



Select Committee on a National Plan for Sport and Recreation

Corrected oral evidence: National Plan for Sport and Recreation

Wednesday 10 March 2021

4.25 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; Baroness Morris of Yardley; Lord Moynihan; Baroness Sater; Lord Snape.

Evidence Session No. 16

Virtual Proceeding

Questions 125 - 129

Witnesses

I: Laura Cordingley, Chief Executive Officer, Chance to Shine; Mark Hardie, Chief Executive Officer, Access Sport; Oliver Scadgell, Participation Director, Lawn Tennis Association.

USE OF THE TRANSCRIPT

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Examination of witnesses

Laura Cordingley, Mark Hardie and Oliver Scadgell.

Q125 **The Chair:** I see that our next witnesses are in the dock. We are seamlessly moving from one session to the other.

This is the second session today of the House of Lords Select Committee on a National Plan for Sport and Recreation. Thank you all very much for joining us. Laura Cordingley is chief executive of Chance to Shine; I love that title. Mark Hardie is CEO of Access Sport, and Oliver Scadgell is participation director of the Lawn Tennis Association. Welcome to you all. I hope you were able to catch some of the previous discussion with our three experts.

I hope I can use your Christian names. Can I start with you, Laura? We are interested in particular in the link between school and after-school provision and how we get continuity, because it is no good having great programmes at school if they then drop off the whole spectrum. How would you describe the state of affairs in after-school provision of sports and recreation for children and young people? What does the landscape look like? In particular, what could be done to improve it? In this session we want to get from you ideas about what we can do to make things better.

Laura Cordingley: Thank you, Lord Willis and the committee, for hearing from me this afternoon.

The state of after-school sport is mixed. There are some fantastic examples in the community and on site after school of brilliant initiatives that engage children in wonderful ways, but on the flip-side we know that, sadly, children are still too inactive. Recent reports from the likes of Youth Sport Trust and Sport England clearly show that children are not getting anywhere near the recommended minimum level of daily physical activity. A huge amount of that is to do with them not accessing school sport during and after school hours or even in the community. Sadly, if you are a girl, or you are from a black, Asian or minority-ethnic background, or a low-affluence background, you are even less likely to take part in sport outside school.

At Chance to Shine, our street programmes take place in the top-third disadvantaged areas, and 86% of our participants are black, Asian or minority ethnic. When they come to the sessions for the first time, from what they tell us, 75% are doing absolutely no other physical education activity outside school, so we know there are challenges. On the flipside, when it works and you get it right, the benefits for young people are wonderful. We see that from the evidence we gather.

What more could we be doing? For me, it is about consistency in what young people experience in school and how it helps them to transition into the community. There are many barriers, but if a young person has had a positive experience on a school site with a high-quality PE curriculum, they are turned on to sport in the first place. We know from

our Chance to Shine programmes that 90% of children enjoy themselves and want to continue to play sport after school, so we need to make sure that it is as easy as possible to remove the barriers. The barriers are time, location and cost. We need to make sure that the right role models are in place. Crucially, teachers do a wonderful job, but we need role models from the community to make sure that, when children get to the sessions, not only do they have people to look up to but those people are based in the community, of the community and relatable to young people.

Mark Hardie: We come at it from a community club angle. We develop community clubs to be connected to their community across a whole range of sports, mainly in deprived areas. From where we stand, in our experience, if you want to engage with active and underrepresented young people, it is important that you provide an exciting range of choice. I was listening to the previous session; PE and schoolteachers are incredibly important, but so, too, is linkage to the community, utilisation of community assets and volunteers, whether they be parents or mums at schools, and connecting them effectively.

We have really good examples of non-traditional-style sports that engage disabled young people and those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and ethnic minorities. They include BMX cycling and, you might be surprised to hear, American football, baseball, dance and even pétanque. I heard the comment about daughters being turned off. It is about creating exciting, cool, relevant social fun. To be honest, I do not think that schools on their own can provide that.

It is about linking to community facilities, getting the right workforce and joining up community activators with schools, with a particular focus on being more developmental, with more mentoring and caring and being more person-centred. Ali Oliver said that we had lost something world-class with the school sports partnerships. I have lived through both regimes, and we definitely have. It is far more difficult for clubs to connect with schools, which have to do it on a very individual basis. We work with about 300 schools. It is much harder work than it should be.

