



Select Committee on a National Plan for Sport and Recreation

Corrected oral evidence: National Plan for Sport and Recreation

Wednesday 24 February 2021

4.30 pm

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Members present: Lord Willis of Knaresborough (The Chair); Lord Addington; Baroness Blower; Baroness Brady; The Earl of Devon; Baroness Grey-Thompson; Lord Hayward; Lord Knight of Weymouth; Baroness Morris of Yardley; Lord Moynihan; Baroness Sater; Lord Snape.

Evidence Session No. 13

Virtual Proceeding

Questions 97 - 105

Witnesses

I: Rebecca Donnelly MBE, CEO, Fight 4 Change; Ollie Dudfield, Executive Director, Sport for Development Coalition; Mark Lawrie, CEO, StreetGames.

USE OF THE TRANSCRIPT

This is a corrected transcript of evidence taken in public and webcast on www.parliamentlive.tv.

Examination of witnesses

Rebecca Donnelly, Ollie Dudfield and Mark Lawrie.

Q97 The Chair: Welcome to the second panel of witnesses this afternoon to the House of Lords Select Committee on a National Plan for Sport and Recreation. I hope you have been able to listen to some of the first panel and the sort of tone that we try to set.

We welcome our three new witnesses. Rebecca Donnelly MBE is CEO of Fight 4 Change, Ollie Dudfield is executive director of the Sport for Development Coalition, and Mark Lawrie is CEO of StreetGames. Welcome to you all and thank you very much indeed for giving us your time.

As I said to the first panel, a transcript of this session will be made and put on the committee's website. If you have a requirement to change any of the answers you have given, for whatever reason, please let us know and we will try to accommodate that. Members will ask a specific witness to answer the question. Please do not feel that you have to answer all the questions. If someone has given a really good answer and you cannot top it, let us just pass on so there is more time for other questions.

Rebecca, I will start with you, although this question is directed to everyone. We have heard a lot recently about the notion of sport for development and how we use sport in all sorts of different settings, particularly in lifting people in deprived areas, people displaying antisocial behaviour and, referring to the previous session, those going into the criminal justice system. Could you tell us how you would define sport for development? How is it different from sport and recreation offers elsewhere? For instance, is it different from a sport and recreation offer to people in a deprived area of Bradford?

Rebecca Donnelly: For me, sport for development is about sport for social outcomes and is a more holistic view. Sport for sport's sake and recreation is about getting fit and producing elite athletes. Sport for development is about sport for a social outcome. You are addressing holistically everything to do with that young person who is engaging. It is more than just physical activity: it is mental well-being, it is the relationship between coach and mentor and the individuals who come, and team-building experiences. It is also the add-ons that come with that—the educational opportunities that grow from initial engagement within the sport. To put it in a nutshell, the sport is the hook within sport for development.

The Chair: Thank you very much. That is a really succinct answer. Ollie?

Ollie Dudfield: I thank the committee for the invitation. Having worked for a number of years in the intergovernmental and UN system, I draw on the definition there as the intentional use of sport and physical activity to contribute to specific wider development outcomes. Across the 160-odd networks and organisations in the Sport for Development Coalition, that element of intentionality of purpose and outcomes is pretty essential.

There are two other elements. There is a very strong equity lens within sport for development. That might be equity of access to sport and physical activity, but also inequalities in some of the outcome areas at which sport for development is aimed.

Lastly, there are clear specific characteristics that can be used to define a sport for development-type approach, but this sits on a continuum through to what might be the broader sport system or environment. A diversity of organisations might sit outside what would be considered to be the traditional sport and leisure sector, but that intentionality, equity lens and ability to define specific characteristics are the three areas that I would use in that definition.

The Chair: Ollie, it seems to me that every witness in this inquiry—we have spoken to a lot of people—sees sport and recreation, and basically an active lifestyle, as an essential part of a decent society, and yet nobody seems to take responsibility for co-ordinating that to put it into practice other than the department. It has no money. How do you respond to that?

Ollie Dudfield: I would respond by talking about the importance of segmentation to an extent and its importance via outcomes. One of the challenges in the positioning of sport as a contributor to broader societal outcomes is that sport for good, sport for change and sport for development are very vague terms. They might not cut across to the specific outcomes in a place or community that a department might be looking to achieve, referring directly to your question.

The specific characteristics, mechanisms, policy levers, programmes and specific interventions that can maximise the contribution of sport to reduce entry to criminal justice and support employability and education outcomes for hard-to-reach young people then become segmented, outcome-based approaches, which do need the involvement of multiple stakeholders but are different from a very vague sport for social good and sport for development. You can characterise those two much more specifically targeted approaches based on outcomes versus a more vague, cross-cutting generalised approach. I am sure that will flow into measuring outcomes, types of investment, et cetera.

