



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

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

Dydd Iau, 27 Mehefin 2013
Thursday, 27 June 2013

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

Cofnodir y trafodion yn yr iaith y llefarwyd hwy ynddi 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
Rhodri Glyn Thomas	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
Lindsay Whittle	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales

Eraill yn bresennol
Others in attendance

Ashok Ahir	Aelod o Bwyllgor Cyngori Cymru, Show Racism the Red Card Show Racism the Red Card Welsh Advisory Committee member
Iwan Davies	Pennaeth Diwylliant, Twristiaeth a Hamdden, Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru Head of Culture, Tourism and Recreation, Welsh Local Government Association
Peter Gomer	Cynghorydd Polisi, Hamdden, Diwylliant a Threftadaeth, Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru Policy Adviser, Leisure, Culture and Heritage, Welsh Local Government Association
Sunil Patel	Rheolwr Ymgyrchoedd, Show Racism the Red Card Show Racism the Red Card Campaign Manager
Stuart Williams	Prif Swyddog Undeb Cenedlaethol yr Athrawon National Union of Teachers Principal Officer

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

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

*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:** Good morning and welcome to the Assembly's Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee. Before we start, I remind Members to switch off any mobile phones or BlackBerrys, as they affect the transmission. We have not received any apologies this morning.

Ymchwiliad i Lefelau Cyfranogiad mewn Chwaraeon—Sesiwn Dystiolaeth 4 Inquiry into Participation Levels in Sport—Evidence Session 4

[2] **Christine Chapman:** The first item on the agenda is our inquiry into participation levels in sport in Wales. On our first panel of witnesses, we have representatives of Show Racism the Red Card, Wales. I warmly welcome Sunil Patel, campaign manager, and Ashok Ahir, Welsh advisory committee member. I welcome you both and thank you very much for attending today. You have sent us evidence in advance and Members will have read that, so are you happy for us to go straight into questions?

[3] **Mr Patel:** Sure, yes.

[4] **Christine Chapman:** Thank you. To start, in your evidence you say that there is a need to challenge the institutionalised perception that there is no problem in Wales with regard to discrimination in sport. Could you expand on this comment?

[5] **Mr Patel:** Sure. Through personal experience of working with this charity for seven years and coming from a black and ethnic minority background, I am giving you my thoughts on two levels. Through the seven years that we have been working in Wales, we have come across a number of individuals and communities that keep coming up with the same problems and issues. There seems to be a lack of trust from some of these groups towards some of the sporting institutions that are looking to increase participation among BME groups. So, it is from the experience that we have; we have many examples of evidence in our office that highlight this issue. We strongly feel that their issues have not been looked at and given the importance that they should have been given. I will talk through that during the next 30 minutes or so, with some evidence that I have.

[6] **Christine Chapman:** We will develop this, but what do you think are the main steps that need to be taken to address the issue? Could you outline those?

[7] **Mr Patel:** There are a number of steps; it is not as straightforward as people make out. If you want to increase participation, you have to look at the grass-roots issues of what communities want. By that, we mean that education is definitely the key to it and that is why, as a charity, we go to schools across Wales. For example, in the last 12 months, we have worked with 12,000 young people and 180-odd schools. That is the key; you have to educate to get rid of racism. Once you start doing that, you will get a level playing field, where young people and adults feel that they are welcomed into the clubs that they wish to join.

[8] You cannot just increase participation; defeating and eradicating racism go hand in hand with increasing participation. That is why our work is important. It is something that I believe that institutions have missed out. If you look at the consultation evidence that has

been put forward over the last two weeks and some of the evidence given in this room, I do not really believe that anyone has picked up that point. It is just looked at on the outskirts and it has not really been looked into, even in the questions that have been asked of everyone. I have noted some of the comments that have come back from some of the organisations and there is no real firm evidence as to how they deal with some of the issues that we come across.

[9] **Peter Black:** In terms of evidence, when we had the evidence last week from Sport Wales and Disability Sport Wales, they were very keen to emphasise that they do quite extensive surveys and research across Wales, and they effectively rejected the notion that there was insufficient information about sports participation levels, particularly among protected groups. Do you think that that is the case, or do you think that they are missing the point?

[10] **Mr Patel:** I think that they are totally missing the point. There is not enough evidence out there. When looking at the research as to what has been done in the last seven years that I have been in post, it is difficult for me to find any real, hard evidence. What they do is perhaps small scoping exercises, which I have seen, but they do not take on recommendations that have been put forward in the reports that I have come across and then put those into practice. I am not sure how they are managing to engage with communities, the BME groups, when they seem to lack experience from the board level down to the ground level. If you look at the make-up of the groups, you will see that they are made up of mainly white British people, from the board level down to the officers. For example, with regard to the 5x60 officers, football development officers, sport development officers and Dragon Sport officers, I do not understand how they can ask the questions when they do not have the experience or knowledge to understand what the communities face in terms of the barriers that exist. So, it is a real issue. It should be looked at in depth. They should not pre-judge and stereotype what these communities want when I do not think that they understand what they really want.

[11] **Peter Black:** They say that they survey every school in Wales and that tens of thousands of surveys come back—I think that 15,000 was the figure that they used. Are they not asking the right questions?

[12] **Mr Patel:** I do not think that they are. I think that they pre-judge the outcome. If you look at who is putting these questions together and who they are consulting, it leads us to ask again how diverse the groups are that they are consulting with. What I mean by that is, for example, if you look at Sport Wales, it has an advisory group that is made up of 14 members. These are influential members from communities in education, businesses, and so on. However, if you look at the make-up of that group, you will see that there is not one BME representative. If you look at the make-up of Wales, you will see that 4% are from BME groups, which is some 200,000 people. That group should be representative of Wales as a whole. Historically, we know that there have been issues and barriers. We have read many reports that, over the last 10 or 20 years, have made many recommendations, but I do not believe that any of them have been taken forward. I have read many strategies and action plans and, when they devise these questionnaires, for example, I do not believe that the right questions are being included in these forms in order to gather information on what the BME communities really need.

[13] **Peter Black:** So, what questions should they be asking?

[14] **Mr Patel:** Each individual community will have a different issue. For example, if you are asking Asians a certain question, not all of the Asian communities are going to be able to be included in that question. For example, a Pakistani community will have different needs to the Indian communities. With regard to religion, Hindus and Muslims have different issues in terms of dietary requirements. If you have religious festivals throughout the year, some

members of the community will not be able to participate, for example, during Ramadan, or when they are fasting. There is a lot more to it. It is a big picture, which needs a lot more delving into than just saying, ‘We want to increase participation and provide cricket and football to these groups’, because not all of these groups just like cricket and football, by the way; some of these groups are into volleyball or badminton. In countries like Pakistan and India, hockey is just as important as football. So, there is a lot more to it. In the country where I was born, India, there is a sport called kabaddi. I am not sure whether any of you have heard of it, but it is a national sport in India. Many of our uncles, aunties and parents have heard of it and played it back in school in those countries. I am sure that, if they had an opportunity, they would probably participate in these sports.

[15] **Mr Ahir:** That is certainly the case in other parts of the UK where some traditional south Asian sports have been introduced, like kabaddi. One of the things that we were keen to get across—and thank you for your question, Peter—is that, while work has been done before, and it would be wrong for anyone to say that it has not, we have not noticed and the people we engage with have not noticed whether or not any outcomes have come from that work. So, for example, following the review that a previous culture committee did into participation, there were specific recommendations about engaging with BME communities and trying to take up some of the work that had been done in England with programmes like Sporting Equals, for example. As an organisation that works not just on football, but other sports as well, we are yet to see anything come out of, for example, a Welsh version of Sporting Equals.

[16] We know that a scoping exercise was done by the sports council, which someone mentioned, but that was done in 2009. It was a small scoping exercise, which we felt should have gone on to another level. However, a lot has happened since 2009 and that exercise was not even taken forward. Some things did come out of it that were proper findings about some of the barriers to participation—there were references to, for example, some women not being comfortable going to swimming pools where there were open areas—that kind of village system. We appreciate that, but there are a lot of other things. It is not always about cultural issues; it is often about the level of interest that people might have in a specific sport. One of the things that we have discussed as a body is the lack of an Olympic legacy, not just on a Welsh level, but within our BME communities. We have a significant Somali community in Wales. One of the biggest stars of the British Olympic team was Mo Farah, but we have yet to see Mo Farah materialise anywhere in Wales, carrying the baton for athletics and trying to engage with those communities. It is not something that we would necessarily wish to push and pursue, but we would have thought that Welsh Athletics, Sport Wales and others would have been pushing that kind of thing.

[17] **Christine Chapman:** I know that some Members want to talk about the Olympics, so we will leave that topic for the moment, Ashok, if you are happy, because I know—

[18] **Mr Ahir:** What I am trying to say is that we think that avenues have been opened, but that no one seems to have driven anything down those avenues.

[19] **Christine Chapman:** Okay. Peter did you want to continue?

[20] **Peter Black:** Thank you. That is fine.

[21] **Christine Chapman:** Lindsay, did you want to come in?

[22] **Lindsay Whittle:** I am sorry; I am suffering with a head cold. Good morning. Thanks for coming along today. I have attended some of your events and they have been positive, which I think is important. I am really interested, by the way, in kabaddi—I will Google it afterwards. I want to go to watch it, although I am not sure whether it is a team sport or an

individual sport. I will find out, because that is important, is it not? That is why this inquiry is being held; it is being held so that we can find out about these ethnic sports. Welcoming people into Wales is not only about respecting your language, your culture and maybe your food—your sports should perhaps be included as well. That is really interesting, and I will look up that sport.

[23] What are young people in these communities telling you are the main barriers preventing them from participating in sports and what steps do you think can be taken to address those barriers?

[24] **Mr Patel:** It is not just young people, but their parents and members of the BME community who are playing football at the semi-amateur level, for example. I have evidence here that has built up over seven years of people who are playing in the Welsh football leagues who have suffered racial abuse. Even after complaining to the relevant authority, they are not happy with the way that they have been dealt with. This is reflected in the younger generation as well, given that in the last 18 months, in football generally, you have seen that racism is still high on many agendas. Unfortunately, I am sad to say that I strongly believe that not enough action is being taken across sport, particularly in football, given that it is the biggest sport in the world.

[25] We continue to see either a lack of evidence, or fines that do not reflect the kind of punishment that should be enforced if players are found guilty, and young people are telling us that they will not join clubs because they do not feel comfortable or safe playing in these environments. That is the message that needs to get through to the governing bodies in sport. They need to get to grips with the issue. It is not for charities like ours to take ownership of trying to defeat racism in sport or in football. It is also for them to realise that this is a real issue. When you have area associations across Wales, of which there are six, they must start to note any racial incidents that are reported. I do not believe that they do that. There is a starting point for you, because if you do not record what is going on in Welsh football, and you do not make a note of incidents that are occurring, then you have no record of how things are improving or not improving.

[26] We have evidence to show—although we do not have enough time today to do this—that there is a systematic problem or failure in football and in other sports. Cricket is another example. We talked about cricket and how big the ICC was. Ashok and I went to the ground, which was full of fans, and, in the car, I said to Ashok, ‘I’ve been to 30-odd football matches and I have been to two cricket matches, and the last two weeks have been the best time that I’ve had in sport.’ That must tell you something about sport and football in particular. Is football welcoming enough for BME groups? We are not just talking about joining clubs; we are also speaking about going to watch football matches. Two Welsh clubs are now in the biggest football league in the world. They need to do a little more around engaging with the groups in the areas where their grounds are based. The messages that I am getting from young people are that they do not feel comfortable playing in the club environment; they fear racism and discrimination at these clubs. It is seen in the worldwide game. We have Sepp Blatter, who said what he said a year and a half ago. It does not send out the right message to the lower levels, let us be honest. I strongly believe that what happens at the top is reflected through the whole system at the bottom of any organisation or sport.

9.30 a.m.

[27] **Christine Chapman:** Do you think that the approach is still at a very tokenistic level? I am talking about—

[28] **Mr Patel:** Sure. Ask the question back to the organisations—what are they actually doing to tackle racism and discrimination? If they just say, ‘Well, we provide funding to such

and such a cause', and they feel that that is enough, you would have to reply by asking, 'What would you do if that organisation was not here?' So, I believe that maybe there is some form of tokenistic gesture in other organisations. However, that is not just the case in football or sports, is it?

[29] **Lindsay Whittle:** Is this problem identified in any particular part of Wales? Is Cardiff, Newport or Swansea any different to, say, the Valleys, the rural part of Wales, or north Wales?

[30] **Mr Patel:** I will hold this document up for you to see. It contains details of a case that we came across nine months ago. It concerns a gentleman who is a black coach in north Wales. He has been a coach for many years. He got in touch with us after going around in circles, having talked to people in different establishments, including the police. He was being physically and racially abused in that area. He has a young child who is seven years old, and the same things had happened to him. He played football in this gentleman's team and had constant racial and physical abuse. It was reported to the police and to the Welsh Government as well, I might add, and to football associations. We are now two years on and I do not have a clue what positive action has been taken for this gentleman and his family in that area. I strongly believe that no action has been taken. I believe that this is one example of many out there. This gentleman has now stopped coaching and his young lad has said, 'I'm not playing football, daddy. I don't want to go through this racism'. This is just an example of what, I believe, is really going on in Welsh football or other sports. It is a strong case.

[31] **Mr Ahir:** The other point is the lack of role models. This is a good example of a role model who was developing and has been lost. There is a severe lack of role models; not just people who are professional in sport, but those on a coaching level and certainly those on a leadership level. The statistics are quite clear. There is only one BME physical education teacher in Wales. That is correct, is it not?

[32] **Mr Patel:** That is correct.

[33] **Christine Chapman:** On that individual, I do not think that it is appropriate for us to discuss it now, but I would be very interested to have the details. Perhaps we could have a conversation outside of the committee.

[34] **Mr Patel:** Absolutely. I will leave the details for you.

