



National Plan for Sport and Recreation Committee

Corrected oral evidence: National plan for sport and recreation

Wednesday 23 June 2021

4.30 pm

[Watch the meeting](#)

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. 25

Virtual Proceeding

Questions 190 - 195

Witnesses

I: Clive Copeland, Head of Participation, Angling Trust; Marcus Kingwell, CEO, EMD UK; Gillian Osborne, Vice Chair, British Wheel of Yoga.

USE OF THE TRANSCRIPT

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

Examination of witnesses

Clive Copeland, Marcus Kingwell and Gillian Osborne.

Q190 **The Chair:** Could I first welcome you to this, the second session? It is in fact the 25th evidence session of the Select Committee on the National Plan for Sport and Recreation. We hope you heard most of that earlier session. We are very pleased you are with us this afternoon. I welcome Clive Copeland, the head of participation of the Angling Trust. Believe it or not, Clive, angling has been mentioned a number of times during this inquiry. Some of our members have a real affection for angling. Marcus Kingwell is the CEO of EMD UK. Again, areas such as dance, Marcus, have constantly been mentioned as a huge enabler for all generations, but particularly perhaps young people. Gillian Osborne is the vice chair of the British Wheel of Yoga. I did not know there was a wheel of yoga, but I am delighted, having read up about it, that there is. You are very welcome indeed, Gillian, to join us today.

I will say to all our witnesses that this inquiry started with a plea by Lord Moynihan that we should look at sport and recreation and see whether we need a national plan for it. On our journey, I think it would be fair to say—and I hope Lord Moynihan would agree—we have moved in all sorts of different territories. One of our motives is this core reason of trying to keep people active, improving health and mental health in particular, and making sure that people simply live longer, happier lives as a result. That is why you three have been brought today. We are very grateful for your presence.

Clive, what are the main challenges and opportunities you face in increasing participation rates in your sport and activity? In answering that, I am particularly interested in how you go outside your normal group, if there is a normal group who go angling. How do you get more people? I am very conscious that, when I was a head teacher, we had a lot of problems with disruptive behaviour in east Leeds. We had a community police officer attached to us. His passion was angling and he took some of our most challenging, shall I put it, students fishing once a week. It made a phenomenal difference. I am looking for how we get more people involved.

Clive Copeland: Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you for inviting me here. Specifically on angling, and the challenges and opportunities, the general barriers to participation in our sport across society are a lack of time, not knowing how or where to fish, or indeed no one to go fishing with. As the national governing body, we work hard to address these challenges. We are somewhat hamstrung by a lack of funding and resources to really effect scale.

Our funding comes from Sport England—we rely heavily on Sport England funding—and from the Environment Agency. In freshwater, it is a requirement to have a rod fishing licence. The licence sales are reinvested into angling and we receive money from the Environment Agency. It comes with caveats and restrictions and we have no specific, dedicated funding stream to support sea anglers, for example. Sea

angling is the third discipline. We have three disciplines in our sport: game, coarse and sea. Sea angling is a very large discipline, approximately a million people, and we have no specific funding to support participation growth in that discipline, which is a real challenge.

To answer your question about how we actually go about recruiting people, there are the resources we have. We have a partnership engagement programme, so we reach out to the angling community. There are education providers, charities and community interest companies that deliver angling participation in specific areas of society. We work heavily with partners. We resource, support and facilitate partnership delivery where we can, using the resources and funding that we have from Sport England and the Environment Agency.

As far as opportunities for our sport's growth are concerned, we are very focused on reaching new audiences. It is a very sad reflection of our sport at the moment that 80% of it is populated by white British males. It is something we are determined to change. New audiences, for example, are women and girls and, of course, the ethnically diverse. We are working very hard to improve diversity and inclusion across the sport, because clearly that is a new opportunity for us to grow participation.

The Chair: What are you actually doing? We hear that a lot, but we do not know what people are actually doing.

Clive Copeland: Do you mean with regards to diversity and inclusion?

The Chair: Yes.

Clive Copeland: It is a new and exciting area for us to work in. We are working with Sport England. Through its new strategy for sport, Uniting the Movement, and the focus on diversity and inclusion specifically, we have conducted a number of pieces of recent insight into the barriers and opportunities for women and girls or the ethnically diverse. We are going to use that insight to create and launch an awareness and education programme, essentially, to those communities, to make sure we can strengthen the opportunities and pathways to engage in our sport and the outcome benefits of engaging in our sport. It is that outreach piece of work we are doing. That has to be a very focused piece of work with the limited—I would say that strongly—resources we have.

