficult to look at things like marriage and issues such as that,

because that comes within gender issues. So, a number of these issues are addressed through different pieces of work that we have done, rather than individually in terms of the specific nine characteristics.

[26] **Jenny Rathbone:** Disability Sport Wales says that it can give us statistics on 12 different sets of people, including the blind and the visually impaired, et cetera. I just wondered if you shared these statistical gatherings of information. Is there a pool of information and, if so, who is the keeper?

[27] **Dr Jones:** Absolutely. We established Disability Sport Wales some 10 years ago, and we established the community programme that it runs, which is lottery funded. It is based in our building, so we have a very close relationship with it.

[28] **Jenny Rathbone:** So, the information that it says it has, you also have.

[29] **Dr Jones:** Absolutely, and that is why there should be consistency between the numbers that it has and the numbers that we have. There are differences in terms of the numbers that we are talking about in terms of Peter's question. Much of that was about large-sample survey data; the information that you have on disability is about clubs, groups and output numbers. They are not proportionate in terms of population-based numbers.

[30] **Mark Isherwood:** Peter referred to the FAW concern about the dependency on the buy-in of schools. What proportion of schools participates in these surveys? How geographically representative is that? Do you have black spots with a lack of data and other areas where the data are plentiful?

[31] **Dr Jones:** Yes, we do. That is one of the continuing challenges in terms of the buy-in, and it does vary, not just by school, but by local authority. For example, two years ago, when we undertook the survey, we had fantastic responses from Blaenau Gwent and Conwy, which gave us very detailed information at primary and secondary level. The buy-in in terms of some other authorities varies quite considerably. There are some where we have good data in terms of secondary and some where we have good data in terms of primary, so it will be really interesting. We have put a lot more effort in this year to try to ensure that we get really comprehensive data in all of the authorities. At the moment, we are struggling with a couple of the authorities. Out of the 22, when I looked at the information the other day, we were struggling in terms of Cardiff and in terms of Swansea and Neath Port Talbot. Generally speaking, many of the other authorities have really bought into this. However, it all depends on individuals and individuals' attitudes at the end of the day.

9.30 a.m.

[32] **Christine Chapman:** Janet, did you want to come in now, or on the next section of questions?

[33] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** The next one.

[34] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. Mike is next, then.

[35] **Mike Hedges:** Coming back to Swansea—I can talk only about Swansea, as it is the only area I know—what I have seen over the last 40 years is a substantial movement away from school sport towards club sport. Certainly, cricket has almost disappeared from schools, but there has been a huge growth in club cricket, especially at junior level. Football and rugby have both gone the same way. Have you noticed that and do you see advantages or disadvantages in it?

[36] **Ms Powell:** I think that there is a mix. We have always tried to tackle the school-to-club link. We have always seen a lot of activity within schools and one of the challenges has been creating that activity in the clubs. I am pleased to announce that we have gone over the 500,000 mark within national governing body club membership. That has increased year on year. That shows that there is sustainable participation. We see that, once you are in that club, you are likely to be in that club for life, so that is good news. Going back to school sport, we are challenging schools around making sure that there is a varied and wider curriculum. As you know, our 5x60 programme has been put into the schools to listen to the young people around what activities they want to take part in, to make sure that there is a good variety. So, it is not just the traditional activities that we may have offered previously, but dance and health and fitness activities and so on, within the school, to create opportunities for all. I will go back to school sport, because I think that that is a fundamental thing going forward. If we really are going to shift the physical activity levels, the skills and confidence of young people through school and their first experiences of sport have to be what we focus on over the next few years, because that will give us physical activity for life, as we put it.

[37] **Mike Hedges:** Have you noticed that movement towards clubs and away from school, though? You mentioned dance, for example; the one thing that Swansea is not short of is dance clubs for pre-teen and teenage girls. There has been a huge growth of that in recent years. Has that come through in your surveys as well?

[38] **Ms Powell:** We do not have the survey data as yet, but we are looking specifically at women and girls. One of the surveys that we have done as a small project was around the issues specifically facing young girls and why they were dropping out within the school environment. One of the things that they came back with is that they wanted to do more dance activities. So, the increase that we are seeing in dance is a positive trend. We are also looking more at the leisure part of the activity, so that they can do more health and fitness activity in the environments that they want. The environment for women and girls is very important within the school and within a club environment, in terms of the changing rooms et cetera. Simple changes can be made and these are the things that we have to think about if we are going to tackle the women and girls agenda.

[39] **Christine Chapman:** It is about hairdryers and things such as that, is it not? *[Laughter.]*

[40] **Ms Powell:** It is simple things, yes.

[41] **Dr Jones:** To go back to your original question, Chair, this is quite fundamental in terms of how we can make a difference. The one thing that we have to be careful about is not to generalise in terms of what girls want, what women want, what black and minority ethnic communities want, what I want or whatever, because we are all very different. What we would like is a community, which Mike was asking about, that provides for everybody whatever they want to do, whether they want to take part in dance, football, cricket, walking or whatever. We recognise that that is not the case at the moment, and it is certainly not the case in deprived areas. So, it is about how we move from the situations that we have at the moment to being able to create that situation and that culture within our communities. That is going to be the big, long-term challenge for us.

[42] **Christine Chapman:** We are going to explore this further in the next theme. The committee members want to ask you some questions around the opportunities and barriers to participation for different groups. I will ask Ken to come in first.

[43] **Kenneth Skates:** Before I ask some specific questions on that, do you think that there are body image problems that prevent women, in particular, or younger women and girls, from participating in sport?

[44] **Dr Jones:** I think that the answer to that is ‘yes’.

[45] **Kenneth Skates:** Okay, so that is all part of the cultural shift that we need to see.

[46] **Dr Jones:** Yes, absolutely. We have known for many years about the issues in relation to clothing for school PE lessons and so on. It surprises and disappoints me that there are still gymslip cultures in some schools in Wales. You are not going to get 14 to 16-year-old girls wanting to participate in that type of environment.

[47] **Ms Powell:** To add to that, one of our challenges is about role models. Girls want to look athletic and there are very good role models out there, but the media has a massive role to play. It may portray women only in a certain way and perhaps does not show the support that we want to see. The Olympics and the Paralympics were a real eye-opener, and there was the potential, through the media, to highlight role models and to see women in that way, which encourages more girls to get involved, but, after the Olympics and Paralympics, the media reverted to rugby and football. That is a real challenge for us. If we want to encourage more women to get involved, they need to see more women’s activity in the media.

[48] **Kenneth Skates:** I am straying partly into later questions here, but I want to ask about the three key areas that need to be addressed—sport in school, collaboration and a cultural shift. Could you go through each of those and flesh out what needs to be done and by whom in order to improve participation? I know that you have already spoken quite a bit about schools, but could you begin with schools and identify what actions are required and by whom?

[49] **Dr Jones:** I will add to what Sarah has said already. With regard to the physical education curriculum, if we are to see children getting hooked on physical activity and sport, we need to see more time in the curriculum and significantly improved initial teacher education and training. We also need to see CPD in schools given a higher profile, so that teachers are confident in their ability to deliver the subject. In some institutions in Wales, in terms of initial teacher education and training, only seven hours of PE training is given. What can you learn in seven hours, apart from being told, ‘These are the things that you need to go and swot up on in the library’? There are fundamental issues with that in terms of teachers’ confidence, and health and safety, because physical education is very different from geography or maths; you are talking about risks to individuals’ health. So, we need to see significant improvement there and it needs to be given a higher priority.

[50] It is very much about the leadership of headteachers. In the best schools in Wales—I do not mean ‘best’ in terms of educational attainment, but in terms of what they provide and their attitudes towards children—we see headteachers employing individuals to deliver extra-curricular activity, whether it is arts, dance or sport, as part of their contracts. We certainly want to see things like that, so that children get extra-curricular opportunities as well. We also want to see links through the work that we have been doing in 5x60 and the young ambassadors’ work, linking children and young people with community clubs. That is the real challenge. As Mike asked earlier, how do we ensure those links, not just between schools and communities, but between communities and schools as well, so that they do not have only competitive sport opportunities? If you are the best rugby or football player, you will find a club, there is no doubt about that, because people will want you there. However, if you are not very good at badminton, or you want to only do dance, it is not quite as easy. Those are the fundamental challenges that we face in terms of education in schools.

[51] **Kenneth Skates:** Moving on to collaboration in the sport sector, what actions need to be taken and by whom?

[52] **Ms Powell:** I do not mind taking that. We have been looking at the collaboration agenda for some time now. You will be aware of the Simpson compact, which is looking at local authorities. That is one area on which we have been trying to work closely with chief officers of recreation and leisure, at national and regional level, to see how themes across sport and physical activity can be brought together across local authorities and looked at on a more regional or national basis. Some examples of that are regional chief officers of recreation and leisure and groups coming together and perhaps looking at workforce issues and how we get more volunteers or coaches involved. Gwent is a very good example of where they have come together and approached that collaboratively. There is also peer review, that is, looking at how they can collaborate to review each other's work and share best practice, so we are not doing things through 22 separate vehicles. They are all similar in their objectives. We are also looking at how they can benchmark against each other, so we have a continuous improvement from their own review, so it is about how they take themselves forward. There is also collaboration on alignment between governing bodies, sports organisations and local authorities, so we have people working together, not duplicating, but looking at how they can join up their development going forward. Those are some of the examples of how we would want to see collaboration. There is an opportunity, potentially, to look at other models going forward. We could perhaps look at how sport could be delivered through different mechanisms, but we would need to talk about that with the sector over some time to look at how we take that forward.

[53] **Christine Chapman:** May I ask, before I bring Ken back in, why has this not happened before?

[54] **Ms Powell:** It has been happening in patches. I think that what we are trying—

[55] **Christine Chapman:** So, what will make the difference to make that step change?

[56] **Dr Jones:** In many instances, a ministerial lead. Much of what we are talking about is public sector and local authority provision, and it will be really interesting to see what happens as a result of the report that came out yesterday about education provision and what that model will look like, whether it will be a collaborative model, a statutory model or whatever, and whether we have local government reorganisation in future. The models that we are talking about here will be determined by what is decided politically over the next five years. There is only so much that you can do collaboratively and co-operatively on this. Some of it requires some statutory underpinning.

[57] **Kenneth Skates:** To move on to people's attitudes towards sports, what actions need to be taken there?

[58] **Dr Jones:** It is very difficult to change people's attitudes, and this is one of the biggest challenges. If I were to challenge each one of you to go home this evening and to think about one individual in your family who does nothing at all and who is a couch potato—you know them, you love them and you know what makes them tick—and ask how could you get them to do more physical activity than they are doing at the moment, it is very difficult, is it not? It is even more difficult when you do not know people, as a sports development officer, and it is even more difficult when you are a sports development officer working in a deprived area of Wales. So, we have some enormous challenges in terms of how we can change behaviour. The only way in which, I believe that we can change behaviour is through exemplification, namely for people to say to people in their peer groups, 'Come on, Sarah, let's go for a walk' or 'Let's go for a run. I enjoy doing this. Just come with me this time, and see whether you enjoy it or not.' I do not think that it is something that can be forced on individuals. That has been one of the difficulties that we have faced previously, in that much of the policy has been based around doing this to people: 'We will provide you with this walking scheme, and you will do it, won't you?' and 'We can't quite understand why you

don't turn up'. We have to adopt very different approaches in terms of communities, looking at how a community ticks, who participates there at the moment and how we can get them to help their next-door neighbours, their friends and their colleagues and bring those people together from those groups to participate.