[35] **Christine Chapman:** Perhaps we could look into it. I think that that would be—

[36] **Mr Patel:** I will leave the whole batch if I can, because there are many other examples in here that need to be explored and they need to be engaged with.

[37] **Christine Chapman:** Right. We will have a conversation about that after the committee. Thank you. Lindsay, do you have any other questions?

[38] **Lindsay Whittle:** No, that is fine. Thank you.

[39] **Christine Chapman:** Janet, do you want to come in here?

[40] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** Yes, thank you. May I say that I am really interested in your evidence? It is very concerning, because in the time that I have been here, we have talked up equality for all in society and there is clearly an issue here that we need to look at. My first question is this: what can we, as an Assembly, do, and what can the Welsh Government do? Is it a resource issue, or is it a policy or strategy issue? What single thing could we do as an Assembly?

[41] **Mr Patel:** I have been looking into this for seven years, and I go home sometimes and I scratch my head and think, ‘No-one is taking a grip of this situation’. We are a charity—a small team of six workers—that covers the whole of Wales. Some of you will know about the work that we do; our work is about educating the next generation. Unfortunately, there is no-one to drive this forward on behalf of BME communities.

[42] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** We are listening. This is a really good opportunity now.

[43] **Mr Patel:** Absolutely. I would ask you to please look into this and do a thorough investigation, research, or whatever needs to be done. You need to engage with the 200,000 BME people in this country and ask them, ‘Why are you not participating?’, ‘Is there discrimination and racism?’, and ‘Is there a lack of opportunity for you to become football or sport development officers?’ It is all very well asking them to be ambassadors and volunteers, but these people need to be put into the roles that will make a difference. I had a look at the make-up of all the governing bodies over the last two or three days, and it shocked me to see that, in the organisations that are based in Cardiff, there is no diversity, even among administration staff. So, that shocked me, given that the population of Cardiff is 15% BME.

[44] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** Okay. We will look into that now.

[45] **Mr Patel:** You have to look into that.

[46] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** For me, technically, the organisations are there to embrace, support and nurture. I note that you say that there is

[47] ‘unwillingness to accept that racism exists, and organisations who hope the matter will go away even when it is raised with them.’

[48] Can you expand on that, and on where we should be looking?

[49] **Mr Patel:** We will not mention the organisations—I think that that is wrong—but they will know who we are talking about. We set up advisory groups many years ago, and we still have the same groups. We did get funding from one of these groups a while back, and we kept saying to it that participation cannot be increased unless discrimination and racism is eradicated, and I have brought some of those issues up today in this room. However, I do not think that they kind of see that. They are going in with a colour-blind attitude; they do not quite grasp that the work that we are doing is vital to increasing participation. I have a young child who is six years’ old. He loves football, and he wants to play football when he is older. I take him to the Gôl centre on a Saturday morning at 9 a.m., and at the back of my mind I know that he will not be a footballer because there are no south Asian role models out there playing football. I have seen, in the system, some coaches who just do not have enough education or knowledge to understand the needs of the BME groups. When I asked the question of why there are no south Asian players playing football, a coach in Wales said to me, ‘It’s because they all pray on a Friday’. That was the answer that I had. I have other examples of coaches who just lack cultural knowledge. This is why it is important that these organisations take on some of the views that we put across and the fact that you cannot just increase participation; they have to look at their own internal staffing and they have to make sure that their sport development officers reflect the communities that they are engaged with. It must be understood that the work that we are doing is vital and drives forward the agendas and the strategies that they have in place.

[50] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** I am not one for saying that we should throw money at things, but I believe that perhaps there is a resource issue here within the sporting bodies, but also within the Welsh Government. I was really interested when I read that your organisation

would

[51] ‘challenge this Committee to itemise the expenditure the government spends in sport on minority ethnic sport and sports clubs that are ethnically based’.

[52] Can you explain your concerns in this regard?

[53] **Mr Patel:** I have two examples to share with you. Perhaps we could look at cricket because we have talked about football quite a bit, and we all hear that Asians are all into cricket and so forth. There is a cricket club in Wales that has been established for 25 years. I think that it is called Welsh Asians Cricket Club. I spoke to the chairman just the other day about the situation that he has and how things are going. He said to me that things are not going very well because, even though the club has been established for 25 years and it is the only cricket club that represents the Asian communities in Wales, it is finding it difficult, for example, to hire pitches. We know that pitch costs have gone up threefold, and we also know the fact that ethnic minority groups have lower pay in society than other groups. The club has no training facilities either. It is based in Cardiff, but it has no engagement with Glamorgan County Cricket Club, and it has no involvement with Cricket Wales, I believe. The club believes that it has coaches that are qualified, but they are not being picked up to get into mainstream cricket. The club has talented young players who are not being picked up. This is also the case across the board in other sports. So, that is one issue.

[54] There is also a football club called Cardiff Grange Harlequins Football Club, which is based just across from Cardiff City Football Club. We have very close connections with it. The club is 120 years’ old and it is made up of a mixture of minorities, the majority of whom are from Grangetown, Riverside, Canton and Cardiff bay. It also has issues in terms of finance, and it has no involvement with Cardiff City Football Club, which is based across the road. So, the club is struggling financially, and it is also struggling to get the youngsters through into mainstream football. So, due to the lack of engagement, even by professional clubs, we are still seeing common issues across the board. I could go on and on about this, but I would need more than 30 minutes.

[55] **Lindsay Whittle:** That reminds me of the treatment of the CIACS—Cardiff Internationals Athletic Club—by Cardiff Rugby Football Club in the 1960s and 1970s. That rugby club had to disband. It was a specifically ethnic minority rugby club in Butetown.

[56] **Mr Patel:** I would need all day to discuss this. We are in touch with a club in Swansea that is made up of mainly African players. It gets racist abuse probably once or twice a month. The members wear our T-shirts before the games because they feel that they need someone to support them. Again, that club is struggling financially. You will have clubs that are no longer playing. When there is disadvantage towards these BME groups already in society, you are putting up another barrier. We really need more money to be invested to support these clubs. However, we know that they cannot be given priority as such.

[57] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** I can assure you that I will be raising questions in the Senedd on this.

[58] **Mr Ahir:** If I may come back on the specific point about what can be done, we feel that there has never been a dedicated programme. I do not believe in throwing money at problems, but it is clear that, maybe for quite a while, the voices have not been loud enough; the voices may have spoken, but they have spoken softly or they have not really been sought out. Across sport, other interest groups, which are very important and have a lot of kudos, have had the focus. It is good that they have had the focus, but we feel—Sunil has been clear about the numbers—that when you marry together the issues of health and sport, you are forgetting about a huge community of people who have their own specific health issues as

well. So, it is not just about young people engaging in football, cricket or hockey. We are talking about, for example, older women from south Asian backgrounds who need to get out of their homes and to be engaged in some leisure activities. It is not just about trying to offer aerobics or Bollywood dancing to individuals. If we were to push forward, for argument's sake, a programme of yoga across a lot of these communities taken by suitable teachers, we would see people coming forward. It has happened in other parts of Britain, because they have got engaged with them on a leisure level about the participation that they want to do. That is not work for groups like ours, but a job for local authorities or sporting organisations.

[59] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** Thank you for your evidence, anyway.

[60] **Mr Patel:** May I leave this document with you?

[61] **Christine Chapman:** Yes. We have a couple of minutes left. I know that Mike wants to come in, but we are getting short of time.

[62] **Mike Hedges:** Briefly, I am aware of an Asian cricket team in Swansea and of a number of players who came from abroad to play cricket—Jeff Dujon played for Swansea and Linton Lewis was a well-known and successful cricketer for Ammanford. So, there has been a large number of people, and there is Kari Singh, who is from Swansea and has played at the highest level and hit me all over the place on more than one occasion, for a long time.

[63] **Mr Patel:** That is a fair point. Glamorgan has had many other cricketers from abroad, but we are looking at home-grown talent here, are we not? If we look at Glamorgan County Cricket Club, we do not see any BME players in the first team. I feel that we even have to look at cricket and what it is doing to engage with these groups.

[64] **Mr Ahir:** Cricket is an interesting example, because we spoke earlier about the success of the ICC tournament and the games in Cardiff, and in certain club structures there have been quite big, visible stars over the last 20 to 25 years—your Viv Richards and your Shastri. However, there has not been a single black or Asian player who has come through the system. Not one in a Welsh context. We have bought in players from England or around the world, but if you go to the parks of a weeknight and watch the league matches that are going on, you will see that it is not just the Welsh Asians here or in Swansea, there are plenty of young players. However, the question is whether the cricketing authorities are engaging with those individuals at the right point in their lives to get them into the academies and, potentially, to get them into first teams. We do not think that they are.

[65] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Rwy'n cofio cael y trafodaethau hyn yn 2007 pan oeddwn yn Weinidog â chyfrifoldeb am chwaraeon ac roeddwn yn frwdfrydig ar yr agenda hon, fel, rwy'n credu, roedd fy rhagflaenwyr. Fodd bynnag, gallaf gadarnhau'r hyn a ddywedodd Sunil—nid oes unrhyw fath o ddatblygiad wedi bod ar yr agenda hon. Rwyf hefyd wedi chwarae criced yn erbyn Ashok Ahir, a byddwn yn cymryd unrhyw gamau posibl i'w wahardd rhag chwarae mewn unrhyw dîm sy'n fy ngwrthwynebu i, achos roedd yn droellwr twyllodrus a medrus.

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: I remember having these discussions in 2007 when I was Minister with responsibility for sport, and I was enthusiastic about this agenda as, I believe, were my predecessors. However, I can confirm what Sunil has said—there has been no development on this agenda. I have also played cricket against Ashok Ahir, and I would take any steps possible to ban him from playing on any team that was playing against me, because he was a deceptive and skilful spin bowler.

[66] Fodd bynnag, rydych yn sôn yn eich tystiolaeth am y ffaith eich bod wedi bod mewn cysylltiad gydag Iechyd Cyhoeddus

However, you mention in your evidence the fact that you have been in contact with Public Health Wales and that you have been

Cymru ac wedi bod yn siarad â'r tasglu sy'n edrych ar ymarfer corff a chwaraeon mewn ysgolion. Rydych wedi bod yn ymwneud â Chymunedau yn Gyntaf; beth yw'r rhwystrau? Pam nad oes unrhyw ddatblygiad wedi bod? Gwn fod hwn yn gwestiwn *simplistic* iawn, ond beth yw'r tri pheth y byddech am i Lywodraeth Cymru eu gwneud i sicrhau bod pobl o leiafrifoedd ethnig yn cymryd mwy o ran mewn chwaraeon yng Nghymru?

9.45 a.m.

[67] **Mr Ahir:** Y peth cyntaf yw gweld y cymunedau fel rhai sy'n amrywiol. Nid dim ond un gymuned leiafrifol ethnig sydd. Dyna'r peth cyntaf. Ni allwch daflu rhai pethau sy'n addas ar gyfer rhai o'r cymunedau. Nid yw hynny'n gweithio. Y peth arall yw gweithio drwy ysgolion. Rydym yn gweithio gydag ysgolion, ac mae angen mynd ar ôl y swyddogion a'r hyfforddwy, oherwydd, nhw yw *role models* cyntaf y bobl ifanc. Os nad ydych yn cysylltu gyda nhw, a chwaraeon a phobl ifanc o wahanol gefndiroedd, ni fydd yn gweithio. Rwyf wedi bod drwy'r broses fy hun—rwyf yn cyrraedd pwynt mewn chwaraeon lle rwyf yn meddwl, 'Yes, but the next step is not really for me'. Rydych yn cyrraedd lefel ac yn meddwl, 'I will be a good local player', neu beth bynnag.

[68] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Roeddet yn well na hynny.

[69] **Mr Ahir:** Fodd bynnag, roedd yn esiampl dda. Rydym yn siarad am rai o'r chwaraewyr sydd wedi symud allan o bêl-droed ysgolion, er enghraifft, i fynd i glybiau pêl-droed proffesiynol. Mae rhai pobl sydd ar yr un lefel ag unrhyw un arall sy'n gwneud hynny, ond mae'n gam arall. Mae pobl yn aml ar yr un lefel pan maent yn 14 neu 15 oed, ond i fynd i'r clybiau neu'r *academies*, mae angen rhywbeth ychwanegol. Weithiau, mae'n fater o gael cefnogaeth deuluol, ond weithiau mae hefyd angen cefnogaeth y gymuned neu bobl rwyf ti'n eu hedmygu, fel hyfforddwy neu athrawon ymarfer corff. Dyna'r cam nesaf. Rydym hefyd yn meddwl ei bod yn broblem. Nid ydym wedi gwneud unrhyw beth penodol i drio gwneud pethau'n

speaking to the taskforce that is looking at physical exercise and sports in schools. You have been involved with Communities First; what are the barriers? Why have there been no developments? I know that this is a very simplistic question, but what are the three things that you would like the Welsh Government to do in order to ensure that people from ethnic minorities participate more in sport in Wales?

Mr Ahir: The first thing is to see that there is variety between the communities. There is not only one ethnic minority community. That is the first thing. You cannot throw some things that are suitable for some of the communities. That does not work. The other thing is to work through schools. We are working with schools and it is necessary to go after the officers and the coaches because they are the first role models for the young people. If we do not connect with them, and sport and young people from different backgrounds, it will not work. I have been through this process myself—you reach a particular point in a sport where you think 'Yes, but the next step is not really for me'. You reach a certain level and think, 'I will be a good local player', or whatever.

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: You were better than that.