There should be a more connected training offer that is more developmental. It is not easy for schools. There are lots of great examples. To blow our own trumpet, we have inclusive training. There are organisations like StreetGames, the Youth Sport Trust, Sported and others, but it is difficult for schools to shop around and know what is going on. There is an increased desire, with talking going on now, to make sure that things are better joined up.

There should be more local events and festivals that link clubs and the community. School Games is really good, but we are talking about the hyperlocal level where you can bring schools to the local park, get clubs there, get mums involved and recruit, and use that as a way forward for the year and link it to events such as the London Marathon or RideLondon.

The final thing on engaging young people is about utilisation of active travel and the absolute importance of Bikeability. It is not exciting or inclusive enough at the moment. There is a lot of money going into cycling. We are working with the likes of the Youth Sport Trust and the Bikeability Trust to make it more exciting and relevant. It is not just about cycling, it is the use of the streets outside schools; it is about skating to school, scooting to school, walking to school and running to school. Why not have something called the Last Mile instead of the Daily Mile? Everybody has to get out of their car and do something active and fun going to school.

The Chair: Mark, before I leave you, you have not mentioned one of the big factors that the previous panel referred to, which is that access to facilities in local communities is incredibly difficult, because their owners, mostly schools, universities or colleges, will not allow open access. What is your solution to that? What should the committee recommend to solve that problem?

Mark Hardie: The problems are quite structural and deep-rooted. It costs money to open up schools. It costs money—

The Chair: I know the problems; I want to know what the solution is.

Mark Hardie: Directly, more investment. There is an elephant in the room. It comes back to the big picture and how important it is to get people moving and physically active. I know of good clubs that cannot access their local academy halls for weekends and evenings. Kids have to pay £7 an hour to go to after-school football clubs. You will not get the less sporty people in the nation active unless some kind of assistance is given.

The other angle is that Access Sport builds cycling facilities in local parks. We deliberately design them to be open access and free, but to be co-ordinated by community groups, which include local police, local clubs, local schools and local disabled people's organisations. It is about making things accessible, including financially, I am afraid.

Oliver Scadgell: Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you for this opportunity.

I think it is worth stating a few points of context. I agree with some of the things Laura referenced. We know the impact of Covid-19 on the physical and mental health and well-being of children and young people. Equally, we know that, pre-pandemic, participation levels in sport and physical activity among children were already very concerning, with only 45% of children meeting the Chief Medical Officer's recommendation of an hour of sport and physical activity a day, according to Sport England's latest data.

As Laura mentioned, we are still very concerned about the significant levels of inequality in participation, with the pandemic having a disproportionate impact on those from lower socioeconomic groups and

ethnically diverse communities. That is why the LTA very much welcomes Sport England's recent Uniting the Movement strategy, which focuses on tackling inequalities. That aligns very much with the LTA's vision of opening up tennis and making it more relevant, accessible, welcoming and enjoyable to anyone who wants to get involved, regardless of age, gender, background, ability or disability.

As the nation emerges from the latest restrictions, access to participation in sport and physical activity is fundamental, and it needs to be prioritised for children and young people both inside and outside school. That is the reason why we have invested in our LTA Youth programme, which is designed to make it easier for anyone to get involved in the sport, regardless of whether that is in school or outside school. We are rolling out that programme later this month. We are training primary school teachers, and tennis coaches as well.

You started by asking how we can better support activity outside the school environment. We very much believe that, yes, it is important that teachers are trained to deliver high-quality experiences in school, but equally we must allow appropriately qualified and safeguarding-checked coaches to come into the school environment to ensure that participation is sustainable outside school. That is a very significant focus of our LTA Youth programme.

We are incentivising teachers and schools to sign up to LTA Youth and deliver tennis; they can redeem a £250 voucher against either equipment or, perhaps slightly more importantly in my view, coach time, so they can get a qualified LTA coach to come into the school environment and support the delivery of tennis in school. That creates a sustainable link to a local club or park site such that children can have fun and enjoy the activity outside the school environment as well.

Q126 **Lord Addington:** The committee has heard about the need to make sport and physical activity more fun and enjoyable, particularly for children. What measures would be needed to achieve that? Could you deal with the generalities? What are the things you have come across in all your activities that could be used outside your own groups?

Laura Cordingley: First and foremost, it is about fun and a positive attitude on the part of children and young people, and hoping they will continue the sport. I will highlight four key things that are common principles that we would apply across Chance to Shine and in other sports.

