**Feedback Form – ‘Getting Wales Moving’**

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**Role: Health and Wellbeing Advisor**

**Organisation: Natural Resources Wales**

1. **How important is achieving a physically active population to achieving your organisations core objectives and priorities.**

Natural Resources Wales’ (NRW) purpose is to ensure that the environment and natural resources of

Wales are sustainably maintained, sustainably enhanced and sustainably used, now and in the future. Wales’ environment is one of our most valuable assets and is vital for the range of services it provides – food and water, energy, physical activity opportunities and even the air that we breathe. Our environment is where we live, work and play; it is part of our culture and key to our economic prosperity and sense of community.

NRW wants Wales to be a place where our air, land and water are managed sustainably, using Good Knowledge to achieve a Good Environment that will be Good for People and Good for Business. We will help to achieve this by ensuring that Natural Resources Wales is a Good Organisation – as an employer of over 1500 staff NRW considers employees physical and mental wellbeing to be a vital priority.

One of NRWs priorities is to ensure people are safe, and enjoy Wales’ natural resources by:

* Providing opportunities for recreation and access, helping to improve people’s health and wellbeing;
* Helping communities to work together – improving local environments, tackling poverty, volunteering;
* Improving greenspace – in both urban and rural areas (for many outcomes of which physical activity is one);
* Creating opportunities for learning for everyone using our environment and natural resources.

NRW also has statutory responsibilities under the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (WFG) in which we commit alongside other public sector bodies to the delivery of all 7 wellbeing goals, including ‘a healthier Wales’.

1. **Do you think that the broad areas for action outlined within the document address all of the important areas for action?**

We broadly agree with the recommendations made in the document and are supportive of the approach however, we feel that the document could strengthen its reference to and recommendations regarding the outdoor sector and environment (reference to particular sections are made below).

We also believe that more could made of the WFG Act principles in thinking about how to achieve this - recommendations could possibly be framed around the integrated multi-benefit opportunities. Reference is also required to how this will be embedded – utilisation of the WFG Act and the role of the PSBs to enable this embedded and integrated approach to increasing physical activity would strengthen this document.

We would be keen to see recommendations that recognise the importance of involving people/ communities/ citizens in finding and enacting solutions for themselves as part of the package (we agree with much of this document but do think it reads a little bit as if everything is being ‘done to’ people).

We would also encourage acknowledgement that physical inactivity is not a ‘standalone’ issue. It is intrinsically linked to a whole host of complex wellbeing and social issues – from mental health to self-esteem to isolation. We recognise the need to focus on increasing physical activity but must remember that (a) other things may need to be addressed first before an individual is able to be more physically active and (b) that in increasing physical activity levels, we may also be positively affecting other ‘issues’.

**Following are some more detailed comments on the document:**

The first paragraph (pg2) refers to data that uses the previous CMO guidelines for physical activity. This may be confusing as data is available for the new 150mins guidelines and these guidelines are referenced later in the document. Using different datasets through the document is confusing so we think that the data from the current CMO guidelines should be used for consistency.

Pg3 – the word ‘Aspiration’ seems vague – perhaps we should be using ‘Outcome’? Also, using ‘one day’ implies a future that might never come.

In the paragraph under ‘Definition’ the statement ‘active recreation such as sport or structured exercise’ implies that ‘sport’ is an example of ‘active recreation’, but as the diagram indicates these are different types of activity.

In reference to the ‘Spectrum’ diagram on page 3, the box on ‘Recreation’ needs to include mention of other outdoor pursuits, e.g. horse-riding, climbing, kayaking, orienteering, etc. - recreation is very broad and there is a need to acknowledge this at the very least in the text. This is relevant when considering how to implement the recommendations put forward. E.g. throughout the document recognition of water related recreation (WRR) activities should be added (outdoor/wild swimming is directly referred to). Similarly for WRR, access opportunities and facilities linked to blue spaces, not just green spaces need to be considered both in urban and natural settings. There is also a need to include recognition that there are ‘overlaps’ e.g. cycling can be considered both ‘sport’, ‘recreation’, and ‘active travel’.

On pg4 under the wellbeing goals, the 3rd paragraph refers to the CMO guidelines of 150min, however we feel that it is also important to mention ‘intensity’ of PA as well as frequency / duration.

At the top of pg5 there is reference to schools – we believe this should be broader and should include out of school informal outdoor recreation and play.

Paragraph 3 on the same page implies that there is already more than enough opportunities for PA, however it needs to be made clear that there is still a need to improve and in some cases increase provision, e.g. active travel routes, greenspace, urban tree canopy cover and creating a less ‘obesogenic’ environment to make physical activity the easiest and most desirable choice.

Top of pg6 – Overarching recommendation 1 – we presume this is based on the current CMO 150+ min guidance? If so, this reiterates the need to change the very first paragraph of the documents and have consistency of message and data. Number 4 under this section should read ‘National Survey for Wales’.