Gillian Osborne: Thank you, Chair. I must say I am slightly concerned about your troublesome pupils, since you were the head at a school I formerly attended.

The Chair: Oh, my goodness.

Gillian Osborne: That is the power of yoga for you, is it not? What are the challenges and opportunities we face? Pre-Covid, there was a perception of yoga as being something for younger people. There are a lot of images particularly of young, white women in gymnastically impossible poses that I do not personally take part in. That is a perception that has existed for some time and is definitely a big barrier.

There is also a perception that men do not take part in yoga, whereas in fact quite a few footballers do, but only 10% of our membership is male.

We have geographical issues as well. There can be a lack of classes and availability in certain parts of the country. There are also health issues. I saw a quote recently, and I cannot remember who said it, saying, "I am too inflexible to do yoga is like saying I am too dirty to have a shower". That is why we go to yoga, to improve overall mobility for general health and sustainable movement through life, so that our quality of life can be enhanced and maintained.

We face quite a few barriers. To address those, we have partnered recently, and we seek to partner, with companies or organisations that will enhance or change some of those perceptions. We have just collaborated with 3rd Rock, which is a climbing and yoga company that has a much younger demographic and more men involved with that. We are contracted to a magazine with a much younger and more diverse demographic than we are.

In terms of health and mobility, we had a very successful pilot study in 2016 for one of our programmes, which is called Gentle Years Yoga. That is currently in trials at York University. That is something that the NHS may well take on into social prescribing. It looks at improving health, well-being, mobility and mental health of the older adult with comorbidities and multiple health issues.

The Chair: I will stop you there, because I am going to come back to a lot of this later on. I would like that to form part of that question, if you do not mind. I will move on to Marcus and then we will come back to you.

Marcus Kingwell: I want to say a little bit of background about group exercise, because not everyone may fully understand what it is. There are about 400 varieties of group exercise activity, which are fitness sessions put on by an instructor to one or more people, sometimes to music, sometimes not. It does not have a big facility requirement. Any indoor space will pretty much do. Often, these take place outdoors as well. It is everything from aerobics to Zumba. That is the A to Z. Yoga is very much part of it. Gillian's organisation is the specialist, so we defer to it on the detail and expertise around yoga.

The way that we work is with the instructors more than the participant. This is important because the instructors are the key to unlocking the participation. No instructor: no group exercise. You cannot have the equivalent of a kickabout in the park for football. That does not exist for group exercise. It has to be led, or else it really does not have any meaning to it.

On one hand, it is hugely successful at engaging with people. We are the second most popular physical activity, according to the Active Lives survey, with 6.8 million people doing it twice a month. It is second only to running. 80% of the participants are female, so it is doing fantastically well for women's participation. Men have plenty of opportunities to be

active in addition to group exercise. Also, 21% of participants have some kind of disability, so it is inclusive on that basis. On ethnicity, it is slightly below par, with 88% of participants being white British—a little bit below the national average there.

The devil is in the detail. There are particular communities that find it very difficult to access, for the same reasons that Clive pointed out in respect of angling—I never thought there would be some common ground with angling. People do not have enough time. They do not have access to the instructor or to a venue. They have other priorities with their life they need to get on with. They have a fear of being seen to be incompetent when they start. They have a fear of being judged. All these things are very difficult barriers for people to get over that first hurdle. It will come as no surprise that these factors are most common in the poorest communities across the country.

In terms of what we have been doing to address this, there are a couple of significant projects. One, we have been using investment from Sport England, the Tackling Inequalities Fund, to reach out to the most deprived communities in the country, again using the same sort of model that Gillian and Clive have talked about, working through partner organisations that are best able to access those communities. We have run one successful programme of that with 10 organisations. We are now coming on to a second wave of that Tackling Inequalities Fund. That has been across all sorts of sports and physical activities and has been a very successful programme.

The other one that we are just starting now is with This Girl Can, the big, famous campaign that Sport England has been doing for a number of years. We have devised a fitness class called This Girl Can classes, specifically aimed at women who have never exercised before or who are returning to exercise after a long gap. That has a range of different class formats within one 50-minute session, so people can try something they want to. We are going out with slogans like, "Getting it wrong is part of getting it right", so that confusion and barriers about making mistakes are all part of the fun. That launches this summer and we are hugely excited about that. We hope that, through the instructors, will then reach women in parts of the country who do not access physical activity currently.

