



Government response to the House of Lords National Plan for Sport and Recreation Committee Report on A national plan for sport, health and wellbeing

February 2022

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Presented to Parliament by the Minister for Sport,
Tourism, Heritage and Civil Society by Command of Her
Majesty

February 2022



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Foreword

Dear Lord Willis of Knaresborough,

The Government is grateful for the recent report by the Lords Select Committee on a National Plan for Sport and Recreation and all the work by the Committee. I commend your Committee's focus on the importance of sport and physical activity. The Government has been clear about the physical and mental health benefits they bring, and how sport and physical activity help strengthen communities and boost economic development. The pandemic has reinforced the critical importance of grassroots sport. Throughout the pandemic, the Government has prioritised physical activity, providing over £1 billion of financial support to sport and leisure organisations. It is crucial that we have a rich and varied sport offer across the country so that physical activity is accessible to all, no matter a person's background or location, and our focus is on achieving this as part of the Government's wider work on levelling up.

The Government agrees with the Committee's overarching recommendation on a need for a new ambitious national plan for sport. We also agree that sport, health and wellbeing are closely linked and that any Government strategy should reflect those links. As set out in our response, the Government is developing a new sport strategy to be published in 2022, as well as updating the School Sport and Activity Action Plan and the National Physical Activity Framework. As you highlight in your report, the Government's approach needs to be joined up and I will continue to work across departments to ensure that our work in this space is closely aligned and delivers on our ambition to get the nation more active.

As this response demonstrates, this Government is strongly committed to increasing participation and activity levels across the population, and ensuring that everyone has access to opportunities to get active.

I hope you are reassured by this response, and would be happy to discuss it further with you.

Yours sincerely,
Nigel Huddleston MP
Minister for Sport, Tourism, Heritage and Civil Society

Introduction

The Government is clear that being physically active and taking part in sports has a wide range of benefits, both for individuals of all ages, genders and demographics, and for communities more widely. It brings people together and builds social bonds, it can help drive economic activity at local and national levels, and it can help people develop skills and confidence.

The Government is committed to increasing activity levels across the country. We recognise that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a negative impact on activity levels and that change is needed. We want to support the nation to recover from the pandemic, building back fitter and healthier, and to address stubborn inactivity levels that predate the pandemic.

The Government has prioritised physical activity throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Given the benefits of sport and physical activity, we made clear that people were allowed to leave their homes for physical activity. We also prioritised the reopening of the sector whenever lockdown restrictions were eased to ensure that people could be active.

Further to this, the Government has provided over £1 billion of financial support to sport and leisure organisations. This includes support to local authority leisure centres through a £100 million support fund. The Government also provided a £600 million Sports Survival Package which has protected the immediate futures of major spectator sports in England and provided onward benefits to grassroots sports. Sport England also provided £270 million directly to support community sport clubs and exercise centres through this pandemic, via a range of funds.

Local Authorities are crucial to supporting physical activity across the country. We have provided more than £6 billion of unringfenced funding to local authorities since the start of the pandemic to allocate in line with local needs, which includes leisure facilities. Funding has been made available to local communities through the £4.8 billion Levelling Up Fund to support town centre and high street regeneration, local transport projects, and cultural and heritage assets. This is in addition to the £150 million Community Ownership Fund which is supporting community groups to protect and take over local assets of community value.

Building on this significant financial support, the Government wants to go further, and we are investing to improve access to sport facilities. At the recent Spending Review, the Government announced £205 million of funding to build or transform up to 8,000 state-of-the-art community football pitches and multi-use sports facilities across the UK. This is in addition to £25 million for new community football pitches announced in 2021. The Government has also announced a £30 million package to renovate 4,500 park tennis courts across the country. We have also announced nearly £30 million for improving and opening up school sport facilities in England as well as to improve the teaching of Physical Education at primary school.

The Government is developing a new sport strategy to be published in 2022, as well as updating the School Sport and Activity Action Plan and the National Physical Activity Framework. This work will be closely aligned and will look to address the issues facing grassroots sport, many of which have been set out in the Committee's report.

This response outlines the Government's approach to sport and physical activity at the grassroots level. A full response to each of the Committee's recommendations is provided below, taken chapter by chapter.

Government Response

Chapter 2 - A NATIONAL PLAN FOR SPORT, HEALTH AND WELLBEING

A national plan

“1. We are calling for the development of a long-term cross-government national plan for sport, health and wellbeing. The national plan would form an overarching framework document which would set out the Government’s vision, aims and objectives over a multi-year period and would bring together disparate strategies covering physical activity, health promotion, planning, housing, education, transport and more. This will mean that some existing strategies such as Sporting Future will need to be incorporated into the national plan and refreshed to reflect the new way of working, but not abandoned. (Paragraph 58)

2. Delivery of sport and recreation is uncoordinated and fragmented from the top down and delivery and funding structures are not fit for purpose. There needs to be a new architecture to embed genuine cross-departmental working and to reset delivery and funding. (Paragraph 76)

6. To establish consistent Parliamentary scrutiny of progress of the national plan, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care must coordinate and submit an annual report to Parliament setting out the Government’s performance against the national plan and table a motion in both Houses to debate the annual report. (Paragraph 80)”

The Government agrees with the Committee on the importance of setting strategic direction for sport and physical activity. We are in the process of developing a new Government Sport Strategy and are working across Departments to do this. This will build on the progress that has been made since the publication of Sporting Future in 2015 as a cross-government strategy recognising the importance of sport and physical activity.

The Government recognises that, to tackle this challenge, cross-Departmental working is vital. Through the School Sport and Activity Action Plan the Government demonstrated the importance of joint working. Through the refresh of the plan and the development of a new cross-Government Sport Strategy we will continue to progress this. Cross-government teams are collaboratively working to embed an evidence-based approach to this strategy, drawing on what we know makes a difference to support health. The update to Everybody Active Every day: the National Physical Activity framework is a major influence on this and sets out a whole system approach designed to tackle inactivity, support health and address inequalities associated with physical activity.

Government will continue to report to Parliament on the evidence for its interventions to drive improvements in sport and physical activity.

“3. The establishment of the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities represents a timely opportunity to make ambitious changes within Government to match the ambitions of the national plan. As a first step the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities should be renamed the Office for Health Promotion and it must be placed on a statutory footing to give

it the surety of purpose and authority to truly deliver cross-departmental working, and ensure that all departments are prioritising physical activity, health and wellbeing.”

The Government agrees that the establishment of the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) represents a timely opportunity to make ambitious changes within Government to improve the health of the nation. OHID works across the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), the rest of government, the healthcare system, local government and across different sectors to be creative about how we shift our focus towards preventing ill health, in particular in the places and communities where there are the most significant disparities. Tackling health disparities is a fundamental driver for action throughout the Office and is therefore reflected in its name and identity. As part of DHSC, OHID brings together expert advice, analysis and evidence with policy development and implementation to shape and drive health improvement and equalities priorities for government.

People in the most deprived communities can be at far higher risk of poor health and worse health outcomes. OHID will systematically tackle the top preventable risk factors for poor health, improving the public's health and narrowing health inequalities. Reducing health inequalities and disparities will be a core aim of OHID across the breadth of its activity. OHID, under the leadership of the Deputy Chief Medical Officer and Director General for OHID, will develop strong relationships across government (national and local), the NHS, the wider public health system and industry to drive change. Establishing a statutory Office for Health Promotion would reduce the effectiveness of the Office in delivering change in the centre of government and risk restricting the focus on tackling health disparities that have been thrown into such sharp relief by the pandemic.

Driving change on prevention depends above all on strong and ambitious policy making across government, underpinned by the best evidence and expertise, and translated into effective delivery through a wide range of partners and channels. Given the cross-cutting nature of public health and prevention, it is vital that DHSC strengthens its public health role and its public health analysis, policy-making and implementation capability.

The public health system and the Government needs a trusted source of independent scientific advice on health improvement issues and policies to ensure that decision-making is evidence-led and there is a focus on addressing health inequalities. Teams within OHID that provide expert public health or medical advice, evidence and analysis are under the professional leadership of the Chief Medical Officer. Ministers are responsible and accountable for all policy decisions and OHID's strategic direction.

As part of our strategy for cross-government collaboration, we have established the Health Promotion Taskforce (HPTF) to drive a cross-government effort to improve the nation's health. The HPTF will identify opportunities to take action across government to improve health and reduce health disparities.

