

Ken Skates AC / AM
Y Dirprwy Weinidog Diwylliant, Chwaraeon a Thwristiaeth
Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref KS/05252/14

William Powell AM
Chair – Petitions committee
National Assembly for Wales
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

11 November 2014

Dear William,

In July this year you wrote to my predecessor, the former Minister for Natural Resources, Culture and Sport, John Griffiths AM, about the Petition (P-04-561) from Inside Welsh Rugby TV regarding grassroots rugby in Wales.

The Welsh Rugby Union (WRU) receives funding via the Welsh Government's delivery agent for sport in Wales, Sport Wales. Sport Wales has agreed with the WRU investment of £979,167 for 2014-15 (for a ten month period). This investment is based on individual sport specific targets and agreed outcomes which the WRU will be expected to deliver/meet as a condition of the investment. These outcomes should accord with the key priorities set out in Welsh Government's annual remit letter to Sport Wales.

The former Minister for Natural Resources, Culture and Sport asked, in his remit letter to Sport Wales dated 5 March 2014, to see a particular effort to broaden the base of participation with a focus on developing programmes that attract children and young people who do not currently participate in sport. Further, one of the priorities is to narrow the participation gap between those living in deprived areas (i.e Communities First areas) and the national average and increase levels of regular physical activity amongst women and girls, disabled people and BME communities.

I met with Roger Lewis, Chief Executive, WRU, this week. We spoke about the WRU's new strategy, launched on 2 October 2014, which aims to strengthen the game at community and elite level. The strategy includes plans to increase participation across all levels of rugby, to unify the pathway for players and coaches and reinforce the cultural values of rugby. It will provide a seasonal structure that supports club, school and representative rugby simultaneously and is based on the appropriate development of players according to their age.

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*Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu (100%)
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The WRU has been working with secondary schools to create school-club hubs across Wales. In total, 43 schools including 3 FE colleges are currently employing full time rugby officers to increase participation within schools across Wales and help strengthen links with clubs, improving the sustainability of club rugby and long term player involvement. The initiative will aim to develop good role models within the school, providing playing opportunities for boys and girls of all abilities and creating leadership development through coaching and refereeing qualifications via the Welsh Baccalaureate.

Outside the school environment, the WRU is working to encourage more women and girls to take part in rugby. They have been successful in securing funding from the International Rugby Board (IRB) towards a programme to increase women and girls participation and there is greater involvement in the international women's game as Roger Lewis continues as the appointed chair of the Women's' Six Nations Committee.

With regards to the coverage of rugby, although the Welsh Government is actively involved in discussions in relation to broadcasting issues that affect Wales, broadcasting is not devolved to the Welsh Government. We therefore do not have any direct control or influence over what is broadcast by commercial or public service broadcasters. Likewise, the issue of televising rugby matches below regional level is not within our control and is a matter for the event organisers and the broadcasters.

I hope this substantive response with the very latest information about rugby activity is helpful.

Yours ever,



Ken Skates AC / AM

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