The Chair: Marcus, before I move on, you started by saying none of the activities of yours, and you included yoga as well, are without an instructor or coach. One of the biggest barriers we have found during this inquiry is none of the coaches look like the people in underrepresented groups. If we are dealing with the BME community: "They do not look like us". What are you doing to tackle that?

Marcus Kingwell: We are looking to recruit instructors that come from those communities by lowering all the barriers to getting them qualified. For example, we offer discounts on training courses so they can lower the price. We are changing all our marketing materials to show a much more

diverse range of photographs of people, so it is more inclusive to those thinking about it.

Also, working with Sport England, the chartered institute and UK Coaching, we are soon to launch a programme called Retrain to Retain. That is focused on coaches and instructors in the most deprived parts of the country. That will be coming out in late July or early August. It is about targeting the communities where those groups come from and getting instructors from those communities to take up group exercise.

Q191 The Earl of Devon: I should probably disclose at the outset that I am a passionate fisherman, I like yoga and I also do group paddle boarding. I have been known to do all three at once, doing paddle board yoga on the River Exe. I will ask specifically about funding, perhaps first to Marcus. Do you think public funding is distributed fairly? Is Sport England using appropriate criteria to decide who is funded?

Marcus Kingwell: It is a tricky one to answer accurately, because the criteria for the amounts of funding are not 100% clear, apart from the fit with the strategy that is in place at any given time. Having worked in a number of sports organisations over my career, there always seems to me to be a weighting towards “The award you were given last time is more or less the funding amount you are going to get the following time”, which may not be the best way of doing it.

I would welcome greater transparency about that. I think that that is the way the process is going. For the funding that starts next April, in 2022, Sport England has announced there will be a dialogue between the delivery partner, like us, and Sport England over a number of months to work up proposals together. It is hard to know exactly the basis. If I was to look at it another way, we have been receiving £825,000 a year from the lottery as our core money—we have had some extra money for projects. That is core money, and yet we are the second most popular activity in the country. You could have an argument that says maybe we should have more money because we are getting more people active. That would be another way of looking at it.

The Earl of Devon: That is very helpful. Gillian, perhaps you could comment on Sport England funding in particular.

Gillian Osborne: I have consulted our accountant on this, because funding is not my key strength. We are self-sufficient. Incredibly, we do not receive any funding. We find that we fail to qualify on lot of the criteria that Sport England use. Something there would be really welcome. We have run specific training courses with bursaries for ethnic minorities to train ethnic-minority teachers, but we are not able to fund as many of those initiatives as we would like to.

We applied to Innovate UK to develop an online platform when the Covid outbreak started, so we could continue to deliver yoga. We qualified for that, but sadly we were not successful. Funding-wise, we have not done well at all. We would welcome greater transparency and at least access to

it, or, if we do not have access to it, to know why. We seem to fall through a gap actually.

The Earl of Devon: Do you know why you failed to qualify? What are the elements that you do not meet?

Gillian Osborne: Here is where I could do with the accountant next to me and she is not. We failed to qualify because we are not an elite sport. We are also not a sport club. We are a charity and a membership organisation, so we get revenue from our membership. We receive legacies as well. Those are the main reasons why. We are also a small charity, and sometimes that is a factor.

The Earl of Devon: That is helpful. Clive, you spoke a bit about your funding streams. Do want to add anything to that? I have a follow-up question that I might ask you to consider.

Clive Copeland: In essence, I would agree with the majority of the comments from Marcus. At the Angling Trust, we have been fortunate enough to receive funding from Sport England specifically for about 10 years now. To answer the question directly, historically I do not think it has been distributed fairly. It always appeared to me disproportionately biased towards mainstream sports that focused on physical activity outcomes.

However, we understand from Sport England that the change of direction within their new strategy and their investment strategy particularly will be more open to improving or, let us say, embracing sports like ours that have very strong outcomes of improving mental health and well-being and have the opportunity to work with priority audiences, the ethnically diverse and the disabled community. Thirty-nine per cent of our core-market anglers have some form of limiting disability, so we work very closely with that community.

Marcus touched on the tackling inequalities funding. As a sport and as a governing body, we are very thankful for the support that Sport England, and the Environment Agency, our other core funder, have provided through the Covid pandemic, essentially to make sure that our angling community and our sport can exist as we come out of it. The Tackling Inequalities Fund from Sport England was particularly useful. We were successful at bidding for that. We supported 22 priority projects within the community to make sure those individuals at community clubs and groups could still access angling as we came out of lockdown.

