

# Blw Bo.

Review into the impact of Sport Wales  
funded projects in further education  
colleges from 2014 to 2017  
[Final report](#)

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## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank everyone who contributed to this evaluation, including management and delivery staff at ColegauCymru and the colleges, wider stakeholders and beneficiaries who provided feedback.

## Executive summary

### Introduction

In September 2017, ColegauCymru appointed BlwBo Limited to independently review the impact of Sport Wales funded projects in further education institutions from 2014 to 2017. The aim of the review was to explore the impact and added-value of the partnership with ColegauCymru and Welsh Colleges Sport during this period.

### Method

Fieldwork took place during October to December 2017. This included semi-structured interviews with 16 strategic representatives and partner organisations, 12 senior representatives from the further education institutions and 17 project staff members. The researchers held group or individual discussions with 85 participants, including students from business studies, equine studies, catering, Public Services, Independent Living Skills (ILS), sports students and members of Student Management Teams. Delivery of activities was observed at five different sessions as part of the case study visits.

### Key findings

The Sport Wales funding to ColegauCymru aimed to increase participation, tackle inequalities and develop volunteering. Programme management information showed 4,683 students had accessed ColegauCymru sport and physical activity opportunities through the project, exceeding the targets for 2016-17 by over 1,500. This number suggests that approximately 11% of the eligible student population have been engaged with by the project to date.

The opportunities provided by colleges showed little duplication or displacement of their existing provision. The target audience was the less active, 'non-sporty' student. Tackling inequality was an aim and this was generally achieved – there was gender balance in participation levels, access for students with disabilities, and the students involved were not generally active elsewhere in college before the project was implemented. Those that were active (and linked to the sports departments) tended to be supporting the delivery and organisation of sessions for others.

The approach to project delivery varied considerably across institutions, with many different activities trialled, a diverse range of partners engaged with – including National Governing Bodies, local instructors and community providers, at different times and in different spaces. Some activity was timetabled into students' programmes and delivered throughout the term. Other provision was openly accessible in public spaces in the college. Provision in the main has been recreational and informal rather than structured, performance-focussed opportunities. The project has mainly operated in the 'participation for wellbeing' world.

Funding for the project was considered modest, but sufficient, and had the effect of focusing thinking within the institution about students' needs and the promotion of active wellbeing. The funding enabled institutions to get activities 'off the ground' that otherwise may not have been considered. Institutions lacking in sports facilities made use of common rooms, refectories, arranged transport, or made links with community provision. The management of the project within institutions varied and projects were led by different departments from sport to learner services.

The coordinator role has evolved considerably since the project began and involves liaison with all colleges and a wide range of partners, and includes operational and strategic responsibilities. Operational stakeholders interviewed viewed the coordinating role positively and saw a need for it. There was also a desire from other stakeholders to see the role develop a more strategic approach to future activities now the project had been in place for three years.

The outcomes for students included increased confidence, enjoyment, and increased opportunities and participation in physical activity. Students considered that taking part in such activities could help relieve the stress of studying and could help them in future employment. Senior representatives from institutions spoke of the importance of this kind of provision as a strategy to address mental health and wellbeing issues and as enhancing the overall learning experience across the college.

#### Future considerations

The review took place at a time when a new vision for the sector is being consulted upon and developed by Sport Wales. The context of sport, physical activity and the policy environment in which this is organised and delivered is in a period of change. This presents opportunities for the further education sector, who have direct contact with a key target audience and potential future workforce who can help meet the sector's goals. Stakeholders spoke of wanting to see ColegauCymru and further education institutions collaborate and take a strategic approach to meeting the future needs of students. This might mean making links with a wider range of partners who are working towards similar goals.

#### Conclusion

Over the past three years, ColegauCymru has delivered against its original plan and targets from Sport Wales. In a relatively short timescale, a lot has been achieved in setting up different activities, engaging new audiences in the institutions and developing the enrichment offer. There is now a need to look at the offer strategically for it to be sustainable and have a greater impact. ColegauCymru is now in an ideal position to seek to refresh its approach to the delivery of physical activity for FE learners in Wales. The organisation can actively lead on taking this work forward in partnership with further education partners and stakeholders, to agree a consensus on the strategic priorities moving forward.

In the short term, the review found that project activities were working well and could be supported for a further year in their current guise to cover a transition period while the new vision for the sector is being developed. ColegauCymru and further education institutions in Wales should play a key role in helping to develop and deliver this vision. Practical learning from different institutions should be shared to help improve the ongoing delivery of project activities during 2018-19.

### Recommendations

Blwbo's full report makes a number of recommendations around nine different areas and considers recommendations for scenarios where a) the project continues in its current format or b), if a broader, strategic approach is taken forward. We report these recommendations under nine headings, as follows: 1) the changing environment; 2) the development of a new vision and strategic plan; 3) governance; 4) structure and delivery model; 5) allocation of funding; 6) recruitment and engagement of participants; 7) project monitoring and data sharing; 8) a communications strategy and 9) a collaborative approach.

# 1. Introduction

In September 2017, ColegauCymru appointed BlwBo Limited to independently review the impact of Sport Wales funded projects in further education institutions from 2014 to 2017. This report sets out the findings of the review and highlights a number of recommendations for the development of future initiatives.

## 1.1 Aims and objectives of the review

The aim of the review was to focus on Sport Wales project funded activity from 2014–2017 and explore the impact and added-value of the partnership with ColegauCymru and Welsh Colleges Sport during this period.

As highlighted in the brief, the overall requirement for the review was to produce a report that enables ColegauCymru to:

- Identify best practice in the sector in project related activity.
- Establish a picture of strategic level change, impact on provision and impact on participants.
- Demonstrate the benefits and opportunities that have been derived from the project activity.
- Inform senior leaders at Sport Wales, the Welsh Colleges Sport Strategy Group and the Board of ColegauCymru on the development and direction of future funded activity and strategic level planning for the sector.

## 1.2 Method

The research, which was undertaken between October and December 2017, encompasses the following elements of work:

- An inception stage to include attendance at an inception meeting with the study Steering Group, accessing relevant information and documentation in relation to the funded projects and preparing an inception report.
- Desk based research to include detailed literature review of Welsh Government policy and strategy documents and programme operational documentation.
- A review of published sources of survey data and official statistics.
- Preparing research instruments to include semi-structured discussion guides for use with a range of contributors.
- Conducting interviews with six policy and strategic stakeholders.
- Undertaking a package of qualitative fieldwork across 11 of the 13 further education institutions, including visits to seven colleges. This fieldwork included:



- Interviews with 12 senior representatives from the institutions - these included Principals and Vice Principals.
- Interviews with eight project leads and a further nine project staff members or tutors of groups involved in the project.
- Discussions with a total of 85 participants. These included students from a range of subjects – business studies, equine studies, catering, Public Services, Independent Living Skills (ILS), sports students and members of Student Management Teams (SMT), plus a small number of former students now studying in higher education institutions who support the project.
- Interviewing 10 representatives from partner organisations - these included National Governing Bodies (NGBs), StreetGames, Young Ambassadors and self-employed/commercial activity deliverers
- Observing delivery at five different sessions as part of the case study visits.

### 1.3 Methodological considerations

The research took place in a relatively short time period (ten weeks) and therefore the research team were unable to visit each institution. However, barring one institution, all were covered by either visit(s) or telephone interviews.

A survey of students was also considered for this project, but was not included, as in part it may have duplicated forthcoming plans for the 2018 national Further Education survey. Including a survey as part of the review could have caused research fatigue in advance of an important collection of official statistics.

### 1.4 Structure of the report

The report is presented in eight chapters as follows:

- Chapter one: this introduction to the report.
- Chapter two: an introduction to the ColegauCymru Sports Project and strategic context in place.
- Chapter three: a review of the project's engagement and participation levels.
- Chapter four: findings from the fieldwork in relation to the design and underlying rationale for the projects and the evidence of need in place for intervention.
- Chapter five: findings from the fieldwork in relation to the delivery models and management arrangements in place.
- Chapter six: the impact and difference made by participating with the project.
- Chapter seven: future considerations for ColegauCymru and in partner organisations.
- Chapter eight: draws on the conclusions and recommendations from the review.

## 2. The ColegauCymru Sports Project

This section sets out an introduction to the ColegauCymru Sports Project. It considers the policy and strategic context in place when the programme was developed, the programme's aims and objectives and intended delivery model.

### 2.1 The further education sector in Wales

Further education (FE) in Wales is a diverse sector providing a wide range of qualifications delivered to learners of all ages. It is delivered through the implementation of Qualified for Life, the Skills Implementation Plan and Youth Engagement and Progression Framework. Qualified for Life sets out the Welsh Government's long-term vision for education of 3 to 19-year olds. The Skills Implementation Plan sets out a 10-year vision for a more highly skilled nation. The Youth Engagement and Progression Framework focuses on progression, enabling learners to fulfil their potential.<sup>1</sup>

Wales' further education institutions are not-for-profit organisations with more than half of their funding received from the Welsh Government. They also receive income from their work with businesses, contracted services, and international activity. The institutions vary considerably in size, number and type of students and the range of programmes and services offered. The majority offer both academic and vocational programmes. Some have developed specialisms in particular vocational sectors, such as land-based, marine engineering, and food technology. Some have steered a strong direction towards engaging particular sections of the population, for example, adults returning to learning, international students, or training for businesses.

Further education institutions in Wales offer 80% of all post-16 qualifications and provide learning experiences for almost 200,000 people. In the 2013/14 academic year, there were approximately 177,000 learners, although this fell to 135,000 in 2015/16.<sup>2</sup> A greater proportion of female learners were enrolled in the academic year 2015/16 (almost 6,000 more), highlighting the importance of Welsh Colleges Sport's aim to *"make a tangible difference to the health of our young people, especially young women, who tend to become less active when they reach their late teens"*.<sup>3</sup>

In addition, further education institutions can address other inequalities – with around 30% of learners domiciled in deprived areas (defined as any Communities First area in Wales), this equates to over 38,000 individuals who can access sport and physical activity opportunities via FE support.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/learningproviders/further-education/?lang=en>

<sup>2</sup> <https://stats.wales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Education-and-Skills/Post-16-Education-and-Training/Further-Education-and-Work-Based-Learning/Learners/Further-Education/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.welshcollegessport.wales/get-active/>

The Sport Wales investment therefore has the potential to make a considerable impact on students' lives both during their educational experience and beyond once they complete their studies. The further education sector has an important role to play in delivering the Welsh Government's aims to widen participation, tackle social exclusion and stimulate economic regeneration.

## 2.2 ColegauCymru

ColegauCymru is the national organisation that represents the 13 further education institutions in Wales. It is a member-led body.<sup>4</sup> As a charity and limited company, ColegauCymru works to raise the profile of further education among decision-makers in order to improve educational opportunities in Wales.

ColegauCymru provides a range of services to its members including networks, conferences, research, consultancy and the sharing of good practice. It also works closely with a wide range of partners in post-16 education and training. Through ColegauCymru, colleges are represented on various committees, working parties and other groups influencing and shaping policy in post-16 education, training and life-long learning.

In 2013, ColegauCymru introduced the Going for Gold Strategy, the strategic plan for sport in Wales' FE colleges 2013-2018. This aimed to build on the legacy of 2012, and stated:

*"Our aim is to increase participation in sport amongst our learners and to improve the performance of all college students taking part in sport, with particular attention to our elite sportsmen and sportswomen. At the same time, we want to tackle disadvantage and broaden opportunities so that those who do not normally participate have an opportunity to do so and have access to the very best and up-to-date facilities... We echo the vision of Sport Wales and the wider sports sector in wanting every college student to be hooked on sport for life – whether actively participating in sporting activities or serving as volunteers supporting individuals and teams."*

The strategy included seven principles underpinning any development of sport in colleges. These were:

1. An emphasis on learning – our missions as colleges are to offer the maximum learning opportunities to our thousands of learners – sport and health are one aspect of this. The educational ethos of the colleges should guide the provision of sport.
2. A broad curriculum offer and equality of opportunity – opportunities should exist for all learners including elite sports, those with disabilities and beginners.

