

Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee

Oral evidence: The social impact of participation in culture and sport, HC 734

Wednesday 12 December 2018

Ordered by the House of Commons to be published on 12 December 2018.

Watch the meeting

Members present: Damian Collins (Chair); Clive Efford; Paul Farrelly; Simon Hart; Ian C. Lucas; Rebecca Pow; Jo Stevens; Giles Watling.

Questions 271 - 347

Witnesses

I: Edward Argar MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Ministry of Justice; Steve Brine MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Public Health and Primary Care, Department of Health and Social Care; Mims Davies MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Sport and Civil Society, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport; Michael Ellis MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Arts, Heritage and Tourism, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport; Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP, Minister of State for School Standards, Department for Education.

Written evidence from witnesses:

- [Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport](#)

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Edward Argar MP, Steve Brine MP, Mims Davies MP, Michael Ellis MP and Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP.

Q271 **Chair:** Good afternoon and welcome to this session of the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee on our inquiry into the social impact of culture and sport. The witnesses are joining us on an historic day in Parliament as this is the first time that five Government Ministers have ever appeared in front of a Select Committee at the same time. The Clerk of the Committee has checked with the Clerk of the House and this is indeed the case. He said he didn't even need to look it up, he was so certain that this was the first time five Government Ministers have appeared together. We are extremely grateful for you appearing together, because it is not normal practice to do so, but as you will have gathered the nature of our inquiry cuts across a number of different Government Departments and so we were interested in discussing these matters with you together.

I would be very interested to know if the Ministers could give us a sense of what extent there is co-ordination between Government Departments on some of these cross-departmental issues. We have looked at the role of sport and arts and music teaching in schools, the role of culture and sport in rehabilitating offenders, dealing with health problems and obesity. Obviously we have got you all here in one room together, but how often do you meet as Ministers to discuss these things?

Michael Ellis: I will start off by saying thank you very much for having us here. I think I possibly volunteered on this occasion, which can't be a common occurrence.

I think that question can be answered as I am sitting next to our colleague Nick, because we have been working very well during the course of the past 12 months in regard to the work of the DCMS and also of DfE. Nick will no doubt go into more detail about this if he wishes, but Sir Nicholas Serota, the Chair of Arts Council England, for example, has been to see Nick as Minister for Schools to talk about cultural education and how much more can be done in that regard. Nick came at my invitation to visit a school in Northampton, called the Northampton School for Boys, with girls in the sixth form. It is a comprehensive school that does extremely well in the arts area. I know that was a very fruitful visit too.

In that area and in others there has been quite a lot of cross-party working. I know that there has been work by officials in our two Departments, and I think in the Departments otherwise represented here. With DCMS and MoJ, for example, I saw in March of this year the National Criminal Justice Arts Alliance, who do a lot of very good work with young offenders in the arts area. I think that is something that can have a major impact too, having been a barrister in criminal practice before coming to Parliament in 2010. As far as I am concerned, as a



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Culture Minister, I think there is good work across Departments of Government.

Nick Gibb: In sport we have the new cross-Government school sport activity action plan where we work with the Department of Health and DCMS. The National Plan for Music Education is run by Darren Henley but it is a joint project between DCMS and ourselves. We have the Darren Henley review of cultural education as well, another joint effort. As Michael said, he and I work very closely together in making sure that we have quality music in our school curriculum and a quality arts and cultural curriculum in our schools. We are working with the MoJ on developing a new secure school policy. Then there is the childhood obesity strategy working with the Department of Health. There is a lot of cross-Government work and it is happening not just at officials level but with Ministers as well. We are working very closely Jackie Doyle-Price in creating the Green Paper on children's mental health.

Steve Brine: Following on from that, Chair, the Schools Minister mentioned the child obesity strategy chapter 2 and I have written down off the top of my head the Departments that are involved in that strategy. There is DHSC, Department for Education, DHCLG, DCMS and Her Majesty's Treasury. That is very much a cross-Department strategy and the strategy does not hang together, let alone does it get us any closer to the north star, which is to halve child obesity by 2030, without all of those things playing their part. We simply cannot do it all on our own. We have to recognise that as the Department of Health we have a field force that is GPs, for instance.

The other thing that may be interesting for your record is that the physical activity guidelines of the Chief Medical Officer, who is independent of Government but works very closely to my part of Department, set out the health benefit for everyone. DCMS, the Department for Education and DfT, who are obviously not here, subscribe to those CMO guidelines on what we expect to see and what we think is healthy to see around physical activity. I think we are quite joined-up.

I talk at great length with the Sports Minister, both previous and current, about lots of these issues and that has been supercharged in a way by the fact that the new Secretary of State in my Department has prevention at his core. If you have prevention at your core, you can get away for about a week with saying it and then you have to back it up with some evidence and some strategy. That is why we brought out a prevention strategy a month or so ago. I think we are joined-up. There is always room for more.

Edward Argar: I endorse everything that Steve said there and as Michael said at the start of the answers. It is hugely important that we are joined-up and I think that we are increasingly joined-up. From a criminal justice perspective, we can only achieve what we are seeking to if we work in partnership. There is always more to do but I am confident



that with the work that has been done in the past six months, a year—we have seen the publication of Rosie Meek’s review and I know she has given evidence in this Committee. We are undertaking a strategic review of PE in the custodial estate. All of that is viewed through the prism of, I think it was, “Sporting Future”, which was a DCMS strategy document in 2015. It ranged widely but we have sought to root our approach in that cross-Government document.

At a day-to-day level, the head of PE and nutrition industries across the entire prison estate, Jason Swettenham, who I work with directly, co-ordinates meetings at an official level. We have had meetings between MoJ, HMPPS, DCMS and Sport England on this and they are looking to be monthly meetings to make sure that we are aligned. At a ministerial level, the Sports Minister and I have already had discussions about this and we are due to have a formal follow-up meeting in January about how we are aligned with that.

As Steve mentioned, I have regular monthly meetings with Jackie Doyle-Price to ensure a join-up with DHSC and Nick Gibb and others from the Department for Education, particularly about exclusions and the value of sport for those who do end up in custody. There are those meetings at a ministerial level and at the layer below there are the mechanisms at official level and strategy level to ensure an alignment. There is more to do but I think we are in a relatively good place.