It is a difficult question to answer specifically when I have had the history of Sport England investment. Historically I do not think it was allocated fairly, but that has improved drastically over the last few years and, I hope sincerely, for the future.

The Earl of Devon: Is there other support that you need from Sport England or government that would achieve further support for angling? That may be access issues or other issues that we are debating in the

Environment Bill at the moment.

Clive Copeland: The frustration for me over the last 10 years with investment from Sport England, and possibly UK Sport, is funding to support our national teams or any form of talent pathway for young, talented anglers in competition. One in five anglers fish in some form of organised competition. We have over 34 England national teams. They are all self-funded. It has been an immense frustration over the last decade or so because our teams compete in the international arena. They are successful. Our sport is worldwide, and our national teams compete against some very heavily state-funded nations. That has been a frustration.

Up until 2016, we received a small amount of funding for what we termed the England Talent Pathway programme in angling, to fund development of talented young anglers to fish for their country. That was withdrawn by Sport England as it did not see it as a strategic priority for the future.

The Earl of Devon: Gillian, maybe you could come in on what other support you need, outside of the funding that you do not get. Are there other areas where Sport England and/or the Government can assist?

Gillian Osborne: Yes, actually. That takes me to the final question. We would like a little bit more transparency with Sport England. We do not have direct communication. We would like more co-operation and engagement with it so that we can find out much more easily the ways in which they can assist us to develop yoga. There are some other funding initiatives that we will be looking into. There are some initiatives within schools that we have been involved with and are currently involved with, but that is not through Sport England.

Marcus Kingwell: There are a couple of things. One would be greater connection with other government departments. At the moment, our primary relationship is through Sport England to DCMS. That has been helpful through the Covid crisis. Our real power to change people's lives is through health. I have been working in this sector for 25 years. Every day, we have been talking about the power of sport and physical activity to improve health. We have made baby steps towards influencing the Department of Health and Social Care and getting proper engagement with the health sector.

I do not know the answer to it. I have been grappling with it, as colleagues have. There needs to be some way of unlocking that and finding where the barriers are, and why sport and physical activity is not used more widely. We have this latest opportunity around social prescribing. To me, it seems straightforward that a GP should refer somebody to a group exercise class for physical, social and mental support. It is very easy. There is a great, competent workforce. We are having real trouble navigating that particular landscape at the moment. That is number one.

Number two is around digital. Sport and physical activity has been way behind the curve for many years on uptake of digital. It is way behind retail. As consumers, we are all quite good at it and we nearly all have the devices on ourselves to access these things. Covid has accelerated that within our sector. As you know, people have been doing exercise classes online during lockdown. That was very popular in the first lockdown in England—23% of all adults were doing fitness classes online. It is a fantastic achievement.

It is a complex and rapidly changing environment, which is very hard for individual governing bodies like us. We have 20 staff, based down in Horsham. For us, to really drive that forward, we need the help of more clout across Sport England and government to open some doors for us to find out where that is going.

A final, related point is that, while digital is very much here to stay and part of the future, do not forget that 12 million people in this country do not have basic digital skills and 2 million households cannot access the internet via broadband or online. While I might glibly say, "Great. You can go online and do group exercise", there are all those people who have no chance of doing it, whether it be a Covid lockdown, they cannot leave the house for childcare reasons or a disability reason. There is another block there that needs removing.

The Earl of Devon: Thank you. I am sure Lord Moynihan will follow up on the digital aspect.

The Chair: That brings us, very conveniently, to Lord Moynihan.

Q192 **Lord Moynihan:** I should declare an interest as well. I have been a long-standing supporter of the Angling Trust and would be fishing with its chair this Friday were it not for the fact that we have an important debate on well-being for future generations, which fits very neatly into what we are discussing today.

That said and declared, I want to focus on how you intend to seek, or currently seek, to engage young people in your sports and activities. To me, the figures that we have just received—and I am pleased that Marcus began the conversation on IT—do not apply to the younger generation. The younger generation are overwhelmingly used to social media campaigns which showcase lifestyle, sport, staff, venues and facilities for different sports. There are apps. There are online games. There are all sorts of ways, through IT, that you can reach out to young people to encourage them to participate. And yet, having just supported the Angling Trust so strongly, I notice that, if I just type in "apps and Angling Trust", there are two that come up. One is a fish pass and the other is an educational one on angling. Do you not see social media campaigns and the use of IT as critical to engaging young people in your sport moving forward? Clive, having pointed out that I have not yet found Angling Trust on the apps here, perhaps you can respond first.