The Chair: Mark, how vague is sport for development and how do we promote it?

Mark Lawrie: Good afternoon, Lord Willis; good afternoon, everybody. To Ollie's point, it is vague at times; it is not an absolute measure. I think that sport for development organisations exist along a continuum. At one end, sport is used only as the hook. There are some organisations that might run only 12 weeks of sport to achieve an employment outcome. When I think about what we do, StreetGames is about both the value of long-term participation in sport and the social outcomes that come with that. We are at the other end of the sport for development spectrum and are closer to community sport in our beliefs and way of working.

Maybe the best way I could illustrate it is through the example of table tennis clubs. I used to work in Reading. I worked with the early table tennis club that Matthew Syed came through and the only league club that has taken young people all the way from starting to play table tennis through to winning Olympic medals. Another example is Brighton Table Tennis Club, which takes children on that journey through sport, but it also provides sport for development for refugee groups and people with learning difficulties—sport that is very much accessible, enjoyable and fun, but does not necessarily take the participants on the journey. So it can combine that traditional community sport view with the view of sport for development and make a difference to the individual's life.

The Chair: Rebecca, I want to come back to you on my first point. Sport for development is a very vague idea, and therefore it falls between different stools. It is one of these things that sounds good and looks good, but how do we as a committee make that a recommendation to government that it will take notice of?

Rebecca Donnelly: I think all organisations, from small grass-roots organisations to the larger charities, emphasise that what they are delivering is more than sport and is a holistic view, but they probably have different outcomes. There needs to be a joint, focused outcome that everyone can work towards, because then everyone is singing from the same hymn sheet. At the moment, for all the different organisations, outcomes may cross over, but some may be different. The issue is: how do you make that small sports club, which may be a grass-roots boxing club or table tennis club that probably does do sport for development naturally but does not know it or understand it, aware of the national framework in which everyone is working towards these outcomes and that it can achieve those outcomes as well? It just grows sport for development, but then everyone is working towards the same platform.

The Chair: Thank you for that.

Q98 **The Earl of Devon:** I will put my question first to Rebecca, because your answer gave a good segue into it when discussing outcomes. Assuming we can define sport for development satisfactorily, how do we know if such programmes are effective? How do we measure their impact? Can you recommend any good practice in this area for measuring the impact?

Rebecca Donnelly: We have what is called an outcomes framework, and that is attached to KPIs. That is predominantly a funder-led thing. While we have our own outcomes and KPIs, each funder will obviously want us to work towards that. It will be harder for smaller groups to monitor and evaluate it. We have surveys and questionnaires sent out to individuals; we do baseline questionnaires. They are based on individuals' perceptions, feelings and engagement in the sessions in which they are taking place. This could be a simple question like, "How engaged are you within your local community on a scale of one to seven?", "What do you feel is the relationship with your peers?", or, "How is the relationship with your family?" We are measuring from a baseline to six months and nine

months, and collating all that evidence internally. It can be done internally.

We also have impact research done by the university, but sometimes questionnaires can also become barriers. If I have a young person with various issues who comes to me on a programme, the initial contact is vital for making them engage with our services further. That comes down to the staff member, the way they are trained and that individual.

We do not always collect surveys and that information on first contact; we have to build up that relationship first to do that. If you are looking to collate all the evidence from the smaller sports clubs and everything like that, there needs to be that understanding and training about the questionnaires and how they would gather that information. We are okay with it. We have done this for 10 years and have learned that process as we have gone along, but it is about making that process easier for the other groups.

The Earl of Devon: Thank you, Rebecca. That is very helpful. Do you report that information? I am wondering whether it is the kind of information that the committee might see so that it can understand how it is reported and the format in which it might be reported.

Rebecca Donnelly: We have impact research that the information we collate works towards. I can easily send you the surveys we are using at the moment, if the committee wishes to have them. What we are collating at the moment is ongoing work. There are interim, six-month and nine-month reports. Not all the data for current projects is available yet, but we have the impact research and data for previous projects that I can send to you.

The Earl of Devon: Mark, how do we evaluate whether they are effective and, perhaps from the point of view of local government, how is impact assessed?

Mark Lawrie: Our network of organisations, which includes local government, measures its impact in a range of different ways. The first thing to say is that even for local government the purpose of what it is doing with sport for development is not about counting things. One of the great challenges we have had over the past 15 years of the charity has been to encourage people who just want to get children and young people active and away from the things that are potentially harming their lives, and record things. That is still a challenge today in spite of all the understanding of how valuable evidence is.