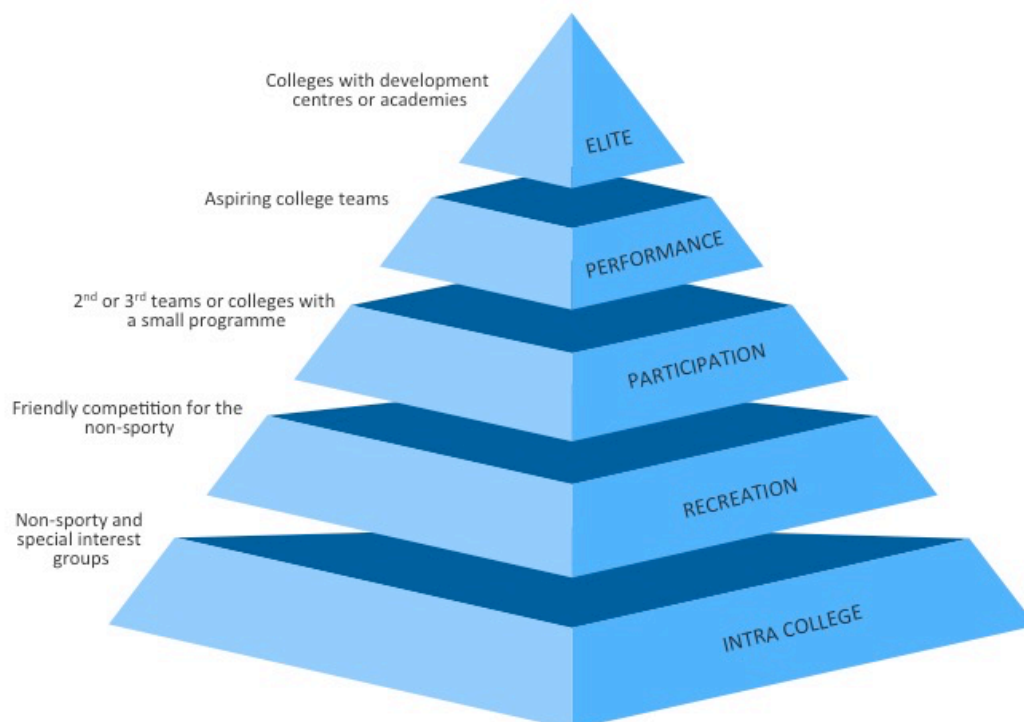
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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.collegeswales.ac.uk>

3. An awareness of the importance of healthy living as a significant life skill.
4. The contribution of sport to the employability of learners.
5. A coherent, competitive infrastructure which is fair, consistent and celebrates excellence.
6. Clear decision-making and communication on the part of those who oversee and manage the strategy.
7. A need to invest in the development of sports and college staff so they have the skills to run and organise sport either as part of their employment or as volunteers.

ColegauCymru was to have a key role acting as a conduit between the staff of the colleges and the key partners in developing new opportunities, projects and initiatives and sourcing appropriate funding streams. As highlighted in the pyramid below, the strategy covered a broad spectrum, from intra college and recreational activity through to elite competition.

Figure 1: Growing the Pyramid, Going for Gold:



As highlighted in the brief for this review, ColegauCymru will look to build on Going for Gold with a new post 2018 strategy. The findings of this review will also act as a starting point for this strategy development work.

### 2.3 Aim of the Sport Wales funded projects

The partnership between Sport Wales and ColegauCymru has been in place since 2014, when Sport Wales provided project funding for further education institutions. The original project aims, set out in each annual offer letter from Sport Wales are to achieve the following:

- Increasing participation - 40% of students hooked on Sport (i.e. taking part on three or more occasions per week – in 2015 this was 49%).
- Tackling inequality – Reducing the gender gap by 10%.
- Developing volunteering - 10% of further education students volunteering in Sport (in 2015, 23% of students volunteered in sport).

The investment from Sport Wales has supported a range of projects tackling various issues, from developing leaders on Student Management Teams through to implementing monitoring systems. Activities have been developed in collaboration with a range of partners, focussing on both operational delivery and strategic level engagement work.

Alongside the input from Sport Wales, further education institutions themselves are also committed to developing sport, physical activity and wellbeing of learners at a wider level, contributing considerable investment into new and existing sports facilities, sport-related courses, and students competing at local, regional and national level. Further education institutions also engage with a wide range of partners and local communities, linking with local sports development teams, trusts, and NGBs.

### 2.4 Project funding

Project funding has been allocated on an annual basis from Sport Wales. In 2014-15, funding of £104,375 was provided. In 2015-16, £65,000 of core funding was awarded to the colleges (£5,000 to each) with further funding for the coordinator salary. In 2016-17, £158,000 was awarded to ColegauCymru, with core funding reduced to £3,000 per college and an additional fund of £60,000 for four collaborative projects (see page 25 for details), which were introduced in 2016/17 following guidance by the Welsh Colleges Sport Strategy Group to guide learning from FE projects on some new and innovative themes<sup>5</sup>.

Table 1 shows the grant funding available from Sport Wales to ColegauCymru using the 2016-17 allocation.

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<sup>5</sup> ColegauCymru Active Wellbeing Project Report 2016/17

Table 1: Distribution of Sport Wales Funding in 2016-17

Grant Funding 2016/17	Colleges	Amount per college	Total
Core Funding	13	£3,000	£39,000
Collaborative Projects	4	£15,000	£60,000
Childcare / Physical Literacy	10	£1,000	£10,000
UPSHOT online Monitoring	13	n/a	£13,000
Sports Coordinator Salary (50% contribution)	n/a	n/a	£26,250
Welsh Colleges Sport Conference 2017 (50% contribution)	13	n/a	£1,750
YSDA Project	Indirectly supports 4 colleges	n/a	£8,000
Grant total			£158,000

Table 2 shows additional Sport Wales funding already in allocation to other partners working with colleges, in partnership with ColegauCymru.

Table 2: Other Sport Wales funding distributed in 2016-17

Organisation	Total funding	Project description
FAW Trust	£8K	Football activators project funding.
StreetGames Wales	£10k	US Girls projects in further education institutes, overseen by ColegauCymru.
First Campus	£5k	Higher education in further education work placements supporting delivery in five institutes as part of HEFCW reaching wider programme.

To oversee the various elements of project delivery, Sport Wales and ColegauCymru have invested in a Sport Coordinator post, which has been in place since February 2014. With the post hosted by ColegauCymru, the coordinator has the dual role of increasing participation in sport and physical activity among further education learners and managing further education sport through Welsh Colleges Sport (WCS) as a governing body. The coordinator liaises with each college in Wales and engages strategically with partner organisations. Reporting to ColegauCymru's Welsh Colleges Sport Strategy Group and in turn to Sport Wales, the coordinator provides written progress reports approximately every six months and meets regularly with relevant stakeholders.

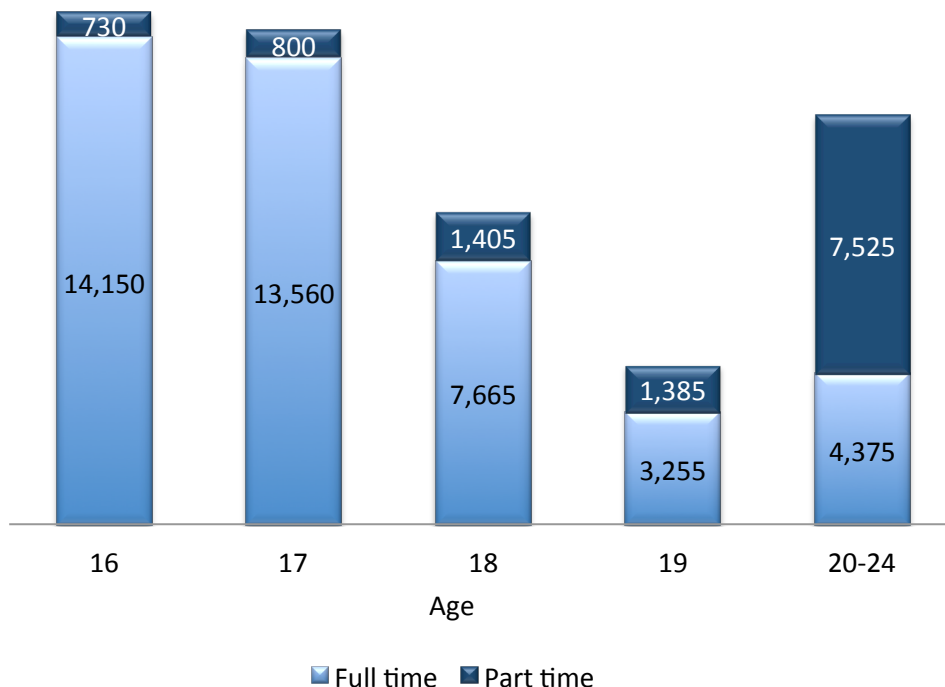
### 3. Engagement and participation levels

This section considers the target population that further education institutions could engage with and the picture of sports and physical activity participation at the project's outset. We then consider the latest available quantitative data to show how the project is investing in and engaging with these target groups.

#### 3.1 Target audience for the project

The ColegauCymru Sports Project has specifically targeted full-time learners aged 16 to 24. In 2015-16<sup>6</sup>, there were 43,005 learners enrolled at the colleges funded by the project. Outside of this age range, there were a further 4,845 full time learners aged from 25 through to 65+. Figure 2 shows the distribution of learners who had the potential to benefit from the Sport Wales and ColegauCymru partnership.

Figure 2: Number of learners aged 16-24 enrolled in 2015-16



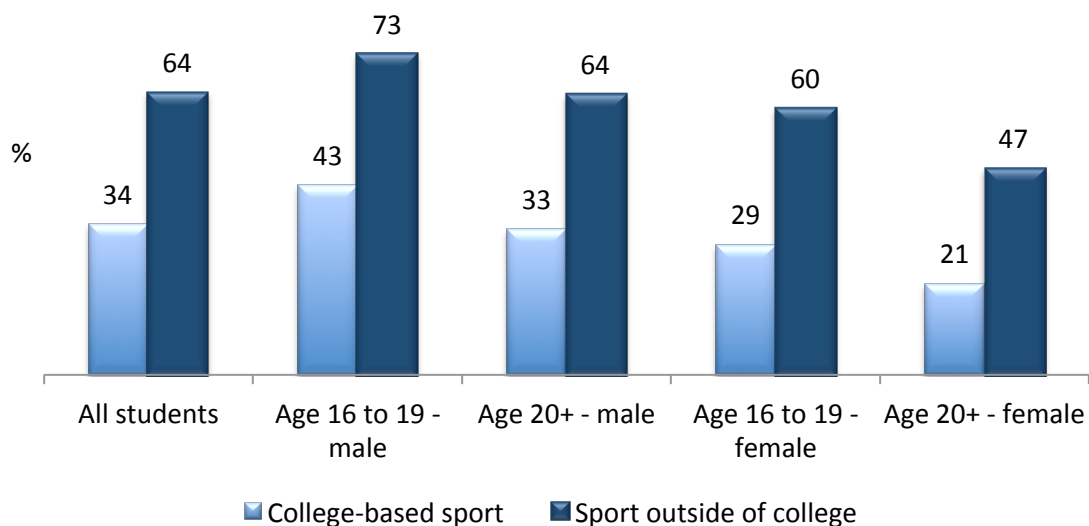
<sup>6</sup> <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Education-and-Skills/Post-16-Education-and-Training/Further-Education-and-Work-Based-Learning/Learners/Time-Series/numberoflearners-by-provider-age>

Participation levels, particularly for females, decrease from school age through to FE in Wales, beginning around Year 9 and 10 when learners reach exam age in education. This is no different to the UK picture of participation reported by other home country Sports Councils and organisations such as the Women's Sport Foundation and Youth Sport Trust.

Understanding the current level of student participation, as well as existing provision for students was important. In 2015, ColegauCymru and Sport Wales ran the Further Education Sport Survey for the first time. Fieldwork took place from Easter through to term end, running in conjunction with the 2015 School Sport Survey. The resulting data set a baseline from which to monitor high level, longer-term outcomes. While overall levels of student participation were relatively good (in comparison with older adults) with 49% taking part three or more times a week, it was found that almost a third (32%) of students did no frequent activity – i.e. they took part less than once a week. The gender gap was also more extreme in further education students than in school age pupils with 59% of males taking part three or more times a week compared with 40% of females – a 19 percentage point difference. The equivalent figures for school age pupils were 52% male and 44% female.

Figure 3 from the FE Sport Survey 2015 illustrates this fall in participation among older students and the gap according to gender.

Figure 3: Participation at least once a week in sport and physical activity in college and outside of college



Survey data showed that those subject areas most affected by high levels of inactivity were:

- Childcare / Health and Social Care.
- Hair and Beauty.
- Travel, Tourism and Hospitality.



- Art and Design.
- Independent Living Skills / Learning Support.

Between 48% and 50% of these students were inactive, providing evidence of the necessity for some intervention that would help to engage them and provide an offer suitable to their needs. ColegauCymru are aware that some of these subject areas have predominantly female students enrolled.

At the time of this review, a second survey of FE students is being planned, which will provide further evidence of whether student participation levels have changed in the three years since the project was introduced. Although this 2018 survey will gather feedback from predominantly a different student cohort to the 2015 survey, the direction of travel in terms of general activity levels among learners on different courses, different age bands and according to gender will be an important source of evidence to assess the high-level outcomes of the past three years. This can be analysed alongside the programme management information, which we discuss below.

### 3.2 Programme outputs

The ColegauCymru project implemented the UPSHOT<sup>7</sup> system in October of the 2016/17 academic year. This monitoring software can collect information about activities provided and numbers of participants involved. Data recorded through this system allows ColegauCymru and the individual colleges to monitor and manage progress and take-up in the scheme, providing high quality information about **who** is engaging with the project, **where**, in **what** activities, and **when** – with evidence to show how frequently activities are attended by individuals. There is also scope within the system to upload media and incorporate photos, case studies, videos, and to map project activity against demographics and areas of deprivation.