Mr Ahir: However, it was a good example. We are talking about some of the players who have moved out of schools football, for example, to professional football clubs. Some people are on the same level as everyone else doing that, but that is another step. People are often on the same level when they are aged 14 or 15, but to go to the clubs or the academies, you need something extra. Sometimes, it is a matter of having family support, but sometimes you also need the support of the community or people whom you admire, such as coaches or physical education teachers. That is the next step. We also think that it is important for the entire field to realise that it is a problem. We have not done anything specific to try to do things differently in communities such as these. It is

wahanol mewn cymunedau fel y rheini. Mae'n wir ei fod yn gwestiwn o arian neu raglenni, ond rwyf am weld y rhaglen gyntaf, gan nad oes un rhaglen wedi bod eto. Mae'n iawn i siarad am y peth a dweud bod problemau, ond mae angen inni gymryd y cam mawr a dweud, 'Iawn, trïwn ni wneud rhywbeth. Dyma'r bwriad a gwnawn asesiad ar y diwedd i weld a yw hwn wedi gweithio.'

true that it is a question of funding or programmes, but I want to see the first programme, as there has not been one yet. It is fine to talk about it and to say that there is a problem, but we need to take the big step and say, 'Okay, we will try to do something. This is the intention and we will undertake an assessment at the end to see if this has worked.'

[70] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Nid wyf yn credu ei bod yn broblem o ran arian nac ymrwymiad. Credaf ein bod ni i gyd yma, ar draws y pleidiau, am weld hyn yn digwydd. Y cwestiwn mawr yw: sut, yn ymarferol, y gallwn sicrhau bod hynny'n digwydd?

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: I do not think that it is a problem of funding or commitment. I believe that every one of us here, across the parties, wants to see this happening. The big question is: how, in practical terms, can we ensure that that happens?

[71] **Mr Patel:** It all goes back to the point that I made earlier. We need to speak to these communities now. No-one has ever done that. In the seven years that I have been in post, I have not seen that happen. I know that you mentioned that we have been involved in some of the consultations, but I am not sure where you have got that idea from, because we have not been involved in any consultations. We have had two football inquiries, one in 2006 and another in 2011 or 2012, with the Welsh Premier League. If you look at the people involved in these inquiries, you will see that there was no representation from BME groups.

[72] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** In 2007, I had meetings with you as an organisation and I also attended an event in Cardiff football stadium with you as an organisation, and I continued to have communication with you. I presume that my predecessors and the people who followed me in that post also had meetings with you as an organisation.

[73] **Mr Patel:** It is not just a matter for the Welsh Government, is it? It is a matter for other organisations that are involved in sport. We put on an event here last year, in March 2012, in relation to racism in football. We had 12 or 13 Assembly Members in front of us; we had the Football Association of Wales's chief executive as our guest speaker; we had BME members who play football; we had the only Asian football coach in Wales in front of us speaking about the racism that his players were experiencing; we had Nana Ba, who wants me to put his name forward today, because he is really enthusiastic about making sure that something happens and he wants to provide further evidence himself. He is the only black manager playing in Wales and he is the only PE teacher, as Ashok mentioned, from a black community. Again, he regularly experiences racism. He has gone through the channels and no-one is listening to him. Since this event a year ago, none of these people have been contacted by the associations or anyone that was in front of them. It is about the commitment and the will—it is not just about us taking this agenda forward, but everyone. It is a collective response.

[74] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** In terms of this committee and our recommendations, what would you want us to propose?

[75] **Mr Patel:** First, there has to be an investigation into this issue. Secondly, you have to ask the governing bodies back and ask them specifically what they are doing to tackle racism in football, cricket, athletics—whatever sport it is. One answer that they may give you is that they are supporting Show Racism the Red Card. You need to ask what they are doing themselves, not what they want others to do for them. That is the question that we need to ask these organisations. What evidence have they got that they are increasing participation? It is all very well starting football leagues with refugees and asylum seekers, for example, but they

make up a small percentage of the 200,000 BMEs in Wales. That is a small minority that you are trying to support, but there is a majority out there that has no real support, and no-one is looking after their interests. I believe that we need another session like this—it would be great if we could—where we could bring real-life situations into the room and ask people what they are experiencing playing football, and what the problems are. It is not just me or Ashok that you need, but also the other communities that are suffering.

[76] **Mr Ahir:** One related point is that there needs to be a proper look at the link with specific health issues that affect communities, and the lack of sport or leisure activity by those individuals or groups. I do not think that that work has been done. Clearly, not enough of that work has been done.

[77] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** On the point that Ashok raised now, are you saying that there are specific health issues?

[78] **Mr Ahir:** We know, for example, that there is higher incidence of diabetes among certain communities. There is certainly higher incidence of asthma within certain communities. In the Welsh context, we have a significant Bangladeshi community, and they are probably lower down the health scale than even some other south Asian communities. There needs to be a degree of work to look at both health issues and what we can do from a policy level to bring forward some measures of leisure activity to help alleviate some of those elements.

[79] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Do you also think that we need to look outside the traditional sports? I met people from, I think, the Somali community in Grangetown, who play a strange form of volleyball, which I never quite understood, I must admit, but which is apparently very popular in that community. They were looking for league status. We all know what ethnic minorities contribute towards cricket especially, but do we need to look outside those traditional sports as well?

[80] **Mr Ahir:** As we said earlier, there are specific sports—you could class them as sports or leisure activities—that some communities do. South Asians do a lot of yoga, and it is a bit of a fad; it has been for the last five years, particularly among people who are beyond 50, which is a really good thing. If you go on YouTube, Lindsay, you will see big inter-city competitions in Kabaddi; it would be good to have a Cardiff team, but you have to develop that. We know how localised baseball is in a Welsh context, but it is still very competitive, and you can go to the parks around certain cities, certainly between Newport and Cardiff, and see people playing baseball at this time of year. So yes, there are such sports. I will not tell you that we know every single one, because we do not, but what we are trying to say is that we need to delve into this.

[81] **Lindsay Whittle:** You need competition, do you not? In Cuba, there are two rugby clubs, and they just play each other.

[82] **Christine Chapman:** Unfortunately, because of time I am going to have to close this session. I know that Members have further questions, so I suggest that we send them to you and perhaps you could reply in writing. I know that there are some good points that Members wanted to make, but unfortunately, we have to move on to our next witnesses. I also want to follow up on the individual, so we will arrange that outside the committee. I thank you both for attending this morning. As I said, we will be writing to you if there are further questions from Members. We will send you a transcript of the meeting to check for factual accuracy. Thank you for attending. It has been a very good session.

[83] I ask the next witness to come to the table.

9.55 a.m.

Ymchwiliad i Lefelau Cyfranogiad mewn Chwaraeon—Sesiwn Dystiolaeth 5
Inquiry into Participation Levels in Sport—Evidence Session 5

[84] **Christine Chapman:** We move on to evidence from the National Union of Teachers. I give a warm welcome to Stuart Williams, principal officer. I understand that you were a PE teacher, Stuart. Is that right?

[85] **Mr Williams:** Yes, I was a PE teacher for nine years.

[86] **Christine Chapman:** You have sent us evidence in advance, so, if you are happy to do so, we will go straight into questions.

[87] **Mr Williams:** Absolutely.

[88] **Christine Chapman:** In the NUT's view, what are the main reasons as to why the Welsh Government and Sport Wales have not reached their goals to widen participation in sport over recent years?

[89] **Mr Williams:** When it comes to participation in sport in schools or outside schools, it is all to do with facilities and funding. I know that funding is very rare in this economic climate, but that is the main crux of everything. If you want to engage people, you must have facilities, and also enjoyment. As a PE teacher, my goal for every lesson was to make sure that every child enjoyed that lesson and looked forward to coming back to the next one. Whether their skill levels were low or whether they were very good gymnasts, footballers, athletes or whatever, as long as they enjoyed that lesson and looked forward to the next one, they were engaging with PE. They would then look to participate outside school lessons in lunchtime clubs, afterschool clubs or in clubs outside the school. So, basically, it is to do with enjoyment and it is to do with facilities, and you cannot get top-class facilities for these children, especially in deprived areas, unless you put the funding in there.

[90] **Christine Chapman:** We had Sport Wales in last week, and its document, 'A Vision for Sport in Wales' talks about a step change. Some of us asked questions around that. How do you think this step change is going to happen?

[91] **Mr Williams:** What do you mean by a step change exactly?

[92] **Christine Chapman:** Its document is called 'A Vision for Sport in Wales', and it says in the future that it thinks that there will be a big difference in the future in the number of people participating. How confident are you that there will be this difference?

[93] **Mr Williams:** Well, there has been a drop in participation in the last few years. That document, which I have a copy of here, is a very good document. If it is done properly, I have no doubt that it will increase participation rates. However, it must be ensured that children enjoy participation, whatever sport it is. You have the four main team sports in schools—football, rugby, hockey and netball. A lot of women—girls, especially—are disengaging with hockey and netball, mainly because there may be no facilities to play hockey, or maybe they do not like netball. When you get to year 10 and 11, that is when they start dropping out. At years 7, 8 and 9 at key stage 3, they are really keen, but they start dropping out at year 10 and 11. I noticed that, when I was a teacher, the girls in my school were dropping out at year 10 and 11. It is all to do with self-image and maybe there being not enough sports that they like to participate in. It is mainly netball and hockey, but maybe they want to do some fitness work or dance. Maybe the teacher who is with them does not have the relevant experience or training to carry out those lessons.

[94] **Christine Chapman:** This has always been the case, but why have we not addressed this before? We know the answers, but why has it not happened before, and how confident are you that it will happen in the future? What is happening to make that difference?

[95] **Mr Williams:** I do not think that anyone is engaging with the PE teachers in secondary schools and primary schools. They need to be asked exactly what the barriers are, and what they think would make these young girls—because it is young girls, more or less—take part in sport lessons and extracurricular activities. They need to be engaged. Unless you engage with the PE teachers in both sectors, secondary and primary, nothing will change.

10.00 a.m.

[96] **Jenny Rathbone:** What are your members, both as curriculum leads, and as members of governing bodies, doing to address the very valid point that you are making about the need to diversify the offer, so that girls do not drop out of sporting activities?

[97] **Mr Williams:** Any PE teacher in a secondary or primary school would want every single person to take part in their lessons. That was my goal. The workload pressures that they are under at the moment mean that they are unable to put everything that they might want into increasing the participation levels in lessons and extracurricular activities. I will give you an example. In some small secondary schools—of 300 to 400 children—the number of children is dropping, and so the number of PE lessons given is also dropping. That teacher then has to concentrate on another subject, or they risk losing a day or two days a week of their contract. Basically, we need to make sure that we provide enough lessons and opportunities for these children to participate and enjoy PE.

[98] **Jenny Rathbone:** I agree, but what are your members doing to promote that? It is not just the role of the PE co-ordinator, it is the role of the wellbeing coordinator, and the role of the leadership of the school to ensure that there is a broad and balanced curriculum that is meeting the needs of the pupils.

[99] **Mr Williams:** I totally agree. We are not the only teaching union in the school. So, I would say that—

[100] **Jenny Rathbone:** Absolutely, I agree, but you are an important union.

[101] **Mr Williams:** NUT members do like to make a difference, but I have not really engaged with my members before coming to the inquiry, so I would not be able to answer that question. I can answer general questions on what I think should happen to increase participation, but when it comes to our members, given the short timescale between the publication of the report and coming here, I could not really engage with them.

[102] **Jenny Rathbone:** That is fair comment. Would it be possible for you to talk to your members electronically and see whether you can provide us with a really good role model?

[103] **Mr Williams:** I can definitely do that. I will need to look at our database to see how many members we have who are PE teachers in primary and secondary schools or—

[104] **Jenny Rathbone:** They do not have to be PE teachers. I re-emphasise the point that this is everybody's problem, not just PE teachers.

[105] **Mr Williams:** Okay.

[106] **Christine Chapman:** May I ask about the free swimming scheme? What are your

views on that in relation to children and increased participation?

[107] **Mr Williams:** Anything that is free for children to participate in has to be good. It is a fantastic scheme and it has worked, but the levels have dropped recently. That, I think, could be down to obesity, because 36% of children in Wales are—

[108] **Christine Chapman:** Obesity is actually preventing them from participating?

[109] **Mr Williams:** It is body image, without a shadow of a doubt. I will give you an example. When I was teaching, we did have a swimming pool very close to the school. In years 7, 8 and 9, key stage 3, there was no problem with participation. In years 10 and 11, girls started dropping out because they thought that the boys were going to be there looking at their bodies. I did everything that I could to get the girls into the swimming pool before the boys came in, and to get the boys out of the swimming pool before the girls left, so that they had the water up to their necks if they were self-conscious. It did not make any difference whatsoever. Also, when they get to years 10 and 11, they do not like going into a pool and getting their hair wet, because they then have to get themselves ready to go to the next lesson. I was watching footage of the Sport Wales evidence and I think that it was you, Chair, who mentioned having hairdryers in changing rooms. Absolutely. They do get self-conscious about their image and that is about what is portrayed in the media as well. There is a pressure on them to look good.

[110] **Christine Chapman:** It is different, I think, is it not?

[111] **Mr Williams:** Absolutely. The free swimming initiative is fantastic, it really is a good scheme, but I think that there are issues there.

[112] **Christine Chapman:** Thank you. Rhodri is next.

[113] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Stuart, from your experience as a teacher, do you think that obesity is more of a problem now than it was, say, 10 years or 20 years ago, or even 40 years ago, when I was in school?

[114] **Mr Williams:** Yes it is, without a shadow of a doubt. The dietary advice for children in schools changed, I think, in 1983, when the eatwell plate was brought in, which recommended that 55% of your intake a day should be carbohydrates—that was completely wrong. Research has shown that excessive intake of carbohydrates and sugars leads to increased obesity. *[Interruption.]*

[115] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** Processed foods.

[116] **Mr Williams:** Processed food, exactly. I think that there has been an increase. In 1983, I was 13 years old, and there were not as many obese pupils back when I was in school, to be honest. Since then, I think that it has grown and grown. As processed food is so cheap to buy, families on low incomes will tend to buy processed food. Eating healthily is expensive. I have changed my diet over the last 12 months to eat a lot more healthily and it is costing me a lot more money. I can understand why obesity rates have increased and I think that they will continue to increase among low-income families, because you get adverts for a meal at McDonald's for £1.99, and buying some healthy food might cost them between £5 and £8. They cannot afford it.

