

CCPR

One voice for sport and recreation



Getting the Ball Rolling

Sport's Contribution to the 2008 - 2011 Public Service Agreements

Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	4
Chapter 2: Stronger communities and a better quality of life	7
Chapter 3: Fairness and opportunity for all	21
Chapter 4: Sustainable growth and prosperity	34
Chapter 5: A more secure, fair and environmentally sustainable world	39
Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations	42

Chapter 1: Introduction

Sport policy in the UK is undergoing its latest shift. The recent announcement of Sport England's new three-year strategy heralded a firm commitment to funding sport for sport's sake¹. This contrasts with much of what has gone before. For the last decade or so, an emphasis on the instrumental value of sport – its presumed contribution to health, crime, employment and education, for example – has reflected a government agenda of developing communities *through* sport, rather than developing sport *in* the community². In 2003, at CCPR's annual conference, Richard Caborn, the then Minister for Sport, stated that the Government would 'not accept simplistic assertions that sport is good as sufficient reason to back sport'³. Contrast this with the speech made by James Purnell, the then Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, who initiated this latest policy shift in 2007: 'Sport matters in itself...too often sport is justified on the basis of its spill-over benefits'⁴.

While this restatement of sport's intrinsic benefits has been welcomed by many of the national governing bodies of sport, this does not imply that sport and recreation organisations are reluctant either to recognise their role, or to invest, in helping to achieve wider social and economic objectives. Indeed there are countless examples of organisations seeking to use sport and recreation as a means of positively influencing both individuals and communities. Furthermore, there is a rapidly increasing evidence base which supports the premise that sport and recreation can make contributions across a very wide range of government policy areas. Some of this evidence relates to specific, targeted sport-based programmes, while some refers to the wider benefits of general forms of sport engagement – participating in sport, volunteering in sport, or being a member of a sports club.

Nor does this change in emphasis suggest that the Government has abandoned its belief in the wider benefits of sport and recreation. In fact, several current government policies and programmes are based on these convictions. To take just one example, the PE and Sport Strategy for Young People (previously the PE, School Sport and Club Links strategy), was founded, in part, on sport's capacity to improve health and physical fitness and pupil concentration, commitment and self-esteem, leading to higher attendance, better behaviour and attainment⁵. Nevertheless, despite explicit recognition of sport's inherent and external benefits in various government speeches and policy statements, in many areas of social and economic policy, the role of sport remains ignored, poorly understood and under-supported.

The last ten years have seen a number of reviews of the social and economic benefits of sport: *Sport and Social Exclusion*⁶; *Policy Action Team 10: Report to the Social Exclusion Unit – Arts and Sport*⁷; *The Role of Sport in Regenerating Deprived Areas*⁸; *Game Plan*⁹; and *The Social Benefits of Sport*¹⁰. In addition, Sport England and UK Sport have sponsored an on-line database of published research, the *Value of Sport Monitor*¹¹. Together, these highlight research evidence and case studies and make a series of recommendations for how sport could be most

¹ Sport England (2008) *Sport England Strategy, 2008-2011*, London, Sport England. Accessed online at: http://www.sportengland.org/sport_england_strategy_2008-2011.pdf

² Coalter, F (2007) *A Wider Social Role for Sport: Who's Keeping the Score?* London, Routledge.

³ Caborn, R (2003) *Transcript of Richard Caborn's Opening Speech at CCPR Conference, 20 May 2003*, London, Department for Culture, Media and Sport. Accessed online at: http://www.culture.gov.uk/reference_library/minister_speeches/2126.aspx

⁴ Purnell, J (2007) *World Class Community Sport – Speech by Rt. Hon. James Purnell, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport*, London, Department for Culture, Media and Sport. Accessed online at: http://www.culture.gov.uk/reference_library/minister_speeches/2056.aspx

⁵ Department for Education and Skills (2003) *Learning through PE and Sport: A Guide to the Physical Education, School Sport and Club Links Strategy*, London, Department for Education and Skills, p. 1. Accessed online at: <http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/LTPES.pdf.pdf>

⁶ Collins, M, Henry, I, Houlihan, B and Buller, J (1999) *Sport and Social Exclusion: A Report to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport*, Loughborough, Institute of Sport and Leisure Policy, Loughborough University. Accessed online at: <http://www.sportdevelopment.org.uk/collins1999.pdf>

⁷ Policy Action Team 10 (1999) *National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal: Policy Action Team Audit, Report of the Policy Action Team 10: The contribution of Sport and the Arts*, London, Department for Culture, Media and Sport. Accessed online at: <http://www.sportdevelopment.org.uk/html/pat10.html>

⁸ Coalter, F, Allison, M and Taylor, J (2000) *The Role of Sport in Regenerating Deprived Urban Areas*, Edinburgh, Scottish Executive Central Research Unit. Accessed online at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/156589/0042061.pdf>

⁹ Department for Culture, Media and Sport/Strategy Unit (2002) *Game Plan: A Strategy for Delivering Government's Sport and Physical Activity Objectives*, London, Cabinet Office. Accessed online at: <http://www.sportdevelopment.org.uk/gameplan2002.pdf>

¹⁰ Coalter, F (2005) *The Social Benefits of Sport: An Overview to Inform the Community Planning Process*, Edinburgh, **sportscotland**. Accessed online at: <http://www.sportscotland.org.uk/ChannelNavigation/Resource+Library/Publications/Social+Benefits+of+Sport.htm>

¹¹ Sport England/UK Sport (ongoing) *Value of Sport Monitor*. Accessed online at: <http://www.sportengland.org/vosm/vosm.htm>

effectively supported in order to maximise its beneficial impact. This report seeks to complement, and in some places update, these reviews, while ensuring that the information it provides is tailored as much as possible to current government priorities.

The Government's 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review announced 30 new Public Service Agreements (PSAs), which set a vision for how the Government would seek to achieve its priority outcomes over the Comprehensive Spending Review period, 2008-2011. These 30 PSAs have been grouped by the Government into four priority areas:

- Sustainable growth and prosperity
- Fairness and opportunity for all
- Stronger communities and a better quality of life
- A more secure, fair and environmentally sustainable world

Each PSA is underpinned by a single delivery agreement shared across all contributing departments and developed in consultation with delivery partners and frontline workers.

This report analyses the potential impact of sport and recreation on the Government's key objectives, as stated in the various PSAs. It looks at the aims and objectives of the relevant PSAs, their delivery agreements and the key policy documents that underpin them. In so doing, the report reviews the most recent and robust research evidence and provides examples of current and previous policies and programmes in which sport and recreation organisations contribute to wider social and economic goals. It is hoped that this report will be of significant benefit to policymakers, as it directly demonstrates the role sport could play in a wide range of social and economic policy areas.

The report is organised into chapters based on the Government's four priority areas identified in the Comprehensive Spending Review. Chapter 2, *Stronger communities and a better quality of life*, includes, among other things, an examination of the impact of sport and recreation on health (in reference to PSA 18) and the role of sport in the context of building cohesive, active communities (PSA 21), the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games (PSA 22) and crime reduction and community safety (PSA 23). Chapter 3, *Fairness and opportunity for all*, includes a focus on the potential impact of sport and recreation on the various 'youth' PSAs (12, 13 and 14), as well as its relevance to educational achievement (PSAs 10 and 11). Chapter 4, *Sustainable growth and prosperity*, looks more closely at the economic benefits of sport, including its impact on regional economies (PSA 7) and the development of skills (PSA 2). Chapter 5, *A more secure, fair and environmentally sustainable world*, looks at, among other things, the impact of sport on the environment (PSAs 27 and 28) and overseas development (PSA 29). Finally, Chapter 6 draws a series of conclusions from the previous chapters and makes some general recommendations on how sport can be more successfully integrated into social and economic policy.

There are several points worth making clearly at the outset. First, this report recognises the broadness of 'sport'. The definition of 'sport' that most people turn to, when pushed, is the Council of Europe's:

Sport means all forms of physical activity which, through casual or organised participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental well-being, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competition at all levels.¹²

This is noteworthy since it includes within the definition itself some of sport's assumed externalities, i.e. improvements in physical fitness and mental wellbeing and the formation of social relationships. However, previous reviews have highlighted how diverse the label 'sport' is:

There are individual, partner and team sports; contact and non-contact sports; motor driven or perceptually dominated sports; sports which place differing emphases on strategy and physical skills and sports can be both competitive and non-competitive.¹³

Moreover, this report examines the social and economic impact of walking, cycling, dance and many other recreational activities that may, in fact, resist the label sport. Also, discussion is not restricted to participation *per se*, but covers many aspects of sport 'engagement', such as sports volunteering and sports spectatorship, both of which have been shown to provide social and economic benefits. It may be better, therefore, to follow previous sport researchers in regarding sport as a series of social relationships and social processes, in which it is assumed that certain types of

¹² Council of Europe (2001) *The European Sports Charter (Revised)*, Brussels, Council of Europe. Accessed online at: http://www.sportdevelopment.org.uk/European_sports_charter___revised_.pdf

¹³ Coalter, F (2007) *A Wider Social Role for Sport: Who's Keeping the Score?* London, Routledge, p. 34.

learning or socialisation may occur¹⁴. If this leads to a multiplicity of terms throughout the report – sport, sport and recreation, physical activity, and so on – then this should be seen not as confusion, but as a reflection of the multifaceted nature of sport. This, in turn, is shown to be one of its key strengths in relation to social and economic policy.

Second, there are many instances throughout the report where evidence relevant to one PSA is equally relevant to another. In practice, this may require a quick shift by the reader to the section where the research is explained most fully. This reflects two issues: first, many government policy objectives are interlinked; and second, many of sport's potential benefits extend from similar intermediate impacts, such as improved fitness or increased sense of wellbeing. Research has shown how the strategic social outcomes which it is claimed sport can help produce in fact work through a series of intermediate impacts and outcomes¹⁵. For example, sporting outcomes, such as increased participation and the development of sporting skills may, in certain circumstances, lead to intermediate impacts like improved fitness and/or self-esteem. In turn, these may lead to changes in behaviour, such as decreased drug use, improved educational performance or increased employability. If this type of behaviour change occurs in individuals, it may lead cumulatively to wider strategic social and economic outcomes, such as community regeneration. Consequently, analysis of sport's impact on, for example, educational achievement and crime reduction may be based on identical evidence that demonstrates that sport can potentially impact positively on participants' self-esteem (given that improved self-esteem may contribute to beneficial education and crime reduction outcomes). Marshalling the evidence in reference to the various PSAs was therefore a tricky task. Again, however, this can be viewed in a positive light, since it demonstrates the multiple, interrelated benefits that could arise from properly targeted investment in sport.

Finally, with specific reference to the evidence base for sport, it is worth making what seems like an obvious point: no evidence of a particular relationship is not the same as evidence of no relationship. For example, an examination of the impact of sports clubs on social capital may find a lack of methodologically sound studies and therefore be unable to reach an overall judgement. This is not the same, however, as finding a multitude of robust studies all of which refute the theory that sports clubs can have a positive impact. Indeed, although research on the various social and economic impacts of sport is rapidly accumulating, more robust evaluation of sport policies and programmes is urgently required. The reasons for this lack of research to date are many, but the main ones are eloquently summarised as follows:

[U]ntil the last decade, the ability of sport to address such wider social issues was largely taken for granted. Various combinations of a general absence of a culture of performance definition and evaluation, the mythopoeic status of sport, the apparent theoretical strength of claims about sport's benefits, a view of sport as a relatively cheap and simple solution to social problems and sport's general marginal policy status resulted in a widespread failure to monitor and evaluate sporting investments (which were always small in comparison to mainstream policy areas).¹⁶

These issues are by no means restricted to sport research; most areas of social and economic policy would benefit from better planned, integrated and funded evaluation research. What this report demonstrates, however, is that in many policy areas where relevant research evidence already exists, the potential role of sport is either overlooked or poorly articulated.

¹⁴ Coakley, J (2004) *Sport in Society: Issues and Controversies*, 8th edition, Boston, MA, McGraw Hill; Coalter, F (2007) *A Wider Social Role for Sport: Who's Keeping the Score?* London, Routledge; Svoboda, B (1994) *Sport and Physical Activity as a Socialisation Environment, Scientific Review Part 1*, Strasbourg, Council of Europe, Committee for the Development of Sport.

¹⁵ Coalter, F (2007) *A Wider Social Role for Sport: Who's Keeping the Score?* London, Routledge.

¹⁶ Coalter, F (2007) *A Wider Social Role for Sport: Who's Keeping the Score?* London, Routledge, pp. 23-24.

Chapter 2: Stronger communities and a better quality of life

PSA Delivery Agreement 18: Promote better health and wellbeing for all

The Government's vision for public health, set out in PSA 18, as well as in the Department of Health's strategic objectives and in the recently published White Paper, *Our health, our care, our say*, is 'to create a health and adult social care service that genuinely focuses on prevention and promotion of health and well-being informed by what people have said they want'¹⁷. Specifically, PSA 18 aims are as follows:

- continuing to increase life expectancy in England by tackling the biggest killer diseases, with an emphasis on ill health prevention and promotion of good health, and sustaining the drive to promote equality and to reduce inequalities in health;
- reducing smoking prevalence;
- supporting people to meet their aspirations for independence and wellbeing; and
- improving the well-being and inclusion of people with depression and/or anxiety disorders through improved access to psychological therapies.

The first part of the delivery agreement for PSA 18 signals a primary aim to tackle the biggest killer diseases, including cancer, cardiovascular disease, suicide and smoking. Underpinning this are key strategies, including the *NHS Cancer Plan*¹⁸, National Service Frameworks for coronary heart disease¹⁹, diabetes²⁰ and renal disease²¹, the *National Stroke Strategy*²² and the *Suicide Prevention Strategy*²³. The role of sport and physical activity in helping to achieve these aims is almost entirely ignored. A clear example of this is the approach taken in seeking to prevent cancer. The *NHS Cancer Plan* lists two main ways to reduce the risk of cancer: reduce smoking and improve diet. While physical inactivity and obesity are mentioned as risk factors, scant attention is given to how promoting sport and physical activity could help to prevent several forms of cancer.

This perhaps reflects the fact that much of the evidence of the benefits of sport and physical activity has come in recent years. A quick look at the two key evidence reviews from the last decade illustrates this perfectly. The most authoritative review of evidence on the prevention of cancer, *Food, Nutrition, Physical Activity and the Prevention of Cancer: A Global Perspective*, was published in 2007 by the World Cancer Research Fund and the American Institute for Cancer Research²⁴. This mammoth report updated the 1997 version, entitled *Food, Nutrition and the Prevention of Cancer: A Global Perspective*²⁵. The difference in the titles is highly instructive. The 2007 report stated that 'since the mid-1990s the amount of scientific literature on this subject has dramatically increased...There is more evidence, in particular, on overweight and obesity and on physical activity'²⁶.

In the most recent of these reports, following rigorous and painstaking assessment of the evidence, the expert panel concluded that 'taken together, the evidence suggests that all types and degrees of physical activity are or may be

¹⁷ Her Majesty's Government (2007) *PSA Delivery Agreement 18: Promote Better Health and Wellbeing for All*, London, Stationery Office, p. 3. Accessed online at: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/5/A/pbr_csr07_psa18.pdf

¹⁸ National Health Service (2000) *The NHS Cancer Plan: A Plan for Investment, A Plan for Reform*, London, Department of Health. Accessed online at: http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4009609

¹⁹ Department of Health (2000) *National Service Framework for Coronary Heart Disease*, London, Department of Health. Accessed online at: http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4094275

²⁰ Department of Health (2001) *National Service Framework for Diabetes*, London, Department of Health. Accessed online at: http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4002951

²¹ Department of Health (2004) *National Service Framework for Renal Services*, London, Department of Health. Accessed online at: http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Healthcare/NationalServiceFrameworks/Renal/DH_4102636

²² Department of Health (2007) *National Stroke Strategy*, London, Department of Health. Accessed online at: http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyandguidance/dh_081062

²³ Department of Health (2002) *National suicide prevention strategy for England*, London, Department of Health. Accessed online at: http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4009474

²⁴ World Cancer Research Fund/American Institute for Cancer Research (2007) *Food, Nutrition, Physical Activity and the Prevention of Cancer: A Global Perspective*, Washington DC, AICR. Accessed online at: <http://www.dietandcancerreport.org/?p=ER>

²⁵ World Cancer Research Fund/American Institute for Cancer Research (2007) *Food, Nutrition and the Prevention of Cancer: A Global Perspective*, Washington DC, AICR.

²⁶ World Cancer Research Fund/American Institute for Cancer Research (2007) *Food, Nutrition, Physical Activity and the Prevention of Cancer: A Global Perspective*, Washington DC, AICR, p. 15. Accessed online at: <http://www.dietandcancerreport.org/?p=ER>

protective, excluding extreme levels of activity. The evidence is consistent with the message that the more physically active people are, the better.²⁷ There is convincing evidence that physical activity protects against colon cancer and it is probable that it protects against postmenopausal breast cancer and cancer of the endometrium. Furthermore, there is convincing evidence that physical activity, through promoting healthy weight, protects against six types of cancer, including pancreatic cancer and kidney cancer.

In fact, the benefits of physical activity extend far beyond cancer prevention. A recent epidemiological review concluded the following: 'there is incontrovertible evidence that regular physical activity contributes to the primary and secondary prevention of several chronic diseases and is associated with a reduced risk of premature death. There appears to be a graded linear relation between the volume of physical activity and health status, such that the most physically active people are at the lowest risk.'²⁸

The Department of Health has itself acknowledged the importance of physical activity. The Chief Medical Officer's detailed review, *At least five a week: Evidence on the impact of physical activity and its relationship to health*, concluded that adults who are physically active have 20-30 per cent reduced risk of premature death and up to 50 per cent reduced risk of developing major chronic diseases²⁹. There is a clear dose-response relationship between physical activity and all-cause mortality, and between physical activity and diseases such as coronary heart disease and type 2 diabetes: greater benefits occur with greater activity participation. It has also been demonstrated that these considerable health benefits hold for both women and men and are evident even up to the age of 80 years³⁰. Moreover, the report stated clearly that, for most people, social sporting activity represents one of the easiest and most acceptable forms of physical activity.

The first aim of PSA 18 – increasing life expectancy – will be assessed by a reduction in the all-age all-cause mortality (AAACM) rate. Given the clear evidence described above, it is baffling that physical activity and sport are entirely ignored in the delivery agreement and that the Department for Culture, Media and Sport is nowhere mentioned as having the potential to contribute. It is even more surprising given the evidence that sport could play an important role in achieving the other stated aims of PSA 18. One part of the vision of this PSA is to improve the wellbeing and inclusion of people with depression and/or anxiety disorders. The primary means by which the Government aims to achieve this is through improved access to psychological therapies, especially for those with mild to moderate depression and anxiety disorders. Once more, the strong evidence of the benefits that sport and physical activity can bring in this area is entirely bypassed.

Mental illness in the form of depression is predicted to become the second most prevalent cause of disability worldwide by 2020³¹. Mental health problems are already highly prevalent in Britain, with at least one in six people suffering at any one time³². A comprehensive review of several hundred studies and over 30 narrative or meta-analytic reviews of research found strong evidence that exercise can help in the prevention and treatment of depression³³. In addition, a critical examination, published in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, reviewed existing literature on exercise and mental health in relation to changes in anxiety, depression, mood, self-esteem, and stress reactivity, premenstrual syndrome and body image. With regard to depression, the authors concluded that physical exercise has a positive influence. Limited evidence suggests that aerobic exercise is most effective, including activities such as walking, jogging, cycling, light circuit training and weight training and that exercise which extends over several months appears to yield the most positive results³⁴.

²⁷ *Ibid*, p. 209.

²⁸ Warburton, D, Nicol, C, and Bredin, S (2006) Health Benefits of Physical Activity: The Evidence, *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, 174(6), 801-809.

²⁹ Department of Health (2004) *At Least Five a Week: Evidence on the Impact of Physical Activity and its Relationship to Health*, A Report from the Chief Medical Officer, London, Department of Health. Accessed online at: http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4080994

³⁰ Lee I and Skerrett P (2001) Physical Activity and All Cause Mortality: What is the Dose-response Relation? *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise*, 33, S459-S471; discussion S493-S494.

³¹ World Health Organization (2001) *World Health Report: Mental Health, New Understanding, New Hope*, Geneva, WHO.

³² Singleton N, Bumpstead R, O'Brien M, Lee A, and Meltzer H (2001) *Psychiatric Morbidity Among Adults Living in Private Households, 2000*, London: Office for National Statistics.