[59] **Kenneth Skates:** Before we move on, I have one final point on the barriers. If we look at the trends over the past 10 years, we see that, among the higher socioeconomic groups, participation in sport has increased, particularly in areas such as cycling, where you need to spend quite a bit of money on the equipment that is required. In deprived areas, one of the biggest barriers surely is the cost of renting a tennis court or renting the equipment, and this is still not being addressed by local authorities, which often operate both the sports facilities and the schools that use the sports facilities. So, during school, children can use those facilities for free, but, after school, suddenly, there is a charge, which is prohibitive. Is there more scope for collaboration between local authorities and within local authorities between departments to improve access and make it more affordable to use sports facilities?

9.45 a.m.

[60] **Dr Jones:** Absolutely, particularly in terms of the use of education facilities and how we move forward. There are challenges for many local authorities at the moment. Some have put their facilities out to trusts, some have gone out to social enterprise, and some have gone out to the private sector. Others have challenges in terms of their dual-use nature, and in terms of who owns those facilities and who has responsibility for them. I believe that what would really help is a much more strategic approach by local authorities, in terms of identifying those particular needs, and seeing how the use of dual-use facilities—at specific times—could reap the benefits that you are talking about. As there are going to be tough times to come over the next few years, that is even more vital, because not all of the boxes that we have built over the last 30 to 40 years—and they have different names on them, whether they are libraries, community centres, sports centres, schools or whatever—can survive. Therefore, we need a much more strategic approach, and difficult decisions are going to have to be made.

[61] **Christine Chapman:** I wish to alert Members to the fact that we have slightly less than 20 minutes left, and we have a few more themes to cover. Mark, Janet and Lindsay wish to contribute on this section, and we then need to move on. Do you want to go first, Mark?

[62] **Mark Isherwood:** Thank you. You talk about collaboration within the public sector, but what about beyond that? What engagement is there, for example, with the street sports initiatives, which are reaching out to the communities that are often the hardest to reach in terms of sports engagement? What about the activity with clubs? We did a previous inquiry into football, and we heard from many football clubs about their community engagement activities—at all sorts of levels—and about how, by working with those third and private sector organisations, you can extend your reach, and get more bang for your buck.

[63] **Ms Powell:** Absolutely. What we have been trying to do over the last year or so is to widen the range of partners with whom we work, as well as encouraging new partners to come forward. One scheme that we launched last year was Calls for Action. That was a new Lottery scheme that we put forward, based on trying to work with different socio-economic groups, but it was also about trying to work with new partners. So, it was not the traditional sports development grants; we would continue to have those, but we would encourage anyone in Wales who could tackle any of the participation agendas—moving children from the hundreds to the thousands, as we called it—to come forward.

[64] We have been successful in having 12 new grant schemes, which will be rolled out over the next two years. Some of those are with RCT Homes, which is a totally new group for us, which we have not worked with before. We are trying to work with new partners. You are

aware of StreetGames; we already work with StreetGames, and we have increased our investment to it. It also works with Communities First, so it is a tri-partite agreement. So, we are trying to encourage new ways of working. We are also working quite closely with the regional business communities, and they are now helping us to support clubs, and are bringing their new business ideas into the sports sector. We have not had that previously, because it has been very volunteer run. So, we are trying to bring the business approach into that sector as well.

[65] **Dr Jones:** There are two really interesting models that we are looking at at the moment. Sometimes, when people talk about collaboration, they invariably think about local government collaboration, cross-border collaboration, and joint collaboration. However, we have been thinking about how that links with the third sector, and, particularly, with governing bodies. We have sports development officers employed within local authorities, and we have sports development officers in governing bodies who are employed at regional level. How can we bring those two closer together, so that we avoid duplication? That is one thing, and that would be one of the models of collaboration that we really want to look at, depending on what is happening politically.

[66] The second model—we have mentioned this in our evidence—is the 3G pitches. Sometimes, when people think about 3Gs, they just think about facilities. However, that is potentially a very good mechanism to bring various clubs and communities together. One difficulty that we have is that many clubs are quite small—they may just be a team, which does not give them economies of scale in terms of coaching, volunteering and so on. If we can bring those clubs together, through some sort of hub, that will make it much stronger. Football, rugby and hockey have been working on a spatial plan for the development of 3Gs across the whole of Wales. We have agreed funding of £3 million over four years, with partnership funding from the Welsh Rugby Union, the Football Association of Wales and, hopefully, local authority partners, to roll that out. I believe that that could make a significant difference over the next few years.

[67] **Christine Chapman:** Thank you. Janet has the next questions.

[68] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** I am trying to establish whether policy, strategy and bureaucracy are getting in the way of being able simply to deliver sporting activity for everyone. With that in mind, talking about collaboration, I note that you say that Sport Wales has said that

[69] ‘progress has probably been lower than we would have liked’

[70] in collaboration and, as such, it has

[71] ‘started to investigate potential alternative models of regional delivery’.

[72] It goes on to say about the £3 million over four years with Hockey Wales, the FAW and the WRU to develop 3G pitches, which will also entail working with local government. As we talk about the collaboration agenda—I know that you have also mentioned yesterday’s announcement on education—we are in the here and now, and I just wonder, with all the pressures facing local government, with the essential services that they have to deliver, whether the leisure side of things, because it is discretionary and not statutory, is seen by authorities as not being as important. If you do not mind, can I ask you what your budget is? Do you feel that your budget is taken up more in jumping through the hoops of strategy and policy and bureaucracy than in actually delivering sporting facilities and activities for all?

[73] **Dr Jones:** No, I do not. One of the key challenges facing us and our partners over the next few years is to address these difficult issues. At the moment, far too many people get

embroiled in the detail, and, actually, there is not that strategic view or vision of what they want to create. Until we have the approaches that try to answer the issues of collaboration, 3G, the hub, and the opening up of schools, et cetera, and until communities and local authorities have a very clear view of how that is going to work, they will always find it very difficult, because they will always be operating in the detail of these issues.

[74] Also, I do not accept some of the things that you read in the newspapers in relation to sport and leisure being discretionary services, rather than mandatory provisions like social services. That is, technically, correct, but the one thing that I think is really interesting is that when anybody tries to close a swimming pool or whatever, the community sees the value of it.

[75] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** Oh, definitely.

[76] **Dr Jones:** It is one thing to have something in statute; how people view and perceive it is another thing. That is why the vision for how community sport will develop and engage the community in what they want it to look like is absolutely essential to the way forward, because that is the only way that we are going to get more people taking part.

[77] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** What about your budget?

[78] **Dr Jones:** Our budget?

[79] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** Yes, your annual budget. How much is it, and how do you feel it is spent? Do you feel that it goes more on the bureaucratic side of things, or does the greater proportion of it go on delivering sport on the ground?

[80] **Dr Jones:** I think that credit goes to the Welsh Government; we have a very good relationship with it. I think that the relationship that we have now is probably the best that we have had with any Government in my 25 years at Sport Wales. We have colleagues who really do listen, and I say that across the political spectrum, and that has been the case for the past 10 years. People genuinely want to make a difference in terms of outcomes, rather than just focusing in on detail. I do not think that we have a bureaucratic situation, and I am sure that the Minister would very much agree with some of the visionary and innovative work that we are trying to do to impress that on our partners—I am sure that he would very much agree with that approach.

[81] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** What about your budget?

[82] **Dr Jones:** The budget is about £25 million in Welsh Government exchequer funding, about £10 million or £11 million in lottery funding, and we ourselves turn over around £3 million per annum. So, it is around £40 million in total, give or take.

[83] **Christine Chapman:** We have about 10 minutes left, because we have other witnesses coming in. Lindsay is coming in next, and then we need to move on.

[84] **Lindsay Whittle:** Good morning. I notice that you are a Stonewall diversity champion since 2011. I congratulate you on that. I also notice from your evidence that you are going to have a stall at this year's Mardi Gras for the very first time. That, too, is very creditable. In evidence, Diverse Cymru says that there is an urgent need to tackle homophobia in Wales and you have also said that you will establish a sports charter over the coming months. You mention that you think that this will be very much a learning curve for you. Do you think that there are lessons to be learned from the rugby sporting section of Wales—I am talking in particular of Gareth Thomas, the former Welsh rugby captain, Nigel Owens, the referee, and the King's Cross Steelers rugby team? There was no learning curve there at all, to

be honest. It was simply accepted and people moved on. I appreciate that, perhaps, football may be a slightly different issue, but how do you think that that learning curve will affect other sports in Wales, and how would you tackle it in football in particular?

[85] **Dr Jones:** We have a long way to go, and I think that even rugby would accept that we have a long way to go. We have two excellent examples, which Lindsay has just mentioned, but those are examples; that is not part of the culture of rugby any more than it is part of the culture of football. The WRU is very aware of that, as is the FAW. Coincidentally, we have an LGBT sport network meeting this evening, which I am chairing, and I have chaired that since we established it, because I consider it to be fundamentally important. We have a wide range of individuals there. It is really about bringing together our governing bodies of sport—we have the WRU, the FAW, swimming and quite a number of sports present at those meetings, along with representatives of the lesbian and gay community. It is really about people understanding each other and talking about the challenges that we face, and how we can do things better and create those communication mechanisms. A lot of the time, it really is simply down to communication. The one thing that I have certainly noticed at those meetings—I think that I have probably chaired about six of them—is that everybody wants to make a difference and everybody wants to be positive, but they do not always know what to do. That is why mutually supportive mechanisms are really important in terms of getting those things right.

[86] **Lindsay Whittle:** That is interesting. I was at an event recently in Abertridwr, where I live, at which Nigel Owens was one of the main speakers, and the ovation that he had was incredible. He would definitely not have had that 20 years ago. So, I think that the curve—I do not know whether curves narrow, but you know what I mean.

[87] I would like to ask another question about Sport Wales's response to Show Racism the Red Card in Wales. That is a particularly difficult issue to tackle. Once again, I do not want to single out football, but many sports organisations show a lack of leadership and an unwillingness to accept that racism exists, but it does. Once again, how would you help sports organisations to tackle that?

[88] **Dr Jones:** There are two challenges here. It is very similar, in many cases, to the LGBT issues that we have talked about. First, it is a matter of wanting to do something about it and having the impetus to do something about it and address these difficult issues, and to create those communication mechanisms. That is where the second part comes in, about who we talk to within communities to make a difference. That is always something that is relatively unclear. We have some very good examples of specific black and minority ethnic work that is being done that has made a difference. A StreetGames initiative on netball has been targeting Muslim girls. That approach with young Muslim girls would be different to targeting Muslim women, because the attitudes are different. We tend to stereotype BME communities as all being the same, but we have very different attitudes, even within the Muslim community, in terms of first, second and third generation individuals, let alone compared to the Hindu community or the Chinese community, and so on. So, we have to be very careful in terms of that stereotyping. It is a case of identifying those communities, finding community leaders and creating those communication mechanisms.

[89] **Lindsay Whittle:** Just a quick question, if I may, Chair. There is so much talk in premier league football about racism, and I know that it exists, but it is more about the grass roots, really, because, by and large, most of the BME communities at the grass-roots level in Wales are people from Wales, and they are the people who we need to concentrate upon, as opposed to Premier League footballers, who are perhaps slightly overpaid and underworked, but there you go.

10.00 a.m.

[90] **Ms Powell:** We have the equality standard for sport now, which we have been rolling out for some years. We expect all of our governing bodies to work towards the equality standard for sport, which tackles all of the equality strands. It is important that they sign up to that, but also that we give a very clear message that it is not acceptable to have racism or homophobia in sport. All children and all people should have the same opportunity to take part.