Under ‘Specific Recommendations’, No7 should also include reference to a focus on ‘low PA groups’. For Recommendation No9 we would like to see Outdoor Recreation included on the list. Acknowledgement of land use planning (incl. natural environment) in this recommendation would also be welcomed - natural (and built) environments have the potential to contribute significantly to increasing levels of physical activity but this will not happen effectively unless they are considered as ‘part of the system’ and not separately.

Top of pg7 – again reference is made to the previous CMO guidelines – this is confusing and inconsistent. The new guidelines should be used.

There is a need for referencing sources of data and evidence throughout the ‘Detailed Recommendations’ section.

**1. Cross Cutting Themes:**

**a) Inequalities**:

R3: this recommendation is all sport orientated, and often ‘cost’ focussed. Emphasis should also include increasing provision of, and access to, free-to-use outdoor recreation opportunities.

R5: Why does this ask for use of greenspace to be monitored rather than increased (as with other activities in recommendation 3)? There are factors in the barriers to accessing greenspace that are beyond the actual provision of access infrastructure. Discomfort or lack of understanding of the outdoor environment can also be a factor so for any monitoring to be meaningful it would also need to look at the perceptions that the community has about its local environment.

Also for R5 – ‘monitoring access to and utilisation of’ is the ‘how many are doing this’ approach, what we really want to know is that the people accessing these are seeing physical and mental health and wellbeing benefits.

**b) Communication and Social Marketing**: R1: ‘Take action to support professionals and volunteers to deliver consistent and accurate information to the public on how to be more physically active and to access local services ***and greenspace***’.

**c) Monitoring, evaluation and funding**: R1: National Survey for Wales

**d) Workforce:** R4: Or should this be the other way round – physical activity should be central to workforce and wider organisational planning?

1. **Active People:**

Under Active People more reference could be made to the life course stages. There is little mention of older people. Physical activity has a huge roll to play in the falls prevention agenda as well as dementia friendly communities and loneliness and isolation.

**a) Active Early Years:** It seems like the focus of this section is very much around more formalised early years settings (play groups, etc.). There could be a consideration here about making more greenspace accessible to young families; this may be through identification, prioritisation and management through Local Authority’s - ensuring that greenspace is at a suitable standard for families to use without concern, possibly looking at what has already been done through the Green Flag and Blue Flag awards.

**c) Active Health**: Although there is no specific mention of referral systems, a barrier of health care professionals is the confidence they have in the knowledge and expertise of exercise practitioners to take on patients. There is growing evidence of the benefits of the natural environment to health and wellbeing – acknowledgement could be made here of how the health and environment sectors should be making greater links in the prevention agenda.

**d) Sporting Wales:** The title of this section is a little misleading and the whole section is too dominated by Sport - the first sentence starts with sport and recreation, therefore it would be good to see the title of this section say the same. Although we agree with the overall aspiration of this section we feel the detailed recommendations may not really lead to the ‘landscape of Wales full of people enjoying sport and recreation activity’ as they are dominated by sport. The aspiration itself should also be re-written to better capture outdoor recreation opportunities.

The list at the end of paragraph 1 should read ‘…improved joint working between sport, ***outdoor recreation***, education, health and other sectors if we are to create a lasting step change in the activity habits of the nation.’

Perhaps using ‘informal active recreation’ may help to separate out competitive participation.

R1: perhaps should start with ‘public sector bodies to increase partnership with…’

The role of the Outdoor Sector in providing people with the skill sets they need to access our natural resources should also be considered. For example, in R4, an acknowledgment that ‘outdoor activity providers’ or groups like the scouts and guides also play a key role in supporting the link between schools and outdoor activity clubs.

**3. Active Places:**

The first paragraph here refers to the severe budget challenges - it may be worth strengthening this by adding that there would be a failure to comply with the Sustainable Development duty under the WFG Act and deliver against the Wellbeing goals. The ‘Long Term’ and ‘Prevention’ principles are particularly key here. The wellbeing goals may in fact worsen not improve if the scenario given here pans out.

Perhaps the use of the word ‘sustainable’ in paragraph 2 needs to be reviewed - sustainable use of natural resources and facilities in improving physical activity?

**b) Facilities and Outdoor Spaces:** This section feels too focused on urban development and again focussed on traditional sporting pathways without the wider consideration of outdoor recreation. As a cross portfolio strategy there is little overlay with approaches being taken by the environment sector to address the same issue. We can see the need for an overview of leisure facilities but should this not include other recreational opportunities or accessible landscape settings? The first paragraph also needs to include mention of the wider Rights of Way network which are also subject to budget issues.

Could consideration be paid to using the Health Impact Assessment tool whenever Local Authorities and other public bodies sell-off or make budget cuts to facilities and park and green space management? HIA is used readily for new proposals but what about recommending it when it comes cuts.

In relation to Facilities and Outdoor Spaces (and related recreational access) the role that local authorities Rights of Way Improvement Plans can play in planning and implementing change needs to be recognised. ROWIPs are statutory 10 year plans for local rights of way and other recreational access facilities and are due to be revised over the next 2 years.

