

Going for Gold: A strategy for sport in Wales’ Further Education Colleges

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Colegau Cymru
Uned 7 Cae Gwyrdd
Greenmeadow Springs
Tongwynlais, Caerdydd CF15 7AB
Ff: 029 2052 2500
E: helo@colegaucymru.ac.uk
W: www.colegaucymru.ac.uk

Colleges Wales
Unit 7 Cae Gwyrdd
Greenmeadow Springs
Tongwynlais, Cardiff CF15 7AB
T: 029 2052 2500
E: hello@collegeswales.ac.uk
W: www.collegeswales.ac.uk

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Foreword

ColegauCymru recognises the key importance of developing opportunities in sport for the thousands of young people and adults attending FE colleges in Wales.

There is strong evidence that participation in sporting activities leads to increased confidence and improves health and well-being. This combination of benefits can have a major impact on improving educational achievement and improving employability. Investment in sport pays huge dividends.

We want to build on the legacy of the 2012 London Olympics and Paralympics and ensure that young people and adults have access to a wide range of sporting opportunities.

We know that participation in sport declines after the age of 16, particularly amongst women. But first we need to find out the numbers and types of students taking part in sport in our colleges, what sports they are involved in and the extent of community involvement. This will provide a benchmark against which to judge progress.

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.

This draft strategy sets out a vision for the development of sport in colleges in Wales and identifies a number of key principles to make this vision a reality. It emphasises the importance of colleges building partnerships with their local communities and with sport governing bodies to maximise participation. It also emphasises the importance of the sports curriculum in colleges and the development of sport coaches and volunteers.

It is an ambitious strategy that I believe meets the key principles laid down by Laura McAllister, chair of Sport Wales, who, in her keynote address to ColegauCymru's 2012 annual conference, argued for a fresh approach to develop sport among 16-25 year olds and adults.

The drawing up of the draft strategy is timely. The Welsh Government in November 2012 set out a revised Government approach to raise the level of physical activity in the light of the successes of Welsh and UK athletes in the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

This draft strategy will now be sent principals, heads of sport in colleges, British Colleges Sport and other key organisations. A revised strategy will be presented to the ColegauCymru Board in Spring 2013. The revised strategy will form the basis of an ambitious and innovative proposal to Sport Wales for the development of sport amongst 16-25 year olds and adults.

I would like to thank Paul Croke, previously principal of Yale College, Wrexham, who has been responsible for drafting this strategy. In the course of his deliberations, Paul met with a wide range of organisations and individuals. I hope that all FE colleges and FE institutions will sign up to the strategy.

John Graystone, Chief Executive, ColegauCymru

The Rationale for a Strategy

There are 19 further education colleges and designated further education institutions in Wales. They deliver around 80% of post-16 qualifications in Wales outside of higher education (240,125 enrolments in 2010/11) and maintain close links with local and national businesses.

Two-thirds of 16-19 year old learners are at an FE college. Most enrolments (77%) at FE colleges are for part-time studies. Most learners (71%) are over the age of 19, with 29% aged between 16–19 years.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Coleg Gwent | 12. Coleg Ceredigion |
| 2. St David's Catholic College | 13. Coleg Harlech / WEA (North) |
| 3. Cardiff & Vale College | 14. Grŵp Llandrillo Menai |
| 4. Coleg Morgannwg | 15. Deeside College |
| 5. Ystrad Mynach College | 16. Yale College Wrexham |
| 6. Merthyr Tydfil College | 17. Coleg Powys |
| 7. Bridgend College | |
| 8. Neath Port Talbot College | Community-based institutions: |
| 9. Gower College Swansea | YMCA Community College |
| 10. Coleg Sir Gâr | WEA (South) |
| 11. Pembrokeshire College | |



What is sport?

Sport covers a wide range of activities. It may cover competitive team sports such as rugby, football, hockey and netball, individual sports such as swimming and cycling which may or may not be competitive and recreational activities such as hiking or mountain walking. Some say sport can also include games such as chess or bridge.