“4. We also propose the establishment of a new ministerial post for Sport, Health and Wellbeing. This role will sit within DHSC and will have responsibility for sport, which will be moved from DCMS to DHSC. The role will have joint responsibility with the Office for Health Promotion to develop and oversee implementation of the national plan. (Paragraph 78)”

The Government does not agree with the proposal to establish a new ministerial post for Sport, Health and Wellbeing and does not agree with moving responsibility for sport from

DCMS to DHSC. The Government is committed to improving the health of the nation, including through supporting sport and activity, within its existing structures. Government Departments including DCMS, DHSC and DfE work closely together on sport, health and wellbeing policies and we believe that it is right to focus on delivery through these means rather than a Machinery of Government change that expends energy on setting up new structures.

Sport has a major role to play in delivering across multiple outcomes, not just on health and wellbeing. Sport is integral to delivering a wide range of community outcomes such as enhanced social cohesion and the sector has a very significant economic reach. Given the range of outcomes which sport delivers against it is right that it continues to sit as part of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. The Government's work on sport includes support for the elite sport sector, including the £600 million Sports Survival Package, and our Olympic and Paralympic programmes. The Government believes that a Machinery of Government change would be a distraction and dilute the focus on sport compared to its current positioning within DCMS where it is a major focus for officials.

DCMS, DHSC and DfE have a joint responsibility, through the School Sport and Activity Action Plan, to deliver sport programmes which aim to better improve children's physical activity levels across the country. Our joint working will continue in 2022, with an update to the School Sport and Activity Action Plan, a new Government Sport Strategy, and refresh of the National Physical Activity Framework 'Everybody Active Every Day'. This work presents an opportunity to further strengthen how we work together to align and connect our core objectives, enabling us to deliver government commitments to improve the nation's health and physical activity levels.

“5. The Minister for Sport, Health and Wellbeing will chair a regular Strategic Forum of central and local government and other key stakeholders to discuss the formation and implementation of the national plan. The national plan must have buy-in and support from local government, metro mayors and Active Partnerships, and it must incorporate the views of the broad range of stakeholders involved in delivering sport and recreation on the ground including grassroots organisations and NGBs. (Paragraph 79)”

The Government agrees that regular engagement with a broad range of key stakeholders is vital in developing a national strategy for sport and physical activity. The Minister for Sport and department officials regularly meet with a wide range of sector stakeholders including Arms Length Bodies, National Governing Bodies, sector representatives, Local Government and industry associations.

The Government's new Sport Strategy is being developed in partnership with the key stakeholders from across the sector with DCMS seeking views as part of wide ranging evidence gathering exercise. The central purpose of this engagement is for the Government and the wider sector to work collaboratively to identify and understand the key challenges and opportunities that exist within the sector. The Strategy will work with the sector to tackle these challenges.

“7. Funding needs to coalesce around the national plan. The Government should look to New Zealand's wellbeing budget model for inspiration on how to coordinate departmental agendas and budgets around delivering a shared programme of work. The Treasury should review the tax environment for the sector, including for sports clubs, to create a more favourable tax regime that encourages self-sufficiency and reduces dependency on public funding. The

Government must also introduce a statutory requirement on local authorities to provide and maintain adequate facilities for sport and physical activity. This will need to be backed up with adequate financial support from the Treasury. (Paragraph 81)”

The Government does not agree outright with the Committee’s recommendations, but will consider this further as part of the Sport Strategy. New duties for the local government sector would need to be considered on a case by case basis and would need to undergo a full new burdens assessment. Separately, the Government keeps all tax reliefs under review, in order to ensure they strike the right balance between keeping taxes simple to administer, well-targeted and effective. HM Treasury ensure that a relief is the most effective and fair lever by which to provide that support.

“8. To deliver the national plan to the grassroots effectively, Sport England should improve its funding and support for organisations delivering to underrepresented groups by implementing bespoke funding timelines for targeted interventions to allow programmes to become embedded and sustainable. Sport England should also provide ringfenced financial support for local authorities and metro mayors to implement concessions for access to facilities. (Paragraph 82)”

The Government agrees with the principle of the recommendation and will continue to work with Sport England to review and improve funding delivery models as is already happening under their strategy *‘Uniting the Movement’*. It is vital that funding delivery for grassroots sport enables support to reach those who need it most, and that that funding is sustained in the long term. Sport England has acknowledged in its *‘Uniting the Movement’* strategy that new and different ways of distributing funding could help to make sure that funding reaches those who have not found Sport England resources accessible in the past. This includes working through partners who have a more direct connection into those communities which remain under-represented; a model which has already had notable success through Sport England’s Tackling Inequalities Fund and now their Together Fund.

Sport England set out in its 2022-25 Implementation Plan that it will focus its investment and resources on the communities that need it most, and has committed to creating a simple, single point of entry for available funding, replacing separate application processes. This approach should make it simpler for under-represented communities and those that work most closely with them to access the right forms of investment.

Uniting the Movement is a ten-year strategy, providing the opportunity for Sport England to make longer-term investments into building sport & physical activity providers’ capacity and capability to tackle inequalities and under-representation. Sport England will also develop a free set of resources for anyone who is contributing to – or wants to contribute to – Uniting the Movement, with the aim of helping people and organisations to access more support to tackle local challenges.

Through the revised Sport Strategy, the Government will work with Sport England and other partners to understand the issues and barriers to getting active that people face, and coming together to develop local solutions. Local authorities are responsible for determining how they can best serve those in their community who would benefit from concessionary pricing for access to facilities. Sport England does not have sufficient resources to ringfence funding at such scale, without significant consequences to the wider sport and physical activity ecosystem.

Sport England provides guidance to local authorities on leisure operating service specifications to support councils to achieve positive community outcomes and address inequalities whilst delivering a financially sustainable service.

Using data to improve access to sport and recreation

“9. We do not have full confidence in data currently collected and do not believe there is a suitable evidence base for effective monitoring and evaluation. While we recommend keeping the five priority outcomes from Sporting Future for the national plan, we agree with BASES on the need for a Physical Activity Observatory to act as a single point for independent analysis of data, evidence and practice related to physical activity for the sector. The Observatory would be responsible for developing objective and robust measures in collaboration with public and private sector partners, and collecting and analysing non-sensitive data from public and private sector. (Paragraph 101)

10. The new Physical Activity Observatory should seek to collect data consistently and regularly from publicly funded organisations. To do this, it should develop a standard approach for collecting non-personalised data that will provide a clearer picture of how and when people exercise and support efforts to improve access to facilities. Sport England should make funding to organisations contingent on them providing information for the Open Data initiative. (Paragraph 102)”

The Government agrees with the Committee that more work is needed to improve the quality of data for funding and decision making. Good quality data is crucial in monitoring and evaluating the impact of Government interventions in grassroots sport. As part of our work on a new Government Sport Strategy, we will be looking at what more we can do on data and evidence gathering to better monitor activity levels and inform future policy in real time, and to understand the impact that funding decisions have. Only by doing so can we expect to make a tangible change to stubborn inactivity levels in this country.

Sport England’s Active Lives surveys provide established and robust approaches to monitoring that provide a true, accurate and reliable reflection of trends and patterns in sport and physical activity at a population level. Both the Active Lives Adult and Children and Young People surveys use probability sampling methods: the best approach to achieve a representative sample and sampling frames, and provide excellent coverage of the populations of interest. These data sources provide an accurate yearly assessment, but we will continue to work with Sport England, as set out in their *‘Uniting the Movement Strategy’* and others to go beyond Active Lives data with innovative approaches.

Chapter 3: PRINCIPLES UNDERPINNING THE NATIONAL PLAN

Physical literacy

“11. Improving physical literacy must be a key principle at the heart of a national plan. Although the focus on teaching physical literacy must be directed toward children and young people through PE and school sport, it will also be crucial to ensure that opportunities to develop confidence and a love of movement are available to people of all ages and backgrounds. (Paragraph 108)

21. We believe that the physical literacy of children should be valued as highly as their literacy and numeracy. To this end, the Department for Education must designate PE as a core subject across all key stages to ensure that it receives adequate time and resource. The Department for Education must establish expected standards for the delivery of PE and school sport. The quality and delivery of PE and school sport must be assessed during Ofsted inspections of schools. (Paragraph 222)”

The Government agrees that physical literacy should be a key principle for any national plan for sport, and it will remain a focus for school sport, but we do not currently plan to designate PE as a core subject. We know that the greater children’s physical literacy, the more active they are likely to be, and in turn that they report improved wellbeing over and above their less active peers. We also know that active children do better at school in attainment and achievement. The Government wants all children to benefit from being active and to enjoy doing so. School sport and supporting children and young people to be active will be a core part of the Government’s new Sport Strategy. We know that getting this right is crucial to tackling inactivity across the country.

