

Written evidence submitted by the Sport and Recreation Alliance

The Sport and Recreation Alliance believes that the power of sport and recreation can change lives and bring communities together. We provide advice, support and guidance to our members and the sector, who represent traditional governing bodies of games and sport, county sports partnerships, outdoor recreation, water pursuits, and movement and dance exercise. As the voice of the sector, we work with Government, policy makers and the media to make sure grassroots sport and recreation grows and thrives. Having an active nation is important as it delivers huge benefits to society and the millions of participants, volunteers, staff and spectators.

Introduction

The Alliance warmly welcomes the Committee's inquiry into the social impact of participation in culture and sport. In partnership with our members, we have for some time advocated for policy changes which maximise the economic and social impact of sport and recreation. Before responding to the questions, we wish to raise the following points which provide useful background when considering the social impact of sport and recreation.

Key points

1. We welcome *Sporting Future's* focus on outcomes which we feel is a positive step as the sector is well placed to be able to demonstrate the social value it delivers. However, Government and its agencies must be clear about how they will assess performance and support the sector to better measure its impact.
2. The sport and recreation sector delivers significant social impact which has traditionally not been recognised and embedded across wider Government policy – for example, there is a broad recognition of the health benefits of sport and recreation in terms of prevention and cost savings. However, sport is often viewed marginally by policy makers and in practical terms, the sector's role in many policy areas is still limited. There has been some progress with regards to Sport England's health services partnership with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), and GPs prescribing physical activity (which is supported by Public Health England). Yet, more needs to be done if we are to experience the true value of sport and recreation.
3. Government needs to better coordinate across departments to maximise the social value of sport. *Sporting Future* is a good start – there is an explicit recognition of the need for cross-government working – but progress on making this a reality has been slow.

Questions

1. *Which programmes best demonstrate the positive social impact that participating in sport and culture can have on the five central themes of the inquiry?*

- 1.1 We have highlighted the work of a number of our members in this area below and further detail is available in our report [Uncovering the Social Value of Sport](#). We encourage the Committee to refer to our report as well as our [Game of Life](#) research which highlights the role of sport in enhancing social cohesion and tackling antisocial behaviour and crime.

Greenhouse Sports

[Greenhouse Sports](#) is a London-based charity that uses sport to engage with young people and improve their life chances. Greenhouse Sports partner with schools and embed coaches full time into the school environment to deliver high quality, intensive programmes that empower and inspire young people growing up in disadvantaged communities.

School of Hard Knocks

[School of Hard Knocks](#) is a social inclusion charity which uses sport to tackle issues surrounding unemployment, crime and health. School of Hard Knocks offers numerous sport programmes to a range of participants – including to those not in education, training and employment (NEETs) – and help its beneficiaries '*realise their potential, take responsibility and contribute more fully to society.*'

England Boxing

[England Boxing](#) uses the power of boxing to help participants improve their health and wellbeing, integrate more effectively in their communities and reduce anti-social behaviour. England Boxing offer a range of support including offering boxing-related educational courses and careers advice for young unemployed people, and structured boxing sessions to help people tackle mental health problems.

Sported

[Sported](#) is a free membership organisation who have supported over 3,000 community sports clubs and groups across the UK deliver sport for development. Sported uses the power of sport to transform the lives of disadvantaged young people and build stronger, safer communities. Sported offers support to sports clubs and groups through educational opportunities, administrative support and mentoring with the ambition of creating financially sustainable and resilient members.

Golf Roots, Skills for Life

The Golf Foundation's '[Skills for Life](#)' programme helps young people enjoy the benefits of golf and helps them 'Start, Learn and Stay,' in the sport. In addition to learning the rules of the game, participants are taught important skills which can be applied to everyday life situations – such as exams, public speaking and controlling anxiety and aggression. 'Skills for Life' measures the personal development of the participant through tailored coaching programmes with the ultimate ambition of attracting golfers for life.

Street Games, Doorstep Sport Club programme

Street Games's [Doorstep Sport Club](#) programme provides support to young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to participate in sport. Doorstep Sport Club has delivered £20 million in investment and engaged over 100,000 young people in sport. Street Games also offer guidance and advice to coaches and project leaders on the challenges of providing sport in a doorstep environment and retaining participants on a long-term basis.

London Sports Trust, Active Communities

Organised by the London Sports Trust, [Active Communities](#) encourages inter-generational cohesion through sport and physical activity on housing estates in West London. The programme helps inactive Londoners becomes more involved in exercise through fun and innovative projects, with programmes delivered to families, adults and people with mental health problems.

Rugby Football Union (RFU), Try for Change

[Try for Change](#) is an England Rugby programme which uses rugby union to improve the lives of marginalised and disadvantaged people in England and internationally. The RFU raises funding to provide investment to projects and programmes which harness rugby and its core values for positive change.