Why should colleges in Wales have a strategy for sports now?

The legacy of the 2012 London Olympic and Paralympic Games provides everyone associated with sports development in the United Kingdom with the opportunity to take positive action in the world of sport. Improving participation rates, engaging in partnerships, embracing opportunities for involvement and promoting healthy living for all are significant aspects of this legacy.

This draft strategy, "Going for Gold", aims to be fully inclusive. Its aspiration is to enable all participants to attain their own gold – to be encouraged and supported to achieve their own goals. The draft strategy covers: prospective Olympic and Paralympic medallists – the future Jade Jones, maybe – Wales' 2012 Olympic gold medallist in Taekwondo; those who

want to be able to practice and enjoy recreational sporting activities; disabled students keen to be actively involved in sport; and also coaches and volunteers who love nothing more than helping others reach their own personal gold.

Colleges in Wales, with their many thousands of learners can make a huge contribution to this drive for participation in sport and awareness of the importance of healthy living.

Professor Laura McAllister, chair of Sport Wales, is emphatic about the challenges facing all organisations involved in sport in Wales:

“Sport needs to keep adapting to be fresh and appealing. It needs to fit into today’s busy lifestyles. At Sport Wales, we will be incentivising new and innovative approaches. We cannot have more of the same. The same approaches will produce the same results”. (*Sport in Wales*, issue 21)

Sport Wales and the sports sector aspire to “unite Wales as a proud sporting nation”, for “every child to be hooked on sport for life” and that Wales becomes “a nation of champions”.

This document provides examples of how we can support Sport Wales and the sporting sector in delivering its vision. The priorities outlined in Sport Wales’ *A Vision for Sport in Wales* are:

- Skills for a life in sport
- Sporting opportunities
- Sporting communities
- Sporting excellence
- Growing a skilled and passionate workforce.

These provide a template for colleges in Wales to follow within the context of a modern further education environment.

Key strategies already developed by Sport Wales cover:

- Elite Sports
- Community Strategy
- Coaching and Volunteering.

Coaching and volunteering is of particular significance to the thousands of learners within our college communities. The challenge made by Professor McAllister of “doing things differently” is one that will be relished by the colleges in Wales as we seek to build on the sporting excellence that already exists.

Similarly, in their 2011 document “Growing Sport, Growing Colleges”, written before the Olympics in 2011, FE colleges in England outline their commitment to:

“provide a clear vision and direction for further education colleges and organisations that wish to work with them regarding the provision of sport and physical activity for students, staff and the wider College community”. (*A Strategy for Sport in Further Education Colleges 2011-2015* (England))

This draft document is being developed with the support of Sport Wales, British Colleges Sport, heads of sport and other representatives of Welsh colleges and ColegauCymru. It is anticipated that the strategy will cover the years 2013-2018 with a first review taking place in September 2013. A key feature of the strategy will be fact-finding and data sharing as we determine the current state of play in Welsh colleges’ sport and use this baseline to develop short-term and long term targets. In addition, ColegauCymru will 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.

This strategy puts forward an over-arching vision of ambitious aspirations for the colleges of Wales. It will be supported by an operational plan that will include realistic targets agreed by the heads of sport in the colleges, Wales Colleges’ Sports Strategy Group and ColegauCymru. It will be monitored by ColegauCymru.

Principles for Developing College Sport

All sports development in colleges should be underpinned by the following seven principles:

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
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.

Where are we now?

Sport is offered in every FE college in Wales, although national-level up-to-date statistics on the extent of participation in sports in colleges do not exist.

National data a reduction in activity in sport at the age of 16, most pronounced amongst young women. But there is also much to be proud of.

The following brief examples epitomise the sporting achievements of the colleges in Wales. They are by no means exclusive and many other achievements exist. A number of college-based teams have won highly prestigious sporting accolades and it is a tribute to the standard of college rugby that S4C has chosen to televise intra-college matches.