PE as a subject is central to giving all children and young people the grounding they need for lifelong enjoyment of physical activity and sport. The Government is committed to seeing further improvements in the provision of PE, school sport and physical activity. This commitment is clear in the 2019 manifesto pledges to invest in primary school PE teaching and ensure that it is being properly delivered, and to promote physical literacy and competitive sport. These commitments have become even more important in the light of the impact of the covid-19 pandemic on children and young people’s physical activity, as evidenced in the Active Lives Children and Young People survey data.

PE already has a strong place in curriculum frameworks. Currently PE is the only foundation subject compulsory at all four national curriculum key stages, regardless of which examinations pupils are taking. Schools are free to deliver a diverse and challenging PE curriculum that suits the needs of all their pupils. Academies and free schools are not required to follow the national curriculum but must provide a broad and balanced curriculum.

A 2017 Teacher Voice omnibus survey found that 30% of primary school teachers responded that they taught PE as a specific subject for more than two hours each week. The survey also reported that the average time spent teaching PE was 90 minutes per week. This is the third highest average teaching time for any subject other than English and Maths (average 300 minutes as subject-specific lessons, each week).

While the Government does not have any plans at present to change the status of PE, we recognise the need to take further action to ensure it is delivered well and support the structured development of physical literacy for all children and young people. That is why the Government announced in

October nearly £30 million a year to improve the teaching of PE at primary school, as well as to improve and open up school sport facilities. More details on how this funding will be used to improve the teaching of PE at primary school will be published in due course and form an important part of the update to the School Sport and Activity Action Plan.

Ofsted does not inspect individual curriculum subjects, but there is a statutory requirement on inspectors to consider how schools' support pupils' personal development and help them to know how to keep physically and mentally healthy. Inspectors will consider the teaching and the quality of PE and sport pupils undertake.

Accessibility and availability of facilities and spaces

“12. Inactivity rates among some groups remain stubbornly high and progress to tackle this problem has been disappointing. The Government must utilise the new funding and delivery mechanisms developed through the national plan to tackle these stubborn inequalities. This must include assuring and ensuring that disabled people will not be penalised for being active by the benefits system. (Paragraph 136)”

Whilst we were seeing steady progress to reduce inactivity pre-pandemic, the Government agrees that inactivity rates remain stubbornly high, and will tackle this as a priority in our new Sport Strategy. We agree that tackling inequalities and reviewing funding and delivery mechanisms are essential to giving everyone the opportunity to be active. It is also a key element of Sport England's 10 year strategy Uniting the Movement, which emphasises the importance of increasing physical activity rates for underrepresented groups.

The new Government Sport Strategy presents an opportunity to set out the Government's future ambitions for the sector, to rebuild from the pandemic and address those structural weaknesses that the pandemic has highlighted. This gives us an opportunity to be more focused on the areas where there is opportunity to make the most significant impact and drive change where it is most needed. With national attention on the importance of physical and mental health, the strategy will leverage cross-Government action to drive participation in sport and physical activity to drive a step change in activity levels across the country as we recover from the pandemic. We want to address the participation challenge and target those people who are less physically active, whether that be people with disabilities, or ethnic minority groups. The Government wants to tackle the overarching barriers to participation, including accessibility and attitudes towards sport, which affect different groups of people in different ways. For some groups these barriers can compound to lead to disproportionate impact on their activity levels.

Part of this includes supporting disabled people to be more active. The 2019 UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines sets out the scientific evidence for the benefits of physical activity and provides recommendations on physical activity for people across the life course. This includes a specific set of physical activity guidelines for disabled adults. More recently, a review of evidence led by the Faculty of Sport and Exercise Medicine, enabled the development of a consensus statement, which supports that physical activity has an important role to play in preventing and treating many conditions and that, for most people with long-term conditions, the benefits outweigh the risks. Both help to enable action across the sector, including for instance the 'We are Undefeatable' campaign to better support and enable disabled people and people living with long term conditions to live more active lives.

As part of this Sport England launched the next phase of its Together Fund in October 2021. They have committed a further £20million to targeting underrepresented groups, including lower socio-economic groups, culturally diverse communities, disabled people and people with long-term health conditions whose physical activity levels were disproportionately impacted during the pandemic.

Specifically, on the impact of activity on a disabled person's benefits; Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is intended as a contribution towards the extra costs faced by people with a long-term health condition or disability. PIP is assessed on the basis of needs arising from a long-term health condition or disability rather than the health condition or disability itself. Participation in sport/treatment/therapy is, of itself, not an indication of needs arising. The Government wants disabled individuals to take every opportunity to participate in sport as we know that can improve their health, wellbeing and their overall independence. The Government always wants to ensure that disabled individuals get the level of support they need, but, when the total number of individuals in need reduces it is only right that the level of support in PIP is reduced to match those needs.

The Government wants to ensure that people who may be able to work in the future are given the right help to do so and those who cannot continue to receive comprehensive support. The premise of the Work Capability Assessment (WCA), which determines eligibility to Employment and Support Allowance, and the additional health-related amount of Universal Credit, is that eligibility should not be based on a person's condition, but rather on the way that condition limits their ability to function.

As part of the WCA, in order to help determine how a person's condition(s) affects their functional ability, the assessor is required to explore with and obtain a factual account of how the claimant spends their typical day. The fact that an individual participates in physical activity will not of itself determine the outcome of the assessment. The role of the assessor, and the DWP decision maker, is to consider all of the evidence gathered as to how that person's disability or health condition – be it physical, mental, cognitive or a combination – impacts on their capability for work. By taking account of developments in healthcare, modern workplaces, changing attitudes and flexible working arrangements, the WCA focuses on what people can do, as well as identifying what they cannot.

“13. The Government must also conduct an audit and develop a clear, fully costed national facilities strategy for pitches, leisure facilities, swimming pools, parks and outdoor spaces. This strategy should be created jointly with local authorities. The strategy need not duplicate the Football Foundation's facilities plan for football and artificial football pitches. Instead, it will complete the picture of what each local authority needs to ensure that a full range of high-quality facilities and spaces are available and easily accessible for everyone. (Paragraph 137)”

The Government recognises that access to good quality facilities is critical to increasing participation in sport and physical activity, which is why we have invested heavily in facilities in recent years. We agree that it is important to have a clear picture of facility provision across the country, and we will be looking at how we can improve that picture as part of our new strategy.

At the recent Spending Review, the Government announced £205 million of funding to build or transform up to 8,000 state-of-the-art community football pitches and multi-use sports facilities across the UK. This is in addition to £25 million for new community football pitches announced in 2021. The Government also announced nearly £30 million for improving and opening up school sport facilities in England as well as to improve the teaching of Physical Education at primary school. This was in addition to a £30 million package to renovate 4,500 park tennis courts across the country.

Sport England's Active Places provides a rolling audit of sport and leisure facilities across the country, with the data used to help local authorities consider their facility stock alongside the Strategic Outcomes Planning Guidance, with subsequent assessments and strategies developed as required.

Sport England will continue to work with the Government to ensure that local assessments of need continue to underpin local plans. This is important to ensure there is certainty for new and upgraded sports facilities and that funding to support their development can be secured via the Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 agreements.

“14. Local communities, leisure trusts, local clubs, schools, colleges and other higher education institutions with sport and leisure facilities, charities, and social and voluntary enterprises delivering sport and recreation will need to be consulted on the audit and plans resulting from the facilities strategy that pertain to their local area. This includes design and planning of future facilities to ensure that they are accessible to local communities and provide a welcoming and inclusive environment. (Paragraph 138)”

The Government agrees on the importance of collaboration at the local level to improve access to sports facilities. We will look at how we can improve collaboration in this area as part of the work on our revised Sport Strategy. Sport England would welcome broad engagement of asset owners or the organisations who are responsible for service delivery in any audit and national facilities strategy; integrated care systems (ICSs) are another key stakeholder here.

Sport England's Strategic Outcomes Planning Guidance supports local authorities to consider the purpose and vision for any facility investment, and to identify the planned provision and the associated community outcomes which are desired. This helps to engage communities by understanding the barriers to participation that exist and the changing needs of communities.

Tackling discrimination

“15. Discrimination comes in many forms and it is always unacceptable. As part of the national plan the Minister for Sport, Health and Wellbeing will need to take steps, together with Sport England and UK Sport funded bodies and other key stakeholders, to ensure there is a safe environment for participants in sport and recreation and to raise awareness of the channels through which complaints can be made and how participants can seek support. (Paragraph 148)

The Government agrees with the fundamental point here and thinks it is important to reiterate it. There is no place for racism, sexism, homophobia or any other kind of discrimination in sport.”

