

Delivering with less – Leisure Services



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Some facts about Wales



- **Area:** 20,800 km², **Population:** 3,074,000 (2012)
- **Capital:** Cardiff
- **Currency:** Pound sterling (£)
- **GVA:** £55.8 billion (2015)
- **Poverty rate:** 23%
- **Employment:** 73% **Unemployment:** 4.4% (March 2017)
- **Median earnings:** £492 per week
- **Official languages:** English and Welsh -19% speak Welsh
- **Legislature:** National Assembly – (specified devolved powers)
- **Executive:** Welsh Government – (largely funded by UK Government)

Wales within the UK



*From 'Europe Location' map series ©
David Liuzzo*

Areas of devolved functions include:

- Health
- Housing
- Education
- Economic Development
- Rural affairs (including agriculture)
- Heritage (museums, sport etc.)

Reserved functions:

- Taxation (but some devolution starting)
- Defence
- Justice and Policing

The Auditor General for Wales and the Wales Audit Office



The Auditor General for Wales is the statutory auditor of:

- Welsh Government and its sponsored bodies
- Health service bodies in Wales
- Local government bodies in Wales
- Over 800 bodies in total

Total annual value of expenditure audited >€27 billion

The Wales Audit Office provides the resources to the Auditor General to deliver his programme of audit work (approximately 250 staff)

Auditor General for Wales



Auditor General's work:

- Duty to audit accounts (provide opinion on them)
- Powers to examine and report on economy, efficiency and effectiveness ('value for money' or 'vfm') and to make recommendations for improving vfm
- Statutory **discretion** in the way powers and duties are exercised; is not directed by government - can, for example, pursue issues raised by the public

Impact of Austerity



- Public services face significant and increasing financial, demand and capacity pressures
- Wales - £1.2 billion (7%) cuts (2011-2015)
- NHS, Education and Social Services 'protected', impact is less funding for other services
- Sport and recreation services delivered by Local Authorities have seen reduced expenditure of about 22% over the last 7 years
- Leisure reviewed as part of a series of reviews on how public bodies are 'Delivering services with Less'

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Agencies involved



- **Welsh Government** - 20-year plan (*Climbing Higher*) - to increase participation in sport and leisure activities to improve the quality of life and improve the health of the nation.
- **Local Authorities** in particular identified as playing a crucial role in providing, supporting and developing leisure and recreation services
- **Sport Wales** – funded by Welsh Government to develop and promote sport and physical activity in Wales (Grants and programmes)
- **National Governing Bodies of Sport**
- **Voluntary sector** – sports clubs and community groups
- **Private sector** – health clubs and gyms

Scale of provision



- Wales has a generally good range of provision in terms of built facilities for sport and recreation (over 800 publicly funded facilities)
- Many sports facilities were built in the 1970s and 1980s and require significant investment to refurbish or renew
- Because of historical factors and population change over the past 30 years a number of facilities are not necessarily in the best location

Community sport and recreation provision



- Majority of community sport and recreation facilities have been provided by local authorities and are heavily subsidised by them
 -but this is changing
- Provision is not a statutory requirement for local authorities (less than 2% of expenditure)
- Local authorities are under increasing financial pressure
- Emergence of alternative models of provision
 - Not for profit Trusts
 - Social enterprises
 - Public/private partnerships

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Archwilydd Cyffredinol Cymru
Auditor General for Wales