We provide a national portal for everybody from small community organisations to large local authorities where they can record their participants' involvement. They can also look at different parts of the social outcomes spectrum and how they are having an impact. We help them to use tools like the youth Outcomes Star. That is a standardised tool used by youth services in local authorities to identify how much young people's communication, confidence and their self-esteem has

improved. Similar to Rebecca, we work with academic institutions like Loughborough, Brunel and the University of East London on lots of different, deep-dive academic reports that will involve local authorities as well as small community organisations.

The final point I make is that this is a journey. We have worked as a founding member of the coalition to develop a social impact portal that is designed to help any organisation measure the difference it makes to life outcomes, using the national questions of the Office for National Statistics included in Sport England's Active Lives Survey, so that even the smallest organisation can demonstrate the impact it is having on mental health, individual development and all those areas where we know sport can have an impact, but it is so hard to capture the data.

The Earl of Devon: Thank you, Mark. That is very helpful and interesting in understanding the challenges of capturing that sort of data.

Ollie, perhaps you can give us your view on this question, in particular whether you have seen any good examples of evaluation from the UK and overseas.

Ollie Dudfield: There are two leading points. We talk of sport contributing to wider outcomes, not just at intervention or project and programmatic level but at policy level, so the question about the more macrolevel measurement is quite important. Indeed, you could argue that Sporting Futures as a policy framework and Uniting the Movement, Sport England's new strategy, had strong sport for development focuses that run across those policy documents or strategies.

It is also hard to measure things that have not happened. Much of the approach to using sport to contribute to wider outcomes is a preventive approach, right from health through to entering the justice system and exclusions from education. There are two main principles across the coalition. Certainly, the network of the coalition did a good job in taking some of the outcomes that we speak about in setting out very clear planning, monitoring and evaluation and learning frameworks that help measure impact.

The first would be both descriptive and inferential. What I mean is that, if you look at the policy level, we see an association between being active and improved well-being. It is an association, but there is a wider outcome that sport is contributing to with descriptive measurement. We also see that there is an £85 billion return on community sport and physical activity across health, social care and economic return. Those are the wider outcomes, but it is being inferential and drawing inferences about the value and impact of sport at a policy level.

If we go down to the specific programmatic level, the same principles apply. Sported, which is one of the other large networks alongside StreetGames in the Sport for Development Coalition, looked pre-Covid at the reporting from young people in low socioeconomic settings about community trust and life satisfaction before and after joining a sport for

development/community sport setting. We saw reports of a ten-times increase in trust in neighbours and about a three-times increase across the scores in life satisfaction.¹ If we move from the descriptive to the inferential, we see strong use of social return on investment where at a programmatic and intervention level people are putting a dollar value on what they deliver.

The other component—this builds on Mark’s point and the monitoring and evaluation framework used in the Sported study I spoke about—is being driven locally but comparative in monitoring and evaluation, by which I mean utilising validated questions and datasets within the monitoring of specific interventions. Those two data points used in the Sported study were from the Office for National Statistics well-being data.

As a coalition, a range of our network is increasingly utilising a collective survey tool, which Mark mentioned, which utilises these validated questions and datasets. I can give you a very good practical example. The Dame Kelly Holmes Trust, which uses athletes to provide intensive mentoring for young people who may be at risk of exclusion from education environments or other hard-to-reach young people, has seen a 7.5% increase in scores on the Warwick-Edinburgh monitoring tool before and after intervention. Therefore, it is driven locally in relation to how we measure, but there are comparative data points in terms of some level of validity to our measurement approach.

The Earl of Devon: That is helpful. Chair, I have a supplemental, but I notice that Baroness Morris has a question. I do not know whether she wants to come in.

The Chair: Let us bring in Baroness Morris.

Q99 Baroness Morris of Yardley: We have talked about evaluation. The answer to this might be just a straight no. To what extent do the activities of which you are aware, perhaps because of their partnerships, fall under the scrutiny of regulators? I know that charities I am involved with in similar work and working with Ofsted, because of the nature of the course to which it contributes, end up being inspected when they would not primarily otherwise be inspected.

My query is: if you are aware of regulators having a presence with these sorts of organisations, to what extent are they helpful? To what extent do they help us all in promoting the importance of what you are doing, or is it a bit vague and it was okay? How far do they put you up the agenda? Mark, you were nodding, which made me think that perhaps you had something to say.

