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Ymchwiliad i'r Adolygiad Blaenoriaethau ar gyfer y Pwyllgor Iechyd, Gofal Cymdeithasol a Chwaraeon

Inquiry into the Priorities for the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee

Ymateb gan: Diogelu Plant mewn Chwaraeon yng Nghymru

Response from: Safeguarding Children in Sport in Wales

**Strategic group consultation response:**

The Strategic Group for Safeguarding Children in Sport in Wales aims to deliver the vision of ensuring every child and young person can participate in sport and physical activity free from the risk of child abuse. We also aim to:

- influence policy on safeguarding in sport
- and represent the voice of safeguarding in sport with government and other key bodies.

In response to the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee consultation on priorities for the next Assembly Term we have set out our priorities below and would welcome the opportunity to discuss these further when appropriate. We noted in the current draft work programme limited mention of Children and Young People, we would strongly recommend children and young people remain a priority group within the sport and health priorities.

Safeguarding children and adults at risk has become a key governance issue for all sports organisations. The Governance and Leadership Framework for Wales, developed for the sector, by the sector, integrates safeguarding within and remains a focus for bodies funded by Sport Wales, this will also be strengthened by the forthcoming UK Governance Code which will be mandatory for Sport England and UK Sport funded bodies/programmes.

We would recommend two areas are prioritised for short inquiries:

1. **How safe are children in unregulated activities (that sit outside Sport Wales funded recognised partners)?**. Unsuitable adults are able to exploit opportunities available in unregulated activities to gain access to children and so we recommend the Committee runs a short inquiry into the safety of Welsh children in unregulated activities. Sport Wales supports key sports bodies to achieve recognised safeguarding standards, but there are still unregulated bodies in the private and voluntary sports sector which we feel should be subject to regulation around safeguarding. This is an area where there are likely to be recommendations which will come out of Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson's Duty of Care review for sport <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/sport-duty-of-care-review-call-for-evidence>.

We believe the safeguarding risks are much higher in these environments as they do not come under any regulatory body or scrutiny that recognised National Governing Bodies of Sport or other Sport Wales funded partners do.

We also believe that safeguarding must be embedded within leadership structures and prioritised by all organisations responsible for provision. Accountability for safeguarding needs to be placed at the top of organisations through CEOs, senior management and boards and support advice and guidance prioritised to continuing this work.

2. **Talented Athletes are the highest category risk group with regards to safeguarding from all the evidence shown, mainly due to their dependence status.** Wales exceeded its medal

targets in Rio Olympic Games and there is excellent work happening to ensure talented young people exceed their potential. However, some sports manage progression and deselection well and others don't; there is often a fine line between poor practise and safeguarding issues. We would recommend a short inquiry into the safeguarding of our talented athletes to hear the views of national bodies but also athletes themselves. We would recommend that there should be support and guidance available for young people when difficult decisions are made and for a period of time afterwards and that this support should be integrated with mental health services.

There is an additional issue, which resulted from a recent decision made by Welsh Government, that we would like to bring to the attention of the Committee and we recommend that this is an area for scrutiny of the Minister responsible for community sport.

**3) Scrutinising Welsh Government provision of support to improve safeguarding in Sport and Physical Activity in light of recent changes.** There has been recent withdrawal of Welsh Government funding that provided free DBS checks for the third sector through the Criminal Records Unit of the WCVA. The Unit provided around 20,000 volunteer checks per annum of which around 5,000 free volunteer DBS checks were within sport.

Welsh Government announced that they would use the resources previously spent on the WCVA Criminal Records Unit to provide support to the sport/voluntary sectors for training and other safeguarding support, enabling better links with the statutory sector. Though we were disappointed to lose this service, the Welsh Sports Association have set up a supported DBS service. We agree that there remains the need for further support for training and safeguarding support and guidance. The Strategic Safeguarding Group provides a pivotal link and communication pathway between the sector and statutory Authorities and we feel that an open procurement process should be established for this support and training in dialogue with the strategic group for safeguarding in and through sport. We would be very happy to provide additional information on this issue to inform a scrutiny session with the Minister.

Key contacts:

If you would like to further discuss any of these matters or obtain more clarification please contact the Chair of group: xxxx or xxxx