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WALES AUDIT OFFICE
SWYDDFA ARCHWILLO CYMRU



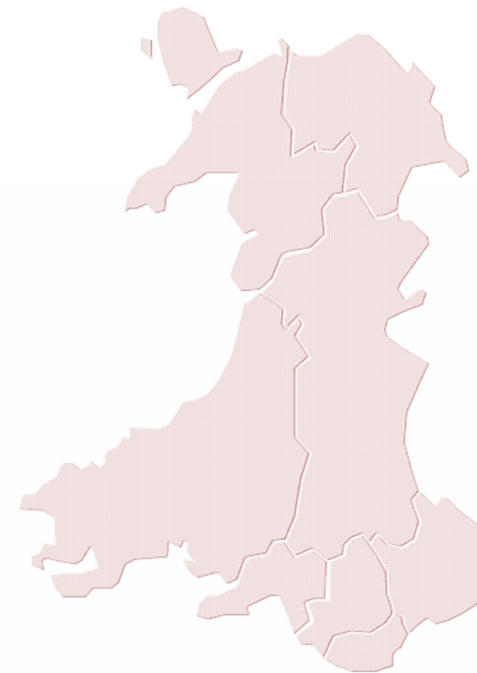


We surveyed elected members, senior leisure officers and citizens

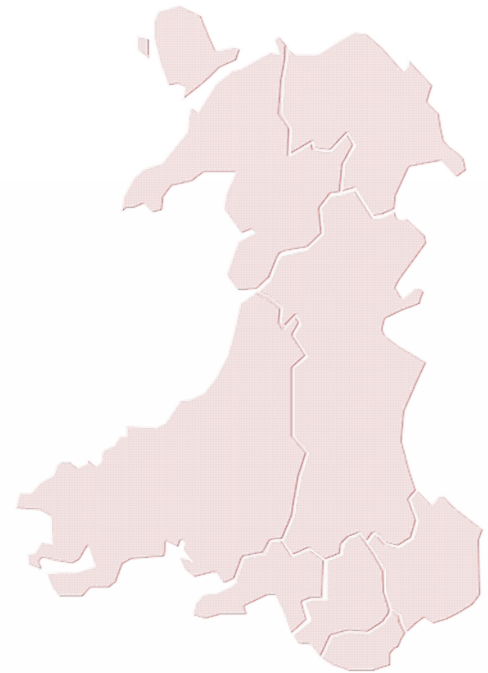
Completed fieldwork at a sample of authorities