Q272 Chair: If I ask the Sports Minister, do you think it would make sense—what I am about to say may be a tempting question for you to say yes to but it would be interesting how it would work strategically in Government—that the Sports Minister should be the strategic lead on sport? Sport is not a core competence for the Department for Education, even though a huge amount of money is spent on it on schools, and sport is not a core competence of the Ministry of Justice, but nevertheless sport in prisons and institutions is an important part of the curriculum there as well. Would it make sense to have the person who is the lead on sport being the strategic lead across Government on sport?

Mims Davies: You may have heard a parting shot from a previous Minister who felt very strongly about that. I don’t think there has been any meeting I have had since coming new to this post that the Departments represented across this table have not been raised in. I have enjoyed the fresh eyes and the opportunity to be quite greedy about taking on as much sport responsibility as possible. I am responsible for afterschool and over the weekend sport, but Minister Gibb and his Department have to make sure that that is part of the curriculum and the opportunities that our youngsters see in school and it works with the curriculum. If it was gifted to me, of course I would not be saying no but I think you have to work within the realities of the constraints.

But what we do have, and I think you have seen, is an active approach to it across Government. “Sporting Future” is very much a cross-Government strategy and since the publication it has shown joined-up



HOUSE OF COMMONS

working. As I say, I don't have any meetings where I don't say I need to go and speak to such and such Minister or there is feed from other officials or Departments. The reality is, whether it is school sport, physical activity, childhood obesity or social integration, it cuts across these areas. I am very keen to explore what more we can do, particularly as we see a push towards social prescribing in the health area and about prevention. I think active travel, working with schools, is absolutely vital. We need to explore how we can build on that.

Maybe a seismic shift at this point while we are working positively well together is not the place to go but I wouldn't expect anything else but for this Select Committee to try to put it at my door.

Steve Brine: I think the Secretary of State for Public Health sounds a lot better than the Secretary of State for Sport, but that is just my preference.

Q273 **Chair:** I thought a picture painted by Gary Neville to the Committee, earlier in the year when we started this inquiry, was quite interesting. If you look at, say, an inner city area that is poorly served with community sports facilities, where there are some crime-related issues and health-related issues, you might look at the community and say that the community facilities are not great; there are school facilities but they are only accessible to children who go to the school. Why don't we make the school a community hub for community sport and link it to other work that is being sponsored by DCMS through Sport England or the local authority or the public health board? It may be co-ordinated at a departmental level, your officials may know what is going on in the Departments, but when you look at communities on the ground, funding and policy seems to be enacted in siloes rather than looking at the community as a whole. Is that something that you reflect on in your deliberations?

Mims Davies: Sport England is helping with training more sports teachers and it has taken a function on that. Of course it supports grassroots through participation and facilities. But I share the frustration that there may be a fantastic pitch that you can't get on to and that you are prohibited from being there. We are looking at maybe using digital to try to find out where is available, where could be hired, where you could participate. Participation for me is absolutely key and there can't be anything more frustrating than wanting to improve your skills or have an opportunity and you feel that you are locked out. There is a role for private schools and, as you say, from community hubs. I have been there as a councillor trying to set up a legacy project and it is very difficult.

If the question is should we be doing more across Government to make sure that there is not limited opportunities, I think we should be doing more and particularly in those post-school, after what I call "munch time", 4.00 pm to 6.00 pm, where we don't necessarily know that our children are safe, we don't know whether they are being active. Indeed, they may not be home with a parent. We need to make sure that the



HOUSE OF COMMONS

whole of their day is active and if opening up facilities is the issue; we need to get to the crux of that.

Chair: There are some organisations, some private, some charitable, that go along to schools and say, "We will put in all weather sport facilities for you if we have access to run them commercially or the community when the school is not using them".

Q274 **Ian C. Lucas:** You are conjuring up a vision of a lot of happy meetings together thus far. I don't want to spoil the party but I want to ask about money. We have been hearing in the sessions is that there is a feeling in principle that we all want to be working together and doing cross-departmental stuff, but do you have examples of pooling of budgets between Departments that leads to projects that show practical working together on these cross-departmental issues?

Mims Davies: I think I just gave one example about teacher training, which Sport England are doing in terms of best practice.

Q275 **Ian C. Lucas:** Are they putting money into that?

Mims Davies: Yes, absolutely.

Q276 **Ian C. Lucas:** What sort of proportion are they putting in?

Mims Davies: I just had a meeting with them and I can't remember. I can send that to you, but it is certainly something that they see as a priority in their budget in terms of the challenge, working with the DfE, to make sure that from 4.00 to 6.00 pm, and maybe at the weekends, children have those basic skills and that teachers with busy days have an opportunity to make the best of the time that they have with their pupils to make sport fun. In the most recent survey about active lives for our youngsters, sadly the fact that sport was fun did not come out enough. If you want more participation and you want your money to go further, ultimately you have to make it fun and enjoyable so that children will come back and it will change lives. It is not always just about money but in this particular case you are right about—

Q277 **Ian C. Lucas:** It is not always about money but when you are trying to get money to support a worthwhile project—and I am sure you know this in your own constituencies—it is very difficult to get mainstream funding into novel projects, whether it be from a health budget or an education budget. What we would really like to have is examples of where you have been able to do that. Justice is another area.

Nick Gibb: One of the classic examples of that is the childhood obesity plan and the soft drinks industry levy that was designed to reduce sugar content in drinks that are consumed largely by children. The revenue from that has been given to the Department for Education to fund the primary PE and sport premium. That is a very significant sum of money. It is about £1 billion since 2013 and we have doubled it last year to £320 million a year. That is a really good example of where a policy designed to reduce sugar intake, driven really by the Department for Health, has



HOUSE OF COMMONS

funded an education sport scheme in our schools and that money has been very effective.

Mims Davies: Can I just jump in? It is £13.5 million that has gone into teacher training from Sport England and that is part of the £40 million projects to help children and families get active together.

Steve Brine: Following on from what Nick said, the sugary drinks industry levy—the sugar tax as it is called—has been very successful as a piece of nudge policy. That is why it is under review. Treasury want to review it to see whether we extend it to milky drinks. It is taking about 45 million kilograms of sugar every year out of these drinks, so that in itself is a good thing. Companies have reformulated and Lucozade is a great example of managing to do it and maintain the product. As well as the PE sport premium money that Nick mentioned—and we may get on to the child obesity plan in more detail later on—it also put some £26 million, £27 million into breakfast clubs. There is cross-fertilisation of money in that respect. It is a Treasury policy that is pushed by us that has benefited DfE, a good trick that they have managed to pull off. The fact is that Treasury managed to guarantee that money and then double it regardless of what the sugar tax brought in, so you can see why it has been a successful piece of policymaking.