[117] **Christine Chapman:** Jenny has some questions on this.

[118] **Jenny Rathbone:** I disagree with you on that. I think that you will find that a lot of processed food is very expensive. Things like crisps and sweets are very highly priced, and

they cost an awful lot more than an apple, for example. However, I completely agree with you that the adulteration of food, the way in which it is marketed, and the need to create a demand is a really serious issue. What action have NUT members taken to ensure that crisps are not sold in vending machines, or sugary drinks?

[119] **Mr Williams:** We do make recommendations to all headteachers. I think that every school in Wales now should be a healthy school. Therefore, they should not be selling crisps or Coca-Cola through vending machines. That was not an NUT issue; I think that it was an all-Wales issue.

[120] **Jenny Rathbone:** Indeed.

[121] **Mr Williams:** So, that has been implemented, which is fantastic. Again, in terms of what NUT has done to stop this, it is not down to the NUT, it is down to the headteachers to look at what food they provide for children in the canteen at lunchtime and during break time. Obviously, if it is council-led provision, their hands are tied as to what food that they can offer. However, if they run their own canteen, which I know some schools do, it is up to the headteachers to make sure that they provide healthy food for children. Children are children, of course, and they will find a way of bringing in unhealthy food to school. Therefore, it is about education as to the effects that processed food, high carbohydrates, starchy foods and sugars have on the body, along with a lack of participation in sport, of course. They go hand in hand. It is absolutely essential that they get that education. Jamie Oliver went into a few schools and gave them healthy food, which is fine, but what we found with that television programme was that someone was setting up a burger van or a chip van outside the school gates and the pupils were getting food in that way. Sometimes, you can do all that you can, but you cannot win.

[122] **Jenny Rathbone:** Okay, but we can agree that headteachers have a primary role in this to ensure that the children are getting healthy food, but, equally, NUT members can also be advocates of healthy food.

[123] **Mr Williams:** I would like to think that the majority of teachers would promote healthy food for children, particularly PE teachers. I would be very surprised if PE teachers did not promote healthy food. If pupils want to be elite athletes, like Mo Farah, they must eat healthily and properly at the right times, with the right portion amounts, and with the right nutrients. So, I would say that the majority of teachers should and would make sure that children get this education. I would say that many teachers do not even know because they have been told to push the eatwell plate. The eatwell plate is up in classrooms in every single school in Wales. It is fantastic for elite athletes, because carbohydrates are a great source of energy, but, for those children who do not participate, it is not a good source of energy because it will be stored as fat in the body if it is not used.

[124] **Christine Chapman:** Mike is next, then Rhodri.

[125] **Mike Hedges:** I will just make two brief comments. First, with girls in years 10 and 11, their make-up can also get damaged when they go into the swimming pool. That tends to put them off. I do not know whether you found that. My daughter is in year 10 at the moment. She and her friends hate the idea of actually going in, getting their faces wet and getting their make-up damaged.

[126] The second thing is about eating. Do you agree that one of the things that we have seen in recent times with professional athletes is that they have improved their diet no end? Before Arsène Wenger came to Arsenal, the diet of a professional footballer was not that different to the average supporter. People who have come from abroad with better ideas on diet have made a huge difference, and that has made its way down through the junior teams

within professional sports clubs. Have you seen that?

[127] **Mr Williams:** I would agree with you that professional footballers' diets have changed. They eat when they are told to eat, they are told to eat specific foods and, if they do not, they will lose their places in their teams. I do not think that that has filtered down to grass-roots level at all. If it had, I do not think that we would have the obesity rates that we have now. I would like to see professional football clubs do a lot more with local clubs about diets, and engage with them a lot more. I do not think that would increase participation, but it would definitely improve their diets and fitness, and possibly help with those children who are disengaged with participating because of body-conscious or wellbeing issues. If they understood that the professional footballer that they admire eats these foods at this time of day, then it could change. Again, it comes down to affordability; can they actually afford to buy this healthy food? Obviously, footballers are very well paid and can eat what they like.

[128] **Christine Chapman:** You might know this, Stuart, but the Children and Young People Committee is doing an inquiry on childhood obesity, so we will—

[129] **Mr Williams:** I have responded and I was a little disappointed to find out that the inquiry has been postponed for now. I received a letter to say that it will not be holding an inquiry. I have the letter with me.

[130] **Christine Chapman:** Oh, right, fine. You know more than we do, or more than I do, at least.

[131] **Mr Williams:** I responded to that inquiry as well, because I think that it is absolutely essential that we tackle obesity. If over a third of our children are overweight or obese, they are not going to take part in sport, because of fitness issues or body image issues. Once we address that, I am sure that participation would increase.

[132] **Christine Chapman:** Jenny and I were on that committee. Anyway, Rhodri is next.

[133] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Diolch yn fawr, Gadeirydd. A ydych chi'n meddwl, Stuart, ein bod yn gorbwysleisio'r elfen o ddeiet? Rydych chi wedi dweud ei fod yn fater o allu fforddio'r fath honno o ddeiet, ac mae'r rhan fwyaf o deuluoedd o dan bwysau ariannol enfawr y dyddiau hyn. Mae Lindsay Whittle newydd fy atgoffa bod 50 mlynedd ers i mi fod yn yr ysgol, nid 40 mlynedd. Mae ond yn gallu dweud hynny achos ei fod yr un oedran â fi. Yn y dyddiau hynny, nid oeddwn yn poeni am ddeiet, roeddwn ni'n cymryd rhan mewn chwaraeon—pêl-droed, rygbi, criced, tenis ac yn y blaen—ac nid oedd lot o wahaniaeth beth oeddem ni'n ei fwyta, achos roeddem yn cymryd rhan mewn chwaraeon. Onid oes mwy o angen inni, yn hytrach na phwysleisio deiet, i ddweud ei bod yn bwysig bod pobl yn cyfrannu mewn chwaraeon, o ran eu ffïtrwydd a'u hiechyd? Mae'n bwysig hefyd o ran y sgiliau maent yn eu dysgu, yn enwedig o fod yn rhan o dîm ac ymwneud â phobl a chyfrannu at lwyddiant gyda phobl eraill.

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Thank you, Chair. Do you think, Stuart, that we are overemphasising the diet element? You have said that it is a matter of being able to afford that type of diet, and most families are under huge financial pressures these days. Lindsay Whittle has just reminded me that it is 50 years since I was in school, not 40 years. He can only say that because he is the same age as me. In those days, we did not worry about our diet, we took part in sport—football, rugby, cricket, tennis and so on—and it did not really matter what we ate, because we were participating in these sports. Rather than emphasising diet, should we not be concentrating on saying that it is important for people to participate in sports, in terms of their fitness, and their health? It is also important in terms of the skills that they learn, particularly from being a part of a team and relating to other people and contributing to a team's success along with other people.

[134] **Mr Williams:** Rwy'n cytuno 100% â chi. Pan oeddech chi yn yr ysgol, nid oedd gennych *computer games* ac nid oedd iPads o gwmpas, sy'n denu lot o ddiddordeb gan blant y dyddiau hyn. Felly, yn hytrach na fynd allan i chwarae pêl-droed, rygbi, neu beth bynnag, maent yn dueddol o aros yn y tŷ. Bryd hynny—peidiwch â chael *go* arnaf—pa mor hawdd oedd hi i gael gafael ar grisbs a swîts? Mae deietau wedi newid yn ofnadwrs ers pan oeddech chi'n blentyn, o gymharu â'r hyn sydd ar gael yn awr. Mae lot o hysbysebion ar y teledu ar gyfer bwydydd nad ydynt yn dda i blant.

Mr Williams: I agree with you 100%. When you were in school, you did not have computer games and iPads, which take up a lot of children's time these days. So, rather than going out to play football, rugby, or whatever, they stay in the house. Back then—do not have a go at me about this—I do not know how easy it was to get hold of crisps and sweets. Diets have changed substantially since you were a child, compared with what is available now. There is a lot of TV advertising of foods that are not good for children.

[135] Felly, nid wyf yn meddwl ein bod yn gornwneud deiet, ond mae'n rhaid inni gael cydbwysedd o fwyta'n iach a chymryd rhan mewn chwaraeon. Mae'r ddau'n ymwneud â ffordd iach o fyw. Mae hynny'n mynd i wella lles meddyliol, corfforol a chymdeithasol nifer fawr o blant yng Nghymru. Felly, mae'n rhaid inni sicrhau ein bod yn cael y balans yn iawn. Mae dywediad: *you can't out-train a bad* diet—pe bai Mo Farah wedi bwyta'nialwch, ni fyddai wedi ennill medal aur yn y gemau Olympaidd. Mae'n rhaid iddo fwyta'n iach i gadw'r lefelau uchel hynny o ffitrwydd. Pam na allwn ni sicrhau bod plant ysgolion Cymru yn gwneud yn union yr un peth? Mae prisiau'r archfarchnad mor uchel; mae'n anghredadwy. Nid yw ffrwythau mor ddrud â hynny, ond mae cig a llysiau, sy'n dda i chi, yn ddrud. Yn anffodus, mae'n rhaid inni sicrhau bod y prisiau'n dod i lawr, ond mae hynny'n rhywbeth anodd ei wneud yn y sector breifat.

So, I do not think that we are overemphasising diet, but we need to have a balance of healthy eating and sports participation. Those two factors contribute to a healthy lifestyle. That would improve mental, physical and social wellbeing for many children in Wales. So, we must ensure that we get that balance right. There is a saying that you cannot out-train a bad diet—had Mo Farah eaten all sorts of rubbish, he would not have won a gold medal at the Olympics. He has to eat healthily to maintain those fitness levels. Why cannot we ensure that children in Welsh schools do exactly the same thing? Supermarket prices are so high; it is unbelievable. Fruit is not that expensive, but meat and vegetables, which are good for you, are expensive. Unfortunately, we have to ensure that prices come down, but that is a very difficult thing to do in the private sector.

10.15 a.m.

[136] **Christine Chapman:** I have a few Members who want to come in on this subject, and we then need to move on to some other areas. I know that Mark and Lindsay want to come in, and then we will move on to Peter.

[137] **Mark Isherwood:** I want to make a quick observation. You mentioned female body image, and, as the father of boys and girls, I know from my children that males have body image issues as well and this young generation more so than previous ones. Boys are more interested in their appearance than my generation might have been.

[138] Secondly, in terms of healthy eating, there is a large number of third sector projects dealing with healthy eating on low incomes, involving homelessness charities and housing associations. I visited one last Friday that was run by a women's mental health charity. So, I wanted to make the point that we must not make people feel that they could never afford to do it, because there are some models of good practice that are helping people to do that, even

though they are on low incomes.

[139] **Mr Williams:** Excellent. I agree with you on boys and body issues. They will tend to go into the gym and get themselves fit. If they are overweight or obese, some of them will not want to participate, because they get made fun of. Those are the issues that we want to try to tackle. If we could improve their diet and get them more active—not just playing football, but walking or whatever activities they want to do. We have to cater for what children want. Things have moved away now from the four main team sports, because children are interested in a lot more individual sports. We should have a look at what they would like to engage in and provide the training for coaches or teachers to deliver those activities and to make sure that there is a safe environment for them to do so.

[140] **Lindsay Whittle:** If we can, I would like to try to move away from diet. In 1953, the Welsh rugby team beat the All Blacks and it was the last time that we beat them. I am sure that the diet and the drinking habits of that rugby team were far different from those of the present rugby team, but we have not beaten them since, by the way; but there you go. I am more interested in participation levels. I am the same age as Rhodri, and, when I was at school, we had compulsory PE, compulsory rugby in the winter, and athletics, cricket and tennis in the summer. There are a lot more sports now, and that is to be welcomed. However, teachers also played their part on the weekends. We were always on buses travelling to Neath to beat Neath, to Howardian school in Cardiff to beat Howardian, and to Swansea to beat—*[Interruption.]* No.

[141] I appreciate that teachers do not particularly want to work on weekends because, to be fair, they say, ‘I work Monday to Friday and, like everybody else, I’d like the weekend off’. Is there a case to make that we should employ PE teachers from Tuesday to Saturday and encourage young people to take part in sport for their school and to take pride in their school on the weekend?

[142] **Mr Williams:** Saturday games tend to happen in south Wales, but not in north Wales. It tends to be the senior or under-18 teams that now play rugby, and it is mainly rugby on a Saturday morning. I was teaching at a school in Cardiff, and the head of department was saying that he plays his senior rugby games on a Saturday morning and he is more than willing to do so. If teachers were appreciated more, they would be willing to give up more of their time, because they want to be appreciated and they want the children to develop and enjoy themselves. That is why teachers go into the job. They do not go into it for the money or the holidays; they go into it because they want to make a difference. If they are appreciated more, with less of a workload, less testing—for example, why should we be looking at children between years 7 and 9, and in primary school, and assigning a level to them, saying ‘He’s a level 5, she’s a level 4’? For me, that is absolutely pointless, because it should be all about the enjoyment. If we start saying how good they are at the age of 11 or 12, they will say, ‘There’s no point in me continuing with my PE, because I’m not good enough’. We need to get rid of that.

[143] **Lindsay Whittle:** I agree with that. I hope that you do not think that I was implying that—

[144] **Mr Williams:** No, not at all. However, in terms of getting teachers to work on a Saturday morning, a lot of them would give up their Saturday mornings if they felt more appreciated and there was less of a workload. It is all about bureaucracy and having to complete their lesson plans and handing them in on time. It is all about paperwork. Teaching now is less about the chalkface and more about sitting by your desk and preparing and justifying yourself to headteachers, Estyn and anybody else. We need to move away from that and let them get on with teaching and let kids enjoy their education.