First is the importance of a relaxed environment for children, one that they can go into where there is less pressure, and where they have a certain amount of ownership and can make decisions about the types of activity they take part in. It is an environment that is not too competitive and skills-based. It is about getting the balance right. We find that the best chance of success is when children have a sense of ownership in the conversation around a relaxed environment.

Secondly, it is about making it inclusive, making sure that all young people feel safe and part of the session. Part of that is very much about having the right role models in those sessions, so that children who come along to community sessions outside school hours have relatable role models, and, from our experience, role models who have been through the programme as well. A third of our coaches are previous participants, and that adds an extra level of peer support for young people.

The third element would be concentrating on their personal best. It is concentrating on what they are able to do themselves, the small gains they make every week and the things they enjoy, not comparing themselves to other young people so much, and positioning the activities very much around their own personal fun and enjoyment.

The last bit is consistency, so that, when they turn up in week one, the environment and offer is very similar to what they get three, four or five weeks later. That is hugely important, because you might get a young person to come along once, but if the offer is not quite right for them, they will not come back, so it is about trying to make sure that it is as consistent as possible.

One good piece of practice we have developed with one of our partners, the England and Wales Cricket Board, is in the work we do in schools and the work it does for its all-stars programme in clubs. If you are a young person and take part in Chance to Shine in schools, it is games-based; it is fun and a world away from what you would associate with traditional cricket. When you go to the cricket club, if you are keen to do that afterwards, you do the same sorts of games; you have the same sort of terminology, whether it is an alien-themed game, cones and domes or whatever it is. It is about helping their confidence. If they have developed their confidence in school, we want to keep that confidence high as they go into the outside-school environment and setting.

Mark Hardie: I echo everything Laura said. It is important to give young people a voice and ask them what they actually want, and to include them in decision-making.

I may be repeating myself and repeating what Laura said, but it is important to have the right inspirational people with the right attitudes. It is about making it fun, personal and developmental; it is about mentoring, having everybody involved and building confidence, teamwork and the like. That is not the history in coaching, so there needs to be a bit of a shift. There is good practice in the sector—for example, Chance to Shine. It can be gathered and be put together, and a whole new era of approaches and volunteers can emerge. They are already there.

The final thing is the use of festivals and events, bringing people together face to face. I know it is not possible right now, but people get something out of coming to a place, celebrating, having fun and bringing the community together. Those are some of the elements.

Lord Addington: Before we go into some of those, do you regard the

special events and festivals as a key part?

Mark Hardie: Yes. Events and points in time are important in every walk of life. After the humdrum week after week after week, in the summer downtime when exams are finished, or whatever, bringing a group of schools together with community clubs, and putting on a whole range of things and bringing families in, makes a difference. It can be used to recruit new activators and volunteers who can become walk leaders or ride leaders. Our experience is that it works.

Lord Addington: You seem to have agreement behind you. Laura, do you want to add anything?

Laura Cordingley: No.

Lord Addington: Oliver, you have the final say.

Oliver Scadgell: I agree with a lot of what has been said. Fun and enjoyment is fundamentally important to children's sport and physical activity; it is at the heart of our own LTA Youth programme.

Perhaps I could mention a few elements that have not been touched on. When we developed LTA Youth, it was built on insight and research with children and their parents. One aspect that we found was of fundamental importance was ensuring that there is an element of progression in all that children do in sport and physical activity. Everyone likes to see themselves improve, and parents like to see their children getting better and enjoying the activity they are taking part in. We feel that progression through the coaching curriculum and from a competitive point of view is important. We built our coaching curriculum for LTA Youth on movement and motor skills, and not just how to deliver a good serve, for example. We feel that is really important because it lays the foundations of any child's ability to enjoy physical activity and sports.

Another point that has not come up yet is the importance of parents. One of the aspects of LTA Youth is how we support parents to encourage their children at home to continue learning and developing in tennis. Indeed, that is relevant to any sport. We have developed lots of at-home resources that have been crucial over the last 12 months, given the amount of time people have spent at home. Making it easy for parents to support their children in continuing to enjoy tennis while at home is really important.