¹ Note by witness: The research titled *In Sport We Trust* analysed national data sets that ask young people about their involvement in sport clubs and community groups. The research found that young people from lower social-economic groups (SEG) report 3x higher increase in life satisfaction scores from being a member of a sports club when compared to those from higher SEG. They also reported 10x higher increase in scores for trust in their neighbours as members of a sports club, when compared to those from higher SEGs. See: Sported (2019) *In Sport We Trust: How can sport bridge the UK trust deficit*. <http://sported.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/In-sport-we-trust-2019.pdf>

Mark Lawrie: You are talking to an ex-primary school teacher.

Baroness Morris of Yardley: So you know what I am on about, then.

Mark Lawrie: It sends a shiver down my spine from that perspective. The reason I was nodding is that we have delivered apprenticeships as part of our role and a lot of organisations that we work with deliver apprenticeships. That, of course, brings them into contact with Ofsted as a regulator. My reflection on that is that the newer Ofsted framework is much more helpful to those organisations, because it focuses on the learning and the way that is delivered, whereas the previous Ofsted framework was perhaps more systems focused.

Our view on Ofsted was that it was a helpful framework for us to plan our approach to apprenticeships when we were first involved with it, and certainly our experience of dealing with it as a regulatory regime has been that it has added to what we are doing, but I also recognise that, while we are a fairly large charity, for smaller organisations—

Baroness Morris of Yardley: It is a burden.

Mark Lawrie: —some of the requirements of the regulator are hugely demanding, and to get your head round them and get them done, as well as doing your day job, is really tricky.

The Chair: Mark, would it be helpful if we had standardised KPIs, which would assist both in evaluation and in standardising the way in which we evaluate projects of different sizes, or is that not possible?

Mark Lawrie: I have mixed feelings about this. The chief medical officer's recommendations on physical activity as a standard KPI is 30 minutes for adults and 60 minutes for children. That is really helpful, because everybody knows that if they are delivering against that, they are achieving something that meets physical activity targets.

The intention with the social outcomes portal that Ollie and I have talked about was about trying to get more organisations to use the ONS measures and start to build the much bigger national evidence base. The reason I have mixed feelings about it is that we do not want every organisation spending all its time measuring. You almost need a set of agreed standards rather than KPIs, for example, "If you are delivering sport in this way, we know you are impacting on mental health and physical activity levels", because, ultimately, one thing we do in the sector all the time is keep measuring the same things. Everybody is doing it, and I am not sure it is adding sufficiently to the evidence base.

The Chair: We go back to the Earl of Devon.

Q100 **The Earl of Devon:** I appreciate those questions. I guess this is relevant to what Ollie said with respect to measuring what does not happen. Ollie, let me ask this supplementary question. What is the evidence on the impact that sport and physical activity can have in rehabilitation, deterring or preventing engagement in criminal behaviour?

Ollie Dudfield: As I said previously, the challenge there is about measuring an issue that has not happened. That is where effective organisations or interventions have taken the challenges and been able to develop a very clear—what we would call—results chain. The intermediate results from the evidence base and understanding what effective practice is suggest that there will be a contribution to reducing entry or re-entry or recidivism in the justice system. Some of the measures are about changed attitudes and behaviour; some of the harder outcomes are about moving into sustained employment and movement into employment or training.

That is where we come to nuances or pathways, or jargon like the theory of change, logic model, et cetera, where it is set out that this is the results pathway where the outcome and impact may be reduced reoffending or recidivism, or rehabilitation or reduced entry into the justice system. These are the effective milestones on that pathway to measure, because the evidence base and understanding of effective practice tells us that it is those markers and milestones that are the best contribution that sport can make to a complex issue that needs multiple interventions, actors and stakeholders supporting what is a very complex outcome.

The Earl of Devon: Rebecca, do you have any comments with respect to evidence of the impact on rehabilitation?

Rebecca Donnelly: I probably agree with joint outcomes, but we have the theory of change as well. I would agree with Ollie that there are different levels. There is the immediate impact, the longer-term outcome and the ultimate goal, which would be the distance from crime, or well-being. The impact has various different stages. I agree with what Ollie said. The interim, short term and long term are all about that logic model.

The Earl of Devon: Thank you, Rebecca. Finally, Mark, do you have any answers?

Mark Lawrie: I cannot comment particularly on rehabilitation. Rosie and Justin in the previous session are probably much better placed to do that than I am.