The Government will continue to work closely with partners in the sector including arm's length bodies, UK Sport and Sport England, and national governing bodies, as well as sporting organisations to ensure that discrimination is tackled at all levels of sport from grassroots, through to elite and workforce.

As part of our work on a revised Sport Strategy, the Government will work with UK Sport and Sport England to review the current processes and channels for complaint handling and dispute resolution in both elite and grassroots sport.

“16. To tackle abuse on social media platforms the Government must hold social media companies to account for harmful content online. The forthcoming Online Safety Bill should ensure that social media platforms are regulated to prevent such harm with robust enforcement and significant sanctions. (Paragraph 149)”

The Government agrees that social media companies must be held accountable for harmful content that is shared on their platforms, which is a fundamental principle of the Online Safety Bill. The Online Safety Bill will usher in a new age of accountability for tech companies. For the first time, tech companies are going to be accountable to an independent regulator to keep their users, particularly children, safe.

Social media sites, websites, apps and other services which host user-generated content or allow people to talk to others online will have a duty of care to remove and limit the spread of illegal content such as child sexual abuse, terrorist material and suicide content. They will need to protect children from being exposed to harmful content or activity such as grooming, bullying and pornography.

Under the duty of care, all companies in scope will also be expected to address illegal online abuse. The largest social media sites, with the highest-risk features, will need to go further by setting and enforcing clear terms and conditions which explicitly state how they will handle content which is legal but could cause significant physical or psychological harm to adults. This may include, for example, content which promotes hateful extremism, or online abuse, such as antisemitic abuse, which does not meet the threshold of a criminal offence. This approach will help bridge the gap between what companies say is allowed to happen on their sites, and what happens in practice. Companies will be able to fulfil their duties by taking the recommended steps in the codes of practice that Ofcom will issue or by taking alternative action provided the outcome is as good or better. Companies will also be required to put in place effective and accessible mechanisms for users to report concerns and seek redress.

Platforms that fail to protect the public will need to answer to the regulator. Ofcom will have a suite of enforcement powers, including fines of up to £18m or 10% of qualifying annual global revenue (whichever is higher), asking companies to make improvements and business disruption measures (including applying to court to block access to services that cause serious harm). There will also be criminal sanctions for senior managers in tech companies if regulated providers do not take their responsibilities to Ofcom seriously.

Public messaging campaigns

“17. We support the positive role that public health campaigns like This Girl Can and We are Undefeatable play. We recommend that Sport England seeks robust evidence to better understand their impact and to learn lessons on how public health messaging can be made more effective, especially for underrepresented groups. This is the type of task that could be led by the Physical Activity Observatory. (Paragraph 156)”

The Government agrees that we should learn from, evaluate, and look to replicate, the success of campaigns like This Girl Can and We are Undefeatable.

Sport England's campaigns are regularly evaluated, providing a bank of evidence and insight about the impact of public health or physical activity campaigns, and how their impact could be increased. This evidence and insight is regularly shared with national and local partners and wider stakeholders, through a range of briefings, webinars, insight packs, meetings and conferences.

Sport England is now also developing a model that will help to use this evidence to make decisions about plans for future campaigns, as well as helping partners to understand their audiences, develop their engagement and create their own campaigns. In 2022 Sport England will be developing the next phase of This Girl Can, evolving Join the Movement to support audiences most impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, and continuing to work with Age UK to deliver the We Are Undefeatable campaign.

Tackling health inequalities - Social prescribing

“18. To improve social prescribing, local authorities, working with its health and wellbeing boards, local NHS Trusts and Clinical Commissioning Groups, must ensure that coordination and quality of social prescribing is enhanced. This must include monitoring and evaluating interventions to ensure that social prescribing is reaching those in need and achieving positive health and wellbeing outcomes. Local clinical commissioning groups should consider the development of a local register of organisations suitable for social prescribing to provide assurance to medical practitioners.”

The Government agrees that local authorities are well placed to support local communities, including people currently inactive and in underserved groups, to move more. The Government is committed to enhancing social prescribing and extended social prescribing across the NHS and expanded the National Academy for Social Prescribing (NASP) in order to support this. We have committed an additional £6 million in grant funding for the Academy across 2021/22 and 2022/23.

We agree that coordination is vital and as part of a whole systems approach OHID are working with Local Authorities and NHSE&I to develop an improved understanding of the role and impact of physical activity. This approach supports the management and helps prevention of many long- term conditions including coronary heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, cancer, obesity, mental health conditions and musculoskeletal conditions. This coordinated approach is being undertaken through the Moving Healthcare Professional Programme which is a partnership between OHID and Sport England to empower healthcare professionals to embed the promotion of physical activity within their daily practice.

There is definitely a need at a local level to develop improved mapping of the physical activity options available for signposting. NASP is working with Sport England, National Active Partnership team and Natural England to explore the development of local provider consortiums in which physical activity, sport and green providers come together with medical practitioners and social prescribers to co-create supportive pathways to enable clients to move effortlessly from point of referral to providers. NASP is also working with UK Active to identify resources required by fitness and leisure providers to embed social prescribing into their work; and with the English Football League to identify opportunities for community football trusts to connect effectively to the health system through social prescribing. We agree that interventions should be evaluated, NASP will publish an evidence review

on physical activity and social prescribing in the coming months, as well as reviews of the economic impact of social prescribing, funding models, outcomes and inequalities.

Sport for development in criminal justice settings

“19. Sport for development can turn people’s lives around. In formulating the national plan, the Minister for Sport, Health and Wellbeing must work with the Ministry of Justice to review the role of sport for development in communities and criminal justice settings. It should consider how sport and physical activity opportunities can best be resourced and deployed to improve outcomes for those who stand to benefit most from sport for development programmes in our communities and those serving custodial sentences, and how these outcomes can best be measured. (Paragraph 182)”

The Government agrees that sport has the power to change lives and this coordination is already taking place across Government. Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) are leading the Government's work to develop a 'Theory of Change' and Sports Strategy that will build on the positive work already being undertaken in prisons. For the first time, it will target the positive impact that sport and physical activity can have, not just on health and well-being, but also engagement and motivation for people in prison and on probation. This evidence-based approach will underpin the development of services that are accessible to individuals serving sentences in custody and the community and support those transitioning from custody back into the community to aid their ongoing resettlement. The implementation of an Effective Practice Sports Panel to review and support the development of PE based interventions is now in place to build an evidence hub and route for interventions to be evaluated through the national research committee. This work will align with cross-government priorities around sport and well-being and the overarching aims of our revised Sport Strategy.

The Government engages with a number of sport development activities, including the APPG on Sport in The Criminal Justice System. The APPG is the central, constructive, cross-party voice in parliament that promotes sport-based interventions and physical activity as effective tools for diversion, prevention of crime and the rehabilitation of individuals within the Criminal Justice System. In November 2021, a Taskforce on Physical Activity and Sport in the Criminal Justice System was established with the support of HMPPS, Alliance of Sport, NHS England and NHS Improvement. By May 2022, the Taskforce aims to launch a plan and vision for how physical activity and sport sectors can work more effectively with the Criminal Justice System.

Chapter 4: INSTILLING A LIFE-LONG HABIT OF SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

PE and School Sport

“22. We are disappointed and alarmed to hear that some primary school teachers are entering the profession with only a few hours’ training in delivering PE lessons and physical activity. The Government must work with teacher training providers to ensure adequate time is allocated in teacher training courses to build knowledge and confidence in the delivery of PE, and to assess trainee teachers’ understanding of physical literacy. (Paragraph 223)”

The Government recognises the importance of ensuring that teachers have received adequate training ahead of entering the profession. Evidence shows that teacher quality is the most important factor within school in improving outcomes for children and young people, and reforms to teacher training and early career support are key to the government’s plans to improve school standards for all.

It is for this reason that in November 2019, we published the Initial Teacher Training (ITT) Core Content Framework (CCF). The CCF sets out a minimum entitlement of fundamental knowledge and skills that all trainees need, so they can enter the profession in the best position possible to enter the profession and effectively teach and support all children.

The framework is universal, and it remains the responsibility of ITT providers to design curricula appropriate for the subject, phase and age range that trainees will be teaching.

