
Ymateb i Ymgynghoriad / Consultation Response

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Background information about Estyn

Estyn is the Office of Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales. As a Crown body, Estyn is independent of the Welsh Government.

Estyn's principal aim is to raise the standards and quality education and training in Wales. This is primarily set out in the Learning and Skills Act 2000 and the Education Act 2005. In exercising its functions, Estyn must give regard to the:

- Quality of education and training in Wales;
- Extent to which education and training meets the needs of learners;
- Educational standards achieved by education and training providers in Wales;
- Quality of leadership and management of those education and training providers;
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of learners; and,
- Contribution made to the well-being of learners.

Estyn's remit includes (but is not exclusive to) nurseries and non-maintained settings, primary schools, secondary schools, independent schools, pupil referrals units, further education, adult community learning, local government education services, work-based learning, and teacher education and training.

Estyn may give advice to the Assembly on any matter connected to education and training in Wales. To achieve excellence for learners, Estyn has set three strategic objectives:

- Provide accountability to service users on the quality and standards of education and training in Wales;
- Inform the development of national policy by the Welsh Government;
- Build capacity for improvement of the education and training system in Wales.

This is a partial response in accordance with Estyn's remit and is not confidential.

INTRODUCTION

Estyn welcomes the Welsh Government's vision to help people lead longer, healthier and happier lives¹ and the draft plan to prevent and reduce obesity in Wales. Key messages contained in our response include:

- The high-level actions proposed for the implementation plan are welcome but more detail is needed. The implementation plan will need to set out clear markers of success and contain specific, measurable actions that identify lead roles and responsibilities across the public sector.
- The need to ensure that professional learning sufficiently prepares teachers for the new curriculum's Health and Well-being Area of Learning and Experience.
- The need to extend support to a range of community education services (play, youth work and youth support services) to ensure that school-based interventions sit inside a whole-education approach to health promotion.
- Specific consideration and equitable support must extend to vulnerable and marginalised groups to improve their involvement in decision-making and participation in physical activity.

Childhood and adolescence are key periods for children and young people. The nature of the biological and social changes they experience will often determine the quality of their future health and economic wellbeing². Individual health-related behaviours and attitudes developed in early life can be 'tracked' into adulthood^{3 4} and these periods are profoundly important for public health.

Education through schools, colleges and youth work forms a vital part of a whole-system approach to drive-up outcomes and secure sustained improvements in reducing health inequalities⁵. International evidence demonstrates the positive impacts these settings have made in helping to reduce the levels of substance misuse, smoking, sexually transmitted infections and obesity⁶. Therefore, Estyn welcomes the recognition given to education sector in the Welsh Government's national ambitions to prevent and reduce obesity in Wales.

Our common inspection framework incorporates judgements on learner wellbeing and the care, support and guidance provided by schools and colleges. This includes assessing how organisational leadership and the quality of teaching and learning experiences enables learners to make healthy lifestyle choices, for example, relating to diet and physical activity. Although Estyn's inspection evidence does not cover obesity specifically, our inspection arrangements provide useful insights about how well providers support learners to become healthy and confident individuals. Annual analysis of our inspection outcomes shows that in:

¹ Welsh Government (2018) *A Healthier Wales: Our Plan for Health and Social Care*. [pdf] Available online at:

<https://gweddiill.gov.wales/docs/dhss/publications/180608healthier-wales-mainen.pdf> Accessed on: 29/03/2019

² Public Health Wales (2015) *Adverse Childhood Experiences and their impact on health-harming behaviours in the Welsh adult population*. [pdf] Available online at:

[http://www2.nphs.wales.nhs.uk:8080/PRIDDocs.nsf/7c21215d6d0c613e80256f490030c05a/d488a3852491bc1d80257f370038919e/\\$FILE/ACE%20Report%20FINAL%20\(E\).pdf](http://www2.nphs.wales.nhs.uk:8080/PRIDDocs.nsf/7c21215d6d0c613e80256f490030c05a/d488a3852491bc1d80257f370038919e/$FILE/ACE%20Report%20FINAL%20(E).pdf) Accessed on: 01/04/2019

³ Poulton, R., Caspi, A., Milne, B.J., Thomson, W.M., Taylor, A., Sears, M.R. et al. (2002) 'Association between children's experience of socioeconomic disadvantage and adult health: a life-course study', *Lancet*. 360(9346):1640–5.