What our students say

Aled Davies

A former sport coaching and fitness student at Bridgend College, Aled won gold in the discus and bronze in shot putt at his first Paralympics in London 2012. He is now studying for a sports management degree at Cardiff Metropolitan University (UWIC) and trains with an able-bodied group in Cardiff. In recognition of Aled's outstanding achievement, Bridgend College awarded him an honorary fellowship at its Higher Education Awards Ceremony in October 2012.

Of his time at Bridgend College, Aled says "Bridgend College was a fresh start for me, and the course was exactly what I wanted to do. The tutors and the college were amazing, and helped me fulfil my potential. The college will always receive my recognition for playing such a vital part in my success."

Danny Lydiate

The 2012 RBS Six Nations rugby union Player of the Tournament, Danny Lydiate, was a student at Coleg Powys. Paying tribute to the college, he says:

"When I joined Coleg Powys, I was playing a lot of junior rugby, but was poorly developed in terms of conditioning. When I left, I was so much bigger, faster and stronger and I have no doubt how much this contributed to me turning professional with the Newport Gwent Dragons...without the college strength and conditioning programme I would not have been able to achieve these levels. It was the difference and is as good as any system in professional rugby."

Good practice in our colleges

A number of Wales' colleges have been awarded Sports Leadership Academy status by Sports Leaders UK. Grŵp Llandrillo Menai, the latest addition, outlines some of the activities that have led to its award:

“The College’s Community Sports Leaders have delivered sports sessions to primary schools and encouraged young people to actively get involved in sport. The Level 3 students have worked closely with Disability Sport Wales and helped organise disability swimming and athletics events. Students have also volunteered to assist at rugby matches at the Eirias Park complex in Colwyn Bay”.

Setting the Scene

Sport in colleges is extremely diverse. A summary:

The Sports Curriculum

Colleges offer a wide range of sports courses as part of the curriculum. They are proving to be more popular than ever and make a huge contribution to the employability of learners within the sports specific sectors. Many future sports coaches, PE teachers and sports specialists begin their sporting careers in colleges.

Enrichment

Sporting activities are enjoyed by thousands of learners outside their core programme of study and help enrich their college experience. Enrichment activities identify learners who participate in sport for fun and leisure purposes. The additional skills and experience gained on the various programmes also contribute to learners’ employability. Recently, some colleges have restricted their enrichment offer owing to financial pressures. However, this enrichment through sport can introduce many learners to new sports and activities. Many sporting champions started their sporting lives in enrichment activities.

Extra-curricular sport and competitions

Extra-curricular sport can also encompass college teams, academies and formal competitions, along with coaching awards and volunteering activities. These activities are not exclusive to sports students and many successful elite athletes study courses that are unrelated to the sports curriculum.

Community Sports and Activities

All colleges are located within communities and as such have a role to play in contributing to the programme of sport and related activities available to community members. Partnerships feature strongly in this context and it is the responsibility of all colleges to maximise opportunities to offer a varied programme. Annex 2 “Growing the Pyramid” depicts the diverse participation in sport of FE learners.

Serving the needs of learners of all ages and from a diverse wide range of backgrounds, colleges in Wales have a golden opportunity to contribute to the aspirations of Sport Wales in creating a nation of champions.

Vision

Our vision is that within the next five years, sporting activities will be embedded in the curriculum offer of all colleges and the numbers of learners actively involved in sport will have substantially increased and the facilities available considerably improved.

This vision is underpinned by five core strands

1. Developing opportunities for the wider college community – All Sports for All
2. Providing support for elite sportsmen and women
3. Promoting Sporting partnerships and increasing competitions
4. Improving the sports curriculum in colleges
5. Promoting health and well-being

Each of these is accompanied by objectives for the years 2013-2018 and by a rationale and aspiration. The vision for colleges in Wales is compatible with and supports the overall vision for sport in Wales set out in Sport Wales' 'A Vision for Sport in Wales'.