It is not one size that fits all. With certain demographics of society, particularly children from lower socioeconomic groups, you need a slightly different approach. A lot of it comes down to people. In our SERVES programme, we work with national partners such as StreetGames and Sporting Equals to identify the right people in local communities, and train them up with basic tennis skills and knowledge so that they can deliver fun and enjoyable sessions to children at locations within their local communities, whether in youth centres, mosques or church halls. That gives them the right training and equipment, such that it is a more

easily accessible opportunity. Links between something like SERVES to more sustainable opportunities at local park sites that are affordable are also critically important.

The Chair: Laura, how important is it that young people see role models who look like them in order to be able to increase participation and confidence in the people who come?

Laura Cordingley: It is hugely important; it is fundamental. All our research shows that to help build the confidence of young people they need to see people like themselves as part of the process. Interestingly, we did a survey of Chance to Shine participants and asked them who their favourite cricketer was. We were interested to see who it would be. The vast majority, 80%, said their favourite cricketer was their Chance to Shine coach. Effectively, that was their role model; 80% of our participants say they look up to their coach.

We started our programme in 2005, and many of our coaches now in the programme were former participants. They tell us that when they were going through the programme they did not see anybody like themselves coaching. Effectively, that was a motivator for them to become coaches themselves. One of the big things we have done is support participants on their journey to become leaders and coaches in their local community. Our street projects are similar to LTA's SERVES. Effectively, it is a club but an informal one that operates year round in communities. The clubs are very much centred around coaches from the local community, supporting children who are reflective of that community. Wherever you go, you can drop a pin on one of our projects and the demographics of it will be broadly reflective of the local community around it.

It is particularly important for girls to see female role models and diverse female role models. We have some wonderful examples of female coaches from south Asian backgrounds who have told us that parents were much more willing to support their girls' involvement because of our individual coaches. Not only are they cricket coaches but they have full-time jobs in other professions. Having diverse role models across sectors and ethnicities is absolutely fundamental.

The Chair: Mark and Oliver are both nodding, so I believe they agree with you. Thank you, Laura. It is important to get that on the record.

Q127 **Baroness Blower:** This is a two-part question about the very serious and important matter of duty of care and safeguarding measures, which Oliver referenced in passing. Are duty of care and safeguarding measures and standards fit for purpose? Going on from that, what further steps are needed? Baroness Grey-Thompson may want to come in on this after we have heard from you.

Oliver Scadgell: I agree that nothing is more important to us than the safety and well-being of those involved in tennis, particularly children and young people and adults at risk. The LTA has been committed to leading the way in safeguarding in sport over the last three years of our latest

safeguarding strategy to try to drive the highest standards across tennis venues, and particularly the coaching workforce. We have done that in a number of different ways.

To pick out a few specifics, we have developed a set of standards that all LTA-registered venues need to adhere to in order to be registered and receive the benefits that come with that. That includes safeguarding policies and procedures, a dedicated venue welfare officer, having appropriate criminal record checks for the individuals at a venue who engage with children and young people, and the appropriate risk assessments, plus ensuring that coaches are LTA-accredited and, therefore, meet safeguarding standards. That is of fundamental importance.

We also feel that it is important to increase awareness and knowledge of safeguarding issues in our sport and in sport more broadly. We were very pleased to have partnered last year with Sport England on a Safe to Play campaign, using innovative technology called augmented reality, which brings to life real-life safeguarding cases and stories, to ensure that our coaches and venues and, importantly, parents are up to speed and aware of safeguarding matters, so that they deliver safe and enjoyable activity across the sport. We are also delighted that for the past two years we have been rated as excellent across all categories in the annual survey of the NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit.

I was aware of the announcement earlier this week about the change in the law to recognise sports coaches as being in a position of trust. I would like to thank Baroness Grey-Thompson and the House of Lords more broadly for the work they have done in that regard, particularly through the *Duty of Care* report. We feel that is of fundamental importance and will be a game-changer in supporting more broadly the health, safety and well-being of children and young people in tennis.

There are a few other things that we also feel need to be done. Removing the statutory presumption to release without bail, and adjusting the timescales and authorisation levels of pre-charge bail, is important. There were some recent positive announcements on that as well. Establishing more consistent processes for information sharing between the police and national governing bodies, and between national governing bodies, is important. We share information with the likes of the FA, the ECB and the RFU, but sharing information between the police and NGBs is critically important.

Finally, although we have robust safeguarding standards for our venues, a consistent approach across all sporting venues would be helpful. There are sports venues that have a multi-sport offering, which are perhaps a bit of a missed opportunity right now. Those are some of the things we would recommend.