⁴ Wright, C.M., Parker, L., Lamont, D. and Craft, A. (2001) 'Implications of childhood obesity for adult health: findings from thousand families cohort study', *British Medical Journal*. 323(7324):1280–4.

⁵ World Health Organization (2008) *Closing the gap in a generation: Health equity through action on social determinants of health*. [pdf] Available online at: https://www.who.int/social_determinants/final_report/csdh_finalreport_2008.pdf Accessed on: 01/04/2019

⁶ Suhrcke, M. and De Paz Nieves, C. *The Impact of Health and Health Behaviours on Educational Outcomes in High-Income Countries: A Review of the Evidence*. [pdf] Available online at: http://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/134671/e94805.pdf?ua=1 Accessed on: 01/04/2019

- **Primary schools:** Many pupils understand the importance of keeping themselves healthy through eating a balanced diet and taking part in regular physical activity. Almost all schools help their pupils to understand the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Many schools provide pupils with a variety of extra-curricular activities, such as athletics, rugby, dance and cricket that supplement their PE lessons well.
- **Secondary schools:** Pupils have a sound understanding of how to keep healthy by eating a nutritious diet and undertaking regular physical exercise in two-thirds of secondary schools. The arrangements to promote healthy living are strong in most schools and many pupils take advantage of the valuable opportunities offered for participation in sport, cultural and community activities.
- **Further education institutions:** Many learners demonstrate a clear understanding of the importance of making healthy lifestyle choices⁷.

Estyn is currently conducting a thematic review into school impact on pupils' health and wellbeing and the emerging evidence indicates that further improvements could be made to how schools promote physical activity, play and healthy eating. Of the schools who took part in the review, our initial findings show that:

- Most **primary schools** schedule all pupils to have around two hours of physical education per week. However, these scheduled sessions are too readily missed for a variety of reasons, such as: the availability of a hall, the availability of external specialists, inclement weather or another learning activity taking priority.
- No **secondary school** schedules all pupils to have around two hours of physical education per week. They commonly provide for around two hours for Year 7 pupils but this timetabling decreases as learners progress in their schooling.
- Many primary schools offer a free healthy breakfast for pupils before the start of the school day. While this ensures that some pupils have a nutritional breakfast that may otherwise have not done so, it develops a habit that causes a problem when pupils move to secondary school. Only a very few secondary schools offer pupils breakfast. This means that pupils who are not in the habit of eating breakfast at home often arrive to school hungry or have eaten unhealthy snacks on their way to school.
- A lot of pupils in secondary schools eat a high-carbohydrate 'brunch', such as white toast or a bacon roll, during their mid-morning break to make up for the lack of breakfast⁸.

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

Question 2: Do you agree that a whole system approach could enable change to take place? If not, why? What are the opportunities, risks and barriers to effective leadership?

Overall assessment: Yes, a whole-system approach would enable change to take place.

Supporting Comments on LEC1:

- **Delivery of the 'Healthy Weight: Healthy Wales' plan to be led by a national implementation board which will be accountable to Ministers.**

⁷ Estyn (2018) *The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales*. [.pdf] Available online at: [https://www.estyn.gov.wales/sites/default/files/documents/ESTYN Annual%20Report Accessible English 2018.pdf](https://www.estyn.gov.wales/sites/default/files/documents/ESTYN%20Annual%20Report%20Accessible%20English%202018.pdf)
Accessed on: 01/04/2019

⁸ Initial findings of Estyn's thematic report *Healthy and Happy: School impact on pupils' health and wellbeing*. [unpublished] (Anticipated publication date: June 2019).

Estyn welcomes the Welsh Government's intention to establish a national implementation board to oversee the strategic delivery of the national plan. Accountability to Ministers should help to ensure a cross-departmental and collaborative approach across government. This sits in line with the principles laid down by the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015.

The set of high-level actions proposed by the consultation document are welcome but Estyn would welcome more detail. The implementation plan will need to set out clear markers of success and contain specific, measurable actions that identify lead roles and responsibilities across the public sector. The monitoring and evaluation of progress should link to the National Indicator Set for Wales and the relevant proposed milestones required by the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015.

Representation to the national implementation board will also need reflect the whole-system approach proposed by the plan. As currently set out in the consultation document, the proposal rightly focuses on the role of Local Health Boards but does not list strategic representation from the education and training sectors. Representation from these sectors could include Estyn, the regional consortia and local authority education services (including youth support services). Consideration could also be to given supporting ongoing public engagement, including children and young people, at this strategic level.

