



Ministry
of Justice

Government response to **A Sporting Chance**

An Independent Review of Sport
in Youth and Adult Prisons

Foreword to the government response by Edward Argar



As a nation we are inspired by the efforts of our sporting heroes, whether that's Georgia Hall's stunning victory in the British Open, Geraint Thomas' triumph in the Tour de France, or England's penalty shoot-out heroics in the World Cup. When we are inspired to get involved in organised sport, it brings people from all walks of life together – I am determined to incorporate that into our approach to rehabilitation.

We know that access to the gym and other sporting activities are hugely valued by and popular with offenders in custody. I pay tribute to our Physical Education Officers, and the coaches from sports clubs and community organisations who deliver programmes for young people in custody every day – from Leeds Rhinos mentoring vulnerable young people at Wetherby YOI, to Fulham Football Club and Saracens Rugby Club offering coaching qualifications at Feltham YOI.

Taking part in sport has obvious benefits for our physical health and wellbeing, but it also has an impact on our mental health and self-discipline. In schools, teachers notice that children taking part in the "Daily Mile" scheme not only show improvements in their fitness, they also show increases in their levels of concentration.

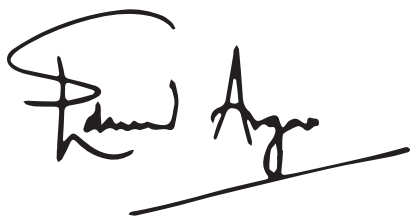
Sport on its own does not provide all the answers, but if it is harnessed in the right way then it can have transformative effects on the lives of young offenders. It can help them to realise their potential and recognise skills they never knew they had – like leadership, teamwork, communication and discipline.

Many of these young people will have had challenging educational experiences but a positive one with sport can give them the confidence to engage again with education; it can change their self-perception, helping them to see themselves as successful, talented and hard-working people. If we are to make rehabilitation really work, then this is a key step.

Emerging evidence from programmes being delivered in custody is building a picture of the rehabilitative value of physical activity. These programmes provide young people with access to positive role models, mentors and team-mates, as well as opportunities to gain qualifications to develop their own career in sport.

For former offender John McAvoy – now an endurance athlete garnering serious attention for his attempts to break the Iron Man world record – getting involved in sport whilst serving a prison sentence was life-changing and set him on a path away from crime. Whether or not offenders choose to pursue sport or coaching as a career themselves, the skills they learn enhance their prospects for getting jobs, increasing the likelihood that they will turn their backs on crime for good.

Alongside our programme of reform to youth custody, I believe the recommendations outlined in this report will support Governors to improve physical and mental wellbeing through sport, as well as enhancing the life chances of the children in our care. I would like to pay tribute to Professor Meek and to my predecessor, Dr Phillip Lee MP, for their contributions to this important work that I will now be taking forward.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Edward Argar', with a long horizontal line underneath it.

Edward Argar MP

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Ministry of Justice

August 2018

Ministry of Justice response to recommendations

1) Prisons should devise an integrated physical activity and wellbeing strategy.

HMPPS policy for the provision of physical activity in prison establishments in England and Wales, including Young Offender Institutions, is set out in PSI 58/2011. It provides a framework for delivery of a comprehensive package of health and well-being activities. We will review the PSI to ensure that the policy is relevant for provision of physical activity with young people in custody.

To support delivery of this policy framework at individual sites, all YOIs will work with HMPPS to develop local physical activity and wellbeing strategies. Provision of physical activity will reflect the principle that all young people will have individualised health and wellbeing plans that are fully integrated with psychology and healthcare to ensure that each young person accesses the right activities to reflect their individual needs.

To ensure that physical activity is relevant and takes account of young people's resettlement, education providers will work with PE Teams to embed numeracy and literacy within physical activity and how it can be linked to career pathways and opportunities to continue to engage with providers and programmes post-release.

2) Commissioners and education providers should develop a flexible education contract which enables collaborations and creative delivery.

We believe that introducing greater flexibility in the learning day will enable the development of more tailored and needs-led approaches to education and physical activity, ultimately supporting our core aims of reducing violence and reoffending and improving rehabilitation outcomes.

We are working with education providers to understand how we can improve flexibility and enhance provision offered within the core day, working to combine core curriculum teaching with greater scope to give young people access to vocational training, sports-based learning pathways, enrichment activities or participation in physical activity. This will help to further engage young people and improve their learning outcomes.

Learning through activities such as sport is a powerful way to engage people in education who may be averse to traditional classroom-based learning and we will support establishments to develop a Sports Academy pathway where one isn't currently available.

We will be investing in the workforce by expanding frontline staff capacity in Public Sector YOIs by 20% which equates to over 120 new recruits. Additionally, we will be increasing the number of physical education instructors across all YCS establishments which will enable an enhanced physical activity offer as part of the core day.

We will be investing up to £1.8m per annum to enhance opportunities across educational and physical activity offered by providers and establishments. This could include new education and sports based projects, community partnerships, and upskilling staff to facilitate a broader education curriculum.