Baroness Blower: Mark, you were nodding a great deal. Do not feel you need to go over everything, but obviously add in specifics of your own.

Mark Hardie: I do not have a great deal to add, except that, with Covid and declining mental health among young people, we are focusing on mental health training for coaches and volunteers. It is an opportunity in both a negative and a positive way for coaches to learn how better to support young people generally, to support themselves and to deal with important and sometimes concerning issues.

We heard in the previous session about perhaps a lack of standardisation around after-school provision. From our own personal perspective, we know that schools really care about checking. NGBs, such as the Lawn Tennis Association, are excellent in making sure the standards are there, but I can readily understand that there may be schools that—not through any desire—get clubs or others to come in that might not have the requisite standards in place. There should be some kind of standardisation. It is very much about teamwork; it is about schools, clubs and NGBs combining, reviewing and renewing, and a strong culture.

Laura Cordingley: To build on what Oliver and Mark said, the emphasis on the education of the workforce is crucial. I endorse the view about increasing the well-being of children. It is especially about coaches in the community. Not only are they coaches; they are seen as confidants and peers. They are quite often in an environment where young people disclose and/or display levels of illness or poor mental health, and helping our coaches as much as possible to understand that and respond to it will be crucial as we move forward.

We have started to train some of our coaches in mental health first aid. We have taken the approach of trying to get some people qualified as tutors because as a charity that is a more cost-effective route for us. It is quite costly to put an entire workforce through that training, but we should all commit to it.

On the theme of education, we get a huge amount of support from the ECB as our governing body and take a lot of guidance from the Child Protection in Sport Unit. One thing that we feel is potentially missing is the sharing of the learning that happens along the way between the big reviews. For an organisation like ours, some of the conversations are clearly very confidential and should remain so, but if there is a way to share in a forum the small learning that helps us embed better practice as we go, that would be absolutely wonderful.

Because we cross the barrier between school and community, we are very confident from a sport and community sport perspective that everything we do adheres absolutely to the guidance laid down by the ECB, Sport England and the Child Protection in Sport Unit. We would like to understand how we can better align with the education world. I am aware of the Casey review. We want to know how we can do the best possible job to make sure that the needs we see in the sports sector and how we are delivering them reflect the needs of schools. Any guidance and support we can get at national level to tie things together when we cross those barriers would be wonderfully helpful to us.

Baroness Blower: Chair, I wonder whether Baroness Grey-Thompson might come in. I am sure she has something helpful and important to say.

The Chair: She always has. That would be helpful.

Baroness Grey-Thompson: Thank you. There was a good deal of celebration earlier this week when the Government announced that they would bring in positions of trust legislation. Strangely, we might have some people who oppose it.

My question is in two parts. First, do you see any risks in bringing in positions of trust legislation, because we may still face some pushback from people who say it is not needed? Secondly, we have seen in other governing bodies and associations that whatever process is in place it is still difficult for participants or athletes to raise complaints. Is there anything more we need to do through education or flagging up to young people a different process that they might not know exists? If there is one performance pathway in a club, you do not want to rock the boat, so what more can we do, beyond processes, to make a complaints system work? Oliver, I turn to you just because you are first on my screen.

Oliver Scadgell: Maybe I will take your second question first. We recognise that the prevalence of safeguarding cases in high-performance sport is more common, given the closer nature of the relationship between a performance player and a sports coach. Part of our safeguarding strategy has been very much focused on providing support and guidance to our performance coaches, as well as ensuring that our athletes and performance players know where to go to raise concerns. We have a dedicated helpline for the reporting of safeguarding concerns. We have a whistleblowing policy and helpline where players and coaches can confidentially raise any issues or concerns and be confident that they will be dealt with in a confidential and appropriate manner. That is fundamentally important.

We ensure that in the audit processes we carry out of all registered venues we do them yearly for all our performance-accredited centres, for the reasons I mentioned earlier. Whether it is our national academies, our regional player development centres or our local player development centres, we ensure that we visit those centres, of which there are circa 70, on an annual basis to ensure that they are operating standards at the highest level.

On your first question, we have no concerns about the bringing in of the legislation that was announced earlier this week. As I have said already, we feel it is fundamentally important further to help safeguard children and young people in tennis. We are huge advocates of it. At one of our major grass court events a few years ago, along with some other sports, we staged a round table with the Ministry of Justice to put forward our arguments. Therefore, we are delighted with the announcement that came out earlier this week. We look forward to supporting the various

organisations and bodies, hopefully, once it is approved, to implement it across tennis.

