

UK Sport Consultation - Call for Evidence: Submission by the Sport and Recreation Alliance

The Sport and Recreation Alliance

The Sport and Recreation Alliance believes that the power of sport and recreation can change lives and bring communities together. Together with our members and in partnership with the wider sector, we make the most of our opportunities and tackle the areas that provide a challenge. The Sport and Recreation Alliance provides advice, support and guidance to our members who represent the outdoor recreation sector, traditional governing bodies of games and sport, county sports partnerships, water pursuits, and movement and dance exercise. As the voice of the sector, we work with Government, policy makers and the media to make sure grassroots sport and recreation grows and thrives.

Section 1: What Inspires?

UK Sport's vision is: A nation inspired by Olympic and Paralympic success Q1. What Inspired

1, What example(s) can you give of how an international sport, an athlete, team or event has inspired you?

Sport and recreation have enormous power to inspire - through success, overcoming challenges and through people being the best they can be. Inspiration is drawn from many sources - and it is important that the full breadth of the inspirational power of sport and recreation are recognised and supported.

The Alliance is proud of the successes of our members – from the grassroots to the elite and from the first engagement with sport and recreation to the global pinnacle of sporting achievement. There are countless examples of memorable moments which have an unparalleled reach and impact on providing inspiration.

The current system has, generally, benefited from clear and well understood objectives. In the case of providing inspiration as a specific aim of the system, this could be developed further.

There is potential to understand more and to build a more compelling evidence base, which addresses:

1. *The precise nature of inspiration – what are we trying to inspire people to do?*
 - a. *If the system is intended to specifically inspire greater participation levels, then this should be explicit and a specific, targeted plan put in place across all sports to achieve this.*
 - b. *Clear metrics should also be in place to better articulate (and measure performance) in relation to providing inspiration.*
2. *The nature of a causal relationship between elite success and the resultant inspiration and how this can best be harnessed and grown.*
3. *How can we build a sustainable, diverse system which offers choice and visibility of a range of sports in order to spread the potential inspiration of success as widely as possible?*

2. What are the wider impacts?

The sport and recreation sector delivers enormous impact - on people's health and wellbeing, on the economy and in tackling many social issues. There is a relationship between elite success and participation at the grassroots level, which some sports having been able to particularly capitalise upon this. However, a stronger and more comprehensive evidence base to demonstrate the nature of this relationship and how best it may be exploited should also be developed.

Elite success and event hosting have significant impacts – in promoting the strengths of the UK internationally, in driving community regeneration and in providing vital moments of national unity and cohesion.

It is important that success can be delivered on a sustainable basis across as many sports as possible. Without any correction measures put in place, the current system could lead to over concentration in reducing numbers of sports and disciplines, and lead to diminishing returns over time (i.e. greater concentration in fewer and fewer sports leading to less cross system sustainability).

5. And which of these inspires you the most? Please select one only

- Team GB / ParalympicsGB achieving or beating their medal target at the Olympic and Paralympic Games
- Team GB/ParalympicsGB maintaining a top 3 position in the medal table at the Olympic and Paralympic Games
- England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland teams achieving or beating previous achievement at other global sporting events (e.g. Commonwealth Games; World Championships, international events etc.)
- Individual sports achieving or beating their specific medal target at the Olympic and Paralympic Games
- Individual sports achieving their own goals at other global sporting events (goals that may not necessarily be medals)
- British athletes achieving their own individual goals at the Olympic and Paralympic Games (whether this is winning gold, silver, bronze or making the final, achieving a personal best, breaking a world record etc.)
- English, Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish athletes achieving their own individual goals at other global sporting events (whether this is winning gold, silver, bronze or making the final, achieving a personal best, breaking a world record etc.)
- Lesser known sports achieving success
- The number and variety of sports being funded to compete internationally (i.e. do you think the higher the number of sports funded, the greater the inspirational impact)
- Diversity across British athletes competing internationally (age, identified gender, social and economic background, sexual orientation, ethnicity etc.)
- British athletes raising awareness of sport and sharing experiences/knowledge with society (e.g. through local volunteering, visiting schools etc)
- British athletes overcoming adversity to compete internationally
- British athletes becoming role models within society
- British team sports being able to compete internationally (not necessarily winning medals) • British athletes succeeding in sports that a large number of people play or follow
- No overall preference

6. Which of the following, if any, do you think are the most likely outcomes for a nation inspired by British sporting success? Please choose up to three potential impacts only

- Pride in the achievement of our athletes
- Pride in Great Britain and NI generally
- Greater social cohesion across communities (on a local and / or national basis)
- Increase in people becoming more active generally (but not necessarily through organised sport)
- Increase in people participating in organised sport
- Increase in people's mental well-being through participation in sports/activity
- Increase in people exploring ways to become an international level athlete
- Increase in people getting organisationally involved with sport, sporting bodies, sporting events etc (e.g. working in the sector, volunteering at events...)