As for prevention, we have been working with Loughborough University for the past five years, and we have been working very closely with about 26 police and crime commissioners around the country to work out the critical ingredients of a sporting intervention that reduces the risk of entering the criminal justice system, reduces antisocial behaviour and the link to serious youth violence. With Loughborough we have developed an understanding of the critical ingredients—there are 10 of them—that you need to have in a sports intervention so that it can effect prevention of crime and avoid entry into the criminal justice system.

The work we have been doing since we have understood that is about training and working with sports providers and sport for development

providers about how you get these ingredients right, because just offering sport as a diversionary measure does not do it. You need to have people within the sporting offer who have the mentoring skills and understand the ability to engage with young people. As I say, the 10 ingredients in our community safety training are backed up by evidence and are proven to support young people to stay away from the criminal justice system.

On Ollie's point, sport in the neighbourhood is only one part of the solution. You can design a sporting intervention in a way that supports and prevents young people entering the criminal justice system, but you cannot legislate for every other part of their lives; you cannot see what they are doing when they are not at your sessions, so there is only so much sport can do.

The Chair: I would ask for slightly briefer answers, if you do not mind, only because I would like to get all the questions in if we can.

Q101 **Lord Hayward:** Rebecca, what are the main barriers or challenges to delivering high-quality sport for development programmes? I know several of you have already touched on what you might think are the barriers. When I put that question, I am not asking about just looking upwards at structures and government intervention, but a barrier or challenge to get more people involved, because I would define that as a high-quality programme. You can look upwards, downwards or outwards in answering the question.

Rebecca Donnelly: If I look at it from the point of view that everything is grown from the grass roots upwards, we need the people there in the first place to engage the young people we are talking about. They are always the important ones, because you cannot have that intervention without the appropriate staff there. A barrier to the staff being able to do their job is the paperwork side of it. Although the outcomes are important, and although the monitoring and evaluation is important, and a centralised system is important, it is about their time inputting into that system and doing that paperwork, which is not always accounted for. Some of these people are volunteers as well. So that is one barrier.

Another barrier would be shorter-term interventions. There needs to be a realisation that when you are engaging with a young person a whole cycle is involved. These are external factors; these are home lives. We have also said that sport alone is not enough. Sport alone can help with the initial engagement with them, but sometimes a shorter-term programme does more harm than good. It puts a lot of work on the workers on the ground because they probably have the same monitoring, evaluation and reporting on that shorter-term programme, but there is not a long-enough contact time with the individual to make any difference to their life.

Ollie Dudfield: While taking the advice, I might look at a structural issue. A lot has been made of the projections or modelling of an £85 billion return on community sport and physical activity. Probably less

attention has been paid to the inputs that support and deliver that return on investment. The model is about £21.85 billion of inputs. What is interesting is the methodology used by Sport England and Sheffield Hallam. About 11.1% of those inputs comes from the government sector; about 26% is volunteering and non-financial inputs; and about 63% is from the consumer commercial sector—so people paying for access. At the same time, the Institute for Fiscal Studies has projected that over the past 10 years there has been a decrease of about 70% in local government budgeting for sport and leisure.

One point I spoke to at the start in defining sport for development is that within the 160 networks and organisations—there are thousands of groups within the coalition—there is a real diversity of organisations, some from the traditional and leisure sector, but a number of voluntary, community and social enterprise-type organisations often working in community space with multiple challenges.

Within the current structure to support commissioning and access to facilities, be they leisure or school, the space for the component of the sector, which often has intentionality of purpose and delivers with the characteristics that we know support those wider outcomes, is struggling not just to get funding but to get access to facilities and support from different structures.

That structural issue is quite an important one. Is there going to be enough resource in sport or local government? Probably not. Therefore, redressing that balance and being very articulate and clear about the outcomes and contributions that sport can make to priorities in other areas of government, be it national or local, become critical to ensure that the VCSE organisations that are sports-based or using sport get the support and access they require to deliver the outcomes we are talking about.

Mark Lawrie: At a very local level, I refer to three things. A couple of them have already been touched on. Inclusive access to school and other leisure facilities is a massive barrier because, unlike membership-paying sports clubs, a lot of the small sport for development organisations do not have the financial wherewithal to pay the fees required to get access to facilities, which will be made harder with the pandemic and the effects of that on leisure providers and schools.

There is definitely something about the hand-to-mouth existence of these organisations. They are very agile; they are able to draw in funding from lots of places, but they do not have long-term sustainable funding that allows them to invest in the people and coaches that Rebecca talked about in a way that enables them to grow participation.

The third one is probably the risk that the whole sport for development sector has about lack of understanding of what it does and what it can do as local community organisations. So it is about not being able to get across the message that you can increase both participation and social benefit working through community organisations.