Mark Hardie: On the first question about positions of trust, I wholeheartedly support it. To be honest, it is a bit of a no-brainer. On the second question, all I can usefully suggest is that perhaps more practice is embedded in both schools and clubs to take the time to make children and parents aware of helplines as part of the fabric of what happens, whether it is school assemblies, clubs or coaches talking about it a bit more. I do not know whether there is a sufficient culture around that yet, but that might help.

Laura Cordingley: It is probably most appropriate for me to stick to the second part of the question. Communication and culture are two of the most important things. First and foremost, there should be proactive communication about how people can access support and make disclosures if they need to, but backed up by a culture that clearly says, and demonstrates, that if there are such issues in sport we will make sure that they are dealt with appropriately and promote the fact that we have dealt with them. That proactive culture will help drive people's confidence in coming forward. It has to come from the top, but from grass-roots level as well.

Q128 **Lord Hayward:** Mark has already answered in part the question about the state of affairs in accessibility to after-hours recreation. Therefore, I ask the other two witnesses not to repeat what Mark has already said, because he has made the position reasonably clear, but you can add to it.

Can I go off completely at left field and return to an earlier question? I was fascinated by Laura's opening comments about breaking down barriers and the like. In a totally different field, while commenting on accessibility after hours, is there any cultural barrier where you have thought to yourself, "If only I could break that down, we would get so much more participation"? I am talking about people who do not participate in recreation and physical activity. Those are two very different aspects of the question, Lord Chair, and I hope you will allow me that digression.

The Chair: Of course.

Mark Hardie: As a cultural thing, I had an extremely interesting conversation with a young lady last night, whose petition you may be aware of, about not being heard in her school setting and not being allowed equal choice of access to sport because she was being told from the top down. That struck me. It is the culture of giving children a voice in sport, a choice of sport and the way it is delivered, not necessarily that they completely dictate it or make it unrealistic, but that their views are consulted, because young people are passionate. That particular young lady was extremely eloquent.

Laura Cordingley: On the cultural side of things, if it is about embracing everybody's diversity and trying to make sure that no matter who you are the offer is right for you to be able to take part with the least number

of barriers possible, I can give a practical example. One of our street projects in Birmingham, which caters for children of eight-plus, takes place from eight to 10 at night on a Friday. If you look at that on paper, you might say that no one would ever schedule a session at that time, but it takes place after the vast majority of the children have been to their local mosque for prayer. That works exceptionally well for their families; parents are able to take them and facilitate that, but we would not know that unless we had conversations with the local community and had the right coaches in place. That is what works.

There is absolutely no one-size-fits-all model; it is very much about listening to young people and their families, and understanding. For me, there is no magic switch, but you absolutely have to understand the diverse nature of the young people you want to be able to take part, and you have to be super-specific about removing some of the barriers. It could even be making sure that the session is in a safe location. To give another example, we have a very long-standing street project in Camden. One of the biggest things that children tell us is that safety and feeling safe in sessions are paramount. There was a knife crime incident around the corner from that session, and children did not turn up the next week. We had to do a huge amount of work to understand the challenges and create another safe space for children in that local community. That took knocking on the doors of parents to communicate with them about that. You have to know the communities and the issues going on and be able to work with them. That is hugely important.

Oliver Scadgell: I have a few points on culture. I agree with the comments made. As I said earlier, there is no one size fits all. I wholeheartedly believe in listening to the voice of the child. I cite some examples from our LTA SERVES programme whereby we take tennis into communities where people feel safe, to Laura's point. It is delivered by people from those communities; we train them up so that they feel comfortable and are in familiar surroundings and in locations they are used to going to, perhaps for other sporting activities. By doing that, we have seen 30,000 children go through the SERVES programme—over 75% from lower socioeconomic groups and over 50% from ethnically diverse communities. I wholeheartedly believe that is of fundamental importance.

The Chair: Lord Hayward, do you want to follow up on the business of how we get access to public leisure facilities?

Lord Hayward: Yes, please. Should children have access to public leisure facilities outside school hours? Is that a practical proposal, or do councils need the revenue from fee-paying adults? Is there a way round it? Do you know of examples where kids have been given access?