[145] **Lindsay Whittle:** I can name my PE teacher—Mr Gomer Richards. I am sure that we all can do that. His motto was, ‘Just take part and enjoy it’, and I think that that approach is important. For me, when I watch the award ceremonies for sports personality of the year, both in Wales and in Britain, I am always delighted that often the first person the winners and runners-up thank is their PE teacher. That is a boost for the profession.

[146] **Mr Williams:** Absolutely. When it comes to elite sports and pushing people forward from school to club level, it is about the PE departments. It is about how engaged they felt, how valued they felt and the enjoyment they had. A school is as good as its PE department. If you have a strong, hard-working PE department, then you can have a good school, because it looks after the less academic children—those who do not want to get up and go to school. If they are good at sport they will say, ‘Right, I have PE today, I will go in’. If they know there is a game coming up against a local school, they will make sure that they turn up every day because they want to play in that game. Unfortunately, school games are becoming fewer and fewer. The WRU had a fantastic scheme when I was teaching; it used to fund the bus to play away games in the Welsh cup. That has now been taken away and I have no idea why, because the price of a ticket to watch Wales play has trebled, so the WRU’s income has trebled, but it is not willing to invest in the grass roots. In the rural part of north Wales where I used to teach, the nearest home rugby game was a 35-minute bus ride away. This was a big bus with two teams on it; I used to take a girls hockey or netball team with me so that they would not miss out. However, that has stopped. School games in general are nearly grinding to a halt, and that cannot be good for participation. If someone is less academic but wants to go to school to play football or rugby and they see these games are not being played anymore, they will be less engaged in going to school, let alone participating in physical activity afterwards.

[147] **Christine Chapman:** We have a quarter of an hour left, and I know that there are a lot of questions. I will ask Peter to come in at this point. I ask Members for brief, succinct questions. If not all Members are called before the end of the session, perhaps we can write to Stuart, because there are some really good questions to be asked.

[148] **Peter Black:** I have no idea who my PE teacher was, so I will move on to statistics. *[Laughter.]*

[149] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** That is why you are a Liberal Democrat.

[150] **Peter Black:** The PE teacher in my school was only interested in the elite, not in the other people. In terms of the school sport survey done by Sport Wales, when its representatives were here last week they were adamant that it is quite an extensive survey, that thousands of children participate and that the survey is representative and gives them a good picture of participation in school. We have just heard from the previous witnesses that that is not necessarily the case. I was just wondering what your perception of that survey is, and whether it is achieving the outcomes that Sport Wales believes it is achieving.

[151] **Mr Williams:** When I was teaching, my children took part in the survey. What I found when I asked them about it was that, although they answered the questions as honestly as they could, they tended to give the answers that you wanted to hear. That is a problem. They think, ‘That is what they want to hear, so I’ll put that down’. It is not getting the correct outlook in terms of what these children do. In big cities like Cardiff and Swansea, there are a lot of facilities for taking part and engaging but, in rural Wales and north Wales, I would like to see what the pupils said and to break it down into areas so that we can assess why they are not engaged in this or that area, or why they are engaged. My personal opinion is that it is probably down to facilities and transport—being able to get to somewhere to participate, and not just in school, but after school. This is where we are losing out. We can force children to take part in school, but after school it is up to them, and joining clubs is up to them.

[152] So, we need to find what the survey said about certain parts of Wales. I think that the results would be quite startling, especially in rural Wales where there are no facilities and you have to travel half an hour to an hour to get somewhere. I can give you another example: I had a fantastic athlete in my school who was a 300m and 400m runner and the best in the county, but the nearest track was an hour and a quarter away from him. His parents could not take him there twice a week to get the coaching that he wanted. For me, that one slipped through the net. He was fantastic, but there was a lack of facilities. He did not actually take part in the survey when he was at school. I think that it is to do with different areas in Wales.

[153] **Peter Black:** Would you agree with Show Racism the Red Card that these surveys are not getting through to BME communities, and that they are not asking the right questions of them, and are not getting the responses that they should be getting from them?

[154] **Mr Williams:** Yes, I would definitely agree with Sunil and Ashok. We need to make sure that these surveys survey more than 50,000 children. Every single child should be asked these questions in primary and secondary school. We should be looking at what they particularly want. As they said, perhaps some areas want different things to other areas. It might be the same in north Wales, south Wales and mid Wales, but the children in these areas might need and want different things, and might be inspired by different things. We need to know exactly what all children in Wales want, not just the 50,000 surveyed. There are a lot more than 50,000 children in schools.

[155] **Peter Black:** When you were a teacher, were the surveys going on at that time?

[156] **Mr Williams:** I think that there was one in 2010. That is the last one that I remember.

[157] **Peter Black:** Do you remember the content of it? Do you feel that it was asking the right questions?

[158] **Mr Williams:** I am sorry; I cannot remember the content. However, I had issues in my school with young girls, and so I gave them my own questionnaire asking, 'What would you like to see happening? What lessons would you like to have, rather than your hockey and your netball?' The response was, 'More fitness work and more dancing'. So, that is exactly what I provided. It increased the participation in lessons, but I am not sure that that actually progressed into after-school club participation.

[159] **Christine Chapman:** I know that there are a number of other themes, but because we missed some of this in the last session, I wonder whether Gwyn would like to come in on some of his questions now. It is an area of concern, I think, to some Members.

[160] **Gwyn R. Price:** Good morning to you. Could you just expand on your concerns that Cardiff Council and the Welsh Government are wasting millions of pounds in bidding for the 2026 Commonwealth Games?

[161] **Mr Williams:** I am not sure what the outcome of that initial meeting was. I think that I stated in my report that I would like to know whether they will actually bid for the Commonwealth Games. It will cost millions of pounds for the Commonwealth Games. At the moment, the facilities in Cardiff and other places at the grass-roots level are not good enough. We are looking into participation rates and why they are dropping. We need to invest the money for the Commonwealth Games into the grass-roots level and possibly the national association level, because that is where the athletes of the future are. It would be fantastic to get the Commonwealth Games to Wales. Do not get me wrong, but it will cost this Government a fortune just to bid, not to mention getting them here and building the right facilities to host the Commonwealth Games. If it is the participation rates that we are looking

at, we must look at investing money.

[162] **Cardiff Council** has increased its park fees. I have spoken to quite a few people on this. They cannot continue to pay those fees. I coach a Welsh-language team in Cardiff. Our second team played on these park pitches, but the condition of the changing areas and the pitches themselves is not good enough, and it does not warrant the increase. The players do not get paid to play; they pay to play. They pay the club and the club pays fees. It is a matter of paying for the kits, nets and referees. The costs are going higher and higher. I think that increasing those fees while keeping the facilities at the same level is unacceptable. They should be looking at improving facilities. If children see improved facilities, they might be enthused to try them out.

[163] **Gwyn R. Price:** That was very interesting. Thank you very much.

[164] **Christine Chapman:** Did you want to come in on this, Jenny?

[165] **Jenny Rathbone:** Many schools describe themselves as community-focused schools. What more could schools be doing to make their facilities available out of school for the wider community? In addition to that, I note your comments about rural communities having fewer facilities. What action are schools taking to ensure that community councils' money is being used for improving sporting facilities in rural areas?

[166] **Mr Williams:** I remember that, back in 2005 or 2006, there was an opportunity to make a bid for council money to improve facilities in schools. I think that it was called the new opportunities fund. I made use of that fund for the school that I was in. Many schools in the Gwynedd area made use of it. That fund no longer exists.

10.30 a.m.

[167] **Jenny Rathbone:** There are other funds. Some community councils have very large sums of money that they are sitting on.

[168] **Mr Williams:** I would say that schools are maybe not aware of that, or maybe the process of putting an application in is so bureaucratic and long-winded that they do not have the time to pursue them. They have to look at the curriculum and at testing. There are a lot of things that teachers and headteachers nowadays have to do; they are under a lot of pressure to make sure that they are not put into band 5 or band 4. That, again, is a stigma, and parents will say, 'If that's a band 5 school, I'll send my child to the band 1 school just down the road.' There are a lot of pressures on schools nowadays. I do not think that funding for sport facilities is at the top of their list of priorities. It should be up there. If you want to make schools more community focused in every community in Wales, that should be the case. You cannot expect headteachers or teachers under pressure to deliver top-quality standards day in day out. It is bureaucratic—asking them to put their time into making applications that should be made more easily available to them.

[169] **Jenny Rathbone:** If the participation in physical activity were part of the banding system, do you think that schools would pay more attention to that?

[170] **Mr Williams:** I do not agree with the banding system, to be honest.

[171] **Jenny Rathbone:** Okay, but it is here.

[172] **Mr Williams:** It is here. Our members do not agree with it. I do not think that that would make a difference to the banding. I think that banding is flawed, and, as a union, we think that it is very flawed. I would not take that into consideration.

[173] **Jenny Rathbone:** What does the NUT think that we can do to make schools more focused on getting their facilities better used by the community, so that they all do more physical activity?

[174] **Mr Williams:** We have to make sure that these facilities are manned after school hours. We cannot ask teachers to do that; they already work from 9 a.m. until 3.30 p.m., then go home and work in the evenings to complete all the bureaucracy that is required by the job at the moment. We cannot ask them to stay after school five days a week to make sure that the facilities are used. It is up to the local council to make sure that the facilities are available for the public, so that it can then say that it is a community-focused school. We cannot ask teachers to do that. I am sorry; I think that teachers are overworked as it is.

[175] **Lindsay Whittle:** They will be asking you to wash their kit next.

[176] **Mr Williams:** Well, I used to wash the kit anyway. [*Laughter.*]

[177] **Christine Chapman:** We have a couple of minutes left. We have the Welsh Local Government Association coming in now after the break, so some of these issues can be raised with them. Rhodri?

[178] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Stuart, mae gennyf dri o blant—dau yn eu hugeiniau hwyr ac un sydd wedi mynd heibio'r trideg. Dim ond un ohonynt oedd yn cymryd rhan mewn chwaraeon traddodiadol—y gemau cystadleuol. Rwyf yn falch o ddweud bod y tri ohonynt yn parhau i nofio ac yn mynd i'r gampfa yn gyson. A ydych chi'n meddwl bod perygl gwirioneddol bod gormod o bwyslais ar y gemau traddodiadol yn ein hysgolion? A oes perygl ein bod ni'n colli'r rhai sydd ddim yn mynd mewn i dimoedd yr ysgol o ran gwneud ymarfer corff? A ddylem roi mwy o bwyslais ar bethau fel dawn, neu unrhyw fath o ymarfer corff sydd yn golygu bod pobl yn cymryd rhan? A ddylid symud oddi wrth yr agenda traddodiadol o gael yr un bobl yn y tîm pêl-droed, rygbi, hoci, pêl-rwyd, gan mai hwy yw'r unig bobl sy'n gallu cymryd rhan mewn chwaraeon?

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Stuart, I have three children—two are in their late twenties and one is over thirty. Only one of them took part in traditional sports—the competitive sports. I am glad to say that the three of them continue to swim and go to the gym regularly. Do you think that there is a real danger that there is too much emphasis in our schools on the traditional sports? Is there a danger that we will lose those people who do not get into the schools teams in terms of taking part in physical activity? Should we be putting more emphasis on things such as dance, or any form of physical activity that means that people participate? Should we move away from the traditional agenda of having the same people in the football, rugby, hockey and netball teams, because they are the only people who can take part in sport?

[179] **Mr Williams:** Rwyf yn meddwl bod y bechgyn, ar y cyfan, yn cymryd rhan lot yn fwy mewn pêl-droed a rygbi. Mae yna lot o fechgyn hefyd sydd ddim yn hoff iawn o rygbi, neu nid oes ganddynt y sgiliau i gymryd rhan. Felly, rhaid inni sicrhau eu bod hwy hefyd yn cael y cyfle i fod yn weithgar. Mae'n dibynnu ar ba adnoddau sydd ar gael yn yr ysgol. Os bydd ganddynt adnodd ar wahân i gaeau chwarae, mae modd gwneud defnydd ohono, er enghraifft math o *mini-gym* gyda *treadmills* ac yn y blaen. Mae hynny'n grêt, oherwydd gallant ddarparu ar

Mr Williams: I think that boys, in the main, participate a lot more in football and rugby. There are also a number who do not like rugby, or do not have the skills to participate. We must ensure that they also have the opportunity to be active. It is therefore dependent on what facilities are available in the school. If they have a resource apart from playing fields, then it is possible to make use of it, for example a mini-gym with treadmills and so on. That is great, because they can provide for those children as well. In terms of girls, fewer girls are playing hockey and

gyfer y plant hynny hefyd. O ran merched, mae llai o ferched yn chwarae hoci a phêl-rwyd. Mae mwy o ferched yn troi at ffirwydd neu ddawns. Nid yw merched, pan fyddant yn cyrraedd blwyddyn 10 ac 11 yn enwedig, yn hoff o gystadlu. Mae'n well ganddynt wneud pethau yn unigol neu mewn grŵp, a chael mwynhad allan o hynny. Mae hynny'n dod i'r amlwg fwyfwy mewn ysgolion.

[180] Nod pob ysgol yw sicrhau bod pob plentyn yn cymryd rhan mewn gwersi yn rheolaidd. Os oes rheswm pam nad ydynt yn gwneud hynny, mae'n rhaid i'r ysgol edrych ar y rhesymau hynny a cheisio datrys y broblem. Mae honno'n broblem fawr efo merched blwyddyn 10 ac 11. Mae angen darparu hyfforddiant i athrawon er mwyn iddynt allu gwneud y gwahanol fathau o weithgareddau eraill. Efallai y dylid edrych ar yr hyfforddiant maent yn ei gael yn y brifysgol, nid yn unig yn y sector uwchradd, lle mae arbenigedd mewn addysg gorfforol, ond yn y sector cynradd, lle mae gofyn i athrawon cynradd fod yn *jack-of-all-trades*—maent yn gallu gwneud bob dim, yn cynnwys addysg gorfforol. Felly, ymhob ysgol gynradd, efallai y dylem gael athro addysg gorfforol llawn amser a fyddai'n cymryd pob dosbarth yn ei dro, gan roi cyfle i athrawon gael gwersi rhydd i farcio a pharatoi gwersi eraill, yn hytrach na chael rhywun digymhwyster i gymryd y dosbarthiadau hynny. Mae honno'n broblem fawr, oherwydd mae nifer fawr o gynorthwyr dosbarth yn cael eu gofyn i gymryd dosbarthiadau, ond nid oes ganddynt gymhwyster dysgu nag arbenigedd mewn addysg gorfforol.