At a macro level I make just two quick points. The first one for me is that, if we really want more people to be involved and want to face the challenges that Sport England has identified in Uniting the Movement about inequality, we need mainstream sport to change its approach in some of the areas we work in, because in most areas there may be only a community centre and possibly one football club in some of the neighbourhoods we are talking about. The wider mainstream sport offer needs to be there if we are to grow participation and not just a sport for development offer.

The Chair: Thank you very much. Could we move to Baroness Grey-Thompson?

Q102 **Baroness Grey-Thompson:** Good afternoon, everybody. I would like to start with Rebecca and ask how you address issues of duty of care, diversity and inclusion to ensure that you can provide a safe and welcoming environment.

Rebecca Donnelly: I would say that this starts with the staff, but it is also integrated into our policies. Staff have equalities and diversity training; they are trained in safeguarding as well. We have a lead safeguarding officer and follow all the protocols. Every volunteer who is inducted with us goes through the policies and is trained. It is more like everyone singing from the same hymn sheet. We have safeguarding meetings fortnightly when we go through our welfare checklist. In a nutshell, that is basically what we do.

Baroness Grey-Thompson: Ollie?

Ollie Dudfield: It is a really important question and focus for the committee in this inquiry. We can talk about balancing a culture in relation to duty of care, safeguarding and ongoing capacity building of the diversity of organisations in the sector, alongside a compliance focus. We know that a lot of benefits come from sport at each level, but there are some additional risks, particularly around intentional harm and abuse, so fostering that sort of cultural element and capacity across a diversity of organisations is quite critical. It is of critical importance that that starts at a governance level. Regardless of the different types of governance that the diversity of organisations that we talk about have, it is a consideration right at the top of the governance of the intervention, organisation or policy.

There is also ring-fenced investment in this area. Rebecca gave a good example of how that plays out at an organisational level if there is a governance level commitment, with specific ring-fenced investment in strengthening the safeguarding culture and capacity as well as the compliance aspect.

The Chair: Ollie, how has the duty of care dealt with in the review authored by Baroness Grey-Thompson influenced the multitude of organisations within your alliance?

Ollie Dudfield: One important influence is that it has raised the awareness of those involved in sport, sports organisations and those using sport, of the critical importance of duty of care and safeguarding. There has been a range of initiatives on safeguarding, including the work of the Child Protection in Sport Unit of the NSPCC; there has been work on adult safeguarding, particularly in the context of the shift from vulnerable adults to adults who are in at-risk situations. That is certainly one of a number of influences that has put this issue more on the agenda of sport generally. Given the nature of some of the organisations within the coalition that do work with people at risk and cross over with voluntary sector charities and other areas of the third sector, there has been some interesting learning from that intersecting Venn diagram, if you like, back to those who might have a more traditional sport orientation, if I can call it that.

The Chair: Mark, could you please respond?

Mark Lawrie: The very positive thing about the duty of care is that it has shifted the focus away from a minimum-standards defensive approach to welfare and safeguarding. I ask the sector to think about the responsibility we all have for making sure that children and young people have a safe and caring environment in which to play their sport. Having come from a children's services background, safeguarding can often be interpreted as being about child protection and the very worst of harm. That absolutely has to be there; it is foundational that you have the policies and the disclosure and barring service checks, but it is far more than that. It is about people doing it in practice. I think the duty of care has led to people looking far more at their safeguarding practice than just their policies.

As Ollie said, the Child Protection in Sport Unit has altered its standards so that it asks much broader questions about the way in which safeguarding and welfare is approached. Organisations like UK Coaching have set out their duty of care courses that kick-start people to think about duty of care beyond purely safeguarding. Organisations like ours have developed practice-based safeguarding training. It is about talking to coaches on the front line and saying, "Okay, you have your policy and your DBS check. What do we need to do to help you make sure children are safe and the environment is safe for them?"

Q103 **Baroness Grey-Thompson:** Thank you for picking up the question on the report. It is quite hard to ask this, because my name is on the report. Is there anything that you think was missed out as part of the recommendations? I know it is a really huge area and it is quite challenging, but is there something that stands out immediately or that you would like to see included in future duty of care work?

Rebecca Donnelly: In short, the report was quite comprehensive. We are a small charity; we have grown from a boxing club into a formal charity. I know that, when regulations within boxing first started out, a local coach, for example, would take a group of kids to a tournament and think nothing of it. Now that has all changed; there has to be that duty.

As another witness has said, I think it has made us focus on it and think about it, but I think it was comprehensive enough for me as an individual to read and be able to digest it and follow it. It was simple enough. It is not something I would have any input into; there is nothing I would need to have added to it.