Laura Cordingley: Children need access to community facilities. They need access to leisure facilities, and to whatever is the most local accessible facility for them. School sites are still important, and for many young people that is their first experience of transition into community sport. Our experience is that, in more urban areas, getting access to

those facilities is increasingly difficult. Price is absolutely an issue. We have sessions that over the last five to 10 years have been priced out of leisure centres. As a charity, we have our budget and it is stretched as far as it can be, unfortunately, but our commitment to location is paramount.

Within all of this, we should not forget the hyperlocal community organisations, the small community clubs and the multi-use games areas on an estate. They are at times the most important place for young people to access their facilities. Those facilities tend to be the ones that from a cost perspective are the least restricted. As they become more commercial, that is where we find the challenges.

Facilities are hugely important. You cannot deliver a session unless you have somewhere to go. Equally as important is getting the offer right. You can have the best facility in the world, but if your offer is not right for young people they will not come back. Yes, you need the place but, just as importantly, you need the offer.

Oliver Scadgell: I have a number of points. We recognise that school facilities are not always accessible to their local communities, as has already been mentioned. That is why we welcome the focus of government and Sport England on looking at how we can better open up school facilities outside school hours and overcome some of the operational barriers that we know exist. Interestingly, we are piloting exactly that with some primary and secondary schools at a local level, using technology as a vehicle to help facilitate that, with online booking systems and gate access systems, which we think is quite innovative and could be something other sports might be interested in. I am very happy to share that in some written material that we can send in.

Furthermore, I would like to point out the importance for tennis of park sites and, therefore, local authorities, because local authorities own and operate the vast majority of park tennis courts across the country. We recognise the significant financial pressures that local authorities are under at the moment. We saw this morning that the National Audit Office referenced that 94% of councils will cut their spending next year. That is why we feel it is important that we can come in and support local authorities with an offer that helps to sustain those tennis court facilities for the long-term future. The offer is built on insight and on what we know about the barriers to participation. One of the biggest barriers is the journey to court, so we are making it easier for people to find, book and access tennis facilities, as they can book a cinema ticket on their phone. That is what we are trying to do with some of the tools we are providing for local authorities.

We also work with our charity partner in Tennis For Free to provide regular, free family tennis sessions at the weekend for local communities to access. We feel that is important in providing hyperlocal opportunities so that children and young people and their families, from different backgrounds, are easily able to access participation opportunities in tennis.

We absolutely understand and advocate the vital role that local authorities play in supporting the delivery of opportunities for children and young people in tennis, and sport more broadly. We would like to see a commitment from government to support councils to ensure that parks and open spaces can continue to be sustainable for the long term, because we feel it is so important to sustaining and growing participation levels across our sport.

The Chair: Mark, do you have anything to add?

Mark Hardie: On the activation of community parks, there is a fantastic example of a collective of clubs at Elephant and Castle, not far from Parliament, called Burgess Sports. It is about 10 different sports. We have supported it over a number of years. It is a model that is worth investigating, because under its banner it picks up everything from parkrun to BMX, football and cricket. It is highly inclusive. It has excellent young leader programmes. If you are looking for an example of the utilisation of parks, that would be one.

Another important and more forward-looking thing is that Access Sport works to build accessible open-access community cycling hubs and facilities because we believe in the importance of cycling, but it is a generalised principle. When regeneration efforts happen and money goes into housing, as it is doing, the appropriate spaces should be put in, with a duty on planners and local authorities to do that. I am afraid there is a problem with local authorities. We work with a good 30 or 40 of them. We have seen the vast majority of them hollowed out in terms of staff and time, which puts limits on it. I am an advocate for helping local authorities to fulfil their roles to a greater extent.

Lord Hayward: Mark, if I may make an observation—it is not a question—I am sitting 150 yards from the tennis courts at Burgess Park, so I know the area you are talking about.

The Chair: On that note, we move to our final question with Lord Snape.

Q129 **Lord Snape:** Can I put a question that we have put to all our witnesses? We are not trying to catch anybody out. What recommendations would you like the committee to make to the Government? You are not allowed to mention resources because everybody would say the same thing. Other than more money, which is understandable, what would you like to see the Government do?

Laura Cordingley: There are a couple of big but quite impactful things. One is cross-departmental join-up by government. Sport and physical activity have so much to offer across all government departments. There is absolutely no doubt that at the moment there is a will, but it is not co-ordinated. Within that, each department should be clear about how its objectives contribute to an overall gain in the health and well-being of the nation. That is absolutely crucial.