³³ Fox, K (1999) The Influence of Physical Activity on Mental Well-being, *Public Health Nutrition*, 2, 411-418.

³⁴ Scully, D, Kremer, J, Meade, M, Graham, R and Dudgeon, K (1998) Physical Exercise and Psychological Well Being: A Critical Review, *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 32, 2, 111-120.

Again this has already been recognised by the Department of Health. The Chief Medical Officer's report makes this explicit when it says, 'physical activity has been shown to be effective in reducing clinical symptoms in those diagnosed as severely, moderately or mildly depressed'³⁵. It highlights several studies that show physical activity is at least as effective for treating depression as psychotherapy and other studies that show it is as effective as medication. The report also dispelled the myth that people tend not to adhere to exercise programmes. All studies included in the report found that adherence to exercise was at least similar to other forms of treatment. Indeed, physical activity is a particularly important alternative for the many patients who do not wish to take medication due to the possible side effects³⁶.

It is important to note that while most of the evidence relates primarily to physical activity, rather than sport *per se* (although sport and recreation obviously count as physical activity), there is additional evidence which suggests that certain aspects of sport may be particularly beneficial in this area. For example, a recent review of physical exercise and anxiety, depression and sensitivity to stress points out that the potential value of physical exercise can also derive from its popularity and face validity. 'Exercise might be of particular use [to a clinical psychologist] where patients with emotional problems reject ostensibly psychological diagnoses and treatments'³⁷. This demonstrates the unique nature of sport: it is not simply the physical activity component of sport which can benefit health, but also its social appeal. Other research has also found that identification with a local sport team was a significant independent predictor of social wellbeing³⁸. Although more evidence is needed in this area, these results indicate that, in addition to participation, sports spectatorship may also have a beneficial impact on wellbeing. Such impacts may also extend to sports volunteering. Recent research has identified lower levels of depression among volunteers, particularly older volunteers³⁹, and other studies have found that volunteering can confer a series of mental health benefits on those who take part, including increased confidence and self-esteem⁴⁰.

While current evidence suggests that physical activity can help to reduce the risk of depression, there are insufficient data to determine the optimal level of physical activity needed for a preventive effect⁴¹. Further research would allow a clearer insight into what types of sport and recreation are best placed to promote better mental health. For example, a systematic review of the effects of yoga on depression found that, overall, the initial indications are of potentially beneficial effects of yoga interventions on depressive disorders⁴². Although variation in interventions and methodological issues suggest that the findings must be interpreted with caution, the review concluded that further investigation of yoga as a therapeutic intervention was definitely warranted.

PSA 18 also aims to increase the proportion of people supported to live independently and the vision for this signals a focus on 'the importance of cost effective, evidence-based, innovative approaches to supporting people to live independently in the community'⁴³. Although this objective encompasses people of all ages, the delivery agreement recognises that the largest group of users of health and social care are older people. It points to a framework of actions that can be taken locally set out in the Department of Health's *Next Steps in Implementing the National Service*

³⁵ Department of Health (2004) *At Least Five a Week: Evidence on the Impact of Physical Activity and its Relationship to Health, A Report from the Chief Medical Officer*, London, Department of Health, p. 59. Accessed online at:

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4080994

³⁶ Scott, J (1996) Cognitive Therapy of Affective Disorders: A Review, *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 37, 1-11.

³⁷ Salmon, P (2001) Effects of Physical Exercise on Anxiety, Depression, and Sensitivity to Stress A Unifying Theory, *Clinical Psychology Review*, 21, 1, 33-61, p. 59.

³⁸ Wann, D and Pierce, S (2005) The Relationship between Sport Team Identification and Social Well-being: Additional Evidence Supporting the Team Identification-Social Psychological Health Model, *North American Journal of Psychology*, 1.

³⁹ Lum, T and Lightfoot, E (2005) The Effects of Volunteering on the Physical and Mental Health of Older People, *Research on Aging*, 27, 1, 31-55.

⁴⁰ Lewis, T (2005) *Valuing Volunteers: The Scope of Volunteering for People with Mental Health Problems*, Rhyl, Wales Council for Voluntary Action.

⁴¹ Dunn A, Trivedi M, and O'Neal H (2001) Physical Activity Dose-response Effects on Outcomes of Depression and Anxiety, *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise*, 33, S587-S597.

⁴² Pilkington, K, Kirkwood, G, Rampes, H and Richardson, J (2005) Yoga for Depression: The Research Evidence, *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 89, 1-3, 13 – 24.

⁴³ Her Majesty's Government (2007) *PSA Delivery Agreement 18: Promote Better Health and Wellbeing for All*, London, Stationery Office, p. 5. Accessed online at: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/5/A/pbr_csr07_psa18.pdf

*Framework for Older People*⁴⁴. The first action highlighted in this is 'to improve physical fitness through encouraging and communicating the benefits of moderate regular exercise for older people'. Here then is clear recognition by the Department of Health of the benefits of regular exercise for older people. The *Next Steps* report states that: 'Contrary to popular belief, health promotion services are popular amongst older people, with a strong evidence base for effectiveness in producing good health outcomes and reducing pressure on services and families by reducing impairments and disabilities. Activities such as exercise classes and dancing, promote not only health and independence, but also increase social interaction leading to improved emotional well-being.'⁴⁵

The original framework – *The National Service Framework for Older People* – was published in 2001 and its proposals were based on 'expert advice, the values underpinning care services and research evidence'⁴⁶. In fact, like much of the evidence on the benefits of physical activity and sport and recreation, there has been a significant increase in research findings in recent years; consequently, there should now be even more support for the health benefits of sport and recreation, particularly for older people. The Chief Medical Officer's report drew a series of conclusions on the impact of physical activity on the health of older adults. It found that physical activity not only produced preventive effects at least as strong in older age as in middle age for all-cause mortality, cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes, but also had a beneficial impact on particular health issues affecting older people. These include: mobility, muscle strength, falls, depression and anxiety, cognitive impairment, and self efficacy⁴⁷. Given the strength of the evidence in this area and given the recognition of this evidence by the Department of Health, it is difficult to understand why sport and physical activity are afforded such a low profile in the delivery agreement.

This part of PSA 18 overlaps, and is explicitly linked, with two of the stated aims of PSA 17, namely to improve the level of health experienced in later life and to increase the ability to maintain independent living, while being supported with health and care services where needed. Thus chapter 3, where PSA 17 is analysed, provides an even more detailed examination of how sport can impact positively the health of older people. As the Chief Medical Officer's report makes clear, this evidence is now well established.

The final stated aim of PSA 18 is to reduce the prevalence of smoking. Evidence shows that smoking is the principal avoidable cause of premature death and ill-health in England today and the *Comprehensive Tobacco Strategy*, which underpins the strategy for this part of the PSA, details six strands based on international evidence of effective tobacco control. These include: help for smokers to quit through NHS stop-smoking services; comprehensive bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship; and regulation of tobacco products through pack-warnings. The further measures advocated in the delivery agreement are as follows: comprehensive smoke-free legislation to eliminate health risks from secondhand smoke; introducing picture warnings; the introduction of new powers to ban retailers from repeatedly selling tobacco products to under-age children; and supporting international work to develop a framework for controls on global smuggling of tobacco. Even a quick glance at these various measures makes it clear that the Government sees effective regulation as the primary means of achieving this objective. It is striking that, alongside the Department of Health, the two other government departments afforded key roles in the delivery agreement are HM Revenue and Customs, through action on tobacco smuggling, and HM Treasury, through action on tobacco duty.

There is clearly little appetite for, or belief in, health-related behaviour change, despite growing evidence that it can be effective and that it can prove a sustainable means of reducing the prevalence of smoking. In this context, sport has been shown to have a major impact and, considering its potential for positively influencing the other objectives of PSA 18, greater support for sport could provide the basis for a valuable, joined-up approach. The positive impact sport can have on health-related behaviour, particularly in young people, is demonstrated in a series of robust, scientific studies. A study of adolescent twins, published in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, examined the association between

⁴⁴ Department of Health (2006) *A New Ambition for Old Age: Next Steps in Implementing the National Service Framework for Older People*, London, Department of Health. Accessed online at: http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4133941

⁴⁵ Department of Health (2006) *A New Ambition for Old Age: Next Steps in Implementing the National Service Framework for Older People*, London, Department of Health, p. 18. Accessed online at: http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4133941

⁴⁶ Department of Health (2001) *National Service Framework for Older People*, London, Department of Health, p. 10. Accessed online at: http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4003066

⁴⁷ Department of Health (2004) *At Least Five a Week: Evidence on the Impact of Physical Activity and its Relationship to Health, A Report from the Chief Medical Officer*, London, Department of Health. Accessed online at: http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4080994

leisure time physical activity over a three year period and health-related behaviour, social relationships, and health status in late adolescence⁴⁸. It found that persistent physical inactivity in adolescents is associated with a less healthy lifestyle, worse educational progression, and poor self-perceived health. The study concluded that promoting physical activity may prove useful for influencing other health habits. Studies examining specific health-related behaviours have found similar results, even after taking into account a number of other factors that may be influential, including family background, social status and educational background. A recent study on smoking, for example, found that those who were physically inactive in adolescence were much more likely than physically active adolescents to smoke as young adults⁴⁹. There is further examination of the impact sport can have on healthy behaviour, especially in young people, in Chapter 3, in relation to PSA 12.

Analysis of PSA 18 has demonstrated that physical activity and sport can make valuable contributions across all the Government's health objectives, yet they are barely mentioned. What is more, sport and physical activity represent a much more joined-up approach to these interrelated objectives. Whereas improving diet may be useful in one area, or regulation in another, promoting physical activity may bring benefits in all the Government priority areas. This analysis is, in many ways, supported by the recent independent report by the Healthcare Commission and Audit Commission, which examines the impact of health policy⁵⁰. It recommends a consistent focus across the NHS and government, with policies that complement each other and joined-up approaches at a local level. It also recommends that the Department of Health should continue to support the identification of evidence of what works, particularly in order to support effective action around obesity and alcohol misuse.

PSA Delivery Agreement 20: Increase long term housing supply and affordability

PSA 20 focuses on increasing housing supply and ensuring its affordability and sustainability. Part of the Government's vision is that 'new development will be planned and built more sustainably (balancing the environmental, social and economic needs of future generations)⁵¹. The Department for Communities and Local Government leads on the delivery of this PSA, with support from other government departments, including the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. Sport England is mentioned as a statutory planning consultee, along with English Heritage, and their role in the delivery of PSA 20 is described as '[working] with LAs, Local Delivery Vehicles and Agencies to seek to promote policies on the quality of the built environment, heritage protection, sports and other cultural facilities, including through any appropriate Local Area Agreements.⁵²

There is, in fact, increasing research evidence around physical activity, sport and the built environment. The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) recently issued guidance on a public health programme aimed at modifying the environmental factors that promote physical activity⁵³. The Department of Health originally requested this guidance based on, among other things: concern about the generally low levels of physical activity undertaken by the population as a whole; and a growing recognition of the influence of the environment on the behaviour of individuals and communities. The final guidance, based on extensive reviews of evidence, consultation with expert stakeholders and impact assessment, made a large number of recommendations, including the following:

- Ensure planning applications for new developments always prioritise the need for people (including those whose mobility is impaired) to be physically active as a routine part of their daily life;
- Ensure local facilities and services are easily accessible on foot, by bicycle and by other modes of transport involving physical activity;
- Ensure children can participate in physically active play.

⁴⁸ Aarnio, M, Winter, T, Kujala, U and Kaprio, J (2002) Associations of health related behaviour, social relationships, and health status with persistent physical activity and inactivity: a study of Finnish adolescent twins, *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 36, 360-364.

⁴⁹ Kujala, U, Kaprio, J and Rose, R (2007) Physical activity in adolescence and smoking in young adulthood: a prospective twin cohort study, *Addiction*, 102, 7, 1151-1157.

⁵⁰ Healthcare Commission/Audit Commission (2008) *Are we Choosing Health? The Impact of Policy on the Delivery of Health Improvement Programmes and Services*, London, Commission for Healthcare Audit and Inspection. Accessed online at: http://www.healthcarecommission.org.uk/_db/_documents/Are_we_choosing_health_tagged.pdf

⁵¹ Her Majesty's Government (2007) *PSA Delivery Agreement 20: Increase Long Term Housing Supply and Affordability*, London, Stationery Office, p. 3. Accessed online at: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/9/D/pbr_csr07_psa20.pdf

⁵² Her Majesty's Government (2007) *PSA Delivery Agreement 20: Increase Long Term Housing Supply and Affordability*, London, Stationery Office, p. 13. Accessed online at: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/9/D/pbr_csr07_psa20.pdf

⁵³ National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (2008) *Promoting and Creating Built or Natural Environments that Encourage and Support Physical Activity*, London, NICE. Accessed online at: <http://www.nice.org.uk/nicemedia/pdf/PH008Guidancev2.pdf>

Here is strong evidence of the beneficial impact sport, recreation and active transport can have on public health and the importance of considering these issues in planning the built environment. The NICE guidance also corroborates one of the main tenets of this report – that many of the Government’s objectives are interrelated and that sport and recreation can contribute across a very wide range of these objectives. The guidance states that a more physically active population will help the Government to achieve the aims and objectives of a number of PSAs, specifically 12, 18, 21, 22 and 27, as well as national service frameworks on coronary heart disease, diabetes, mental health, older people and children, and a number of other policy documents, including *Choosing Activity*⁵⁴.

PSA Delivery Agreement 21: Build more cohesive, empowered and active communities

The vision for PSA 21 is built around three associated and reinforcing agendas – seeking to build communities:

- that maximise the benefits of diversity rather than fear it;
- where individuals are empowered to make a difference both to their own lives and to the communities and wider environment in which they live; and
- where individuals are enabled to live active and fulfilled lives⁵⁵.

This PSA extends from, first, government recognition that migration has brought associated challenges and, second, its aim of fostering a shared sense of purpose and belonging. The broad means of achieving this, as set out in PSA 21, is to increase people’s skills and confidence, allowing them to influence public bodies, and to increase levels of formal and informal volunteering and participation in sporting and cultural activities.

Sport and recreation are integral to the third main aim, listed above, of enabling people to live active and fulfilled lives. Evidence shows that this may be realised through the many processes of sport engagement: participation, volunteering, or even spectating. In addition, sport has been shown to contribute to the first two aims, through its capacity to break down cultural barriers and improve life skills. Sport and recreation, then, have relevance across the full breadth of this PSA.

The delivery agreement for PSA 21 draws a common thread between sporting and cultural participation, social and cultural cohesion and active citizenship.

From the smallest village hall concert, estate-based football teams, local museums and neighbourhood festivals through to national events, the cultural and sporting sectors allow people to get involved in the kinds of positive activities that can help to create more active communities. Such active communities can be a key part of enabling people from different backgrounds to interact on an ongoing and equal basis.⁵⁶

PSA 21 also refers to previous research on the links between participation in sporting and cultural activities and positive aspects of community cohesion. The Government-commissioned *Taking Part* survey found that people taking part in cultural activities were 20 per cent more likely to know ‘many people’ in their neighbourhood, and 60 per cent more likely to believe that ‘many of their neighbours can be trusted’⁵⁷. Furthermore, the 2001 Citizenship Survey found that sport and exercise are the single greatest contribution to social participation⁵⁸.

In fact, there is a much greater body of evidence around sport, social capital and community cohesion than these two snapshots indicate. A recent statistical analysis of sport and social capital in the UK, commissioned by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, found that, at national level, the correlation between sports participation and social trust

⁵⁴ Department of Health (2005) *Choosing Activity: A Physical Activity Action Plan*, London, Department of Health. Accessed online at: http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4105354

⁵⁵ Her Majesty’s Government (2007) *PSA Delivery Agreement 21: Build More Cohesive, Empowered and Active Communities*, London, Stationery Office, p. 3. Accessed online at: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/E/9/pbr_csr07_psa21.pdf

⁵⁶ Her Majesty’s Government (2007) *PSA Delivery Agreement 21: Build More Cohesive, Empowered and Active Communities*, London, Stationery Office, p. 11. Accessed online at: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/E/9/pbr_csr07_psa21.pdf

⁵⁷ Department for Culture, Media and Sport (2006) *Taking Part: The National Survey of Culture, Leisure and Sport, Annual Report 2005/2006*, London, DCMS. Accessed online at: http://www.culture.gov.uk/reference_library/publications/3682.aspx

⁵⁸ Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate (2003) *2001 Home Office Citizenship Survey: People, Families and Communities*, London, Home Office. Accessed online at: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs2/hors270.pdf>

is particularly strong⁵⁹. At individual level, the same study found that, even when socio-demographic characteristics, such as gender, education, income, age and ethnicity, are accounted for, membership of sports clubs has a statistically significant effect on political trust, wellbeing and the frequency of socialising and meeting with friends. Indeed, membership of a sports club was found to have a statistically significant effect on life satisfaction and happiness equivalent to moving up approximately one and a half household income categories (around £3,600). A study of voluntary sport organisations in Norway also found statistical confirmation that being a member of a sport organisation has a positive effect on certain kinds of general social trust⁶⁰. Furthermore, a series of studies in Australia all concluded that sport can promote social integration through participation and through social interaction and engagement⁶¹. Research has also shown that sport and other forms of physical activity may be particularly beneficial for social contact among older people. A recent interview survey of more than 6,500 adults over 60 found that reducing barriers to physical activity may be an appropriate and effective strategy for promoting social network contacts in older individuals⁶².

It is important to consider the particular sporting contexts where such positive social interaction can take place. For example, a comparative study of voluntary sports clubs and commercial health and fitness centres in Norway, which questioned people directly about their sport experiences, found that both types of venues contribute to social integration, but in different ways. Members of sports clubs tended to form new friendships, and establish friendships outside the context of the club. This happened much less frequently in commercial fitness centres, although these venues were important for maintaining existing friendships⁶³. This is supported by work in Germany and Sweden, which found that gym members were, in general, less trusting than members of other sporting associations, and that they did not seek to form 'associational bonds' with other members⁶⁴. The studies undertaken in Australia, described above, also focused predominantly on local sports clubs, where it was found that social integration could be promoted through leadership, membership, participation, skill and community development.

The delivery agreement for PSA 21 recognises the key role that sports clubs and other third sector organisations play in community building:

Sustainable third sector organisations are vital to achieving the aims of this PSA. They are able to better represent the voice of communities, to support empowering, user-focused services, which involve citizens in their design and operation, and bring people together to effect change in communities. (p. 3)

The local third sector plays a vital role in working both alongside and independently from local statutory agencies. It provides the organisational forms through which people come together to find a voice and solve problems. It often acts as the bridge between different groups within and across communities, helping people to find ways to talk to each other. It is also often a deliverer of local public services, providing valuable models of user engagement and responsive needs-led services. Third sector organisations also often provide the platform for voluntary activity by individuals, and volunteers form a vital part of the third sector workforce. (p. 15)

The delivery agreement also details the broad measures government will take to support third sector organisations.

The Government will continue to work to create the conditions where these organisations can thrive and 'scale up' their contribution where they wish to, delivering their objectives and contributing fully to better outcomes, both alone and in partnership. (p. 3)

Sustainable funding will play a key role in this. Short term funding can lead to the diversion of valuable resources into bidding for funds. It prevents an organisation from making any medium or long-term commitments to serve its users or beneficiaries and can

⁵⁹ Delaney, L and Keaney, E (2005) *Sport and Social Capital in the United Kingdom: Statistical Evidence from National and International Survey Data*, London, Department for Culture, Media and Sport. Accessed online at:

http://www.ippr.org.uk/uploadedFiles/research/projects/Arts_and_Culture/sport%20and%20social%20capital.pdf

⁶⁰ Seippel, O (2006) Sport and Social Capital, *Acta Sociologica*, 49, 2, 169-183.

⁶¹ Driscoll, K and Wood, L (1999) *Sporting Capital: Changes and Challenges for Rural Communities in Victoria*, Melbourne, Victoria Centre for Applied Social Research, RMIT University; Tonts, M (2005) Competitive Sport and Social Capital in Rural Australia, *Journal of Rural Studies*, 21, 2, 137-149; Atherley, K (2006) Sport, Localism and Social Capital in Rural Western Australia, *Geographical Research*, 44, 4, 348-360.

⁶² Bertera, E (2003) Physical Activity and Social Network Contacts in Community Dwelling Older Adults, *Activities, Adaptation & Aging*, 27, 3/4, 113-127.