While the Sports Coordinator can view and interrogate high-level information, colleges can hold additional local information for their own programme management and recording purposes.

Table 3 shows an example of how the project can currently capture outputs in UPSHOT against funding and targets. These data have been derived from progress reports submitted to Sport Wales along with an exploration of the available monitoring data held within the UPSHOT system as part of this review, drawing outputs from 1st September 2016 to 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.UPSHOT.org.uk/>

<sup>8</sup> It should be noted that not all activity is recorded in UPSHOT at this stage, therefore these figures are conservative. Informal activity will occur outside of sessions recorded, and some activity is recorded under 'academies' and competitive sport, which is not collated in UPSHOT.

Table 3: 2016/17 funding and outputs

Grant Funding	Colleges funded	£ per college	£ Total	Target output	Number of students involved			% target output achieved*
					Total output	Male	Female	
Core Funding	13	£3,000	£39,000	2790	2,308	1,147	1,161	83%
Collaborative Projects	4	£15,000	£60,000	n/a	761	395	366	n/a
Childcare / Physical Literacy	10	£1,000	£10,000	200	84	46	38	42%

\* Only two colleges have recorded Collaborative Project outputs on UPSHOT to date

Childcare/Physical literacy projects were delayed due to shortage of physical literacy tutors, therefore 7 colleges started this work in September 2017

The 2016-17 Active Well-Being Report provides other programme monitoring information currently held outside of UPSHOT, which gives the full picture of the ColegauCymru sports project activity taking place. The report stated the following outputs:

- Currently over 50% of project activity involves female students.
- 35% of females were taking part in ten or more sessions in the project lifecycle.
- Average group size is between 8-10 participants.
- Core funding provided 2,200 sessions - delivering over 3,600 hours in 2016-17, exceeding the target of 1,647 sessions.
- 1,283 Student volunteers in project related activity.
- 4,863 students had been involved in total. This includes students on core funded projects, collaborative projects, First Campus, Us Girls, Welsh Colleges sport competitions, those attending the Welsh Colleges conference, accessing Childcare/Physical Literacy projects, taking part in the Welsh Colleges Sport Snowdonia Challenge and YSDA training.

Programme monitoring information is improving through the roll-out and use of UPSHOT, and although not all colleges are capturing the data consistently, there is good quality evidence emerging in 2016-17. Our analysis of the UPSHOT outputs shows that this project provided a range of different opportunities across the different funding streams. Table 4 shows the results.

Table 4: Funding stream, outputs and costs

Funding stream 2016/17*	Individuals participating	Total attendances recorded	Number sessions provided	Total session hours /contact hours	Cost per individual participant	Cost per attendance	Cost per hour
Core Funding - £39,000	2,308	10,875	1,194	2,457	£16.90	£3.59	£15.87
Collaborative Projects - £30,000	761	3,573	105	6,113	£39.42	£8.40	£4.90
Childcare / Physical Literacy - £3,000	84	314	56	725	£35.71	£9.55	£4.14
Us Girls- £10,000	183	975	n/a	1,103	£54.64	£10.26	£9.06

*\*Note: Full collaborative data for 2016/17 is available for 2 of the four further education institutions and childcare project data from 3, hence adjusted £ inputs*

Overall, this shows that the project achieved the following:

- New or additional activity opportunities for 3,336 students.
- Average cost per student is £36.67 (over estimate).
- Individuals took part an average of 5 times in 2016-17.
- The average cost per attendance was £7.95.

While we have included some basic calculations of cost against outputs for illustrative purposes, these alone do not show the whole value of the investment and each funding stream has had. The participants involved are very different with students from a range of subject areas based in diverse local circumstances. For example, the project was seen as being particularly important to subject areas such as Childcare (which we discuss further below) – not just for the students themselves, but also for passing on behavioural change attitudes to the children and young people these students may be working with in the future. The costs of investing (comparatively) in these students might be higher, but the scope for a long term positive impact on the Welsh population may be far reaching in terms of engaging with parents and children in the future to develop physical literacy.

Similarly, Us Girls sessions at the cost per individual are higher, although cost per hour appears far better value. It should also be noted that engaging with previously inactive participants from deprived communities (as is the aim of Us Girls) is time consuming and requires considerable efforts to help learners overcome barriers. Smaller numbers should be expected, although the subsequent gains in personal benefits (health, wellbeing, confidence etc.) may be substantial.

Other factors included the accessibility of different sessions. One collaborative project had a finite number of opportunities to participate as it was part of the curricular timetable. Core funding numbers may be largely underestimated in terms of the participants accessing them and their frequency of provision. Recreational core-funded opportunities such as gym access or table tennis use were informal, and unrestricted by the need for a deliverer. As such, activity levels will not be recorded in full.

With the total number of individuals accessing ColegauCymru sport and physical activity opportunities recorded at 4,683 students, this exceeds the targets for 2016-17 by over 1,500. This number suggests that approximately 11% of the eligible student population have been engaged with by the project to date. The benefits and perceived value of this engagement is discussed in the 'Difference Made' Section below.

## 4. Design, rationale and evidence of need

In this section we consider the evidence gathered from stakeholders and case study visits, focussing on feedback around the aims and objectives of the ColegauCymru intervention, their appropriateness and how these have changed over time. We reflect on contributors' views on the design and rationale of the initiative and consider the extent to which the project has complemented existing intervention.

### 4.1 [Evidence of need](#)

Some contributors to the review noted that Sport Wales have traditionally focused on young people (under the age of 16) in the main and that the project was an opportunity to focus on a different but key target audience. There was also a perception that Sport Wales funding had been allocated to people who were already participating in sport and physical activity.

Feedback from stakeholders confirmed that the ColegauCymru project was established in response to the drop in sport and physical activity levels from around the age of 14. In terms of its underlying rationale, most contributors referred to the fact that the need for the ColegauCymru project had largely been based on Sport Wales data discussed above, and the drop off in sport and physical activity participation levels and emerging gender gap at secondary school age. It was widely believed that further education institutions were strategically placed to respond to this trend with their audience of students aged 16 to 24. It was also an opportunity to address the issues of girls' lack of participation and barriers for under-represented groups.

At a more local level, the fieldwork did suggest that the need for ColegauCymru project varied geographically and by institution. For instance, some identified a need to tailor the support to certain target groups, including disadvantaged learners, Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups and girls. Understanding the local population and student make-up is important and ensuring there is flexibility in the project activities to meet these requirements is beneficial.

### 4.2 [Perceived aims and objectives](#)

Contributors to this evaluation commonly observed that one of the fundamental aims was to increase the number of further education learners participating and volunteering in sport and physical activity. Contributors also discussed aims to improve the quality of student experience and influence the attitudes and behaviours within the student population towards physical wellbeing and activity.

Over time there was more of an emphasis on reducing inequality and providing opportunities to under-represented groups. Rather than focusing on increasing the number

of FE students participating in sport and physical activity overall, provision became much more targeted and involved the inactive or lapsed participants. The approach became tailored with certain courses and groups of people becoming engaged with the project. There was also a slight shift away from physical activity towards wellbeing.

It was acknowledged overall that further education institutions are operating in the 'participation space' and 'wellbeing pathway' space, not the 'club' space. While the fieldwork revealed that the project was driven by the primary purpose of increasing participation rates through strategic investment, the focus was very much lower down the spectrum than would be expected with other partners. As highlighted by many contributors, the project centred on the participation agenda, tackling inequalities, the workforce element, and provision for students in local areas. It was not about the role of elite sport and the development of academies.

One contributor said, *"The project was designed to tackle issues relating to volunteering, employability and facilities. Generally speaking, the project is a microcosm of what we're trying to achieve at a national level."* A senior manager added, *"The project is about increasing participation, reducing inequality, improving the wellbeing of FE learners and providing opportunities to under-represented groups – girls, NEET and BME."*

ColegauCymru played a key role in helping the colleges understand the project's aims and objectives and how they could shape provision accordingly. Some further education representatives discussed how ColegauCymru recognised that the project needs to move outside sport and be more embedded in the curriculum. Contributors recognised that a critical aspect of the project was about developing the capacity and knowledge of educational practitioners to be able to better support students within their own institutions.

The fieldwork revealed some ambiguity around the project's aims and objectives in terms of final outcomes or the 'end game' for participants. To some extent it was suggested that greater clarity was being established over time, but some contributors still had concerns and doubts over the aim which further education institutions focused upon. Some talked about the importance of providing **volunteering opportunities** to students, while others talked about **enriching their education/college life**. For others it was about ensuring long-term **health benefits** or increasing their appetite to **participate in sport** for life. This lack of consensus suggests that there is a need for a more strategic approach to the investment, which we discuss further below.

#### 4.3 [Design and rationale](#)

Funded through Sport Wales, responsibility for the project sits with ColegauCymru. Sport Wales had previously funded some individual college work, but considered they would gain more by investing in ColegauCymru. There seemed to be more value in this approach.

The majority of contributors also saw the benefit of having an umbrella body representing further education institutions. While a small number of contributors questioned the need

for an intermediary, most agreed that the organisation could represent the needs of the sector. One Principal said, *“They are the glue that hold us all together – we need to agree the direction of travel and the sector benefits from that.”* One representative explained that they would not be involved with the project had ColegauCymru not been the lead body.

Further education institutions have developed different approaches to providing these activities with some developing the Student Management Team to deliver activities for example. Some of the representatives also explained that the ColegauCymru project fits in with what they’re trying to achieve with the non-sporty participants through the enrichment programme.

The fieldwork with stakeholders revealed that the ColegauCymru project has evolved since it was first established. In addition to the direct activities, the project was an opportunity to educate and develop the student cohort who will be working in nurseries and in health and social care. By equipping students with the skills and understanding to promote the physical literacy, physical activity and wellbeing agenda, students would add value in the workplace. While the feedback suggests that this has not been the main focus of the project, it does have a wider role to play in Wales (especially when considering *The Childcare Strategy for Wales, Prosperity for all – the national strategy*, and *Taking Wales Forward*). Evidence from a higher education representative in response to developing a workforce for the sport and leisure industry within a changing environment highlighted this. There is an opportunity for ColegauCymru to make links with current plans for developing the childcare workforce<sup>9</sup>.

Contributors to the review working in further education institutions however believed that the focus on reaching certain target outputs – with success measured in terms of number of new groups, number of new sessions and number of participants – has shaped the way they plan activities. This, according to some contributors, has made it difficult to think about strategic and sustainable projects. Considering individual and college **outcomes** as well as **outputs** for future plans would be beneficial, linking in to an overall strategy for the sector.

#### 4.4 Complementarity of provision

Contributors involved in the delivery of provision across further education institutions argued that the ColegauCymru project has been instrumental in adding value to existing provision, with the greatest level of added value being in place for further education institutions which did not have a particularly strong record or offer in place for supporting students with little or no involvement in sport or physical activity. The ability to provide opportunities to certain cohorts (e.g. ILS students) was also seen as particularly valuable. Contributors also talked about the fact that there was little duplication in the work and that activities were additional to past or existing provision. This has been one of the positive outcomes of the work – working together ensures thinking is aligned. One respondent observed that this might not have been the case four or five years ago.

<sup>9</sup> <http://gov.wales/newsroom/people-and-communities/2017/ambitious-new-plan-to-develop-wales-childcare-workforce/?lang=en>

*“The project is very appropriate – the college needs to be proactive and take the game forward. There’s a lot of pressure on students and the timetable. Colleges have a duty as a college to make sure that they provide adequate support in all aspects of college life”. (Stakeholder).*

*“If we didn’t have this project, they wouldn’t be doing anything. Those kids wouldn’t be in that Sports Hall today, some wouldn’t have their Sports Leaders qualification, they wouldn’t be on a First Aid course next week, and the students will be sat somewhere else.” (Project lead).*

Generally, contributors tended to suggest that without the project, the non-sporty activities would not go ahead. Sports activities on the other hand would not be affected.



## 5. Delivery model and management

This section considers how the delivery model evolved and was implemented across further education institutions, their use of the funding, governance arrangements and monitoring and reporting. It also considers the national arrangements put in place to manage the project including the role of ColegauCymru.

### 5.1 Project timeline

In February 2014, the Sports Coordinator began an audit of existing provision, undertaken as part of the project funded by Sport Wales. This involved interviews with the heads of sport in 17 sports departments across Wales along with a review of existing survey data from Sport Wales and exploration of other countries' work. Through the first year of the project, the coordinator was tasked with spending time developing performance measures, developing a three-year national action plan and supporting institutional plans, and organising the Welsh Colleges Sport Conference. By the end of this calendar year, 12 colleges had developed individual plans for 2015 delivery. Core funding of £5,000 per college was distributed.

During 2015/16, the extent of the work began to expand, with the coordinator developing a range of new partnerships. The project made links with StreetGames Wales (Us Girls) and FAW Trust (Football Activators Programme), who were also in receipt of Sport Wales funding to invest in colleges, so the coordinator had a role in overseeing this work. Further partnerships (among others) were reported with Disability Sport Wales, the Outdoor Partnership, Run Wales, and Cardiff Metropolitan University (Employability / placements), WCVA, Wales Rugby league. The coordinator led a successful application for Erasmus + funding for Youth Sports Ambassadors Project, and worked on the procurement of the UPSHOT online monitoring system.