[91] **Jenny Rathbone:** Going back to hockey, I have two Communities First programmes in my constituency of Cardiff Central, and I have never seen any of this hockey. Is it because I am blind? Where have you been delivering these informal hockey sessions?

[92] **Dr Jones:** We do not deliver them; they are delivered by Hockey Wales at the national centre in Cardiff or Whitchurch Hockey Club, which is one of the premier hockey clubs in Wales, and at a number of other places. Sarah is probably more able to answer that as an ex-international hockey player.

[93] **Jenny Rathbone:** Most young people in my area would not be able to make it easily to Whitchurch. Where are the local opportunities for playing hockey?

[94] **Ms Powell:** The best answer is that we can put you in touch with Hockey Wales, because it can look at where it is being delivered. Hockey is very well spread out within Cardiff, Penarth and the Vale of Glamorgan, so there should be opportunities nearby. Linking back to the point that you made with regard to making sure that people can get hold of that opportunity, the school is probably the best place to have it. So, yes, we want to centralise clubs at the best facilities because that is where you develop talent, but also at school so that you can take part straight after school. Hockey should be providing that opportunity at the school as well.

[95] **Christine Chapman:** Could you send us an e-mail or something on that, so we can share it?

[96] **Ms Powell:** Of course we can.

[97] **Jenny Rathbone:** Moving back to schools, we have the community-focused schools programme. How have you used the so-called community-focused schools to deliver more opportunities for the local community to play sport?

[98] **Dr Jones:** Most of that is being done in every secondary school in Wales, where we have a 5x60 scheme. The whole purpose of that scheme has been to create opportunities for those who do not get the opportunities. The one thing that we did not want to do was to have people create opportunities for individuals playing in the first XI hockey team and the first XV rugby team, et cetera. It is very much targeted at girls in particular, and looking at what those girls want to do and those boys who do not participate, and to then say, 'Okay, if that is what you want to do, this is what we can deliver with you and for you, and this is how you can organise your own activities as well'.

[99] **Jenny Rathbone:** Finally, Bridgend County Borough Council says that large numbers of young people are leaving school without the ability to swim. What are we doing about that? That is life threatening; if they fall in a river, they are gone. How is that? They are all supposed to have swimming lessons.

[100] **Dr Jones:** Yes, they are. When you look at the requirements of the national curriculum, it says that all children should be able to swim by the age of 11, but they do not. That comes down to prioritisation at the end of the day. That is a matter for Ministers. There

is a commitment from the Welsh Government to address that issue, but we see quite significant differences across local authorities in the ability of children to swim. When we started collecting that data and pointed it out to each local authority, to their credit, they were surprised at the situation and made a commitment to address the issue.

[101] **Jenny Rathbone:** So, you have the statistics on where these children who cannot swim are, because I would be very interested to see them.

[102] **Dr Jones:** The statistics are by local authority.

[103] **Jenny Rathbone:** Could you send us that?

[104] **Dr Jones:** Yes.

[105] **Christine Chapman:** Thank you. On the final theme, I will ask Gwyn to come in.

[106] **Gwyn R. Price:** Good morning. In your view, what legacy impact have the Olympic and Paralympic games had in Wales in terms of participation in sport?

[107] **Ms Powell:** It is early days as yet, but we have already seen some examples of green shoots in swimming, gymnastics and hockey. We have put some of the figures in our evidence. There has been around about a 20% increase across their membership, so that is already showing us that there has been some impact because of the games straight away. Cycling is another one that has established new clubs off the back of the games, and similarly canoeing. So, those sports that were promoted well within the games, but also had the structures in place—we knew that the Olympics and the Paralympics were coming for seven years—and really did embrace and take forward their own plans to make sure that they had activities, and that the clubs, the workforces, and the volunteers were ready, have really seen that maximised. When we see our survey data in October, we hope to see further increases. The signs, to date, as a result of the games, are very positive.

[108] **Dr Jones:** Something that you may want to think about, as we have mentioned, is that one of the great legacy successes has been the young ambassadors scheme. We now have around 1,800 of them. If you have a chance to speak to these individuals, you will find that they are phenomenal. It really gives you a great deal of heart when you see some of these fantastic young people that are coming through, who are very mature in their approach, organising sport within their schools and communities. It is one thing to hear from administrators like us, but I think that you would really benefit from hearing from these young people in terms of what they do and the challenges that they face.

[109] **Christine Chapman:** I will discuss this with Members. I think that that would be a very good idea. We will look at that. Thank you.

[110] **Mike Hedges:** I certainly appreciate the work that you are doing in terms of promoting sport in Wales. Have you seen the effect of Swansea, for example, being in the premiership? Just by looking at the number of teams in the league, I have noticed that there has been a huge increase in the number of junior teams, but that there has been a collapse in the number of senior teams. I have also noticed that rugby teams have also been affected because people have moved from participation into watching. Have you noticed that, and will you keep an eye to see what happens in Cardiff following the team's promotion?

[111] **Ms Powell:** We are already in discussions. As you know, 10% of the Premier League is Welsh, which is great news, and we have Wrexham and Newport. So, we are particularly pleased with football at the moment. Also, I would not dare to leave the six nations rugby behind. However, we are in discussions with Premier League 4 Sport, which has a number of

initiatives. We are only aware of a few of them at the moment, but there are numerous initiatives where we can now work with them to develop community activity, not just for football but for a number of activities through the partnership now with Premier League 4 Sport that we will be taking forward. The Minister is also involved in the discussions, so we are hoping that, over the coming months, we will be able to bring something forward.

[112] **Mike Hedges:** I am talking about the decline in adult football and the increase in junior football, which is shown by the number of teams in the league in Swansea.

[113] **Dr Jones:** I think that the point that you make, Mike, is generally true across Wales. I think that there are changes, and I think that much of that is really due to societal changes. We are seeing a lot more people playing five-a-side football and wanting to play things informally. This goes back to what we want to see in terms of governing bodies, which is much more small-sided activity and much more recreationally based activity. People find it far more difficult to make commitments for training for 11-a-side and 15-a-side matches continuously. That really is a challenge for governing bodies.

[114] **Christine Chapman:** On that note, I thank both Huw and Sarah for coming along this morning. It has been a very interesting session and it will certainly help us in our inquiry. We will send you a transcript of the meeting so that you can check it for factual accuracy. I thank you both for attending this morning. I will now ask our next witness to come to the table.

10.09 a.m.

Ymchwiliad i Lefelau Cyfranogiad mewn Chwaraeon—Sesiwn Dystiolaeth 2 Inquiry into Participation Levels in Sport in Wales—Evidence Session 2

[115] **Christine Chapman:** I welcome Anne Hamilton, general manager for the Welsh Sports Association.

[116] **Ms Hamilton:** Thank you very much.

[117] **Christine Chapman:** You have sent some written evidence in advance, which Members will have read. So, if you are content, we will go straight into questions and then we can develop a discussion. As I said, thank you for coming along today. In your evidence you discuss significant increases in participation in certain sports over the past year. Could you tell me how exactly these increases have been achieved and what lessons can other sports and organisations learn from that?

[118] **Ms Hamilton:** If I take gymnastics as an example, for the past three or four years, gymnastics has, at club level, been making some significant changes. Previously, a lot of gymnastics clubs operated out of leisure centres where they had, maybe, a two-hour slot, which meant that facility staff had to bring the mats in and out. They probably did not like gym clubs very much because it was hard work for them. A lot of those gymnastics clubs had huge waiting lists that they were not able to accommodate. Gymnastics clubs, with some funding from Sport Wales and, quite often, from the local authority, have said, 'We have got a very clear demand there, so what can we do about it?' So, some of those clubs have taken a risk and it is a big risk on their part. They have gone from operating a leisure centre session to taking out, usually, an old warehouse sort of facility on a lease. That has meant that they have a dedicated facility and they can run all day and every evening. As a consequence, they have been able to accommodate the waiting list they already had, and, where they have seen increased demand through the shop window we had with the Olympics and Paralympics, they have been able to accommodate the demand that has come with those events.

[119] It would have been, for the individuals involved, a big decision. At Planet Gymnastics, the head coach was a teacher and was, therefore, in a stable, secure job, but took a big risk and set up the gym club and it has gone from strength to strength. The club does not manage to do it just by running gymnastics. It runs a childcare nursery out of the facility as well. It does lots of work providing after-school activities for local schools. So, that would be an example.

[120] **Christine Chapman:** So, obviously, the clubs have picked up the other issues and barriers that have probably affected the sport up until now.

[121] **Ms Hamilton:** Their biggest issue was facility access. They had the demand but they were not able to do the supply side.

[122] **Christine Chapman:** I think Jenny wants to come in, but I just want to move on from that, because, as you said, there have been increases in some sports, but the Welsh Government assessment is that, overall, participation levels have not increased. So, why do you think there is this difference of view, if it is a difference in view?

[123] **Ms Hamilton:** Clearly, what we are looking at here are membership figures, which would reflect groups that are affiliated to the national governing bodies. Across the board, when we add up across all of the governing bodies, there has been a significant increase over the past 12 months in membership figures. Some have gone up significantly, some have stood still and a few have gone down. In some of the smaller sports, where they have not had the infrastructure and are solely run by volunteers, it has been a lot harder for them to take advantage of the huge advert that the Olympics provided for them. Where governing bodies are increasingly trying to do more is on the informal side. It is a lot harder for them to capture the data. Obviously, when people affiliate to them, they do so because they are usually playing in a competitive league. I caught the tail end of Huw's evidence and I would agree that, for a lot of people, one of the barriers is that they cannot turn up for training and a match every week, at the same time, week in week out. That is just not a realistic proposition, and, for some of them, neither would they want to. A less competitive and more informal environment is much more amenable to them.

[124] **Christine Chapman:** Jenny, did you want to come in?

[125] **Jenny Rathbone:** I just wanted to come in on this hockey business, because the previous witnesses from Sport Wales talked a lot about the increase in participation in hockey, but I am unclear as to where that is happening. I would like to see many more informal hockey opportunities rather than the sort of formal, competitive ones that we have now. Where is that happening, because Hockey Wales is part of your association?

10.15 a.m.

[126] **Ms Hamilton:** Yes, it is. A lot of enclosures will be at club level, and the clubs tend to operate where there is an artificial turf pitch. What they are also doing is using some of the school provision. So, it will be on a school playground with adapted sticks and adapted balls. Obviously, on a hard tarmac surface, you do not play with the same ball that you would use on an Astroturf pitch because that would be dangerous. So, they play with adapted equipment in order to do that.

[127] You do not see the same informal equivalent of park football for hockey. You do not see the jumpers for goalposts; that does not happen much in hockey. However, I think that that is something that the governing body is trying to encourage. Through some of the games that they are operating, they are trying to see almost an equivalent of the three-on-three basketball. It is a small number and the idea would be, 'We have a group of friends; let's just

go and play'. They are trying to encourage that sort of activity.

[128] **Jenny Rathbone:** I would really want to see much more of a multi-use approach to sports grounds. It is the dominance of football, and it is also the dominance of boys.

[129] **Ms Hamilton:** Yes.

[130] **Mike Hedges:** Has one of the fastest-growing girls' sports in Wales not been girls' football in recent years?

[131] **Ms Hamilton:** It has, indeed. I think that it has seen an increase of around 40% over the past 12 months.

[132] **Peter Black:** Looking at the available data and statistics, to what extent would you say that the data available on sport participation in Wales enable organisations, governing bodies and clubs to identify how participation can be increased?

