



Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-804  
Ein cyf/Our ref HID/00239/18

David John Rowlands AM  
Chair - Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

SeneddPetitions@assembly.wales

13 April 2018

Dear David,

Thank you for your further letter dated 23 March regarding the petition submitted by RAY Ceredigion which your committee has recently considered.

I have responded to the points you have raised below:

- **What assessment the Welsh Government has made of the sufficiency of steps taken by local authorities to fulfil the duties under Section 11 of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010;**

Since the commencement of the local authority duties in respect of play opportunities, the Welsh Government has taken a supportive, collaborative and encouraging stance. Under the Play Wales Strategic Policy Grant, the Welsh Government has provided grant funding to Play Wales to provide strategic support to the Local Authorities and their partners to assist the implementation of the Play Sufficiency duties.

The Play Sufficiency Assessment Toolkit was also developed in 2012 by Play Wales and the Welsh Government, in conjunction with play providers across Wales, as a means of supporting the implementation of the duty. The toolkit was designed to give guidance but allow for local contexts, to encourage dialogue across policy areas and to influence future awareness and policy decisions. The intention was to enable local authorities and their partners to take account of children's play in all policy and implementation agendas.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1NA

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

[Gohebiaeth.Huw.Irranca-Davies@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Huw.Irranca-Davies@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Huw.Irranca-Davies@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Huw.Irranca-Davies@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.

To support local authorities to consider collaborative working, Play Wales has been promoting the delivery of a Professional Development Programme delivered by colleagues from the University of Gloucestershire. It is based on a pilot programme drawing on key themes identified in two research studies undertaken by Play Wales and the University of Gloucestershire in 2013. The programme comprises a series of workshops designed to support the local authority and its third sector partners in their approach to assessing and securing play opportunities.

As part of its grant funded activity, Play Wales has undertaken analyses and reviews of the Play Sufficiency Assessments and the related Play Action Plans. These reports have shown the progress being made in each local authority in Wales. My officials work in partnership with Play Wales to facilitate annual regional events for local authority play officers, where good practice is shared and regional issues discussed.

My officials also work in partnership with Play Wales to deliver cross policy networking meetings with a range of Welsh Government officials. These meetings have enabled the sharing of initiatives that have worked well, barriers to sufficiency and solutions, future actions and collaboration information. This approach has also identified issues and challenges which might be addressed by the various Welsh Government policy areas outlined within Matter I of the statutory guidance 'Wales – a Play Friendly Country'. Distinct benefits have been evidenced from this approach, including closer integration and alignment of policies.

- **What steps have been taken to ensure that an adequate level of expenditure on play is being allocated at a local level throughout Wales;**

As I outlined in my letter of 6 March, the Welsh Government has allocated just under £5 million since 2013-14 to support local authorities to meet their play sufficiency duties. A further £1.7 million was allocated in the last financial year, which isn't an insignificant amount of funding given the current financial climate. Local authorities also have the discretion to use their Welsh Government Out of School Childcare Grant funding for play-related purposes and this amounts to £2.3 million per annum. The majority of Local Government funding is of course made up of the core unhypothecated funding for local authorities and it is for each local authority to determine how it spends these resources, along with locally-raised council tax and income from fees and charges, to deliver key outcomes and priorities.

- **What consideration has been given to play provision in the development of the Welsh Government's obesity strategy;**

Matter I within the Welsh Government's statutory guidance 'Wales – a Play Friendly Country' acknowledges that if we are to achieve the positive outcomes for children we desire, it is necessary for policy and implementation across many policy areas to contribute. I have already mentioned the Welsh Government's Cross Policy Networking meetings that my officials convene to share policy development updates and information, including examples of good practice, challenges and barriers, identified in the Local Authorities' Play Action Plans.

We are currently developing an obesity strategy through our Public Health Wales Act 2017, with the objective of improving the nation's health. This will aim to consider a number of areas of work which will need to come together in order to create change. We will be launching a consultation later this year where we hope to test ideas. This will include listening to children and families to consider how we can understand some of the real life issues and barriers which provide challenges to healthy weights across everyday life.

Play is an important issue in order to increase levels of physical activity amongst children, which will help to tackle childhood obesity. Play Wales have been involved in early engagement workshops with stakeholders in order to feed in policy ideas for the development of a strategy. The role of play is recognised in Public Health Wales' '10 Steps to a Healthy Weight' and Play Wales have been working to develop campaign messaging in respect of 'Step 6 Children should play outdoors every day'. To support the programme, Play Wales has included information within its 'Focus on Play' publication to support public health professionals to consider the role they hold in supporting better opportunities for children to play in their own communities. Furthermore, we recognise the vital role which early years settings play and we are currently developing guidance for nutritional standards to help support healthier diets.

I also awarded an additional £30,000 grant funding to Play Wales in 2017-18 to develop and deliver a social campaign aimed at parents and communities to help make their communities more playful. Alongside a new supportive and accessible (jargon free) website, the campaign includes the development of a range of bilingual information sheets and community resources on street play, and the printing and distribution of Play Wales's 'Right to Play' children's book at events across Wales which include roadshows in partnership with Public Health Wales,

I hope this information answers the Petition Committee's queries.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Huw', with a horizontal line underneath it.

**Huw Irranca-Davies AC/AM**

Y Gweinidog Gofal Cymdeithasol a Phlant  
Minister for Children and Social Care