Q278 **Giles Watling:** I would like to first of all address Nick, if I may. Ofsted recently said that it is seeing secondary schools eliminating art subjects from their programmes, but you have commented that the number of students taking art subjects has increased. How do you account for that difference?

Nick Gibb: Well, it has remained broadly stable, is what I said. They fluctuate over the years. The proportion taking at least one arts GCSE this year was 44% but it was also 44% in 2012. It has been as high as 49% in 2015 and in 2017 it was 46%. It fluctuates but it is broadly stable about the mid-40 percentage points of the cohort. What Ofsted is concerned about is to make sure that the quality of the curriculum in key stage 2 and key stage 3 in the arts is of a high standard. The arts are compulsory at key stages 1, 2 and 3 and then pupils can opt for an arts subject. They are entitled to study it if they wish but it is an option they can take to GCSE.

If you take the individual arts subjects, say for example music, that has fluctuated over the years but it is broadly at 6% or 7%. This year it was 6% with 31,000 entries. In 2011-12 it was also 6% with 33,000 entries, but it has been as high as 7% with 40,000 entries in 2009-10 and 39,000 in 2013. My ambition is for that figure to go up. We want more young people to be taking music to GCSE and to A level, and the way to do that is to improve the curriculum in music and the arts leading up to GCSE so that they are well equipped and motivated to take those subjects. That is the kind of project that Michael and I have been working on with people like Sir Nicholas Serota and Veronica Wadley about what we can do to



HOUSE OF COMMONS

work together to improve the quality of the curriculum throughout a child's compulsory—

Q279 Giles Watling: I understand that the curriculum is terribly important but there are also funding issues particularly in music, as you bring it up, with regard to the supply of instruments and so on. You can go to some schools, generally private schools, that will supply an instrument to a child if they show an interest; other schools don't do that. We have to level that playing field. What are you doing about that?

Nick Gibb: It is a very good point and there are some very good examples around the country where that is happening. We have the music hubs and we are spending £300 million between 2016 and 2020 on funding the music hubs. The Arts Council recently published a report showing that in 2016-17, 700,000 young people were learning an instrument in a whole-class setting, which is a very significant number of young people doing that. The music education hubs have been hugely successful and that came out of the Darren Henley National Plan for Music Education.

Q280 Giles Watling: What concerns me is that people are led so far down the line. I come from a background of the arts and I realise how valuable it is not only because people might go on to have careers in the arts world but it develops a sense of confidence and an engagement of abilities and so on. In my view, I don't think one should ever abandon people just because they have gone so far down. You finish that period of your education and then you are abandoned because you are moving on to somewhere else. We need to follow the students, follow their desires and wills in this area. How do you keep that smooth path going?

Nick Gibb: These are not easy questions. My concern has been to ensure that the quality of music education that all young people receive, regardless of whether they go on to more elite music later in their lives, is to make sure that they learn to read music, that they are exposed to some of the best music that has been played and composed. In addition to the £300 million, we are spending up to £500 million, which includes the £300 million, between 2016 and 2020 on those extracurricular activities outside of school, the music and dance scheme and so on, to enable those who do have a particular talent to be able to develop those talents.

Q281 Giles Watling: What I am driving at is: is that also going to be spent on capital assets?

Nick Gibb: Schools are able to spend money on those issues, but for particularly talented young people we do have the music and dance scheme that they can apply for to pay for access to the very elite music schools and conservatoires around the country.

Q282 Giles Watling: You recently announced £96 million to be spent on theatre, to support music, drama and dance to start a career in the arts. Is that part of the spend that you are talking about?



Nick Gibb: Yes.

Q283 **Giles Watling:** Is that going to be supporting drama schools beyond secondary education?

Nick Gibb: Yes. The music and dance scheme ensures that exceptionally talented young musicians and dancers, for example, are able to access specialist education. There are examples of theatre, also. Some well known actors and actresses have come through this scheme to develop their talent in theatre and drama.

Q284 **Giles Watling:** You will be supporting independent drama schools as well?

Nick Gibb: I am just double checking and that is absolutely right, yes, but if it is not I will correct the record in a minute.

Giles Watling: You will let me know in a minute. Thank you.

Q285 **Paul Farrelly:** Nick, I hope you don't feel that we are picking on you but I have a few questions for you particularly. I am very glad you are here because otherwise, in terms of parliamentary service, I would feel really, really old, and Ian as well. You have a long record at the Department. You were a Shadow Minister there before 2010. You served in the current position until 2012 and then came back in 2014. You are BG, DG and AG, before Gove, during Gove and after Gove. I wondered whether you might reflect back on your years of service during each of those periods and give us a feel for how you feel the state of music provision, the numbers of people studying it and the priority put on music by Government have changed over the period.

Nick Gibb: We take music and the arts extremely seriously. My assessment from visiting schools during that period—the period from 2003 when I was on the Education Selection Committee—is that the schools with the best academic standards are the schools that have a broad and balanced curriculum and a very high quality arts provision, very good quality music, very good sport. The idea that the best schools are just focusing on a narrow range of subjects is not the truth. I could take you to Northampton School for Boys where they have over 20 choirs and ensembles but they also have a very rigorous academic ethos and at least 70% of their pupils enter the EBacc combination of GCSEs. There are other examples of primary schools that take the view that if you have a very rich curriculum the academic results take care of themselves.

We also rewrote and revised the national curriculum to make sure that it was a more rigorous curriculum for music and the arts. As I mentioned earlier, there is now a requirement that children are taught to read music in primary school so that they can start to compose their own music if they wish to do so. We take music and the arts very seriously. I feel that the point of your question is that somehow, because we take English, maths, science and foreign languages seriously, we take music and the arts less seriously. Nothing could be further from the truth. We want



HOUSE OF COMMONS

children to be well educated in all the cultural subjects, in English literature, in the humanities, our history, the geography of the world, as well as being deeply immersed in the culture of our country and the culture of the world in music and the arts.