- Increase in people more generally contributing to their community (e.g. volunteering or charity work not necessarily in the sports sector)
- Enhancing Great Britain and NI's status on the world-stage
- Increase in local and national economy (e.g. through increased tourism, new direct investment in the UK etc.)
- Increased demand for and investment in new sports facilities and clubs
- Other (please write in)
- Other (please write in)
- Don't know

7. Thinking ahead to the future, is there anything else you want to say about how international sport, international level athletes and sporting events can be inspirational or more inspirational?

The current system has delivered world class, sustained success. It is the envy of many performance and elite sport systems across the world and has many strengths and attributes which must be protected. In terms of potential changes in future, the Alliance would recommend that:

- 1. The specific UK Sport elite funding model is considered in the wider context of the ways in which the sport and recreation system operates and that this particular policy area is not considered in isolation. For example, this should include a rounded discussion about talent development, building a sustainable system and considering the particular relationship between this element of the system and inspiring people to be active.*
- 2. There is a strong case for a base level of funding for all Olympic and Paralympic sports, which would further broaden the reach and therefore inspirational potential of the system.*
- 3. There should be a more graduated approach to removing funding, ensuring that one disappointing performance does not result in systems wide damage – for example through immediate withdrawal of all/multiple funding streams.*
- 4. The system should support world class, international performance across a diversity of sports. Government and UK Sport should consider broadening the current remit of the policy to allow for some non Olympic and Paralympic sports to be funded – particularly given the far lower level at which medal success could be delivered in many of these sports.*
- 5. Athlete visits are maximised – to ensure that all days are delivered and that the considerable potential of athletes to be role models are realised. The current rate of take up would suggest that there is greater potential in this area. Athletes should be trained and directed to suitable opportunities, with good quality support provided by UK Sport and others.*

Section 2: What is success?

We asked you to describe your views on how international sporting success can inspire members of the British public. We would now like you to consider what it means to you for Great Britain and Northern Ireland to achieve “success” at an international level. When considering this question, you may consider “inspiration” and “success” to share some, all or none of the same attributes.

2. What example(s) can you give of how an international sport, athlete or event has been successful? Please write in

There are many examples of world class success in British sport. Inevitably, this relates in large part to medal success and in achieving success in world class competitions. It is important to have a nuanced and rounded definition of success, which includes:

- a) Recognition and respect for success in the full range of sport and recreational activities.*

- b) *Recognising that success is not restricted to medals – but may also include elements such as overcoming challenges, reaching world class competition and in achieving sustained progress within sport and recreation.*
- c) *Building a sustainable, attractive system and offer which encourages and facilitates participation and nurtures and develops future talent.*

3. And what wider effect or impact do you think this has had? Please write in

At its most simple level, success as defined as the current system relates to medals. Medals do matter and achieving and beating stretching targets and maintaining Team GB's and Paralympics GB's relative performance against competitor nations is a key measure of success. However, more broadly a successful system is one in which talent is nurtured, diversity is embraced and success is delivered on a sustainable basis. Where the system has worked best, these have been the impacts.

4. And which of these do you think is the MOST important measure of success for UK Sport's investment?

- Team GB / ParalympicsGB achieving or beating their medal target at the Olympic and Paralympic Games
- Team GB/ParalympicsGB maintaining a top 3 position in the medal table at the Olympic and Paralympic Games
- England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland teams achieving or beating previous achievement at other global sporting events (e.g. Commonwealth Games; World Championships, international events etc.)
- Individual sports achieving or beating their specific medal target at the Olympic and Paralympic Games
- Individual sports achieving their own goals at other global sporting events (goals that may not necessarily be medals)
- British athletes achieving their own individual goals at the Olympic and Paralympic Games (whether this is winning gold, silver, bronze or making the final, achieving a personal best, breaking a world record etc.)
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- Diversity across British athletes competing internationally (age, identified gender, social and economic background, sexual orientation, ethnicity etc.)
- British athletes raising awareness of sport and sharing experiences/knowledge with society (e.g. through local volunteering, visiting schools etc)
- British athletes overcoming adversity to compete internationally
- British athletes becoming role models within society
- British team sports being able to compete internationally (not necessarily winning medals)
- British athletes succeeding in sports that a large number of people play or follow
- No overall preference

Q7. Are there any other measures of success that could be considered? Please write in

Success should also be measured in the following ways:

1. *The building of a sustainable system.*
2. *An equitable and fair spread of funding across sports as appropriate and against agreed success criteria.*
3. *A world leading approach to duty of care in sport.*

Section 3: Funding Strategy

Professional sports such as football, golf, tennis and rugby have their own funding structures to support their athletes and teams in international competitions. Other sports, particularly those which are represented in amateur events such as the Olympics, Paralympics and Commonwealth Games are heavily dependent on government and National Lottery funding to be able to compete internationally.