[133] **Ms Hamilton:** There are some data available. Governing bodies have their membership figures. That does not capture well the informal side of sport. I think that governing bodies struggle to capture those data. The data are captured more through the Sport Wales surveys that run every two years. They are great, but they run every two years. They provide robust figures at a national level. However, trying to use those to say 'At a local level, this is what happens' is much harder; and there is quite a time delay in getting those results. That is an issue. One of the approaches that some governing bodies are trying to use is more of a market-segmentation approach; so, looking at the profile of people in a particular area and trying to use not what they themselves are collecting, but using what I guess is the equivalent of what our commercial companies would use—the profiles of people in a local area to see what sort of models and formats of their sport might be more appropriate in a particular area.

[134] **Peter Black:** Are there any specific areas on which having more detailed data would assist governing bodies in that respect?

[135] **Ms Hamilton:** Do you mean in specific geographical areas?

[136] **Peter Black:** I mean data relating to socioeconomic aspects, the concentration on protected characteristics, as well as the geographical aspects.

[137] **Ms Hamilton:** Again, I think that some of that would be captured through the market-segmentation approach, because that does tell you quite a bit about the sorts of people who you are talking about. I think that governing bodies do try to capture some of the characteristics, but, again, that is only about the people who choose to affiliate to them.

[138] **Peter Black:** With all of the data that you have at your disposal, can you look at them and say that there is a particular socioeconomic group, a particular characteristic group, or a particular community that is not participating in sport in the way that we would like it to?

[139] **Ms Hamilton:** I think that you can do that to an extent from the Sport Wales surveys, and I think that the larger governing bodies can do that from their own membership data. To be quite honest, for some of the smaller governing bodies, their membership data are probably on a personal computer, on an Excel spreadsheet, and their ability to interpret the data is related to how much time they, on a volunteer basis, are prepared to spend doing that. So, I think that some of the big governing bodies have those data and are able to use them. However, for some of the smaller bodies, it is really down to finding someone who is prepared to spend the time doing that on a voluntary basis and to making sure sure that they

are collecting the data from all of their members.

[140] **Peter Black:** If, as a result of this inquiry, we produce a report, what recommendation could we make to the Welsh Government or Sport Wales to improve the availability of data and statistics on participation rates?

[141] **Ms Hamilton:** You would need to make sure that we were not putting an additional burden on those volunteers. So, I guess that they would be looking for support in terms of customer relationship management systems, something that would make it easier for them to be able to take and interpret those data. Perhaps we could do something on a central basis that would make it easier for them. I do not see that as an issue for the big governing bodies, because they have those sorts of data and they are able to do that. For the smaller ones that are solely volunteer run, I would be nervous about creating an issue.

[142] **Christine Chapman:** We want to move on to another area, Anne, looking at the possible opportunities for and barriers to participation of the different groups. I ask Ken to come in first on this.

[143] **Kenneth Skates:** Many thanks for your evidence. It was very stern in parts, which was refreshing and, as far as I am concerned, welcome. If I may read out two quotes from it, you believe that, to increase participation in sport

[144] ‘a significant attitudinal shift is needed’

[145] and also that

[146] ‘It would be great if taking part in sport and ensuring your children take part in sport became a social norm in Wales, and that not doing so was frowned upon.’

[147] To see what probably needs to be a dramatic change in attitude achieved, what needs to be done and by whom?

[148] **Ms Hamilton:** When I looked at those sorts of things, I looked at other areas where we have seen that attitudinal shift. For me, one of the obvious ones is the shift in drinking and driving. If I was contemplating doing that, I hope that my friends would give me a hard time, and I would love for sport to be in the same position. I reflected on how that came about, and I would say that it was through concerted efforts right across the public sector, central Government and the voluntary sector as well as the commercial sector. It was not any one thing that made that happen. Where we have seen the shift, in places like Finland, again, it has been right across Government. It has not been the sports division or the health division making that happen; everything has been looked at at the same time. So, transport would be seriously looking at how it sets up transport systems that facilitate this, and planning would think about where it puts out-of-town shopping centres and businesses, asking whether it was thinking about how to make it easier for people to take part. That would happen alongside the sorts of things that Change for Life is trying to do. So, it would run across everyone, rather than it being down to the sports division or Sport Wales.

[149] **Kenneth Skates:** Specifically regarding children and that quote that I read out a short while ago, in order to improve parental responsibility, do you see allowing children to become obese and not meeting their physical needs as some form of neglect?

[150] **Ms Hamilton:** I might be somewhat biased. It is certainly making life difficult for your children.

[151] **Kenneth Skates:** Okay, so we need that clear shift towards believing that it is

something that is negative. Before we move on, one barrier that is mentioned in your evidence is the lack of use of what you call our 'spectacular natural environment' and you cite in particular the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. Do you believe that perhaps the countryside is too often viewed as something that can be utilised purely for agricultural purposes and that we do not fully exploit its potential for leisure and physical activities? If so, how do we address that?

[152] **Ms Hamilton:** We have a fantastic natural environment in Wales, and I heard some of your questions about disadvantaged people earlier. Going for a walk in the countryside and doing lots of activity in the countryside can be done quite cheaply. If you want to mountain bike through it or canoe through it, then, yes, there starts to be some impact there, but if you want to go for a walk on a regular basis, you just need a pair of decent shoes.

[153] **Kenneth Skates:** And access.

[154] **Ms Hamilton:** And access. I guess that what we are calling for is a look at how it operates in Scotland, where the presumption is much more about access, on the land, above the land and under the land. The presumption is that you can use it. There are responsibilities with that, about how you do that, but the presumption is for access rather than against it. It is not like our current situation, where it is just about access to the land; they have also thought about hand gliding, caving, water, all those sorts of issues, at the same time. The feedback that we get about how it operates in Scotland is really positive. It is much easier for sports organisations to make activity happen, and make stuff accessible.

[155] **Christine Chapman:** Janet, did you want to come in?

[156] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** No.

[157] **Christine Chapman:** Fine. Then Lindsay is next.

[158] **Lindsay Whittle:** Good morning. Is it still morning? Yes. I do not know where I am these days. Could you outline what specific steps are being taken by you, but more importantly, perhaps, by your member bodies, to address specific barriers to participation that have been identified in evidence? I am talking about people from some socioeconomic backgrounds, the need to tackle homophobia, increased participation among women and girls, and criticism that sport organisations show a lack of leadership to accept that racism does exist. I appreciate that many of your bodies may put a paragraph or a page or two in a glossy document with a lovely photograph, and then it is left on the shelf and that is it. That is not acceptable to me. How stringent are you in saying to these national bodies, 'No, you have got to take action, and now'?

[159] **Ms Hamilton:** When I talk to governing bodies they recognise that this is an issue, and they are keen to take action on it. There are some examples of that happening. With football, for example, there was a huge project in Wrexham with the Polish community, where they did a lot of work to set up teams specifically for that community. A number of governing bodies have entered into partnership with organisations such as StreetGames in order to address some of the issues with economically disadvantaged communities. A huge amount of work has been done in terms of table tennis in particular areas of the Valleys, which has been very much about setting up clubs and links with schools in those areas, and there has been growth in participation as a consequence. There is some good work going on. When I talk to people, though, every one of them says that that is not enough. There is a significant recognition that, if we do not address those issues, we are missing out on a significant proportion of the population, and that is not okay. So, I do not think that it is a case of a little statement in a document. That is not what I hear from people. What I do hear is a strong desire to take action and do things, and many of them are taking action. They recognise

that there is still a long way to go.

[160] **Lindsay Whittle:** What about the national governing bodies? Do they do any work with the audience watching the sport? That is crucial, for me. There is nothing more satisfying for me than to watch somebody winning something for Wales. I do not care what sport it is; there is nothing more satisfying than raising my fist in the air and saying, ‘Yes!’—it is a feelgood factor for the whole nation, is it not? More work needs to be done—and I do not care whether somebody is from a rich or a poor background, or whether they are gay or straight, male or female, or black or white; if they are winning for Wales, that is good enough for me, and that is all that I care about. I think the audience needs education as well as the sports organisations. I am sure that all the goodwill is there among the sports organisations. It is the audience—it is Joe Public out there who is waving that Welsh flag with pride—

[161] **Kenneth Skates:** Or British. Or European, if you think of the Ryder Cup.

[162] **Lindsay Whittle:** If they want to. However, this is an inquiry into Welsh sport, and that is important. I think that it is audience education that the national governing bodies need to examine as well.

10.30 a.m.

[163] **Ms Hamilton:** There are some small examples that I am aware of. In the case of the audience or parents in some of the junior leagues, I can give the example of a junior netball league in Merthyr where they did quite a bit of work with the audience on the sidelines, mainly because they were having some significant issues. They did quite a lot of work—by just talking to them, by taking them to one side as a group, and also by talking to them on the sidelines, mainly about the impact of their behaviour on the people taking part. A lot of leagues have a code of conduct that is not just for the players, but for the spectators, too, and they have sanctions for unacceptable behaviour on the part of spectators, as well as the players.

[164] **Mike Hedges:** Have them banned from clubs.

[165] **Ms Hamilton:** Yes.

[166] **Lindsay Whittle:** I would just highlight one thing about why I think that audience support is essential to sport, be it parental or grandparental, or from aunties, uncles and cousins—I do not mind. I saw an incident in which a five-year-old girl won an egg-and-spoon race at our school, and her father burst into tears of pride. That is what sport is all about, is it not? That is what we have to encourage in Wales. Thank you for your evidence; very kind.

[167] **Christine Chapman:** Mark, did you want to come in?

[168] **Mark Isherwood:** Yes.

[169] You mentioned Wrexham; I just want to point out that Wales Rugby League has an initiative in street sport in Wrexham.

[170] There are a lot of adults walking around today from all backgrounds whose aversion to sport is based on their experiences of being forced into organised sport, team sport and gym activities at school, possibly being seen as the poorer performers and then being laughed at or picked on, or even humiliated by a teacher, and not given an alternative to develop their physical health, such as alternative recreation or alternative play. How do we reach them? So far, the talk has been on the basis that everybody, with the appropriate intervention, can achieve in sport and develop self-esteem and physical health through sport. That is never

going to be the case, so how do we reach the others?

[171] **Ms Hamilton:** I guess that there are two angles for me. One is to make sure that that does not happen to our young people coming through the education system now. I think that there has been a significant shift. Certainly, in a lot of the schools that I go to, behaviour of that sort would not be acceptable now. So, one point is to make sure that people come out of school with a positive experience. It is partly about what the teachers give, but it is also about what is acceptable behaviour from the peers of those youngsters and how that is dealt with by the teachers. That would be one side of it.

[172] The other side of it is that I would recognise that that is some people's experience, and when you talk about sport or physical activity, some will raise their hands and say, 'I don't do that and I wouldn't go near it'. Where we have seen some positive changes for those sorts of people, it has been through a softly-softly approach: it has been a friend persuading them to take part, and it is often not the competitive team games, but activities like walking and some of the outdoor activities that are not competitive by their very nature. It could also be on the health and fitness side of things, but, again, they are not competitive, and very obviously so. It is in getting people in by those routes that we have seen some success.

[173] **Mark Isherwood:** When should we be doing that? Is it when they first encounter exclusion in the school environment? Should it be part of the structure that supports them, or should we just wait until their friend invites them on a walk?

[174] **Ms Hamilton:** I certainly think that it needs to be tackled in schools, so that people do not have that experience. They should have a positive experience of sport, both in school and beyond it. I think that coaches bear a big responsibility in this. Certainly, what I see from coaches is much more of a clamping down on that sort of behaviour, and if you look at the coach education side of things, a lot of it is to do with simple things, like how to pick a team. If you were the kid who was always picked last, why would you go back and do that voluntarily? So, in the coach education, we give people alternate ways to make sure that they end up with balanced teams that are not about two captains picking a team. So, part of it is the education about alternative ways to do it that do not embarrass people. The other thing that I would say is that, the more people we get playing sport, the easier it is for people to play against people of similar ability to themselves. Nobody wants to get completely thrashed; that is not fun, and it is not fun on the winning side of that either, because you do not compete terribly well. The more people we have going, the better chance we have of being able to make sure that it is fair competition against people of similar abilities.