Q286 Paul Farrelly: You have anticipated some of the line of questioning. We have had this discussion before when we did our inquiry into the creative industries about STEM and STEAM. I am focusing on music but other people might wish to focus on sport or IT design technology. Let's ask a specific question: is the number of music teachers falling or rising or the same over the period?

Nick Gibb: What I can tell you is that the percentage of time spent teaching the art subjects, for example in—

Paul Farrelly: No, I am just talking music now.

Nick Gibb: I don't know if we have those figures to hand, but certainly the proportion of time spent teaching these subjects has remained broadly stable between 2010 and 2017. Of course there has been a decline in that period in secondary school pupils. There has been an increase in primary school pupils in that period and now that is going into it as well.

Q287 Paul Farrelly: I was just asking the question: has the number of music teachers fallen or risen or stayed the same over your time?

Nick Gibb: I don't have those figures here and I can write to the Committee with those figures. But the important figure, bearing in mind you have to take into account the numbers of pupils in the schools, is the proportion of time spent on these subjects and, as I have said, that has remained broadly stable in secondary schools. One more point on this is that in primary schools it is the third highest subject area in time spent on it and in secondary schools I think it is something like the fourth highest curriculum area, whether that is music or arts generally.

Q288 Paul Farrelly: If you have the data, I am sure we would like it. It is perhaps a bit of an unfairly detailed question at the moment. If you could write to us, Nick, that would be great.

Nick Gibb: Yes, I am happy to send you those figures.

Q289 Paul Farrelly: I am conscious of time and the fact that you have four colleagues here as well. You will have seen some of the research that we have seen from the University of Sussex on music teaching. That is from a poll of 500 or so schools, so clearly it is not comprehensive. But in their latest research they found that the number of pupils taking GCSE music and A level music and the number of schools offering it as an option have been in decline since 2016 and before then and that decline is likely to go on over the next couple of years. How does that relate to the statistics that you gather?

Nick Gibb: Art and design GCSE for example—



Paul Farrelly: No, I am talking about music.

Nick Gibb: Music GCSE has fluctuated over the years but it is broadly stable within that fluctuation of about 6% or 7% of the cohort taking a music GCSE. In 2010 it was 39,000 entries, which was 7% of the cohort. This year it is 31,000, which is 6% of the cohort, but last year it was 34,000, 7%, and in 2011-12 it was 33,000, 6% of the cohort. It is broadly around that figure, 6% or 7% of the cohort. Speaking personally, I would like that figure to rise and the way to get it to rise is to improve the quality of the curriculum leading up to GCSE.

Q290 **Paul Farrelly:** If we could send you a summary of the University of Sussex showing—

Nick Gibb: I am aware of the research. I have the DfE figures here of the entries into GCSEs.

Q291 **Paul Farrelly:** You might be able to give us a more comprehensive response from your statistics to the response that they got from 500 schools.

Nick Gibb: I can also give you the figures for A levels. The A level music entries have fallen. There were 5,390 this year and last year there were 5,585 and they have been higher. They have been up as high as 8,200 in 2012 but they were 6,127 in the year 2000, so they are about that figure.

Q292 **Paul Farrelly:** Perhaps you can follow up, but the general picture you are painting of the last few years is of a decline and the University of Sussex polled teachers who firmly blame the EBacc measure. It is almost a logical consequence that if you measure something at schools against something, that tends to create an incentive for schools to offer the subjects that they are being measured in.

Nick Gibb: During the period since the EBacc performance measure was first announced in 2010, as I have said the proportion taking at least one arts GCSE has remained broadly stable at that 45%, 46% figure. We don't apologise for EBacc. The EBacc is about social mobility. It is about making sure that all young people, regardless of their social background, are able to study and take the exams that the middle classes, the wealthier people in this country take for granted. When we came into office in 2010—I will give you one example—63% of young people were taking at least two science GCSEs. This year that figure is 95%, so now almost all young people are taking at least two science GCSEs whereas before it was the preserve of the top two-thirds. I think that is a welcome statistic.

Despite that increase, we are still seeing the proportion of young people taking at least one arts GCSE as remaining broadly stable at about 45%, 46%. It was higher in 2016, it was 48%, but then it was lower in 2012 at 44.7%. I am very pleased about what the EBacc has achieved. It has given more opportunities to more young people to take at A level the



HOUSE OF COMMONS

facilitating subjects that the Russell Group says open more doors and more access to their universities.

Q293 **Paul Farrelly:** I don't want to take up too much time, but whether that is broadly stable or not, having had a broad education of science and arts myself, I find the statistic quite worrying that only 45% or 46% are taking at least one arts GCSE.

Nick Gibb: But that predates the EBacc. That is nothing to do with EBacc. Can I just correct the record about one thing before you move on? When I was mentioning the third amount of time, that was to do with sport not to do with the arts. Sport is the third highest curriculum time spent in primary schools and the fourth highest in secondary schools, not the arts.

Q294 **Paul Farrelly:** I don't want to dominate too much of the time and I have only two more questions. I won't rehearse what is happening in my area. You will be familiar with parts of Staffordshire, having stood in Stoke Central, very bravely, in 1992. When we are worried about disparity across the country in music and what is going on, the Government and local authorities often say, "We are putting a lot of effort into the music hub". How well are music hubs doing across the country and how do you know?

Nick Gibb: The Arts Council does monitor the activities of the music hubs. They produced a very voluminous report earlier this year, analysing the performance of the music hubs and that report showed that in 2016-17 over 700,000 pupils learned to play a musical instrument in whole classes provided by the music education hubs and 88% of schools worked with hubs in the last academic year. I think the music education hubs are proving very successful and we have put a lot of money into music education hubs: £300 million in 2016 to 2020. They do a very important service and the schools are using them.

Q295 **Paul Farrelly:** We are doing a parallel inquiry into live music and associated issues, so there is an overlap. One of the witnesses from a band, Gomez—I had never heard of them but I have now; I am showing my age—was very forceful in saying that with concerns about regional disparities and how music is failing in different areas, how the hubs are performing, it is about time that there was a comprehensive review. If you agree, and members might or might not agree, there is a question across the Departments of who does it.

Nick Gibb: Who does what, sorry?

Paul Farrelly: Who would carry out such a review?

Nick Gibb: A review into music?

Paul Farrelly: Yes.