R5: in order to aid understanding of this action, we think that Healthy Stadia should be at the front of this, e.g. professional sports clubs should work towards WHO Healthy Stadia. Although establishing community physical activity programmes is part of the status there are many more aspects that they need to work towards, e.g. healthy food, tobacco awareness. If this is to be a recommendation it should be about the broad social responsibly of the clubs as sports promoters to promote healthier lifestyles. Hundreds of thousands of people across the country attend a sports stadium each week to watch their team, to work, to volunteer or to use the stadium’s facilities and this recommendation should be about their broad responsibility not solely about community physical activity programmes.

Developing community physical activity programmes should be broader than sporting clubs - why not wider outdoor recreation, etc.? The broader spectrum should be considered.

**c) Active Education:**  We fully agree with the aspiration but again this point seems to be focused on traditional sporting pathways.

Key recommendation: And the wider public sector? This should be focussed on any place of learning for physical activity / physical literacy and whoever provides it not just formal settings.

Greater emphasis needs to be put on building the skills for active outdoor recreation and non-traditional outdoor sports. The Outdoor Partnership have shown how it is possible to use the sporting pathways model for active outdoor recreation non-traditional outdoor sports, however, these still have to be taken as extracurricular activities as the formal curriculum is dominated by formal sports.

The Outdoor Sector could contribute a lot to this objective, helping provide young people with skills and experience of using the outdoors for active recreation.

R1: Could this be carried out collaboratively as advocated by the WFG Act? This could be done using other public, third or private sector facilities/open space.

**d) Active Communities:** This section needs to consider both urban and rural communities requirements for physical activity as there are differing needs and thought should also be paid to the links between urban and non-urban environments and recognition of the ‘wider natural resources’ for active recreation. There needs to be more clarity through the document about what is meant by ‘greenspace’ as it seems to be a term used for ‘urban greenspace’ rather than the wider environment.

Green space provision is written in to Planning Policy Wales, so Getting Wales Moving could include a recommendation / demand that local authorities are given a statutory duty, and the necessary resources, to follow the existing guidance in PPW, and in particular Technical Advice Note 16 on green space assessment and provision.

Under ‘Active Communities’, R4 should be Public Service Boards (not Local Service Boards).

R5: In terms of context, this needs to be seen as a collaborative action as many green spaces are not under NRW control - other public bodies, private and third sectors own and or manage natural resource/open space. It is also essential that by working through the PSBs all sectors will be looking at where and how they can maximize opportunities for physical activity in that place/service provision. This would allow integration of all elements discussed in this document, rather than looking at them in siloed activities.

**Conclusions**: Again, outdoor recreation should be part of the list in paragraph one on pg18: ‘…it is a responsibility that must be shared equally with other sectors such as education, local government, sport, *outdoor recreation*, culture, transport, planning and finance.

1. **What further areas or programmes should be included in the document?**

Many suggestions have been made in the previous section, however some additional comments have been made below.

Reference to older people is a little lacking. Considering the main themes of Ageing Well in Wales (Older Peoples Commissioner) we believe that physical activity has a vital role to play across all the themes and in particular, falls prevention and dementia friendly communities.

There is an assumption in this document that making greenspace accessible will lead to more activity. Wales is predominantly a rural country and, although we have an abundance of natural green and blue space, there is a certain level of awareness and understanding required for accessing it not to be a barrier. There is rightly a fundamental drive in the document toward a nation with a core level of ‘Physical Literacy’ but it could be argued that, to make our greatest natural asset accessible, people also need a core level of ‘Outdoor Literacy’. To be more specific, there are a set of skills and knowledge required to go beyond managed ‘greenspace’, such as parks and beaches, and into our wider natural resource. These skills include, personal safety, understanding weather, basic orientation in the outdoors, understanding land management and farming practices. Ideally, these skills need to be introduced to people at an early age and be fostered right through their journey into adulthood, however, they can be taught later in life.

There are excellent examples of programmes that build Outdoor Literacy, for example, the Duke of Edinburgh Award, John Muir Award, Outdoor Partnership Outdoor Award and the Come Outside! programme. However, the continuing focus in the PE agenda on formal sports still seems like a fundamental barrier to integrating these skill sets into mainstream curricular education. This is an area that Getting Wales Moving should address.

1. **Do you feel the document is clear about what success will look like and how we will know we are making progress?**

We are encouraged to see links to established data collection processes/ mechanisms and reference to social benefits however we would like to see greater mention of accountability in the document. While the intentions here are all good, if organisations and individuals are not held to account (regularly), progress will be patchy. The overarching recommendations mention that this needs to be a priority in the Programme for Government, with a single Minister taking on the portfolio. While these are vital, further recommendations on accountability/ programme leadership/ coordination arrangements would also be welcomed (including links to the WFG Commissioner, Act and PSBs).

1. **How confident are you that if we take the steps outlined in the document that we will increase levels of physical activity?**

Increasing physical activity will come from clear leadership from WG to create opportunities for action by others mentioned in the recommendations. As stated above, accountability is key and further mention of leadership/co-ordination arrangements will strengthen the document and subsequent recommendations.

   