

IFRCS39 James Trafford, on behalf of Cardiff and Met Hockey Club

Senedd Cymru | Welsh Parliament

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Ymateb gan: James Trafford, ar ran Clwb Hoci Caerdydd & Met | Evidence from: James Trafford, on behalf of Cardiff and Met Hockey Club

1. What impacts has reduced funding had on your organisation and sector so far?

Cardiff and Met Hockey Club used to receive £3,000 from Hockey Wales recognising our performance club status. The last time we received this was for the 2021-22 season. The funding was then stopped. This means we have been operating with a reduction of £6,000 over the past two seasons (22/23 and 23/24).

In addition to this funding, we receive a grant from the National Governing Body to cover pitch hire costs. For the 23/24 season we received a grant of £7917.90 (inclusive of VAT) to cover pitch costs. However, these grants have decreased: we are due to receive the following:

- 2024/25 - £6,200 plus VAT
- 2025/26 - £5,500 plus VAT.

As detailed above, whilst we have certainly suffered from a reduction in funding, these sums were modest in the first place. Naturally we would welcome increased funding, but our greater concern is to address a failure to realise our potential and take advantage of the momentum created by a successful and dedicated group of athletes. Put bluntly, hockey facilities in Wales as a whole are poor and declining.

Wales could achieve far higher levels of performance with a more strategic and devoted source of support and funding. The article below rightly attracted a great level of coverage. It reflected the commitment of our Welsh athletes. It was also a depressing reflection of the lack of support they received.

'I don't think the other teams bring a packed lunch' - how Wales broke a glass ceiling to reach Hockey World Cup - BBC Sport

2. What measures have you taken in light of it, such as changing what you do and how you do it?

We have liaised with Cardiff Council in light of the options available to Cardiff and Met Hockey Club ("CMHC") in order to further grow and improve the standard of hockey at the Club. Despite the arrangements with Cardiff Metropolitan University, which sees CMHC making use of the single astro turf facility at the Cyncoed campus, for a club boasting six men's and six (five competitive, one friendly) women's teams the lack of clubhouse and access to more pitches is hindering its further growth. It is notable that only two locations in Wales offer two adjacent hockey specific astro turf pitches (one in Swansea and one in North Wales). This is an astonishingly low number. [Note: football 4D pitches cannot be used for hockey].

3. To what extent will these impacts be irreversible (e.g. venues closing, or specialist skills being lost rather than a temporary restriction in activities)?

CMHC have a recent unparalleled success in the hockey world. The men's 1st XI are entering their second season in the National League Premier League meaning they are in the top 12 teams in England and Wales. They are the only club in this league and the broader national league without a dedicated facility. They have represented Cardiff and Wales in European competitions for many years and the club boasts a number of current Welsh internationals.

The international men's team is currently ranked 17th in the World. The international women's team is currently ranked 25th.

In addition to the teams we run, we have a full junior programme to accommodate. When put alongside the Cardiff Met BUCS teams, all operating on the one pitch, we are incredibly stretched and it is hampering growth and opportunity.

4. What interventions would you like to see from the Welsh Government, beyond increased funding?

Although at a local city led level we expect to continue liaising with, and looking for support from, Cardiff Council, we also need the support of wider government in terms of helping to identify possible partnerships with local schools, asset transfers or available land which might be suitable to locate one of preferably two pitches and associated club house and changing facilities. Our club – but the wider hockey community - is worthy of support and we have absolute confidence it will repay the local community many times over.

5. To what extent do the impacts you describe fall differently on people with protected characteristics and people of a lower socioeconomic status?

CMHC have achieved success with limited grant and funding and without material private means, unlike the vast majority of other Premier League teams against which they compete.

CMHC has a long and rich history of providing opportunities for youngsters in Cardiff and the surrounding areas to take up a sport that can sustain and motivate. The junior sections are thriving but can achieve more with support. It is notable that first team players and internationals take an active part in coaching the junior sections.

Our club – and the broader Welsh hockey community – provide a valuable opportunity for youngsters (a number of which do come from deprived backgrounds) to join a club which nurtures and develops them, giving greater self-confidence and self-worth.

As a club, we take our role in society seriously. We are not just a sports club. We have a rich tradition of helping our members pastorally with many examples of helping young adults (whether or not graduates) into local employment and assisting students to get their coaching badges via our junior section.

6. Do you have any other points you wish to raise within the scope of this inquiry?
