

EP 1010/03-07

Alun Pugh AC/AM

**Y Gweinidog dros Ddiwylliant, y Gymraeg a Chwaraeon
Minister for Culture, Welsh Language and Sport**



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref AP/00112/07

Elin Jones AM
Ty Goronwy
32 Pier Street
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SY23 2LN

March 2007

Thank you for your letter of 28 February 2007 regarding 60+ Free Swimming at Lampeter Pool in your constituency. I am also responding as part of my Plenary commitment of 14 February to write to you on this matter.

Our local authority partners have considerable flexibility to manage the delivery of Free Swimming locally. The grant they receive via the Sports Council for Wales is provided in two parts, in September and March of each financial year and is linked to the receipt of relevant and accurate management information. The precise way in which the Free Swimming grant is subsequently managed locally is at the discretion of the local authority.

I understand Ceredigion County Council pay the Free Swimming grant to Lampeter Pool in advance of receiving their allocation from the Sports Council for Wales (SCW) but I am also aware that there are ongoing discussions between the local authority and the pool Manager about the level of grant received. Clearly this has to be a matter determined at local level but I would assume that factors such as relative size, throughput and costs would be relevant considerations. I do know, however, that the pool was successful during the bidding round for the Free Swimming Improvement Fund and received a further grant of £3,200 for pool equipment and to operate structured sessions such as aquacise.

The Sports Council for Wales is party to the discussions between Ceredigion County Council and Lampeter Pool regarding the Free Swimming funding issue and I am assured that the Free Swimming provision for Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire residents has not been affected by these discussions.

I hope this is helpful.

To: 1. Stephen Woodfine
2. Alun Pugh AM

[AP/00112/07]
CC: Sara Butlin
Lynda Wilce
Valerie Taylor
Nadia Brown

From: Nigel Champ
Sports Policy Unit
Ext 1408
Fax 5119

Date: 23 March 2007

60+ FREE SWIMMING - LAMPETER POOL

1. Elin Jones AM has written regarding 60+ Free Swimming for the Over 60s at Lampeter Pool. Officials have combined this jacket with your Plenary commitment to Elin Jones AM on 14th February 2007 (doc 1).
2. A draft reply is provided with this advice.

NIGEL C CHAMP
Sports Policy Unit

01 MAR 2007



Cynulliad National
Cenedlaethol Assembly for
Cymru Wales

Elin Jones AC/AM

Plaid Cymru Ceredigion

Alun Pugh AM
Minister for Culture, Welsh Language and Sport
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
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28 February 2007.

Annwyl Alun,

Re: Free Swimming for Over 60s

I recently visited a group of pensioners who are swimmers at Lampeter Pool in my constituency. The Pool Manager also attended the meeting. This is the only swimming pool in Lampeter and it is a community-owned pool.

Five out of the six public swimming pools in Ceredigion are community pools – only one is run directly by the Local Authority. As such, several issues have arisen that is making the continuation of the Free Swimming initiative at Lampeter virtually impossible:

1. The fact that the National Assembly does not release funding early in the financial year means that the Local Authority also does not release the funding to the independent pools and this causes severe cash flow problems;
2. Ceredigion County Council divides its allocation equally amongst all six pools. This means that for a pool such as Lampeter that has a large number of free swimmers – 75 each week on average – they then do not receive funding that reflects the numbers of participants. In this financial year, Lampeter Swimming Pool was expecting £6,000 for the Over 60 programme, but due to changes by the Sports Council, it has only received £4,000. This allocation was used up by Christmas and since then, the Pool has run the scheme on goodwill alone;
3. Lampeter's situation is further complicated by the fact that over 30% of its pensioner swimmers are from Carmarthenshire. It receives no funding at all from Carmarthenshire and therefore has at times refused free swimming for Carmarthenshire people – a postcode lottery for the over 60 swimmers!

I hope that you are able to take up these points as you assess the Over 60s Free Swim initiative – it is obviously problematic in its present state for independent, community pools. It is very successful in Lampeter and it would be a great loss if it had to be curtailed at Lampeter.

I look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely,

Elin Jones AM

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