Core funding for each college was reduced to £3,000 in 2016/17. External policy was being updated at this time, with an emerging focus on physical literacy and health and wellbeing. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act<sup>10</sup> and Graham Donaldson's Successful Futures<sup>11</sup> were now in place. The coordinator worked on the development of criteria for new, larger scale innovative Collaborative Sports Projects that were being planned, with a £60,000 allocation from Sport Wales and 10 Childcare/Physical Literacy projects with colleges.

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<sup>10</sup> <http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/people/future-generations-act/?lang=en>

<sup>11</sup> <http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/150317-successful-futures-en.pdf>

Four collaborative projects were successful in receiving funding:

1. NPTC Group: Focus on **Health**, developing a healthy college initiative to increase physical activity in all areas of the curriculum through providing a physical and social environment that is conducive to increasing participation rates of harder to reach groups.
2. Gower College Swansea: **Workforce** – A Fitness 4 life programme is designed to deliver bespoke inclusive sessions for areas within college with poor activity levels (Hair & Beauty, Childcare, Hospitality and Travel).
3. Pembrokeshire College: **Sporting Pathway** - Developing a Community Hub based in the further education environment, at Pembrokeshire College, to promote new physical activities and extend physical activities between partners, schools, local community and business groups.
4. Bridgend College: **Wellbeing** - Implementing the curriculum based LUSH Project (Live and Unite in Sport and Health) for all Level 3 Year 1 learners.

By 2016/17, the project encompassed the management of the core funding to each college, plus the ongoing partnership work. The remit of the project had therefore broadened in scope, with five key outcomes now referred to that the project should deliver against:

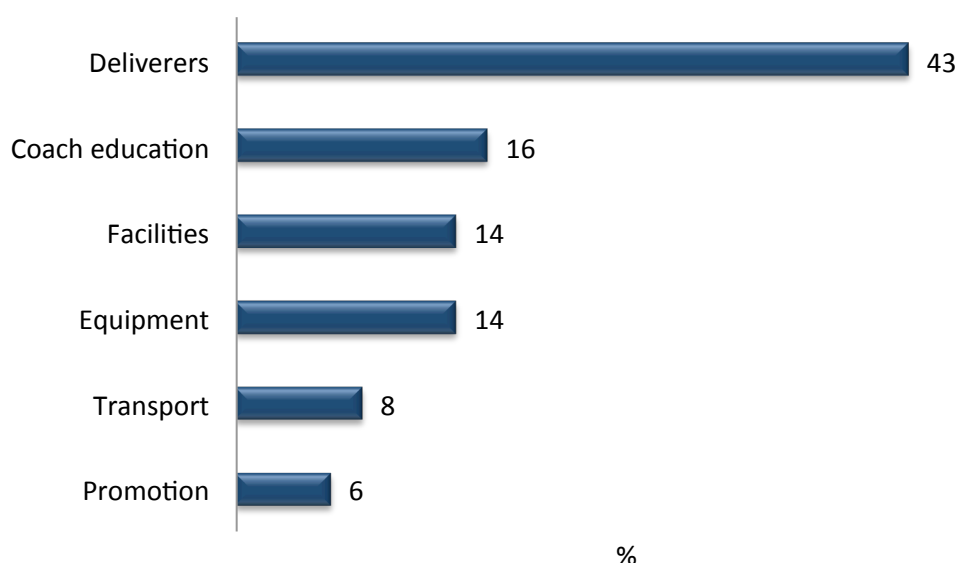
1. Increasing participation in Sport and Physical Activity.
2. Developing workforce and future employability.
3. Embracing the Sporting Pathway – recreation to competition.
4. Tackling Inequalities in Participation - reducing the gender gap.
5. Improving the Wellbeing of FE students.

At the time of writing in December 2017, the funding from Sport Wales to increase participation is in a transitional year for 2017/18, with plans to develop a new three-year strategy for FE sport with ColegauCymru and Welsh Colleges Sport.

## 5.2 Use of ColegauCymru funding

The evaluation team reviewed 10 college plans that were available for 2017/18 to better understand the proportions of spend in different activity areas. As highlighted in Figure 4, the bulk of the funding is being used to fund instructors and deliverers – and a lack of suitable workforce providers to deliver the extent of the activity wanted was something that several contributors noted during interviews.

Figure 4: Proportion of funding allocated in most recent college plans



Significant in-kind investment is provided by further education institutions to expand the resources available at individual further education institution level. Although it proved impossible for this study to be able to gather monetary data on the value of this in-kind investment in most further education institutions, the in-kind contribution included:

- Staff time e.g. Senior Management Team setting the direction, staff facilitating and co-ordinating activities (with staff responsible for transporting students between campuses in some cases), attending ColegauCymru meetings/conferences, dealing with queries, etc.
- Free access to facilities (the cost of a one-hour session on an indoor 3G facility is £150 in one institution).

It was generally recognised that the level of funding provided over three-year period was modest but nonetheless adequate for most further education institutions. However, contributors involved in the management/co-ordination of the project regarded the initial Sport Wales financial investment as having been instrumental in getting them to think about students' needs and in getting activities off the ground not least as it enabled them to overcome any financial restrictions which further education institutions may have faced in getting involved.

It became apparent during discussions with contributors from further education institutions that they have faced financial constraints and funding cuts in recent years. One Senior Manager from a further education institution in South Wales said, *"We've lost 20% of teaching time in the last six years. FE funding has been slashed and any type of enrichment has taken a hit. I would love to put something like this project on the curriculum and show it as value added to Estyn."*

There was a strong suggestion from contributors that the ColegauCymru project has helped address an area of need at a very challenging time and that the support might not have been available without the additional funding made available. Another Senior Manager added that FE is under considerable financial strain and this will affect its funding profile and potentially reserve levels. A strong business case for sport will therefore enhance and advance its priority amongst college partners. The feedback from contributors suggests that without a clear strategy, sport could be a 'victim'.

The two other main funding themes raised during interviews related to the amount of funding allocated per further education institution and long-term requirements. It was observed that whilst the simplistic approach currently adopted to award further education institutions with equal funds had been appropriate at the outset it was suggested by a few contributors that there was a need to refine this for the future to take into account factors such as the number of participants, the needs of target groups, dependency on external facilities and the additional cost of delivering activities in more than one campus or across a large, rural area.

### 5.3 [Project activities](#)

As highlighted in the College Development Plans, the further education institutions set out their key activities against the strategic priorities established by ColegauCymru in response to the funding requirements. The strategic priorities were used as a basis for planning and involved areas such as the following:

- Student Management Team.
- HE Placements.
- UPSHOT monitoring system.
- Further Education Sport and Active Lifestyles Survey 2018.
- Health enhancing physical activity.
- Developing workforce and employability.
- Sporting pathway.
- Raising participation.
- Tackling inequality in participation.

According to contributors from further education institutions, the emphasis has been on providing new and different opportunities to individuals not involved in sport and physical activity. The flexibility of the delivery model has proved key – further education institutions have been able to shape provision according to areas of need.

In some cases, further education institutions utilised the funding to support (and set up where necessary) the Student Management Team to facilitate meetings and provide activities. As part of this model, the Student Management Team received coach education to drive forward initiatives to actively encourage the wellbeing of other college students.

Other further education institutions had members of staff or Higher Education representatives deliver activities to FE students. Some contributors explained that they made use of all tiers of sport student by allowing the degree (over 18) students to support and lead year one and two foundation students with on campus activities designed for non-sporty students. Another further education institution representative mentioned that they had a staff member oversee the coaching activity.

Contributors from further education institutions explained how they aimed to develop a programme of support that *“stretched as far it could reach,”* maximizing investment and impact. The focus of the intervention varied however. Some further education institution contributors talked about offering certain activities as a way of testing the need. Once the interest had been created, there was then a focus on developing the structures and providing longer-term results through an academy. The success of a netball enrichment programme in one institution eventually led to a netball academy and so the pathway within the college was being developed over a period of time.

Other further education institutions worked with key groups or courses from within the college. One institution utilised the Student Management Team to provide activities for students from Performing arts, Childcare, Travel and tourism, Musical theatre, Level 2 Public Services, and Independent Living Skills courses. A Performing Arts Lecturer was eager to use the project to help improve the fitness of her students, a key aspect of the industry that they would be involved with in future.

Using pre-defined UPSHOT categories for the project, activity type was categorised by the coordinator as follows:

- Enrichment Physical Activity - 59% of project activity – typically non-competitive fitness based sessions
- Enrichment Recreational Sport - 21% of project activity
- Enrichment Wellbeing - 8% of project activity

It is worth reflecting how recreational sport and physical activity are described in the joint Public Health Wales and Sport Wales document *Getting Wales Moving*, which defines physical activity as follows:

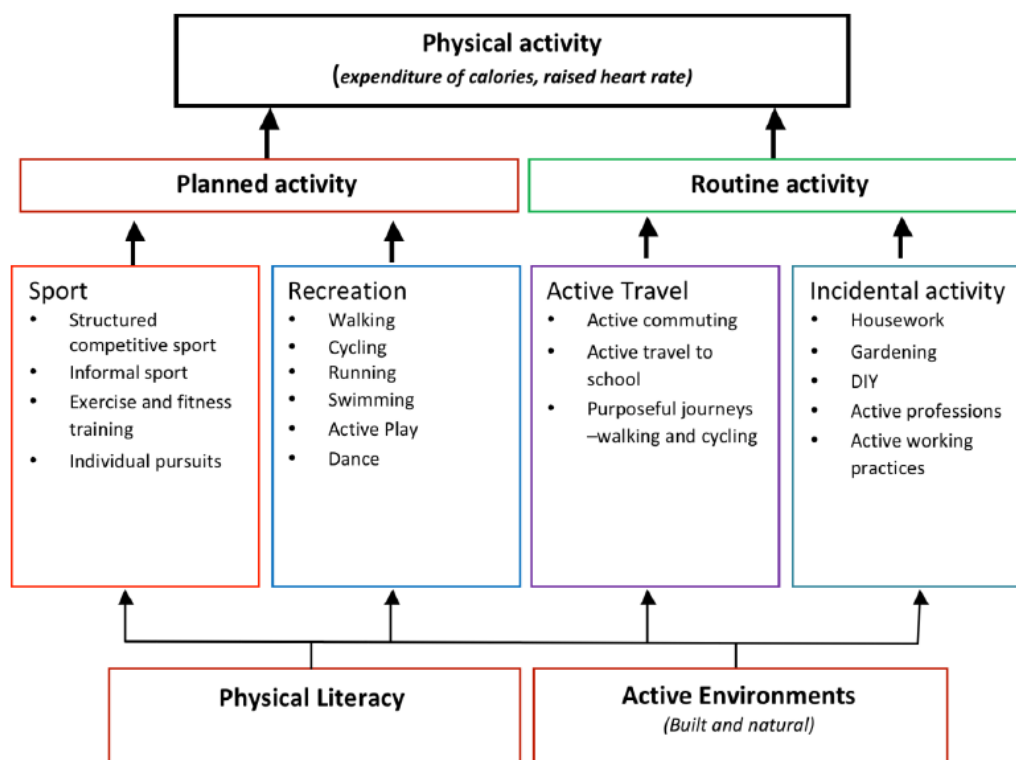
*“Physical activity is often defined as any body movement that works your muscles and requires more energy than resting. As such physical activity includes a spectrum of categories, including but much more than, active recreation such as sport or structured exercise. It includes incidental physical activity whilst doing something else that we need to do or enjoy doing as part of our daily routines.”*

The breadth of the physical activity agenda is depicted in the diagram ‘Core components of an Active Wales’<sup>12</sup>. Activity provided by this project contributes not only to providing

<sup>12</sup> Diagram taken from *Getting Wales Moving*

opportunities to participate in planned activity, but also sets up students with the encouragement to maintain fitness levels for Active Professions and working practices.

Figure 5: Core components of an Active Wales



#### 5.4 Placement of activities

In relation to courses studied among the 16-24 age band, there were 5,185 students taking part in sport, leisure and recreation learning activities<sup>13</sup>. This is compared with 18,015 Health, Public Services and Care students (incorporating nursing, health and social care, Public Services, and Child Development and Well-being) 3,170 studying Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care, 13,905 Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies, 10,140 Construction, 5,975 Information and Communication Technology and 14,040 Retail and Commercial Enterprise. Many other course types are listed, covering A levels, part time access and so on.

Placing the emphasis of the project solely in the sport and recreation departments will therefore have a limited impact. For example, there are more than three times as many health, public services and care students, and more than five times as many engineering and

<sup>13</sup> <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Education-and-Skills/Post-16-Education-and-Training/Further-Education-and-Work-Based-Learning/Learners/Further-Education/learningactivitiesfurthereducationinstitutions-by-subject-age>

construction students. ColegauCymru and further education institutions have the capacity to consider the different types of impact they might want to achieve, and colleges have focussed on students from different course types and in different campuses. Developing an improved understanding of the local and national population make-up and student profile may help to inform the future direction and expectations of the numbers of students that projects have capacity to engage with.