[175] **Mike Hedges:** It is not just about similar ability; it is about similar size. Certainly, in both football and rugby at a junior level, big boys and big girls do a lot better than smaller boys and smaller girls. You might be better, but if somebody is knocking you all over the place, being better than them does not really matter. Size is important in those sorts of sports.

[176] **Ms Hamilton:** That is a really fair point. In sports like rugby, where it makes a more significant difference, people are starting to talk more about stage not age, so that is not just under-12s, for example. My son is aged 12 and the difference between him and some of his friends—I am quite tall, so you would expect him to be tall—is just not fair. We still see that a lot of people who make our national teams have September, October, or November birthdays.

[177] **Kenneth Skates:** Mark mentioned that some people are put off participating in sport in their adult life because of their experiences at school—they might be overweight or not particularly good. It has now become almost an acceptable norm to be overweight—we have seen the figures for obesity rising. Do you think that we need to recognise physical excellence more and perhaps be less tolerant of obesity?

[178] **Ms Hamilton:** I do not know if it is physical excellence that I would focus on. I think that it is about encouraging people to take part whether they are excellent or not. It is about having opportunities even if you are not terribly good at sport and it is about starting that from a very young age. When young people start school, some of them are already obese, so it is about interventions through our health visitors and training them so that they know how to promote physical activity, which the vast majority of them do not—the things that they use are years out of date. That is really important in some of our core communities. When people start life like that, it is very tough to get past it. If you come from a family that has given you no exposure whatsoever to physical skills you will see, even at age 4 or 5, a significant difference in what other children are able to do. Some youngsters will have played football in the back garden with dad or thrown a ball around, or will have had parents who throw the waste into the waste paper bin and that is part of what they do. Other children are told ‘Sit still’, ‘Stop causing a problem’ or ‘Don’t knock the ornaments off the wall’. That completely different experience means that, even at a very young age, there is a difference in skills and ability.

[179] **Kenneth Skates:** That was the answer that I was hoping that you were going to give. I rather feared that I had set a trap for you there. The flip side is that body image is preventing people from participating in sport. Would I be right in assuming that we have now conveyed the image of a woman as being Jessica Ennis with a six-pack and men as being, basically, like Superman, and that that, in turn, prevents many people from participating in sport?

[180] **Ms Hamilton:** Body image is an issue, particularly for girls—it still applies to boys, but particularly for girls. Is that a factor? It probably is. One of the things that schools are trying to do is address what they expect them to wear. If you are a bit overweight, a leotard is probably the last thing that you want to be seen in, but a pair of tracky bottoms and a polo shirt are much more acceptable.

[181] **Mark Isherwood:** My son has a bench press machine in the garage because he wants to look like Superman.

[182] **Kenneth Skates:** That is my point. It is an artificial ambition for people to achieve that body image. Then, they give up because they do not realise the body that they want. I have not done so, of course. [*Laughter.*]

[183] **Christine Chapman:** Returning to the points that Ken made, you talked about informal sports, and the fact that there has been a huge change in children’s physical activities. Going back many years to the time when I was a child, we would be out all day, playing on the mountains and in the street. It is completely different now. Do you have any thoughts on that? Quite often, parents are nervous, if not overprotective, about letting their children out. I do not think that the research bears out that there is more danger than there would have been years ago. Do you have any thoughts on what could change that situation?

[184] **Ms Hamilton:** When I talk to a lot of the governing bodies, one of the things that they say is that they would be keen to see an extended school day, where people would stay after school, and where part of what they would do is sporting activity. That is a safe, comfortable environment that they know how to get to and that is on their doorstep. A lot of people pay for after-school care. People are looking for childcare, particularly at primary school age. This would hit two issues at the same time. If you were able, through childcare, to provide good physical activity, many of my governing body members would like to see more of it.

[185] **Christine Chapman:** We have less than 10 minutes left of this really interesting discussion. I would like to move on now to Jenny.

[186] **Jenny Rathbone:** Sticking to the previous theme, your governing bodies think that having an extended school day would be an excellent idea, and I can see that working very well. What are the barriers to making it happen? You talk about the failure of Government to involve some of your members when it talks about new physical activity initiatives. What are the barriers to achieving what you have just described?

[187] **Ms Hamilton:** Some of the barriers are around the availability of volunteers, if we are involving club personnel in making that happen. I am sure that, when I went to school, we finished at 4 p.m., but finishing time seems to be closer to 3 p.m. now. The availability of people who are in work makes it quite a difficult time slot. That is part of why I am suggesting that it is combined with a childcare option, so that that becomes a meaningful job for someone.

[188] **Jenny Rathbone:** Fine. During volunteers' week, I met lots of organisations with volunteer programmes, including the police, the local authority, the health body and lots of voluntary bodies. What would it take to shift some of their focus onto what you are talking about?

[189] **Ms Hamilton:** Some of my governing bodies talk about how difficult it is to get into schools and to get someone to answer the phone. They say that they will write to them and phone them, and they will quite often end up writing to the head of PE or to the headteacher. However, they might not respond. I talked about Planet Gymnastics, which is a fantastic club with fantastically well-qualified coaches. It took it an awfully long time to get acceptance and trust from local schools to have youngsters sent to the club to join up, and for the club to do taster sessions at the schools. So, it is about having a bit more of an open door and a certain responsiveness, where people are willing and able to do that. It is also about ensuring that it is not such hard work to get in through the door. That would help.

10.45 a.m.

[190] **Jenny Rathbone:** In the context of the epidemic in obesity and diabetes, and the Government's announced intention to tackle this through 'Together for Health', your Planet Gymnastics people should not have to struggle to get into so-called community-focused schools. Do you think that that is something that the Government has to do? Obviously, your Planet Gymnastics people are getting frustrated and using up valuable time not getting a response.

[191] **Ms Hamilton:** It would be great if PE was a higher priority in schools—it is in some schools, but that is very much down to whether the headteacher sees it as an important subject. It is not a priority across the board. It should be seen as important by schools and inspectors and made a higher priority. It should also be a higher priority to see achievement in physical literacy by the young people. Where you see that high achievement, it is usually where they have good links with their local club, where what is done in PE is built on and extended through the community club. If PE had a higher priority and teachers were much more judged on its success, it should become more important for them to link with local clubs because of what they can do for young people and the opportunities they can offer—opportunities to extend the time that is available and the workforce that is available. That is what I would look for.

[192] **Jenny Rathbone:** That is all very interesting. On a slightly different theme, has anybody done any analysis or evaluation of the prescription for exercise, as to whether it leads from just a one-off thing to keep the GP quiet to an actual change of lifestyle?

[193] **Ms Hamilton:** My awareness, probably because one of my close friends used to run

the scheme for the Welsh Government, is that they did a big evaluation of the exercise referral scheme and it showed some significant success. It is not something that national governing bodies typically interact with. Typically, people are referred to a gym session and not to a walking session or a sports session—I guess because the gym is a more controlled environment. However, referrals to ramblers could be a mechanism that could be used to extend the variety that is on offer through the exercise referral scheme.

[194] **Jenny Rathbone:** Lastly, on Communities First programmes, how engaged are they with the StreetGames initiative? Are they actively engaged with some of your members?

[195] **Ms Hamilton:** There are good examples of links with StreetGames. However, in a very recent discussion with national governing bodies, they said that they would like it to be much easier to engage with Communities First. There is recognition that, in order to work with those sorts of communities, the governing bodies need to work with the people who are already working with those communities, and that if they go in as governing bodies and try to find people and connect with them, that would be quite a time-intensive way of doing it, so it would be better for them to link with the people who are already in the communities. Certainly, that is the approach that people like those at StreetGames take.

[196] **Gwyn R. Price:** Good morning. What is your overall view on how beneficial, in terms of participation levels, is the Welsh Government's commitment to attract more major sporting events to Wales? I noticed in your evidence that you are slightly concerned that certain sports—rowing and so on—will not get that recognition.

[197] **Ms Hamilton:** In terms of the impact of the Olympics, we have seen a shift. It probably comes through in the evidence that it is quite a mixed picture. That reflects the same thing that Sports Wales said when it was here. Where the sports have the infrastructure, where they have been able to create additional opportunities and where they had the workforce in order to do that, they have seriously benefited from those things. For some sports, it is harder. For rowing, their club numbers have gone up as a consequence, but buying a boat is not cheap, so they have struggled to accommodate the interest that they have had. Their university clubs are turning away hundreds of people because they cannot accommodate them. Even though they would have known that that was coming, buying a boat is expensive, and for existing members to do that in the hope that they would get more people following a big event would have been quite a risk for them. If you consider the participants of something like volleyball, which is an even smaller sport, most of them were at the Olympics helping to run it. So, for those smaller sports, it is much harder, because of their size and their capacity, and because the majority of them are volunteers and are doing it in their own time.

[198] **Mike Hedges:** I have two brief questions. The first is on technical sports such as yachting and rowing. I might have been a world champion yachtsperson—I probably would not have been—but I was never going to find out because I lived in a council house and went to a comprehensive school. We need to create opportunities across sports, so that everyone has the opportunity to access them. What can be done about that? My second point is, we talk about elite achievement, but in my area, it is the achievement of some of those smaller clubs, such as West End FC in a neighbouring constituency, Bonymaen RFC and Morryston RFC, that, because of their relative local successes, tends to generate a lot of interest among young people in the area who gravitate towards them and want to play for those clubs.

[199] **Ms Hamilton:** I think that they can see that local participation as a possibility. Being Jessica Ennis and having the six pack and everything that goes with that is something about which a lot of people would think, 'I could never be that good, but, actually, I could play for my local club and we might win the local league'.

[200] **Mike Hedges:** You might win a Welsh cup. But, you have your neighbours and

people around you who are achieving that, as well.

[201] **Ms Hamilton:** Yes. For some people, going to play the game is an achievement.

[202] **Mike Hedges:** Yes.

[203] **Gwyn R. Price:** Getting involved.

[204] **Ms Hamilton:** Yes.

[205] **Mark Isherwood:** I have a short observation to make. Whatever their sporting aspirations, pupils' and young people's participation in out-of-school-hours school sports activities is determined by the time the school buses go to and from the school. In communities such as mine, that does prevent participation, even when the opportunities exist.

[206] **Ms Hamilton:** Yes, but there is no reason why those times should not be changed.

[207] **Mark Isherwood:** Except that that would be penalising other children who would be forced to wait an extra hour if they are not taking part in activities after school.

[208] **Ms Hamilton:** For me, that is about, 'Let us look at drama, arts, music, cooking, or woodwork'. It is not just sport; it would benefit a huge number of areas. It is all about young people having the choices to do what they want.

[209] **Mark Isherwood:** They might like to get home because they are going to a local club, which you have also referred to.

[210] **Mike Hedges:** Clubs would—

[211] **Ms Hamilton:** Clubs would adapt to those timings.

[212] **Christine Chapman:** Thank you, Anne. That was a very interesting discussion. It was really good, and I know that Members enjoyed the discussion this morning.

[213] **Ms Hamilton:** Thank you for the opportunity to come.

[214] **Christine Chapman:** We will send you a transcript of the meeting, so that you can check it for factual accuracy and, in due course, we will be producing a report. So, thank you for attending today.