UK Sport assesses which sports - currently Olympic and Paralympic sports - will receive funding. This assessment is based on a range of factors of which the most critical is the potential for athletes and/or teams to win a medal at future Olympic and Paralympic Games.

We will ask you over the next few questions about your opinions on this current funding structure. Please remember that UK Sport has no responsibility, direct involvement or government directive in community, school and grassroots sport which are the responsibility of other organisations.

2. In terms of being inspirational, what are the positive factors of the current investment policy (where medal potential at future Olympics and Paralympics Games is the primary focus)? Please write in

The current system has many strengths and has delivered impressive and sustained success. There is undoubtedly a benefit to the country more widely from this success and considerable potential to inspire. This exercise should be part of a wider examination of the whole sporting system – and the ways in which this can be used to deliver inspiration.

The current system also benefits from being clear and transparent, in having well understood objectives, in delivering success across many sports and disciplines (though this should potentially be increased further) and in valuing success across different sports and disciplines equally.

The current system has also successfully delivered many ‘medal moments’. These are essential and provide an invaluable platform to promote sporting success, promote the UK internationally and to bring the country together. However, these moments can only deliver on their potential when they have suitable profile – and this is dependent on good quality, accessible media coverage. This has been a strength of recent successes (particularly in relation to the Paralympic GB Team) – but must be protected and nurtured in future with positive media relationships built.

3. In terms of delivering success, what are the positive factors of the current investment policy (where medal potential at future Olympics and Paralympics Games is the primary focus)? Please write in

No further comments – see above

4. And in terms of being inspirational, what are the negative factors of the current investment policy (where medal potential at future Olympics and Paralympic Games is the primary focus)? Please write in

There are a number of ways in which the system could potentially change. These include:

1. *Baseline funding for all Olympic and Paralympic sports*
 - a. *There may also be a case on an overall cap for funding – in terms of an absolute amount in one cycle or as a percentage of investment by the sport itself*
2. *Considering widening the time horizon for likely medal success (i.e. funding for sports across 3+ cycles)*
3. *Examining whether restrictions in funding to only Olympic and Paralympic sports remain fit for purpose (i.e. considering support for international/world class performances in other sports)*

- a. *This should also consider the extent to which it is appropriate that UK (or, indeed home nations) funding decisions are predicated on a list of IOC/IPC approved sports for competition (and indeed categories within individual sports, e.g. Para Triathlon categories for Tokyo 2020)– over which this country has limited control*
4. *The potential for non Olympic and Paralympic sports to access support (e.g. in sport science/governance/commercial sustainability) should also be considered*
5. *Examining the operation of this particular system in line with the wider sporting system and landscape*

5. And in terms of delivering success, what are the negative factors of the current investment policy (where medal potential at future Olympics and Paralympic Games is the primary focus)? Please write in

There have been examples of poor practice in sport in relation to duty of care and it would appear that in some cases a ‘no compromise’ policy has been mis-interpreted and given rise to this behaviour. It is imperative that the health and wellbeing of athletes and all of those who work within the system is of paramount importance.

The overall system should also provide seamless transitions – from talent development, performance and end of career transitioning. There is potential to make further progress in this area and to achieve better success for athletes and the overall system.

There is considerable potential to bring further diversity to our sporting teams, squads and overall system. Reaching a greater range of participants will clearly increase the size of the base of the talent pyramid and high profile, diverse sports people providing a more representative picture of modern Britain would provide inspiration to future participants. This is a further area in which a systems wide view is needed – for example in ensuring that appropriate access is available to a full range of sports.

Section 4

With a fixed amount of investment to distribute to sports, a change to the current investment policy such as an equal distribution of funding for all sports could have direct consequences. For instance it may include proportionately less support and funding for sports which are likely to deliver success and therefore the potential for far fewer medals at international events such as the Olympic and Paralympic Games but it might mean funding sports which more people play but where historically medal success is more challenging.