It seems likely (given the long-term evidence available from national surveys of school age children and adults) that a considerable proportion of learners arriving in the FE sector will not be active enough to benefit their health, and ColegauCymru may want to consider whether they place more emphasis on working with other partners, including Public Health Wales, to focus on these students - as well as the mid-range group that Sport Wales may be targeting in its next strategy.

### 5.5 Student consultation

The feedback from representatives of the further education institutions indicates that students play a key role in deciding what activities to be involved with. At least one institution would undertake a survey with students through the Student Management Team before engaging with tutors. For those engaged with specific courses, the role of the tutor is key. It has become apparent over time that if the course tutor is not receptive to the idea, then the project is unlikely to work. While the students decide the type of activities they want to be involved with, the tutors play a key role in involving the students in activities and in helping to find the time to run sessions within the curriculum. Activities have included football, mini tennis, table tennis, touch rugby, netball, kickboxing, Zumba, bench ball, dodgeball, rounders, badminton, use of gyms and circuit training.

While a schedule of events may have been agreed with course tutors, the students select the activities on the day or during the week. One contributor said, *"We don't dictate what the students want to do."* Another contributor has seen a demand in the running and walking activity – they are working on couch to 5k, and making new links with a free running group. Others invested in table tennis equipment, placing them indoors and outdoors, which proved popular with students on two campuses, providing an easily accessible opportunity available through much of the week.

Having said this, there were examples in some further education institutions where a programme of activities was offered. In one further education institution, the basketball activity was offered on a Wednesday afternoon with students invited to casually come along and take part. This was an example of where the institution aimed to create an interest in the sport and then turn it into an academy, where students can play, coach and compete moving forward. A member of the research team observed a *Footy Fives* session where students turned up to play football in a fantastic location. Members of the team get a point for winning a game but then switch teams. This helps sustain the interest as students are collecting team and individual points based on results.

There was also evidence of the further education institution's enrichment programme offering four-week taster activities in an effort to generate interest in activities. In one further education institution, a number of people engaged with dance and so this continued for a longer period of time and culminated in a musical. Contributors believed it was important that students can see that there is progression.

At least one further education institution has developed more of a structure to their programme. In one collaborative project, this involved five weeks of mandatory, timetabled LUSH activity (Live and Unite in Sport and Health) for each Level 3 learner. It involved the following:

- Week 1 – Nuffield Health - Nutritional information – the link to physical and emotional health.
- Week 2 - Identifying skills developed through physical activity which can be transferred to education and employment.
- Week 3 - How to embed activity into your lifestyle.
- Week 4 - Finding an activity to suit you (competitive / team / individual / led).
- Week 5 - Taster sessions of physical activity and where they are available.

Another key element of the work has been the activities with Independent Learning Skills students. Staff and Student Management Team representatives have been instrumental in generating the demand - with the Student Management Team holding gym sessions with 35 ILS students in one example.

## 5.6 Challenges and limitations

The time it takes to build relationships and trust with a student cohort that is only involved with the college for a short period of time and changes considerably from year to year should not be underestimated. One representative said, *"We need to train our students and build their confidence in a short space of time. We're lucky to have them for two years."* Another project lead added, *"Breaking down barriers has taken a year."*

Other representatives discussed how the college experience has changed for young people and how this presents a number of different challenges - *"A lot more has been added to the curriculum over the last three to four years however and we try to embed elements into the Welsh Baccalaureate. But things always drop off – we will have students here for four days for example and then they would work the other day. They would therefore do less charity work."*

A common theme to emerge from the fieldwork with further education institutions was the time taken to move from a period of planning to implement activities. Reassuringly, this has reduced during the project lifecycle. Contributors from one further education institution stated that they only had three groups of students up and running before Christmas the previous year – but the following year they had progressed to eight groups. The cycle of



consulting, planning, and delivering can shorten each academic year with increasing experience of the issues affecting delivery.

Some further education institution representatives also underestimated the time commitment taken to plan sessions. Consideration is given to the logistics of sorting the group, location and tutor. In some cases, it also takes time to get students upskilled. The support of the tutor and the availability of facilities are key ingredients. Some college students reported that tutors did not always facilitate their participation in the activities, being stretched in terms of timetabling. This suggests that further consideration could be given to positively influence tutors and management teams that don't currently support the project, so that they see its value. Research<sup>14</sup> shows the benefits of physical activity to other areas of learning and the positive impact it can have on future employability. This could be an important 'hook' and is something that is relevant regardless of the course the student is attending.

Some of the activities have been restricted to certain campuses due to the location of staff and facilities. For the further education institutions that hold sessions outside of their campuses or for those holding sessions on other campuses, transportation and the availability of staff to transfer via buses has been key. This is another example of how members from the enrichment team go beyond what is expected and the in-kind support that is often forgotten. While some institutions have been less reliant on external facilities in recent years due to the development of fantastic facilities in-house, there were examples where activities had to occur at an external site (e.g. another 3G pitch or Leisure Centre).

Linked to facilities are transport issues. The further education institutions in rural areas discussed how they had to travel 30 minutes for an hour activity and this has proved a real barrier. Due to the dependency on certain members of staff and the challenges in transporting students from one place to another, some representatives are finding it difficult to replicate the model elsewhere without additional staffing.

The capacity of existing staff members involved in the project will no doubt affect the scope of the outcomes. The research has shown that further education institutions with dedicated officers or project leads have been more engaged. Some institutions have taken on university students to support the project administration work. One representative explained, *"The project can't get bigger – I'm at my limit and the administrative assistant is doing far more than what he should. We now need to roll this out to new groups and individuals. We've done it all group based because it's easier to manage. What the project needs is the sessions and for other students to drop in to that. That needs a whole new level of overseeing because you have to do a lot more marketing, promotion."* The administrative assistant added, *"You'll also need a lot more session leaders. If you offer something and half the college turn up, then you have a problem."*

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<sup>14</sup> [http://sport.wales/media/1923315/education\\_evidence\\_paper\\_2015.pdf](http://sport.wales/media/1923315/education_evidence_paper_2015.pdf)

## 5.7 Project management

Within further education institutions, a number of different governance arrangements are operating. In some, the project may be isolated within one department and line management responsibilities stay within those reporting structures – for example contained within a sports department only. In others, the project is embedded in a broader college-wide plan for wellbeing, in some cases with staff members having the project built into job roles. In others, Strategy Development Groups have been formed to drive plans and make links with lecturers across an institution. The project activities can include curricular-based provision as well as recreational and structured opportunities. Support from the senior management team therefore can vary.

Engaging with, and overseeing ongoing delivery with thirteen different institutions with different plans is a considerable achievement. Within ColegauCymru, the coordinator post is line managed by the Director of Policy and Development through to the CEO, with support for this post through to board level. The Welsh Colleges Sport Strategy Group who steer the project have member representation from ColegauCymru, further education institutions, Sport Wales and Young Ambassadors. Stakeholders emphasised that the Welsh Colleges Sport Group has done some very good work, although there was less knowledge from funders about how far the sport and physical agenda was recognised within the whole of ColegauCymru at senior and board level, and whether it was high priority in comparison with other issues affecting colleges. There was a desire to see the relationship evolve from an existing funding arrangement between organisations, to an equal partnership. It was noted that there would still probably be a need to fund provision of activities, but this must be with the endorsement of the sector.

Within ColegauCymru itself, the project was welcomed, and it was reported that it plays an important role in holding the network together and raising the profile of sport and physical activity. The role/national programme is also important to ColegauCymru's European funding ambitions both pre-and post-Brexit. The post is critical in delivering learning & knowledge to ColegauCymru. Indeed, one strategic stakeholder commented *"Erasmus+ probably wouldn't have happened... it is a great example of a small investment having a significant pull in of additional funding"*. Contributors to this research would like to see some form of connectivity with Europe maintained as it brings many opportunities to students/network.

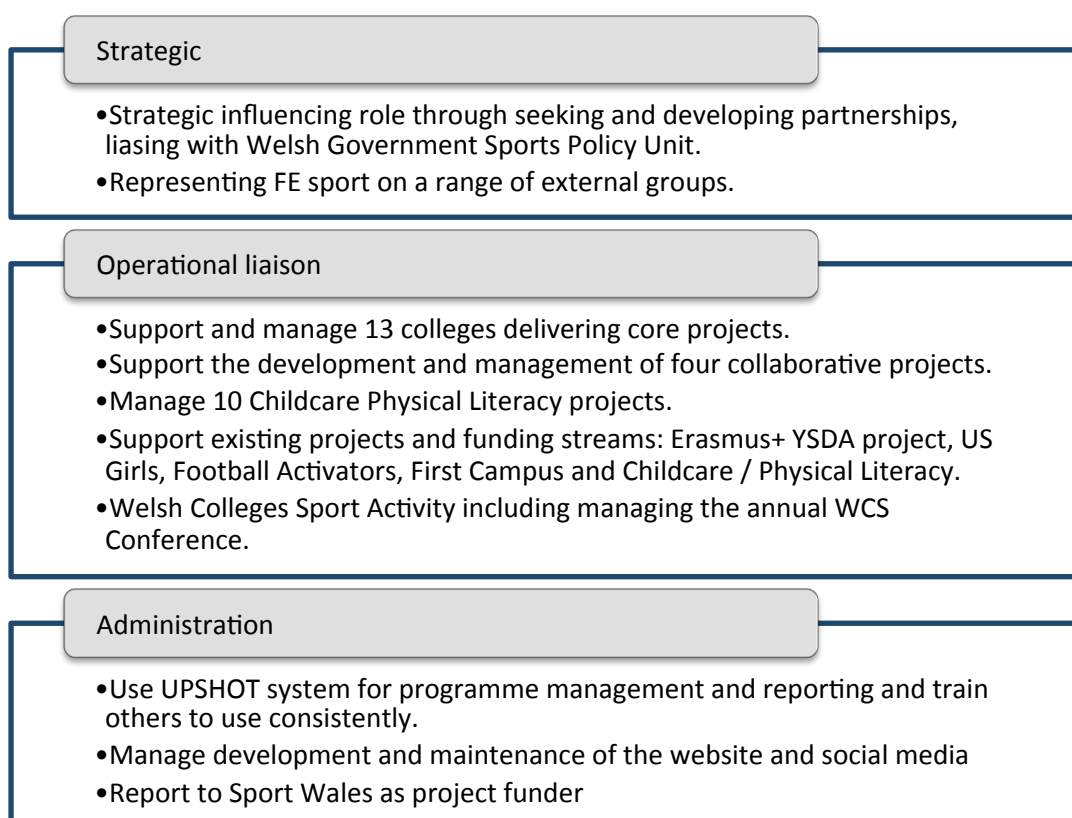
There was a suggestion from several contributors that ColegauCymru – and the colleges in partnership – could play more of a strategic role on behalf of the FE sector. At least one further education institution questioned whether they would be better off dealing directly with funding partners like Sport Wales. Some of the strategic stakeholders however noted the importance of having a representative body acting on behalf of the FE sector as a whole. Most strategic stakeholders believed that the colleges are stronger together and ColegauCymru is key as an umbrella body representing the college – *"They are*

*the glue that hold us all together – we need to agree the direction of travel and the sector benefits from that.”*

The view that funding via an umbrella body was the right approach was supported by representatives from the funding body. Although funding of individual colleges has occurred in the past, this has generally been linked to older programme links. It was generally considered that there was more to gain by investing in ColegauCymru rather than directly to further education institutions - there was more value in this approach. In relation to this preference though, some contributors commented that they would like to see ColegauCymru take on a more strategic role now that the project is actively running. It is timely that ColegauCymru have made a commitment to fund this post from within the core budget of the organisation - the substantive role is now embedded within ColegauCymru's business plan and can be considered an important outcome of Sport Wales funding.

### 5.8 The role of a project coordinator

Part of this feedback is due to constantly evolving context in which the project has operated and recognition that there is the potential to achieve much more. The role of the coordinator has continually extended since introduced in 2014, both from dealing with the increasing outputs against the original project plans, and also through additional opportunities, policy developments and partnerships that have been taken advantage of during that time. As such, the sports coordinator role currently encompasses a broad portfolio of work, as set out below.



There is strong support for the coordinator post. The main strengths of the post were considered to come from having a central point of contact, sign-posting the network, adding value to thinking, providing advocacy on behalf of the sector, knowledge and a 'bank of information'. The current project coordinator was viewed in a very positive manner and the level of experience and contacts the post holder has across the sector was a recognised skill. Contributors from further education institutions saw the role being very much that of a 'mentor', 'a guide on the side', enabler, provider of honest feedback for example in strategy development and testing the water on projects. The post is also seen as being important in that it provides information back to colleges on matters of national, common interest.