⁶³ Ulseth, A-L (2004) Social Integration in Modern Sport: Commercial Fitness Centres and Voluntary Sports Clubs, *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 4, 95-115. Accessed online at: http://www.samfunnsforskning.no/files/file22202_t_2004_27_original.pdf

⁶⁴ Stolle, D (1998) Bowling Together, Bowling Alone: The Development of Generalized Trust in Voluntary Associations, *Political Psychology*, 19, 3, 497-525.

restrict the ability of organisations to recruit, retain and invest in the best staff. The Government is committed to tackling this problem by making three-year funding to third sector organisations it funds the norm rather than the exception. (p. 3)

These measures, as set out in PSA 21, are welcome. However, there is currently little evidence of the Government directly supporting voluntary sports organisations, despite its recognition of the positive impacts these organisations can have on community cohesion and active citizenship. Recent studies of sports clubs have found that they are increasingly vulnerable, due to financial and regulatory burdens and the difficulty of attracting volunteers⁶⁵.

[PSA Delivery Agreement 22: Deliver a successful Olympic Games and Paralympic Games with a sustainable legacy and get more children and young people taking part in high quality PE and sport](#)

The 'Olympic' PSA focuses on four Olympic priority areas and one further target around the PE and Sport Strategy for Young People:

- Construction of the Olympic Park and other Olympic venues;
- Maximising the regeneration benefits of the 2012 Games;
- The Olympic Park and venues are designed and built according to sustainable principles;
- Public participation in cultural and community activities across the UK and participation in sporting activities both in the UK and in other countries, particularly those in development; and
- Creation of a world-class system for Physical Education (PE) and sport.

The vision for this PSA reiterates government pronouncements that the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games will have benefits beyond immediate, physical ones – an economic boost for the UK through investment, training and jobs, sports participation for all, cultural opportunities, national pride, international profile and community engagement. It also restates the Government's five Olympic legacy promises, which are to:

- make the UK a world-leading sporting nation;
- transform the heart of East London;
- inspire a new generation of young people to take part in local volunteering, cultural and physical activity;
- make the Olympic Park a blueprint for sustainable living; and
- demonstrate that the UK is creative, inclusive and a welcoming place to live in, visit and for business.

Consequently, the delivery agreement for PSA 22 draws direct links between hosting a major sporting event and a number of positive social and economic outcomes. It also states explicitly that the third legacy promise listed above – to inspire a new generation of young people to take part in local volunteering, cultural and physical activity – 'chimes well with the broader government agenda to build safer and stronger communities by encouraging people to play an active role in those communities'⁶⁶ and links this overtly with PSA 21, *Build more cohesive, empowered and active communities*, and PSA 23, *Make communities safer*. Elsewhere in this Chapter, however, it is argued that much of the evidence for sport and recreation's potential contribution to PSA 23 is ignored. What the delivery agreement for PSA 22 demonstrates here is that while the Government recognises its potential contribution, a joined-up approach is somewhat lacking.

The final objective of PSA 22 – to create a world-class system for Physical Education (PE) and sport – is underpinned by the national PE and Sport Strategy for Young People (PESSYP) strategy, which is founded on the principle that PE and sport in schools, both within and beyond the curriculum, can improve:

- pupil concentration, commitment and self-esteem, leading to higher attendance and better behaviour and attainment;
- fitness levels; active children are less likely to be obese and more likely to pursue sporting activities as adults, thereby reducing the likelihood of coronary heart disease, diabetes and some forms of cancer; and

⁶⁵ Central Council of Physical Recreation (2007) *CCPR Sports Club Survey 2007*, London, CCPR. Accessed online at: <http://www.ccpr.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/279DBDE9-4C3E-407E-869F-B33D0C29B79E/0/CCPR2007CCPRSportsClubSurvey2007.pdf>

⁶⁶ Her Majesty's Government (2007) *PSA Delivery Agreement 22: Deliver a successful Olympic Games and Paralympic Games with a sustainable legacy and get more children and young people taking part in high quality PE and sport*, London, Stationery Office, p. 12. Accessed online at: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/5/6/pbr_csr07_psa22.pdf

- success in international competition by ensuring talented young sports people have a clear pathway to elite sport and competition whatever their circumstances⁶⁷.

Although not mentioned in the PESSYP or in the delivery agreement for PSA 22, there is a good deal of research on these issues, much of which is discussed elsewhere in this report (see, in particular, Chapter 3, PSAs 10 and 11). Several key academic reviews have found evidence that sport and physical activity can improve educational performance, reduce disciplinary problems, improve attentiveness and reduce absenteeism⁶⁸. As explained in Chapter 3, more research is needed in order to precisely how these outcomes can be brought about. This would, in turn, enable more sophisticated policy making and better targeted investment.

As the second bullet point above states, participation in sport and recreation can also contribute directly to the reduction of childhood obesity and there is strong evidence that involvement in sport can positively influence wider healthy life choices, specifically among young people. Research evidence, cited in the Chief Medical Officer's report, shows that less active children are more likely to have excess fat, even as early as late infancy⁶⁹. Research also shows that physical activity based interventions have resulted in clinically significant decreases in body fat and body mass index in obese children⁷⁰. The evidence base for this is examined in more detail in Chapter 3, as PSA 12 includes a clear target to reduce childhood obesity.

Ofsted, the official body for inspecting schools, has published a series of reports on the strengths, weaknesses and impacts of the PESSYP since 2003. The most recent report found that, in addition to the stated aims of the strategy, an important outcome for pupils in secondary schools was the promotion of leadership opportunities⁷¹. This demonstrates the potential sport has for producing wider social benefits. The report also confirmed that new activities during lessons or sports activities at lunchtimes helped to reduce inappropriate behaviour.

PSA 22 has important policy implications for sport. First, the Government clearly believes, at least with reference to London 2012, that sporting events can have wider social and economic impacts. Despite this, no mention is made in PSA 7 of the potential of sporting events to improve economic performance (see Chapter 4). Second, the PESSYP makes evident the Government's conviction that sport can improve young people's concentration, commitment, self-esteem, school attendance, general behaviour, academic achievement and that it can combat obesity, improve fitness and lead to health benefits in childhood and later life. Despite this conviction, other PSAs that deal specifically with these issues – PSA 2 on skills, PSAs 10 and 11 on academic achievement, PSA 12 on children's health and wellbeing, and PSAs 17 and 18 on health and wellbeing – fail to articulate the role sport could play in achieving their objectives. This indicates a clear failure by government to adopt a joined-up approach.

PSA Delivery Agreement 23: Make communities safer

PSA 23 aims to reduce crime and make communities safer through four priority actions:

- reducing the most serious violence, including tackling serious sexual offences and domestic violence;
- continuing to make progress on serious acquisitive crime through a focus on the issues of greatest priority in each locality and the most harmful offenders – particularly drug-misusing offenders;
- tackling the crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour issues of greatest importance in each locality, increasing public confidence in the local agencies involved in dealing with these issues; and

⁶⁷ Department for Education and Skills (2003) *Learning through PE and Sport: A Guide to the Physical Education, School Sport and Club Links Strategy*, London, Department for Education and Skills, p. 1. Accessed online at: <http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/LTPES.pdf.pdf>

⁶⁸ Hervet, R (1952) Vanves son Experience, ses Perspectives, *Revue de l'Institut de Sports*, 24, 4-6; Shephard, R (1997) Curricular Physical Activity and Academic Performance, *Pediatric Exercise Science*, 9, 113-126; Sallis, J, McKenzie, T, Kolody, B, Lewis, M, Marshall, S and Rosengard, P (1999) Effects of Health-related Physical Education on Academic Achievement: Project SPARK, *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 70, 2, 127-134.

⁶⁹ Boreham, C, Twisk, J, Savage, M, Cran, G and Strain, J (1997) Physical Activity, Sports Participation and Risk Factors in Adolescents, *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise*, 29, 788-793; Wells, J and Ritz, P (2001) Physical Activity at 9-12 Months and Fatness at 2 Years of Age, *American Journal of Human Biology*, 13, 384-389.

⁷⁰ LeMura, L and Maziakas, M (2002) Factors that Alter Body Fat, Body Mass, and Fat-free Mass in Pediatric Obesity, *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise*, 34, 487-496.

⁷¹ Ofsted (2006) *School Sport Partnerships: A Survey of Good Practice*, London, Ofsted. Accessed online at: http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/assets/Internet_Content/Shared_Content/Files/schlsprtprtshps.pdf

- reducing re-offending through the improved management of offenders.

The vision for this PSA states clearly that its broad objectives cover the full breadth of crime and community safety issues, 'spanning serious violence, acquisitive crime and anti-social behaviour'⁷².

That sport has the potential to improve community safety through reductions in crime and anti-social behaviour has been proposed for some time. Indeed PSA 14 specifically points to the beneficial impact of positive activities (sport, recreation, volunteering and other, similar pursuits) on risky behaviour, crime and anti-social behaviour (see Chapter 3). Those assertions are based on the Government's assessment of evidence from the UK and the USA, which also underpins the relevant strategy documents around positive activities and children and young people. Traditional rationales for sport's beneficial impact on crime have been linked to sport's capacity to improve physical fitness, increase self-esteem, present appropriate role models, offer legitimate excitement, and/or provide a hook to encourage involvement in other educational initiatives⁷³. There is some good evidence in this area, but there is also recognition among researchers that many of these rationales have tended to be value-led, rather than evidence-led.

The debate about the relationship between sports participation and crime divides broadly into theories about diverting people from criminal behaviour and rehabilitating offenders⁷⁴. Much of the evidence about the former comes from evaluations of programmes both in the UK and abroad. For example, in the UK, the Youth Justice Board monitored more than 100 Summer Splash schemes in 2001, involving sports and arts activities for 20,000 13-17 year olds. It reported a 36 per cent reduction in domestic burglary and an 18 per cent reduction in youth crime in the areas concerned, compared to respective 6 per cent and 8 per cent changes in similar areas⁷⁵. Evaluation in the following year found further decreases in crime figures in the areas where Splash schemes operated: a 4.7 per cent decrease in the number of burglaries, a 5.6 per cent decrease in the number of juvenile nuisance episodes and a 6 per cent decrease in the number of drug offences⁷⁶. Evaluation research carried out on a US-based summer recreation programme, STRIDE (Success through Recreation in Disadvantaged Environments), compared the programme participants with a group of non-participants both before and after the programme. It found that the programme participants experienced significantly increased self-perceptions on scholastic competence, social competence, athletic competence and personal appearance⁷⁷.

Midnight Basketball, one of the most well known programmes of this type, came to prominence in the US in the late 1980s. Later research estimated that the Milwaukee Midnight Basketball project resulted in a 30 per cent reduction in crime⁷⁸. However, many scholars and policy analysts raised serious doubts about these figures, given that crime rates were falling generally across the country and that only small percentages of 'at-risk' young men actually participated in the leagues. This has contributed to a reconceptualisation of the programme in the US whereby the focus has been shifted to outreach work and informal education, using sport as the hook to engage potential participants, rather than assuming that sports participation would directly deliver benefits⁷⁹. Nevertheless, a recent statistical analysis of the midnight basketball programme from its inception in 1989 actually found that cities that had adopted it had lower property crime rates compared to other cities, even after taking into account a range of possibly confounding factors. This suggests that even in its early format, the programme may have had community-level effects on certain types of crime⁸⁰.

Contentions over the claimed impact of Midnight Basketball illustrate the complexity of research in this area. Firstly, sports-based crime reduction programmes are often overambitious in their objectives, seeking a better appeal to

⁷² Her Majesty's Government (2007) *PSA Delivery Agreement 23: Make communities safer*, London, Stationery Office, p. 3. Accessed online at: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/3/D/pbr_csr07_psa23.pdf

⁷³ Nichols, G (2007) *Sport and Crime Reduction: The Role of Sports in Tackling Youth Crime*, London, Routledge.

⁷⁴ Coalter, F (2007) *A Wider Social Role for Sport: Who's Keeping the Score?* London, Routledge.

⁷⁵ Youth Justice Board (2001) *Splash 2001: Final Report*, London, Youth Justice Board.

⁷⁶ Cap Gemini Ernst and Young (2003) *Splash 2002: Final Report*, London, Youth Justice Board. Accessed online at: <http://www.sportdevelopment.org.uk/Splash2002EvaluationReport.pdf>

⁷⁷ Wright, P, Harwell, R and Allen, L (1998) Programs that Work - Project STRIDE: A Unique Summer Intervention Program for Youth-at-risk, *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration*, 16, 1, 97-113.

⁷⁸ Farrell, W, Johnson, J, Sapp, M, Pumphrey, R and Freeman, S (1995) Redirecting the Lives of Urban Black Males: An Assessment of Milwaukee's Midnight Basketball League, *Journal of Community Practice*, 2, 4, 91-107.

⁷⁹ Hartmann, D (2003) Theorizing Sport as Social Intervention: A View From the Grassroots, *QUEST*, 55, 2.

⁸⁰ Hartmann, D and Depro, B (2006) Rethinking Sports-Based Community Crime Prevention, *Journal of Sport & Social Issues*, 30, 2, 180-196.

funding agencies, but based on an unsophisticated understanding of the various causes of criminality. Secondly, it has been difficult to evaluate such projects effectively because they tend to be large-scale, casual and open to all, and this makes tracking of participants extremely hard. Finally, the short-term nature of many diversionary projects means that not only is funding insufficient to allow robust evaluation, but also that the projects are probably not long enough for participants to benefit from the 'therapeutic' quality of sport, and thus any evaluation would find little change in their behaviour⁸¹.

Recent detailed research into the effects of sport on crime and anti-social behaviour has stressed the importance of clarity over exactly how sport might have a positive impact. 'An understanding of the role of sport in programmes to reduce youth crime requires an understanding of how such programmes have a positive impact. It is not sufficient to make generalisations about the benefits of sport per se.'⁸² This understanding is necessary at all levels, for policy makers, practitioners and researchers. To varying degrees this has started to happen, and has led, for example, to an increasing focus on how sport fits into the 'risk/protective' factor model, which is one way of understanding why young people become involved in crime and anti-social behaviour. According to this model, there are a series of 'risk' factors that predispose an individual towards criminal activity, such as poor parental supervision, low educational achievement and alienation, and a number of 'protective' factors that are deemed to mitigate them, such as a strong sense of self efficacy, and stable relationships with parents⁸³. The Youth Justice Board, in 2005, published a study⁸⁴ on the various risk and protective factors associated with youth crime and effective interventions to prevent it. There is evidence that some government-funded programmes, such as *Positive Futures*, have incorporated this perspective into their work with young people⁸⁵.

Evaluation research has also led to an increasing focus on risk and protective factors. A major report by the Australian Institute of Criminology, funded by the Australian Sports Commission, identified and described programmes using sporting activities to reduce antisocial behaviour among youths in Australia. Following an examination of 175 programmes, the report concluded that 'sport and physical activity programs can facilitate personal and social development through which [antisocial] behaviour may be positively affected. This seems to be primarily achieved by focusing on improving underlying risk factors that predispose individuals to such behaviour.'⁸⁶

It is important to recognise the breadth of sport experiences for young people and how this can affect personal outcomes, which may have an impact on criminal behaviour. For example, one key study explored the effect of two different versions of martial arts training on juvenile delinquency. Male high school students were assigned to three groups: the first group received training which emphasised psychological/philosophical aspects; the second, training which focused simply on free-sparring and self-defence; and the third group participated in other activities, such as basketball, and was used to control for any benefits deriving from maturation, contact with the instructor, and increased physical activity. Participants were tested before and after the six months of training in relation to aggressiveness and other personality traits. The results showed clearly that, following the training, the 'philosophical' group had below average aggressiveness scores and other positive personality traits, including lowered anxiety and increased self-esteem. The 'sparring' group, however, showed an even greater tendency towards delinquency and an increase in aggressiveness. The 'activities' group showed no notable differences in personality, though there was a tendency towards increased self-esteem⁸⁷.

When looking closer at the various government policy documents in this area, it is possible to discern some recognition of the potential sport has for positively impacting crime and anti-social behaviour. The delivery of PSA 23 is

⁸¹ Coalter, F, Allison, M and Taylor, J (2000) *The Role of Sport in Regenerating Deprived Urban Areas*, Edinburgh, Scottish Executive Central Research Unit. Accessed online at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/156589/0042061.pdf>; Nichols, G and Crow, I (2004) Measuring the Impact of Crime Reduction Interventions Involving Sports Activities for Young People, *The Howard Journal of Criminal Justice*, 43, 3, 267-283; Tacon, R (2007) Football and Social Inclusion: Evaluating Social Policy, *Managing Leisure*, 12, 1, 1-23.

⁸² Nichols, G (2007) *Sport and Crime Reduction: The Role of Sports in Tackling Youth Crime*, London, Routledge, p. 5.

⁸³ Nichols, G (2007) *Sport and Crime Reduction: The Role of Sports in Tackling Youth Crime*, London, Routledge.

⁸⁴ Youth Justice Board (2005) *Risk and Protective Factors*, London, Youth Justice Board.

⁸⁵ Positive Futures (2007) *Positive Futures: Putting the Pieces Together*, London, Home Office. Accessed online at: <http://www.substance.coop/files/Putting%20the%20Pieces%20Together.pdf>

⁸⁶ Morris, L, Sallybanks, J, Willis, K and Makkai, T (2003) *Sport, Physical Activity and Antisocial Behaviour in Youth*, Canberra, Australian Institute of Criminology, Trends and Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice, no 249.

⁸⁷ Trulson, M (1986) Martial Arts Training: A Novel "Cure" for Juvenile Delinquency, *Human Relations*, 39, 12, 1131-1140.

underpinned by the crime strategy for England and Wales, which recognises the preventative potential of positive activities in general, and sport in particular⁸⁸. It states the following:

Identifying children and young people who are on the cusp of getting involved in offending is crucial in preventing them escalating rapidly into more serious crime, and in preventing them becoming victims of crime... Diversion, particularly sports and other youth programmes, has a key role.⁸⁹

The delivery agreement for PSA 23 also makes explicit its links with the delivery agreement for PSA 14, in which sport, recreation and other positive activities are a key focus (see Chapter 3). This emphasises the Government's awareness of the role of sport in addressing youth crime, although whether this awareness translates into direct support and assistance is arguable.

However, it appears that there is a lack even of recognition of the role that sport and recreation could play in efforts to reduce re-offending. The fourth priority action of PSA 23 is to 'reduce re-offending through the improved management of offenders'. However, the part of PSA 23's delivery agreement that deals with reducing re-offending makes no mention whatsoever of sport's potential contribution. Likewise the Government's *Reducing Re-offending Delivery Plan*⁹⁰, which underpins delivery in this area, includes no reference to sport. As already mentioned in this report, this is an extremely complex area and it is not possible to make simple pronouncements on the benefits of sport. Indeed research has indicated that rehabilitation through sport requires a deep understanding of individual needs, including the processes associated with different types of sport. For example, traditional, competitive sport may not be a suitable 'vehicle' and may, in some cases, have negative consequences⁹¹. Nevertheless there is evidence to suggest that properly targeted programmes, based on a clear understanding of how sport can facilitate processes of skills development and pro-social development, can be effective in reducing re-offending⁹².

A robust and well-cited evaluation of the West Yorkshire Sports Counselling project in the late 1990s found that participation in sporting activities over a 12 week period reduced the reconviction rates of Probation Service clients over two years as compared to a control group. Close analysis of the programme suggested that various aspects contributed to its success, including the voluntary nature of participation, the skills of sports leaders, improved self-esteem and perceptions of fitness, the length of course, new peer group, and access to training courses⁹³. In the US, a review of 21 outdoor recreation programmes found that there were positive results in terms of recidivism (eight out of 14 reported reduced rates), and 14 out of 16 studies reported significant positive changes in self-concept⁹⁴. However, the authors did note a number of methodological concerns with the studies and stressed the importance of rigorous research design to improve the validity of future studies.

In fact, sport could play an even more significant role in crime reduction than indicated in the research evidence specifically dealing with sport and crime. There is strong evidence of sport's potential to contribute to other key areas identified in the overall crime strategy for England and Wales and the *Reducing Re-offending Delivery Plan*. The crime strategy identifies four fundamental issues affecting crime:

- drug misuse;
- alcohol misuse;
- social exclusion; and
- the mental health needs of offenders⁹⁵.