ITT courses must be designed so that teacher trainees can demonstrate that they meet all of the Teachers’ Standards at the appropriate level. The Standards set out the key elements of effective teaching and the minimum expectations for the professional practice and conduct of teachers. In order to be awarded Qualified Teacher Status, trainees must satisfy the Standards, including standard 3, “Demonstrate Good Subject and Curriculum Knowledge”. Standard 3 is clear that all qualified teachers must have a “secure knowledge of the relevant subject(s) and curriculum areas”, which would include PE for primary teachers.

We have recently undertaken an ITT Review¹. The aim of the Review was to ensure all ITT is of the highest possible quality, in line with the CCF. The Review’s report was published on 5 July, 2021, along with a public consultation. The Government response to the Review was published on 1 December, 2021. This fully considers views from the consultation and wider stakeholder engagement, and balances these against the ambition to drive up the quality and consistency of ITT provision across the country.

Ofsted will continue to inspect ITT provision. Their new inspection framework (published in June 2020) will scrutinise course curricula and delivery to ensure that all trainees are getting the training they are entitled to. DfE are also implementing plans for Ofsted to move from a 6-year to a 3-year inspection cycle from January 2025.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/initial-teacher-training-itt-market-review/initial-teacher-training-itt-market-review-overview>

Making sport and physical activity fun and enjoyable

“20. Sport and physical activity, both inside school and outside school settings, need to be fun and engaging. Where possible schools should allow children the choice of what sort of activity they would like to take part in including the option to take part in non-competitive activities. (Paragraph 190)

23. Schools should always provide pupils from all backgrounds and abilities with a safe environment where they can feel comfortable and free from judgement or criticism when exploring sport and recreation activities. When reviewing School Sport and Activity Action Plan, the Department for Education should include guidance for schools to ensure that all pupils can try a wide range of sports and activities. Guidance should also be provided to schools to support the participation of children and young disabled people. (Paragraph 224)”

The Government agrees with the principle of the Committee's recommendations; that all children should have the opportunity to participate in sport and physical activity in ways that they find fun and engaging. This principle will be central to our work on a revised Sport Strategy and the update to our School Sport and Activity Action Plan. A positive experience of sport and physical activity at a young age can create a lifelong habit of participation. It is important that all children have the opportunity to engage in sport and physical activity in a way that interests them. We want all schools to understand the importance of PE, sport and physical activity in keeping children healthy and the positive impact it can have on a child's health and wellbeing.

That is why the cross-Government School Sport and Activity Action Plan (2019) includes a key ambition that “all sport and physical activity provision for children and young people is designed around the principles of physical literacy, focuses on fun and enjoyment and aims to reach the least active.”

Through the plan we have delivered a number of initiatives that aim to engage the least active and broaden the range of activities available to children and young people, including non-competitive opportunities. The Department for Education is funding a new 3 year programme through Sport Leaders Qualifications to increase opportunities and choice for girls to engage in sport. Through this programme nearly 9,000 girls will have new opportunities to take part in competitive sport and 600 girls in sport leadership.

Sport England has provided £1.5 million of National Lottery funding for a new digital schools' platform, designed to reach girls who have disengaged from PE. Co-created with teenage girls, Studio You gives PE teachers across England access to a free digital library of alternative workouts designed to engage girls with physical activity, by inspiring them to feel more confident in a school PE setting. Sessions focus on activities that teenage girls in Sport England's focus groups found appealing, including yoga, boxing, barreFit and Pilates.

The Government is committed to increasing opportunities for children to take part in competitive sport. The School Games has provided a valuable platform for this, with 2.4 million participation opportunities being provided across inter and intra school level events in academic year 2018/19 (prior to COVID-19). In line with this, the Government has confirmed funding for School Games Organisers for the full 2021/2022 academic year. DCMS and DHSC are considering arrangements for the School Games Organisers funding for the 2022-23 academic year and beyond. We are aware of the importance of providing schools with sufficient notice of future funding and will confirm the position as early as possible. The Government is also exploring options to directly link the School

Games and the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth School Games, to increase engagement and participation in School Games events.

The Government remains committed to the ambitions we set out in the School Sport and Activity Action Plan and we will publish an update to the plan in 2022. This update will not only recover ground lost during COVID-19 restrictions, but will boost momentum to deliver an action plan for all pupils regardless of background. The update will be backed by nearly £30m a year to improve the teaching of physical education at primary school and open school sport facilities outside of the school day.

Accountability of PE and Sport Premium spending

“24. The Department for Education must guarantee funding for the PESP for the long-term, ensuring that it is maintained at least at the current amount of £320 million each year, and ensure that schools are aware of their allocated funding well in advance of the forthcoming academic year to ensure that they can plan for effective use of the funding.

25. The Department for Education must provide schools with adequate guidance for finding qualified external providers of sports coaching and how to utilise them effectively to build teacher confidence in delivering sport offers. The Department for Education must develop an accreditation scheme for external providers who deliver sport in schools to improve accountability of external provision and ensure that the highest safeguarding standards are maintained.

26. The Department for Education needs to monitor PESP spending and outcomes better to ensure it is getting value for money. Failures by schools to publish their PESP spending and outcomes must be investigated by the Department for Education.”

The Government recognises the importance of providing schools with sufficient notice of future funding. The Department for Education is currently considering arrangements for the Primary PE and sport premium for the 2022-23 academic year and beyond. We are aware of the importance of providing schools with sufficient notice of future funding and will confirm the position as early as possible.

All guidance issued by the Department regarding the PE and sport premium is developed and updated using stakeholder and school insights to ensure that the content is tailored to the schools and teachers who will be using the guidance. The guidance also signposts other organisations, such as UK Coaching, that can provide further advice/support on this matter, and has linked to useful external resources and guidance.

Ultimately schools are accountable for their spending and any expenditure should be closely monitored and scrutinised by Boards of Governors, this would include meeting the conditions for PE and sport premium spending. Publication of schools’ online reporting of the PE and sport premium will be monitored by DfE. We will sample a number of schools in each local authority to ensure what they have published on their use of the funding and their swimming attainment meets reporting requirements.

Being active throughout the day

“27. The Department for Education must review the untapped potential for physical activity to be embedded in the school day, including incorporating physical activity into lessons beyond PE. (Paragraph 255)”

The Government agrees that schools should not look to PE lessons alone to provide physical activity for pupils, but should explore options like after-school clubs, lunchtime sports clubs, activities such as active miles, and building in activity to classroom lessons. The update to the action plan will continue to explore ways in which we can support schools to deliver 30 active minutes for pupils.

To support this goal and encourage active travel for children, the Government has confirmed the appointment of Chris Boardman MBE as the first Active Travel Commissioner for England. He will take the helm on an interim basis to spearhead the establishment of Active Travel England.

“28. To support children to be active, the Minister for Sport, Health and Wellbeing must work with the Department for Education to launch a campaign to encourage and inspire parents to be active with their children outside of school. (Paragraph 256)”

The Government recognises the importance of encouraging children to be active both during and outside of the school day, as well as the role that parental attitudes play in influencing this. We will be looking at this as part of our new Sport Strategy. We will also be looking at how we can build on the 2021 Rediscover Summer campaign that aimed to encourage children to participate in activities, including sport, through the summer holidays.

Subject to partner funding, OHID plans to continue the successful 10 Minute Shake Up campaign over the 2022 school summer holidays. Since 2014, the 10 Minute Shake Up campaign, in partnership with Disney and supported by Sport England, has increased activity levels by inspiring children to get active. The campaign breaks down the recommended hour of daily activity into short bursts by promoting a wide range of children's games inspired by Disney, Pixar and Marvel, and also encourages children to explore sports they might like via the Better Health website. Based on the 2019 10 Minute Shake Up campaign audience research, 58% of Mums were aware of the campaign, and an estimated 2.35 million children aged 3-11 took part. Of those taking part, 79% agreed it made their children more physically active as a result.

Opening school facilities

“29. Some sports and local clubs have established positive partnerships with schools, but there is considerably more potential for schools and local sports clubs to connect and work together to encourage more participation in grassroots sport. (Paragraph 273)

30. The Department for Education must work with NGBs to support the delivery of tuition and sport offers by local clubs. This can establish links between schools and wider community and grassroots sport and physical activity opportunities for children and young people. (Paragraph 274)

31. We are encouraged by the efforts made to support the opening of school sport facilities to their communities. However, we do not believe that progress is being made swiftly enough in this area and there remains significant untapped potential which restricts the availability of sport facilities to community sport clubs and the wider population. (Paragraph 275)

32. We believe that with the right support, schools can open their facilities to local communities. The Minister for Sport, Health and Wellbeing will need to work closely with the Department for Education, local authorities and Active Partnerships, including through the Strategic Forum, to identify, engage with and support schools and other educational institutions, such as colleges, to open their facilities to local clubs and their communities. (Paragraph 276)”

The Government is committed to supporting the opening of school sport facilities beyond the school day, to provide more opportunities for pupils and communities to play sport and be physically active. Building on the work to date will be a key part of our revised Sport Strategy and a continued focus in the update to our School Sport and Activity Action Plan.