[181] Felly, rwy'n cytuno efo chi—dylem edrych ar beth mae pawb eisiau ei wneud, a darparu'r gweithgareddau maent eisiau eu gwneud. Fodd bynnag, mae'n rhaid inni sicrhau eu bod yn cael addysg o'r safon uchaf pa bynnag weithgaredd maent yn ei ddewis, a rhoi'r hyfforddiant hwnnw i athrawon.

[182] Nid oes datblygiad proffesiynol parhaus i athrawon mwyach—nid oes arian gan yr ysgolion i'w gynnig. Roedd gan Gyngor Addysgu Cyffredinol Cymru system grantiau a gafodd ei thynnu'n ôl rhyw wyth

netball. More girls are looking towards fitness or dance. Girls, especially when they reach years 10 and 11, are not too fond of competing. They prefer to do things individually or in a group, and gain enjoyment from that. That is coming through more and more in schools.

The aim of every school is to ensure that every child participates regularly in lessons. If there is a reason why they do not, the school has to look at those reasons and try to resolve the problem. That is a major problem with regard to girls in years 10 and 11. Training must be provided for teachers to be able to do the other different types of activities. Perhaps the training that they receive at university should be looked at, not just in the secondary sector, where there is specialism in physical education, but in the primary sector, where primary school teachers are required to be jacks of all trades—they can do everything, including PE. So, in every primary school, perhaps we should have a full-time PE teacher who would take every class in turn, allowing teachers the opportunity to have free lessons to mark and prepare other lessons, rather than having someone without qualifications to take those classes. That is a big problem, because we have a great many classroom assistants who are asked to take classes, but they do not have a teaching qualification or a specialism in PE.

So, I agree with you—we should look at what everyone wants to do, and provide the activities that they want to do. However, we must ensure that they receive the highest standard of education whatever the activity they choose, and provide that training to teachers.

There is no continuous professional development for teachers any more—schools do not have the funding to provide it. The General Teaching Council for Wales had a grant system that was withdrawn about eight

neu naw mlynedd yn ôl, lle roeddech yn gallu ymgeisio am grant o £500 i gael gwersi rhydd i fynd ar gwrs hyfforddi. Nid yw hynny'n bodoli mwyach. Nid oes cyfle i athrawon, heblaw am ddiwrnodau hyfforddiant mewn swydd y consortia, i wneud unrhyw hyfforddiant ar chwaraeon eraill. Mae'r hyfforddiant hwnnw yn cael ei ddarparu ar gyfer grŵp o athrawon y consortia, yn hytrach nag hyfforddiant unigol y mae athrawon ei angen. Felly, mae'n rhaid i ni edrych i fuddsoddi arian yn yr arbenigwyr i ehangu eu gwybodaeth hwy o wahanol weithgareddau er mwyn rhoi'r addysg orau i'r plant sydd ddim eisiau cymryd rhan y pedwar prif gêm.

or nine years ago, where you could apply for a £500 grant to have free lessons to go on a training course. That does not exist anymore. There is no opportunity for teachers, apart from the consortia's in-service training days, to undertake any training on other sports. That training is provided for the groups of teachers in the consortia, rather than the individual training that teachers require. So, we must look at investing in the specialists to enhance their knowledge of different activities to provide the best education for the children who do not wish to participate in the four main sports.

[183] **Christine Chapman:** We have run out of time. I thank Stuart very much—it has been a very interesting session. I know that Members want to put other questions to you, so if you are happy to do so, we will write to you and perhaps you can send us a written response. Thank you for attending. We will also send you the transcript of the meeting so that you can check it for accuracy.

[184] **Mr Williams:** Thank you very much.

[185] **Christine Chapman:** We will take a short break now until 10.45 a.m., then we have the session with the Welsh Local Government Association.

*Gohiriwyd y cyfarfod rhwng 10.38 a.m. a 10.47 a.m.
The meeting adjourned between 10.38 a.m. and 10.47 a.m.*

Ymchwiliad i Lefelau Cyfranogiad mewn Chwaraeon—Sesiwn Dystiolaeth 6 Inquiry into Participation Levels in Sport—Evidence Session 6

[186] **Christine Chapman:** I welcome our panel from the Welsh Local Government Association. A warm welcome to you both: Peter Gomer, policy adviser, leisure, culture and heritage, and Iwan Davies, head of culture, tourism and recreation from the WLGA.

[187] **Mr Davies:** I am sorry, Chair, but may I clarify? I am head of culture, tourism, sport and leisure for the City and County of Swansea and I am also chair of the chief leisure officers of Wales.

[188] **Christine Chapman:** Do you want to add anything, Peter?

[189] **Mr Gomer:** No, my title is perfectly fine, thank you.

[190] **Christine Chapman:** Thank you, first of all, for providing your paper. The Members will have read it. If you are happy, we will go straight into questions. I see that you are. I will start. Can you outline the extent to which you believe that future budgetary pressures will affect local authorities' sport and leisure provision and what you think the subsequent impact on participation might be?

[191] **Mr Gomer:** I will give an overall view and then Iwan will give some specific details. The cuts over the last few years do not appear to have had a major impact on the use of

facilities in local authorities, certainly within the leisure realm. There is clear evidence that authorities have been more entrepreneurial, and, as I say in my report, a number of them have looked at how they will deliver their services into the future. A number have already taken the decision to find different delivery methods. One has gone to an in-house trust, one to an external trust, one to a private operator and Neath Port Talbot has been operating since 1996 as a trust. So, local authorities have been working for some time to see how they can take these budget savings and—[*Inaudible.*] A lot of local authorities have taken a positive view, and where they have done their options appraisals and reviewed their estate, they have invested more into facilities. So, rather than say ‘We’re going to cut the budget here’, they have put an investment in and recouped it. Cardiff is one example; I think that it invested something like £600,000 into fitness rooms and so on in its centres, and took back over £1 million in additional income over a period of time, which has transformed its service. Instead of having to find a bigger cut, it has put more money into the budget. In terms of the latest news, obviously there will be an impact, and the most worrying thing is whether we will have people on the ground. Facilities are one thing, but it is about having development workers, and the links with education, schools and so on; that could be the one to suffer, maybe more than facilities. Certainly, a lot of work has already been undertaken.

[192] **Christine Chapman:** We had comments last week from the Welsh Sports Association that sport and leisure services should be a statutory duty, so that there is that element of protection. Do you have any thoughts on that?

[193] **Mr Gomer:** It is probably not the best timing, because to suddenly make them statutory now would take a couple of years anyway. It is certainly something to look at for the future. However, even though they are not statutory, in terms of local authority provision, local authorities have always recognised leisure services, almost as part of their public health role, and they have always provided them, whether they were statutory or not—some to a greater extent than others, depending on local need. So, although there are worrying headlines that leisure and libraries and so forth have been the first to face the axe, local authorities do value them highly, and if we look at the public protests over the years, the closure of leisure centres and playing fields has got as much reaction as the amalgamation of a local school. So, local authorities are well aware of the non-statutory nature of these services, but also are very aware that the public values the facilities highly, and see them as important.

[194] **Jenny Rathbone:** I would like to focus on the role of community-focused schools. What it says on the tin, to me, is that they are reaching out to the rest of the community, and are not just about what goes on in school between 9 a.m. and 3.30 p.m. We heard some evidence last week from the Welsh Sports Association and from Sport Wales that it was really hard work getting into so-called community-focused schools. In these times of financial constraint, how many community-focused schools are there as a proportion of the total, and what do you think their duties are in relation to opening up their facilities to wider use?

[195] **Mr Gomer:** If I answer on the bigger picture, perhaps Iwan will want to talk about one or two issues in Swansea. It varies from authority to authority. I have been a strong advocate over the years of joint-use leisure facilities, where the facilities are on a school site and are shared by the community and the school. Those facilities are appropriate for everybody’s use, and much of the investment that has gone on in the last few years in some authorities has been very much around that community focus, having the public and the school together rather than having the box down here and the school over there. There is an issue with some schools, and the same thing came up in the play sufficiency audit: they can only be opened up if appropriate, and if the right facilities are there. There is not much point opening it if the right facilities are not there. For example, if a school only has one playing field, and it is needed for the school, because we are trying to encourage schools to have physical education in the day, what you do not want on the weekend is somebody using the field and completely tearing it up so that the school cannot use it all week. So yes, maybe we

need to look at that more, but it is done where it is appropriate, and more and more authorities have gone down the community-focused route, with officers now linking very strongly with the education department and the sports department, and trying to make those links stronger and stronger. If there is a particular piece of evidence from the Welsh Sports Association and it has some examples, we would be more than happy to go back to talk to the chief leisure officers in those authorities to see whether we can open the door.

[196] **Mr Davies:** I would echo what Peter has said. They are an important resource in the local community. There are different approaches in different local authorities. Swansea, for example, has taken an approach over the years to develop dual-use centres, as Peter said, and that means that sport and leisure facilities are an integral part of the school. We work closely with those schools that have leisure centres on site. We have service level agreements, which we constantly review. There will be an opportunity, going forward, in terms of the school improvement programme, for example, to look at opportunities to improve resources, not just for schoolchildren during the academic day, but also for the wider community. However, once again, you have to look at things and designing for access in a cost-effective way. That is, if there are opportunities to do so, to review the way that schools are set up so that you do not have to rely on school staff, such as a caretaker, to enable access. A lot of it boils down to local opportunities within each school. However, there are tremendous resources and there are exceptionally good examples where access for the local community has been highly successful.

[197] **Jenny Rathbone:** A lot of it is down to leadership, is it not? That is, the leadership of both the headteacher and the governing body to ensure that they are a community-focused school.

[198] **Mr Davies:** Yes, leadership and then a partnership, I suppose, with the local volunteer community and local development opportunities with regard to sports and leisure provision within the local authority.

[199] **Jenny Rathbone:** There are lots of examples where schools are not community focused. They have multi-use games areas, so they do not have the problems that Peter outlined about the pitches being churned up through overuse at the weekend. So, do you agree that a lot needs to be done in getting schools to think more about the needs of the community and all of the stakeholders?

[200] **Mr Davies:** My local experience has been fairly positive. I have to be honest in that context. However, one can always agree that there are opportunities that need to be pursued and we can always improve access. In reality, you have to look at the cost of doing that, the logistics of doing it and how schools can work effectively within those budgets with the local community.

[201] **Jenny Rathbone:** Indeed, but if you have the Welsh Sports Association knocking on the door and saying, 'We would like to provide hockey', or whatever it might be, and the school is not responding, that is very frustrating for it. It is being made to work a lot harder.

[202] **Mr Gomer:** It is difficult to answer a generic question. I would love to be able to speak to the Welsh Sports Association. We speak to it, but that is not something that it has raised with us. However, we would be very happy, to follow this up, to get that meeting and engage with it to see if there are hotspots where, perhaps, we can go in and intervene. Our experience is that, where it is appropriate for them to do so, schools have been happy to open up. Of course, the development officers, who are often funded by Sport Wales, working in partnership with local authorities, help to create those opportunities. So, it would be helpful to get some specifics.

[203] **Christine Chapman:** Would you be able to do that?

[204] **Mr Gomer:** Yes, we would be more than happy to do that and to have that meeting.

[205] **Christine Chapman:** Okay; thank you. Do you have any other questions, Jenny?

[206] **Jenny Rathbone:** End Child Poverty has done an analysis of the free swimming initiative, and there seems to be quite a lot of variation between local authorities in relation to how the scheme is delivered. Could you say a little more about that?

[207] **Mr Gomer:** I have read the report. It is a good report, but it does not take into consideration, sometimes, the demographics in certain areas or some of the built environment, as it were. Some authorities have centres with pools that stand alone in the big urban areas, while others are small swimming pools on school sites, so there is obviously a limited amount of time when you can access it. You cannot stop the children from swimming in the day to open up for others, but, of course the children are in school then anyway. There are all sorts of issues.

[208] Our experience is that all authorities—and we did an exercise linked with Sport Wales only last year—are actually performing, in terms of delivering free swimming, way beyond any budget given. They are all committed to it. I thought that this might be something that we would come to in further evidence later and you have asked about things that the Government has sponsored in relation to free swimming, and so on. We can give further evidence later on to show that there has been a significant impact and improvement across the board. However, that variation—and, as I said, I have read the report—comes down to a whole host of issues relating to the present facilities and issues such as that, rather than someone just saying, ‘We are only going to do the minimum’, or, ‘We are going to do the maximum’. It is all about the availability of pool space. I can give you an example. I go to a pool in Pembrokeshire, which, because of the nature and development of the pool, can be split into three. So, three different activities can go on at the same time. There might be canoeing in one, free splash in another, and so on. Other pools, because of their nature, can have only one activity at a time. So, they have three pools operating, whereas others may have just one small pool. So, it is a facilities issue, rather than the view that says, ‘We’re not happy with this; we’re not going to deal with it’. It comes down to other issues.

11.00 a.m.

[209] **Jenny Rathbone:** There is a specific issue around the fact that about 25% of children leave primary school unable to swim 25m.

[210] **Mr Gomer:** We have statistics on that one. I mentioned in my written report that Welsh local government is working very closely with chief leisure officers and Sport Wales. In addressing the Simpson review, we came together to see what we could do to collaborate better. As part of that evidence-gathering, we found that local authorities, because of the non-statutory nature of the service, were not being held accountable for what they were doing. Many local authorities often felt that they were doing a really good job. We therefore developed a report card based on Assembly-type methodology. The overriding target is health, but one of the key issues was that all children could swim by the age of 11, because we felt that that was already very strongly included in the curriculum in key stage 2.