⁸⁸ Home Office (2007) *Cutting Crime: A New Partnership 2008-11*, London, Home Office. Accessed online at: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/crime-strategy-07/crime-strategy-07?view=Binary>

⁸⁹ Home Office (2007) *Cutting Crime: A New Partnership 2008-11*, London, Home Office, p. 30. Accessed online at: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/crime-strategy-07/crime-strategy-07?view=Binary>

⁹⁰ National Offender Management Service (2005) *Reducing Re-offending Delivery Plan*, London, NOMS. Accessed online at: <http://noms.justice.gov.uk/news-publications-events/publications/strategy/reducing-reoffend-delivery-plan/reducing-reoffending-delivery?view=Binary>

⁹¹ Andrews, J and Andrews, G (2003) Life in a Secure Unit: Rehabilitation of Young People through the Use of Sport, *Social Science and Medicine*, 56, 531-550.

⁹² Nichols, G (2007) *Sport and Crime Reduction: The Role of Sports in Tackling Youth Crime*, London, Routledge.

⁹³ Nichols, G and Taylor, P (1996) *West Yorkshire Sports Counselling: Final Evaluation Report*, Sheffield, University of Sheffield Leisure Management Unit.

⁹⁴ West, S and Crompton, J (2001) A Review of the Impact of Adventure Programs on At-risk Youth, *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration*, 19, 2, 113-140.

⁹⁵ Home Office (2007) *Cutting Crime: A New Partnership 2008-11*, London, Home Office. Accessed online at: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/crime-strategy-07/crime-strategy-07?view=Binary>

Sport has been shown to have the potential to contribute positively in all of these areas; indeed, in some cases, the delivery agreements of other PSAs make this explicit. Earlier in this Chapter, in relation to PSA 18, the evidence for sport and recreation's beneficial impact on depression and other mental health disorders was presented: a number of high level reviews, including the Chief Medical Officer's report, attested to the positive impact of physical activity on mental health and psychological wellbeing. Both PSA 25, which sets out the Government's plans for reducing the harm caused by alcohol and drugs, and PSA 12, which aims to improve the health and wellbeing of children and young people and is linked explicitly with PSAs 13 and 14, address drug and alcohol misuse. Chapter 3 – in relation to PSA 12 – reviews in detail the evidence in this area and cites key studies that indicate the positive impact that sport and physical activity can have on young people's drug and alcohol related behaviour. This is one of many examples of how sporting outcomes, such as increased participation, might produce other social outcomes, such as reduced anti-social behaviour, working through a series of intermediate processes, such as improved self-esteem.

PSA Delivery Agreement 25: Reduce the harm caused by Alcohol and Drugs

The Government's vision, as set out in PSA 25, is to produce a long-term and sustainable reduction in the harms associated with alcohol and drugs. Such harms are significant and wide-ranging and this PSA focuses particularly on:

- reducing the harms caused to the development, achievement and well-being of young people and families;
- reducing the harms caused to the health and well-being of drug users and those using alcohol in harmful ways; and
- reducing the harms caused to the community as a result of associated crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour.

The economic costs of the harms caused by drug and alcohol misuse are also substantial and are estimated at £15.4 billion and £18-£20 billion respectively⁹⁶. The three main strands identified above are supported by a series of actions, underpinned by the relevant strategies on drugs and alcohol. Principal among these actions is 'a renewed effort to address substance misuse amongst young people, particularly through early intervention with those we know to be most vulnerable'⁹⁷.

The delivery agreement for PSA 25 makes explicit its links with PSA 14, the ambition of which is to increase the number of children and young people on the path to success. In PSA 25's twin strategies for reducing both drug and alcohol misuse, the 'young people's substance misuse indicator' in PSA 14 is declared a key delivery lever. As described in greater detail in Chapter 3, a central plank of the Government's strategy around children and young people is to increase participation in positive activities, among which sport, recreational pursuits and volunteering feature prominently. This is based on the Government's appraisal of evidence from the UK and the USA which shows that positive leisure time activities can have a significant impact on young people's resilience and outcomes in later life, including helping young people avoid taking risks such as experimenting with drugs or being involved in anti-social behaviour or crime.

PSA 12, which focuses on improving the health and wellbeing of children and young people, also sits in a broader framework of encouraging healthy life choices, including a reduction in the harm caused by alcohol and drugs. Chapter 3 reviews the evidence for sport and recreation's potentially positive contribution towards this goal, a contribution which was also recognised in the World Health Organization's report, *Health and Development through Physical Activity and Sport*⁹⁸. Another key aspect of the Government's strategy around children and young people is its emphasis on the interrelatedness of its various objectives. Consequently, the aim, in PSA 14, of increasing participation in positive activities is linked closely to the aim of reducing substance misuse.

⁹⁶ Her Majesty's Government (2007) *PSA Delivery Agreement 25: Reduce the Harm Caused by Alcohol and Drugs*, London, Stationery Office, p. 3. Accessed online at: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/A/4/pbr_csr07_psa25.pdf

⁹⁷ Her Majesty's Government (2007) *PSA Delivery Agreement 25: Reduce the Harm Caused by Alcohol and Drugs*, London, Stationery Office, p. 7. Accessed online at: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/A/4/pbr_csr07_psa25.pdf

⁹⁸ World Health Organization (2003) *Health and Development through Physical Activity and Sport*, Geneva, WHO. Accessed online at: http://libdoc.who.int/hq/2003/WHO_NMH_NPH_PAH_03.2.pdf

So while sport and recreation may not substantially influence the specific, measurable objectives of PSA 25, they are directly related to the overarching goal – in PSAs 14 and 25 – of preventing substance misuse among young people. A clear explanation, then, of sport's role in the delivery agreement for PSA 25 would be of great benefit. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport, for example, is mentioned nowhere in the delivery agreement. Currently, it requires a sizeable effort to join the dots, searching for relevant mentions in associated policy areas. There is a danger that, in doing so, the evidence for sport and recreation's potential contribution to healthy behaviour change in young people might become obscured.

Chapter 3: Fairness and opportunity for all

PSA Delivery Agreement 8: Maximise employment opportunity for all

PSA 8 aims to maximise employment opportunity for all given that, as the vision states, ‘the chance to work opens up opportunities to progress, to develop and to participate fully in society’⁹⁹. Sport has the potential to contribute to this goal in several ways. Firstly, sport-related employment in England was estimated at 434,000 in 2005, accounting for 1.8 per cent of all employment in England¹⁰⁰. This is greater than the combined employment in the radio and television and publishing sectors and it is growing rapidly: in the five years between 2000 and 2005, employment in sport increased by 19 per cent¹⁰¹. Coaching is one key area of sports employment and while the majority of coaches are volunteers, there is evidence that opportunities for paid employment in sports coaching are increasing. The most recent report on the coaching workforce, carried out in 2006, indicated that around 30 per cent of coaches received pay for coaching, compared to around 19 per cent in 2004, representing a significant change to the structure of the coaching workforce¹⁰².

Beyond the direct employment opportunities provided by both the commercial and non-commercial sport sectors, it has been asserted that, in certain circumstances, the presence of professional sports teams and the hosting of sporting events can also lead to employment, often in non-sport related jobs. Researchers in this area have consistently stressed that employment-related benefits are by no means an automatic consequence of either sporting events or professional sports teams. However, analysis of the economic regeneration strategy adopted by the city of Indianapolis in the 1970s and 1980s, which included significant investment in sports infrastructure, did conclude that the ‘sport strategy’ created a small number of jobs and the spin-off from sporting events generated a substantial number of service sector and hotel jobs¹⁰³. It is essential to consider the opportunity costs associated with such investment. For example, the Indianapolis analysis suggested that, had the investment strategy focused on alternative factors, a larger economic impact may have been possible. Nevertheless, if integrated appropriately, there are opportunities associated with major sporting events to promote employment and skills development. As mentioned in Chapter 4, the employment and skills strategy for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games seeks to create new jobs, increase sustainable skills among local people and improve links between employers and those looking for work¹⁰⁴. This includes a clear aim: seven per cent of the on site workforce should be made up of people who were previously unemployed before working on London 2012 construction. This could potentially equate to between 4,000 and 5,000 people over the entire period of construction.

This use of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games to drive employment and skills development demonstrates the importance of connecting the overall aim of PSA 8 with the Government objectives included in other relevant PSAs. For example, the next section examines the impact of sport on improving academic achievement (PSAs 10 and 11) and Chapter 4 examines the impact of sport on improving skills (PSA 2). Both of these analyses suggest that sport and recreation could make a valuable contribution to the Government’s objectives in each policy area. And both of these areas – education and skills – ought to be fundamental to an overall employment strategy.

⁹⁹ Her Majesty’s Government (2007) *PSA Delivery Agreement 8: Maximise Employment Opportunity for All*, London, Stationery Office, p. 3. Accessed online at: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/5/9/pbr_csr07_psa8.pdf

¹⁰⁰ Sport Industry Research Centre (2007) *The Economic Importance of Sport in England, 1985-2005*, Sheffield, SIRC, Sheffield Hallam University. Accessed online at: http://www.sportengland.org/2005_england_summary_final.pdf

¹⁰¹ Sport Industry Research Centre (2007) *The Economic Importance of Sport in England, 1985-2005*, Sheffield, SIRC, Sheffield Hallam University. Accessed online at: http://www.sportengland.org/2005_england_summary_final.pdf

¹⁰² Townend, R and North, J (2007) *Sports Coaching in the UK II*, Leeds, sports coach UK. Accessed online at: <http://www.sportscoachuk.org/NR/rdonlyres/F4DE7C6B-5E27-41CD-8469-8209167D1122/0/SportsCoachingintheUKIIFINAL.pdf>

¹⁰³ Rosentraub, M, Swindell, D, Przybylski, M and Mullins, D (1994) Sport and Downtown Development Strategy: If you Build it, Will Jobs Come? *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 16, 3, 221-239.

¹⁰⁴ Olympic Delivery Authority (2008) *Jobs, Skills, Futures*, London, ODA. Accessed online at: <http://www.london2012.com/documents/oda-publications/employment-and-skills-strategy-feb-08-low-res.pdf>

PSA Delivery Agreement 10: Raise the educational achievement of all children and young people and PSA Delivery Agreement 11: Narrow the gap in educational achievement between children from low income and disadvantaged backgrounds and their peers

The joint vision for PSAs 10 and 11 declares: 'educational achievement is the biggest single predictor of a successful adult life; but a successful education is not simply a product of what happens in schools and colleges'¹⁰⁵. A central theme, then, of the delivery agreement is that children's lives must be understood in the round and educational objectives must be pursued in this context. Despite this avowed approach and despite the importance of positive activities in government strategies around children and young people, there is little recognition here of the role that sport could play both within and beyond the curriculum. Sport and recreation go virtually unmentioned in the delivery agreement for PSAs 10 and 11 and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport is strikingly absent from all discussion of contributing government departments.

The potentially positive impact of sport and recreation on educational performance has been acknowledged in previous government policy and also explored in some detail in academic research. In 1999, the report of the Policy Action Group 10 stated: 'sport can contribute to neighbourhood renewal by improving communities' performance on four key indicators – health, crime, employment and education'¹⁰⁶. Indeed, specialist sports colleges, first introduced in 1997, have seen a rise in academic performance over the last decade¹⁰⁷ and there is also evidence that specialist sports and technology colleges are the only types to add value to subjects other than their own¹⁰⁸. Several key academic reviews have found evidence that sport and physical activity can improve educational performance. The classic study on the impact of PE and school sport on pupils' school performance was carried out in France in the early 1950s. Researchers reduced 'academic' curriculum time by 26 per cent and replaced it with PE and school sport. Academic results did not worsen and, moreover, there were fewer discipline problems, greater attentiveness and less absenteeism¹⁰⁹. More recent studies have corroborated these general findings. For example, one review of three large scale studies found that when physical activity makes up a significant proportion of curricular time (14-26 per cent), academic performance definitely does not decline, and in some cases improves, compared with those not receiving additional physical activity¹¹⁰. Longitudinal analysis also found that, at a minimum, the physical and mental health benefits of sports participation can be obtained without any negative impact on educational performance and, among some participants, educational performance will improve¹¹¹.

More research is needed to understand exactly how these processes work. For example, physical activity at school might enhance academic performance in a relatively direct manner by increasing the flow of blood to the brain, enhancing arousal levels, changing hormonal secretion, and improving mental alertness¹¹². Indeed two major reviews, one focusing solely on children, found that exercise has small, but beneficial, effects on cognitive performance¹¹³. Regular exercise has also been shown to have small, but reliable, positive effects on reaction time, sharpness and mathematics¹¹⁴. Alternatively, sports participation might lead to educational improvement through positive

¹⁰⁵ Her Majesty's Government (2007) *PSA Delivery Agreement 10: Raise the educational achievement of all children and young people and PSA Delivery Agreement 11: Narrow the gap in educational achievement between children from low income and disadvantaged backgrounds and their peers*, London, Stationery Office, p. 4. Accessed online at: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/D/E/pbr_csr07_psa10_11.pdf

¹⁰⁶ Policy Action Team 10 (1999) *National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal: Policy Action Team Audit, Report of the Policy Action Team 10: The contribution of Sport and the Arts*, London, Department for Culture, Media and Sport, p. 23. Accessed online at: <http://www.sportdevelopment.org.uk/html/pat10.html>

¹⁰⁷ Rudd, P, Aiston, S, Davies, D, Rickinson, M and Dartnall, L (2002) *High Performing Specialist Schools: What Makes the Difference?* Slough, National Foundation for Educational Research.

¹⁰⁸ Levacic, R and Jenkins, A (2004) *Evaluating the Effectiveness of Specialist Schools*, London, Centre for the Economics of Education, London School of Economics.

¹⁰⁹ Hervet, R (1952) *Varves son Experience, ses Perspectives*, *Revue de l'Institut de Sports*, 24, 4-6. Sallis, J, McKenzie, T, Kolody, B, Lewis, M, Marshall, S and Rosengard, P (1999) Effects of Health-related Physical Education on Academic Achievement: Project SPARK, *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 70, 2, 127-134.

¹¹⁰ Shephard, R (1997) Curricular Physical Activity and Academic Performance, *Pediatric Exercise Science*, 9, 113-126.

¹¹¹ Sallis, J, McKenzie, T, Kolody, B, Lewis, M, Marshall, S and Rosengard, P (1999) Effects of Health-related Physical Education on Academic Achievement: Project SPARK, *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 70, 2, 127-134.

¹¹² Bailey, R (2005) Evaluating the Relationship between Physical Activity, Sport and Social Inclusion, *Education Review*, 57, 1, 71-90.

¹¹³ Etnier, J, Salazar, W, Landers, D, Petruzzello, S, Han, M and Nowell, P (1997) The Influence of Physical Fitness and Exercise upon Cognitive Functioning: A Meta-analysis, *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 19, 249-277; Sibley, B and Etnier, J (2003) The Relationship between Physical Activity and Cognition in Children: A Meta-analysis, *Pediatric Exercise Science*, 15, 243-256.

¹¹⁴ Thomas, J, Landers, D, Salazar, W and Etnier, J (1994) Exercise and Cognitive Function, in C. Bouchard et al. *Physical Activity, Fitness and Health*, Champaign, Illinois, Human Kinetics.

socio-psychological outcomes, such as an increased sense of self-efficacy and/or self-esteem. Or, there may be even more indirect reasons, including increased school commitment or increased attention from coaches, teacher and parents¹¹⁵. There is also evidence which suggests that peer acceptance is crucial in cognitive and emotional development. Participation in sport, therefore, may have a beneficial impact on educational performance through the opportunities it offers for young people to gain peer acceptance¹¹⁶.

A more detailed understanding of the specific mechanisms through which sport and recreation influence educational achievement is of more than just academic interest. It would significantly affect policy, programmes and investment in this area. For example, if sports participation *per se* improves cognitive ability or self-esteem, which in turn improves academic performance, there would be a strong argument for promoting sports participation outside school on educational grounds alone, even in addition to promoting it on its inherent benefits or for public health.

While the delivery agreement for PSAs 10 and 11 recognises that many factors, including behaviour, attendance and lifestyle, impact on educational achievement, there is very little recognition of the influence that sport can have on these factors. For example, the strategy states: 'missing school increases the likelihood of pupils leaving without qualifications. Misbehaviour interferes with the teaching process and learning experience.'¹¹⁷ As the evidence above shows, some of the clearest benefits of sport in school may be that participants experience fewer discipline problems, greater attentiveness and less absenteeism. Indeed, the original guide to the national PE and Sport Strategy for Young People listed as one of the three main benefits of PE and sport in schools, both within and beyond the curriculum, as improvement in 'pupil concentration, commitment and self-esteem, leading to higher attendance and better behaviour and attainment'¹¹⁸. Despite this, the only passing mention to sport in this part of the delivery agreement is a brief declaration that schools will be encouraged to offer extended services to children, such as homework clubs after school, additional sport and music tuition, drama and ICT clubs or catch up classes in English and mathematics, provided directly or through local third sector and community organisations.

There is a consistent focus in the delivery agreement for PSAs 10 and 11 on improving basic skills, particularly literacy and numeracy. Here again, sport and recreation have demonstrated considerable potential. Recent research has examined the possible benefits to educational performance which could arise from using the salience of sport to attract young people to educational programmes. One such programme, *Playing for Success*, based at various professional sports clubs, underwent four successive years of evaluation. Results in ICT, literacy and numeracy showed statistically significant improvement in results for participants, compared to control groups. Furthermore, comparisons with a national distribution of scores found that pupils selected to attend *Playing for Success* were performing at a very low level initially, but by the end were much closer to national norms¹¹⁹. As demonstrated throughout this report, it is the multiple aspects of sport engagement – participation, volunteering, spectatorship, and in this case simply the wide appeal of professional sports clubs – that can influence personal outcomes. A greater understanding of these various processes would lead to much more sophisticated policy making and better targeted investment.

[PSA Delivery Agreement 12: Improve the health and wellbeing of children and young people](#)

PSA 12 recognises that there has been a sharp increase in child obesity and that rates of mental health disorders remain worryingly high. In tackling these issues, the Government focuses on 'prevention and early intervention, based on evidence of effective practice and support designed around the needs of children and young people'¹²⁰. This

¹¹⁵ Snyder, E and Spreitzer, E (1990) High School Athletic Participation as Related to College Attendance among Black, Hispanic and White Males: A Research Note, *Youth and Society*, 21, 3, 390-398.

¹¹⁶ Evans, J and Roberts, G (1987) Physical Competence and the Development of Children's Peer Relations, *QUEST*, 39, 23-25.

¹¹⁷ Her Majesty's Government (2007) *PSA Delivery Agreement 10: Raise the educational achievement of all children and young people and PSA Delivery Agreement 11: Narrow the gap in educational achievement between children from low income and disadvantaged backgrounds and their peers*, London, Stationery Office, p. 26. Accessed online at: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/D/E/pbr_csr07_psa10_11.pdf

¹¹⁸ Department for Education and Skills (2003) *Learning through PE and Sport: A Guide to the Physical Education, School Sport and Club Links Strategy*, London, Department for Education and Skills, p. 1. Accessed online at: <http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/LTPES.pdf.pdf>

¹¹⁹ Sharp, C, Blackmore, J, Kendall, L, Greene, K, Keys, W, Macauley, A, Schagen, I and Yeshanew, T (2003) *Playing for Success: An Evaluation of the Fourth Year*, Research Report 402, Slough, National Foundation for Educational Research. Accessed online at: <http://www.sportdevelopment.org.uk/playingforsuccess2003.pdf>

¹²⁰ Her Majesty's Government (2007) *PSA Delivery Agreement 12: Improve the Health and Wellbeing of Children and Young People*, London, Stationery Office, p. 3. Accessed online at: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/6/8/pbr_csr07_psa12.pdf

strategy sits within the wider context of engaging young people in making healthy life choices. Specifically, the delivery priorities for PSA 12 are:

- increasing breastfeeding at six to eight weeks;
- increasing uptake of school lunches;
- reducing childhood obesity;
- improving emotional health and well-being, and child and adolescent mental health services; and
- improving services for disabled children.

Participation in sport and recreation can contribute directly to the reduction of childhood obesity and the improvement of emotional health and wellbeing. Moreover, there is strong evidence that involvement in sport can positively influence wider healthy life choices, specifically among young people.

The most recent Health Survey for England indicated that almost a third (29.7 per cent) of children aged 2-15 were either overweight or obese. Furthermore, the prevalence of obesity in children has increased dramatically in the last decade or so. In 1995, 10.9 per cent of boys and 12.0 per cent of girls aged 2-15 were obese. In 2006, these figures were 17.3 per cent and 14.7 per cent respectively. There is evidence that these trends are set to continue. According to the recent report published by Foresight at the Government Office for Science, *Tackling Obesities: Future Choices*¹²¹, which used detailed modelling techniques to predict obesity levels, by 2050, 26 per cent of 1-20 year olds will be obese. Obesity carries considerable human costs: it doubles the risk of all-cause mortality, coronary heart disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes, increases the risk of some cancers, musculoskeletal problems and loss of function, and carries negative psychological consequences¹²². There are also serious financial consequences of increasing obesity: the Foresight report estimated that the cost of people being overweight and obese in 2050 will be £49.9 billion¹²³.

