

Kirsty Williams AC/AM
Y Gweinidog Addysg
Minister for Education



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: MA-P/KW/2781/19

Dai Lloyd AM
Chair
Health, Social Care and Sport Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
CARDIFF
CF99 1NA

14 August 2019

Dear Dai

Thank you for your letter of 18 July regarding the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee's recent report, Physical Activity of Children and Young People.

You asked that I review the Welsh Government response to recommendation 8, proposing that the recommended 120 minutes of physical education in schools be made a minimum statutory requirement.

The response on this recommendation outlined that proposed legislation to support the new curriculum is intended to reaffirm the principle outlined in *Successful Futures* of a new curriculum for Wales and that the legislation should define a broad set of duties rather than detailed prescription of content, so providing practitioners with the freedom to use their professionalism and creativity to meet the needs of all learners. I am grateful for your Committee's support in acknowledging the importance of this flexibility within the curriculum.

A specific statutory duty would not guarantee that physical education would be embedded well or appropriately in the curriculum. The focus needs to be on enhancing the quality of provision and on enabling schools and practitioners to maximise the opportunities to promote physical activity.

Schools will be under a duty to develop a broad and balanced curriculum which will support learners to realise the four purposes, one of which is for learners to develop as healthy, confident individuals. This purpose-led approach puts health and well-being, and physical education, as a key part of that, at the heart of the curriculum. It is not optional, and securing the four purposes will require meaningful provision to be offered and all learners being enabled to access it.

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Gohebiaeth.Kirsty.Williams@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Kirsty.Williams@gov.wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Each of the Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLEs) are mandatory parts of the new curriculum. The Health and Well-being AoLE has a clear focus on the importance of physical activity for our children's physical and mental well-being, supporting their development, and ensuring that they grow up to be healthy and confident individuals. The Health and Well-being AoLE is also designed to develop all learners' understanding of the factors that affect physical health and well-being, including physical activity.

The Health and Well-being AoLE framework provides that all learners should experience:

- a range of ongoing, daily opportunities to be physically active;
- opportunities to be physically active in a variety of environments (including indoor; outdoor; different surfaces; heights; in and around water).

The AoLE has been designed in a manner that empowers practitioners to plan provision that best meets the needs and abilities of learners, encouraging them to develop the dispositions and motivation to lead lifestyles which support their physical health and well-being. This gives them the flexibility to choose a range of physical activities and sports that will support children and young people to develop the confidence, skills and motivation to be physically active for life.

The new curriculum will enable schools to consult with learners on the choice and range of physical activities available to them. The Health and Well-being AoLE will not specify sports or areas of physical activity; the school, in consultation with learners, will take decisions on these areas.

The Health and Well-being AoLE is one of six AoLEs in the new curriculum, and schools will need to treat this AoLE with parity to the other five areas. This means that supporting learners to develop the skills, knowledge and experience to maintain good physical health will be central to our new education system.

The draft AoLE guidance has been extensively informed by experts in this area. It will provide the framework from which teachers can select the most appropriate experiences to support a child's learning throughout the 3-16 continuum of learning.

The Welsh Government will set a high-level national framework, but schools will develop their own school-level curriculum, supported by statutory guidance, to ensure that learners get a broad and balanced education. Practitioners will be given more flexibility to choose the specific content and resources which meet the needs of their learners in their specific context. The *Successful Futures* report made clear that how the AoLEs translate into day-to-day activities should be determined creatively, at school-level. It challenged us to re-think our approach to the curriculum; it makes it clear that a high degree of prescription and detail at a national level inhibits "the flow and progression in children and young people's learning". However, schools will not be given complete autonomy in terms of their own school-level curriculum, and what is taught in the classroom. Although there will be greater flexibility about what to

teach and how it is taught, this will be within clear national expectations for scope and progression.

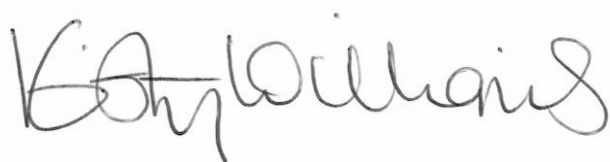
I want to provide all schools with the freedom to explore flexible and adaptable models of delivery to support full curriculum implementation from 2022. It will therefore be down to schools to determine the amount of time being allocated for all areas of the new curriculum.

I published the draft Curriculum for Wales 2022 in April, for feedback; the feedback period closed on 19 July and a wide range of responses have been received. That feedback is now being considered before further refinement work takes place in the autumn.

I expect to publish the revised Curriculum for Wales in January 2020, and this will be clearer in terms of national expectations for schools and settings. A report on the feedback that was received and how it has been used will be made available alongside the revised curriculum in 2020.

I hope this provides assurance to the Committee that provision for physical activity will be an integral element in the new curriculum as well as clarifying why there are no plans to allocate a minimum statutory time for physical education within the new curriculum.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kirsty Williams', written in a cursive style.

Kirsty Williams AC/AM

Y Gweinidog Addysg
Minister for Education