Clive Copeland: I would have to agree that it is a distinct area of focus for it. To be frank, we lack the resources and funds to develop platforms

such as an app to reach the audience. We are working in partnership with the Environment Agency to develop online platforms and increase the availability of information on how and where to fish. It is very much part of our overarching campaign that we titled Get Fishing, which is jointly funded by the Environment Agency and Sport England. It is not specifically targeted at young people. Our insight has told us that the majority of people enter our sport through contacts through a family member or friend. The Get Fishing campaign was designed to be very family focused. It has been running now for some three years. We historically engage around 35,000 people a year in that programme at thousands of events around the country that are delivered in partnership, as I mentioned earlier, with angling clubs, fisheries, charities and education providers. Within those 35,000 people a year, approximately 75% are young people, so we are reaching young people. We certainly need to do more in the digital space. We are aware of that. It is literally not having the capacity and funding to develop that at the moment.

Lord Moynihan: I fully appreciate that extending the reach of angling to young people through families is important. You heard the Chair in his opening remarks talk about the incredible importance of angling to hard-to-reach young people and to young people who find the normal state educational system difficult to engage with. Is it not a duty and a responsibility also for you to reach out to those people and design ways in which you can communicate with them? That is not through the families that already fish but through schools, community groups and looking to structure intensive mentoring groups for those hard-to-reach young people. Should not a social media, IT or app campaign be a higher priority for you in the 2020s?

Clive Copeland: Yes, I would agree with all those points. Social media is certainly a tool that we use very heavily through our Get Fishing campaign work.

To address your earlier point, as I have mentioned, we work very strongly in partnership. We work with numerous charities. I will cite one in particular. We work closely with a London-based charity called Get Hooked on Fishing. It has a flagship project in Ealing and six community projects around the country. It works to prevent young people being socially excluded, using angling as the positive vehicle to do that. We have worked with it historically now for eight years in partnership very successfully. It is very much part of our Get Fishing campaign.

Where our team of officers nationally can establish those sorts of community partnerships through charities or community interest companies, we do so. That is the way we deliver our activity.

Lord Moynihan: Marcus, over to you to answer that question, first on the IT point, which, after all, you introduced, and secondly on other ways you engage young people in your sport and activities.

Marcus Kingwell: We are very heavily embedded with IT already. We have developed our own digital plan for this current year and that goes

across a range of products, including the fact that nearly all our marketing and communications is now digital. That is using a range of social media platforms, web and email. We have been delivering all our sales of products like insurance and training online, actually out of necessity due to Covid. We have been forced into a digital route, but a lot of benefits have come from it as a result. That has been a happy output for us, I suppose.

In terms of engaging young people, strangely, group exercise does not have great traction with them. It is mainly an adult activity. When you look at all the figures, you see that it is just how it has been over the years. I suppose the market that instructors are playing to is an adult market. There are a small number of instructors who have classes tailored to children, but it is quite a niche activity. There is an opportunity there to use it, particularly for engaging girls, probably in the mid to late teens. For those who really do not have an interest in sport but like some sort of activity, maybe one that is not competitive, group exercise has real potential. That would be a future project for us, but not something we have engaged with successfully thus far.

Lord Moynihan: Before I move on to Gillian, can I thank you, Marcus, for your last answer? I think you will find a solution if you go to the Department of Health and Social Care's new Office for Health Promotion. The new drive within the Department of Health and Social Care is on exactly what you said. I will communicate with you afterwards to encourage you to communicate with it. One of its failings is obviously that it has not reached out to you, so that is a fairly important point.

Marcus Kingwell: Thank you.

Lord Moynihan: Gillian, how do you seek to engage young people with yoga?

Gillian Osborne: Again, I would agree that yoga classes perhaps would not appeal naturally to young adults or children. As a mother myself, I think that we are able to present it in a framework that appeals to them. Children and young people like peer support. We would like to develop more relationships perhaps with the Department for Education, get into universities and present things.

I am a teacher as well as being the vice chair. I have two teenage girls who have been with me for a couple of years. I have had feedback from them about how it has helped them not just with their physical movement but with their exam stress and coping with Covid. There are ways in which it can be presented. We are very active on social media and we advertise in magazines for a younger demographic.

What would be really helpful to us is to find some gateway into education, and into universities in particular. I know that Covid and the pandemic have been tremendously difficult for undergraduates. Also, our teachers are Ofqual trained, so we provide additional training. We do a range of modules after qualification and we have specialised training for teaching

children and young people, so we are equipped to do it. We have quite a good number of children and young people involved, but it is a sector of the population that we would like to get further into, if possible.