The Coordinator played a key role in helping the colleges understand the project's aims and objectives and how they could shape provision accordingly. ColegauCymru also play a key role in helping some colleges access funding – *"Without ColegauCymru, I couldn't understand how we would access this support. They are a central point that gets us funding. From our point of view, their support has been invaluable."* One further education institution representative described how ColegauCymru have made the team aware of other funding streams, including funding from the Lawn Tennis Association and Millennium Stadium. Without ColegauCymru support, they wouldn't be involved with the project. The different types of meetings are beneficial – they find out about different opportunities through these meetings.

## 5.9 Future governance considerations

As the project moves forward, strategic level stakeholders commented that it is important that the post holder co-ordinates and share knowledge, maintaining a strategic overview. If this direction is adopted, the coordinator's future role and focus is likely to change. We suggest that ColegauCymru could consider renaming the post of Sports Coordinator to that of National Physical Activity Lead to reflect the wider impact of the role than just 'sport'. This subtle but important change would support the debate for all further education institutions to appoint a similar type post that would support local delivery and connect with National Operational groups. The renaming of the post would also signal a more diverse approach to wellbeing and align better with Welsh Government ambition and the potential to unlock sources of funding from a broader range of partners.

To drive a future strategy, ColegauCymru may wish to consider reviewing their existing governance arrangements. It is proposed that ColegauCymru develops and maintains a high-level Board which would oversee the content and direction of an FE physical activity strategy and the monitoring of agreed national outputs and outcomes. The Board should also act as a conduit into the main board of ColegauCymru as well as into other relevant forums where it can advocate and influence on behalf of wellbeing and physical activity within the further education institution setting e.g. FEI Principal forums, National Governing Body Chief Executive Officer forums, Regional Sports Agencies and or Chief Culture and Leisure Officers of Wales etc.

A matrix could be developed outlining the necessary representative and skills mix necessary for the board which will add value to the college network as well as the wider sport and active recreation sector. The board should be limited to a maximum number of members (approximately 8-12) who should reflect both traditional and independent non-traditional partners. It is recommended that the board should meet approximately 2-3 times per year.

Reporting to the board could be a number of Operational Groups that support the delivery of key areas of the strategy:

*Active Recreation - Elite College Sport – Learning: Supporting a Workforce Fit for the Future.*

These Operational Groups should involve practitioners/partners who are actively engaged in the local delivery of physical activity. The Operational Groups should meet no more than quarterly, allowing more time to be focussed on delivery and shared good practice.

#### 5.10 [Data collection and reporting](#)

Each further education institution had a set of targets in relation to the number of sessions they aimed to deliver and the numbers of participants they aimed to engage with. These were collated in UPSHOT each term. There have been some initial challenges with the UPSHOT system. There were 13 different monitoring systems in place initially and further education institutions tackled issues relating to data protection differently. At least one institution had issues with sharing data and had to work closely with the Head of Management Information Systems to solve the issue. In another case the Welsh-only version of UPSHOT appears when visiting the site – this is a big frustration and something that needs to change moving forward.

Contributors from further education institutions pointed out the time demands associated with data input. It became clear that some of the senior members of the team made use of others to help keep records. In one further education institution for example, a former student who was now studying in a HEI was paid to help with the process. The students delivering the sessions were responsible for uploading information to UPSHOT in another further education institution. While this seemed to be an efficient way of collating information, there was still a need to 'police' the information uploaded, and this took time. Some of the further education institution representatives explained that the project needs a co-ordinator to plan activities and manage UPSHOT.

However, the feedback on this particular monitoring system was positive overall and it seems that the coordinator played a key role in explaining how to use the system. While the system has not been fully utilised from the start, the feedback suggests that further education institutions are now in a position to gather informative data that could help demonstrate the progress of the project.

A highlight of this system is the ability to capture data at the level of the individual, providing data on the absolute number of students involved in the programme as well as the number

of 'attendances' or participant occasions that have taken place. However, there is the possibility that a student could attend multiple 'types' of activity categorised within the system, thereby making it difficult (although possible) to easily extract overall student numbers engaged with.

It may be beneficial to both colleges and ColegauCymru going forward to clarify or reduce the number of funding/project streams through which activity is recorded – colleges have to input figures to align with strands such as Core funding, Childcare, Us Girls, enrichment etc. At this stage, not all colleges are doing this consistently. Once future goals are determined, this could be revised for the next reporting period.

As mentioned above, several interviewees commented on their difficulties finding suitable workforce who would be deliverers of their project. ColegauCymru could consider using the UPSHOT system to compile and share a database of suitable instructors and deliverers used by colleges.

#### 5.11 Monitoring and evaluation

When considering the future monitoring and evaluation of the programme, national key performance indicators should be built from the ground floor up, reflecting strategic direction. Any targets set should contribute toward the ambition of Welsh Government and the sport sector and demonstrate the added value of further education and its return on public investment into the sector.

In developing national targets, ColegauCymru should not only continue to quantify the numbers of students involved in programmes as has been done to date, but also gather qualitative information which will provide further insight on the impact that investment is having on the wellbeing of individuals and their colleges. Refreshing the strategy presents an opportunity for existing KPIs to be reviewed as well as align colleges into a national reporting framework which also reflects and celebrates local activity. It is important to note that this approach should not create a 'league table' as individual institutions could agree targets from the ground floor up, reflecting local circumstance and capacity.

## 6. Difference made

In this section, we consider the feedback provided around impact of the project to date and the difference made as reported by participants, leaders and strategic stakeholders.

### 6.1 Increased provision and participation through collaboration

There have been proactive efforts to boost participation levels by raising awareness of the activities on offer at a college. As highlighted in Section 3, students have accessed new opportunities as a result of this project. Colleges have spent time introducing non-sports students to facilities and providers both in college and in the local community. Two colleges noted how they made links with local community provision as part of their project, linking students to session leaders and local facilities, again helping to remove a hurdle of taking a step into the unknown for those lacking confidence.

Developing community partnerships was highlighted as a key aspect of the work and the discussions with further education institution representatives suggests that they have strived to make the most of external support and this for two reasons: for expertise/capacity when delivering coaching/development opportunities and for use of local facilities.

One representative explained how the funding has allowed them to try new things. They have established relationship with Halo (who were rated highly) and there are discounts for students passes to leisure. Further education institutions talked about the need to provide a link and pathway through from college-based activity into external community-based opportunities. There were examples of good engagement with local communities and partners. There were other examples of institutions being less dependent on external partners for facility needs although they continued to rely on external partners (Diamond Tennis Academy for example) to provide participation and coaching opportunities. Another further education institution explained that they worked closely with Caerphilly County Borough Council (they deliver the Sports Leaders course), Newport Sports Development (they deliver the Playmaker Award), Millennium Volunteers, and the FAW (coach education qualifications). They have also benefitted from a team building exercise with the Army and have also involved an external instructor.

The feedback from NGB representatives suggests that the further education institutions have been instrumental in delivering some of their own strategic objectives, particularly in relation to coaching and participation. Some of these partners explained that they are able to reach an important segment of the population at a critical stage, when their culture and behaviours can change. There was also the appeal of being involved with some of the bigger sports – rugby and football.

While offering specific opportunities was one way of reaching a key target audience, there is also the opportunity to take a longer-term view by contributing to the education of future influencers e.g. students involved with childcare. Considering that the perceptions of young people are shaped at a very young age, this presents a perfect opportunity for potential partners.

Colleges have been innovative in maximising the spaces available to them – using common rooms, refectories, outdoor spaces. The project has extended the amount of opportunities available and increased the level of access to these opportunities, by focusing on students from different courses and campuses and thinking beyond using the usual sports facilities and focusing on the sport and leisure students only. As a result, activity has become ‘visible’ which has the effect of normalising physical activity and wellbeing opportunities within the culture of the colleges. Staff getting involved reinforces this message.

*“There is an example of the girls who are not usually involved. We have noticed a lot [of students] who you wouldn’t think would be interested in sport are starting to take it up from enrichment, and that’s really good – there are several girls doing rugby now” (FE student).*

In another further education institution, two contributors commented that they found it hard to believe that some students have not participated in PE in school since they were in Year 8. It takes time to change the perception and get students involved again. The focus group undertaken at this institution found that:

- 11 students volunteered outside of college.
- 9 of the participants had not done any sports before getting involved.
- 6 had joined a gym or carried on with their interest in physical activity outside of college.
- At least 3 had been inactive for a number of years – including the student who hadn’t taken part since Year 8.

In another example (and this was raised in more than one college) an unintended outcome was that the project was helping students from different courses get to know each other and this can have the effect of a more vibrant culture and atmosphere across the college sites.

*“The ILS department is in one area. Our students now see students from the college – they come and say hello to our students. They’ve broken barriers with this project through sport” (FE Project Lead).*

Colleges wanted to do more of the existing project activity they had implemented to date, although they were limited by some of the logistics discussed in earlier sections. There was recognition that they must ‘*take the activity to all the campuses to stimulate engagement*’ and ensure all students could benefit from the opportunities being offered.



## 6.2 Highlighting the health and wellbeing agenda

The project has brought about a change in focus for the way colleges view sport and recreation, and feedback suggests that the importance of sport and physical activity in the Sporting Pathway world of ‘participation for wellbeing’ has taken a more prominent role across colleges. ‘Sport’ and competition is no longer simply the remit of the sport department. During opening evenings, one college is now promoting activity and wellbeing, something that they did not do previously, showing that the college is much more than just an education provider.

Three years ago, colleges did not have specific plans for health and wellbeing and sport. This project has changed that situation, and the review of college level plans produced from 2015/16 to current 2017/18 applications show development in terms of gathering evidence for targeting investment and demonstrating more clarity of purpose. Placement of the project in learner services, wellbeing and safeguarding departments has helped to raise this profile.

Continued investment over three to four years has been important. It has taken that amount of time for some colleges to demonstrate that this is useful and beneficial for their college and students. Some have restructured, or planned for health and wellbeing as a result, or have employed a person to take that role. One stakeholder commented,

*“It does take constant investment, and the knock-on effects of continuous investment is that some colleges have really excelled and thought about their culture as a college. Two years of funding wouldn’t have been enough for this to happen”.*

## 6.3 Impact on learners and learning outcomes

At a strategic level within colleges, there was recognition that the project has the potential to have a positive impact on learner outcome measures<sup>15</sup>. It was noted by several contributors that students are under a great deal of pressure to perform well academically and this can cause a strain on wellbeing and be at the expense of physical and mental health. There was recognition that learners suffered with stress and anxiety (and that reported incidents of this were increasing in recent years), but that physical activity can be used as a coping strategy – providing a solution for the college. This led to improving attendance levels and results according to the tutors. Keeping the learners in college and achieving good outcomes was important:

*“We get paid say £3K per learner, but if they leave, that learner doesn’t achieve anything. That learner can come back the following year and do the same, but if they don’t stay whole year, there’s no achievement. Physical activity helps with mental*

<sup>15</sup> <http://gov.wales/docs/statistics/2017/170202-learner-outcome-measures-further-education-adult-community-learning-2015-16-en.pdf>The

*health issues. ...I definitely believe exercise helps with the stress of coping with A levels in particular - we are very good at putting in a plan for revision but not a plan for time out. We don't do enough of that. The funding has brought it much higher up the agenda about how important it is"* (FEI Strategic Stakeholder).

It is early in the process to say that the project is seen as a positive throughout the majority of teaching staff. However, at least one college has received specific feedback from tutors to say that certain individuals have improved their confidence and are now more engaged in their studies/college life. The interviewee talked about the impact on lone parents, and students with family issues or autism. The effect on the teaching and support staff was also observed by the students, as this young leader commented:

*"I think the tutors do see a benefit from people getting involved. From the coaching bit. They see people come out of their shell a bit. One girl from ILS who was shy and quiet, after a while she was crying, laughing, running around, you couldn't stop her by end of day. Her support workers who said she was normally retiring and shy said it was wonderful to see".*

*"The impact the project has had is incredible. We've seen a student in a wheelchair being lifted to her feet by a Student Management Team representative, so she can hit the punch bag. These students are now much more confident taking part. You literally physically see the change as they walk into the gym."*

There was feedback of the positive level of buy-in to the project amongst facility staff such as those working in canteens and caretakers of the buildings. However, there was some further feedback that not all tutors actively supported the work and that this was down to pressures of timetabling, and subject areas wanting to have maximum access to their students' area of work. There may be more to be done here in finding ways to share the good practice and positive impact that the project has the potential to make on other areas of the students' learning experience. Raising awareness of the importance of physical activity for physical and mental health and wellbeing and in preparing them to be 'fit for employment' may be as important to do among teaching staff as it is for students, and finding a 'hook' that resonates with different audiences can help this. Complementing this was a keener awareness of 'fitness for employment' across all courses, not just sport related subjects.

There was also feedback that a shared knowledge is developing across the wider college network and that there should be more sharing of learning and the difference made to encourage more of this joined up thinking.

It is not possible to say whether physical activity levels have improved overall as a result of this project, but anecdotal evidence shows that the learners have certainly become more active within the college compared with their previous involvement. Several of the groups spoken to said that prior to the opportunity to take part in project activities they would have done 'nothing'. While some students commented they had taken part in sport and physical

activity previously, many others considered themselves non-sporty. This is worth noting, because despite the broad definition of sport from funding bodies, participants may still find this description very off-putting and it remains a major barrier to involvement. Students did not recognise the activities they have participated in as 'sport'.