National level interviews with Welsh Government and Sports Wales

Completed a detailed analysis of current service provision at **22 authorities**



**The ongoing impact of austerity
presents a risk to the continued
provision of services**



Recreation and sport revenue spending has fallen by 21.7% since 2009-10

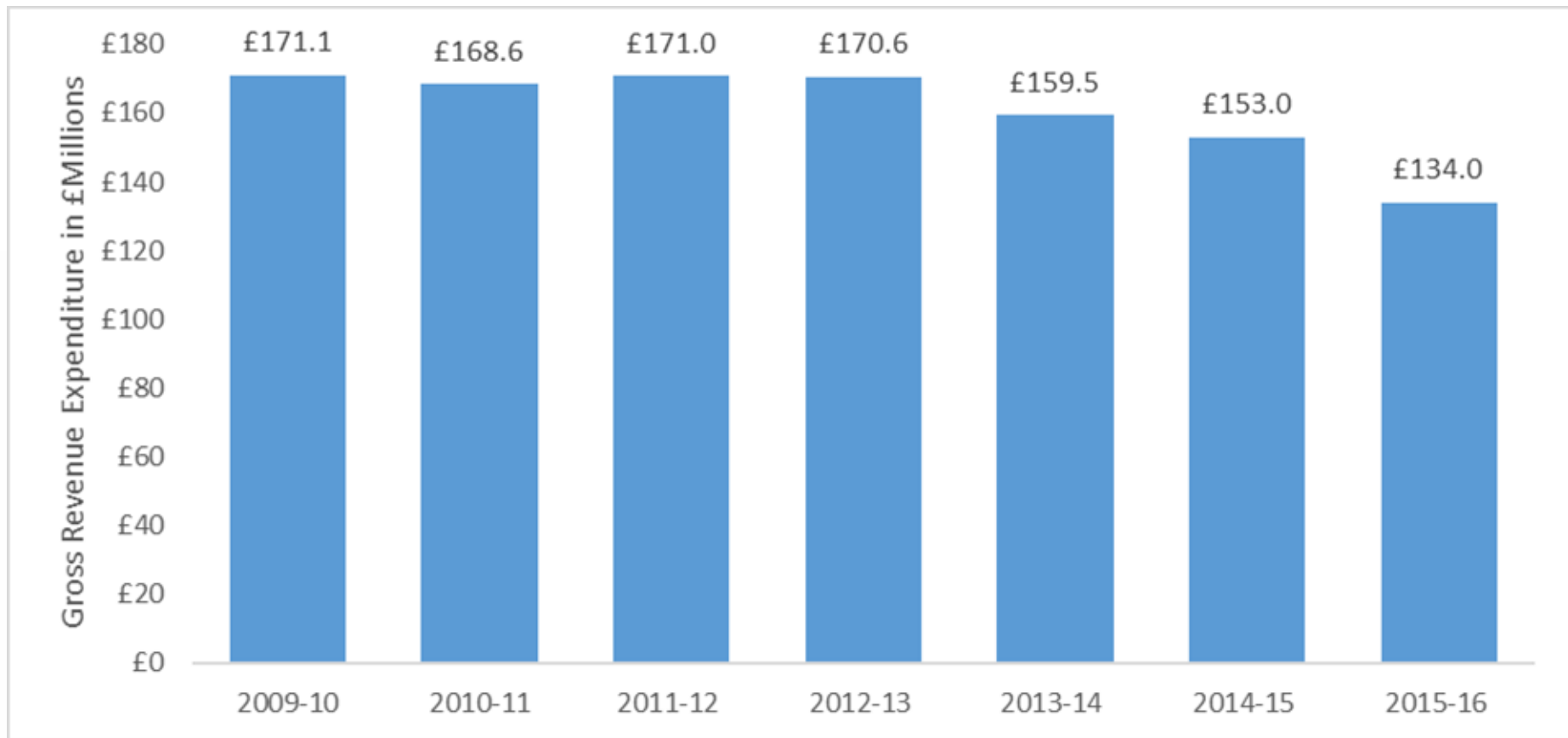


Exhibit source: Revenue outturn expenditure 2009-10 to 2015-16, StatsWales

All Wales spending on sport and recreation has not maintained the spending power of that in 2009-10