Nick Gibb: We had the Darren Henley review, called the National Plan for Music Education. We are planning to refresh and update the National Plan



HOUSE OF COMMONS

for Music Education in the coming months and we will be working with stakeholders, with the DCMS and the Arts Council England to do that piece of work. That is something that I can announce today, that we are working on refreshing the National Plan for Music Education.

Q296 Paul Farrelly: Do you have any dates?

Nick Gibb: In the coming months. We will be working on it and then we will be announcing something, because we want to make sure it continues beyond 2020.

Q297 Paul Farrelly: In the spring?

Nick Gibb: I can't give a date but you can be assured that we will report back to this Committee.

Q298 Paul Farrelly: Will that include an assessment of where things are good in music across the country and where things could improve?

Nick Gibb: Yes. We will certainly assess how successful the last plan has been and how we can build on that in carrying the plan forward.

Can I mention one other thing as a plug? One of the things we did in the Department a few years ago was create the Classical 100. This is a piece of joint work with Classic FM, with the ABRSM and Decca Records to produce 100 pieces of classical music on a website with free access to all primary schools in the country, the key pieces of classical music we think every primary school child should have heard during their primary school education. Over 5,000 schools have signed up. I always like to give a plug for that programme because it is a wonderful way of introducing young people to a certain type of music, to classical music, that they may not have exposure to at home.

Paul Farrelly: Decca. Now I do really feel old.

Q299 Rebecca Pow: I am going to move away from the arts, much as I love it, to sport. I am going to start with Minister Nick Gibb. New figures from Sport England show that not even one in five of our primary schoolchildren is meeting the recommended levels of physical activity. Why not?

Nick Gibb: That is a worry and that is why we are working on a new cross-Government school sport and activity action plan. I think children being active is hugely important not just for their academic achievement but also for their long-term health and mental wellbeing as well.

Q300 Rebecca Pow: You say you are working on it, so it is not out yet?

Nick Gibb: No. It will be coming out in the spring of next year. But we have also had the childhood obesity plan. I met Elaine Wylie, who used to run schooling in Scotland, and she developed the Daily Mile. I do think that all schools, particularly primary schools, should be having a Daily Mile programme in their schools because that is a way of getting children to be active.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Q301 Rebecca Pow: Minister, do you not come up against that some parents say, "My child shouldn't be forced to run a mile?" Is that one of the issues we are up against? Should it be up to Government to be legislating for that sort of thing?

Nick Gibb: We believe in autonomous school system but we do encourage and we pass policy. In fact, a number of schools are already signed up to the Daily Mile and many schools have their own versions of the Daily Mile, but I think all schools should be doing the Daily Mile. For some children it might be a challenge to be running a whole mile and they can walk fast. When you see it in action, children do enjoy it and it is a very effective scheme. I would like to see every single primary school in England taking part in the Daily Mile.

Q302 Rebecca Pow: Do you think a shade of competition would be helpful in that around Parliament we all have our step apps to see how far we go and it is quite competitive: "How many kilometres have you done today?" Do you think that would help with kids, because whatever we say about it, kids like to be competitive?

Nick Gibb: Maybe. I wonder how many—

Rebecca Pow: Maybe the Sports Minister could come in there.

Mims Davies: I said to Mr Lucas earlier that part of the problem is making it fun. There is a problem here with inactivity, as we have seen, and this is the first group stats that we have had from age five. You heard from Minister Gibb about "Sporting Future". That strategy is three years old and will need refreshing and that is one of my plans for the new year. That covers physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing, individual development, community development and economic development. Building on that, we heard from the Active Lives survey, as you mentioned, which showed that 3 million people do at least an average of 60 minutes sport or physical activity a day, which is encouraging, but the other hard-to-reach groups are simply not doing enough and that is unacceptable.

Q303 Rebecca Pow: That is 3 million. How many are there left outside the 3 million?

Mims Davies: I completely agree that the challenge that we have is that there are too many children who are not doing enough. It is a way of bringing it in in schools, whether it is with the work that Sport England is doing with families. Today parkrun have just announced they are going to be doing some more pilots, more money going into that opportunity to run locally, which maybe if you don't get the chance to do it at school you can do it in your local park. We were hearing earlier about challenges about hubs. There are 12 local delivery pilots that are benefiting with up to £100 million from Sport England, which are hyperlocal areas to particularly approach inactive children. My part of the day is between 4.00 pm and 6.00 pm and the weekend, so we need to make sure that families are active, because that encourages the youngsters. If mums



HOUSE OF COMMONS

and dads are being active, you are more likely to have active children. This is definitely a challenge for Government. Looking at things like active travel to school—

Q304 Rebecca Pow: Can I just stop you, Minister? That is a good point about schools that I was going to ask you about in a minute, but I wanted to ask about swimming. The target for kids leaving primary school is that they are able to swim 25 metres but a great number of them are not hitting this target. Surely that is quite a simple way of getting activity into a school and 38% of schools have cut their PE time. It is all very well having all these programmes but that is such a practical, relatively simple thing to do in a primary school, isn't it? Are you aware of that and how do you think you might address it? That would be quite a simple box-ticker.

Mims Davies: I have seen that in my own constituency where a local pool had to be fund raised to keep it open. It has turned into a community hub pool and other people are hiring it out for lessons and learning and it has made the school open up its doors. I think there is a challenge in getting children on a bus, down to the leisure centre and finding time for that in the curriculum, but that is good skills. It is time management, it is going to somewhere different, it is feeling confident about going out of school and being active. What we can't do, and I have been very clear since taking on this role, is we can't expect our kids to be active, adventurous and happy if we cotton wool them and then wonder why as teenagers they can't cope and they can't move forward, so we need to find that balance.

Q305 Rebecca Pow: Minister, I think a lot of the reason why they are not doing sport is because they have had budgets cut, but it has all been health and safety and the number of people you have to have with X number of kids when you take them offsite. All of those are difficulties, aren't they? Those are the things I am suggesting we need to address.

Mims Davies: That is why if we make sure that our teachers and parent helpers—if we have children we have had to go in and assist and give that educational opportunity. Volunteering in that area to assist schools is very helpful.

Michael Ellis: If I may, can I jump in here at this point and say that there is an artform that does not involve sport but is very good for physical fitness and health, including at primary school age, and that is dance. There was an Ofsted inquiry—I think colleagues will know about that—that confirmed that point. Dance is an artform as well as sport and can do much to improve physical health and it can be done indoors.