We know that there are some excellent examples of schools having established partnerships with National Governing Bodies of Sport and local sports providers. Equally we recognise that some schools may have difficulty finding out what activities and support are available and creating new relationships with sports providers. Since October 2019, the Department for Education has provided £11.7 million to schools via Sport England and county level Active Partnerships to support schools to open their school sport facilities outside of the school day and to create new partnerships with local sports organisations and National Governing Bodies of Sport.

The Department for Education has worked with National Governing Bodies of Sport to deliver sports offers and increase opportunities for young people to be physically active. Rediscover Summer was launched in Summer 2021 to provide a programme of enrichment activities and events for young people across the country with a themed week focused on sport and getting children and young people active. The Government will continue to work with National Governing Bodies of Sport through the School Sport and Activity Action Plan sector forum. This will include considering how best to engage National Governing Bodies of Sport in the next phase of activity to support schools to open their sports facilities outside of the school day.

The Government recognises that there is more potential to connect schools and local sports clubs and open school sport facilities to communities. That is why in October 2021 we announced that we would invest nearly £30 million extra a year for three years to improve and open school sport facilities and improve teaching of PE in primary schools. This will include further funding to support schools to open their sport facilities to their local community and local sports clubs. This substantial longer-term investment will improve access to school sports facilities across all areas in England. It will allow pupils to benefit from having greater access and opportunity to take part in sporting activities after school, at weekends and during holidays in a familiar and safe location. It will also create a significant change in how schools use their sports facilities and increase opportunities for the wider community to use facilities to engage in physical activity. The Government is currently considering how to manage funding for this next phase of opening school sports facilities, with the aim of this starting in the 2022/23 academic year.

Chapter 5: ENABLING ACTIVE LIFESTYLES

Active travel

“33. A national plan must take a broad, whole system approach so that activity can be embedded in all aspects of our everyday life including work, leisure time, health and travel. At the same time, a one-size fits all approach will not work. Funding needs to be distributed to the local, grassroots level with power residing in local authorities, metro mayors and communities to develop place-based approaches. (Paragraph 284)

34. The Government’s ‘levelling up’ agenda provides an opportunity to invest in active travel infrastructure and improve the planning and design of our buildings, houses and public spaces to increase physical activity. We must move away from disconnected systems that result in car dependency and which make it less convenient for people to be active in their everyday life. This also includes improving access to parks, rights of way, rivers and lakes, coastal paths and national parks. (Paragraph 303)”

The Government agrees that a national plan for sport must take a broad, whole system approach. Our work on a revised Sport Strategy will look to embed physical activity across all aspects of daily life. Levelling up is at the heart of the Government’s agenda. Levelling up means empowering local leaders and communities to drive real change; boosting living standards, particularly where they are lower; spreading opportunity and improving public services, particularly where they are weaker; and restoring local pride across the UK. The Government will publish a White Paper that builds on existing action being taken across Government, setting out a new policy regime that will drive change for years to come. We want people across places to feel that they can get on in life without leaving their local area; we want to restore pride in underperforming places across the country; and we want people in these places once again to have confidence that the Government is delivering their economic and social priorities through boosting living standards and improving public services.

The Autumn Budget and Spending Review for 2021 set out how we will level up opportunities as we build back better from the pandemic. This includes a major boost to investment in skills training, the first £1.7 billion allocation from the Levelling Up Fund, launching of the over £2.6 billion UK Shared Prosperity Fund and £6.9 billion to boost local transport networks outside of London.

Despite the challenges of COVID-19, ensuring that the whole of the UK benefits from the same opportunities remains central to the government’s agenda. That is why the Prime Minister set out, in his levelling up speech on 15 July 2021, the government’s intention to take a flexible approach to devolution, so that local leaders in our historic towns and counties are given the tools to make things happen for their communities. Further detail on County Deals will be included in the Levelling Up White Paper. County Deals will enable local partners to come together with powers exercised at the right level to make a difference for local communities. In return for greater control, we will expect improvements in governance, efficiency and service delivery. Strong local leadership will be fundamental for all devolution deals. Whilst high-profile, directly elected individual leaders (such as a mayor) can provide a single point of accountability to local citizens and can act as a champion for their area, we will consider other governance proposals that increase stability and strengthen local leadership. This approach will include sport as part of a broader culture offer.

In Summer 2020 the Prime Minister launched ambitious plans to boost walking and cycling in England, with a vision for half of all journeys in towns and cities to be walked or cycled by 2030

(currently 32% of all journeys are walked and 3% are cycled). This commitment is backed with £2 billion of investment over five years.

One of the commitments within the Prime Minister's cycling and walking plan (Gear Change) was to establish a new body, Active Travel England, which in addition to holding the walking and cycling budget will approve and inspect schemes and become a statutory consultee within the spatial planning system, focusing initially on planning applications and development management. The creation of ATE was confirmed on 24 January 2022 and Chris Boardman MBE has been appointed as the first Active Travel Commissioner for England. He will take the helm on an interim basis to spearhead the establishment of ATE in combination with his role as the Chair of Sport England. This underlines this government's ongoing commitment to boosting cycling and walking and to building back greener from the pandemic.

“35. The Minister for Sport, Health and Wellbeing will need to work with Defra, local authorities and other stakeholders, including private landowners, to improve public access to the countryside, using opportunities such as the Environment Land Management Schemes to incentivise and improve maintenance, signage, facilities, parking and public transport options. (Paragraph 304)”

The Government agrees that improving access to the countryside and green space is key to encouraging more people to get active outdoors. In his Written Ministerial Statement of 2 December 2021, the Secretary of State for the Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs set out the high-level environmental priorities for Defra's farming programme. Defra will continue to pay for heritage, access and engagement through existing schemes although these do not currently include schemes to promote access to (currently unregulated) inland waterways (i.e. those which are not currently managed by a navigation authority such as the Environment Agency, Broads Authority or Canal and River Trust).

Defra also has a range of policies and projects beyond Environmental Land Management schemes which aim to increase access to the countryside for all. For example, the Green Recovery Challenge Fund, which has "connecting people with nature" as one of its three objectives, has recently awarded £80 million to nature-based projects across England to support a green recovery from Covid-19. Work is continuing to complete the England Coast Path, with 70% of the route now either open or with establishment works underway, and we are also working on a proposal to create a new National Trail across the North of England. We have also launched the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme which focuses on the key challenges facing farmers in Protected Landscapes. Farmers can apply for funding for projects, including those that promote access and help to capitalise on the many social and financial benefits that visitors can provide.

Digital divide

“37. As part of the national plan, relevant Government departments must reach out to and work with the private sector and academia to develop, trial and roll out new evidence-based apps and use open data better. The priority must be finding new ways to engage and target underrepresented groups and to bring new audiences to physical activity. (Paragraph 326)”

The Government agrees with the committee on the need to open up data in relation to sport and physical activity participation. We will be looking at how we can do this as part of our revised Sport Strategy.

We will look to build on the work of the OpenActive programme, which has been run by Sport England and the Open Data Institute since 2016, to support providers in releasing their 'opportunity data' describing when and where physical activity opportunities take place. Sport England is currently finalising an additional 12-month extension to the ODI's work

Chapter 6: DUTY OF CARE AND SAFEGUARDING

“38. We are unimpressed by the Government’s assertion that progress on implementing recommendations from the independent review on Duty of Care in Sport was de-prioritised to redirect efforts to the Government pandemic response. Issues raised in the independent review have not gone away. The lack of progress on the implementation of an independent sports ombudsman, which pre-dates the outbreak of COVID-19, is unacceptable. (Paragraph 360)

39. We strongly recommend that the Minister for Sport, Health and Wellbeing proceeds with implementing the remaining recommendations in the independent review on Duty of Care in Sport, prioritising the establishment of an independent sports ombudsman with a remit to cover all bodies delivering sport regardless of whether they receive public funding. (Paragraph 361)

40. The Minister for Sport, Health and Wellbeing must work with Sport England and UK Sport to ensure that publicly funded bodies are dedicating sufficient resources and attention to uphold duty of care and safeguarding standards at all levels of their sports. (Paragraph 362)

44. The independent sports ombudsman should provide an avenue for grassroots and elite sportspeople to report mistreatment in their sport. NGBs must promote the independent sports ombudsman’s functions and how elite athletes can contact them once it has been established. (Paragraph 396)

46. Monitoring of what works for duty of care and safeguarding in the sector is insufficient. Monitoring and sharing good practice should form part of the role of the independent sports ombudsman. (Paragraph 405)”

The Government agrees that sports need to have robust safeguarding and duty of care policies in place, but believes that further consideration is needed on an independent ombudsman before a decision can be made. The Government is committed to ensuring that everyone can participate in sport in safe and secure environments, and that where allegations about inappropriate or harmful behaviour are made, these are taken seriously. Ultimately National Governing Bodies are responsible for safeguarding within their sports. The Government’s role is to set the right framework. We will continue to work closely with partners in the sector including arm’s length bodies, UK Sport and Sport England, and national governing bodies, as well as sporting organisations to ensure that duty of care and safeguarding are prioritised at all levels of sport from grassroots, through to elite and workforce. We will also closely consider how we can go further as part of our strategy refresh of Sporting Future.

