

PACYP 01

Ymchwiliad i weithgarwch corfforol ymhlith plant a phobl ifanc

Inquiry into physical activity of children and young people

Ymateb gan Gwyn Harvey

Response from Gwyn Harvey

Consultation for the inquiry into physical activity of children and young people

Introduction

1. My name is Gwyn Harvey, the author/copyright holder of the website www.fairfootball.co.uk. The website seeks to reduce sexism and elitism in sport, by using football as a paradigm to demonstrate the simplicity modifying sports' rules to enable the equal participation by disparate groups, e.g. gender, ability, age, weight, etc.. As my views and knowledge are unique in this particular area of sport, it could be said that I am the world expert.
2. This submission relates primarily to the role of schools, but it represents a challenging, fundamental rethink of what is meant by inclusivity in sport, so has other obvious, wider, implications.

Submission

1. Physical education (PE) in schools is dominated by a few team games - boys playing the high status national sports of football or rugby, and girls playing, the lesser, netball or hockey; all excellent ways of delivering simultaneous outdoor exercise to a large number of children. Unfortunately they are gendered activities, with unequivocal stereotyped messages – no Premier League or Six Nations for girls, but smug superiority for boys. If girls aspire to take part in those national sports their only recourse is through the marginalised, very much subordinate, women's versions. Physical education in schools, whether group or individual, is tainted and influenced by this negative gender association. It's no wonder that many girls, the gender most likely to be overweight, shun PE with such disdain.
2. Despite the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, and the Equality Act 2010 with its very clear [guidance for schools not to discriminate](#), astoundingly, their segregation of PE by gender remains ubiquitous. Although no test case has yet to be brought to court, the responsibility of doing so should rest with those in executive/regulative positions, who instead, either through ignorance or dereliction of duty, deflect that initiative onto school pupils - thus allowing sex discrimination to continue unabated in schools.

3. Another deleterious side-effect of the concentration upon competitive team games in schools is that less-able groups of children are discriminated against – being either not chosen to play, or ridiculed when they do. Modifying sports' rules is an obvious way of accommodating both the able and less able for collaborative play. It's quite remarkable as to why this has not happened.
4. May I therefore suggest that the committee familiarise themselves by reading through www.fairfootball.co.uk, in its entirety. Then, in order to facilitate the cessation of their present unlawful gender discrimination, Welsh schools should be directed to modify their delivery of PE along the lines suggested in the website - which would also additionally allow access for other less motivated children i.e. the uncoordinated, inactive and overweight! Such an intervention will challenge the status-quo, leading to a step change in physical activity amongst school children; encompassing all levels of ability, and of both genders. Moreover there is no cost as all the necessary legislation and facilities are already in place.
5. I look forward to being called to answer questions.

Yours faithfully

J G Harvey

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