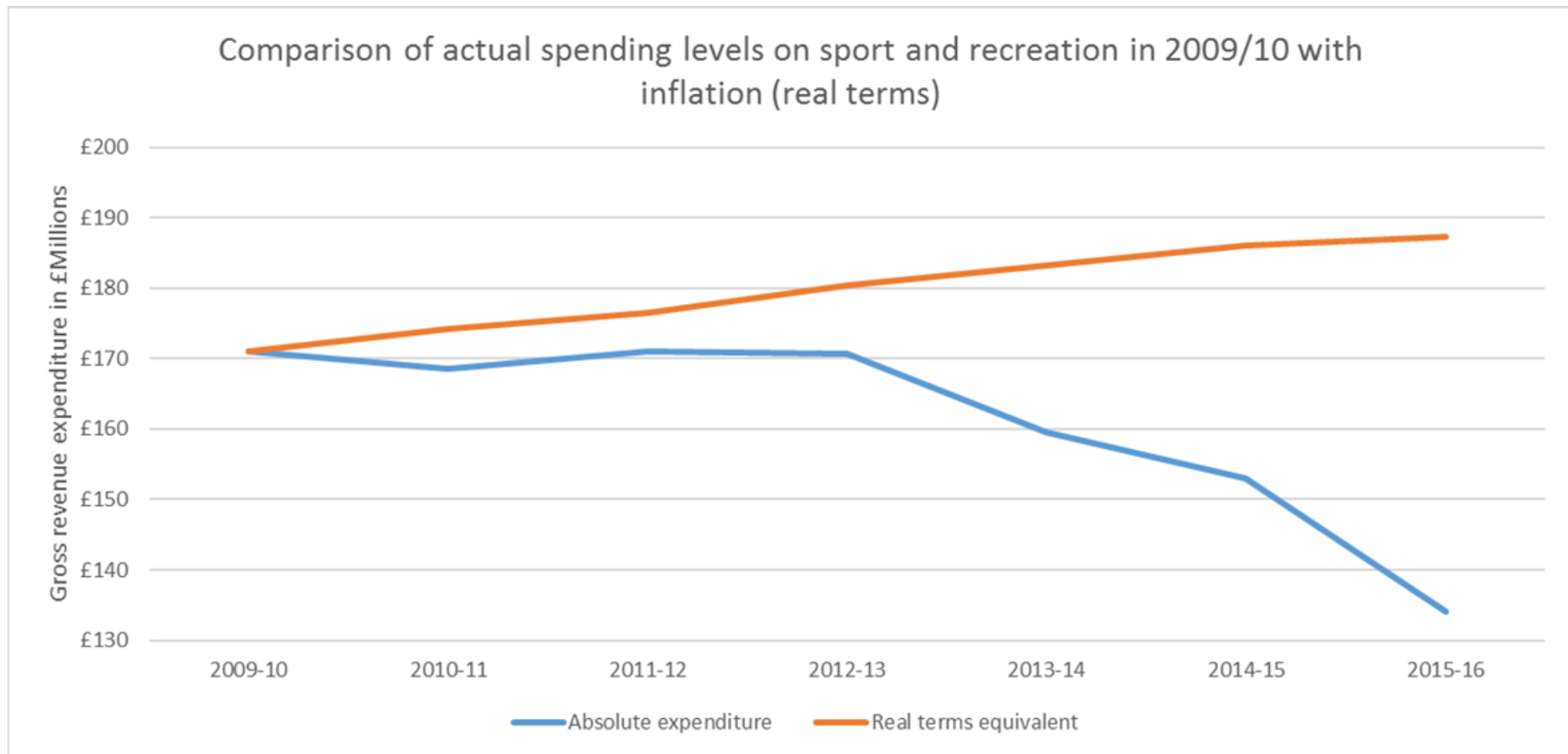
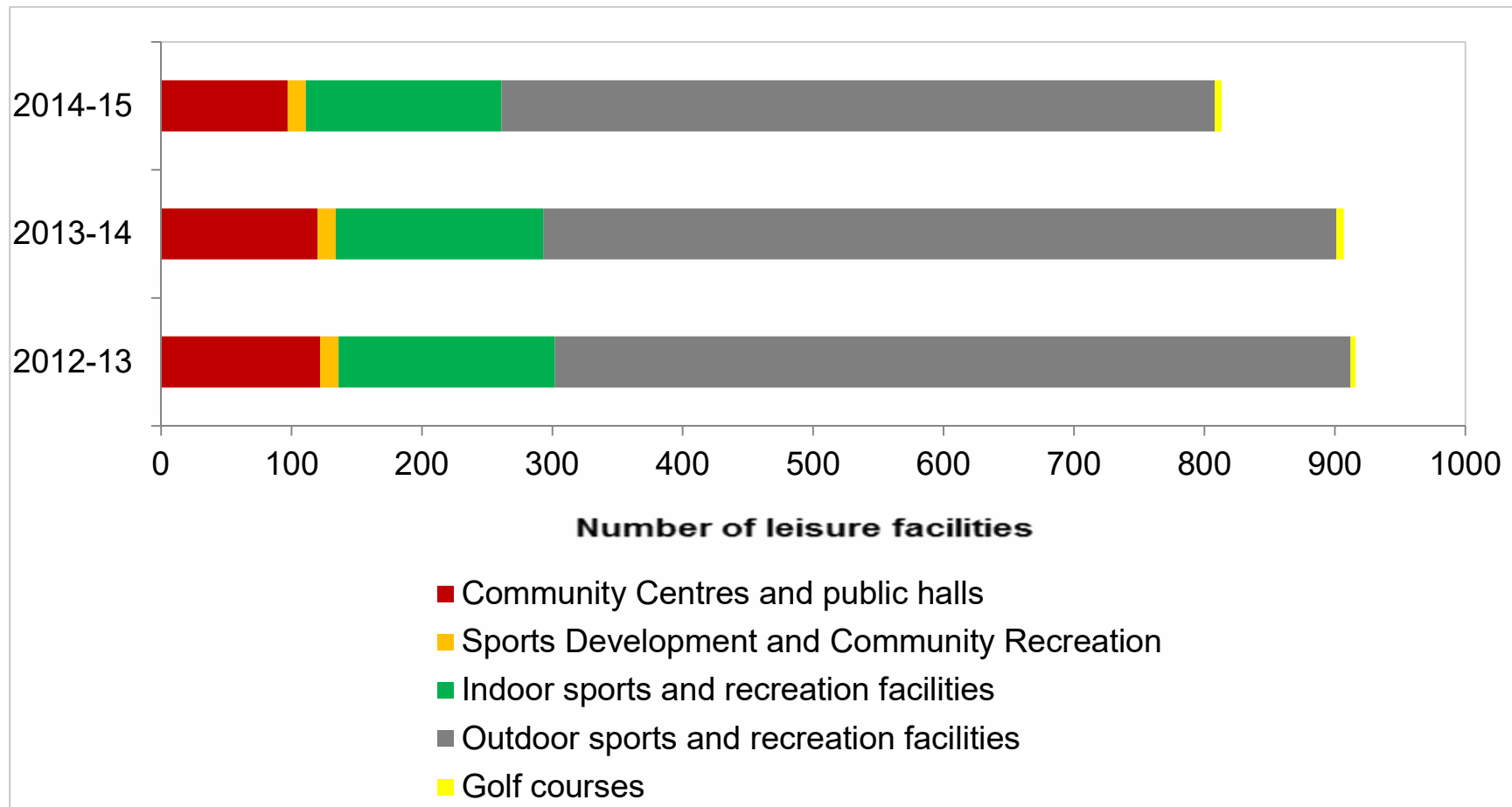