1. Developing Opportunities for the Wider College Community – All Sports for All

Rationale

The principle behind “all sports for all” is simple. Colleges have a duty to all learners to make available to them opportunities to participate in sports irrespective of ability or aptitude. The value of participation has been highlighted by Sport Wales in their Vision for Sport. Colleges in Wales, with their 200,000 students, can help realise this vision.

Aspiration

To increase considerably the number of learners who participate in sport and lead active lifestyles.

Objectives

- encourage new participants by providing opportunities for those who are not currently involved in sport
- encourage under-represented groups (especially women aged 16-24 and disabled students) to take up active lifestyles
- ensure that appropriate activities are inclusive and take account of specific needs of disability groups

Targets

By 2018, to double the number of learners actively engaging in sporting activities with a particular focus on those who are underrepresented in sport particularly young women and learners with disabilities and/or learning difficulties.

2. Elite Sports and Competitions

Rationale

One of our key principles is to provide all sports for all people. Colleges in Wales are aware of the huge reservoir of sporting ability amongst our learners and their key role in identifying and supporting elite athletes to take part and achieve success for Wales and the United Kingdom at the next Commonwealth, Olympic and Paralympic Games. In order to maximise this potential we need to invest resources to support our elite sports men and sports women and help realise Wales' ambition to create a "nation of champions".

Aspiration

To provide support for all talented college sports men and sports women that will enable them to fulfil their sporting and competitive potential

Objectives

- ensure a planned programme of talent identification and support to elite athletes that is compatible with the aims of Sport Wales and the National Governing Bodies
- identify and deliver in partnership with other agencies individualised support programmes for potential elite athletes
- increase the number of learners competing in intra and inter college competitions through maintaining and expanding the range of opportunities

Targets

By 2018, double the number of elite athletes available for selection by Wales and the UK for national and international competitions.

3. Sporting Partnerships

Rationale

Sport in Welsh colleges does not exist in a vacuum. FE colleges in Wales operate as social enterprises and have a responsibility to meet the needs of their local communities. The need to develop sport and healthy lifestyles extends to these communities as well as to the college itself. Attracting community members to our colleges to participate in sports and utilise our facilities can also have long-term benefits in terms of future recruitment and colleges' long term relationship with communities and other partners. Sometimes it only takes "one small step" to embark upon a life-changing journey.

Colleges should therefore engage with local, regional and national partners to maximise sporting opportunities for all learners whilst contributing to a "Team Wales" approach that sees Wales as a small nation raising aspirations. This will include schools, local communities, national governing bodies and Sport Wales. Relations with the English regions of British Colleges Sport need to be very strong. Having a National Policy Officer and Operations Manager for Welsh colleges in place will be vital in this context as they given responsibility for organising national and regional competitions.

Aspiration

To engage with all partners in sport and with our external communities to maximise opportunities for cross sector initiatives and encourage participation in college run sports schemes

Objectives

- support the proposed new FE college National Policy Officer to develop partnerships with National Governing Bodies with the aim of increasing the number of qualified coaches, officials and administrators in specific sports
- improve facilities and provision within our community centres and ensure that colleges are included in partnership initiatives to develop improved community facilities
- enhance sports provision for under-represented groups in partner schools, clubs, community settings and through leisure centres
- increase the number and quality of college links with regional and local sports partnerships, National Governing Bodies, local authorities and community clubs
- through the proposed National Policy Officer, develop partnerships between existing organisations that run competitions to ensure a unified approach to competition planning that reduces duplication and fills gaps

Targets

By 2018 every college should have developed close working relationship with at least two governing bodies and have in place an agreement with their local community to improve or share facilities

4. Sports Curriculum in Colleges

Rationale

The main purpose of the sports specific curriculum in our colleges is to raise aspirations and promote progression to further learning or training, higher education or employment. It is vital that all colleges provide a broad and balanced sports curriculum which prepares learners for the world of work and higher education. The possibility of a new Welsh baccalaureate qualification may provide opportunities for more learners to access sports and coaching awards as an integral part of their studies.