[211] When we did some research, we found that there was a 23% variance in Wales between authorities, which again came down to issues around pools. In a year, we have had some staggering results in terms of change: Monmouthshire has gone from 68% to 75%; Blaenau Gwent has gone from 53% to 73%; and Conwy has already this year seen a 6% improvement.

[212] **Mr Davies:** I just want to reassure the committee that the free swimming initiative, originally through the Welsh Government, has been pretty much taken on board across the whole of Wales. As Peter said, we now have agreement through the chief leisure officers that we will work together, monitor and mentor where there is opportunity to do so. However, the picture in Wales has changed quite radically over the last two or three years in particular, especially if you compare the percentage of children under the age of 11 in Wales who can swim against that of England; it is quite a significant and very positive difference in Wales's favour.

[213] For example, in Swansea in 2008-09, 55% of children under the age of 11 could achieve the required swimming standard—that is, being able to swim a length. We are now up to 93% of children, and our target moving forward is that every child gets the opportunity under this initiative to learn to swim. We recognise that it is a life skill—it is about not only teaching them to swim, but opening the door to participation in other water-based sports, such as water polo, life-saving and windsurfing. You would expect Wales with such a wide-ranging seafront to hammer home that children should at least have the opportunity of saving themselves if they fall into the water. This demonstrates the scheme and the opportunity that has arisen, primarily from an initiative by the Welsh Government initially, but through greater partnership between local authorities and the sport council. It has now developed into a more structured and more positive experience for the individual.

[214] **Jenny Rathbone:** Excellent. If we can get every local authority up to the levels of Swansea, we will be doing really well.

[215] **Mr Davies:** We are getting there.

[216] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** You said 'every child', but does that include disabled children and children from ethnic minorities?

[217] **Mr Davies:** We do not discriminate.

[218] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** I did not say that you discriminated; I was just asking if you were sure that the net is catching everyone. You probably heard the disturbing evidence that we took earlier today.

[219] **Mr Gomer:** I will answer the disability one, if I can. We work very closely with Disability Sport Wales, and most local authorities have now adopted the insport model. Many local authorities with a swimming initiative work with Disability Sport Wales in its disability programme, but they also work closely with the Welsh swimming association. We now have a swimming pathway that most authorities have signed up to. That includes the fact that there will be specialist clubs for children with disabilities. We target children with disabilities in lessons, and, where appropriate, those children will then integrate into the main stream. So, more and more of that work is going on, partly due to the excellent work that Disability Sport Wales does, and the links with Sport Wales. There have been clubs for children with disabilities in Wales for 30 or 40 years—I know that from my experience. More and more over the last few years, the quality of those clubs and the coaching is improving.

[220] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** I would agree with you. What about ethnic minorities?

[221] **Mr Gomer:** Again, it varies, depending on the local authority and the need. I know that, in some local authorities, specialist sessions will be put on for children and for women from certain backgrounds who need that privacy—curtained-off pools and so on. In terms of equalities, all local authorities are now very conscious, particularly around their front-line services, of the need to make sure that nobody finds a barrier. What we try to do if there is

going to be a change—in fact, only a couple of weeks ago we used a specialist from WLGA to go back out to do a seminar for local authorities on impact assessments—is that we look at how we ensure that people from different communities are not overly affected by the change or by the new plan, or by any new idea that we come forward with.

[222] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** So, are you 100% confident in suggesting, and do you have the data to prove, that—I am not even saying ‘discrimination’—we are there with participation and encouragement to participate?

[223] **Mr Gomer:** I am confident of some case studies that I could give you. I could say that I know of specific cases that have occurred in an authority, where somebody has come forward and said ‘My child needs to be able to swim but that pool is not appropriate, because it is not suitable. Can we use this pool?’ and we have integrated, and they have gone into a swimming club. Where local authorities are aware of particular situations, they get involved and do what they can. Most local authorities now have disabled swimming clubs for children and adults, and they also integrate into mainstream clubs. I have some information—some authorities have given me a great deal of information—about swimming pathways. We could talk to Swim Wales and Disability Sport Wales to get you some case studies and examples.

[224] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** Again, I would like it to include ethnic minorities.

[225] **Christine Chapman:** If you look at the evidence from our earlier session, there was some concerning evidence.

[226] **Mr Davies:** To qualify what Peter said, 93% of children aged under 11 in Swansea can now swim. We have schools in Swansea—St Helen’s Primary School, for example—with a high proportion of children from ethnic minorities. I think that that statistic speaks for itself. We provide equalities training as a matter of course; we are going for the ribbon mark for our staff in the provision of leisure. We provide opportunities for ethnic minority females who want to swim under certain circumstances. A lot of work is happening. I want to give that assurance. Certainly from the point of view of provision, we understand better now than, perhaps, 10 years ago the definite needs and requirements of ethnic minorities and disability sport, which is now mainstream sport. This is a huge positive legacy of the Olympic Games.

[227] **Christine Chapman:** Time is moving on quickly. I will bring Lindsay in, then Mark and I need to move on to Peter then.

[228] **Lindsay Whittle:** Chair, I wanted to refer back to the previous evidence from Show Racism the Red Card. There was criticism that many sports organisations—not local authorities so much—show a lack of leadership and willingness to accept that racism exists. There is only one teacher in the whole of Wales from a BME background. I was wondering what specific steps the WLGA is taking to address barriers to the BME community, children from certain socioeconomic backgrounds, the need to tackle homophobia in schools and—as you have mentioned—increasing participation among women and girls.

[229] Interestingly, we heard about—I am going to have to read this—an ethnic-minority sport called kabbadi; I had never heard of it, but I am going to look it up. Has any consideration been given to looking at ethnic sports? Not everybody wants to play cricket, rugby or football. Not everybody wants to be a Welsh rugby international—I do, although it is a bit late now. [*Laughter.*] These other sports sound extremely interesting, and it could encourage all children to take them up. Do you have any thoughts on that? Just explain about kabbadi if you could.

[230] **Mr Davies:** I cannot do that, actually. I think that you have hit the nail on the head about providing opportunities for children and adults to participate in sports that are of

interest to them rather than mainstream sports. That is seen to be the way forward, and, in practical terms, where are opportunities for us to vary the sports, we can do that. We have core sports that we are focusing on: in Swansea for example, we have an agreement with Sport Wales, but that does not preclude activities that would draw in ethnic minorities, and girls particularly. Dance is a big issue. In recent weeks, we have had dance competitions, which has been a culmination of the work that our development officers, funded with Sport Wales, have done within schools to get girls participating in a physical activity. There are tremendous case studies going on and there is a positive outlook, really.

[231] In terms of homophobia, it is dealt with quite formally in terms of the way in which we train staff through our equalities training. Every member of staff gets equality training. We achieved a ribbon mark recently in Swansea, which takes into account the requirements of transgender people attending our leisure centres. It has not been easy; I will allude to that. It has been an interesting journey from a tendency to look at sport participation from perhaps a traditionalist viewpoint. I think that a huge amount of progress has been made over the last five to 10 years.

[232] **Mr Gomer:** If I can just come in, this probably answers the question we did not fully answer earlier. One of the issues you touched upon earlier was about the non-statutory nature of leisure and so on. There has never been an inspection regime, or an accountability regime, as it were. Local authorities basically did what they thought was right in their own authorities. What we have been doing over the last few years is to try to get every local authority to be the best it can in terms of following good practice from other authorities. Iwan has talked about what is happening in Swansea, and we now have regional meetings with Sport Wales—it used to be just one meeting a year—on the sharing of best practice. So, in west Wales recently, 150 officers from sports development and all the services got together and talked about what they were doing to provide opportunities and why one authority's figures were better than another. These sorts of issues can be picked up in those groups, whereas they were not previously. So, even though I cannot, honestly, put my hands on the table now and say that 100% of authorities in Wales are all up to that standard, it is one of the things that we are driving forward with.

[233] I would emphasise in the service that it is voluntary at the moment, and people are very much working on the basis of peer pressure and peer review to deliver that. I know that Sport Wales is looking at its self-assessment model and a new initiative to distribute its funding to local authorities in the future, and that is going to be very much part of that funding. Is the strategy in place, what do they have in place for equality and how are they providing those opportunities? I cannot go back and say 'yes, 100%', but I am confident, the way that we are moving forward, that we will get to that position.

[234] **Christine Chapman:** Thank you. Mark is next.

[235] **Mark Isherwood:** Earlier on, we heard about the lack of information about sports participation among protected equality groups. We heard that it is not just a matter of addressing awareness, to which you responded positively, but that we could have high percentage participation among the general population, but below average participation concealed in particular populations. The witnesses identified the need not only to raise awareness, but to identify the needs of those populations, for example, black and minority ethnic, religious or dietary needs. So, having events on a Friday might preclude certain groups, as might presenting food or drink that simply cannot be consumed by particular populations.

[236] You mentioned outsourcing to trusts or private bodies' leisure facilities. To what extent are the requirements for inclusion included in the contractual terms with those bodies, or to what extent should they be?

[237] **Mr Gomer:** I have not seen the actual contracts, but the local authority when it contracts out still keeps the client role there. The local authority is duty bound in terms of equalities in everything that it does and anything else has to form part of that contract. So, the providers—the trust and so forth—will still have to meet the obligations within the contract, or they fall foul of that contract. So, part of the monitoring role of local authorities is to make sure it actually happens in their areas. So, the contract is the most important thing that they have in terms of how it is delivered.

11.15 a.m.

[238] **Mr Davies:** I will just confirm that. We have a trust in Swansea that manages the leisure centre, which achieves over 600,000 visits a year. We have a specific contract that outlines the council's aspiration for that leisure centre. It is not a commercially-led document; it is a socially-led document, which underpins the council's policy. Within that, there are stringent targets and clauses that we regularly monitor. It is a question of a partnership developing community facilities for the community. For these trust-led facilities, it would be in their best interests to get as many people as possible through the door, from all aspects of the community, to make it sustainable in the long term.

[239] **Mark Isherwood:** Tomorrow evening, I am going to watch the Welsh wheelchair rugby league team training at the outsourced Deeside leisure centre, so, in some areas, some inclusion is happening positively.

[240] **Mr Gomer:** It could improve in some areas. Some local authorities have invested heavily in new technology around smart cards and so on, so they have details on who all of their clients are. For example, one authority recognised that 60 different languages were being spoken by the different people who came through its door. That was just from the information on membership. As part of the development work of the trust, a lot of the people who come in on trusts will bring that technology with them. So, they will be able to target more and more, knowing that information. Market segmentation, profiling, advertising and providing opportunities comes out of that, in terms of how you best use your facilities. So, there are positives regarding some of the issues that go out to contract.

[241] **Peter Black:** We have been talking around this issue, but data are quite important. To what extent are the data available on sport participation in Wales sufficient and comprehensive enough to enable local councils to plan their provision effectively?

[242] **Mr Gomer:** They are very good within local authorities in terms of what they have wanted to collect in the past to give them a picture of what they are doing. What has been a problem is that has not been shared across the 22 authorities in the past. There was only one national data performance indicator, which was pretty much irrelevant, particularly in relation to the questions that we have had today, and that was about the number of people who go through the door of a leisure centre per 1,000 of population. That had all sort of caveats in it. So, we have tried to develop a more meaningful methodology and more meaningful PIs to collect that we can actually use and say, 'This is how we are moving forward', so that we can benchmark across authorities. The one we gave earlier as an example, that all children by the age of 11 can swim, has been signed up to by 22 authorities. There are others around participation in the arts and other such stuff within leisure.

[243] Historically, we have relied very heavily on the Sport Wales school survey. Our officers within the leisure community work very hard with ambassadors and teachers in schools to try to make that survey as robust as we can possibly get it. However, ultimately, it comes down to each individual school as to whether or not it gets the children to fill in the survey, or provides a method. We listened to the earlier part of the meeting, and teachers'

input into getting the children to not just put down the answers that they think teachers want to hear, but the real answers, is so important. So, through the ambassadors' programme, the sports development officers and leisure staff on school sites are very involved in schools in helping that survey forward.

[244] We are also heavily reliant on the chief medical officer's statistics, which, again, are self-reported, but it gives us an accurate picture—when we measure that against those figures that we get out of local authorities, we begin to get an accurate picture. This year, once we have the school sports surveys—I am reasonably confident that it will be better than the previous year in terms of the number of children who have completed it—we will have a very good picture. At the moment, leisure services in local authorities could easily collect data on how many people come through a sports hall door. What is more difficult is counting the numbers who are playing for the club down the road or on the playing field or the local tennis court or whatever. So, those figures are always snapshots, whereas trying to get the local authority figures that can be brought together along with the school sports survey, the adult survey and the chief medical officer's survey is where we build up a reasonable picture. The chief leisure officers have adopted that range and selected from it the ones that they most impact on, and the ones that they want to collect to see where they can make the most difference.

[245] **Mr Davies:** Certainly, gathering the statistics is an important element in the journey to improving participation. There is absolutely no doubt about that. I think that the school sports survey this year, in achieving over 50,000 responses, will give us a significantly robust set of statistics to be able to look at trends. However, I think that the difficulty will come when we try to break those down into various local authorities to establish what the general trends are at the local level. We can say, for example, that the units of participation in Swansea among juniors is on the up, but we cannot say definitively at the moment whether the proportion of juniors taking part is also on the increase, or whether it is the case that more juniors are taking part more often, if you know what I mean. It is important to get the right level of information and data and to be able to analyse it properly, but it is also important, as we recognise, and as Peter has alluded to, that the chief leisure officers actually do a bit of benchmarking and evaluate from one local authority to another how well we are doing and what we can learn from each other.