[215] **Ms Hamilton:** Thank you very much.

[216] **Christine Chapman:** We will have a short break now. Could you be back here by 11.05 a.m.? Thanks.

*Gohiriwyd y cyfarfod rhwng 10.53 a.m. a 11.03 a.m.
The meeting adjourned between 10.53 a.m. and 11.03 a.m.*

Ymchwiliad i Lefelau Cyfranogiad mewn Chwaraeon—Sesiwn Dystiolaeth 3 Inquiry into Participation Levels in Sport in Wales—Evidence Session 3

[217] **Christine Chapman:** We will make a start now, because there is quite a lot to cover. I welcome both of our witnesses today from Disability Sport Wales. I would like to welcome Jon Morgan, the executive director, and Michelle Daltry, the partnership manager. A warm welcome to you both. You have sent evidence to us, which Members will have read. So, if

you are content to do so, we will go straight into questions. I see that you are.

[218] I will start off with a few general questions. You mention recent increases in the number of sports clubs, volunteers, community events and participation opportunities for disabled people. What would you say is the cause of these increases, and are there any lessons that other sports organisations in Wales can learn in this respect?

[219] **Mr Morgan:** Good morning. Chair, we believe that the growth over the last 10 years has been sustained because, within Disability Sport Wales, we have really tried to have a clear vision for Wales. We recognise that we work in an extremely disparate sector of sport. We may be called Disability Sport Wales, but we cover a very large number of individual communities and groups within that. One of the challenges that we face is to lead our sector and to be able to bring everybody along with us at the same pace and with the same understanding. There was a significant rise last year of 20% in terms of clubs, and 10% in terms of membership, but I think that the story behind that is about sustained growth, a clear vision, clear understanding, and advocacy on our part to, hopefully, get local authority partners, the third sector and governing bodies to understand that what we require within disability sport is something quite simple. It is not any different, in many respects, from mainstream sport. It is about good club development, good coach education, and the introduction and recruitment of volunteers and their retention. If we put those building blocks in place, then we should see sustained growth over a decade. Last year, the Paralympic Games was really the lift that we needed to ice some of that cake. So, strategy and vision have been the determinants.

[220] **Christine Chapman:** Thank you. Obviously, it is good news that there has been this improvement, but are there any specific things that would increase the pace of improvement? Are there any specific areas that you could refer to where we could see a step change?

[221] **Mr Morgan:** I think that our sports agenda should very much reflect the social agenda within disability at the moment. Historically, disability sport in Wales has been delivered through a pan-disability environment, with a multi-sport approach, but, more and more, over the last decade, we have diversified into disability-specific strands, and into the issues of inclusion and integration. I think that the social model of disability has maintained pace with our transition, so, where we are now, in terms of a step change, is that we really need to engage the wider, mainstream community and to challenge our partners positively by asking, 'If you are a mainstream governing body and you deliver badminton, what is going to be your offer for a disabled person, if they want to turn up at your club in their community and play badminton?' The step change that we have introduced is a national programme called insport. Insport is a transformational programme that provides the sector partners with the learning and the skills to understand how to be more inclusive in their delivery. If we are to achieve this transformation over the next decade, what we should find is that there is a wider choice for disabled people, that there is more doorstep sport for them, and that they are able to play sport where they want to play it, when they want to play it and with whom they want to play it. So, our agenda is quite exciting. I believe it is quite innovative. We are probably one of the only nations in the world that is genuinely tackling inclusion in sport. For that reason, it is exciting. That is the step change that we need to go to the next level in Wales.

[222] **Christine Chapman:** Thank you. Peter is next.

[223] **Peter Black:** I will be talking mostly about data sets and statistics. Diverse Cymru has expressed concern in its evidence about the severe lack of information regarding the participation in sports of protected characteristic groups. Do you believe that this is an issue in terms of disability sport?

[224] **Ms Daltry:** I think that the data that we have collected are relatively robust. As

disability is a protected characteristic, Disability Sport Wales is already very much committed to equity and equality. We collect data across all impairment groups, as you would expect of a disability sport organisation, but we also collect data pertinent to black and minority ethnic groups, and we collect data on women and girls. While we recognise that there is still room for improvement within that, we are seeing that the data we are collecting are reflected at the national average in terms of the number of individuals from a BME community and the male-female split. There is work to be done, and we are very committed through 'The Equality Standard: A Framework for Sport' to moving forward and driving the equality agenda. We sit on a variety of different groups in order to engage with different communities and to try to improve our provision within those areas. I think the key message is that disability sport is a very inclusive environment by its very nature. While there is not a lot of research that identifies the challenges that equity strands on top of equity strands bring, the nature of disability sport, as an inclusive environment, tends to mean that it is a very welcoming and open environment in any case.

[225] **Peter Black:** Diverse Cymru talks about hidden disabilities and participation levels among people with hidden disabilities. You are collecting information on the participation of people with disabilities in particular in sport. To what extent are you confident that those figures present a proper picture of participation across that particular group?

[226] **Ms Daltry:** The range of provision that we have now has evolved over the 12 to 13 years that the community programme has been in place. So, initially, our offer was: 'We are Disability Sport Wales, would you like to come and be involved in sport and physical activity?' As we moved through the programme, we began to develop more specific opportunities for specific impairment groups. So, we have wheelchair-sport-specific clubs, groups specifically for individuals with profound and multiple learning disabilities, for those with visual impairment, and deaf provision as well. However, the inclusive sport offer that we have means that we are offering a sport for all opportunities. So, we are not pigeon-holing people with disabilities or impairments and saying, 'You have to be in a disability sport environment'. We want to try to offer a genuine menu of opportunities and choice so that people can say, for example, 'I live in Caerphilly and I would like to be involved in this sport' and we will try to facilitate an inclusive sporting environment for that person.

[227] **Mr Morgan:** I would like to add, if I may, that, when you look back to the start of our journey, when we started to collect data around 2002, what became very apparent to us, in terms of our network of provision, was that we were providing very strongly for people with learning disabilities. I suspect that the reason why we were providing particularly well in that area is that they are highly visible as a community within our areas, as it is a supported community, often with access to transport. Therefore, it was a relatively simple process for us to engage with them and create chances for them to do sport. However, as Michelle mentioned, what we have tried to do with data is to not only collect data through outputs, but try to understand where there are gaps in provision. That is why we are quite pleased that, over the last five or six years, we have seen specific growth in the area of physical disability clubs and wheelchair clubs. In areas where you may argue that there is still hidden disability, the challenge, as we see it now, is how we can work with wider sector partners, education, social services and public health, in particular, because we need to understand how they are able to access information on individuals in the community within data protection rules and how we can have information going between our networks to ensure that we can make our sports offer available to everybody. Data protection has, at times, got in the way of our work. We understand the need for it, and we work within data protection rules ourselves, but it is a challenge. What that says to us is that we need to have more robust networks in place with organisations that interrelate with disabled people, so that we can spread our offer far more widely and ensure that we are not missing any hidden communities.

[228] **Christine Chapman:** Thank you. I want to move on now to consider what

opportunities are available and whether there are barriers to participation for different groups. Did Janet or Mark want to come in on any questions to start off with? I know that Lindsay wants to come in as well.

[229] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** I was interested in what Diverse Cymru said about the lack of understanding of the variety of sports that cater for different impairments. It said that many sports clubs assume that disabled people can only play disabled sports. That really concerns me, and I wonder how you seek to address that.

[230] **Mr Morgan:** A lot of our agenda at the moment is around changing perceptions. The Paralympic Games last year were an incredible opportunity to express the ability of disabled people.

[231] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** I am sorry to interrupt you, but I was going to follow on by asking what you feel the legacy of the Paralympics is, so I will ask that question now. A lot of concerns have been expressed to me that we saw the Olympics close down and then the location was set up again for the Paralympics. People have said to me that they found it odd that you have this separation between the Olympics and the Paralympics, between Sport Wales and Disability Sport Wales. I just wondered about how you felt about that. There are two or three issues there for you.

11.15 a.m.

[232] **Mr Morgan:** I will take the set-up of the Paralympics first, then the issue around perception and the mainstreaming of sports. In terms of the Paralympic Games, I have been privileged to sit on the board of the British Paralympic Association for the last eight years, so I have been privileged to attend three Paralympic Games. I can honestly say that the London Paralympics was, without doubt, the most integrated and successful Paralympic Games that I have ever seen. The reason for that was because, from the outset, the London bid was based on being an inclusive games. The reason why we have a gap between the Olympic Games and the Paralympic Games is simply one of scale. If we were to try to merge the Paralympic movement into the Olympic movement, it would result in a lack of competitive elite opportunities for athletes because the Olympic programme and Paralympic programme combined just would not be sufficient in terms of time. It would not be robust enough, and what we would find is that, with regard to some particular classification groups, as we call them in Paralympic sport—and possibly higher impaired classification groups—because it takes longer to prepare and to deliver some of their competitive environments, you would lose those from the competitive programme. We would want to protect against that at all costs. So, I think that it is the right way to go in terms of the Olympic movement and the Paralympic movement.

[233] The second reason for that links into perception. The fact that we were able to present in Great Britain a Paralympic Games—

[234] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** It was fantastic.

[235] **Mr Morgan:** Many people would probably never have seen Paralympic sport at that level before. The Channel 4 post-games statistics indicated that around 74% of the people who viewed the Paralympic Games said that their perception had changed for the better, not just around Paralympic sport, but, importantly, around disability per se. That is absolutely critical as part of our social offer within Paralympic sport.

[236] We are trying to harness the energy of the Paralympic Games with our mainstream partners, because—taking your point around the perception of what disabled people can and cannot do—our view is that a disabled person can do any sport. We will find a way—not

necessarily ourselves, but our partners—to technically adapt sport to meet the needs of people with different impairments. That is why—I go back to the point that I made earlier—this insport programme is so fundamental to what we are doing. We are accepting a really important point that, for our mainstream partners, if they have never had to deliver a disability sport in the past, they will not, therefore, know how to do it in the future. They have to be supported, and they have to be taught and given specific skills. Once they are given those skills and that knowledge, our position is that any mainstream provider can adapt just about any of their services to include disabled people. What we are developing through insport is a model that may be used in the world of art, other community groups, such as Guiding organisations, the Scouts and youth services, because the principles of inclusion that we are applying are, we believe, generic in terms of a wider community offer. So, the perception of the Paralympic Games perception and changing perception into action is really high on our agenda.

[237] **Ms Daltry:** Our data from 2012 have identified that 61% of the sports clubs that are on our database are actually mainstream sports clubs offering opportunities for disabled people. To come back to the previous question, what we are seeing is that, through the disability sport offer, we are improving the standard and quality of coaching. If you can coach disabled people within sport it should, technically, mean that you are a better quality and standard of coach, which improves the offer for all people, not just disabled people. So, if you do not identify as having a disability or an impairment, you should be able to go to a mainstream sports group and know that you will get a better standard of coaching and therefore potentially a better experience within the sport. The 20% increase in clubs that we have seen has predominantly been within mainstream sports clubs that have seen the Paralympic Games and have said, ‘Actually, that was just sport. We can do that. That is just football, cricket’—or whatever the sport might be—‘We can adapt that for disabled people to engage with’. That is the step change that we have seen, and that is the philosophical change that we are trying to drive forward through insport and through our development programme.

[238] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** Great. Thank you, and good luck with it.

[239] **Christine Chapman:** Jenny is next, and then Mike. Sorry, did you want to come in as well, Mark?

[240] **Mark Isherwood:** Is this on group 2?

[241] **Christine Chapman:** No, we are on group 3 now.