One of the most visible effects on the participants themselves has been **improved confidence**. One member of a Student Management Team commented: *"you wouldn't believe it, but I was quiet and shy before, although I loved sport"*. Several colleges reported that increased confidence was either an aim or an outcome of the project. This positive outcome of increased confidence came through strongly from students spoken to and the deliverers engaged. Colleges have helped to boost confidence levels, and have taken steps to help non-sporty students to feel confident and comfortable enough to walk into a facility used primarily by sports students with a level of skill and competence that non-sports students may not have. Students themselves also reported they felt more confident in their ability to participate in particular activities that they had been introduced to.

Perhaps most importantly, participants were finding the activities on offer **fun and enjoyable** and were making good use of the informal recreational offer available, particularly easily accessible activities such as table tennis tables provided which did not require supervision other than that of facility staff.

The project has supplemented existing provision and in doing so, creates an improved educational experience for students, both in terms of participating personally and through volunteering and leading activity. In another college, the project has mainly supported girls who did nothing previously who are now doing an hour's worth of exercise a week. They are also asking about potential lunchtime sessions. Staff involved have noticed girls taking up gym memberships and taking more of an interest in nutrition and what they eat. The feedback from students reaffirmed this point with one noting,

*"It [the activities] gives us a break, we socialise more. We meet people from other courses and it wouldn't really happen without enrichment"*.

#### 6.4 Skills and fitness for employability – the future workforce

Students were also aware of the importance of physical activity to other areas of their education and future careers, as this business student commented:

*"It benefits my other studies, I get a break, and build it into lunchtime 1-2, otherwise I'd read all day. It's particularly difficult for A level students – it is hard...It's good for fitness as I am busy with my work as well. My aim is on my work future, and fitness will help me. Fitness is everywhere at the moment, it is important - without it you can't do anything. In work, they look for fitness in an employee as well"*.

One college lead referred to a couple of success stories when talking about the outcomes. One girl was involved with the Student Management Team studies on the childcare course.

The knowledge and skills gained will help her in employment. In another case, the local authority Sport Development Team recently employed another girl involved.

In addition to the benefits of getting students to take part, there was feedback about the importance of getting the Student Management Team to deliver sessions - *“For me it’s all about what our students give to the other students.”* Representatives from the Student Management Team shared this view. One Student Management Team representative said:

*“I feel we’re developing our communication and leadership skills. It’s an opportunity to take what you learn in the classroom or from coach education programmes and apply it in a real-life setting.”*

Good practice in delivery was observed at visits and discussed by the contributors. Students were keen to state that they would always ask the participants what they wanted to do and then try and develop an activity around their request. Paid activity leaders also discussed the importance of getting to know their participants and adapting styles where necessary. Personally, the leaders have found themselves being far more confident with enhanced inter-personal skills, believing this will lead to increased levels of wellbeing and a greater chance of employability post college. One individual who has been involved in the project from her time in further education and now is in university, commented that the impact for her has been ‘massive’. As a result of the project, she is involved with the local authority sports development team, has helped lead at summer camps, gets paid work – and additionally coaches with a NGB.

Student volunteers spoken to talked about personal satisfaction of volunteering activities as well as recognition for their efforts from tutors. Volunteers mentioned they were improving their confidence/ life skills /employability, that they were being inspired by working with young disabled people, that it was a good distraction from demands of studies and that it improved their coaching skills. There was also comments that they were receiving positive lecturer feedback from their involvement:

*“I now say yes to other volunteering opportunities that come along in sport or my community”.*

*“I don’t want to be paid”.*

*“Learn how to treat people through volunteering”.*

*“I’ve done something good for somebody else”.*

## 6.5 Promoting the outcomes and difference made within education

The colleges visited had considerable knowledge to share about activities that have worked well, the outcomes for learners, and the difference the project could make to individuals, groups, and the college environment. The programme monitoring information being collated through the local projects on UPSHOT, along with the consultations with students that have occurred as part of the project activity provides colleges with evidence to support the learning experience and wellbeing outcomes in Estyn's Common Inspection Framework for FE from September 2017<sup>16</sup>:

- attitudes to keeping healthy and safe.
- Participation and enjoyment in learning.
- community involvement and decision-making.
- social and life skills.

There are opportunities to further raise the profile of the project within colleges and promote a continued focus on the importance of the work by referencing these links and the difference made.

Although contributors noted that the funding provided a relatively modest investment into the college, the grant was considered to make a real difference, targeting some of the college's most inactive students and those affected by inequality gaps. There was support for the work at senior level across the colleges visited. Progress against national targets aligned to Sport Wales investment funding have confirmed that with relatively limited funding it is possible to generate new interest in physical activity from students who hitherto had not been inclined to participate in sport or active recreation. These include female students, disabled students and students from BME backgrounds.

Indicators also positively demonstrate that FE students, particularly those engaged in sports courses, are keen to volunteer both within their college environment and externally with their local communities. Students see the benefits of volunteering and recognised the value it brings not only to their experience of college life, but also for their future career prospects.

The feedback from a range of different stakeholders is clear that the project has made a difference, but at this stage it too soon (and currently too difficult to evidence) whether the project will lead to long-term and deep-rooted impacts for individuals who took part and the people they engage with through physical activity opportunities and employment in the future.

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<https://www.estyn.gov.wales/sites/default/files/documents/Guidance%20handbook%20for%20the%20inspection%20of%20FE%20-2017.pdf>

## 7. Future considerations

A key task for this review was to identify recommendations and strategic themes for a post 2018 strategy. In this section, we consider the context in which a 2018 strategy will be developed, and the findings from this research that should inform those future themes.

### 7.1 The development of a new vision and strategy for the further education sector

With a total FE population of 43,000 full-time and 12,000 part-time students aged 16-24 in Wales<sup>17</sup> there is clearly a significant, latent, opportunity to positively influence behaviours and motivations as young people transition to adulthood. This could be viewed as a critical window of opportunity given the evidenced drop-off rate by young people in sport and physical opportunity from 54% of FE students aged 16 down to 37% of those aged 20+. Several representatives from further education institutions and ColegauCymru discussed their aspirations to upscale ambition and impact. To do this, ColegauCymru and its college network may need to adopt a more strategic approach to the delivery of physical activity, ensuring that they continue to connect with the over-arching mission of FE, whilst also aligning to the ambition of Welsh Government and the perceived shifting landscape of the Welsh sporting and active recreation landscape over the next 5-10 years.

However, the recent Welsh Government Ministerial Review of Sport Wales will have an impact and create uncertainty in the short term. The review confirmed that a diverse sector with devolved leadership responsibilities is required if Wales is to be successful in achieving increased rates of physical activity amongst its population

*“If the overarching commitment to deliver a healthy and active Wales is to be realised, Welsh Government should provide the leadership to **align partners to deliver increased physical activity levels and clarify respective roles, responsibilities and accountability**’ (Ministerial Review of Sport Wales June 2017)”.*

The review also calls for clarity of role delineation between national delivery agencies such as Sport Wales, Public Health Wales and Natural Resources Wales to determine who is responsible for which elements of the physical activity continuum. This clarity should assist ColegauCymru to align different elements of its strategy to different national stakeholders and, potentially, help to identify new resource streams to support its implementation.

It is important to note that Sport Wales have been charged by Welsh Government to facilitate the development of a new strategy for the Welsh sports and active recreation sector. ColegauCymru must immediately grasp this immediate opportunity by presenting to

<sup>17</sup> <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Education-and-Skills/Post-16-Education-and-Training/Further-Education-and-Work-Based-Learning/Learners/Further-Education/uniquelearnersenrolledfurthereducationinstitutions-by-age-modeoflearning-gender>. Figures rounded to nearest 1,000.

Sport Wales a collective view, on behalf of its college network, the impact that the FE sector can have on achieving new levels of activity and participation in physical activity in Wales. This intent provides ColegauCymru with an opportunity to demonstrate its central leadership role within the FE sector by further influencing the strategic direction of the college network within a shifting and dynamic Welsh sporting and recreational landscape. Without this process, this may lead to further education institutions working independently.

## 7.2 Refreshing the Strategic Plan

In order to respond to the changing landscape, ColegauCymru should now seek to refresh its approach to the delivery of physical activity. The strategic plan, 'Going for Gold', was published in the summer of 2013. This document should now be refreshed by building on the output of this review and by testing key themes with partners and stakeholders.

At a high level, evidence from this review suggests that the further education institutions continue to be best placed to contribute toward the following areas of the physical activity continuum:

- Active recreation - Particularly targeting non-sporty students and inequalities.
- Elite College sport - Contributing to competitive opportunities and the NGB talent pathway.
- Learning: Supporting a Workforce fit for the future - Volunteering and placement opportunities.

There should be consensus from FE partners and stakeholders on strategic priorities moving forward as well as agreement on which organisation should lead on which areas e.g. ColegauCymru, further education institutions, Regional Sports Agencies, National Governing Bodies of Sport. There should also be broad agreement across the FE sector on which aspects of the physical activity continuum will have the greatest impact on the wellbeing and sporting ambition of colleges and their students.

In order to resource the new strategy, ColegauCymru could adopt a more flexible approach to funding streams. Since 2013, ColegauCymru have primarily worked with Sport Wales to receive investment and funding for projects. However, with the impending changes in the sporting landscape ColegauCymru should now look wider than simply Sport Wales. Aligned to their strategic direction, ColegauCymru should explore other sources of funding including Public Health Wales, National Resources Wales, National Governing Bodies of Wales and other emerging agencies such as the proposed Regional Sports Agencies. As a Charity, ColegauCymru should consider Trusts and other charitable fundraising opportunities. If possible post-Brexit, ColegauCymru should continue to maintain their interests with European partners where projects have a clear impact on the ColegauCymru strategy.

In respect of Elite College Sport, ColegauCymru could consider developing an Income Generation Plan that targets opportunities to identify commercial investment through

sponsorship or supplier benefits for those sports operating at a national level. The Income Generation Plan should not encroach on existing or potential investments that could be generated at a local level by individual colleges.

ColegauCymru should develop a communications plan which shares the outcomes of programmes both internally, across its college network, and externally to partners investors and the wider public. The plan should reflect the spectrum of activity taking place in FE, covering all pillars of the strategy. In developing the plan, ColegauCymru should ensure that it reflects the work of the FE network and partners giving recognition to lead bodies when appropriate.

ColegauCymru should also seek to positively influence its College partners to develop their own local physical activity strategies. These strategies should enable them to fit into a national framework but importantly allow them to prioritise against local need. Local targets should reflect national outputs, recognising that individual colleges contribute toward the 'greater good' rather than resulting in a league table which does not account for local or regional differences.

### 7.3 Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

There are a number of considerations of which a new strategy needs to take note. The introduction of the Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 provides a legislative framework within which the FE sector must contribute toward improving 'the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales'. It is important in the context of the Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, and in-particular physical activity, for ColegauCymru and its college partners to identify how they can demonstrate impact and in a manner which is most sustainable.

The project has the scope to make links to the strategic priorities of the Act by providing health enhancing physical activity, developing the future workforce and employability, tackling inequality, improving the wellbeing of FE students and developing a sporting landscape in FE. The project can be viewed as having the potential to clearly contribute to several of the Act's goals, including 'a healthier Wales', 'A prosperous Wales', 'A more equal Wales' and 'a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language'. The project has also demonstrated elements of the Act's five ways of working through stakeholder references to prevention and collaboration.

The Act undoubtedly provides ColegauCymru with an opportunity to strategically influence and elevate the importance and status of physical activity within the college network, ensuring that the wellbeing of students (and staff) is of the highest priority and firmly embedded in local business plans and Well-Being statements.

The Act also requires established Public Services Boards (PSBs) for each local authority area in Wales to consult widely in the preparation of Local Wellbeing Plans that sets out its Wellbeing objectives. This presents colleges with an opportunity to define their own reach



and impact into the wider community and possibly identify other resources available through the PSBs which might support colleges' ambition within this area.

#### 7.4 Creating New Partnerships

With a total FE student population of nearly 55,000 noted above, ColegauCymru is in a strong position to support a range of partners in working towards increasing physical activity levels in Wales. Indeed, some further education institutions have already been effective at establishing partnerships at a local level and in drawing funding from different organisations for different projects. Whilst currently ColegauCymru identifies Sport Wales as its key funding partner for physical activity and wellbeing projects there is the potential for other agencies to support activity. This might include Public Health Wales, Natural Resources Wales, any future Regional Sports and Physical Activity agencies, National Governing Bodies of Sport, Local Authorities and commercial investment. It is clear that the college network has an opportunity to grow participation across the physical activity spectrum referred to in *Getting Wales Moving*, and is able to make a significant contribution to the attainment of national targets within this area. ColegauCymru should adopt a more agile approach to developing partnerships based on the needs of its strategy moving forward.