The Government has discussed the recommendation for an independent sports ombudsman with the sport sector in detail and we continue to keep it under review. As part of our work on a revised Sport Strategy we are working with Sport England and UK Sport to explore the options for more independence in complaint handling and dispute resolution processes. This will build on the safeguarding case management pilots that Sport England has been leading and will include consideration of whether further measures to strengthen the integrity of sport are needed.

Since the independent review on Duty of Care in Sport was published, the Government has made progress in strengthening the framework of sports governance within the existing structures of the

sector. Through the terms and conditions of their funding agreements, all funded sports must meet a number of conditions in relation to safeguarding and duty of care. They must comply with the Code for Sports Governance, including the appointment of a lead director for welfare and safety. They must also have appropriate policies and procedures in place to ensure the safeguarding of children and adults at risk. They must comply with, maintain and embed the Standards for Safeguarding and Protecting Children in Sport for organisations working with children and young people and working towards and maintaining the Safeguarding Adults in Sport Framework for those organisations working with adults at risk.

The Government has also included sports organisations in the *'Local Safeguarding Partner (Relevant Agencies) (England) Regulations'* to reflect the importance of these organisations in safeguarding children. These regulations came into force in June 2018. We have also included explicit reference to the responsibilities of sports organisations in the statutory guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children* for the first time.

In March 2021 the Government introduced legislation to extend the definition of a 'position of trust' within the Sexual Offences Act 2003 to include sports coaches. The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill, currently before Parliament, marks a vital step in making our sports clubs more secure to young people, and has been strongly welcomed by sports governing bodies.

“41. We welcome the additional requirements in the revised Code for Sports Governance including for publicly funded bodies to appoint a Director responsible for welfare and sport safety. However, we are not convinced that this will be enough to shift the culture within publicly funded bodies that do not prioritise duty of care and safeguarding standards. We recommend that Sport England and UK Sport conduct and publish a review after 18 months which evaluates the impact of the revised Code to ensure that the ambitions for the updated Code are being delivered by funded bodies and NGBs, and that it is making a difference on the ground. (Paragraph 363)”

The Government agrees with this recommendation to evaluate the impact of the Code. Gathering information about the impact of the Code was a crucial piece of evidence helping to inform the review of the 2016 Code, and Sport England will continue to gather information about the impact of the revised Code as it is implemented.

The Code for Sports Governance has driven significant change since it was introduced, and we are confident it will continue to help drive progress in this area, alongside the range of other initiatives that Sport England is developing to support improved behaviours around welfare and safety across the sport and physical activity sector.

Following publication of the full revised Code in December 2021, Sport England has set the following timeframes for assessing compliance. Sport England is currently tendering for a supplier to support their partners to develop and deliver their Diversity and Inclusion Action Plans (DIAPs). Once this support is in place (anticipated April 2022) Sport England expects to agree partner DIAPs within 12 months (by April 2023). Once DIAPs are agreed, Sport England expects partners to have made meaningful and tangible progress against them within two years (by April 2025).

The Government will therefore review the effectiveness of changes to the Governance Code after this initial two year period of implementation.

“42. We would like to see stronger links and communication between bodies delivering sport, and the police and local authority children’s and adult safeguarding boards to ensure that crucial information is shared. There should be a representative from the sector, potentially from the local Active Partnership, who will act as a contact for safeguarding boards and the police to help them liaise with the sector. (Paragraph 373)”

The Government agrees that a strong link and communication between local safeguarding bodies is crucial to protecting children from harm. The Government has included sports organisations in the 'Local Safeguarding Partner (Relevant Agencies) (England) Regulations' to reflect the importance of these organisations in safeguarding children. These regulations came into force in June 2018. This means that the lead safeguarding partners in each local area can ask sports organisations and clubs to join their arrangements where they think it appropriate. Organisations that are asked to join the local safeguarding partnership then have a duty to cooperate.

The Government has also included explicit reference to the responsibilities of sports organisations in the 2018 update of the statutory guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children*. It highlights the role of sports clubs and community organisations in protecting children from harm, and that they should collaborate to work effectively with the safeguarding partners as required by any local safeguarding arrangement.

“43. Given the potential for abuse in sport and recreation settings, we recommend that the Minister for Sport, Health and Wellbeing consult and work with the sector to introduce mandatory reporting in sport and recreation settings. (Paragraph 374)”

The Government agrees on the importance of keeping children and young people safe in all settings. We will do what is necessary to protect our children and young people. However, the Government does not agree with this recommendation as we have looked at mandatory reporting and consulted on the issue before – this did not make the case for mandatory reporting in England.

The Government considered the evidence for and against introducing a mandatory reporting duty through the Reporting and Acting on Child Abuse and Neglect consultation in 2016.

The Government response² to the consultation, published in 2018, set out that the consultation responses, and other evidence considered, did not provide clear evidence to show that introducing a mandatory reporting duty (or a duty to act) would help to keep children safe.

As set out in the Government response, a mandatory reporting duty would bring with it a range of risks, including the impact on identifying abuse and neglect, on practitioners’ professional judgement, and for children’s outcomes. The Government’s imperative is to ensure that the right children get the right support and protection, at the right time. But even with an increase in referrals associated with mandatory reporting, this would not necessarily lead to an increase in subsequent engagement with children brought into the child protection system.

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/reporting-and-acting-on-child-abuse-and-neglect>

The Government believes that what would be most effective is improved information sharing, supported by better multi-agency working, better assessments, better decision making and better working with children at all stages of their engagement with the safeguarding system. This is at the heart of the Government's work on safeguarding, particularly focused around multi-agency cooperation and social work.

“47. The credibility of Sport England and UK Sport is undermined if the threat of financial sanctions is raised but not implemented. Sport England and UK Sport must follow through and remove funding from NGBs and other funded bodies which fail to meet required duty of care and safeguarding standards. (Paragraph 406)”

The Government agrees that sports which fail to meet the terms of their funding agreements must be held accountable. Through the terms and conditions of their funding agreements, all funded sports must meet a number of conditions in relation to safeguarding and duty of care. They must comply with the Code for Sports Governance, including the appointment of a lead director for welfare and safety. They must also have appropriate policies and procedures in place to ensure the safeguarding of children and adults at risk. They must comply with, maintain and embed the Standards for Safeguarding and Protecting Children in Sport for organisations working with children and young people and work towards and maintain the Safeguarding Adults in Sport Framework for those organisations working with adults at risk.

Where an organisation breaches the terms of its award agreement, the ultimate action available would be to terminate the agreement and to withdraw funding. This was the case in 2017 when Table Tennis England lost access to £9 million of public funding due to failure to comply with the conditions set out in the Code for Sports Governance. More recently, we have discussed the implications for funding for the ECB following the handling of allegations of racism, made by former player Azeem Rafiq.

Chapter 7: THE WORKFORCE

Careers in sport and recreation

“48. The sport and recreation workforce receives inadequate recognition. The contribution of the workforce in supporting a more active and healthy nation is fundamental to the success of the national plan. We urge the Department for Education to work with CIMSPA to review the state of apprenticeships and national qualifications which can support careers in the sector. The Government should publish its findings by the spring of 2023. (Paragraph 416)”

The Government agrees that the sporting workforce is vital to providing the opportunities for everyone to participate in sport and physical activity. All apprenticeship standards are designed directly by employers to ensure that they are high-quality and meet the skills needs of their sector, with apprentices being fully competent in a distinct occupational role on completion. The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (the Institute) is responsible for working with employers on the development and approval of these standards. They rely on employers identifying where they believe there is a genuine occupational gap not met by existing standards.