Aspiration

To provide college learners with a sports curriculum that guarantees pathways to higher education and the world of work

Objectives

- ❶ Increase the number of learners becoming qualified in a range of sport and leisure qualifications to contribute to an expanding workforce
- ❷ Improve the quality of the curriculum offer through continuous professional development of college staff and improved links to employers
- ❸ Enhance the curriculum through quality placements in schools, clubs and the communities thus supporting partnership initiatives
- ❹ Encourage more learners to participate in volunteering schemes

Targets

By 2018, every college will have reviewed its sports curriculum to ensure that it is relevant and up-to-date and has led to at least 90% of learners progressing to further education or training, higher education or employment

5. Health and Well-being

Rationale

Providing support for a healthy lifestyle is a core responsibility of all colleges and integral to their aims. Several colleges in Wales have already pursued the ambition of supporting staff and learners' health and well-being through the various corporate health awards.

Aspiration

To encourage and enable all learners and staff particularly through the promotion of sport and other activities to lead active, healthy lives which embrace healthy eating, and physical activity as key life skills

Objectives

- Work to ensure that a healthy and well-being programme is an integral part of all aspects of College life
- Promote physical activity and a healthy lifestyle through information and marketing encouraging staff and students to make active life choices
- Decrease the number of learners who are currently inactive

Targets

By 2018, all colleges to have in place a policy to promote healthy lifestyles which is reviewed regularly and which sets targets for improvements in health.

Implementing the Strategy

This strategy belongs to all the colleges of Wales and as such key actions should be agreed and owned by the sports staff who work diligently to ensure that sports development in the colleges is successful. The heads of sport in the colleges represent their colleagues on the various operational groups and have opportunities to convey opinions from their staff at regular regional and national meetings.

An important first step will be to provide an accurate database of the sports offered in colleges, the numbers of and type of learners involved in sport in colleges and the number of teams. Information on the various sporting activities currently offered and the availability of sports facilities will also be important.

Working with partners is key to the implementation of the strategy. Annex 1 “How to implement our strategy” indicates the various groupings that make up the operational management of the strategy.

It may be useful to explore the idea of individual colleges taking responsibility for leading in respect to a particular sport, based on a ‘hub’ type model.

It is vital that all partners work together positively to achieve actions that underpin the strategic aims, particularly in achieving those identified by Sport Wales in their vision document.

Additionally, the role of any prospective national sports co-ordinator will be paramount. Annex 1 also shows the relationship between the ColegauCymru Board, the Welsh Colleges’ Sports Strategy Group, the operational groups representing the colleges, the role of the prospective sports co-ordinator and the relationship with key partners such as British Colleges Sport, local authorities and the national governing bodies. The overarching vision is provided by Sport Wales.