[242] **Mark Isherwood:** Okay. I would like to come in, yes.

[243] **Christine Chapman:** Right. Jenny is first, then, and then Mark and Mike.

[244] **Jenny Rathbone:** Could you say a little bit more about sports for the blind and visually impaired? It seems to me that it is particularly difficult to do physical activity that involves movement when you cannot see. You said that you would give us some statistics, which I would like, but could you also tell me about how we make sure that people who are blind can do sport?

11.20 a.m.

[245] **Mr Morgan:** Michelle will give you some statistics in a moment, but one of the challenges around working with some of our groups is the population base and the population densities. So, when we work with blind or visually impaired groups, we tend to work across local authority structures. Part of the strength of our offer in Wales is that we have 22 development officers based in each local authority area, but, from the word ‘go’, we tried to

create a culture whereby if you are working in Swansea, Neath Port Talbot or Carmarthenshire, you work as a team, because to create a blind football opportunity, if there is a paucity of individuals who have an interest in that particular sport to begin with, clearly it will be difficult to get that off the ground. So, we have had to encourage a different approach.

[246] We also find it acceptable if non-disabled people would like to support disabled people by getting involved in their sport and participating. That is positive. Quite often, in wheelchair sports, you will often get non-disabled brothers, sisters, mums and dads jumping into a chair and playing basketball and really enjoying it. So, we have to find different methodologies to ensure that, where we have low population densities, we can find solutions. Visually impaired sport is a challenging area. There are some bespoke pathways through Paralympic sport, where we can let people fulfil their potential if sport is something that they want to pursue. In terms of the statistics, do you want to talk about where we are with club development, Michelle?

[247] **Ms Daltry:** Just short of 3% of the club database identifies clubs specifically for individuals with a visual impairment. Within the pan-disability community and the inclusive sports clubs, there will absolutely be individuals who are blind or have a visual impairment engaging in a different sporting environment. There are more significant issues and barriers for individuals with a visual impairment around transport, and those are some of the things that we are trying to address through specific projects. There is some interesting learning that we have taken on—sight loss comes hand-in-hand with age, and the inclusive insport programme and agenda will lend itself well to the VI communities, because if guys are involved in sport and physical activity, they will probably want to stay within that community rather than being picked up and put into a disability sport or VI sport environment. So, the inclusion and the insport programme will help clubs to understand the needs of different impairment groups, not just VI groups.

[248] Specifically on Cardiff City and Swansea City in relation to the VI football projects that they are doing, only yesterday we had a meeting to look at the identification of ambassadors in Wales. So, Darren Harris and Nick Thomas in north Wales, and Keryn Seal, who have all played football either at Paralympic or at high-level, international standard and who have visual impairments, are being used as ambassadors to work alongside young people, schoolchildren and clubs to encourage participation and to show different forms of the sport. Futsal is one of the adapted versions of the game that is being used, because of the smaller numbers of individuals from those communities.

[249] **Jenny Rathbone:** Thank you; that is very interesting.

[250] **Mark Isherwood:** The public sector equality duty applies to disabled people, their families and their carers, support workers or personal assistants, but, too often, I still encounter local authorities with a lack of disability awareness that prevents them from seeing the barriers that are in the way of people who want to engage or take part and live independent lives. How do you feel that that duty is being, or could be, used to remove those barriers to access to sport for disabled people?

[251] **Mr Morgan:** In terms of the duty, we would like to start from a position in which public sector provision is aware of what its duty is and how it should be discharging it. Our approach has been to try to highlight inadequacies where we may perceive they exist, but also to support processes and learning to get teams outside of our immediate network of officers to understand how they should develop their programmes and deliver service provision to customers in a far more inclusive and friendly manner.

[252] I do not want to harp on too much about the insport programme, but I would like to make the point, because it is important to this issue: insport is a programme that we are

not just aiming at the governing bodies and the club sector. We are also aiming insport at local authorities. Even though, for the last 11 years, we have had a bespoke disability sport development officer within leisure services, we are now challenging local authorities to say, ‘Actually, you should not be placing your sole reliance on the actions and knowledge of one person in your leisure service department’. What we should be doing is using our development officers in a different way. We do not want our development officers going out and delivering or generating sport. We want them to be far more strategic within their departments, influencing the work of mainstream programmes, schools provision and youth services where they work alongside public health programmes, so that we can begin to proliferate from a core and take it outwards in ever-increasing circles.

[253] We know that it is challenging, and we understand that financial resources have to be applied, but finance should not always be a barrier to the provision of good services. Often, we find that the best solutions are simple. A lot of the time, the best solutions are around good communication and understanding. Some research that we did back in 2010 reaffirmed to us that one of the most important aspects of a disabled person’s introduction to sport was the first five minutes after walking into a leisure centre. If the receptionist or person who is welcoming them to the session does not understand some of their additional requirements or needs, then that individual can be turned off sport in a split second. That is why we place such great emphasis on disability awareness training. We delivered 50 courses across the public sector last year, and we are looking to double that in 2013-14, because without that understanding and knowledge, so many people will not get the right experience, and they will be switched off sport.

[254] **Mark Isherwood:** Are those courses being delivered by disabled people themselves?

[255] **Mr Morgan:** We have a range of tutors. Some tutors are disabled, and some individuals are non-disabled. We have taken a view that the most important aspect of our training is the quality and understanding of delivery. Where we have disabled people who are able to impart that knowledge with confidence and understanding, and where people within their workshop are able to take away that core knowledge, then we absolutely support, encourage and welcome disabled people to be part of our tutor network. Where we have gaps in that provision, we will use non-disabled people because, to us, we are dealing with such a large public sector area, and a very diverse area, we have to expand our workforce. For us, at the moment, it is not just about the quantity of tutors; it is very much about the quality of delivery. That is the critical issue in terms of being able to impart our knowledge.

[256] **Mark Isherwood:** Are you working with local disability access groups and fora, where they exist, which could perhaps support you in providing the expertise?

[257] **Ms Daltry:** The vast majority of local authorities—just short of 70%—are actively engaging in local disability fora. Some of those are specific disability sport fora that have been established by Disability Sport Wales; others are access fora or other local forum groups where we have had a seat at the table to discuss the wider disability sport agenda. The position that we have taken is that we do not believe that, in sports development, anyone deliberately excludes a disabled person from an activity. All provision and all sports development officers, national governing bodies and clubs would perceive their opportunities as inclusive. The question then is: if our our clubs are inclusive, why do disabled people not come? The challenges for us are to engage more effectively with partners to understand why that might be and to ask, for example, how they are marketing their programmes. Which fora are we talking to? The only real difference between disability sport development and mainstream sport development is in the partners that we engage with. It is not really much more difficult than that. By having a seat at the table with disability sport fora and engaging with community groups, we are able to develop a broader understanding of localised need and to raise a level of understanding for colleagues in sport development departments of

governing bodies.

[258] **Mark Isherwood:** That was the answer that I wanted.

[259] **Mike Hedges:** Briefly, I understand that the Paralympics and Olympics cannot come together, but do you agree that organisations like the Welsh Swimming Association, which has disabled swimming alongside able-bodied swimming, are moving in the right direction? Are you pleased that Ellie Simmonds probably has better name recognition than most of the people who played for Wales in Japan? [*Laughter.*]

11.30 a.m.

[260] **Christine Chapman:** You do not have to answer that. [*Laughter.*]

[261] **Mr Morgan:** Just taking the last point, what I would say about Ellie and the other Welsh Paralympians is that we are fiercely proud of them. When I started, 12 years ago, I suspect that if you had asked most people in the streets whether they could name a Welsh Paralympian, they would possibly have named Tanni, maybe David Roberts, and probably nobody else. I will not test you this morning, but I would like to think that if you were to go back out and ask the same question, particularly post-London, the profile and the way in which we can use these amazing athletes as role models, not just for disabled kids, but for all children and young people, makes them something that we should aspire to. So, I very much hope that that trend is turning.

[262] In terms of integration within governing bodies, we fiercely believe that, as an organisation, we are beginning to reach our capacity for operational delivery. I pay credit to my colleagues in participation, and also those in performance. Look at the numbers that came from Wales at London: we had 38 Paralympians across 13 sports and we delivered 15 medals. If we were a nation competing in our own right at the Paralympic Games, on medals per head of population, we would be No. 1 in the world, and we would have been No. 1 at Beijing and at Athens. However, the reality is that our network of loyal coaches and volunteers can only go so far in a Paralympic environment where the standards will constantly, and rightly, move on. By the time we get to Rio, we expect sprinters to be sprinting more quickly, swimmers to be going faster, and throwers to be throwing further, and to do that, we need work with governing bodies. We need to work smarter, and we need to look at advances in technology, sports science and sports medicine, all applied to the Paralympic setting. If we as an organisation become selfish and jealous, and we think that we can keep on doing that which we have done over the last decade, then we are very much mistaken; we have to use a team Wales approach. We already work with Sport Wales. If you were to go into the Sport Wales National Centre, you would see as many, possibly more, Paralympians making use of the institute's services than you would Olympians, because of the way that we hub our athletes together.

[263] We cannot stand still, but our challenge to the governing bodies is twofold. They have to embrace inclusion, but they must also accept that before we can hand over performance programmes, they have to demonstrate to us and to Sport Wales that, actually, they are ready to deliver and they understand the issues. I guess that, simply, our bottom line would be that they may well do as good a job as we do, but, actually, we want them to do a better job. So, it is not about switching on a light and saying, 'Over to you, governing bodies; you do it'; it is about managed transition, working hard with governing bodies and recognising our priority sports and performance in Wales, because we cannot do it with every governing body at the same time—we do not have the capacity. So, we have to be quite select, and we have to be sure about why we are working with certain governing bodies and at what time, and about what they are going to deliver for us. However, I believe that if we can adopt that approach, then, yes, I would absolutely agree with your position, Mike.

[264] **Lindsay Whittle:** Good morning. Let us highlight first of all the really positive part of this inquiry, in that there has been considerable growth in sport provision for disabled people over recent years. However, I want to talk about the many barriers that disabled people still face. We have cost, location, perception, dependency, media, marketing, materials, accessibility, carer attitudes—we could go on and on, could we not? Do you have a priority among those that we think should be addressed to improve things? It may be just in the short term.

[265] Secondly, are there any particular groups of disabled people that are being disproportionately neglected in terms of sporting provision? Is there a minority within a minority about which you think something should perhaps be done? How can we address that?

[266] **Mr Morgan:** I will take the first part, then Michelle will perhaps talk about the minorities within the minority.

[267] We provided evidence to the committee, and perhaps the one point within that evidence is physical education in schools. It is a critical issue that we, along with our partners in Sport Wales, are currently looking at. Through successive Welsh Government agendas, we know that there is an ambition to create an educational environment where disabled children are mainstreamed. There are many good reasons for that. Within physical education we need to ensure that, when those children are in mainstream environments, their access to physical education is at the same level, with the same quality and the same understanding of their needs as there would be for a non-disabled child. When you think about participation, the first steps into sport for many kids will be their experience in school. We hear so many elite athletes saying, ‘My PE teacher was the biggest influence on my sporting career’, so, why should it be any different for a disabled child?

[268] The approach that we take with physical education is that we have a level of sympathy for our colleagues, particularly non-teaching colleagues. If you have never been in an environment of having to teach a group of schoolchildren where there may be a chair user, a visually impaired child, a child with cerebral palsy or a child with a very high level of impairment, it is really challenging for a teacher.