3) Prisons should offer nutritional advice as part of their physical activity and wellbeing provision, and promote a readily-available range of healthy eating options.

Establishments will provide information about healthy living and lifestyles during the induction process. Gym Induction Packs will be updated to provide information about healthy lifestyles.

Prison menus and canteen sheets will be reviewed to ensure that healthy options are available and promoted to young people. Nutritional guidance will be provided so young people can make informed choices about the amount of fats, sugar and salt that they consume in their diet.

Establishments will work with education providers to increase delivery of qualifications in healthy living and lifestyle, including exploring the feasibility of developing a learning pathway with nutritionists or dieticians from sporting backgrounds and clubs. This could link cookery with sports-based learning through providing participants with an understanding of how meals are prepared for training or for how dietary needs differ for different sports.

4) HM Prison and Probation Service should revise keep apart list policies and establishments should include gym staff in keep apart decision making.

We will ensure that establishments develop approaches to the management of non-associates in the population of young people in their care which are joined-up and multidisciplinary and reflect the experience and insight of a range of teams including PE, residential staff, education, security and conflict resolution.

PE Teams will be invited to participate in weekly allocation meetings and receive lists of young people who are taking part in Outreach programmes so that the insight of PE Teams is available to for consideration in the risk management process and ensure that those children who are subject to enhanced supervision have access to physical activity.

We will encourage PE Teams to become a partner in conflict resolution, so that those involved in conflict resolution activities are not denied access to sports, and physical activity can be used in innovative ways to end disputes.

5) Sport provision needs to be responsive to individual needs, with a focus on health, wellbeing and rehabilitation at the heart of practice.

As part of their induction to the YOI all young people will be screened by healthcare, wellbeing and PE teams, with the results used to develop comprehensive fitness and wellbeing plans incorporating interventions that reflect the full scope of the young person's needs.

6) The Ministry of Justice should develop a physical activity strategy for women and girls in prison.

HMPPS is developing a detailed framework for delivery of PE in the women's estate which will include the specific clothing, equipment and interests of women.

7) The Ministry of Justice should re-consider the national martial arts / boxing policy and introduce targeted programmes which draw on boxing exercises, qualifications and associated activities.

We acknowledge that there is a great deal of evidence about the way in which participation in boxing and martial arts programmes in the community can have positive outcomes for individuals, however there is currently limited evidence about how that translates into the custodial environment.

In reconsidering any policy our priority must be the safety and security of the custodial environment and the wellbeing of staff, participants and other prisoners. We have no plans to make boxing or martial arts based activities permissible.

8) Prison governors and the Ministry of Justice need to monitor physical activity participation and outcomes according to ethnicity, and ensure that any disproportionality is addressed.

We recognise that there is a continuing, unacceptable disproportionality in our youth justice system, and we are working with HMPPS, the YCS and partners to address issues raised by the recent Race Disparity Audit and Lammy review which highlighted youth justice as an area of central importance.

We will improve the way in which we monitor and evaluate outcomes from sports-based programmes to enable us to build a stronger evidence base and inform how we can best create effective practice in the future.

9) Senior managers need to encourage partnerships between prisons, communities, sporting groups and bodies.

We will build on the strong local partnerships that establishments already have in place with professional and community sports clubs, as well as encouraging involvement with activities like the Duke of Edinburgh award and Parkrun which develop teamwork and a sense of civic participation.

Greater flexibility in the provision of education and additional investment will support the opportunity for greater partnerships to be built between providers of sport and educational activities. Enhanced ROTL opportunities will permit young people to pursue sports qualifications and opportunities in the community.

Where prisoners gain qualifications, we will ensure that they are given opportunities and support to access relevant work experience and employment after are released.

10) The Ministry of Justice should review Release on Temporary Licence, Mobility and related policies to facilitate meaningful sports-based learning, team-building activities, placements and training.

We are currently looking at the approaches to Release on Temporary License and Mobility for under 18s in the Youth Secure Estate. We want to streamline processes, minimise disincentives and ensure that eligible children and young people have access to opportunities in support of their resettlement objectives (where the assessment of associated risks allows).

11) The Ministry of Justice, HM Prison and Probation Service and senior managers need to provide the leadership, staffing, training and facilities required to support a wide-reaching and high-quality sport and physical activity provision.

HMPPS are reviewing the management of Physical Education at national and local levels.

We will develop and grow the capability and the skills of PE staff to enable provision of activities beyond the mandatory activities envisaged by the current education contract, through access to specialist training for working with young people or teaching qualifications.

Introducing flexibility into the core day will enable young people to access a greater range of activities and qualifications and enable more partner organisations to come in and deliver programmes to young people.

Local PE staff should be empowered to deliver training or alongside external providers that will provide offenders with support “Through the Gate” so they can benefit after their release.

12) HM Prison and Probation Service should create and implement a dedicated physical activity monitoring and evaluation strategy.

HMPPS will develop monthly returns that will monitor levels of PE access by young people in custody including recording, monitoring and reviewing delivery hours each week, and undertake feedback surveys to create a needs analysis of the service and inform future development.