#### 7.5 Community Sport and Physical Activity Project

Community sport outcomes remain important. It is highly likely that Sport Wales will be introducing a new approach to the delivery of community sport and physical activity in 2018, starting with a pilot project in North Wales<sup>18</sup>. This review has found that working with the less active student population needs to be a key part of any future provision. ColegauCymru must ensure that it works with its North Wales partners to connect with, and to maximise opportunities that a new regionalised delivery model might bring. These opportunities may include access to locally driven resources to increase participation levels across the region as well as potentially opportunities to deploy students into community settings to help stimulate and deliver activities.

With the expectation that a new regionalised delivery model could be expanded to all areas of Wales, it is important that ColegauCymru is able to connect with and learn the lessons of the early adopter pilot in North Wales.

#### 7.6 National Governing Body Sporting Pathway

National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs) are also facing changes to the way in which they will operate moving forward. Sport Wales are introducing the Sporting Pathway Model which has been developed in conjunction with NGBs. This new model requires NGBs to focus on elements of the Sporting Pathway where they can make the greatest impact and gain. Moving forward NGBs will be required to: -

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<sup>18</sup> <http://playyourpart.wales/>

- Develop an effective strategy to ensure the maximum impact of Sport Wales investment upon the three Community Sport Outcomes - increasing regular participation, sporting pathway and tackling inequalities.
- Use Insight into the sport, including the current profile of participants, provision (programmes and facilities), latent demand, underrepresentation and the key opportunities to drive and enhance participation and performance.
- Produce a national delivery plan based on evidence and insight, and through engagement with communities and collaboration with key partners, to meet the needs of all participants.
- Develop a complete and inclusive pathway of sporting opportunities across Wales - explore and learn/ recreational participation offers and formal / competitive offers, together with robust talent development systems.
- Create a workforce plan (volunteers, coaches and officials) linked to targets for participation growth and performance improvement.
- Develop effective partnerships with Regional Sports Agencies (RSAs) to help inform and develop regional plans ensuring the needs of the sport are understood.
- Identify appropriate next step opportunities from RSAs multi-sport activities into high quality club/ community settings.
- Provide appropriate support and next step opportunities from RSA volunteer networks into club/ doorstep community settings.
- Produce a programme to ensure Lottery funding is proactively used to support new sustainable initiatives.
- Business approaches to maximise investment - attracting commercial investment / leveraging external funding etc.

To achieve the above, NGBs will be required to create effective, sustainable collaborations with sector partners, thus presenting an enhanced opportunity for the FE sector. The focus on the three Community Outcomes fits well with the priorities of FE that have emerged from this review and there are clear opportunities for FE students to support NGB workforce planning in a local activation type role.

In order to avoid duplication of effort between NGBs and Regional Sports Agencies, further education institutions will need to take a more proactive approach to this area of collaboration, developing agreements with NGBs on how best they can support their Sporting Pathway Model. It is unlikely that a 'one size fits all' approach will work. Rather there will be need to be agreement between colleges and individual NGBs on why, where and how they can support approaches to 'whole sport planning'. This will need to take account of issues such as geographical need, facilities, workforce planning, participation gaps, inequalities and talent pathways.

ColegauCymru will have a critical leadership role to play within this national conversation by connecting the FE sector to NGBs whilst also taking a broader overview of the national and regional picture and the investment priorities of organisations such as Sport Wales.

## 8. Conclusions and recommendations

This final section sets out the conclusions and presents the recommendations for future initiatives.

### 8.1 Responding to a changing environment

The funding allocated to further education institutions draws to a close at a time of uncertainty for the sport sector in Wales. In light of the Welsh Government Ministerial Review, Sport Wales have been charged by Welsh Government to facilitate the development of a new strategy for the Welsh sports and active recreation sector. While this provides an opportunity for ColegauCymru and further education institutions across Wales, there is at present a lack of clarity on the role delineation between national delivery agencies such as Sport Wales, Public Health Wales and Natural Resources Wales to determine who is responsible for which elements of the physical activity continuum. There is a danger that this uncertainty will lead to disrupting any opportunity to build on the achievements of the ColegauCymru sports project.

#### **Recommendation 1**

We recommend that ColegauCymru liaise with the Welsh Colleges Sports Strategy Group to develop a one-year interim business plan submission to Sport Wales for continuation funding for 2018/19.

#### **Recommendation 2**

ColegauCymru should use evidence from this review to actively engage with Sport Wales and their efforts to develop a new strategy for the sport and active recreation sector in Wales.

### 8.2 The development of a new vision and strategic plan

Over the past three years, ColegauCymru has delivered against its original plan and targets from Sport Wales and is now in an ideal position to seek to refresh its approach to the delivery of physical activity for FE learners in Wales. ColegauCymru can actively lead on taking this work forward collectively on behalf of FE partners and stakeholders, to agree a consensus on the strategic priorities moving forward.

**Recommendation 3**

ColegauCymru should liaise with the Welsh Colleges Sports Strategy Group to develop a new Welsh Colleges Physical Activity vision and strategy for the sector in Wales, taking into account the changes to the Welsh sporting and active recreation landscape.

**8.3**     Governance

Evidence from this review indicates that there is widespread support for ColegauCymru to continue to play a key, strategic role in facilitating, advocating on behalf of and coordinating physical activity (including active reaction and sport) across the Welsh Colleges network. To drive a future strategy, ColegauCymru may wish to consider reviewing their existing governance arrangements, such as developing and maintaining a high-level Board which would oversee the content and direction of a further education physical activity strategy and the monitoring of agreed national outputs and outcomes.

**Recommendation 4**

A new Welsh Colleges Physical Activity Board should be established to lead on all matters relating to policy, strategy and management of the Physical Activity strategy. The Board should operate as a small group of 8-12 people recruited following the development of terms of reference, skills matrix and recruitment process.

**Recommendation 5**

An appropriate number of sub-operational groups (we have suggested three) with responsibility for coordinating, implementing and capturing the learning from the Welsh Colleges Physical Activity strategy should also be established.

**Recommendation 6**

While some further education institutions have established governance structures, there were examples where reporting lines remained within one sector of the institution and the project was reliant on a small team, presenting a risk to sustainable activity. We recommend that future provision should focus on developing embedded and sustainable governance structures.

**8.4**     Structure and delivery model

One of the strengths of the project highlighted in this research has been allowing delivery models to adapt according to local need and consultation with the target audience, rather than being too prescriptive. This has also included situating some local projects outside of sports departments, which encourages participation and engagement from a diverse course background and is shaped by user feedback. Alongside this has been a shift from 'sport' to

physical activity promotion, health and wellbeing. This reflects the changing national picture where alternative and innovative delivery models and structures are being discussed.

**Recommendation 7**

The flexibility of local delivery models has been a positive aspect and should be continued. While ColegauCymru, in conjunction with funding partners, should set out a common operating framework for similar initiatives going forward, there should be sufficient scope for colleges to tailor provision against the new strategy at a local/regional level. The further education institutions should look to develop their own physical activity strategy that connects to a national framework.

**Recommendation 8**

ColegauCymru should review the remit of the Sports Coordinator role and re-name the post to National Physical Activity Lead.

**Recommendation 9**

Further Education Institutions could consider appointing a local Physical Activity Officer responsible for the delivery of their Physical Activity strategy.

**Recommendation 10**

We recommend that further education institutions should link future initiatives between sports departments and Learner Services/Health and Well-being provision. This link can assist with engaging a broad range of subject areas.

## 8.5 Allocation of funding

The modest amount of funding allocated to this project and distributed to colleges has achieved a positive outcome over a short time period, and the responsibility of being allocated an external source of funding has helped to focus further education institution thinking on the 'end game'. Several projects aspire to expand their project to reach more students, or more campus locations. Local circumstances vary considerably, meaning continuing with an equal allocation of funding and expectation of achievements is unrealistic.

**Recommendation 11**

While the equal level of funding to further education institutions was considered appropriate for the modest budget on offer, we recommend that the funding awarded to each institution in future gives due consideration to projects that are likely to lead to long-term and deep-rooted outcomes, that deliver against the new strategic plan, and to those that incur greater costs due to notable barriers (e.g. travel costs due to lack of facilities).

## 8.6 Recruitment and engagement

The Sport Wales investment via ColegauCymru has been successful in achieving its original aims and target numbers. Contributors agree it is targeted to an area of need which is evidenced through official statistics and local consultation and monitoring. The activities are reaching an audience who are at a critical point in the likelihood of drop off in participation and engagement in sport and physical activity. Some projects are incorporating information about nutrition, mental health and wellbeing and employment skills into activities which not only raise awareness of these associated benefits from taking part but also may help to 'hook' and engage with learners who don't associate themselves with 'sport'. Encouragingly, the feedback from this research and from the programme management information collated suggests that there is little duplication or displacement of provision, and that new, previously inactive or lapsed audiences are being engaged with.

### **Recommendation 12**

ColegauCymru and the Welsh Colleges Sports Strategy Group should continue to focus on less active populations and subject areas, female students and students with disabilities. There is scope to build on sport and physical activity delivery, combining aspects of nutrition, health, wellbeing and employment opportunities into the offer where feasible.

### **Recommendation 13**

Future activities should be made as visible as possible, promoting them and running them across the college in public spaces, advertising on screens around sites, via tutor groups, open days and surveys of new learners.

### **Recommendation 14**

ColegauCymru and college leads could consider how to draw on existing best practice to influence tutors that do not currently support the project, as they have been highlighted as a potential barrier to student participation.

### **Recommendation 15**

Sports students should continue to support the project through volunteering and leadership opportunities. All leaders need to be aware that for some students there is a considerable barrier of using the language of 'sport' for less active students who perceive themselves as having lower physical competence in comparison with sports students.

### **Recommendation 16**

Logistically, some projects have struggled to expand the current offer, finding it difficult to locate suitable instructors and deliverers and places to provide activity. Developing the

volunteer base can support this. Consideration could be given to whether UPSHOT provides a means of recording and sharing a database of instructors and volunteers.

**Recommendation 17**

Some projects have found it difficult to expand activities to 'outreach' campuses where little or no 'sports' facilities are located. Consideration should be given to sharing good practice where colleges have overcome this hurdle.

**8.7 Programme monitoring and data sharing**

The implementation of a standard monitoring system for all colleges has progressed well and in a short space of time, good quality evidence is being collected that can be used locally and nationally to monitor progress and shape future delivery and action plans. There are teething problems in collation of consistent data and with overcoming data protection regulations – this is by no means uncommon and progress has been made in the last year.

The system has the capability for much greater use and can be adapted to collect and to share evidence that will reflect the future aspirations of the sector. This does not have to be purely 'number driven', nor does it have to only monitor short term outputs. Seeking ways to evaluate long term impact on participants is an ideal, and making links with other partners to do this may be mutually beneficial.

**Recommendation 18**

ColegauCymru should review and where necessary refresh indicators to monitor and evaluate both the quantitative and qualitative impact of physical activity and its related effect on mental health and wellbeing within the Welsh Colleges network.

**Recommendation 19**

ColegauCymru should continue to promote the use of UPSHOT to capture quantitative and qualitative evidence demonstrating the impact of the project. The quality of evidence is improving and should support the development of a future strategy. It can also be used to promote and advocate the benefits of the project with new partners.

**Recommendation 20**

We recommend making links with other partners monitoring physical activity interventions nationally to assist with the measurement of the longer-term impact of this project on students and colleges. Current investment is reaching important target groups although it is not known whether this is leading to significant cultural shift and behaviour change. Other outcome measures that are important to colleges (such as Estyn's common inspection framework, WBFG national indicators and FEI learner outcome measures) could be considered.

## 8.8 Communications strategy

Continuing on from the theme of programme monitoring and sharing, the project is already collecting evidence that is currently only available to a restricted set of individuals.

Communicating these findings back to the contributors to this research, as well as policy leads, funders and potential future funders is important to promote and recognise local successes and to make timely use of emerging learning.

### **Recommendation 21**

ColegauCymru should communicate the outcomes of this review with the college network and key strategic partners.

### **Recommendation 22**

Sharing of learning points from this review and good practice across the college network should be encouraged. The conference is one avenue of pursuing this. ColegauCymru should produce a communications plan to share information relating to physical activity within the Welsh College network and to celebrate success. Consideration should be given to setting up an online exchange portal where practice and learning can be shared.

## 8.9 A collaborative approach

There is a huge amount of scope for ColegauCymru and further education institutions to work collaboratively to shape and deliver a continuation of the project and to jointly develop and subsequently deliver a future strategy. ColegauCymru is already engaging with a diverse range of existing operational partners with the project in its current format and there are many potential new strategic partners untapped who may support future work.

### **Recommendation 23**

ColegauCymru should develop a stakeholder map to identify key partners who will contribute to the successful delivery of the Physical Activity strategy.

### **Recommendation 24**

The newly formed Welsh Colleges Physical Activity Board should aim to create a diversified income generation strategy that will support the delivery of the Physical Activity strategy.

### **Recommendation 25**

Having established the Welsh Colleges Physical Activity Board and developed the new Physical Activity strategy, ColegauCymru should consider submitting funding applications to relevant partners to deliver against strategic objectives.



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