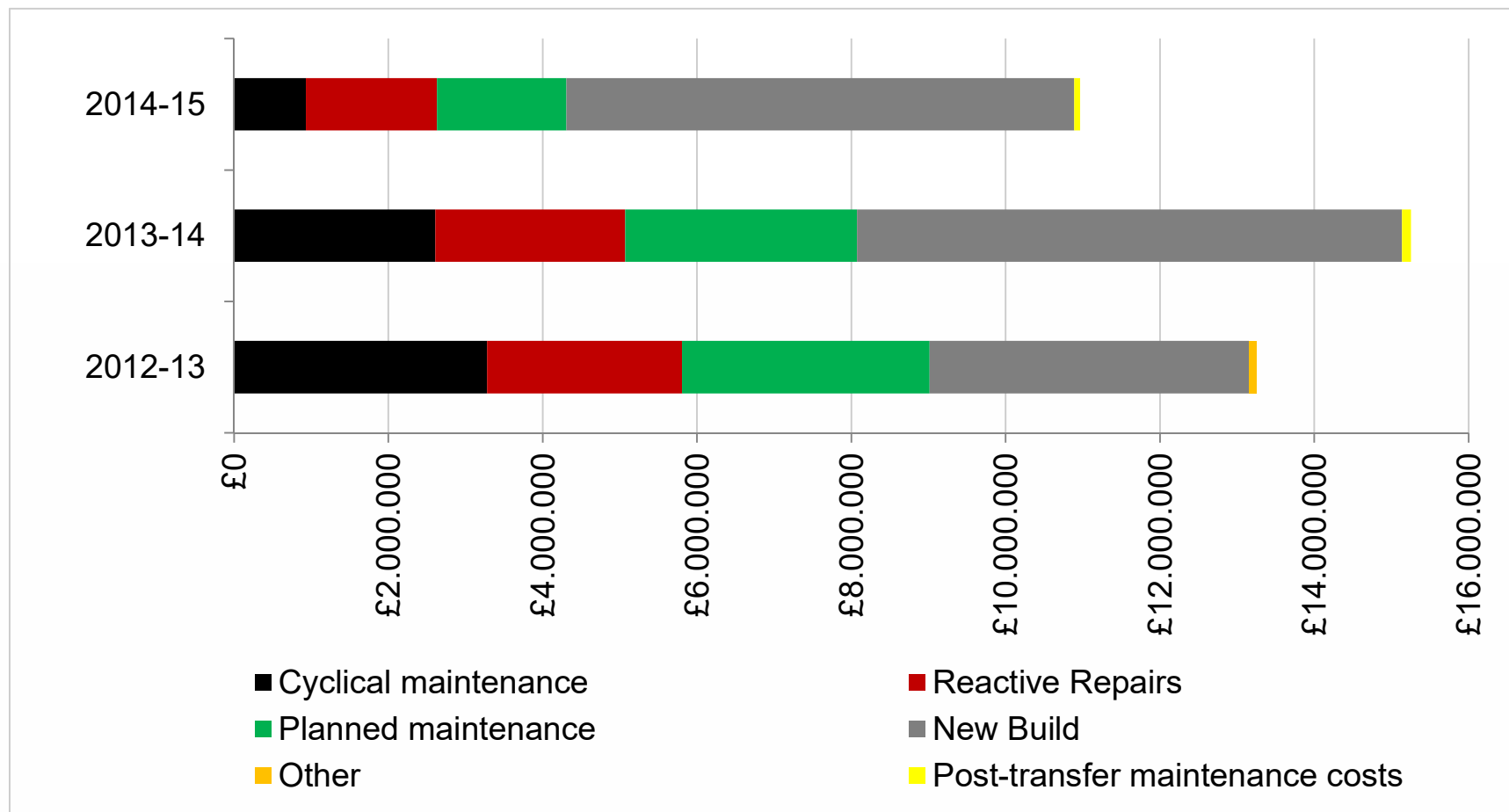


