

Consultation on the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Bill

Evidence submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee](#) for Stage 1 scrutiny of the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Bill.

About you

Organisation: Sport Wales

1. The Bill's general principles

1.1 Do you support the principles of the [Curriculum and Assessment \(Wales\) Bill](#)?

Yes

1.2 Please outline your reasons for your answer to question 1.1

(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 1500 words)

While the practice of the curriculum is yet to be tested, the principles of undefined subject matters allow for a far broader approach to learning, and it is extremely positive to see that the health and well-being AoLE is not only an area in its own right but has links and dependencies across all the AoLEs and it is to be embedded across the curriculum.

However, whilst Sport Wales does support the curriculum approach, its implementation is critical to its success.

1.3 Do you think there is a need for legislation to deliver what this Bill is trying to achieve?

(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words)

Notwithstanding any need to introduce legislation to amend prior regulations on the curriculum, we believe that if the implementation of the curriculum is applied successfully, supported by high quality continued professional development for the teaching

profession, and its content evaluated by the inspectorate in a way which reflects the desires of the new curriculum, then new specific legislation may not be needed.

However, it may be the case that legislation in specific areas will have to follow if the consistency of approach is not forthcoming due to a lack of specification.

Legislation will enable the Senedd to ensure the consistency and quality of application of the curriculum, and review the implementation of it, as well as enabling future developments for mandatory skills or subjects and changes within AoLEs.

2. The Bill's implementation

2.1 Do you have any comments about any potential barriers to implementing the Bill? If no, go to question 3.1

(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words)

The potential barriers to implementing the curriculum lie in the interpretation of the guidance by individual teachers and schools.

We hope that with the legislative changes to the curriculum, the sector can ensure a move away from physical activity being a P.E lesson, and instead towards developing skills and valuing development on different levels and driving outcomes for all subject areas. Currently, P.E. is focused heavily on sports development, and all too often focused on those that show an early aptitude. Sport Wales would like to see the new curriculum deliver experiences that develop the physical literacy of all children, which may not only be through sport but also wider physical activity.

Physical activity can be utilised not only as a single lesson on the timetable but as a way of developing individuals' personally and supporting their mental health, wellbeing and academic achievement. Thematic approaches to delivery will enhance opportunities for broader learning and will help to breakdown the existing silos.

However, there will also be a risk that this leads to such broad areas squeezing the critical importance of physical literacy informed formal teaching and the focus on skills and knowledge which underpins it. As a result, we would stress the expectation of at least two hours provision a week being delivered consistently, aside from the development of wider active school environments, as sport and physical education in its own right is also an important element to safeguard. Further to this, we would expect the quality of that

provision to be part of any evaluation of success, not simply the quantity. This should be a factor in any school-based interventions, including evaluations by Estyn.

We appreciate the nature of the new curriculum has devolved decision making on the appropriate way to deliver content to the workforce. That is to be welcomed. However, there is a wealth of evidence which shows that physical education can be a driver for wider curriculum benefits and sport can be utilised as part of a blended learning approach to engage individuals right across the academic timetable.

In a period of implementation during, and in time following, Covid-19 the engagement of a physical activity offer for physical and mental wellbeing is a more important aspect of the curriculum approach than ever.

2.2 Do you think the Bill takes account of these potential barriers?

(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words)

It is within the context of these potential barriers and the aspirations for the new curriculum that we make the case for adding physical literacy to be one of the compulsory skills alongside Digital Competence, Numeracy and Literacy. The parity of physical literacy and literacy has been an ambition by many, for many years, and this opportunity to recognise a skill which will be applicable throughout a student's education, life and supporting overall wellbeing, will help to produce healthy, confident learners.

If learners are to be physically literate then they need to not only have the opportunities to become physically active through sport, but to also value to importance of that on all other aspects of their personal and educational development. Whilst the Health and Wellbeing AoLE includes key developmental physical progression steps, adding the cross-cutting skill to the mandatory core skills would improve and underpin the learning of the health and wellbeing AoLE.

Other considerations which may not be included directly within the Bill but which will have a significant impact on the barriers to implementation is the inspection approach and the professional development of teachers. Alongside the Bill and the implementation of the curriculum it is important that how schools are evaluated, through both formal inspection and informal mechanisms such as peer to peer cluster support., These should evaluate the quality of provision specifically, across the curriculum.

Secondly, the support for the teaching profession through specific physical literacy teaching has been inadequate in the past. This is the key area of focus which will impact on the success, or otherwise, of the Health and Wellbeing AoLE in future.

3. Unintended consequences

3.1 Do you think there are there any unintended consequences arising from the Bill? If no, go to question 4.1

(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words)

As previously stated, we appreciate that devolving decision making to teachers and ensuring the embedding of the health and wellbeing area of learning and experience across the whole curriculum is to be welcomed, we also have concerns regarding the unintended consequences around the amount of sport and physical activity undertaken by pupils going forward. The most recent School Sports Survey (2018) showed that the average number of minutes children were participating in sport was 90. The recommended average number is 120, and therefore it is entirely possible that with a curriculum which is delivered on a school by school basis, this number could vary hugely across the country, as well as possibly dropping sharply if it is not a requirement of schools to ensure 120 minutes of sport.

We know that physical education can be a driver for wider curriculum benefits, and sport can be utilised as part of a blended learning approach to engage individuals right across the academic timetable. However, sport and physical education in its own right is also an important element to safeguard.

4. Financial implications

4.1 Do you have any comments on the financial implications of the Bill (as set out in Part 2 of the [Explanatory Memorandum](#))? If no, go to question 5.1

(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words)

None.

5. Powers to make subordinate legislation

5.1 Do you have any comments on the appropriateness of the powers in the Bill for Welsh Ministers to make subordinate legislation (as set out in Chapter 5 of Part 1 of the [Explanatory Memorandum](#)). If no, go to question 6.1.

(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 500 words)

It is beneficial that the powers to add or remove AoLEs are subject to the affirmative procedure, as a majority of the Senedd would be required to pass changes, however there is still a risk in the potential for removing an AoLE entirely or certain learning outcomes being changed for a cohort of learners.

It would be detrimental for the AoLE of health and wellbeing to be removed for example, without a suitable alternative also being adopted. This procedure therefore should mean that cross-party support would need to be gained for any such change in the future.

6. Other considerations

6.1 Do you have any other points you wish to raise about this Bill?

(we would be grateful if you could keep your answer to around 1000 words)

No further points.