Where a gap has been identified, the Institute are ready to work with employers to fill that gap or update the standard. The occupational maps, which are owned and updated by the Institute, identifies a further 5 occupations suitable for apprenticeships, including 3 at degree level, should employers wish to develop them.

There are currently 8 apprenticeship standards available within the pathway that contains sport and recreation occupations: Leisure Team Member (Level 2), Community Activator Coach (Level 2), Community Sports and Health Officer (Level 3) and Sports Coach (Level 4), Personal Trainer (Level 3), Outdoor Activity Instructor (Level 3), Outdoor Learning specialist (Level 5) and Sporting Excellence Professional (Level 3).

Take up of the available standards is dependent on employer demand and vacancies.

Coaching and volunteering

“49. We urge Sport England to consider how funding it disseminates to NGBs and other bodies can be utilised to provide training and qualifications for the workforce to support their development, recognise their skills, and to equip them to deliver high-quality sport and recreation offers. (Paragraph 423)”

The Government agrees that efficient use of funding to upskill the sporting workforce is important to delivering a high-quality sport and recreation offer and Sport England is working on this. Sport England has two strategies focused upon developing the sport and physical activity sector’s coaching and professional workforce: Coaching in an Active Nation & Working in an Active Nation. Both detail actions aimed at improving training, qualifications and support for the sector’s workforce to help them to deliver high-quality sport and physical activity opportunities.

Sport England has invested £9 million into the Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA) over the past four years, to develop new professional standards for coaching and other key roles within the sport and physical activity sector. They are now working with

the majority of National Governing Bodies of sport (NGBs) to develop new training courses in line with these standards.

CIMSPA is also rolling out a new programme to ensure that coaches and other frontline sport and physical activity workers are regularly assessed, and can have their professional status clearly identified. We hope that this will lead to more coaches being designated as having 'Chartered' status.

Sport England has also invested £8 million into UK Coaching to rebuild the digital learning and development offer for sports coaches. This hosts a comprehensive suite of accredited training, including courses specifically focused on safeguarding and duty of care. In 2021, Sport England invested £5 million into the unique Retrain to Retain programme, to support the retraining and development of the sport and physical activity workforce which has been disproportionately affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

“50. We urge the Minister for Sport, Health and Wellbeing to appoint a ‘sport volunteers champion’ who works with the Minister and the sector to identify and help remove barriers, burdens and disincentives that volunteers face at the grassroots. (Paragraph 424)”

The Government recognises that sport is heavily reliant on volunteers, both at the grassroots level and in support of major events. We will look at the recommendation to appoint a ‘sports volunteer champion’ as part of our work on a new Sport Strategy. The contribution of the 6.2 million volunteers to sport is immense. It helps individuals get more active, benefits local communities, and it can be a very positive experience for the volunteers themselves.

Volunteering is a focus for Sport England’s new ten year strategy “Uniting the Movement”, published in January 2021. Sport England has invested over £20 million in volunteering between 2017-21. Sport England’s Volunteering Strategy seeks to increase the numbers of volunteers and increase diversity and seeks to understand and apply the insight around the volunteering experience.

The strategy seeks to ensure better quality, meaningful volunteering experiences. This includes investing up to £3 million in The Opportunity Fund to get more people from disadvantaged communities engaged in volunteering, and up to £3 million in The Potentials Fund in volunteering projects, which will benefit 10 - 20 year olds and their communities.

National register of coaches

“52. Sport England and UK Sport should continue to work closely with CIMSPA, UK Coaching and other relevant bodies to develop a national register of coaches to both enhance portability of qualifications and improve safeguarding, and commit to a date for its launch. (Paragraph 436)”

The Government agrees with this recommendation. Sport England, UK Sport and the Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA) are currently undertaking a project to consider the breadth of workforce governance within the sport and physical activity sector – the structures, systems and processes that shape the accountability and efficacy of the sector’s workforce, their norms and actions.

Having completed a research phase to assess the measures already in place across the sport and physical activity sector, other comparable sectors, and how successful each of these are, Sport England and CIMSPA have recently completed the second phase of a feasibility study designed to identify measures to improve participant safety and wellbeing. This includes considering, amongst other initiatives, a single registration process for coaches and other frontline workforce as we seek to improve the regulation of those working in sport and physical activity.

Later this year, Sport England will carry out a development phase to test and pilot each individual measure to assess which work most effectively, before refining each as required. Sport England recognises the need to act at pace here, however we must be confident that any interventions will drive the cultural and behavioural change required.

Improving diversity

“53. Workforce diversity surveys should be mandatory for tier 2 organisations, as well as tier 3 organisations as set out in the Code for Sports Governance. Data for each organisation should be made publicly available on a regular basis so that organisations are accountable. Larger NGBs and other bodies funded by Sport England and UK Sport should support their grassroots clubs in surveying its workforce, both paid and volunteers, to better understand those who help facilitate grassroots sport and recreation opportunities. (Paragraph 457)”

The Government agrees with the importance of work to improve workforce diversity and inclusion in sports organisations. However, we do not agree with the recommendation to mandate workforce diversity surveys for tier 2 and 3 organisations at this stage. The Government will work with Sport England and UK Sport to monitor the implementation of the newly revised version of the Code and its impact on diversity in sport.

The updated Code for Sport Governance includes a new requirement for funded bodies to have a ‘People Plan’ - consider their strategic plans for their people on at least an annual basis. Workforce diversity monitoring and actions to address workforce under-representation will be a part of these plans.

The revised Code for Sports Governance does not mandate workforce diversity surveys, but does include a requirement for funded partners to develop, deliver and publicly report against ambitious Diversity and Inclusion Action Plans (DIAPs). It will be important for sport and physical activity organisations to gather diversity data to help track and measure their progress, and Sport England is currently tendering for a supplier to support their partners to develop and deliver these plans – including support around the collection and monitoring of diversity data.

The revised Code also includes a new requirement with respect to setting, promoting and supporting the implementation of minimum good governance standards throughout an organisation’s structure or associated bodies, including with respect to diversity and inclusion. We are confident that this requirement, alongside other initiatives such as the Equality Standard, will help to ensure that relevant bodies support their local grassroots clubs to better understand their sport and physical activity workforce.

Sport England also commissioned a board diversity audit as part of our review of the Code for Sports Governance. This gathered data about diversity at board level from c.130 sport and physical activity partners. The full report is available on Sport England’s website.

In June 2021, Sport England and the other Home Nation Sport Councils published the findings of a detailed independent review into tackling racism and racial inequality in sport. One of the five focus areas emerging from the review was workforce data. Sport England is committed to work to improve how and where data is collected across the sport and physical activity workforce so that we can build a clearer picture of the inequalities that have been identified through the Tackling Racism and Racial Inequalities in Sport review.

“54. Whilst we welcome new requirements announced for the revised Code for Sports Governance, including Diversity and Inclusion Action Plans, Sport England and UK Sport should be more ambitious and set targets to improve board diversity for other underrepresented groups including ethnic minorities and disabled people. Failure to make progress with the targets should be met with financial sanctions. (Paragraph 458)”

The Government does not agree with the recommendation for UK Sport and Sport England to introduce diversity targets for boards at this stage. The Government will work with both organisations to monitor the implementation of the newly revised version of the Code and its impact on diversity in sport.

Sport England and UK Sport’s review of the Code for Sports Governance highlighted the need for more progress in improving diversity among organisations who deliver sport and physical activity, but also that this work had been significantly accelerated in recent years.

While targets have been an effective way of signalling that an issue is a priority, it has become clear that the culture and attitudes change that the Code has driven in recent years means that organisations are now far more likely to respond to positive opportunities to increase diversity and inclusion.

The Code Review found that the introduction of further targets at a generic level could risk leading to tokenistic representation and a very formulaic response to Board composition. So it was determined to not set universal targets within the revised Code, but to make sure that each organisation that Sport England/UK Sport fund has a robust and ambitious plan to increase their diversity of representation, and that Sport England/UK Sport would judge and measure them on that, depending on where their priorities lie.

It may be that organisations choose to set their own targets to improve diversity in their individual Diversity and Inclusion Action Plans (DIAPs). Sport England and UK Sport believe this to be a more sophisticated approach and one they are confident will have a significant impact. Sport England and UK Sport are investing in substantive support to ensure partners have access to guidance and expertise to help ensure their DIAPs are robust, ambitious, relevant and achievable.

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