- **Create a strengthened role for public health leaders in Local Health Boards so that they can work with Public Service Boards to develop regionally based approaches to implementing the plan.**

Adopting a public health approach would support increased collaboration between the different public sector delivery partners and with the voluntary sector. The proposal to strengthen the role of Local Health Boards is welcomed but there is a risk that the regional based approach may be overly weighted towards medical models of obesity. A social model of intervention should also underpin these regional approaches and give an equal, long-term focus to empowering citizens through education and behaviour change programmes.

- **Prioritise and focus resources to make sure that current investments are delivering and where resources are available they are used in a sustainable way.**

Estyn supports the general principle of this proposed action but would welcome more detail about how this will be achieved.

- **Higher priority for early intervention as well as the prevention of overweight and obesity.**

Estyn supports the general principle of this proposed action but would welcome more detail about how this will be achieved.

- **Engagement with stakeholders, including a multi-level stakeholder engagement and communication programme**

Estyn welcomes this proposal. Stakeholder engagement will play an important role in raising public awareness of obesity and promoting positive behaviour change.

Obesity disproportionately affects vulnerable and marginalised groups, for example, people living with a disability and those living in poverty⁹. Therefore, the stakeholder engagement arrangements should include ongoing public involvement in strategic national decision-making and in the design of local services and specifically take account of the views from marginalised/vulnerable communities. However, there is little detail in the consultation document about how the Welsh Government intends to establish an ongoing programme for stakeholder involvement.

A number of opportunities are available to the Welsh Government to develop a stakeholder engagement programme that builds on participatory infrastructure already in Wales. For example, when developing the stakeholder engagement arrangements consideration could be given to how they make the most of well-established network of school councils, learner voice initiatives, local authority youth fora, and the newly formed Welsh Youth Parliament.

➤ **Long-term, sustained interventions which will build on international learning.**

Estyn supports the general principle on this action but would welcome more detail about how it will be achieved.

➤ **Ongoing evaluation and a focus on continuous improvement, which will enable us to learn from our work, adapt and change.**

Estyn welcomes this action but would welcome more detail about how this will be achieved. The consultation document would benefit from making appropriate links with the National Indicator Set for Wales and the forthcoming national milestones relating to the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015.

Question 6: Do you agree with the proposals for the following settings (please identify which setting(s) you wish to comment upon)?

Schools (HS2): Agree.

Supporting Comments:

➤ **Strengthening school programmes to ensure it provides tailored support to schools to create whole school healthy weight environments**

Whole School Programmes

The proposal to strengthen school programmes in to create whole-school healthy weight environments is welcome. However, it is not clear what programmes are being referred to. The implementation plan would benefit from providing detail and clarity about what school programmes are in scope.

An issue that effects health outcomes related to obesity is the take up of physical activity outside of the school day. The role of parents is crucial in promoting children's healthy behaviours and attitudes toward physical activity. Children are more likely to participate in physical activity if their peers and family members are physically active themselves¹⁰. However, the role of parents is not the only environmental factor that influences children

⁹ Public Health Wales (2019). *Obesity in Wales*. [pdf] Available online at: http://www.publichealthwalesobservatory.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/documents/1208/ObesityInWales_Report2018_v1.pdf Accessed on: 03/04/2019

¹⁰ National Assembly for Wales Health, Social Care and Sport Committee (2019) *Physical Activity of Children and Young People*. [pdf] Available online at: <http://www.assembly.wales/laid%20documents/cr-ld12369/cr-ld12369-e.pdf> Accessed on: 05/04/2019

and young people's physical activity levels – access to community facilities play another important role, particularly in rural areas. While many schools already extend community access to their facilities, this remains an untapped resource. Schools can play a critical role in improving access to physical activity and help break down barriers that limit children and young people's participation. For example, Ysgol Y Gogarth, a special school in Llandudno, hosts a range of extra-curricular activities to support physical activity and provides transport accordingly. It also hosts external clubs after schools which pupils can join along with members of the public.

Therefore, improving community access to facilities should be a key focus of strengthening school programmes for physical activity.

A Whole-Education Approach

While school-based programmes have often been successful in improving children's dietary and physical activity behaviours in school, there is less evidence to show that it improves these behaviours outside school¹¹.

Evaluation research suggests that while these programmes are important, it may be unrealistic to expect schools to facilitate changes in children's behaviours alone¹². Very few interventions make appropriate links to wider family and community engagement programmes¹³. Evaluation evidence¹⁴ and our recent thematic remit shows that a wide range of other community education services (youth work and youth support services) also play an important role in promoting healthy eating, physical activity and other healthy behaviours in and outside of school¹⁵. Therefore, any future strengthening of school programmes should sit within a whole-education community-focused approach that extends similar support to these services¹⁶.