Lord Moynihan: Gillian, would you know who to reach out to in government or how you would reach out to government to achieve that objective, say in education?

Gillian Osborne: That is the problem, really. No. It is the lack of access. I see that Sport England is our gateway to finding these things out and we have not had a lot of traction with how to get in there. For example, we were not involved with This Girl Can, although there was This Girl Can yoga. We would welcome some doors being opened, or at least being presented to us.

Lord Moynihan: Along with Marcus, I hope you get in touch with the Office for Health Promotion. It launches in September and that is exactly what it should be doing, engaging with you. I am slightly surprised. I would like to comment on one point. I would have thought yoga was a very important activity for young people.

The Chair: It is important for mental health as well.

Lord Moynihan: Exactly, it is important for not just physical health but mental health, for both boys and girls in school. I am surprised you say that it does not tend to focus on young people and your push is not principally with them. I would have thought that the door would be open to a lot of young people, such as your teenage children and many other teenage children, who would benefit significantly.

Gillian Osborne: It is finding the right door. We found the door for the health service. Earlier on, social prescribing was mentioned. That is something that we are involved with, because yoga is recognised for physical and mental health benefits, but it is much more to do with health provision. We would like to be more present in education in particular.

We have a venture at the moment with SportInspired, but that is targeted just at primary schools and only in deprived areas. We would really like something that has wider access in education and throughout the whole range from primary school to undergraduate level.

The Chair: Gillian, both my grandchildren, five and seven, do yoga every day at school as part of their exercise and they love it. It is just when they want to teach grandpa the same things that it becomes incredibly challenging.

Q193 **Baroness Blower:** Let me just say, before I ask my question, that, although angling does not form part of my recreational activities now, I fished a lot as a much younger person, even though my behaviour was always exemplary. I am engaged in group exercise. I did it previously, but, post-cardiac surgery, I have done a lot of group exercise. That counts as social prescribing. Unfortunately, I suffer from the fears of inflexibility in the face of yoga, but perhaps you can convince me, Gillian.

The original question about how you promote diversity and inclusion has been addressed to some extent, but, if you feel that you want to say more about that, please do. I specifically want to ask you whether there are barriers about negative perceptions or stereotypes in the way that your sport or activity is represented and how that could be tackled. Are there problems of that sort?

Gillian Osborne: I will go back to what we have been doing with diversity, inclusion and social justice. We are very active on social media, in our online newsletter and in our quarterly magazine. We have a lot of articles. We address these issues. It has been quite prominent, particularly over the last year. We also do an annual survey and we asked our members this year what diversity, equity and inclusion meant to them, what they would like to see us doing and how they think we are doing. We have that information to collate and take forward with actions.

We have considered appointing and decided to appoint an equity, inclusion and diversity manager. The trustees on the board at the BWY have all been on training courses. That is something we would like to offer to teachers and staff, but it is a resource-driven thing. That is the barrier for us as an organisation.

Recently, I would say in the last 12 months, we have made a conscious decision with images and photography of how yoga is portrayed; for example, the flexible postures, something really simple, someone sitting, not even cross-legged but in a state of being at peace. That is something that anybody can do. We have done a number of different things. One is to do with ability; that is, flexibility and gymnastic achievement. The other is to do with minority groups, differently abled groups, ethnic minorities and different sexualities. There is a whole range of issues. There are so many things that could be done and that we are working to address. Again, it is resource. The barrier for us would be resources.

We are developing a new website that will enable us to do a lot more than we can do with our current website. That will affect particularly young people, because I think they will find the content much more engaging than at present. It will also enable us to have forums where we can hold discussions. We have had discussion groups. We do that. That is something that we are continuing to do. Social justice and addressing diversity, equity and inclusion is a huge thing, and I think all of us are looking toward doing that now to develop community, particularly because of the isolation that has become so prevalent throughout the pandemic.

Baroness Blower: Lord Chair, I know of many primary schools where yoga forms part of what children do every day. They may not do it brilliantly, but they certainly enjoy doing it. Marcus, can you respond to those questions?

Marcus Kingwell: Baroness Blower, it is really good to know that you are an advocate of group exercise and I hope it helps you with your recovery. The point you make is significant. The imagery that has been

used for 30 or 40 years now around group exercise and fitness depicts fit, attractive young people in tight-fitting clothes. That continues today to a large extent and it concerns me. It isolates many people who do not feel that that is for them. They feel that it is an unachievable body image and it can sometimes even drive really inappropriate behaviours. There is a problem there that needs to be tackled.