Coupled with that, we need measures that all sports and organisations, such as Chance to Shine, can adopt readily to show real progress on the

well-being side of things. The measures around physical activity and physical literacy are strong, and for Chance to Shine they have been very easy for us to adopt. The Sport England measures around physical literacy are simple. We have been able to take those and compare them with those for participants in the Chance to Shine programme around confidence, enjoyment, competence and understanding of sport. If we had similar measures in other areas that we could all adopt, I think that as a government and as a committee you would quite quickly see the difference that, collectively, everybody could make.

My last ask is not about money, but it is about resources. I would love to see businesses give more help to the not-for-profit sector in sport with their expertise and skills. We do not need money, just their competence and brains to help us.

Lord Snape: I should keep quiet about not needing money. You know what Governments are like.

Mark Hardie: I would take a macro-stance. If you stand back, in 2021, 2022 and 2023 there is a generational opportunity, because of Covid, environmental concerns and the prominence of physical health, to make a step change in the way physical activity and movement are viewed. I would ask that the committee recommend a bold approach and reference some kind of right to meaningful access for all to physical activity and the promotion of physical activity. There are references in UN conventions—the rights of the child, rights of people with disabilities—that could be borrowed and adopted.

With that, come correlative duties for central and local government. It should run as a golden thread throughout all government departments that they have a duty to promote physical activity and the benefits thereof. There is a lot of talk and recognition of the lack of join-up. There needs to be some sort of overarching, unifying basic human right and duty attached to that to elevate things. I like Sport England's wording, "Uniting the Movement". Sometimes the words sport, recreation, outdoor sport or adventure are all just aspects of something bigger, which is about physical activity and movement. Using those words—I am sorry to question the title of the committee's inquiry—I think Sport England has shown a way forward to unify the movement. It also comes with the words "movement" and "social change". Now is the time to be looking at that.

I would like recognition that sport and physical activity can contribute to the fight against pollution and improve the environment. Getting people walking, cycling and scooting is probably the biggest existential thing we all face. We should make sure that is woven into the narrative.

Oliver Scadgell: I have three main points. First, given the impact of Covid-19 on the health and well-being of the nation, it is vital that the Government place sport and physical activity at the heart of the nation's recovery from the pandemic.

Secondly, a bit like Mark's comment, we feel that, specifically for children and young people, a big bold simple commitment that every child should be entitled to activity for one hour a day, as recommended by the Chief Medical Officer, would be a game-changer. That needs to be facilitated by better cross-departmental working, which has already been referenced, and backed up with an updated school sport and activity action plan, as referenced in the previous session, and specifically the elevation of PE as a core subject in the curriculum, with specialist PE teacher training to improve the quality of provision and a longer-term commitment and guarantee of the PE and school sport premium, School Games and School Games organisers.

Finally, social impact has come up a few times this afternoon. It is fundamentally important as an outcome of physical activity. For a long time, there has not been a unified approach to a social impact return model across sport. It is important for the Government to lead on that, with the support of Sport England, so that we have one impact model measuring the social impact of sport across all different sports and physical activities.

Lord Moynihan: To pick up Laura's point, what she said is really important. Back in 2005, the British Olympic Association set up the FTSE 100 initiative with 26 Olympic sports and 26 leading companies in the FTSE 100. Laura, I think that what you are saying is that this could be massively extended by linking local businesses to local charities and major businesses to significant sporting charities, and even linking major spectator sports that have the resources and wherewithal to sports charities. It could be legal advice; it could be financial advice about preparing accounts, helping with a whole range of professional responsibilities that are increasingly being put on charities that work in the sector. That would be a major national initiative. Laura, I think that is what you are looking for—I see Mark nodding as well—and that it would be a recommendation you would welcome.

Laura Cordingley: Yes, absolutely.

The Chair: Laura, it would be very helpful if you could send us that recommendation as a result of this meeting so that we get your recommendation, supported by Lord Moynihan.

Laura Cordingley: I would be very happy to do so.

The Chair: Thank you. On that note, thank you very much indeed, Laura Cordingley, Mark Hardie and Oliver Scadgell, for your presence this afternoon and for being so brief and honest, and, in your answers, giving us a real insight into your work. Thank you very much indeed for that. I thank the committee again for a good range of questions and for Members' attendance. The meeting is concluded.