Exhibit source: WAO analysis of Revenue outturn expenditure 2009-10 to 2015-16, StatsWales

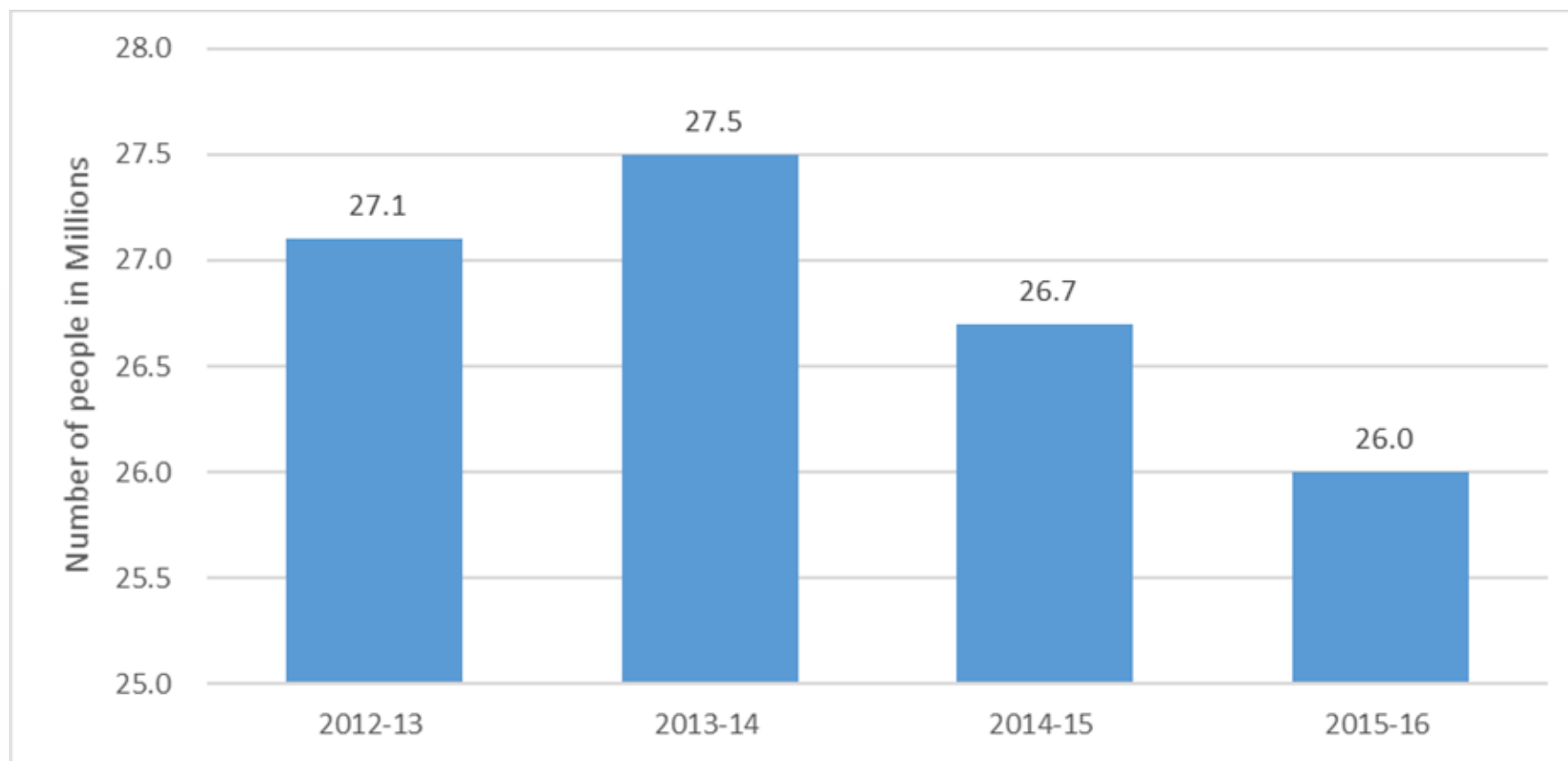
The number of publicly funded leisure facilities has fallen by 11% (2012-13 to 2014-15)



Authorities are reducing how much they spend on servicing, maintaining and improving their leisure facilities

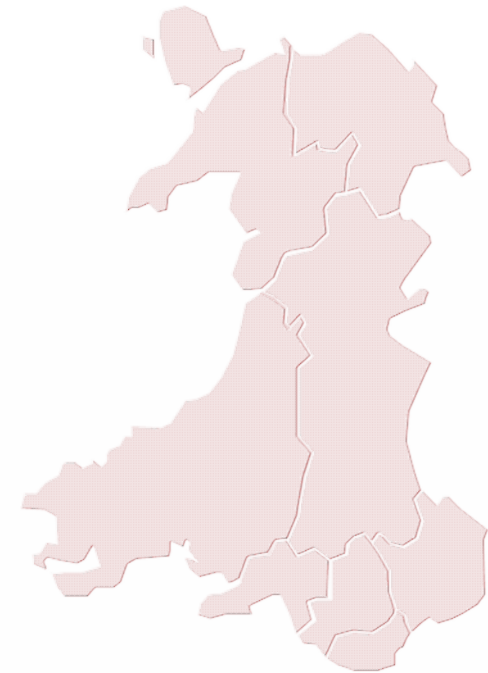


Across Wales the number of people using public leisure services has fallen for the last two years.