Ollie Dudfield: My response is similar. Thank you for raising this issue up the agenda through the report.

Mark Lawrie: I think it was very comprehensive. The only thing, I suppose, is Ollie's point about culture and understanding how, over time, the culture of the sector is changing, not just the mechanics and the policies, because I think that is a huge challenge.

The Chair: We will move finally—if necessary, we will have a good 15 minutes on this—to Baroness Brady.

Q104 **Baroness Brady:** Good afternoon, everyone, and thank you so much for attending today. This committee will publish its report in the autumn and we want it to include very clear recommendations for government and others. If you were sitting on the committee knowing what you know, what would be the one recommendation you would absolutely insist goes into the report with all the good work that you are doing to encourage and support people to do more of it? Can I start with Rebecca, please?

Rebecca Donnelly: It is hard to do just one bit, but I will try to do it. The important bit for me is the people on the ground delivering the work. Without them, nothing would happen. It is about making sure they are upskilled. Sometimes what they have in front of them is so diverse. Your sports coach needs to be your mentor and counsellor. Sometimes there is so much they need to be trained on to be able to address the needs, or so much they need to be aware of to be able to refer on those needs. I would say that in the first instance.

If I can have a little bit of a second one, it would be that funding should be longer term, for the reason that we are engaging with them over a shorter period and building up relationships. If that worker then leaves, you have to start all over again to build up relationships, get to know them and upskill them. Staff are so important to us in building relationships. I am sorry; you have two now.

Baroness Brady: Rebecca, to be clear, you are talking about some sort of training programme for the people who are volunteering, to help them with some of the skills outside the physical engagement that you have—the softer skills of mentoring and relationship building.

Rebecca Donnelly: It is about identifying the right training but also the length of training, the right time and accredited training. There is a fine balance between having the coach and worker knowing that you have to engage with that young person; you have to get to know them to achieve the ultimate aims you want. You have to free up that worker's time to enable them to go on the right course to do more work with that young

person. A lot of courses are thrown at us as well and it is a matter of deciphering what the right courses are for the individual.

Different things come up at different points. Because of the Covid pandemic, as an organisation we are doing a lot more welfare checks. As a consequence, counselling has come up. Counselling is a longer-term qualification that our coaches need. We put them on psychotherapy and counselling, which is a shorter qualification, which aids their mentoring. It is little things like that that we could be aware of and have training for. I know the training is out there, but it is about deciphering through all the training and knowing about the longer-term ones, what are not accredited and what comes up at what point.

Baroness Brady: So you would like a recommended training programme.

Rebecca Donnelly: Yes. At the moment we have been put on trauma training and mentoring. Two staff are going on that. That is quite easy and manageable, because it is two days a month for three months. I can manage the staff's time in that way and I know that at the end of it they are fully qualified; it is a recognised qualification. I want them to be able to go and deliver with that qualification. I recognise that there are some CPD qualifications that can train them up internally, but I would like that accredited qualification so that my insurance covers me in continuing to deliver that.

Baroness Brady: Who would pay for that? Are you paying for it at the moment?

Rebecca Donnelly: We are paying for it at the moment, but we are a network of a lot of organisations. They have funding for the existing training we are putting on. We do not have to pay for that, which is an added benefit to us. We do not have to find that money, but I know that we will have to find it going forward. That is fine, because we work as a charity and are fully aware that that is part of our model going forward, but it is good to know if there are courses or what is available.

Baroness Brady: It is about better training leading to better people, better outcomes and building better relationships.

Rebecca Donnelly: Yes, and being able to retain those people for longer, because that is ultimately what you want. You do not want to put all that investment into a person who is doing an absolutely great job on the ground and then they leave. From the work they do with that young person you can see the benefit. It is also recognising the coaching industry because sometimes it is undervalued. We need to recognise and upskill that individual, because ultimately everything grows from the grass roots up. If we do not have it at the grass roots, we are not engaging or affecting any young people.

Baroness Brady: Thank you; that is really clear. Ollie, what is your one recommendation?

Ollie Dudfield: I would say it is the development of clear plans—the plural is quite important—that articulate and set a road map for how you maximise the contribution of sport and physical activity to specific outcome areas. A model for this is the schools sport and activity plan that looks at the contribution of sport and physical activity within that policy area and brings together three departments and a multitude or diversity of actors to support the delivery of that plan. Those plans are in the priority outcome areas where there is evidence and actors who have the confidence and ability from local to national level to effect and maximise the contribution of sport, whether it be into employability outcomes, supporting young people back into education, employment and training and social cohesion. Those are clear plans based on intentionality and a strong equity lens, using the specific characteristics or ingredients that we know are categorised as sport-type interventions and programmes that can deliver those outcomes.