[269] Our solution is that we have to go right to the heart of continuing professional development for teachers. We have introduced a programme called Active Kids for All, in conjunction with our colleagues in Scotland, Northern Ireland and England, although we have tailored the curriculum to Wales. What is important about that programme is that it will give teachers and non-teaching staff access in one day to learn how to deliver adapted physical activity.

[270] We have only just started on that journey. This is part of a Paralympic legacy. Our good friends in Sainsbury’s have commercially supported the cost of developing that programme across the four nations. While the figure is commercially sensitive, it runs above the £1 million mark, so there has been a significant commitment by Sainsbury’s. This programme has to make a difference.

[271] Linked to that, if I may—I know that time is precious, but it is important—we are working with Sport Wales on its school sport survey. We are delighted that, as part of that school sport survey, there is a section that is specifically aimed at children with disability in the education environment. As we are able to influence in-house training for teachers, and as physical education provision is improved, we should see the response to surveys from that particular community saying, ‘We are more engaged in sport; we’re getting access to sport, we’re enjoying it and we’re looking to make club links’. So, there is a correlation in that we

are going back to square one and training people—not just teachers but also in higher education—ensuring that we can train the teachers of the future, and train people inclusively from the start. We should not do training and then say, ‘Oh, we’d better do some inclusion training as well’; we should be saying, ‘Let’s just do inclusion training’. It is much easier. Of all the barriers that we have identified, we should be clear that education and physical education are critical to our offer moving forward, and we must support them.

[272] **Ms Daltry:** To pick up on the point about a minority within a minority, there is a challenge and a risk that, when people talk about inclusion, they think that it means disabled people in a mainstream sport and environment. For Wales to be an inclusive sporting nation, it means that we offer choice for disabled people to engage in sport and physical activity. That message is essential, because if we just assume that all disabled people will want to take part in mainstream sport, we are going to fail. There are disabled people who, through choice or the nature of their impairment, cannot readily participate in mainstream sport. They may start in disability sport and move into mainstream sport, and it may work the other way round, but the menu of opportunities is essential to ensure that all impairment groups are adequately catered for.

[273] There are gaps in provision, and we need to look more specifically at the opportunities that we provide for the deaf community. Culturally, the disability badge can be a turn-off not just for the deaf community, but for disabled people as a whole. Through the insport project, and through trying to change the landscape of sport, we hope that people will just understand that you can be part of sport. Those are the challenges for us moving forward: to look at further engagement with the deaf community and to ensure that we offer opportunities specifically for those individuals, whether in mainstream sport, or specifically for those guys.

[274] **Christine Chapman:** We have about five minutes left and I know that a number of Members want to pick up some other themes.

[275] **Jenny Rathbone:** I just want to pick up on the patient pathway initiative. I am keen to know why it is only in Betsi Cadwaladr. Is that because you are trying to develop a pilot programme to sell to everybody else?

[276] **Mr Morgan:** That is exactly right. We have gone through a process with Sport Wales and we have bid for one of its programme areas, which is referred to as a ‘call to action’. I believe that we have been successful—I say ‘believe’ because I do not think that it is public just yet. We are introducing a pilot programme in Betsi Cadwaladr because we understand that, while we are able to identify many disabled people in many communities, at the moment, we still have gaps in our provision. However, one of the institutions that disabled people will regularly connect with—at least once a year—is a health institution, by nature of their impairment. Therefore, what we are looking to do is some reverse pathway development. So, rather than having sport development officers trying to break into a very diverse public health setting, we are looking at piloting a person who will be based in the health authority, who will work across the landscape that they understand and will make sure that, as people pass through the different health services, they are aware of the importance of health and the importance of sport, and how they can access it in their own community. They will then make the link from that person out to our network of development officers, clubs and voluntary organisations. So, it is really about trying to take a direct and different marketing approach. Hopefully, through that approach, we will pick up individuals who quite simply do not know that we exist, have not thought of sport, or perhaps have just not understood how they should connect.

[277] It is a pilot programme, but we hope that it is something that we will be able to take forward. We also believe that, even though we are funding an officer in Betsi Cadwaladr for

the first three years, we may not necessarily have to fund officers in other health boards. We think that some of the learning that we can get from this approach can then be taken into other health boards, so that we work in a smarter way and work with key health professionals who understand our business, and we understand their business better.

[278] **Jenny Rathbone:** It is interesting that we have not had any written evidence from any health body; perhaps we should try to rectify that. If I am a GP or a practice nurse and I have a disabled person in front of me, how am I going to find out where the facilities are in my local community that might be suitable for that person's disability?

[279] **Mr Morgan:** That is the challenge. We offer quite an extensive online service, where a disabled person, a non-disabled person or a support person can access our website, and I would say that, within two minutes, they could go into their area and identify any club in their patch that has provision for disabled people. We are able to promote that website through what I would call traditional sport development channels, namely through the local authorities, the governing bodies and the voluntary sector, but we go back to this issue of connecting with health. We may have an individual who goes to a GP, but if the GP does not know that we exist, or if the individual does not quite know where to start, we are missing that connection. So, when we talk about Betsi Cadwaldr, the officer is not just talking about hospital-based services; that officer has influence in the wider field. We know that a lot of health provision will be delivered through community services, as opposed to hospital services, so it is critical that we engage with the wider health sector rather than just focusing on hospitals.

[280] **Jenny Rathbone:** Most health consultations are in the community, not in the hospital. If I am a busy GP and I have an eight-minute consultation, are you planning to produce a leaflet that would enable that disabled person or their support worker to know how to get on to your website and seek the information?

[281] **Mr Morgan:** We already provide a range of hard resources and online resources that we can distribute. However, the contact time for that person in that particular surgery is at the point that they say, 'Hi, I'm here for my 10.40', because that is the time when they are waiting—they are talking to people, they are looking at poster boards and they know the receptionist. That is the point of contact where we have to get people to understand what our particular offer is.

11.45 a.m.

[282] I would say, somewhat whimsically, that our officers are very good at finding disabled people. We will often put posters up in accessible toilets. That is part of the environment that our particular communities use. This is a little bit whimsical, but I am trying to demonstrate that our officers are quite well versed in understanding the locations that disabled people will use in the community. We will try direct marketing tactics. We will also try referred marketing tactics, to try to get our message out there.

[283] **Jenny Rathbone:** You cannot get around the Data Protection Act 2003, but if you provide the leaflet that the GP—

[284] **Mr Morgan:** Yes, we can provide it to the GP. That is what we are trying to do.

[285] **Ms Daltry:** We are also trying to improve understanding. If you are a GP and you think that improving a person's levels of physical activity will be of benefit to their physical and mental health, it is quite obvious that your advice to a non-disabled person would be to say: 'You need to do a little bit more. It might be of value to you to join a gym, go walking or take up sport.' We want to try to improve the culture and understanding that the same

principles apply to people who have disabilities as well. In the past, we have been far too reliant on personalities—the good physiotherapist or occupational therapist with whom we have worked in the past, who understands this issue because they know someone with a disability or they have a relative with a disability. We need to get beyond that and embed into everyone's understanding the fact that sport and physical activity are options for everybody.

[286] **Jenny Rathbone:** When are you expecting to roll out the pilot programme from Betsi Cadwaladr?

[287] **Mr Morgan:** Subject to the project going live, we hope that it will be rolled out in the next three months. We have a project-planning meeting next week in north Wales. All things being equal, I would like to see that post in place within three months.

[288] **Gwyn R. Price:** Good morning. You have covered many areas today. Overall, are there any lessons that can be learned by other organisations in Wales from the way in which you prepared for the Paralympic programme?

[289] **Mr Morgan:** Are you talking in terms of performance?

[290] **Gwyn R. Price:** Yes.

[291] **Mr Morgan:** Part of our offer, in terms of high performance, is that we work with very precise classifications, based on different sports. Therefore, when we go out to look for athletes who we think will be successful, we are looking for very specific personal profiles, based on their disability, and we are looking at where we think those individuals will have an impact in terms of performance. Even though we are quite specific in a Paralympic sense, the notion of athlete profiling is used more widely within our Olympic programmes. In the run-in to 2012, we saw Sport Wales, working with partners in UK Sport, looking at tall and talented athletes for rowing programmes. It is about the notion of investing and taking mitigated risks on the right individuals at the right time, because you see the level of potential. The second part of that process is that if you see a person with potential, you have to work with that individual in an extraordinarily intense way. We brought 18 people through our academy process in a four-year cycle. By today's Paralympic standards, to achieve 18 new Paralympians in a four-year period is world-class performance. It is about making sure that they get the right service at the right time. There is nothing more important than winning in high-performance sport. If we do not have that culture, forget it.

[292] **Gwyn R. Price:** I hope that other organisations pick up on the way that you have gone about this. Well done.

[293] **Mike Hedges:** I have a brief question. Do you think that enough credit has been given to you for what you have achieved in sport in Wales? On a personal level, I would like to congratulate you; I can now say that I know an Olympian.

[294] **Mr Morgan:** It is very nice that you say that. Our mission is to transform the lives of disabled people through the power of sport. The organisation has grown over the past 10 years. We have been supported by Sport Wales, by this body and by the Welsh Government. If the recognition part is important, it is only important because we need mainstream partners to understand what we are about, to understand the work that we are doing and to understand what they should be doing alongside us, in partnership. If recognition gives us a higher profile, which allows us to engage in that discussion, that is the value of recognition for us.

[295] **Mark Isherwood:** I welcome the comment about deaf sport, because the Deaflympics predate the Paralympics, but deaf sport is outside Paralympian provision or inclusion. Does that mean that, in future, support for young deaf athletes preparing for the

Deaflympics might be in place where it has not been in the past?

[296] **Mr Morgan:** Disability Sport Wales has always supported any deaf person if they are on the performance pathway to the Deaflympics. We have done it at successive games and, this year, there is a young lady from north Wales, Emily Noden, who has been selected for the Deaflympics in swimming. From the charitable side of our organisation, we are funding Emily with a level of grant support to help her to get to those particular games. However, there is more work to do in terms of deaf sport in a performance context. Unfortunately, the decision was taken many years back for the deaf community to withdraw from the Paralympic community. I wonder, after London and Beijing, whether they would still have made the same decision. However, the good news is that we are working at a UK level. We are working collaboratively and we are trying to challenge the international body responsible for deaf performance sports to reflect on the way in which it is developing its performance standards and its expectations, and to perhaps look at the Paralympic model as something that we could help it to aspire to. In the short term, if there is any deaf person in Wales who has the opportunity to represent either Wales or their country, then our organisation will support them, absolutely.

[297] **Mark Isherwood:** The point that I was making was that it is a chicken-and-egg situation. They were made to feel unwelcome, were they not? Not by you.

[298] **Mr Morgan:** No, by the Paralympics. Yes, it was a hard story.

[299] **Christine Chapman:** On that note, I thank you both, Jon and Michelle, for attending today. It has been an extremely interesting session. I know that Members have enjoyed the session today. We will send you a transcript of the meeting so that you can check it for factual accuracy. The evidence will be used as part of our inquiry and the report that we will produce in due course. Thank you both for attending this morning.

[300] **Mr Morgan:** Thank you, Chair, and thank you, committee.

11.52 a.m.

**Cynnig o dan Reol Sefydlog Rhif 17.42 i Benderfynu Gwahardd y
Cyhoedd o'r Cyfarfod
Motion under Standing Order No. 17.42 to Resolve to Exclude the
Public from the Meeting**

[301] **Christine Chapman:** I move that

the committee resolves to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting in accordance with Standing Order No. 17.42.

[302] I see that the committee is in agreement.

*Derbyniwyd y cynnig.
Motion agreed.*

*Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 11.52 a.m.
The public part of the meeting ended at 11.52 a.m.*