Tennis Foundation, Beyond the Baseline

The Tennis Foundation partnered with the Youth Sport Trust to establish [Beyond the Baseline](#). The programme engages young people who are struggling with their behaviour or academic performance in school. Beyond the Baseline uses tennis and inspirational tennis mentors to nurture pupils' aspirations and puts them on the path to achieving them.

Get Hooked on Fishing

[Get Hooked on Fishing](#) (GHOF) is a charity which provides training around the sport of angling for young people and the wider community. GHOF runs a number of schemes across England, Scotland and Wales including coarse fishing, sea angling and fly fishing. The ambition of the charity is to create opportunities for young people, their families and their communities to have brighter futures.

2. *How can access to cultural and sporting professions be improved to enable greater diversity? How can Government build a pipeline of talent?*

- 2.1 We take a deliberately wide view of the term 'sporting professions' and in this we include all those who work in the sport and recreation sector as well as those that earn a living from participating at elite or professional level. This is important because sport and recreation comprises a significant economic sector in its own right: total sport-related employment was 1.2 million in 2015 – 3.6% of UK employment (which is a 9.5% increase since 2012), with growth just under twice that of the UK employment as a whole.¹ Similarly, the sport sector makes a huge contribution to our national economy, with the value of the sports economy, as measured by Gross Value Added (GVA), estimated to be £35.0 billion in 2015 – 2.1% of GVA.²
- 2.2 In this context, for sport and recreation to continue to grow it needs access to a diverse and well-trained workforce. With Brexit on the horizon, it is critical that Government policy supports the continued development of the sector and its workforce. For example, Government must recognise the importance of seasonal workers in the sector, with sports such as skiing and sailing exporting a considerable number of instructors to the European Union (EU). Equally, Brexit could affect the UK's ability to host major events, which often take place at short notice and requires a diverse workforce – from the athletes competing, to the people who provide catering facilities. The UK must remain an attractive place to host events once the UK leaves the EU and we hope Government will ensure that any change to the current immigration and regulatory regimes will be mitigated so that it does not disadvantage the sector.
- 2.3 The sport and recreation sector recognises the importance of diversity and has made good progress in becoming more representative of the people it serves. The new UK Sport Governance Code requirements, for example, mandate that organisations adopt a minimum of 30% of each gender on its Board and that it demonstrate progression towards achieving gender parity and greater diversity at a Board level. However, the sector recognises there is still more to do to ensure that all those with talent have access to opportunities to work in the sector and make a living from sport. Equally, Government must work with the sector to look at how diversity at all levels within sport can be improved.

¹ UK Sport Satellite Account 2015, DCMS, January 2016:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/583785/Sport_Satellite_Account_2012_2014_2015.pdf

² *Sporting Future*, December 2015, pg 58:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/486622/Sporting_Future_Accessible.pdf

2.4 Government must also create a supportive policy environment for the sector to build a pipeline of talent for the next generation. Recent policy decisions regarding educational opportunities, for example, could potentially restrict access to sporting professions. Changes to the GCSE and the A-Level PE syllabus have led to some sports being excluded and while we appreciate Government's ambition of improving the assessment practice of the qualifications, Government must ensure that sport remains attractive to young people.

3. Why has the Government not co-ordinated its efforts more effectively?

3.1 The importance of cross-government working is a central theme of *Sporting Future*. While this commitment is welcome, we feel that the cross-departmental spirit evidenced in the strategy has not yet fully materialised into the delivery of outcomes which will help more people lead active lives. In our view, while there has been some progress, there remains a relatively limited understanding and appreciation of the role of sport and recreation in delivering wider policy goals. While *Sporting Future* has been driven by an influential Sports Minister, Tracey Crouch MP, without such ambition being shared by other ministers across Government, it remains questionable whether a genuine, coordinated approach to sports policy will be delivered.

3.2 To address this, we feel that physical activity must be embedded in policy and properly funded by all departments which benefit from the social impact sport and recreation delivers, not just DCMS. In addition, regular, cross-departmental exchanges and oversight of key policies will help ensure greater transparency. To highlight an example, recent decisions regarding the Healthy Capital Pupils Fund (HPCF) have called into question how genuine Government's commitment is to coordinated working. HPCF was intended to provide a boost to school sport facilities and healthy lifestyles, yet, less than five months after its announcement, funding for the programme was significantly reduced by the Department for Education (DfE) – apparently without wider consultation – from £415 million to just £100 million in order to put more money into the frontline schools budget. This highlights not only the need for greater prioritisation of investment for physical activity policy, but increased departmental accountability over sport-related policies.