We also have to think about why it is there in the first place. Group exercise in our gyms and leisure centres is a lucrative income stream, an important one, which cross-subsidises some of the other activities going on. You could say that that kind of imagery has been part of driving that income stream. Group exercise classes now are rammed. They are full to capacity in most gyms and leisure centres up and down the country. You could say, "Is that a price that we pay?" Our cohort of people we deal with work more in the community settings than in the gyms. They are, inevitably, working with more diverse communities.

When you start to look at the original research behind This Girl Can, it said that the number one barrier to women's participation was fear of being judged. This whole thing around the type of clothing and the body image is a major issue. The very first campaign of This Girl Can focused on a very diverse range of women, which I thought was fabulous, most of them actually doing group exercise in the advertisements.

We are continuing to look at it. Like Gillian, we are commissioning new photography to get the right kind of imagery used by our organisation. We signed up to the equality programme as well and we are updating all our policies and actions in that area. It is a long road, but you are right, the imagery remains a problem.

Clive Copeland: I hope that you return to angling someday, Baroness, and we can bring you back to our sport. I touched on our current ambition and focus on improving diversity and inclusion. One thing I did not touch on is that we have been running a programme in partnership with the Environment Agency for the last four years called Building Bridges. That is a very successful programme that works with migrant communities and migrant community schools. We have a team of eastern European specialists, anglers, who work for us, who do the outreach work to educate migrant communities into our sport—the legalities and the traditions. It is also to increase participation. It may not be one of those core focus areas of diversity and inclusion, but it is certainly that sort of outreach area.

As I mentioned earlier, our current real focus is on the ethnically diverse community and, certainly, women and girls in our sport. As I said, 80% white British male is not a place we want to be in the future. I agree with a lot of the comments from Marcus and Gillian regarding imagery. There has been a misconception that angling is a boring sport with a lack of activity, and you need to dress in tweed, green or camouflage and disappear around bushes or trees to participate. We are working to break down a number of those stereotypical images and change the view of society.

Through our Get Fishing campaign, which is particularly focused on families, we have the opportunity to do that across the demographics. We are trying to change a lot of the imagery that we use to be more fun and family-focused—bright colours for example. Families with a picnic rug, having fun and a good day out going fishing is a strong image for us that can change the view for a lot of the community. We are heavily involved in new video content, imagery, blogs and case studies. There are bespoke coaching courses for either women and girls or people from ethnically diverse communities.

We are doing as much as we can within that arena to break down those negative perceptions. We feel that, once we have stronger insight, which I mentioned is the piece we are currently working through, we will be able to upscale the activity in that area.

Q194 Lord Knight of Weymouth: Before I ask my question, I wanted to follow up, Gillian, around this question of yoga in schools. Like others, my perception is that, particularly right now because of well-being being quite a priority for schools, there would be quite a lot of yoga going on. I know that this week, with the International Day of Yoga, my step-daughter was doing yoga in school. Is there a problem, with the size of organisation that you are, being able to capture what is going on? There might be a lot going on; it is just that you do not have the capacity to know that.

Gillian Osborne: A lot of our teachers teach in schools, but that tends to be a private arrangement between the school and the teacher. There is a lot of that. There is also the initiative to teach in primary schools in deprived areas, which we are a part of. There does not seem to be, or there is not, any nationwide embracing, let us say, by the Department for Education of "Let's have yoga on the curriculum". I know there has been a lot of pushing to do that, but so far it has not happened. That is really what we would like to see: that it is taken on board.

Lord Knight of Weymouth: Finally on this, are you aware of any primary schools in particular using the sport premium to fund yoga?

Gillian Osborne: No, I am not. That is not to say that we do not have teachers in those schools. I just do not have that information at the moment here.

Lord Knight of Weymouth: My core question for all of you is the tricky one. We have a limited number of recommendations that we are going to be able to make in our final report if we are going to be listened to and have any impact, so we have to be disciplined. In return, if you were allowed only one recommendation for this committee to make to government, what would it be?

Gillian Osborne: I have been super disciplined in this, because my one recommendation opens a few doors. It has dividends. We would like better communication. For example, This Girl Can was a fantastic campaign and they did a This Girl Can yoga, but we were not even

involved with that. We do not have any direct line of communication to Sport England. We do not have a particular contact, so we are not able effectively to access not just funding but opportunities. That includes marketing. We have a lot of teachers; we have thousands of teachers. If we had been involved with This Girl Can yoga, off the back of that it would have really helped us with our marketing as well. Is that me trying to get three things out of one?