Q306 Rebecca Pow: I endorse it. The greatest value I had out of my school was my dance lessons.

Minister Gibb, Ofsted was raised with us by some of the evidence we had from one particular school—I think it was New College in Leicester—that because of the way Ofsted does its inspections it does not rate things like dance and music. They do not score these things, they do academic



HOUSE OF COMMONS

things, and that then means that the money the primary schools could be spending, ring fenced a bit, is not being well directed because you are not coming out with the right scores and they are not putting the money into the right areas. Do you have a comment on the inspection regime and how that ought to be altered maybe to help art, culture, sport?

Nick Gibb: Ofsted does not grade individual subjects anymore anyway but they do measure and grade the overall broad and balanced curriculum the school has. They have to look at, for example, the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children in a school, which of course does include the sporting activities of a school. They are strengthening their inspection framework at the moment, with a new framework due next year, to make sure that they have an increased focus on the broader curriculum of that school.

Q307 **Rebecca Pow:** Do you think it should be stronger?

Nick Gibb: I do think they should strengthen it, yes.

Sitting suspended for a Division in the House.

On resuming—

Chair: I appreciate that members are still returning, as is one of the witnesses, but for the sake of time we will make a start. We had been aiming to finish at 4 o'clock. Obviously we have lost 20 minutes or so now, so I think the chances are that we will run on slightly longer than that but we will try to conclude things as promptly as possible. We will have a final question from Rebecca Pow to Nick Gibb.

Q308 **Rebecca Pow:** Minister, you commented that you thought the framework you would strengthen art and sport. I think that is what you said just now, wasn't it?

Nick Gibb: It is Ofsted's framework not ours. It is strengthening focus on the wider school curriculum to make sure that those years at key stage 2 and key stage 3—particularly key stage 3 where there was a concern raised by Ofsted in the past that those years are not always used to the best effect. What Amanda Spielman is saying is that the future framework will strengthen inspection of the wider curriculum, particularly at key stage 3. For example, they are not reducing key stage 3 to two years and that there is still that breadth of subjects being taught to all pupils before they specialise for their GCSE choices.

Q309 **Rebecca Pow:** I wanted very finally to ask the Sport Minister, do you think in the light of everything we are saying about the benefits of sport it should be given a great more priority in particularly the primary school years?

Mims Davies: I make no secret about that within the first couple of weeks I made my bid to the Minister here to say that I would love to see it widely recognised in the curriculum and through Ofsted and into



HOUSE OF COMMONS

schools so they don't feel it is picking or choosing. You mentioned earlier about young children swimming; 77% of children leaving primary school can swim 25 metres when they leave primary school and we will be picking up that to 100%. That is how we will be addressing that in the school sport action plan. I think the whole reason that we have the range of Ministers here is for our children, for their activity, for their broader wellbeing, and the curriculum recognising sport is very important.

Q310 Chair: Can I ask Nick Gibb: does the Department keep any records about the academic attainment of schools that make a big investment in sport or culture or music?

Nick Gibb: To the best of my knowledge, I don't think we keep central records of that kind of provision. We do have an autonomous school-led system. We fund schools and we have a national curriculum for maintained schools. They are inspected, their results are published and a great deal of data is published about schools, but we let the day-to-day running of the schools be managed by the schools themselves. We don't collect data on, for example, what proportion of history and so on that—

Q311 Chair: You said that you want all schools to do the Daily Mile. Do you think it would be helpful to schools if there was some sort of evidential base of what schools that do the Daily Mile achieve as compared to schools that don't?

Nick Gibb: You could do and we have the Education Endowment Foundation, which we have endowed with £127 million to carry out randomised control trials of initiatives that schools are undertaking. I don't know whether there is one on that but it is perfectly possible for the Daily Mile, for example, to be subject to such a trial.

Q312 Chair: We had evidence recently from the head of Feversham Primary Academy near Bradford in Yorkshire, which is a really excellent model for how music has been used not just in teaching musical instruments but also as part of the wider curriculum. The head of that school believes it has been key to the transformation of the school in the performance of its students across the whole range of subjects. Would it not be good to have some sort of study of schools like that to see if this is so good, what can we learn from what that school does and what could other schools equally learn from that experience?

Nick Gibb: That is Naveed Idrees who said that if you have a rich curriculum then the academic results take care of themselves, and I absolutely agree with that. It is our role in the Department to try to spread that best practice and what is what we do and that is what the Education Endowment Foundation is principally designed to achieve. Of course, we engage in all kinds of other exhortation exercises to try to encourage schools to look at what the evidence is saying works in schools. We are moving now in the education system to a much more evidence-based approach to pedagogy and the curriculum, which is very welcome. We have, for example, the curriculum fund, which again is



HOUSE OF COMMONS

going to be rolling out curriculum materials, the best that there is around the country.

That is what we do day in day out. We try to spread best practice, but what we are always keen to do is to protect the autonomy of schools themselves.

Q313 Chair: But there are times you don't. There are times you are very strict about what the school should do, and that is not just on things like EBacc that we talked about earlier but things like the way children are taught to read and write. You will remember that was subject to a pilot study, which led to a change in policy. I wonder whether the same sort of approach would benefit as well, if there are official pilot studies saying this level of sporting activity, this level of music or cultural activity can demonstrably have an impact on attainment on schools. Therefore, even if we don't mandate that is programmes that schools should follow, we should at least have a baseline of evidence that says, "This is what we as the Department believe it can do".

Nick Gibb: Yes, I don't disagree with that at all. We have things called hubs around the country, so we have music hubs, we have—although it is a slightly different thing—modern foreign language hubs that we have just rolled out, we have maths hubs, which are designed to spread best practice. It is perfectly possible for us to do the same with music and the arts. At the moment we are working on a project, which we have not announced yet, about how we can improve the quality of the curriculum in the arts, and particularly initially in music, to make sure that what the curriculum is delivering in schools is of a higher quality.

We did change the national curriculum when we came into office in 2010, and it came into force in 2014, that improved what the national curriculum said should be taught in schools, but there is often a gap between what the national curriculum says and what is taught in schools. I agree with you that there is a case for providing extra support and help on what is happening in the best schools in the country, like Feversham Primary Academy in Bradford, for example.