In straightforward terms, the cause of obesity is a chronic imbalance between the amount of energy in the diet and the energy expended by the body in its daily activities¹²⁴. Genes appear to influence the metabolism and distribution of body fat, and are thought to contribute 25-40 per cent to the causes of overweight and obesity¹²⁵. However, the rapid increase in levels of obesity throughout the developed world has occurred in too short a time for there to have been significant genetic changes within the population. It is probable, therefore, that the so-called 'obesity epidemic' has been brought about mainly by environmental and behavioural changes which have led to a more energy-dense diet and more sedentary way of life.

The expert panel involved in the World Cancer Research Fund's incredibly detailed report, *Food, Nutrition, Physical Activity and the Prevention of Cancer: A Global Perspective*, concluded that there was convincing evidence that physical activity decreased the risk of weight gain, overweight and obesity. Consequently, the panel agreed that 'physical activity, which promotes healthy weight, would be expected to protect against cancers whose risk is increased by overweight, weight gain, and obesity'¹²⁶. In addition, the Chief Medical Officer's report described a series of studies that demonstrate how physical activity can reduce weight and also positively affect weight composition. The further relative significance of physical activity is identified in a detailed review of evidence, commissioned by the Department of Health for the 'healthy living social marketing initiative' that underpins the Government's approach to tackling obesity¹²⁷. The review points to experimental studies which suggest that innate appetite control mechanisms operate more efficiently at higher levels of activity with greater energy turnover¹²⁸. Accordingly, physical activity may play an even greater role in weight control than previously thought. In children, there is evidence, cited in the Chief Medical

¹²¹ Foresight (2007) *Tackling Obesities: Future Choices*, London, Government Office for Science. Accessed online at: http://www.foresight.gov.uk/Obesity/obesity_final/17.pdf

¹²² National Institutes of Health (1998) *Clinical guidelines on the identification, evaluation, and treatment of overweight and obesity in adults*. NIH Publication No. 98-4083, USA, National Institutes of Health. Accessed online at: http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/obesity/ob_gdlns.pdf

¹²³ Foresight (2007) *Tackling Obesities: Future Choices*, London, Government Office for Science. Accessed online at: http://www.foresight.gov.uk/Obesity/obesity_final/17.pdf

¹²⁴ Bray, G (2004) Obesity is a chronic relapsing neurochemical disease, *International Journal of Obesity*, 28, 34-38.

¹²⁵ Maffei, C (2000) Aetiology of overweight and obesity in children and adults, *European Journal of Paediatrics*, 159, Supp. 1, S35-44.

¹²⁶ World Cancer Research Fund/American Institute for Cancer Research (2007) *Food, Nutrition, Physical Activity and the Prevention of Cancer: A Global Perspective*, Washington DC, AICR, p. 29. Accessed online at: <http://www.dietandcancerreport.org/?p=ER>

¹²⁷ Medical Research Council (2007) *The 'Healthy Living' Social Marketing Initiative: A Review of the Evidence*, London, MRC. Accessed online at: http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_073044

¹²⁸ Prentice, A and Jebb, S (2004) Energy Intake/Physical Activity Interactions in the Homeostasis of Body Weight Regulation, *Nutrition Reviews*, 62, 7, 2, S98-104.

Officer's report, that less active children are more likely to have excess fat, even as early as late infancy¹²⁹. Interventions using programmed activity have resulted in clinically significant decreases in body fat and body mass index in obese children¹³⁰.

The delivery agreement for PSA 12 recognises the key contribution sport and physical activity can make to reducing childhood obesity: increasing participation in sport – through PSA 22 – is one of five main areas of activity listed. It also points to the cross-government strategy, *Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives*, launched in January 2008, which underpins the delivery of some parts of PSA 12. This includes five fundamental policy themes, of which one is 'children' and another is 'physical activity'. Despite this recognition of the benefits of sport and physical activity, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport is not mentioned anywhere in the entire delivery agreement for PSA 12. This is a striking absence. The previous PSA on childhood obesity, which was jointly shared between the Department of Health, the Department for Education and Skills and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, aimed to halt the year-on-year rise in obesity in children under 11 by 2010, in the context of a broader strategy to tackle obesity in the population as a whole. That this has been abandoned in favour of a watered down target – reducing the rate of increase in obesity among children under 11 as a first step towards a long-term national ambition, by 2020, of reducing the proportion of overweight and obese children to 2000 levels in the context of tackling obesity across the population – is a clear indication of the scale of the childhood obesity problem and the difficulties the Government has encountered in addressing it.

One way in which the Government could make significant headway in this struggle against childhood obesity is by providing more support for local voluntary sports clubs, the bedrock of young people's participation in sport beyond the school gates. The sole means of raising sport participation in order to reduce childhood obesity according to PSA 12 is through the PE and Sport Strategy for Young People, which underpins PSA 22 (see Chapter 2). Yet the vast majority of the funding for the PESSYP is aimed directly at school-time activity: £537 million of the £755 million allocated over the three years from 2008-11 is earmarked to continue support for the network of Sports Colleges and School Sport Partnerships, with an additional £30 million allocated to upgrade facilities in targeted Sports Colleges¹³¹. There is no specific funding commitment from the £755 million budget made to building better links between schools and community sports clubs, only a vague statement that further funding will address it.

The importance of third sector organisations is, in fact, mentioned in PSA 12's delivery agreement:

Third sector organisations play a vital and distinctive role in promoting good health for children and young people, in activities ranging from health promotion to meeting the needs of particular groups. They also have a central role in giving a voice to children and young people, and to mothers and fathers, particularly among more disadvantaged groups. (p. 15)

However, there is little explanation of how they will be supported beyond a vague offer of engagement:

Local community groups will be engaged in promoting better health and creating a healthy environment for children and families, for example, through their involvement in the DH 'small change, big difference' social marketing initiatives. (p. 15)

The importance of sport and recreation to the delivery of PSA 12 extends beyond its impact on childhood obesity and encompasses the fourth delivery priority, improving emotional health and wellbeing in children and young people. The Chief Medical Officer's report cited key studies which confirm that a positive relationship exists between physical activity and wellbeing, independent of social class and health status¹³². The report goes on to state: 'sport and exercise can provide an important arena for youngsters to be successful and this is experienced through positive effects on self-esteem and self perceptions of competence and body image, with a stronger effect for those already low in

¹²⁹ Boreham, C, Twisk, J, Savage, M, Cran, G, Strain, J (1997) Physical Activity, Sports Participation, and Risk Factors in Adolescents, *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise*, 29, 788-793; Wells, J and Ritz, P (2001) Physical Activity at 9-12 Months and Fatness at 2 Years of Age, *American Journal of Human Biology*, 13, 384-389.

¹³⁰ LeMura, L and Maziekas, M (2002) Factors that Alter Body Fat, Body Mass, and Fat-free Mass in Pediatric Obesity, *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise*, 34, 487-496.

¹³¹ Department for Children, Schools and Families (2008) *PE and Sport Strategy Leaflet*, London, DCSF. Accessed online at: http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/_doc/12416/PE%20and%20Sport%20Strategy%20leaflet%202008.pdf

¹³² Hendry, L, Shucksmith, J and Cross, J (1989) Young People's Mental Well-being in Relation to Leisure, in Health Promotion Research Trust (ed), *Fit for Life*, Cambridge, Health Promotion Research Trust, 129-153; Steptoe, A and Butler, N (1996) Sports Participation and Emotional Wellbeing in Adolescents, *Lancet*, 347, 1789-1792.

self esteem¹³³. A more recent, systematic review also found that exercise can have short term beneficial effects on self esteem in children and adolescents, although more high quality, longitudinal research is needed to understand the relationship in more detail¹³⁴. A recent study of high school students explored the impact on mental and physical health and coping skills of organised, more intensive sports participation and lower intensity participation. For both boys and girls, competitive sports participation was associated with a lower frequency of mental health problems, eating and dietary problems and total risks compared to non-competitive peers¹³⁵. In fact, there is much more extensive evidence for the mental health benefits of sport and physical activity in both adults and children. This is covered more comprehensively in Chapter 2, as PSA 18 includes a specific aim to improve the wellbeing and inclusion of people with depression and/or anxiety disorders.

Both of these specific objectives – to reduce childhood obesity and to improve children’s emotional health and wellbeing – are set in a framework of encouraging children and young people to make healthy life choices. This overarching theme is emphasised repeatedly in the delivery agreement for PSA 12 and in the key policy documents that underpin its delivery – the *Children’s Plan*¹³⁶, *Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives*¹³⁷, and the *Every Child Matters* framework¹³⁸. There is strong and growing evidence that sport can play a crucial role in developing healthy behaviour in children and young people, not only in terms of directly benefiting their physical and mental health, but also by encouraging them to make more general healthy life choices. The World Health Organization report, *Health and Development Through Physical Activity and Sport*, states the following: ‘Involvement in properly guided physical activity and sports can also foster the adoption of other healthy behaviour including avoidance of tobacco, alcohol and drug use and violent behaviour as well as the adoption of healthy diet, adequate rest and better safety practices.’¹³⁹ Indeed there are a series of robust, scientific studies that address the issue of sport and healthy behaviour. A study published in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine* examined the association between leisure time physical activity over a three year period and health related behaviour, social relationships, and health status in late adolescence. Persistent physical inactivity in adolescents is associated with a less healthy lifestyle, worse educational progression, and poor self perceived health. The study concluded that tailoring methods to promote physical activity could, properly designed, prove useful for influencing health habits.

A study in the US of a nationally representative sample of more than 14,000 high school students found that participation in sport was associated with numerous positive health behaviours and few negative health behaviours¹⁴⁰. For example, male sports participants were more likely than male non-participants to report fruit and vegetable consumption and less likely to report cigarette smoking, cocaine and other illegal drug use. Another nationally representative study of high school age students in the US found that male and female students reporting participation in one or two sports teams and three or more teams were significantly more likely to have not engaged in cigarette smoking and illegal drug use than those not playing on any sports teams¹⁴¹. In addition, females who played on one or more sports teams were significantly more likely to have not ever had a sexually transmitted disease and to not have been pregnant. Different sports can have different impacts on the health-related behaviour of those taking part. A study of nearly 900 8th grade students in the US found that females who participated in dance, cheerleading and gymnastics in school were less at risk of alcohol use, whereas those in out-of-school dance, cheerleading, gymnastics,

¹³³ Department of Health (2004) *At Least Five a Week: Evidence on the Impact of Physical Activity and its Relationship to Health, A Report from the Chief Medical Officer*, London, Department of Health, p. 32. Accessed online at:

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4080994

¹³⁴ Ekland, E, Heian, F and Hagen, K (2005) Can Exercise Improve Self Esteem in Children and Young People? A Systematic Review of Randomised Controlled Trials, *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 29, 11, 792-798.

¹³⁵ Pyle, R, McQuivey, R, Brassington, G and Steiner, H (2003) High School Student Athletes: Associations Between Intensity of Participation and Health Factors, *Clinical Pediatrics*, 697-701.

¹³⁶ Department for Children, Schools and Families (2007) *The Children’s Plan: Building Brighter Futures*, London, DCSF. Accessed online at: http://www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/childrensplan/downloads/The_Childrens_Plan.pdf

¹³⁷ Department of Health (2008) *Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives: A Cross-government Strategy for England*, London, DH. Accessed online at: http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_082378

¹³⁸ Her Majesty’s Government (2004) *Every Child Matters: Change for Children*, London, Stationery Office. Accessed online at: http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/_files/F9E3F941DC8D4580539EE4C743E9371D.pdf

¹³⁹ World Health Organization (2003) *Health and Development through Physical Activity and Sport*, Geneva, WHO, p. 4. Accessed online at: http://libdoc.who.int/hq/2003/WHO_NMH_NPH_PAH_03.2.pdf

¹⁴⁰ Pate, R, Trost, S, Levin, S, Dowda, M (2000) Sports Participation and Health-Related Behaviors Among US Youth, *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*, 154, 904-911.

¹⁴¹ Page, R, Hammermeister, J, Scanlan, A and Gilbert, G (1998) Is School Sports Participation a Protective Factor Against Adolescent Health Risk Behaviors? *Journal of Health Education*, 29, 3, 186-192.

skateboarding or surfing were at increased risk for using at least one substance¹⁴². Males in out-of-school swimming were at decreased risk of heavy alcohol use, whereas those who took part in football, swimming, wrestling at school or out-of-school tennis were at increased risk for using at least one substance.

The evidence, then, for sport's contribution to reducing childhood obesity, improving mental health and wellbeing and encouraging healthy life choices is already convincing. Policy makers ought to recognise its fundamental role with more targeted support. Given the importance of viewing children and young people's lives in the round, support should be extended well beyond the school gate. There are an estimated 151,000 volunteer-run sports clubs in the UK, a third of which are estimated to have been running for more than 50 years¹⁴³. Here, then, is a sustainable network of organisations already in existence which, with mutually agreed upon support, could make an even more significant contribution to the promotion of healthy living among children and young people.

PSA Delivery Agreement 13: Improve children and young people's safety

PSA 13 states that 'staying safe is vital for children and young people's happiness, health, wellbeing and achievement'¹⁴⁴. Its objectives are linked explicitly with other 'youth' PSAs, particularly 12 and 14. The *Children's Plan*¹⁴⁵ and the *Every Child Matters* framework¹⁴⁶ underlie PSA 13, as they do the others, and the delivery agreement for this PSA is also underpinned by the cross-government *Staying Safe: Action Plan*¹⁴⁷. Sport and recreation, through the opportunities they offer children and young people to develop resilience, should play a key role in any strategy to improve their safety. Indeed, sport, recreation and physical activity – under the banner of positive activities and outdoor play – are highlighted in the *Staying Safe: Action Plan*, but are referred to only obliquely in the delivery agreement for PSA 13.

The consultation that informed the *Staying Safe: Action Plan* found that the issue of play and positive activities generated widespread interest. A majority of respondents considered such activities beneficial for children, not just for their enjoyment but also for their general health and to allow them to develop independence. Many recognised the positive impact sport, recreation and play can have on the development of children's resilience – including learning important social skills and how to handle risks for themselves.

Indeed there is good evidence that sports participation can lead to the development of such skills, though it should not be claimed that development will be an inevitable consequence of participation. Increased physical fitness through sports participation is associated with enhanced self-esteem¹⁴⁸. Likewise, there is evidence for a significant positive relationship between sporting achievement and high 'internal' locus of control, a concept that describes the extent to which individuals feel that they have control over their experiences¹⁴⁹.

The role of sport in improving children and young people's safety, however, is somewhat marginalised in PSA 13. Although the vision for PSA 13 highlights the link between its objectives and other, related objectives, there is no discussion in the delivery agreement of how sport and recreation can help to improve children's safety. PSA 14's discussion of positive activities, among which sport and recreation feature prominently, does identify the development of resilience and other social skills as one of their benefits. However, the link with improving safety is not made explicit. Furthermore, the major sport-specific spending commitment in the *Staying Safe: Action Plan* is the £100 million top-up investment to the PE, School Sport and Club Links strategy, rather than any additional funding.

¹⁴² Moore, M and Werch, C (2005) Sport and Physical Activity Participation and Substance Use Among Adolescents, *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 36, 6, 486-493.

¹⁴³ Nichols, G (2003) *Citizenship in Action: Voluntary Sector Sport and Recreation*, London, Central Council of Physical Recreation. Accessed online at: <http://www.ccpr.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/3CFD4D29-A78A-442D-A1DC-75AE24E4F5A4/0/CCPR2003CitizenshipinActionExecutiveSummary.pdf>

¹⁴⁴ Her Majesty's Government (2007) *PSA Delivery Agreement 13: Improve Children and Young People's Safety*, London, Stationery Office, p. 3. Accessed online at: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/3/4/pbr_csr07_psa13.pdf

¹⁴⁵ Department for Children, Schools and Families (2007) *The Children's Plan: Building Brighter Futures*, London, DCSF. Accessed online at: http://www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/childrensplan/downloads/The_Childrens_Plan.pdf

¹⁴⁶ Her Majesty's Government (2004) *Every Child Matters: Change for Children*, London, Stationery Office. Accessed online at: http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/_files/F9E3F941DC8D4580539EE4C743E9371D.pdf

¹⁴⁷ Department for Children, Schools and Families (2008) *Staying Safe: Action Plan*, London, DCSF. Accessed online at: <http://publications.everychildmatters.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/DCSF-00151-2008.pdf>

¹⁴⁸ Trujillo, C (1983) The Effect of Weight Training and Running Exercise Intervention Programs on the Self-esteem of College Women, *International Journal of Sports Psychology*, 14, 162-173.

¹⁴⁹ Paulus, D (1983) Sphere-specific Measures of Perceived Control, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 44, 6, 1253-1265.

The next section, in relation to PSA 14, explains how positive activities form a key part of the Government's strategy around children and young people. It may therefore have been felt that the delivery agreement for PSA 14 covered the contribution of sport and recreation to children and young people's safety. Nevertheless, PSA 13 is the main delivery vehicle for the *Staying Safe: Action Plan*, wherein sport, recreation and play are afforded an important role. A greater appreciation in PSA 13 of the direct role that sport and other positive activities can play in developing resilience and improving safety, therefore, would represent a clearer, more joined up approach to delivery.

PSA Delivery Agreement 14: Increase the number of children and young people on the path to success

The Government's grand vision, of which PSA 14 forms a part, is to make this country the best place in the world for children and young people to grow up. The *Every Child Matters* framework continues to guide policy in this area, calling for all children, regardless of their background or circumstances, to have the support they need to: be healthy; stay safe; enjoy and achieve; make a positive contribution; and achieve economic wellbeing¹⁵⁰. The delivery agreement for PSA 14 details the measurable indicators that will be used to assess progress in increasing the number of young people on the path to success. These are:

- to reduce the proportion of 16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET);
- to increase participation in positive activities;
- to reduce substance misuse by young people;
- to reduce the under-18 conception rate; and
- to reduce the number of young people entering the criminal justice system for the first time.

It is worth pausing to pinpoint the Government's precise definition of positive activities and its rationale for increasing participation in them. Positive activities are defined as any of the following:

- An organised sporting activity, for example, sports club or class (where the participant has done sport not just watched it);
- A youth forum, focus group or a meeting outside school about making things better in the local area;
- Volunteering (i.e. giving time to help) a charity or local group;
- A youth club or youth group with organised activities, for example, youth café, scouts, guides, cadets;
- Art, craft, dance, drama, film/video-making group or class (not in school lessons);
- Music group or lesson (not in school lessons);
- A residential course, for example, Do it 4Real, Outward Bound.

The rationale for participation is as follows:

Through participation, young people develop socially and emotionally, building communication skills and improving self confidence and esteem. This in turn increases their resilience, helping them avoid risks such as experimenting with drugs, having unprotected sex, or being involved in crime, as well as contributing to better attendance and higher attainment at school. Positive activities also have an important role in building community cohesion, particularly in bridging the gaps between young people from different backgrounds and faith groups, as well as improving relationships across different generations.¹⁵¹

This perspective is grounded in the Government's assessment of the evidence base which informed the various policy documents guiding government strategy around young people and positive activities. *Aiming high for young people: A ten year strategy for positive activities*¹⁵², published in July 2007, cited evidence that participation in constructive leisure-time activities, particularly those sustained through the teenage years, can have a significant impact on young people's resilience and outcomes in later life¹⁵³. In addition, it pointed to evidence from the US – where more rigorous

¹⁵⁰ Her Majesty's Government (2004) *Every Child Matters: Change for Children*, London, Stationery Office. Accessed online at: http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/_files/F9E3F941DC8D4580539EE4C743E9371D.pdf

¹⁵¹ Her Majesty's Government (2007) *PSA Delivery Agreement 14: Increase the Number of Children and Young People on the Path to Success*, London, Stationery Office, p. 7. Accessed online at: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/0/7/pbr_csr07_psa14.pdf

¹⁵² Her Majesty's Treasury/Department for Children, Schools and Families (2007) *Aiming High for Young People: A Ten Year Strategy for Positive Activities*, London, HMT/DSCF. Accessed online at: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/2/6/cyp_tenyearstrategy_260707.pdf

¹⁵³ Feinstein, L and Robson, K, (2007) *Leisure Contexts in Adolescence and their Effects on Adult Outcomes: A More Complete Picture*, London, Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning, Institute of Education.

evaluation has been undertaken – that participation in positive activities can help to improve attitudes to, and engagement with, school; build social and communication skills; help young people avoid taking risks such as experimenting with drugs or being involved in anti-social behaviour or crime; and improve their self-confidence and self-esteem¹⁵⁴. *Aiming high for children: Supporting families*¹⁵⁵, published in March 2007, also highlighted evidence demonstrating the critical importance of social and emotional skills – for positively influencing, among other things, academic attainment and social mobility. It is clear, then, that the Government’s strategy for positive activities and the specific, measurable objective in PSA 14 are based on evidence for linkages between participation in positive activities and the development of social and emotional skills and the ‘compelling evidence that these skills directly influence not only how young people learn and achieve, but also their success in the labour market and the likelihood of them experiencing poorer outcomes such as becoming a teenage parent or being involved in crime’¹⁵⁶. This demonstrates some acceptance by government of the assertions made in Chapter 1, that strategic social outcomes, where they do occur, are brought about via a series of intermediate sporting and social outcomes. Here, also, is an unambiguous declaration by government that participation in sport and recreation (and sports volunteering) leads to positive outcomes for children and young people and plays a major part in their social development.