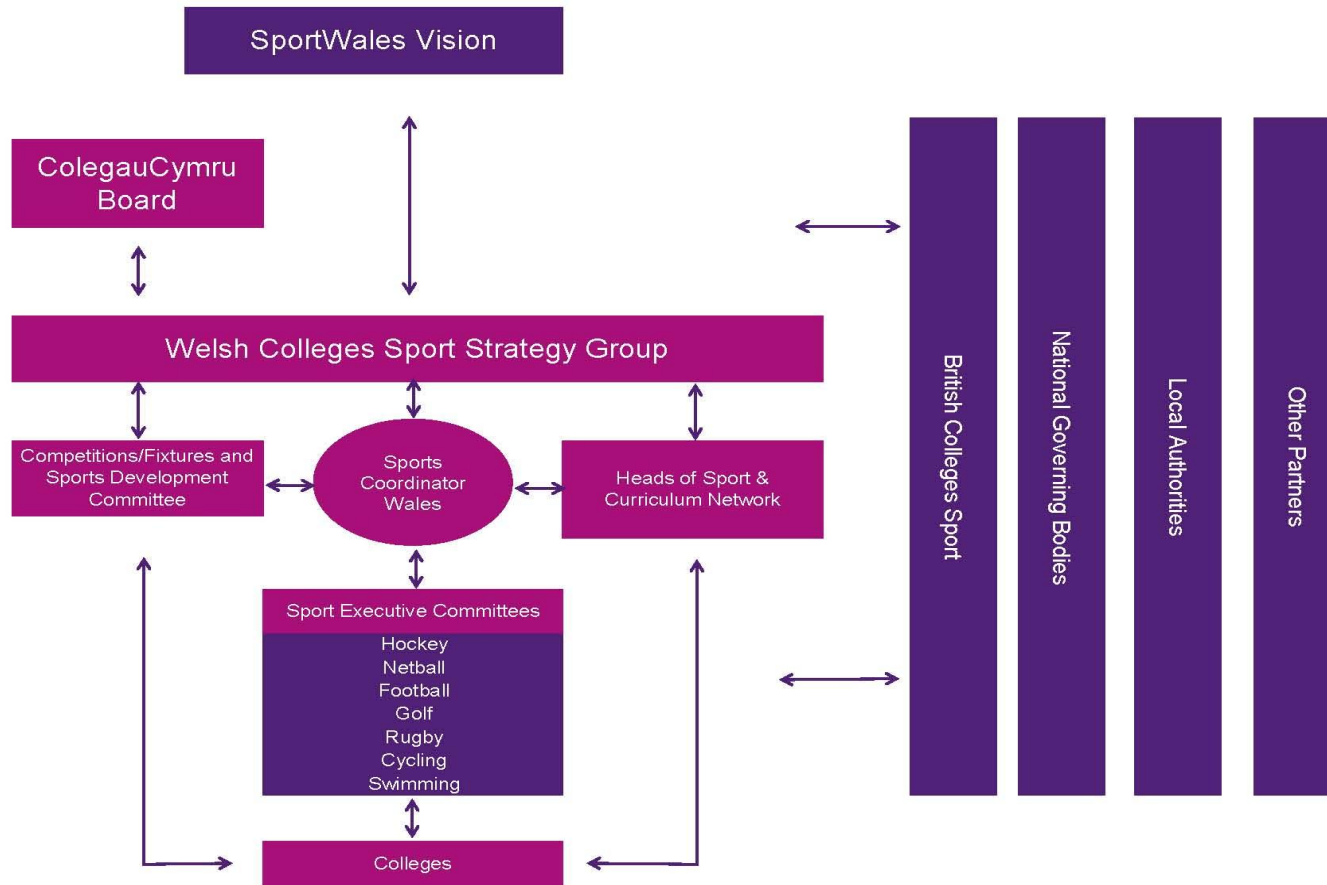
The Welsh Colleges Sports Strategy Group is chaired by a college principal who also sits on the British Colleges Sport Board and there is a direct link with the Board of Sport Wales with another college principal being a member.

This strategy will be underpinned by an operational plan agreed by heads of sport across Wales’ colleges and monitored by the prospective sports co-ordinator in conjunction with the ColegauCymru Board. This action plan will set out what colleges need to do and the key contribution of various partners to achieving success. The targets over the next five years set out in this draft strategy will be amended in the light of feedback from sports coordinators, with an initial interim review taking place in September 2013. It is vital that the communications process between all key partners is effective. The recommendations made on Page 16 of this strategy support this aim.