Q314 Chair: You said that the Department tries to spread best practice. How would a head teacher in my constituency find out about Feversham Academy?

Nick Gibb: There is no hard and fast science to this because what we have always sought to avoid in the Department is for there to be a centralised list of approved approaches. That is not what we want to see. The philosophy behind our whole approach is to have autonomous schools. There are more than 8,000 academies now that have autonomy over their curriculum, but with very strong accountability, a strong Ofsted and a lot of data being published about the results of schools and then people can see where there are schools achieving well.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

The question then is how are those schools achieving well. For example, tomorrow we are publishing the key stage 2 revised results and within those will be the results of multi-academy trusts and how they are doing. There will be a league table and you can see which multi-academy trusts are performing the best and we expect the school system to start to ask the question, "How is it that these schools are at the top of the league table?" and to learn from that.

Q315 **Chair:** In that sense, what is the school system?

Nick Gibb: The school system is the accumulation of all the scores. What we want to see happening and what is happening is that the profession itself is taking control of the curriculum and pedagogy. They are discussing and debating these things at conferences like researchED. It is no longer the preserve of the education departments of universities. That is how you ensure that schools are adopting best practice. As you say, there is a catalyst role for the Department for Education in things like how you teach reading. We are doing the same with maths in primary schools to get the Shanghai maths system. We have the curriculum fund, as I say, trying to spread best practice that is happening now to a wider audience of schools and that is what we are working on initially with music. We will have more to say about that in the next few weeks.

Q316 **Chair:** It strikes me that with the school reading work—because I remember when you were a Shadow Minister you were very closely involved with that—crudely speaking it seemed to be, "A pilot study demonstrated this method is vastly superior to that method and therefore everyone is going to do it this way". While you would not necessarily want to prescribe how sport or music or dance should be delivered in every school in the country, it would seem there would be a huge benefit in having some evidence of the performance of outlying schools to say, "This is how this school has delivered on sport or on music, within its budget; it has not got extra funding to do it". It is something that any school could replicate if they chose to and that should be a readily accessible case study that a head or governing body could go to and say, "Why don't we do that and understand about?"

Nick Gibb: I agree, I really do. In speeches that both Michael and I have made, we talk about examples like Northampton School for Boys with over 20 choirs and ensembles that is also achieving extremely well in the academic side with very high entry into the EBacc combination GCSE. I agree with you. What you are asking is: is there some more systematic way that the Department can promote music and the arts in this way? I agree with you and we should and we will. We are starting that with this work that we have not yet announced about spreading best practice in the music curriculum and ensuring that the music curriculum is of a much higher standard through key stages 1, 2 and 3. I hope that will result in more young people opting for the GCSE in music.

Q317 **Chair:** It strikes me that the method at the moment, as you describe it—I am sure head teachers around the country regularly read your speeches



HOUSE OF COMMONS

to make sure they are up to date—is that you happen to mention Feversham school. The Department is not going to give out any information about Feversham school and what the head of another school would have to do is probably get in touch with Feversham and ask them what they do and see if they can come and learn from it. That seems to me not the ideal way of spreading best practice.

Nick Gibb: No. The official way is that the Education Endowment Foundation conducts randomised control trials, they fund them and they are big. They also analyse the literature on all different areas of the curriculum and they publish it. There is an evidence toolkit and it is widely accessed by teachers up and down the country. It is very well respected. That is the mechanism through which that process occurs.

Q318 **Chair:** Are there any current studies being undertaken on sports and cultural activities in schools?

Nick Gibb: I will write to you about that and I can give you chapter and verse on that.

Q319 **Chair:** Thank you. I appreciate that. I would like to change Departments to the Ministry of Justice. As you will know, we had evidence from your predecessor and from Professor Rosie Meek about the study she was commissioned to do for the Ministry of Justice, looking at sport in prisons and young offender institutions. Why did the Government take so long to respond to the report?

Edward Argar: I was appointed in June when my predecessor resigned. I looked at that as soon as I got it in July and I responded at the beginning of August.

Q320 **Chair:** It was slightly later than they were expecting at the time.

Edward Argar: I think it was possibly slightly later. The publication did happen before the summer and I think at the time of the evidence given to your Committee it had not happened. It did happen and I responded on behalf of the Government in August. I sense an element of the delay, from what I gather, was the changeover in Ministers as well.

Q321 **Paul Farrelly:** As I recall, it was published on a quiet Saturday in August when most people were on holiday.

Edward Argar: Well, I wasn't, Mr Farrelly. I wasn't.

Q322 **Chair:** When we had Professor Meek in front of the Committee, we asked her about the recommendations particularly about boxing and martial arts, some of which she said were based on case studies from favelas in Brazil. She felt there was a very strong case for making them widely available and the Government rejected that advice. Could you tell us a bit more about what the evidential basis for rejecting that was?

Edward Argar: The key element there is that there is evidence about the value of boxing and martial arts in a community setting and other settings. There is not evidence about the value within a custodial setting



HOUSE OF COMMONS

and that was the challenge for us. As I say, in the community there is mixed evidence but there is some strong evidence there, but there is very limited evidence on how that translates into a custodial environment. With that in mind, in reconsidering the blanket policy, our priority was the safety and security of the establishment, the staff and other prisoners. In the absence of any strong evidence in a custodial setting, we felt it was appropriate to retain the current policy.

Q323 **Chair:** The “A Sporting Chance” report did cite examples of boxing being used in a custodial environment and cited those as examples of good practice.

Edward Argar: It was very mixed. I have met Professor Meek subsequently and she acknowledged that the evidence base within a custodial setting is limited. Her request to me, which I think is not an unreasonable one, is in which case can more work be done with research on that to get a stronger evidence base? That is not an unreasonable request and it is something I am looking at at the moment.

Q324 **Chair:** But wasn’t that her recommendation? She wasn’t asking for it to be introduced across the board. She was asking for more pilots to be commissioned by the Department.

Edward Argar: My view, as the Minister responding to it, was at this point, with the lack of any evidence, it was not an appropriate time to commission those pilots to change the policy.

Q325 **Chair:** You say lack of any evidence.

Edward Argar: Within a custodial setting in this country.