The importance of sport, recreation, volunteering and other positive activities is also acknowledged in some of the strategies that underpin PSA 14’s other objectives (listed above). For example, the aim of reducing young people’s substance misuse is being pursued through: the Government’s new ten year drug strategy, *Drugs: Protecting Families and Communities*¹⁵⁷; the National Alcohol Strategy¹⁵⁸; and the Youth Alcohol Action Plan¹⁵⁹. The ten year drug strategy, *Drugs: Protecting Families and Communities*, makes specific reference to positive activities – and *Positive Futures*, the sport-based social inclusion programme – when outlining approaches to ‘preventing harm to children, young people and families affected by drug misuse’. Thus PSA 14 makes very clear that the rationale for promoting sport and other positive activities extends to many key areas of government policy.

[PSA Delivery Agreement 15: Address the disadvantage that individuals experience because of their gender, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief](#)

PSA 15 specifies the Government’s commitment to address ‘the disadvantage that individuals experience because of their gender, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, promoting a fair and equal society, where everyone has the opportunity to prosper and reach their full potential’¹⁶⁰. The priorities it sets out are as follows:

- reduce the gender pay gap from 12.6 per cent;
- tackle barriers which are due to gender, disability or age that limit people’s choice and control in their lives;
- increase participation in public life by women, ethnic minorities, disabled people and young people;
- reduce discrimination in employment due to gender, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief; and
- reduce unfair treatment at work, college or school, and when using health services and public transport due to gender, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief.

The main area in which sport can make a contribution is the third of these – increasing participation in public life. The delivery agreement states that the Department for Culture, Media and Sport ‘will work closely with Sport England, Arts

¹⁵⁴ Harvard Family Research Project (2008) *List of all Out-of-School Time Program Evaluations*, Harvard Family Research Project. Accessed online at: <http://www.hfrp.org/out-of-school-time/ost-database-bibliography/bibliography>

¹⁵⁵ Her Majesty’s Treasury/Department for Education and Skills (2007) *Aiming high for children: Supporting families*, London, HMT/DfES. Accessed online at: http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/_files/HMT%20YOUNG%20CHILDREN.pdf

¹⁵⁶ Her Majesty’s Treasury/Department for Children, Schools and Families (2007) *Aiming High for Young People: A Ten Year Strategy for Positive Activities*, London, HMT/DCSF, p. 7. Accessed online at: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/2/6/cyp_tenyearstrategy_260707.pdf

¹⁵⁷ Her Majesty’s Government (2008) *Drugs: Protecting Families and Communities – The 2008 Drug Strategy*, London, HMG. Accessed online at: <http://drugs.homeoffice.gov.uk/publication-search/drug-strategy/drug-strategy-2008-2018?view=Binary>

¹⁵⁸ Department of Health/Home Office/Department for Education and Skills/Department for Culture, Media and Sport (2007) *Safe. Sensible. Social. The next steps in the National Alcohol Strategy*, London, HMG. Accessed online at: http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_075218

¹⁵⁹ Department for Children, Schools and Families/Home Office/Department of Health (2008) *Youth Alcohol Action Plan*, London, DCSF/HO/DH. Accessed online at: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/youthalcohol/pdfs/7658-DCSF-Youth%20Alcohol%20Action%20Plan.pdf>

¹⁶⁰ Her Majesty’s Government (2007) *PSA Delivery Agreement 15: Address the disadvantage that individuals experience because of their gender, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief*, London, Stationery Office, p. 3. Accessed online at: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/E/8/pbr_csr07_psa15.pdf

Council England, the Museums Libraries and Archives Council, English Heritage and others at national, regional and local authority level to promote participation and formal volunteering across the cultural and sporting sectors...[focusing] on those groups who are currently under-represented or otherwise excluded'¹⁶¹. This links in directly with the overall objective of PSA 21 – to 'build more cohesive, empowered and active communities' – and one of its specific aims, namely 'to increase opportunities for all to participate in civic life'.

As described in detail in Chapter 2, there is increasing evidence that sport engagement can improve community cohesion and help to foster active citizenship. Research suggests that, since sport and exercise can provide focal points for civic engagement, they can be important in the revitalisation of civil society. Sport can be used to create or maintain social connectivity across boundaries defined by class, religious and ethnic backgrounds¹⁶². A series of studies in Australia have found that sport can create social capital and promote social integration through participation and through social interaction and engagement¹⁶³. The primary context for this is the local sports club, where social integration can be promoted through leadership, membership, participation, skill and community development. Studies based on in-depth interviews have also examined the contribution of sport to the personal and social integration of children and young people with disabilities. The findings suggest physical activity is a normalising experience because it facilitates perceptions of legitimating their social identity as children and provides a setting in which social networks with peers are enhanced¹⁶⁴.

It is important to note that once again it is sport's multi-faceted nature that has the capacity to foster social integration and community cohesion: there is evidence that the processes of participation, sports club membership, identification with local sports teams, hosting and organising sports events, and volunteering may all contribute¹⁶⁵. Indeed the potential contribution that outdoor recreation could make to combating discrimination and promoting cross-cultural understanding has also been highlighted in a report by the Countryside Agency and the Black Environment Network. Tai Chi and outdoor activities, including caving, abseiling, climbing and horse riding, were shown to make very positive contributions in this area¹⁶⁶.

In fact, sport and recreation could make an even greater contribution to PSA 15 than by simply increasing participation in public life. PSA 15's delivery agreement states: 'equipping adults with the skills and support they need to get jobs and build careers makes a significant contribution to independence and choice'¹⁶⁷. As discussed in detail in Chapter 4, in relation to PSA 2, and earlier in this Chapter, in relation to PSAs 10 and 11, sport has the potential to contribute significantly to skills development.

[PSA Delivery Agreement 16: Increase the proportion of socially excluded adults in settled accommodation and employment, education or training](#)

PSA 16 is designed to support adults at risk of social exclusion by increasing the proportion of those in settled accommodation and increasing the proportion in employment, education and training. It is focused on four particular groups: care leavers; adult offenders under probation supervision; adults in contact with secondary mental health services; and adults with moderate to severe learning disabilities. The delivery agreement for PSA 16 states that it is

¹⁶¹ Her Majesty's Government (2007) *PSA Delivery Agreement 15: Address the disadvantage that individuals experience because of their gender, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief*, London, Stationery Office, p. 13. Accessed online at: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/E/8/pbr_csr07_psa15.pdf

¹⁶² Harris, J (1998) Civil Society, Physical Activity, and the Involvement of Sport Sociologists in the Preparation of Physical Activity Professionals, *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 15, 2, 138-53.

¹⁶³ Driscoll, K and Wood, L (1999) *Sporting Capital: Changes and Challenges for Rural Communities in Victoria*, Melbourne, Victoria Centre for Applied Social Research, RMIT University; Tonts, M (2005) Competitive Sport and Social Capital in Rural Australia, *Journal of Rural Studies*, 21, 2, 137-149; Atherley, K (2006) Sport, Localism and Social Capital in Rural Western Australia, *Geographical Research*, 44, 4, 348-360.

¹⁶⁴ Taub, D and Greer, K (2000) Physical Activity as a Normalizing Experience for School-Age Children with Physical Disabilities, *Journal of Sport & Social Issues*, 24, 4, 395-414.

¹⁶⁵ Misener, L and Mason, D (2006) Creating community networks: Can sporting events offer meaningful sources of social capital? *Managing Leisure*, 11, 1, 39-56; Eley, D and Kirk, D (2002) Developing Citizenship through Sport: The Impact of a Sport-Based Volunteer Programme on Young Sport Leaders, *Sport, Education and Society*, 7, 2, 151-166.

¹⁶⁶ Countryside Agency/Black Environment Network (2003) Capturing Richness: Countryside Visits by Black and Ethnic Minority Communities, Cheltenham, Countryside Agency. Accessed online at: http://www.countryside.gov.uk/Images/Capturing%20Richness%20-%20Final_tcm2-10023.pdf

¹⁶⁷ Her Majesty's Government (2007) *PSA Delivery Agreement 15: Address the Disadvantage that Individuals Experience because of their Gender, Race, Disability, Age, Sexual Orientation, Religion or Belief*, London, Stationery Office, p. 11. Accessed online at: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/E/8/pbr_csr07_psa15.pdf

intended to complement PSAs 14 and 17, both of which use sport, recreation and physical activity to help achieve their objectives.

There is evidence that sport could contribute to the objective of getting people into, or keeping people in, education, employment and training. This is examined in greater detail earlier in this Chapter, first in relation to PSA 8, which aims to maximise employment opportunity for all, and second, in relation to PSAs 10 and 11, which focus on educational achievement. In fact, sport and recreation may contribute more fundamentally to the overall objective of this PSA through the potential they have to combat social exclusion. The foremost policy-related analysis on sport and its potential to positively affect some of the problems associated with social exclusion remains the Policy Action Team (PAT 10) report from 1999. Commissioned by the Cabinet Office's Social Exclusion Unit, the report examined the contribution that sport and the arts could make to neighbourhood renewal. Based on a substantial literature review, the report concluded, 'participation in [the arts and] sport has a beneficial social impact. [Arts and] sport are inclusive and can contribute to neighbourhood renewal.'¹⁶⁸

In addition to the direct benefits that can be obtained by people participating in sport and recreation, other forms of involvement in sport can help to combat social exclusion. It is reliably estimated that around six million people in England regularly volunteer in sport¹⁶⁹, and volunteering has been shown to have a potentially positive effect on those at risk of social exclusion. The Institute for Volunteering Research recently carried out a major study exploring the link between volunteering and social exclusion. The research found that volunteering could help in some or all of the following ways: by combating feelings of personal isolation; by empowering individuals; by enhancing people's self worth; by helping people to acquire hard (vocational) and soft (interpersonal) skills; by providing either a route to employment or an alternative to employment; and by bringing people from different groups together¹⁷⁰.

It is important to recognise that it may be necessary to emphasise non-traditional types of sport and recreation and means of delivery in order to reach groups most at risk of social exclusion. For example, an evaluation of 'alternative' sport programmes in Norway has shown that 'alternative' sport proved more successful than conventional sport in breaking down class- and gender-based barriers to participation¹⁷¹. It is also important to sound a note of caution about how far sports participation can be considered a means of combating social exclusion. Persistent trends within sport still see lower levels of participation by lower income groups, minority ethnic groups, those with limiting disabilities and long-term illnesses and women¹⁷².

Nevertheless, there are good examples of well-planned interventions which have had an impact on sports participation among the most traditionally 'hard to reach' groups. The Sport Action Zone initiative, launched by Sport England, aimed to help local communities to help themselves by getting local people to play a role in identifying what was needed in each zone and then involving them in the planning and delivery process. Evaluation of four of the 12 initiatives found that, in two of the areas, there had been significant increases in participation across many of the target groups. A number of key success factors were identified, including: having a highly motivated and skilled leader and team of local paid staff and volunteers; taking a bottom up approach to empower local people, based on what they want and need; offering a variety of sports and activities, with low cost or free taster sessions; investing in facilities and open spaces but focusing on people as the key to success; promoting and supporting volunteering by local residents; tailoring communications to individual groups; providing small grants to help build goodwill in the community; taking advantage of peoples' sense of identity and community; engaging with a wide range of partnerships within and outside sport¹⁷³.

¹⁶⁸ Policy Action Team 10 (1999) *National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal: Policy Action Team Audit, Report of the Policy Action Team 10: The contribution of Sport and the Arts*, London, Department for Culture, Media and Sport, p. 5. Accessed online at: <http://www.sportdevelopment.org.uk/html/pat10.html>

¹⁶⁹ Leisure Industries Research Centre (2003) *Sports Volunteering in England in 2002*, London, Sport England. Accessed online at: http://www.sportdevelopment.org.uk/volunteer_full_report.pdf

¹⁷⁰ Institute for Volunteering Research (2004) *Volunteering for All? Exploring the Link between Volunteering and Social Exclusion*, London, IVR.

¹⁷¹ Skille, E and Waddington, I (2006) Alternative Sport Programmes and Social Inclusion in Norway, *European Physical Education Review*, 12, 3, 251-271.

¹⁷² Collins, M (2004) Sport, Physical Activity and Social Exclusion, *Journal of Sports Sciences*, 22, 8, 727-740.

¹⁷³ Sport England (2006) *Understanding the Success Factors in Sport Action Zones: Final Report*, London, Sport England. Accessed online at: http://www.sportengland.org/sportengland_saz_final_report.pdf

PSA Delivery Agreement 17: Tackle poverty and promote greater independence and wellbeing in later life

This PSA focuses on ‘the quality of later life in the UK, seeking to make the most of the opportunities offered by longer life, and driving forward the necessary cultural and behavioural changes’¹⁷⁴. The five key aspects around which it sets improvement targets are as follows:

- making a contribution to society, in particular through employment;
- material well-being, in particular the need to continue tackling pensioner poverty;
- the level of health experienced in later life;
- satisfaction with home and neighbourhood including, for example, the impact of factors such as access to services, transport and crime, and social contacts; and
- the ability to maintain independent living, while being supported with health and care services where needed.

The delivery agreement recognises the interrelatedness of these various objectives when it states: ‘income affects health, health affects ability to maintain independent living, and so on. There is a clear need for policy and delivery organisations to put in place holistic, integrated responses.’¹⁷⁵ As is consistently shown throughout this report, one of the most striking aspects of sport and recreation is its capacity to positively influence a wide range of social and economic outcomes. Here again though, in PSA 17, while physical activity is acknowledged for its contribution in one area, the wider, interrelated benefits of sport and recreation are not made explicit, nor is sport afforded a significant role.

The third stated aim of PSA 17 is to improve the level of health experienced in later life; this will be assessed by measuring healthy life expectancy at 65. The Department of Health leads this, but the PSA does mention that the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), along with the Department for Children, Schools and Families, will ‘also contribute to health promotion through a range of programmes, aiming to help people build the healthy lifestyle habits that last a lifetime by supporting healthy choices and promoting individual responsibility for health’¹⁷⁶. As in PSA 18 (see Chapter 2), strategies extend from *Next steps in implementing the National Service Framework for Older People*, which explicitly recognises the benefits of regular exercise for older people. There is now a strong and rapidly growing evidence base around the health and social benefits of sport and recreation for older people. The Chief Medical Officer’s report found that physical activity not only produced preventive effects at least as strong in older age as in middle age for all-cause mortality, cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes, but also had a beneficial impact on particular health issues affecting older people¹⁷⁷. Well cited research has demonstrated that energy expenditure compatible with the current physical activity recommendations for adults reduces the risk of premature death by 20-30 per cent for both women and men up to the age of 80 years¹⁷⁸.

It is clear, therefore, that physical activity can contribute significantly to achieving an increase in healthy life expectancy at 65. Directly linked to this is the final aim of PSA 17: to increase the ability of older people to maintain independent living. The means for achieving this, as set out in the delivery agreement, centres on increasing the capacity of older people to shape their own health and social care services. While this is welcome, no mention is made of the crucial importance of individuals’ physical and mental health, which is paramount for independent living. The particular benefits of physical activity for older people have previously been recognised by the Department of Health. The Chief Medical Officer’s report presented strong evidence around mobility, muscle strength, falls, depression and anxiety, cognitive impairment, and self efficacy, all issues that are particularly relevant to older people¹⁷⁹.

¹⁷⁴ Her Majesty’s Government (2007) *PSA Delivery Agreement 17: Tackle Poverty and Promote Greater Independence and Wellbeing in Later Life*, London, Stationery Office, p. 3. Accessed online at: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/0/0/pbr_csr07_psa17.pdf

¹⁷⁵ Her Majesty’s Government (2007) *PSA Delivery Agreement 17: Tackle Poverty and Promote Greater Independence and Wellbeing in Later Life*, London, Stationery Office, p. 3. Accessed online at: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/0/0/pbr_csr07_psa17.pdf

¹⁷⁶ Her Majesty’s Government (2007) *PSA Delivery Agreement 17: Tackle Poverty and Promote Greater Independence and Wellbeing in Later Life*, London, Stationery Office, p. 12. Accessed online at: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/0/0/pbr_csr07_psa17.pdf

¹⁷⁷ Department of Health (2004) *At Least Five a Week: Evidence on the Impact of Physical Activity and its Relationship to Health, A Report from the Chief Medical Officer*, London, Department of Health. Accessed online at: http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4080994

¹⁷⁸ Lee I and Skerrett P (2001) Physical Activity and All Cause Mortality: What is the Dose-response Relation? *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise*, 33, S459-S471; discussion S493-S494.

¹⁷⁹ Department of Health (2004) *At Least Five a Week: Evidence on the Impact of Physical Activity and its Relationship to Health, A Report from the Chief Medical Officer*, London, Department of Health. Accessed online at: http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4080994

As mentioned elsewhere (see Chapter 2), the Chief Medical Officer's report confirmed that one of the most straightforward and beneficial ways of being physically active is participating in social sporting activity. Indeed, in contrast to prevailing views of the risk of sport for older people, recent, longitudinal research on more than 2,000 older men concluded that one third of all hip fractures could be prevented by participation in regular sports activities¹⁸⁰. Frequent activity also conferred a reduced overall fracture risk. A high level review of interventions designed to prevent falls in elderly people also found that programmes combining strength, balance and endurance training reduced the risk of falls by 10 per cent¹⁸¹. Moreover research on particular forms of sport has also demonstrated their benefits for older adults. One key study showed that a 15-week Tai Chi programme reduced the risk of falls by 47 per cent¹⁸². A recent review of the impact of resistance training on the health of older adults found that it increased strength, muscle mass and muscle quality. It was also found to increase power, reduce the difficulty of performing daily tasks, enhance energy expenditure and body composition, and promote participation in spontaneous physical activity¹⁸³. These in turn have a very strong bearing on the quality of life of older adults and their ability to live independently. Other aspects of sport can also be particularly beneficial for older people. For example, volunteering has been shown to have a positive effect on the mental health of older people, leading to lower levels of depression, and helping to address the negative psychological impacts among some older people associated with the loss of social roles¹⁸⁴.

It is worth restating the strong evidence in this area because, although DCMS is mentioned in relation to physical activity programmes, the significant potential benefits of social sporting activity are largely ignored. Moreover these targets are set against a background of very low levels of activity and sports participation among older people. The most recent statistical evidence from the Health Survey for England indicates that just 21 per cent of men aged 65-74 and 9 per cent of men aged 75 and above achieve the physical activity guidelines. For women, activity levels are even lower than this, with just 16 per cent of 65-74 year olds and 4 per cent of those 75 and above meeting the guidelines. This represents a significant decline compared to middle-aged adults: 46 per cent of men and 35 per cent of women aged 35-44 achieve the guidelines¹⁸⁵. This decline is certainly not inevitable; survey evidence from Hong Kong and Singapore, for example, shows that levels of physical activity level off, or even increase, from middle to old age¹⁸⁶. The previous PSA that sought to increase the take up of sporting activity among priority groups focused on black and minority ethnic groups, those with a limiting disability, lower socio-economic groups and women. Given the key challenges posed by the UK's ageing population, a stronger focus on increasing physical and social sporting activity among older people should be encouraged.

¹⁸⁰ Michaelsson, K, Olofsson, H, Jensevik, K, Larsson, S, Mallmin, H, Berglund, L, Vessby, B and Melhus, H (2007) Leisure Physical Activity and the Risk of Fracture in Men, *PLoS Medicine*, 4, 6.