Source: Welsh Government: National Strategic Indicators – LCS/002b: Number of visits to sport and leisure centres during the year where the visitor will be participating in physical activity

Public sector leisure provision is changing with the transfer of services and assets to other models of operation, BUT decisions have not always been based on thorough information

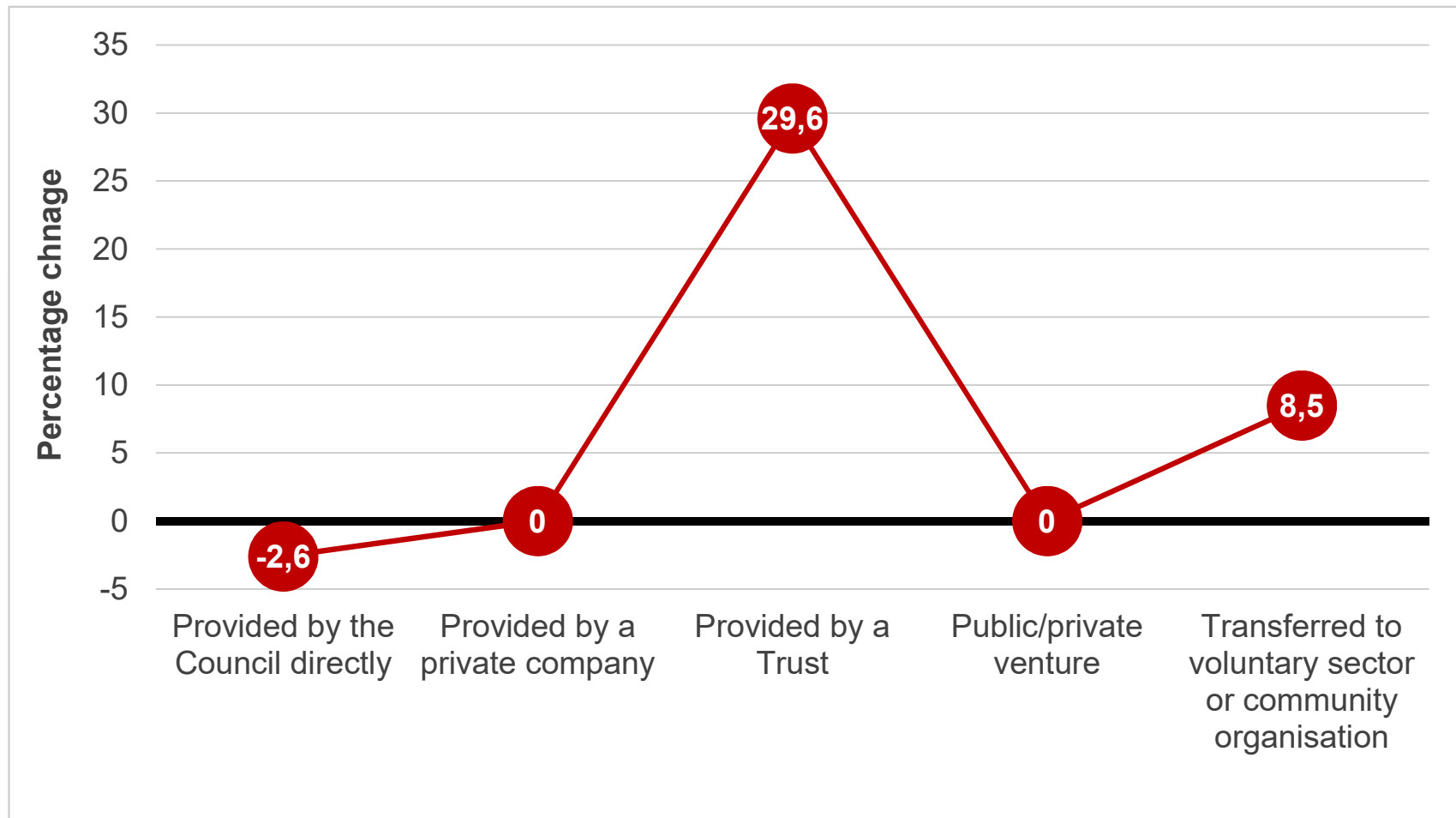


Variety of options



- Given the difficult financial climate, many authorities are undertaking options appraisals to identify the most appropriate delivery models.
- There is a variety of options that authorities have been, or are, exploring in providing leisure services. These include:
 - continuation of public provision;
 - partnership with a private sector provider;
 - transferring management to a trust;
 - voluntary sector management; and
 - some services being withdrawn and/or facilities closed.

Between 2012-13 and 2014-15: Leisure services management arrangements are slowly changing



Options appraisals

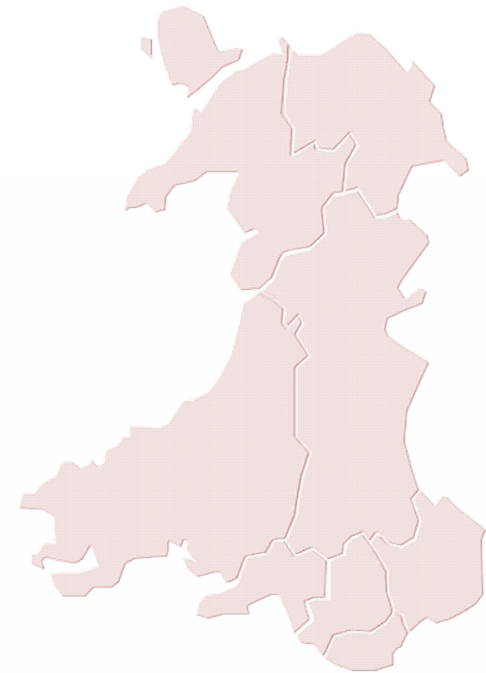


BUT

- Not always a clear long-term strategy (options driven by short-term financial need)
- Not all options always considered
- Collaboration with nearby authorities seldom considered
- Options appraisals often lack detailed cost information
- Service users are seldom consulted (18% of citizens felt they had been consulted on changes)
- Decisions to change provision are generally not thoroughly scrutinised