➤ **Strengthen pupil's voices to drive healthy change in schools and work with School Councils and Youth Ambassadors to develop local approaches.**

Strengthening learner voice in order to drive healthy change in schools is welcomed. However, working only with school councils and youth ambassadors does not always achieve the desired aim. The best leaders ensure that they listen objectively to feedback from **all** pupils about their experience in school, and make sure that pupils know that they are responding to it.

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- ¹¹ e.g. Stone, E.J., McKenzie, T.L., Welk, G.J. & Booth, M.L. (1998) 'Effects of physical activity interventions in youth: Review and synthesis', *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 15, (4), 298–315; Lytle, L.A., Jacobs, D.R., Perry, C.L. & Klepp, K. (2002) 'Achieving physiological change in school-based intervention trials: what makes a preventive intervention successful?' *British Journal of Nutrition*, 88, 219–21; Lytle, L.A. & Achterberg, C.L. (1995) 'Changing the diet of America's children: what works and why?' *Journal of Nutrition Education*, 27, 250–60.
- ¹² Wechsler, H., Brener, N.D., Kuester, S. and Miller, C. (2001) 'Food service and foods and beverages available at school: results from the School Health Policies and Programs Study 2000', *Journal of School Health*, 7, 313–324.
- ¹³ CfBT Education Trust (2010) *Tackling childhood obesity in schools: Lessons learnt from school-based interventions*. [.pdf] Available online at: <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/media/departmental/sell/pdf/wellbeinghealth/Tackling-childhood-obesity-within-schools--lessons-learned-from---CfBT-2010.pdf> Accessed on: 03/04/2019
- ¹⁴ Arad Research (2015) *Youth work in schools in Wales: Full report*. [.pdf] Available online at: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-02/full-report-youth-work-in-schools-in-wales-april-2015.pdf> Accessed on: 03/04/2019
- ¹⁵ Estyn (2018) *Youth Support Services in Wales: The Value of Youth Work*. [.pdf] Available online at: <https://www.estyn.gov.wales/sites/default/files/documents/Youth%20Support%20Services%20in%20Wales.pdf> Accessed on: 03/04/2019
- ¹⁶ Lytle, L.A., Jacobs, D.R., Perry, C.L. & Klepp, K. (2002) 'Achieving physiological change in school-based intervention trials: what makes a preventive intervention successful?' *British Journal of Nutrition*, 88, 219–21.

Just over 40% of pupils said that they do not always feel comfortable in PE lessons¹⁷. Pupils appreciate having a degree of choice about what activities they participate in during PE lessons, as it helps to build their confidence in being physically active. However, in secondary schools around 25% of pupils feel that their ideas about PE are never listened to, and just over a further 50% of pupils feel that this only happens sometimes. Pupils in primary schools are a little less negative about their ideas being listened to.

The proposed action set out in the implementation should ensure that the views and opinions all learners, particularly those from vulnerable and marginalised communities, are taken into account in strategic decision-making, in the development of local services and in the design of learning experiences.

- **One of the four purposes of the new curriculum is that learners develop as healthy, confident individuals who take part in physical activity and apply knowledge about the impact of diet and exercise on physical and mental health in their daily lives.**

The Curriculum

Estyn agrees that the new curriculum is a good opportunity to support learners to maintain healthy, balanced diets and physical activity for life. The current draft of the Health and Well-being Area of Learning and Experience has already recognised this as a key opportunity to embed positive health promotion activity in curriculum offer.

Estyn is carrying out a thematic review into how well schools are supporting pupils' health and well-being. Our initial findings show that all schools provide teaching and learning experiences relating to health and wellbeing, including Physical Education (PE) and healthy eating in their curriculum.

Secondary schools tend to provide better quality experiences in PE, however, they do not give enough time to PE as pupils get older. No secondary school schedules all pupils to have around two hours of PE per week. Schools commonly provide around two hours of PE for pupils in Year 7, but this often reduces for pupils in Year 8 or Year 9. In key stage 4, it is very common for pupils to only have an hour at most of PE per week, except for the small proportion of pupils who choose to study for a related qualification and therefore receive substantially more activity time.

