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Exploring and comparing how 'health' is understood by physical education teachers across the four nations of the UK

What? This infographic describes the results from our interviews with physical education (PE) teachers from across the four nations of the UK (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales) where we talked to them about the concept of health and wellbeing within their curriculum. It's important to note that we interviewed a small number of teachers from each country. Our findings are not intended to generalise, but to stimulate thinking and dialogue.

Who? For teachers, pre-service teachers and teacher educators interested in PE, health and wellbeing across the four nations of the UK, and in the concept of cross-border learning more broadly.



This infographic demonstrates how the **curriculum can influence** how PE teachers understand health and wellbeing. It also demonstrates the **different ways** in which PE teachers can understand health and wellbeing, and how this influences their practice.

Why? Understanding the influence that curriculum can have on teachers creates opportunities to read curriculum more critically, to challenge dominant perspectives and develop alternative, more creative ways of thinking about health and wellbeing.



SOME KEY FINDINGS



The PE teachers from England and Northern Ireland discussed the ways in which PE can support pupils to adopt physically active lifestyles.

“But in terms of health, I think PE certainly has a way of setting people up for how they are active throughout their life and establishing those healthy knowledge and behaviours.”

Hugh, England, secondary PE teacher



Across all the countries, except for Scotland, the teachers highlighted the role that sport can play in promoting health and wellbeing.



The PE teachers from Scotland and Wales shared the understanding that health and wellbeing is a broad concept that comprises social, emotional, mental and physical aspects.

“ We ... take care of the physical wellbeing, but also, we strive to ensure that the emotional and the mental and the social wellbeing of our young people are also looked at and developed throughout the years as well.

Keith, Scotland, secondary PE teacher



The teachers in Scotland referred to health and wellbeing in relation to caring for their pupils. They frequently referred to: showing empathy, developing positive relationships and ensuring that their learners feel safe.



Image: Cardiff Metropolitan University

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU?



The curriculum will have some influence on how you understand health and wellbeing. However, there are alternative ways of thinking about health and wellbeing in PE. These can be used to read curriculum critically and think more creatively about what health and wellbeing should mean and be for your pupils.



REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

Consider your context and your pupils.

- How does your own understanding of health and wellbeing align with your PE curriculum?
- How does health and wellbeing within your PE curriculum relate to the lives and health of your pupils?
- How could health and wellbeing within your PE curriculum better connect to the lives of your pupils?

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