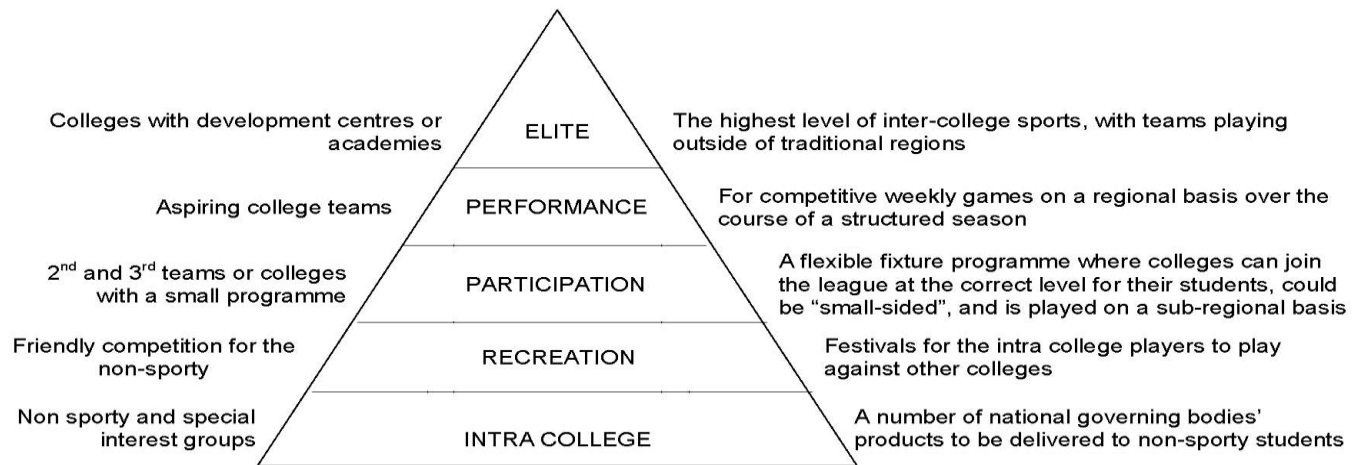
Where next?

1. Conduct research amongst colleges to find out the number learners involved in sporting activities, broken down by sport, and broken down by type of learner; the number of teams and competitions; the number of elite and potential elite sports men and sports women. This data can be as a benchmark to assess performance
2. Request Sport Wales nominates a manager to become a member of the Wales' Colleges' Sports Strategy Group.
3. Invite representatives of National Governing Bodies to attend appropriate meetings of the Wales' Colleges' Sports Strategy Group.
4. Hold a joint workshop (with Sport Wales and British Colleges Sport) to determine key targets and actions to underpin the Strategic Plan 2013-2017 (Spring 2013).
5. Define the role of the national Sports Co-ordinator, and identify the administration required to support competition planning.
6. Invite all college principals in Wales to endorse the strategy. Consider including a commitment to freeing up Wednesday afternoons for sport.
7. Urge the Strategy Group to consider its relationships with HE partners in terms of accessing facilities and inter FE/HE sports competitions.
8. Liaise with British Colleges Sport with regard to student volunteering initiatives.
9. Liaise with British Colleges Sport with regard to observing good practice in equivalent regions of England (e.g. West Midlands).
10. Liaise with British Colleges Sport with regard to the provision of student participation and performance data.
11. Liaise with British Colleges Sport with regard to external communications, including reference to the inclusion of the sporting achievements of Wales' colleges in key documents such as its Annual Report.
12. Liaise closely with SkillsActive, the sector skills council for active leisure and learning.

Annex 1 - How to implement our Strategy



Annex 2: Growing the Pyramid



Annex 3: Key Partners and related documents consulted

ColegauCymru is grateful to the key organisations and individuals who have assisted in devising this draft strategy. The document thus far provides an initial vision for the years 2013-2017. It is only the start of a process.

The following are the main partners and documents consulted:

Sport Wales

A Strategy for Elite Sports

A Vision for Sport in Wales

Community Strategy

Coaching and Volunteering Strategy

Climbing Higher – Next Steps

British Colleges Sport

Growing Sport, Growing Colleges – A strategy for Sport in Further Education

Colleges - 2011-2015

Annual Report 2012

Building the Pyramid – intra college sport

Association of Colleges/Sport England

The Future of Further Education Sport – consultation report February 2010.