[246] **Peter Black:** I am interested in that, because 50,000 is quite a huge sample. You would have thought that you should be able to get a representative sample out of that for the 22 local authorities.

[247] **Mr Gomer:** It will still vary within authorities. One school will have done it and another school might not. Through the WLGA, we have spoken to the Association of Directors of Education in Wales to encourage them to complete it. A lot of work has been done by Sport Wales through chief leisure officers within authorities and with their colleagues. We are all trying to push it. At the end of the day, though, it is down to the individual school to complete it. So, we could have some authorities for which we will get a good picture, because we will have enough of a response from enough schools in that authority, but it still will not give us the full detail. It is unfortunate, because it is expensive to do the survey and it is a very well-organised survey, but it is still relies upon each individual unit to give us that information. However, it is valuable.

[248] **Peter Black:** We have had evidence today from Show Racism the Red Card, which was backed up by the NUT, that it is not convinced that this survey is actually getting to the nub of participation within the BME community. It does not think that the right questions are being asked or that the BME community is responding to it in the way that it should. Is that your reflection on it?

[249] **Mr Gomer:** It is difficult one for us, because, obviously, Sport Wales, with its expertise and researchers, analyses all of the data. It would be interesting for us to go back to speak to Sport Wales again about that. However, in terms of the information that we have gained from it, I went to the Sport Wales conference last week and, last year, we had two sessions where the evidence coming from teachers in schools is that they completely changed their curriculum around the results of the sports survey. They listened to what the students told them in that school and they amended what they were delivering to encourage greater participation across the board. So, the schools with the traditional sports suddenly became less traditional: they provided more dance and more access to the gym, rather than expecting everyone to be playing netball or football. We have had that evidence directly from schools that they have changed as a result of the evidence that they have had. One would expect that, if a school with a high BME concentration also has that evidence, it would look at that evidence and amend its curriculum accordingly, because it is the school, at the end of the day, that will have to amend what it delivers. It is difficult.

[250] **Peter Black:** Are schools with high numbers of BME communities, such as St Helen's, Hafod and Pentrehafod, in Swansea's case, filling in this form and participating in the survey?

[251] **Mr Davies:** We are targeting schools as we speak. The door has not closed on the survey. We still have a few weeks to go. We have some work to do, Peter, to be honest, but I think that we are targeting them. I, personally, having gone through the survey myself, do not hold with the view that it is exclusive in that context, to be honest.

[252] **Peter Black:** Thank you. I was just trying to get to the bottom of that.

[253] **Christine Chapman:** I remind Members that we have about 10 minutes left. We then have another event as part of this committee's work and we still have a number of themes to cover. Lindsay, did you want to come in here?

[254] **Lindsay Whittle:** No, I am fine.

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

[256] **Janet Finch-Saunders:** No, thank you.

[257] **Christine Chapman:** In that case, Rhodri is next.

[258] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** The Minister for Rhybuddiodd y Gweinidog Llywodraeth Leol a Busnes y Llywodraeth cynhadledd Cymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru wythnos diwethaf yn neuadd y ddinas y bydd setliad blwyddyn nesaf yn anodd iawn ac y bydd penderfyniadau y bydd yn rhaid i lywodraeth leol eu cymryd. Gwnaeth Dyfed Edwards, arweinydd Cyngor Gwynedd, ddweud y bydd pob un o gyfrifoldebau dewisol llywodraeth leol yn cael eu hystyried yn fanwl oherwydd bod cyfrifoldeb statudol mewn rhai meysydd. A ydych yn credu bod canolfannau hamdden, pyllau nofio a chaeau chwarae ymysg y cyfrifoldebau dewisol hynny y bydd yn rhaid i lywodraeth leol gymryd penderfyniadau anodd ynglŷn â Local Government and Government Business warned the WLGA conference last week in city hall that next year's settlement will be a very difficult one and that there will be decisions that local government will have to take. Dyfed Edwards, the leader of Gwynedd Council, said that every single one of local government's discretionary services would be considered in detail because there are statutory responsibilities in some areas. Do you think that leisure centres, swimming pools and playing fields are among those discretionary responsibilities that local government will have to take difficult decisions about?

nhw?

[259] **Mr Davies:** Yn gwmws. Bydd pob rhan o'r gwaith rydym yn ei wneud fel awdurdod lleol yn cael ei chysidro, ond bydd rhai agweddau o'r rhannau dewisol, fel y dywedaso, yn sicr yn cael sylw manwl gennym. Eto i gyd, fel y dywedodd Peter yn gynharach, mae darpariaeth yn y cylch hamdden, llyfrgelloedd ac amgueddfeydd yn bwysig iawn yn gymunedol. Ar ddiwedd y dydd, mae cymunedau lleol yn gwerthfawrogi'r ddarpariaeth sy'n cael ei rhoi ganddynt ac felly, yn sgîl y toriadau sydd o'n blaenau, bydd yn rhaid i ni edrych ar fathau arall o ddarparu efallai, fel y sylwyd yn flaenorol, sefydlu *trusts* ac yn y blaen. Mae hwnnw yn waith sydd yn mynd yn ei flaen beth bynnag ar hyd yr amser.

Mr Davies: Exactly, every aspect of the work that we undertake as a local authority will have to be considered, but, as you said, we will certainly have to look at certain discretionary aspects in great detail. However, as Peter said earlier, provision in leisure, libraries and museums is very important at a community level. At the end of the day, local communities appreciate the provision that is currently made, and, therefore, in light of the cuts that we are facing, we will have to look at other means of providing these services, perhaps, such as, as was commented earlier, the establishment of trusts and so on. That work is going on all the time in any case.

[260] **Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** A ydych yn meddwl y bydd llywodraeth leol yn gallu parhau'r lefel o ymrwymiad mae'n ei rhoi ar hyn o bryd i weithgareddau sy'n ymwneud ag ymarfer corff i'r dyfodol, o ystyried yr oblygiadau ariannol sy'n eich wynebu?

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Do you think that local government will be able to continue with the level of commitment that it gives at the moment to activities relating to physical fitness in the future, considering the financial implications that are facing you?

[261] **Mr Davies:** Yn y gorffennol, rydym wedi gweld toriadau gweddol sylweddol. Mae'n rhaid i mi gyfaddef, o ran Abertawe, mae'r cyllid wedi gostwng tua £3 miliwn dros y pump neu chwe blynedd diwethaf. Eto i gyd, mae'r cyfleoedd sydd ar gael i bobl i gymryd rhan mewn ymarfer corff a chwaraeon wedi esgyn ac mae'r niferoedd wedi esgyn yn sgîl hynny. Mae'n rhaid ein bod yn gweithio yn fwy cyfrwys neu graff, fel ein bod yn marchnata'r hyn sydd gennym a hefyd mae'n rhaid i ni edrych ar y buddsoddiad sydd wedi cael ei wneud a'r cyfleoedd sydd ar gael i ddatblygu partneriaethau i gymryd y ddarpariaeth hon ymlaen.

Mr Davies: In the past, we have seen some quite significant cuts. I have to admit that, from the point of view of Swansea, our budgets have reduced by about £3 million over the past five or six years. However, the opportunities that are available to people to participate in sport and physical activity have increased and the numbers participating have increased as a result. We have to work more smartly, so that we market what we have available and we also need to look at the investment that has been made and at what opportunities exist to develop partnerships in order to take this provision forward.

[262] **Mr Gomer:** The role of local authorities from their inception was about the health and wellbeing of their communities. All the evidence clearly points to the fact that physically active citizens, whether they are children or adults, are better. There is clear evidence coming out of other areas—we had some evidence coming out of north Wales recently. In a local health board lifestyle programme linked with leisure, over 200 people were put on a programme to get fitter before they had an operation. In fact, over 200 people then did not need an operation costing £8,000. A lot of research has been done in Birmingham, which has free leisure services, even in these dark days, and managed it in the face of cuts that came before what we are facing in Wales, and the local primary care trust has put millions of pounds into that programme in Birmingham to preserve the free offer in that city, because of the numbers of users, particularly from deprived backgrounds, who suddenly started using all

those facilities, which they had never used before, and because the health benefits are so great.

[263] We have to keep our minds on the fact that the less that people are physically active and the less that we offer—it is not just the great leisure buildings, it is the playing fields, the parks and everything else. We can make savings, outsource and do different things and cut down the number of managers and all sorts of things, which people are doing, but we still have to have that offer at the end of the day of somewhere people can go to participate. If not, our health bill will go through the roof, because we will have more and more obese children and more and more obese adults.

11.30 a.m.

[264] People in the leisure field are not in it just because of sport; they are in it for that, but they also clearly recognise that there is this massive health benefit. We have to keep making sure that everybody is aware of that, because otherwise we are in danger of creating a worse storm in terms of health in the future. There are things happening, and the odd facility might close, or, as in some cases with entrepreneurship, some centres have reinvigorated themselves. A number of leisure centres that have been poorly used over the years are now becoming training barns for rugby clubs that cannot get outside and train in the winter. Do we need so many sand-filled playing surfaces, where we have clear evidence that the new, 3G-type surfaces are encouraging hub development? You have 400 children playing there on the weekend when they have not been able to play through the last three winters. Suddenly, this facility is put in, and the income from that has paid for the facility. So, there is a lot for us to do, but I certainly do not see the demise of leisure and culture. I know that some of our esteemed colleagues have made pronouncements. They have to warn us, but I cannot see that a society like ours can not have sport and physical activity provision. It just cannot happen.

[265] **Christine Chapman:** I want to bring Gwyn in, but I have one brief question first. Obviously, we are looking at participation in sport, and there seems to be some increase, but how confident are you that, in 10 years' time, there will be this step change in the numbers, bearing in mind that there are some budgetary problems, et cetera. How confident are you that we will get to where we want to be?

[266] **Mr Gomer:** I am confident only on the basis that we make people accountable. I mentioned earlier the issue with the non-statutory nature of the service not allowing that to happen in the past. It has been accountable inside an authority, but it is very difficult to measure that in terms of what one does to another, and the levels. If you take education for example, Estyn goes in and does a check. There is a partnership, and more and more people have recognised that we cannot have education over here, leisure here, and the sports council over there. We are all in it together. Community-focused schools were mentioned; the successful programmes being delivered within schools at the moment are partnerships between funding that comes from Government through Sport Wales into local authorities for development officers, with Active Young People teams working on school sites.

[267] We had Tanni Grey-Thompson's report last week. However, we cannot suddenly make all teachers proficient in PE overnight. However, we have some of that expertise out there in schools, where we have officers who can go in and assist. They are not PE teachers, so they cannot be seen as such, but they can help with that extra-curricular work and can link to clubs and so on. There is a clear recognition that it is a commitment, and we have to have it. There is no template, but it is about getting in there. People talk about culture change, but it is difficult to change culture until some people are doing it and others think, 'Oh, I'll do it as well', and then there is targeted marketing and so on. We have to be optimistic rather than pessimistic about this and say that if we had not done what we had done to date, we would be in a far worse position. We have to carry on improving that and moving forward.

[268] **Gwyn R. Price:** Good morning. Do you have any views on the NUT's concerns that Cardiff Council and the Welsh Government are wasting millions of pounds bidding for the 2026 Commonwealth Games, taking into consideration the NUT's view that the grass roots are being cut because fees are being charged and buses withdrawn? Have you got a view on any of that?

[269] **Mr Gomer:** I do not think that that is correct. I do not see any evidence. If buses have been withdrawn, it is probably to do with the overall authority budget. We are at such an early stage with the Commonwealth Games. The WLGA is involved, helping to pull together a regional meeting at the moment. We had a meeting last week. At the moment, it is purely feasibility. As far as I know, there are not major amounts of money going into it at the moment. The business case has to be made to the Commonwealth Games group, and it has to investigate what is happening in Glasgow and the issues there. There could be some real big wins for Wales. We know that we lack certain facilities in Wales. I caught some of the presentation earlier, where they were talking about the need for better facilities; sometimes those better facilities come from saying that we will host a major competition. Yes, it might be in certain areas, but at least we would then have the right facility to put that sport on.

[270] We are at a very early stage, but we are very positively working with Cardiff, and we have talked to all local authorities, including north Wales authorities, to ask whether they want to be engaged in the initial discussions—and they are only initial discussions. I do not believe, unless it can be proved wrong, that there is any actual detail there—and I would hate to upset colleagues in the trade union—at the moment about money being set aside to do it, but I might be wrong.

[271] **Mr Davies:** I think that, from my input, it is just at the feasibility stage. When the business case has been developed and considered in full, that would be the appropriate time to take decisions concerning millions of pounds of funding. You need to rest assured on that point.

[272] **Gwyn R. Price:** We will watch this space, then.

[273] **Mr Gomer:** I think that the evidence is the other way, sometimes, as well. Iwan has a very good example where, because of high-level sports activities, we are actually seeing a greater investment in facilities in Wales. There is an example in Caerphilly, and Iwan has information from Swansea as well.

[274] **Mr Davies:** We are working with the premiere league trust at the moment, and with Gower College Swansea, in the target area, in Penlan, to develop a hub for sports participation that includes rugby and football—obviously—and all community-based sports as well. With excellence in sport comes opportunity, and this is an opportunity for us to inspire the wider population as well.

[275] **Christine Chapman:** We have come to the end of our session. I thank you for attending. Apologies if we have not covered everything—I know that some Members had some other questions and if they want to feed them in through the clerks, we can perhaps write to you, but I think that we have probably covered everything. I thank you again for attending. We will send you a transcript of the meeting so that you can check the factual accuracy.

11.37 a.m.

Cynnig o dan Reol Sefydlog Rhif 17.42 i Benderfynu Gwahardd y Cyhoedd
Motion under Standing Order No. 17.42 to Resolve to Exclude the Public

[276] **Christine Chapman:** If the committee is happy for us to do so, I move that

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

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

Derbyniwyd y cynnig.

Motion agreed.

Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 11.37 a.m.

The public part of the meeting ended at 11.37 a.m.