What is the role of the area of government, third sector and business focused on sport? I would put that role within those plans back to a similar role to the start-up and innovation sector. The role is to seed-fund the interventions and programmes that will have the most potential to attract resource outwith sport to deliver that wider outcome and, at the same time, get more people engaged in sport and physical activity.

There are some good examples of that. The Department for Work and Pensions provides direct funding to a member of our network, Street League, that gets about half of the young people it works with through to education, employment and training.² StreetGames has mobilised a significant amount of resource from outside sport for its local trusts and sports organisations. There are very specific plans on the contribution of sport to these wider outcome areas.

Baroness Brady: Mark?

Mark Lawrie: The risk to the local organisations we work with in communities is that they are funded from and supported by so many different government departments or sources to keep them running. We have probably all seen through the pandemic that those amazing community organisations that are the invisible front line in neighbourhoods get their funding and support from so many different areas.

On the back of that, my recommendation would be for a cross-government commitment both to recognise the value of community organisations that provide sport and deliver across a range of other

² Note by witness: Street League is one example of a number of youth-focused employment charities using sport as one component of their methodology and approach. The organisation describes their work as “using the power of sport to tackle poverty and give young people the opportunities they need to succeed in life and the workplace”. Over the past 12 months there have been 2014 young people start programmes with Street League, and of these 1112 have progressed into jobs, education or further training, with 136 sustaining employment outcomes for at least 6 months over the last year. Further information on this data is available from the [Street League Impact Dashboard](#) and in the organisation’s [2019/20 Annual Report](#).

government priorities, and to support them long term. That is not just about funding, although funding is always important to these organisations; it is about putting them within strategy and policy so that other actors that have funding can recognise their importance and help sustain their work.

I think the intention in Sporting Future to recognise the range of outcomes that these local organisations deliver is great. I think the intention in Uniting the Movement of proportionate universalism and tackling inequalities is great. For me, the critical point is following that with resources and action.

Baroness Brady: On that point, Mark, cross-departmental working really works only if there is one owner and one leader. Who do you think that should be?

Mark Lawrie: That is a great question. If you are talking about children and young people, you would probably go to the Department for Education as long as it recognises the breadth of providers in this space and does not just take a schools-focused approach. I think the holiday activities and food programme the DFE has been piloting for the past three years is a great example of how to include children from disadvantaged backgrounds through schools, community organisations, professional football clubs and any number of different organisations that can make a real difference to their lives, but not with a single lens that talks about schools and young people; it has to be broader than that.

Baroness Brady: Thank you all very much.

The Chair: I will bring in Baroness Blower, who I know wanted to ask a supplementary.

Q105 **Baroness Blower:** I want to go back to Rebecca's points, because I thought they were very interesting. There is a risk that the quality of any given training is in inverse proportion to the glossiness of the brochure that advertises it. Rebecca, you said that sometimes courses were thrown at you. I think that was the expression you used. Do you always know where to go for the training that you think is necessary? Is there some way in which you are easily able to see whether it has been quality assured? I want to hear a little bit more about that.

Rebecca Donnelly: Sometimes we get emails across the network. For example, there was an email the other day about training on domestic violence. That was a good one for certain staff. It was two half-day workshops but it was not accredited, so would that allow my staff to deliver domestic violence workshops under our insurance? Probably not, because it was not an accredited course. Where would I find an accredited course for that specific subject? I would have to Google domestic violence-accredited courses, and then it would be matching that up against what would enable me to deliver with the appropriate qualifications. It is not always available, but it comes up at different points.

When we face a new issue, then I think, "Do the staff have the knowledge and capabilities to deal with these issues?" If not, that young person is referred on to a specialist service, or is there a course that trains up staff to give them confidence to address those issues with that young person? It is not always in one place, and at first glance it is not always obvious whether that qualification allows you to deliver. I am always conscious that, if we give that advice to a young person, we need to be sure that the qualification staff have allows us to give such advice; otherwise we are giving wrong advice.

Baroness Blower: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you very much indeed. Could I thank you, Rebecca, Ollie and Mark, for an absolutely splendid session this afternoon? I hope you have enjoyed giving evidence to the committee and get a flavour of just how committed we are to try to find some positive outcomes to put to the Government. Thank you all very much indeed for coming. I thank the committee today for being, as ever, very engaging with our witnesses. On that note I will declare this session closed.