Lord Knight of Weymouth: Yes, I will forgive the cheating.

Marcus Kingwell: My number one recommendation that I hope you will be able to take up is to make physical activity an integral part of the solution to the public health crisis that the country is facing. There is obesity, type 2 diabetes, cancer rehab, stress. The list of the benefits that it can have goes on and on. I know Baroness Grey-Thompson has talked about this many times over the years; I fully endorse what she has been doing. Let us really take this opportunity to join up those two government departments, make them work more closely together and let that filter through to organisations like ours, Gillian's and Clive's, to really make it benefit the health of the nation through our various activities.

At the moment, it is a struggle. We are all small organisations. We are getting by, but we do not have the clout to do this on our own. We need the support of government and Sport England to make that impact, but we are ready, willing and able to help.

Lord Knight of Weymouth: You mentioned Sport England at the end. Is it the right organisation to be the lead if, in the end, you are asking for group exercise to be one of the cornerstones of building our public health and using physical activity in that way?

Marcus Kingwell: There may well be another route—I am not sure—but I know that it is a big theme within Uniting the Movement, its current strategy. It was a big theme within the previous strategy. The health message was key, and the health benefits are key. Without undoing that good work it has put in place as the building blocks, I would like to continue on that pathway. Yes, perhaps ultimately it is not the right partner. Maybe there is another route in. I do not know.

Clive Copeland: Very simply, our recommendation is to help the Angling Trust in our fight to improve access to angling and the aquatic environment. I have spoken about participation and my role as head of participation, but I have been a passionate angler since I was seven. Anglers rely on a healthy fish stock and access to fishing. Without that, no participation can take place. I would ask the Government to work with the Angling Trust to address the issues around water abstraction, water quality, poaching, predation and restricting access to angling. It is prevalent on a large scale and I am sure many of you on this committee are aware of the issues around that. That really underpins participation. Without the access to water, without water quality and healthy fish stocks, we cannot go fishing.

Q195 **The Chair:** Clive, you are the first person this afternoon to mention facilities and access to them, and yet that has been a common theme throughout our report. I wonder whether, Marcus and Gillian, this is an issue for you. You are not going to get those people currently excluded into your activities unless they can do it effortlessly and at low cost. Are facilities and access to facilities an issue? What could we do to resolve that?

Marcus Kingwell: Post-Covid, it is a massive issue, because 400 gyms and leisure centres have not reopened or have closed in this first quarter of the year. There is already a mass of venues that are gone. On the community side, many venues are run by voluntary committees that do not have the wherewithal and capacity to deal with all the Covid compliance rules. We have a major problem around that.

School halls are another one where, understandably, the schools are putting the education needs of their pupils first, but community access to school halls post-Covid is extremely difficult. That is displacing not just group exercise but all sorts of sports.

Longer-term, facilities are less of a worry for us. If you have any indoor space that is unobstructed, 10 metres by 10 metres and maybe two or three metres high, you can pretty much do a group exercise class. That is one of our great strengths, because we can go into communities that do not have gyms and leisure centres and still get people fit and healthy.

Gillian Osborne: It is not so much of an issue for us, because most of our teachers have transitioned to teaching online. That means that classes are often much cheaper, because the teacher is not hiring a venue. The issue for us is in finding a suitable platform. We would like to develop a really super platform, because yoga has specific requirements when you are teaching online that are not quite so easy to satisfy with some of the platforms.

We also have a timetable of free yoga classes, so that overcomes a barrier of finances for people. We did that during Covid. That is ongoing and online. In terms of that type of access, I do not think there is an issue. I agree with Marcus that, where we have teachers who want to go back into halls, the Covid compliance is definitely an obstacle. You have to overcome that by reducing the size of the classes, which then affects the income of the teachers, and so on.

The Chair: On that note, we bring to an end this session. As ever, I thank the committee for their wisdom, thoughts and excellent questions. In particular, I thank our three witnesses this afternoon: Clive Copeland at the Angling Trust, Marcus Kingwell, the CEO at EMD UK and Gillian Osborne, one of my former pupils, who has been a star and I am sure I saw her on one of those police visits, but we will not mention that as we move forward. It is nice to see you again, Gillian, and thank you very much indeed for your contributions. Thank you, all.