Many pupils in primary schools and most pupils in secondary schools have regular vigorous activity as part of PE. However, not all teachers ensure that pupils exert themselves enough during these sessions to support their fitness and physical health. This is particularly true for pupils in the foundation phase, where teachers are not always supporting the development of pupils' gross motor skills well enough. The quality of learning experiences in PE is generally better in secondary schools. Overall, the attitude of staff leading PE lessons has a critical impact on pupils' wellbeing and the likelihood of participating in lessons.

Secondary schools are increasingly moving away from a strong focus on competitive, team sport in PE lessons to a greater focus on activities that encourage all pupils to be physically active and appreciate the benefits for their health and wellbeing. Schools will need to ensure enough time is allocated for providing quality PE activities for its pupils. Schools also need to be mindful of the opportunities for all pupils to attend extracurricular activities, for example, pupils in rural areas find it more difficult to access these activities due to a lack of amenities and issues around transport.

¹⁷ Sport Wales (2018) *School Sport Survey 2018: State of the Nation*. [pdf] Available online at: http://sport.wales/media/1985082/state_of_nation_2018_final_eng_002_.pdf Accessed on: 03/04/25019

Professional Learning

Success of Health and Well-being Area of Learning and Experience will, to some extent, depend on the quality of professional learning for teachers.

Few teachers enter the profession with substantial background training in child or adolescent development, or how best to support children's health and wellbeing. All schools provide professional learning for teaching and non-teaching staff that is relevant to pupils' health and wellbeing, although the quality is very variable. This professional learning is often through participation in short training sessions rather than learning that requires staff to reflect on, and refine, their practice over time.

Common training being delivered in schools currently covers attachment theory and adverse childhood experiences, and strategies to support pupils affected. Purposeful professional learning can have a significant impact on pupils' health and wellbeing. Therefore, support around providing quality professional learning opportunities for all staff, including those new to the profession is imperative.

- **Update the Healthy Eating in Schools (Wales) Regulations 2013 to reflect current government nutrition recommendations.**

The proposal to updating the Healthy Eating in Schools (Wales) Regulations 2013 is welcome. However, it is very difficult to control what pupils may choose at the point of delivery, especially in secondary schools.

Many primary schools offer a free healthy breakfast for pupils before the start of the school day. While this ensures that some pupils have a nutritional breakfast that may otherwise not have done so, it develops a habit that causes a problem when pupils move to secondary school. Primarily for financial and logistical reasons, only a very few secondary schools offer pupils breakfast. As pupils do not have a habit of eating breakfast at home before school, they often arrive at secondary school either not having eaten at all, or having eaten an unhealthy snack on the way to school. A lot of pupils in secondary schools eat a high carbohydrate 'brunch', such as white toast or a bacon roll, during their mid-morning break to make up for the lack of breakfast.

More detail is needed about how the Welsh Government proposes to work with the Welsh Local Government Association, local authorities and schools to strengthen implementation.

- **We will fund the School Holiday Enrichment Programme in summer 2019/20 to support children from participating schools to receive nutritious food and education, which includes increasing opportunities for physical activity, whilst working with parents to promote healthy behaviours.**

Estyn supports the School Holiday Enrichment Programme being funded for 2019/20. Feedback shows that many participants achieved more moderate-to-vigorous physical activity on club days and a majority ate more fruit and vegetables and ate less sugary snacks, and many drank less sugary/fizzy drinks when the club was open (www.wlga.wales/SHEP-Food-and-Fun).

- **Embed daily physical activity at an early stage within primary schools.**

The Welsh Government's aim to embed daily physical activity at an early stage within primary schools is welcomed. However, as mentioned previously as regards pupil voice, pupils appreciate having a degree of choice about what activities they participate in, as it helps to build their confidence in being physically active. Any activity such as the daily mile should be delivered in consultation with pupils to ensure that they enjoy it and that it does not detract from other activities that were offered previously.

The facilities that schools have, or have access to, for physical education vary hugely depending on the size and age of the school building and grounds, and the proximity of other leisure facilities such as community sports centres, sports fields, swimming pools or athletics tracks. Most schools make good use of what is available to them but pupils across Wales do not have equitable opportunities for physical activity as costs are a barrier to accessing facilities for some schools. The Welsh Government intention to strengthen opportunities through the physical environment in and around schools, such as playground design and access to green spaces is welcomed but lacks detail in how this is to be successfully achieved.

➤ **Work with local authorities to support active travel to school.**

The aim of working with local authorities to support active travel to school is welcomed. A very few pupils cycle or scoot to school in Wales. The lack of a safe cycle route to school is a significant reason why this proportion is low.

[END]