¹⁸¹ Gillespie (2003)

¹⁸² Wolf, S, Barnhart, H, Kutner, N, McNeely, E, Coogler, C, Xu, T (1996) Reducing Frailty and Falls in Older Persons: An Investigation of Tai Chi and Computerized Balance Training, *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, 489-97.

¹⁸³ Hunter, G, McCarthy, J and Bamman, M (2004) Effects of Resistance Training on Older Adults, *Sports Medicine*, 34, 5, 329-348.

¹⁸⁴ Lum, T and Lightfoot, E (2005) The Effects of Volunteering on the Physical and Mental Health of Older People, *Research on Aging*, 27, 1, 31-55.

¹⁸⁵ Joint Health Surveys Unit (2008) *Health Survey for England, 2006*, London, The Information Centre. Accessed online at:

<http://www.ic.nhs.uk/pubs/hse06cvdandriskfactors>

¹⁸⁶ Hong Kong Sports Development Board (2002) *Sports Participation Survey 2000*, Hong Kong, Sports Development Board; Yian, T (2002) *Highlights of the 1998 National Health Survey*, Singapore, Department of Health.

Chapter 4: Sustainable growth and prosperity

PSA Delivery Agreement 1: Raise the productivity of the UK economy

The vision for PSA 1 states that there are two ways to increase economic productivity: increase the overall number of hours worked in the economy, either by increasing the number of people in employment, or by increasing the number of hours worked; or raise overall productivity levels, increasing the amount produced for every hour worked. There is good evidence that sport and recreation can contribute to these objectives through intermediate outcomes, such as skills development and improved physical and mental health.

Chapter 3 has already analysed the potential benefits of sport and recreation in maximising employment opportunities (PSA 8), and improving academic achievement (PSAs 10 and 11) and the following section examines the impact of sport on skills (PSA 2). Research on sport and employment points to several possible avenues. First, direct employment in the commercial and non-commercial sport sector is growing rapidly, accounting for almost two per cent of total employment in England and outstripping total combined employment in the radio and television and publishing sectors. Second, urban investment strategies focusing on sport and major sporting events may lead to job creation and further employment opportunities, although researchers make clear the importance of considering opportunity costs and realistic multiplier effects (see Chapter 3). Third, sport and recreation can positively impact core factors underpinning employment, such as skills and academic achievement. Research has also shown that, in certain circumstances, sports participation can reduce truancy and encourage people to stay in education (see Chapter 3).

One key factor that underpins economic productivity, yet is all but ignored in this delivery agreement, is health. The only passing mention to this in PSA 1 is the following generic statement: 'the provision of better public services including health, education, and infrastructure through increased public sector investment has an impact on the productivity of individuals and on the attractiveness of the UK as a location to live, work and invest'¹⁸⁷. However, a recent, government-commissioned review of the health of Britain's working age population, *Working for a healthier tomorrow*, examined this issue in detail¹⁸⁸. The report found that around 175 million working days were lost to sickness in 2006, equivalent to seven days for each working person. In addition, around seven per cent of the working age population are workless and receiving incapacity benefits because of long-term health conditions or disabilities. The costs of poor health among the working age population are very significant: the report estimates the total cost to the Government at £62-76 billion and the total cost to the economy, including the foregone taxes and healthcare costs to the Government, at £103-129 billion. As the report points out, this is greater than the current annual budget for the NHS and equivalent to the entire Gross Domestic Product of Portugal.

The two most widespread work-related illnesses are common mental health disorders and musculoskeletal disorders, accounting for more than 80 per cent of the total¹⁸⁹. Research has shown that sport and recreation can have a positive influence on both of these conditions. Chapters 2 and 3 examine, in detail, the mental and physical health benefits of sport and recreation in relation to the objectives of other PSAs, particularly PSAs 12, 17 and 18. Indeed, as pointed out there, it is not simply the physical activity component of sport and recreation that may lead to improvements in mental health; sports spectatorship and sports volunteering may also make important contributions. Analysis of PSA 1 demonstrates once more the interrelatedness of the Government's various objectives and the role sport and recreation could play in helping the Government to achieve these objectives. Indeed *Working for a healthier tomorrow* makes this point quite clearly: 'Promoting health and well-being for all will raise employment, reduce child poverty and poverty later in life, and raise the growth in productivity of the British economy. Similarly, increasing employment and opportunity of employment will directly promote better health and well-being for all.'¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁷ Her Majesty's Government (2007) *PSA Delivery Agreement 1: Raise the Productivity of the UK Economy*, London, Stationery Office, p. 8. Accessed online at: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/3/A/pbr_csr07_psa1.pdf

¹⁸⁸ Department for Work and Pensions (2008) *Working for a Healthier Tomorrow*, London, Stationery Office. Accessed online at: <http://www.workingforhealth.gov.uk/documents/working-for-a-healthier-tomorrow-tagged.pdf>

¹⁸⁹ Department for Work and Pensions (2008) *Working for a Healthier Tomorrow*, London, Stationery Office. Accessed online at: <http://www.workingforhealth.gov.uk/documents/working-for-a-healthier-tomorrow-tagged.pdf>

¹⁹⁰ Department for Work and Pensions (2008) *Working for a Healthier Tomorrow*, London, Stationery Office, p. 22. Accessed online at: <http://www.workingforhealth.gov.uk/documents/working-for-a-healthier-tomorrow-tagged.pdf>

PSA Delivery Agreement 2: Improve the skills of the population, on the way to ensuring a world-class skills base by 2020

PSA 2 seeks to move towards the recommendations of the *Leitch Review of Skills*¹⁹¹ by setting a series of interim objectives in order to improve the skills of the UK population at all levels. The two main aims are: improved basic and intermediate skill levels; and improved higher skill levels. There is evidence, set out below, that sport can contribute in both of these areas. Moreover, delivery of this PSA is closely aligned with PSAs 10, 11 and 14. The latter includes sport (and other positive activities) as a means of achieving its objective of increasing the number of children and young people on the path to success. The other two are concerned with improving educational achievement and, as Chapter 3 explains, would benefit significantly by recognising and promoting the role of sport in their delivery.

The influential Policy Action Team 10 report, which analysed the impact of sport and the arts on neighbourhood renewal, concluded that sport (and the arts) is closely connected to the ‘rapidly growing creative, leisure and tourism industries,’ which thereby provide communities with increased employment opportunities¹⁹². Also, through participating in sport (and the arts) individuals are equipped with ‘transferable skills’ such as ‘personal confidence, flexibility and self-reliance on which success in the changing employment market increasingly depends’¹⁹³. Indeed, more recent research has shown that sports-based programmes can be effective in teaching life-skills, as well as improving participants’ self-assessment of their ability to use such skills¹⁹⁴. This suggests that direct participation in sport has the potential to lead to improvements in people’s skills (although there is not enough research at present to establish how and in exactly what circumstances this will take place).

Sport can also contribute to skills improvements in other, more indirect, ways. There is a growing body of evidence which suggests that sports participation can have beneficial impacts on school commitment and reducing truancy. A longitudinal study in the US, based on a sample of 4,000 students, found that participation in sport favourably affected a number of educational factors in young people: social self-concept, academic self-concept, educational aspirations two years after high school, attending university, educational aspirations in the senior year, being in the academic track, school attendance, and taking various types of academic courses¹⁹⁵. A number of school-based studies have found similar results around improved school attendance and attitudes towards school, although the precise mechanisms remain uncertain. For example, it may be through increased levels of participation in sport in general (and thereby, improved behaviour, self-esteem and social skills), or it may be that increased availability of sporting activities in schools (which makes schools more attractive for those who like sports) makes pupils more likely to attend¹⁹⁶. Other, school-based studies that corroborate such findings are explained in greater detail in Chapter 3. Notwithstanding the uncertainty over precisely how sport can improve school attendance and school commitment, the critical point is that such outcomes, where they are achieved, can have a significant, positive impact on skills development among young people.

The salience of sport also has the capacity to improve skills: sport can be used as a hook to encourage both young people and adults to join skills-based programmes. One well known example is *Playing for Success*, a programme that establishes out of school hours study support centres at football clubs and other sports grounds, which aims to use the environment and medium of sport to help motivate pupils identified by their schools as being in need of a boost to help them develop their skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). The programme underwent four successive years of evaluation: results in ICT, literacy and numeracy showed statistically significant improvement in results for participants, compared to control groups. Furthermore, comparisons with a national distribution of scores found that pupils selected to attend *Playing for Success* were performing at a very low

¹⁹¹ Her Majesty’s Treasury (2006) *Prosperity for All in the Global Economy - World Class Skills: Final Report*, London, HMT. Accessed online at: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/6/4/leitch_finalreport051206.pdf

¹⁹² Policy Action Team 10 (1999) *National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal: Policy Action Team Audit, Report of the Policy Action Team 10: The contribution of Sport and the Arts*, London, Department for Culture, Media and Sport. Accessed online at: <http://www.sportdevelopment.org.uk/html/pat10.html>

¹⁹³ Policy Action Team 10 (1999) *National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal: Policy Action Team Audit, Report of the Policy Action Team 10: The contribution of Sport and the Arts*, London, Department for Culture, Media and Sport, p. 29. Accessed online at: <http://www.sportdevelopment.org.uk/html/pat10.html>

¹⁹⁴ Papacharisis, V, Goudas, M, Danish, S and Theodorakis, Y (2005) The Effectiveness of Teaching a Life Skills Program in a Sport Context, *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 17, 3, 247 – 254.

¹⁹⁵ Marsh, H (1993) The Effects of Participation in Sport During the Last Two Years of High School, *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 10, 18-43; Marsh, H and Kleitman, S (2003) School Athletic Participation: Mostly Gain with Little Pain, *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 25, 205-228.

¹⁹⁶ Bailey, R (2005) Evaluating the Relationship between Physical Activity, Sport and Social Inclusion, *Education Review*, 57, 1, 71-90.

level initially, but by the end were much closer to national norms¹⁹⁷. Follow-up statistical analysis on the programme actually found a more mixed picture, wherein low attainers who attended the study support centres did better than expected at Key Stages 2, 3 and 4, but high attainers did less well than expected. The qualitative analysis in the research emphasised that longer term progress should be viewed as a shared responsibility between centres and schools. This independent evaluation study recommended that 'the Government, local authorities and sponsors should continue to support *Playing for Success*. Further consideration should be given to the opportunities for pupils to transfer their learning from *Playing for Success* to other contexts.'¹⁹⁸

Furthermore, as mentioned elsewhere, sport is one of the key areas in which people volunteer in England and volunteering has been found to have a significant impact on skills development and employability. It is estimated that around six million people volunteer in sport in England, contributing more than £14 billion to the economy every year¹⁹⁹. The 2007 National Survey of Volunteering and Charitable Giving found that 22 per cent of all volunteering in England was in the area of sports and exercise, behind only education and religion²⁰⁰. The same survey found that 19 per cent of people took up volunteering in order to learn new skills. This motivation proved even more important for young people: the survey found that 46 per cent of 16-24 year olds started volunteering to learn new skills. Moreover, in terms of the actual outcomes of volunteering, 80 per cent of 25-34 year olds stated that their experience of volunteering led to them gaining new skills. The Institute for Volunteering Research undertook a study exploring the link between volunteering and social exclusion, which found that volunteering helped people to acquire both hard (vocational) and soft (interpersonal) skills²⁰¹.

Sporting events have also been seen as catalysts for helping people to develop both sport-specific and more general skills. For example, the employment and skills strategy for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, *Jobs, Skills, Futures*, contains the following pronouncement:

London 2012 is committed to creating a positive employment and economic legacy for London and the UK after the Games. This will be achieved through the creation of new jobs, an increase in sustainable skills among local people and improved links between employers and those looking for work, recognising the high proportion of Black, Asian and minority ethnic people in the community.²⁰²

Although much of the research evidence on the impact of major sporting events in local communities is equivocal, this demonstrates a clear belief on the part of the Government that London 2012 will bring skills benefits. It will be essential to evaluate carefully the social and economic impact of the Games in order to understand more fully the long-term effects of sporting events.

PSA Delivery Agreement 5: Deliver reliable and efficient transport networks that support economic growth

PSA 5 is concerned specifically with investment in transport which will support sustainable economic growth. It clearly states that other transport priorities, including its impact on the environment, are covered in other PSA outcomes, namely PSA 20 on housing, PSA 27 on climate change and PSA 28 on the natural environment. This leaves the sole dedicated 'transport' PSA to deliver on four indicators:

- Journey time on main roads into urban areas
- Journey time reliability on the strategic road network, as measured by the average delay experienced in the worst 10 per cent of journeys for each monitored route
- Level of capacity and crowding on the rail network
- Average benefit cost ratio of investments approved over the CSR07 period

¹⁹⁷ Sharp, C, Blackmore, J, Kendall, L, Greene, K, Keys, W, Macauley, A, Schagen, I and Yeshanew, T (2003) *Playing for Success: An Evaluation of the Fourth Year*, Research Report 402, Slough, National Foundation for Educational Research. Accessed online at: <http://www.sportdevelopment.org.uk/playingforsuccess2003.pdf>

¹⁹⁸ Sharp, C, Chamberlain, T, Morrison, J and Filmer-Sankey, C (2007) *Playing for Success: An Evaluation of its Long Term Impact*, London, National Foundation for Educational Research. Accessed online at: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RR844.pdf>

¹⁹⁹ Leisure Industries Research Centre (2003) *Sports Volunteering in England in 2002*, London, Sport England. Accessed online at: http://www.sportdevelopment.org.uk/volunteer_full_report.pdf

²⁰⁰ Office of the Third Sector (2007) *Helping Out: A National Survey of Volunteering and Charitable Giving*, London, Cabinet Office. Accessed online at:

http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/third_sector/Research_and_statistics/third_sector_research/~media/assets/www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/third_sector/helping_out_national_survey_2007%20pdf.ashx

²⁰¹ Institute for Volunteering Research (2004) *Volunteering for All? Exploring the Link between Volunteering and Social Exclusion*, London, IVR.

²⁰² Olympic Delivery Authority (2008) *Jobs, Skills, Futures*, London, ODA, p. 5.

Walking and cycling and mentioned nowhere in the entire delivery agreement. It is worth pausing, then, to examine the commitments contained in the other related PSAs to see where sustainable transport is mentioned.

In PSA 20, the Department for Transport (DfT) is charged with a number of actions mainly around business planning and helping to maximise the links between housing growth and economic productivity. In PSA 28, DfT is mentioned for its role in ensuring necessary action around air quality. The delivery agreement states: 'DfT will ensure it improves the environmental performance of transport, taking into account impacts on land, water, biodiversity, air and the marine environment'²⁰³. However, no specific transport policies are mentioned and delivery is left vague. PSA 27, which sets out the Government's actions around climate change, contains the clearest recognition of the beneficial role active transport could play. The delivery agreement states: 'DfT will work to improve the environmental performance of transport, addressing the provision of 'smarter choices', including promotion of travel planning, sustainable travel towns, cycling and walking'²⁰⁴. Again, however, there is no detail beyond a promise to develop further policy. Indeed the most concrete commitments are around introducing successor arrangements to the Voluntary Agreements with car manufacturers on new car CO₂, and introducing the Renewable Transport Fuels Obligation requiring 5 per cent of all UK fuel sold on UK forecourts to come from a renewable source by 2010.

What appears to be absent from all the Government's pronouncements on transport is a clear declaration of the environmental and public health benefits of active travel. Previous policies have advocated walking and cycling, but major decision making is still disproportionately centred on motor transport. DfT's 2004 report, *Walking and Cycling: An Action Plan*, set out plans to increase walking and cycling, based on the benefits they bring to public spaces and the natural environment, as well as for their benefits to public health and community cohesion²⁰⁵. The evidence for the health benefits of physical activity is clear and has been detailed elsewhere in this report (see Chapter 2). Indeed, walking has been described in epidemiological research as the nearest activity to perfect exercise²⁰⁶. Moreover, the recent Foresight report on obesity assessed the top five policy responses which would have the greatest impact on levels of obesity. One of them was 'increasing the walkability/cyclability of the built environment'²⁰⁷. Alongside the public health benefits of increasing walking and cycling, the environmental benefits could also be significant. Nearly a quarter of all trips made in the UK are one mile or less – a generally walkable distance – and 42 per cent are within two miles – less than the average length of a cycling trip²⁰⁸. Despite this, no clear targets have been set for increasing walking and cycling in any of the PSAs for the entire Comprehensive Spending Review period (2008-11).

PSA Delivery Agreement 7: Improve the economic performance of all English regions and reduce the gap in economic growth rates between regions

The Government's central economic objective, referred to in PSA 7, is 'to raise the rate of sustainable growth and achieve rising prosperity and a better quality of life, with economic and employment opportunities for all'²⁰⁹. The Government's vision for this includes, among other things:

- increased employment;
- improvements in productivity; and
- a skills supply more responsive to employers.

Much of the evidence presented throughout this report demonstrates the potential of sport to contribute to these objectives. For example, PSA 8 focuses on maximising employment opportunities for all, the first part of the Government vision described above. As pointed out in relation to PSA 8's delivery agreement (see Chapter 3), sport-

²⁰³ Her Majesty's Government (2007) *PSA Delivery Agreement 28: Secure a Healthy Natural Environment for Today and the Future*, London, Stationery Office, p. 12. Accessed online at: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/1/3/pbr_csr07_psa28.pdf

²⁰⁴ Her Majesty's Government (2007) *PSA Delivery Agreement 27: Lead the Global Effort to Avoid Dangerous Climate Change*, London, Stationery Office, p. 13. Accessed online at: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/9/2/pbr_csr07_psa27.pdf

²⁰⁵ Department for Transport (2004) *Walking and Cycling: An Action Plan*, London, DfT. Accessed online at: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/walking/actionplan/walkingandcyclingdocumentinp5802>

²⁰⁶ Morris, J and Hardman, A (1997) Walking to Health, *Sports Medicine*, 23, 5, 306-332.

²⁰⁷ Foresight (2007) *Tackling Obesity: Future Choices*, London, Government Office for Science. Accessed online at: http://www.foresight.gov.uk/Obesity/obesity_final/17.pdf

²⁰⁸ Department for Transport (2004) *Walking and Cycling: An Action Plan*, London, DfT. Accessed online at: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/walking/actionplan/walkingandcyclingdocumentinp5802>

²⁰⁹ Her Majesty's Government (2007) *PSA Delivery Agreement 7: Improve the Economic Performance of All English Regions and Reduce the Gap in Economic Growth Rates between Regions*, London, Stationery Office, p. 3. Accessed online at: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/5/E/pbr_csr07_psa7.pdf

related employment already accounts for nearly two per cent of total employment in England and the sector is growing rapidly. At the beginning of this Chapter, the section on PSA 1 discussed how sport can lead to improvements in productivity, the second aim described above. In addition to its potential impact on fundamental issues, such as academic achievement and skills development, there is evidence that sport's beneficial effect on physical and mental health can enhance productivity by improving the health of the working age population. The recent report commissioned by the Secretaries of State for Health and Work and Pensions, *Working for a healthier tomorrow*, makes exactly this point²¹⁰. In fact, this argument was given even greater weight by the recently issued National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence guidance on promoting physical activity in the workplace, which stated that investing in the health of employees can 'bring business benefits such as reduced sickness absence, increased loyalty and better staff retention'²¹¹.

The final aim listed above is to create a skills supply more responsive to employers. This is linked to PSA 2, the aim of which is to improve the skills of the population. Earlier in this Chapter, the section which set out the evidence for sport's contribution to skills development, shows that certain forms of sports participation can directly improve skills. Moreover, sport and recreation can improve skills through a number of intermediate processes: reducing truancy through increasing school commitment; improving academic achievement; providing a hook to encourage young people and adults to attend dedicated skills programmes; improving vocational and interpersonal skills through sports volunteering; and using sporting events as a catalyst for skills development.

The delivery agreement for PSA 7, then, demonstrates close connections with a number of related PSAs to which sport and recreation, properly funded and targeted, could make an important contribution.