3.3 A lack of coordinated Government policy also extends to the PE Sport Premium (PESP) and the challenges of delivering a sustainable, long-term vision for school sport. The decision to double the PESP from £160 million to £320 million funding through the Soft Drinks Industry Levy (SDIL) is welcome, but the funding is again routed through DfE and is only guaranteed to 2020 – which is a brief window in which to properly embed school sport programmes. We urge Government to commit funding for the lifetime of this parliament and ensure that this spending actually delivers meaningful sport and physical activity outcomes, and to put in place proper assurance and accountability arrangements for PESP investment. Further, the transparency of school sport policy decisions could be improved by jointly allocating the brief between DfE and DCMS, allowing for greater oversight and a genuinely collaborative approach.

3.4 We welcome DCMS's progress in influencing other departmental strategies, as demonstrated through the physical activity and healthy living initiatives in the *Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy* and the *25 Year Environment Plan*. However, departments must now step up to the challenge and deliver these stated pledges and commit funding where appropriate.

4. Where are the examples of departmental best-practice and how could it be shared?

4.1 DCMS has done a lot of good work to not only progress the actions identified in *Sporting Future*, but to ensure that other departments recognise the potential of sport and recreation in helping solve some of society's greatest challenges – such as obesity, mental health issues and an ageing population. However, to continue best practice, there needs to be a mechanism

in place for measuring the social impact of sport programmes and which is consistent across Government and its agencies. This measurement tool should be developed by DCMS and applied across Government, which will incentivise departments to use sport as a force for good and help assess progress against *Sporting Future* objectives. Sport England has produced guidance for sports organisations on how to evaluate impact, however, it should formally set out how it intends to measure the impact of its funded programmes aimed at improving social outcomes and ensure that this is promoted as widely as possible.

- 4.2 With regards to broader departmental best practice, we would highlight the Ministry of Justice's (MoJ) review of the provision of sport and PE in youth justice. While the review is focused on the youth justice system, it will collate evidence and best practice to inform recommendations for how future delivery of physical activity in custody can be improved. We particularly welcome the Justice Minister, Dr Philip Lee MP's positive comments about the role of sport in reducing recidivism. As part of the review process, we encourage Government to consult widely with the sector for examples of the role of sport in tackling anti-social behaviour – with organisations such as England Boxing, Street Games – and other organisations, such as the Football League Trust, who use the power of football to improve health and reduce crime, and Sport4Life UK, who use sport to engage with young people who have a history of offending. We hope that the MoJ's work will inspire other departments to use sport as a force for good.
- 4.3 We also wish to highlight the changes to the Advanced Apprenticeship for Sporting Excellence (AASE) arrangements and DfE's and DCMS's efforts in agreeing a successor scheme with the sports sector. The AASE programme provides athletes with the ability to pursue career options through training and education opportunities, which offer young people a safety net should an injury put an end to their sporting career. The sector did initially have concerns regarding the termination of AASE – particularly with regards to its replacement and the Government's focus on an 'employer led model,' however, through supportive engagement with DfE and DCMS, the successor scheme has been agreed with Government.
- 4.4 Finally, we welcome the Department for Business, Energy, Innovation (BEIS) and Skills' Industrial Strategy, which has a particular focus on the issues raised by an ageing society and the role of a healthy workforce, which can help overcome the 'productivity challenge.' In this context we would encourage Government to look seriously at the role sport and recreation can play in meeting these challenges. There is also scope for BEIS and DCMS to coordinate on sector deals where sport and recreation can achieve specific objectives e.g. improving productivity. The recently created Sports Business Council can play an important role in this regard as it brings together a wide range of organisations from the sector to consider reforms aimed at growing the sports economy and improving the operating environment for sports businesses.

5. *Has the sport sector been better for social mobility than the arts? If so, why?*

- 5.1 It would be unfair and unreasonable to suggest that either the sports or arts' contribution to social mobility has been more valuable or 'better' than the other. We urge the Committee not to view either sector in isolation and rather, recognise the contribution both sport and culture make to social mobility.
- 5.2 In terms of specific sport examples, we refer to the Youth Sport Trust's social mobility [work](#). YST's PE Sport based intervention programme uses the power of sport to help children have the best start in life. The programme targets schools in disadvantaged areas to help children build their character, confidence and future employability skills. Clare Mount School in Wirral, Merseyside, is a particular example of YST's work in this area and we encourage the Committee to consult with YST for more detailed information.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 We welcome Government's commitment to embedding the social impact of sport across departmental policy and feel the sector is well placed to be able to demonstrate the social value it delivers. However, sport and recreation needs to be properly embedded in policy making across departments and there must be a consistent mechanism in place to measure the social value of sport and recreation programmes. Government must also ensure that its efforts are genuinely coordinated, as recent policy decisions with regards to HPCF in particular call into question whether a long-term vision for sport is shared by policy makers. Better coordination will help maximise the social value of sport and ensure that as many people as possible lead healthy, active lives.

We would be happy to provide the Committee with any further information with regards to our evidence submission if required.

Sport and Recreation Alliance

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