- Councils do not always have the right data available to support effective decision making or to monitor and evaluate their performance

Overall study conclusion

Authorities' approaches to delivering leisure services focus on addressing immediate financial challenges rather than taking a longer-term strategic approach to future provision



Recommendations



- Develop long term strategies – involving all stakeholders
- Improve range of options and quality of information to support options appraisal
- Improve the quality of performance information to measure impact
- Improve public consultation and engagement when considering changes
- Ensure options are thoroughly examined and decisions are effectively scrutinised

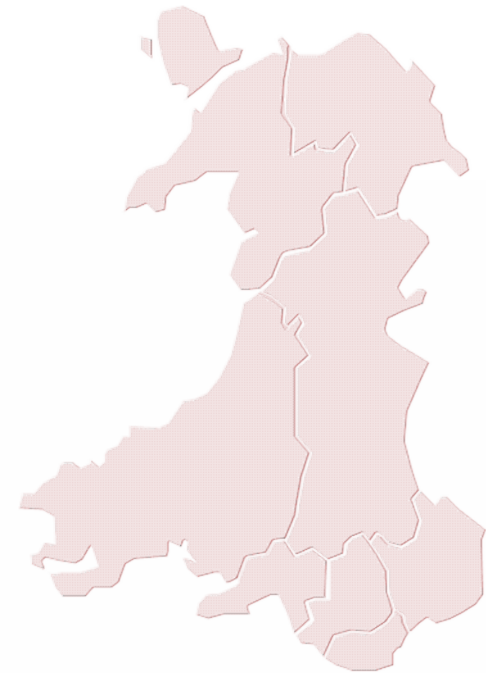
Ongoing Challenges



- **Ageing facilities** - expensive to maintain, need updating or replacing but resources are scarce.
- **Rising expectations** - Quality of facilities is important in attracting and retaining a wide range of participants
- **Community ownership** - can help in providing a more inclusive and responsive service – but communities needed to be willing and able
- **Sharing assets** - More school facilities could be opened for community use – but schools are being rationalised

Sustaining provision

Ensuring the sustainability of publicly accessible sport and recreation relies upon greater collaboration between local authorities, other organisations, clubs and citizens



Further Information

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