²¹⁰ Department for Work and Pensions (2008) *Working for a Healthier Tomorrow*, London, Stationery Office. Accessed online at: <http://www.workingforhealth.gov.uk/documents/working-for-a-healthier-tomorrow-tagged.pdf>

²¹¹ National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (2008) *Workplace Health Promotion: How to Encourage Employees to be Physically Active*, London, NICE, p. 5. Accessed online at: <http://www.nice.org.uk/nicemedia/pdf/PHO13GuidanceWord.doc>

Chapter 5: A more secure, fair and environmentally sustainable world

PSA Delivery Agreement 27: Lead the global effort to avoid dangerous climate change

PSA 27 states at the outset of its delivery agreement that 'climate change is the greatest challenge facing the world today'²¹². It sets out to build the necessary social, economic and political conditions internationally to secure robust global commitments around greenhouse gas emissions and adopt and promote policies which reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, it seeks to develop a robust approach to domestic adaptation.

There is evidence that sport, recreation and active travel – properly resourced – can all have a positive impact on climate change. Chapter 4 highlighted the public health and environmental benefits of increasing walking and cycling (in place of trips made by car). However, despite acknowledgement of these benefits in previous government policies, no clear targets have been set for walking and cycling across any of the PSAs. The next section on the natural environment also reviews the research evidence on the mutually beneficial relationship between the environment and people's physical and mental health. It is here that the evidence for sport's impact on the environment is most extensively reviewed.

Recent research conducted on behalf of the International Olympic Committee has also highlighted the close links between sport and sustainable development and provides methodological and practical guidance to the sports community on how to incorporate sustainable development into ongoing sports practice and one-off sporting events²¹³.

PSA Delivery Agreement 28: Secure a healthy natural environment for today and the future

The Government's vision, as set out in PSA 28, is 'to secure a diverse, healthy and resilient natural environment, which provides the basis for everyone's well-being, health and prosperity now and in the future; and where the value of the services provided by the natural environment are reflected in decision-making'²¹⁴. Indeed there is clear recognition in the delivery agreement of the benefits of a healthy natural environment – it contributes to 'people's sense of identity and place, and make[s] a major contribution to health and well-being'²¹⁵.

There is a rapidly growing evidence base supporting the premise that the natural environment can confer physical and mental health benefits on individuals. Two major recent studies have reviewed this evidence in detail. The Countryside Recreation Network's report, *A countryside for health and wellbeing*, identifies three levels of engagement with nature: viewing nature, as through a window or in a painting; being in the presence of nearby nature, as when walking to work, or reading on a garden seat; and active participation and involvement with nature, as when horse-riding or cross-country running²¹⁶. There is strong evidence for the physical and mental health benefits of all of these forms of engagement, mostly from studies carried out in the USA, Scandinavia or Japan.

The Countryside Recreation Network's report focuses predominantly on active participation within the natural environment, labelled 'green exercise'. It refers to a recent study which examined the impact of a 'wilderness experience' on two groups of women in the US and found that benefits arose from both individual contact with nature and from connections with the social group sharing the experiences²¹⁷. Adventure therapy has also been shown to be beneficial for bereaved children, mental health patients, emotionally-disturbed adults and children with learning difficulties²¹⁸.

²¹² Her Majesty's Government (2007) *PSA Delivery Agreement 27: Lead the Global Effort to Avoid Dangerous Climate Change*, London, Stationery Office, p. 3. Accessed online at: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/9/2/pbr_csr07_psa27.pdf

²¹³ International Olympic Committee (2006) *IOC Guide on Sport, Environment and Sustainable Development*, Lausanne, IOC. Accessed online at: http://www.olympic.org/uk/organisation/missions/environment/full_story_uk.asp?id=2030

²¹⁴ Her Majesty's Government (2007) *PSA Delivery Agreement 28: Secure a Healthy Natural Environment for Today and the Future*, London, Stationery Office, p. 3. Accessed online at: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/1/3/pbr_csr07_psa28.pdf

²¹⁵ Her Majesty's Government (2007) *PSA Delivery Agreement 28: Secure a Healthy Natural Environment for Today and the Future*, London, Stationery Office, p. 3. Accessed online at: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/1/3/pbr_csr07_psa28.pdf

²¹⁶ Countryside Recreation Network (2005) *A Countryside for Health and Wellbeing: The Physical and Mental Health Benefits of Green Exercise*, Sheffield, Sheffield Hallam University.

²¹⁷ Fredrickson, L and Anderson, D (1999) A Qualitative Exploration of the Wilderness Experience as a Source of Spiritual Inspiration, *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 19, 21-39.

²¹⁸ Countryside Recreation Network (2005) *A Countryside for Health and Wellbeing: The Physical and Mental Health Benefits of Green Exercise*, Sheffield, Sheffield Hallam University.

A recent report by the mental health charity, MIND, also reviewed research evidence around 'green exercise' and referred to a number of studies highlighting the benefits to health and wellbeing of outdoor recreation. For example, one recent study found that engaging in physical activities while viewing pleasant green rural or urban pictures enhances mood, improves self-esteem and reduces blood pressure. It does so to a greater extent than exercise alone or exercise while viewing images of less pleasant rural or urban environments²¹⁹.

It is essential to recognise the inherent reciprocity of the relationship between the natural environment and people's participation in sport, outdoor recreation and active travel. The studies described above demonstrate the growing evidence base for the beneficial impact of the natural environment on people's health and wellbeing. Yet by participating in walking and cycling, for example, people are, in return, benefiting the natural environment. In fact, the Government has already recognised this: the Department for Transport's 2004 report, *Walking and Cycling: An Action Plan*, set out plans to increase walking and cycling, based on the benefits they bring to public spaces and the natural environment, as well as for their benefits to public health, sustainable transport and community cohesion²²⁰. This also demonstrates clearly how the Government's policy objectives on the natural environment and transport intersect. One of the Department for Transport's four strategic objectives is 'to improve the environmental performance of transport and tackle climate change'²²¹. Despite this, there is no specific mention of DfT's role in promoting walking and cycling in PSA 28²²². Moreover, PSA 5, which is specifically focused on the contribution that transport makes to economic growth, makes no mention of promoting walking or cycling (see Chapter 4).

The British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) Green Gym initiative is perhaps the clearest example of the mutually beneficial relationship between outdoor recreation, the environment and physical and mental wellbeing. Launched a decade ago, Green Gyms provide opportunities for people to improve their health and fitness by undertaking environmental conservation in their local communities. The BTCV Green Gym National Evaluation Report, published this year, found that the two factors most highly rated for motivation to join a Green Gym project were 'being outdoors' and 'improving the environment'. The report also examined the benefits of the programme through a participant questionnaire and found that 99 per cent of participants 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with the statements on 'health and confidence' including 'I feel more positive about myself as a result of my involvement with the group' and 'I have made new friends as a result of working with the group'. 94 per cent 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with the statements on 'skills and training' which included 'I have learnt new skills through my involvement in the group' and 'through involvement in the group I am more aware of the learning opportunities open to me'. 92 per cent 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with the statements on 'contribution to the environment' which included 'the work of the group contributes to biodiversity and habitat and species action plans' and 'the broader community appreciates the work our Green Gym group does'.

[PSA Delivery Agreement 29: Reduce poverty in poorer countries through quicker progress towards the Millennium Development Goals](#)

PSA 29 sets out the Government's strategy for making progress towards the internationally agreed Millennium Development Goals (MDGs):

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger;
2. Achieve universal primary education;
3. Promote gender equality and empower women;
4. Reduce child mortality;
5. Improve maternal health;
6. Combat HIV and AIDS, malaria and other diseases;
7. Ensure environmental sustainability; and
8. Develop a global partnership for development.

²¹⁹ Pretty J, Peacock J, Sellens M and Griffin, M (2005) The Mental and Physical Health Outcomes of Green Exercise', *International Journal of Environmental Health Research*, 15, 5, 319–37.

²²⁰ Department for Transport (2004) *Walking and Cycling: An Action Plan*, London, DfT. Accessed online at: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgf/sustainable/walking/actionplan/walkingandcyclingdocumentinp5802>

²²¹ Department for Transport's *Aims and Objectives*. Accessed online at: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/about/aimsandobjectives>

²²² It is, however, mentioned briefly in PSA 27, which sets out the Government's plans to lead the global effort to avoid dangerous climate change (see previous section).

The delivery agreement states clearly that 'linking outcomes specifically to the UK's role is challenging. It is important to be realistic about the extent to which partner country results can be attributed to the Government's work...In addition, there are difficulties in realising the impact of the Government's contribution in a relatively short time scale (2008-2011), particularly because progress in many countries will need to be assessed over a longer period and there are time lags in data collection.'²²³ The strategy goes on to set out the various measures the Government will take during this comprehensive spending review period, including providing aid, increasing the provision, access to and quality of essential services, helping improve governance and helping countries to adapt to climate change.

It has previously been argued that sport could be usefully integrated into such international strategies. A report by the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace, published in 2003, analysed in detail the potential contribution that sport could make towards achieving the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)²²⁴. It examined international evidence for the impact of sport on health, specifically around HIV/AIDS, education, sustainable development, peace, communication and partnerships and established an inventory of international programmes and projects. The report stated:

The fundamental elements of sport make it a viable and practical tool to support the achievement of the MDGs. Sport has an impact on health and reduces the likelihood of many diseases. Sports programmes serve as an effective tool for social mobilization, supporting health activities such as HIV/AIDS education and immunization campaigns. Sport can be a significant economic force, providing employment and contributing to local development. It is also a key site and natural draw for volunteer involvement. Furthermore, participation in sport supports the preservation of a clean and healthy environment.²²⁵

In fact, much of the evidence presented in this and other Chapters supports the argument that, properly integrated and targeted, sport could make some contribution to the achievement of the MDGs, through people's participation in sport and through other forms of sport engagement. The first two recommendations of the UN Task Force report were that: sport should be better integrated into the development agenda; and sport should be incorporated as a useful tool in programmes for development and peace. Five years on, however, there is little evidence to suggest that sport has become mainstreamed in the way the report recommends; the delivery agreement for PSA 29, for example, makes no mention whatsoever of the potential contribution of sport. It is worth pointing out that the difficulty of evaluating the impact of sport on social and economic objectives in developing countries is acute. Recent analysis of international sport-in-development programmes expressed this eloquently:

Limitations on financial resources (barely enough for programme delivery), lack of research expertise, the relatively chaotic lives and irregular attendance of many participants, all combine to raise significant questions about the logistics of meaningful outcome measurement and evaluation (leaving aside the generic methodological issues associated with intervening and confounding variables).²²⁶

Nevertheless, these difficulties should not prevent sustained and well resourced efforts to evaluate the impact sport can have on the MDGs, in order to provide guidance on the most effective ways of using sport as a tool for development. It is not the contention here that sport should be seen as a panacea, simply that its potential for helping to achieve such objectives be recognised, further researched and appropriately resourced.

²²³ Her Majesty's Government (2007) *PSA Delivery Agreement 29: Reduce Poverty in Poorer Countries through Quicker Progress towards the Millennium Development Goals*, London, Stationery Office, p. 6. Accessed online at: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/E/4/pbr_csr07_psa29.pdf

²²⁴ United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace (2003) *Sport for Development and Peace: Towards Achieving the Millennium Development Goals*, United Nations. Accessed online at: <http://www.un.org/themes/sport/reportE.pdf>

²²⁵ United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace (2003) *Sport for Development and Peace: Towards Achieving the Millennium Development Goals*, United Nations, p. v. Accessed online at: <http://www.un.org/themes/sport/reportE.pdf>

²²⁶ Coalter, F (2007) *A Wider Social Role for Sport: Who's Keeping the Score?* London, Routledge, p. 90.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

This report has analysed how sport and recreation could help the Government achieve their stated priorities for the Comprehensive Spending Review period, 2008-11. The review of evidence suggests that sport and recreation could play a role in 22 of the 30 Public Service Agreements that together set out the Government's vision for the forthcoming years. While the report has been written deliberately to ensure its relevance to current political priorities, it can also be viewed more generally as a review of the evidence for sport's social and economic benefits. The evidence varies from the direct impact that sports participation can have on physical fitness, general health and specific diseases, to the impact that membership of a sports club can have on social trust. Analysis of this evidence is also becoming increasingly sophisticated, with a greater focus on precisely how various forms of sport engagement can produce changes in behaviour that in turn may lead to strategic social outcomes, such as community cohesion and social regeneration.

The introduction to this report included a brief discussion of Sport England's new strategy and the increased backing of 'sport for sport's sake'. This has been well received by many in sport. Nevertheless, there is still widespread recognition that sport and recreation can lead to wider social and economic benefits. So how can this potential of sport and recreation be realised? Action is needed at a number of levels. Above all, sport and government need to establish a sustainable, mutually beneficial partnership. It is hoped that this report, along with the various studies highlighted within it, can provide the evidence base upon which a productive partnership could be based. A series of detailed, concrete, costed proposals for how sport and recreation should be incorporated into the delivery of each of the 22 PSAs covered here would constitute an entirely new report. This is a report that needs to be written, one that would follow logically from the evidence presented here. However, it is not one that should be written by sport organisations and delivered to government as a *fait accompli*. Instead, it should be the result of strategic discussions between policymakers, funders, those who organise and deliver sport and those who participate in it. In this spirit, only a few concrete recommendations will be made in this final Chapter, with the overarching recommendation being that policymakers should recognise the capacity of sport to help deliver their objectives and fund and support it appropriately.

Research

Given that this report is a review of evidence, the first recommendation is a traditional one: more research is needed. Each of the major policy-related reviews of sport listed in the introduction includes this recommendation and while there are indications that research on the social and economic benefits of sport is increasing and improving, much more needs to be done. This is not a call-out to academics. Researchers in this area recognise well the research deficit and are anxious to carry out more detailed, long-term studies in order to get to the heart of exactly how sport can lead to beneficial social outcomes. Moreover, researchers are not interested in this from a distant, theoretical perspective; many focus principally on the way in which well conducted research can lead directly to improvements in policy and practice.

This, then, is a call-out to policy makers and, in fact, practitioners. Taking each in turn, the Government has consistently espoused the benefits of evidence-based policy making²²⁷. In order for such a process to function in the area of sport policy, high quality research is needed that seeks to understand not only whether, but also how, sport can produce beneficial social and economic outcomes. This requires a policy commitment to fund such research and to articulate clearly how the findings of such research will feed back into the policy making process. It also requires policy makers to accept that there are no 'magic bullets': sport engagement may lead to beneficial social and economic outcomes, but, like any other policy or intervention strategy, it cannot provide a wholesale solution to complex, multidimensional problems²²⁸.

Practitioners have also tended to shun the 'research spotlight'. This may be because they are often so convinced of the benefits of sport that they feel that research is superfluous. Or it may be because practitioners are primarily concerned with delivering programmes in a tight, short-term funding environment, so evaluation comes low down on the list of priorities. Alternatively, it may reflect disconnection between researchers and practitioners, where the former fail to communicate the findings of research in ways useful to the latter.

²²⁷ Cabinet Office (1999) *Modernising Government*, London, Stationery Office. Accessed online at: <http://www.archive.official-documents.co.uk/document/cm43/4310/4310-00.htm>

²²⁸ Coalter, F (2007) *A Wider Social Role for Sport: Who's Keeping the Score?* London, Routledge.

The emerging consensus among sport and social policy researchers is that theory-based evaluation – which seeks not only to measure the outcomes of a particular policy or programme, but also to understand and explain the processes through which it works – would be the best means of providing useful evidence. There is not sufficient space here to describe this approach in detail; other authors provide clear explanations and discuss its advantages and disadvantages²²⁹. Fundamentally, though, it requires policy makers and programme designers to think deeply about the logic of their policies and programmes and set realistic targets for what they can achieve. Researchers will seek to evaluate policies and programmes in this context and, rather than passing a simple verdict on the success or failure of a policy or programme, will aim to specify what works for which types of people in which circumstances. Such an approach should foster closer links between researchers, policy makers and practitioners and should provide robust evidence that can feed back into more sophisticated policy making and programme design.

Voluntary infrastructure

At the risk of oversimplification, it could be said that most government efforts to maximise the social and economic benefits of sport have tended to involve specific, targeted government interventions or the direct or indirect provision of funding for interventions delivered by other organisations. Such interventions are usually funded for a specified period, managed and delivered by paid staff and designed to use sport to achieve specific outcomes. Research suggests, however, that the short-term nature of such interventions and the consequent lack of sustainability can inhibit their effectiveness²³⁰. The second recommendation of this report, therefore, is that policy makers pay much closer attention to the ways in which existing voluntary organisations can help to deliver government objectives simply by continuing to operate as they currently do.

The Government has already recognised the contribution that voluntary organisations can make. The delivery agreement for PSA 21 includes the following statement:

The local third sector plays a vital role in working both alongside and independently from local statutory agencies. It provides the organisational forms through which people come together to find a voice and solve problems. It often acts as the bridge between different groups within and across communities, helping people to find ways to talk to each other. It is also often a deliverer of local public services, providing valuable models of user engagement and responsive needs-led services.²³¹

In sport, these 'organisational forms' are, for the most part, member-run, voluntary sports clubs, of which there are an estimated 151,000 in the UK, a third of which are estimated to have been in existence for more than 50 years²³². Most of the research on sports clubs has focused on the opportunities they offer for developing social capital and active citizenship. There is very little research which has analysed the role of sports clubs *per se* in promoting health, combating crime and anti-social behaviour or improving educational achievement. If the Government were to explore ways of supporting the existing work of voluntary sports clubs to enable them to contribute to wider priorities, this could provide a much more sustainable, cost-effective means of maximising the social benefits of sport.

Joined-up government

The final broad recommendation of this report is that the Government should deliver on its own promise of adopting joined-up strategies for addressing cross-cutting social issues. The Modernising Government White Paper, published in March 1999, called for public sector staff to work in partnership across organisational boundaries to deliver integrated or seamless services²³³. A more recent National Audit Office report on joined-up government suggested that, in some

²²⁹ Coalter, F (2007) *A Wider Social Role for Sport: Who's Keeping the Score?* London, Routledge; Pawson, R (2006) *Evidence-based Policy: A Realist Perspective*, London, Sage; Tacon, R (2007) Football and Social Inclusion: Evaluating Social Policy, *Managing Leisure*, 12, 1, 1-23; Weiss, C (1997) How Can Theory-based Evaluation Make Greater Headway? *Evaluation Review*, 21, 4, 501-24.

²³⁰ Policy Action Team 10 (1999) *National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal: Policy Action Team Audit, Report of the Policy Action Team 10: The contribution of Sport and the Arts*, London, Department for Culture, Media and Sport. Accessed online at: <http://www.sportdevelopment.org.uk/html/pat10.html>

²³¹ Her Majesty's Government (2007) *PSA Delivery Agreement 21: Build More Cohesive, Empowered and Active Communities*, London, Stationery Office, p. 15. Accessed online at: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/E/9/pbr_csr07_psa21.pdf

²³² Nichols, G (2003) *Citizenship in Action: Voluntary Sector Sport and Recreation*, London, Central Council of Physical Recreation. Accessed online at: <http://www.ccpr.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/3CFD4D29-A78A-442D-A1DC-75AE24E4F5A4/0/CCPR2003CitizenshipinActionExecutiveSummary.pdf>

²³³ Cabinet Office (1999) *Modernising Government*, London, Stationery Office. Accessed online at: <http://www.archive.official-documents.co.uk/document/cm43/4310/4310-00.htm>

areas, joint working had been effective, but that there were clear challenges for government departments in identifying where joint working was required and how best to implement successful strategies²³⁴.

This report has highlighted several areas where evidence strongly suggests that joint working – articulating and supporting the role of sport and recreation in PSA delivery agreements – would be of great benefit. One obvious indication of the lack of attention given to sport in the delivery of government objectives is the way in which the Department for Culture, Media and Sport is consistently overlooked. Across all 30 PSA delivery agreements, only four – PSAs 20, 21, 22 and 28 – mention DCMS in any meaningful capacity, and the last of these concerns the historic environment and is nothing to do with sport and recreation. Among the 30, there are some very notable omissions. PSA 18 on health, PSA 23 on crime, PSAs 10 and 11 on education, and PSAs 12, 13, and 14 on young people make no mention of DCMS whatsoever in their delivery agreements.

This is not to suggest that the Department for Culture, Media and Sport itself should be involved in the delivery of all government priorities. Its general absence from the various delivery agreements is simply used to illustrate the marginalised role played by sport and recreation in most areas of social and economic policy. One of the central tenets of this report is that sport and recreation are relevant far beyond the confines of sport policy and could be instrumental in the work of most, if not all, government departments. What is required, though, is a clearer understanding of how sport could contribute and a genuine commitment to funding, evaluating and learning from policies which build on this potential contribution. This report, it is hoped, will contribute to these developments.

²³⁴ National Audit Office (2001) *Joining Up to Improve Public Services*, London, Stationery Office. Accessed online at: http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/nao_reports/01-02/0102383.pdf

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