Q326 **Chair:** Okay. The report there cites Oakhill Secure Training Centre’s boxing club as an example of good practice. Why do you not consider—

Edward Argar: The STCs represent a very different type of regime to either YOIs or the broader adult male or adult female prison estate. They operate in a very different way. They cater for a different cohort of young people with different backgrounds and different offending histories and they also have a much higher staff-to-young-person ratio. All of those factors mean that what is learnt there does not translate directly into the broader custodial estate.

Q327 **Chair:** A recommendation in the report said, “There was widespread frustration from the professional staff I spoke to from different roles across the secure estate as well as many young people and adults, including women in custody, that boxing-related programmes are not offered in prisons”.

Edward Argar: I have visited every STC, every YOI in the youth custodial estate, some of the secure children’s homes, and I have visited a majority of the female estate that I am responsible for and some of the male estate. I have to say that when this has been brought up the unanimous view from staff and others is that they believe our decision



HOUSE OF COMMONS

not to accept that was the correct one. That is from governors down to gym instructors, PEIs, and officers on the wings. I accept that is anecdotal, Chair, but that is the feedback I have had from my visits.

Q328 Chair: You clearly spoke to different people than Rosie Meek did because she is quite clear in her report. She said there are examples of good practice and there are staff saying they would like to see more of it. She also quotes Nicola Adams's foreword to the report of the all-party parliamentary group on boxing where she said that in her view, "Sport has an almost unmatched capability to engage some of the most disaffected young people and help to combat a massive range of social problems". She is saying that as a boxer and there are lots of people within boxing who are big advocates for the role of boxing, often for people who live in very tough communities outside the secure estate and those people within it. Again, what is your reaction to the advice from people like that who are advocates within their sport?

Edward Argar: My reaction to that is that I think there is a strong basis to what they say about value in the community in both diverting particular groups of young people from offending and in the ability of boxing in that context to appeal to particular groups of young people who may be at risk of offending or may be on that track. I still believe that the lack of a strong evidential base and the workforce safety and security issue there means we are right to say at this stage that we don't believe the policy should be changed.

But it is not just boxing that can provide that sort of opportunity and engage with those young people. I focus primarily on the youth estate because, although it shades into the adult estate, there is where Rosie's review was coming from. As you will be aware, Chair, there is a lot of work being done with Leeds Rhinos, Saracens and others. I focus on rugby particularly. There are other sports and other organisations but rugby is a sport that also seems to have a really good engagement rate with some of those challenging young people. As well as giving them a physical outlet and discipline, it gives them a mindset and a team ethos that can also be extremely useful.

I read Rosie's report very carefully. As I say, I was keen to respond to it and I do take Mr Farrelly's point but I was also keen, having read the transcript of your Committee, your point was made, "Can you respond quickly?" so we did respond quickly. I was very clear, but I have met Rosie subsequently to discuss that particular recommendation. She understands where we are coming from. We did not, as some suggest, seek to influence what she did or not put in her report. We responded to it, she published it. It was an independent report and we responded.

Q329 Chair: Her report is quite evidence based. I think she impressed that upon the Committee when she gave evidence to us and that was one of the key recommendations. She cites numerous examples of why she believes it has a role within the secure environment. The Government's response seemed to be relatively dismissive, half a sentence in a very



HOUSE OF COMMONS

relatively short document saying, “We are not going to do it. We don’t believe the evidence is there”.

Edward Argar: A little more than half a sentence, Chair, but I take your point. Even having read what she cited as evidence, the evidence in the custodial setting was limited. For us, the priority must always be the safety of the workforce and other prisoners and unless there is a compelling evidence case, we believe that we have struck the right balance with current policies.

Q330 **Chair:** Yes, but what I am struggling to get a sense of is that she has presented evidence to you and you have rejected it. You have anecdotal evidence you have cited.

Edward Argar: We have said we don’t believe that the evidence is compelling.

Q331 **Chair:** What I don’t see much evidence of is the evidence you have received that tells you that what she has put in her report is wrong.

Edward Argar: What we are saying is that the evidence she put forward was not compelling from our perspective when set against our overriding priority to look after the welfare and safety of our staff and of other prisoners and the concerns that were raised by, among others, the Prison Officers’ Association about this. We have said that we are not convinced at this stage. There are other sporting opportunities within the custodial estate that we believe provide discipline, teamwork and a very positive route for young people and others. As you will have seen, we did accept 11 of the 12 recommendations without quibble.

Q332 **Chair:** What are the welfare considerations for staff from boxing?

Edward Argar: The concerns expressed by the Prison Officers’ Association at the time were about if individuals were taught particularly martial arts there was a risk, if that was not managed properly and if those individuals decided to attack prison officers or others, it heightened the risk of harm. That was the point of view put forward by the Prison Officers’ Association. The evidence we saw in Rosie’s report did not convince us that there was not a risk of harm.

Q333 **Chair:** She is citing evidence from staff saying that they would welcome it. One or two follow-up questions from me on other sports apart from boxing and martial arts. The premise of this study being commissioned was that it was felt that the sport offering in young offender institutions and prisons was not good enough and that there was a missed opportunity because it could improve not just the behaviour of people inside secure environments but also their rehabilitation when they go back into the community. What is your view? Do you feel that the offering to date has not been good enough? If you do, how would you like to see it improved?

Edward Argar: I think the offering is a good one but it is a mixed one, so there is a number of things we are doing to try to address that. At the



moment within, for example, YOIs, three hours is the minimum given to physical activity and sport, PE, as part of the 30-hour core week in education. One of the first decisions I made when I was appointed as Minister was to give governors greater flexibility to alter that ratio and to work with their providers to see whether there was an opportunity for greater use of physical activity, sport, as you will, in that context. They receive accreditation for the PE courses they do and that can be in sports and health qualifications and can incorporate literacy and numeracy qualifications, which for me was a compelling reason to allow that greater flexibility to governors.

I mentioned earlier Jason Swettenham, the national head of PE, among other things across the estate, who also has responsibility for nutrition, which we should not lose sight of as a second part of this. Under him we have a national team trying to drive good practice and shared good practice and a consistency of practice across the estate. We have had the review. We have had Professor Meek's review and we are now looking at the review of the PSI from 2011 that sets the PE framework to reflect the changes there. Across the whole of the estate nationally, we have 690 PEIs. I think we have a vacancy number of only 17 at the moment, so we are pretty well staffed for that.

Q334 **Chair:** But for me the report was not necessarily about staffing levels or qualified instructors. It is what they do and the thinking behind the report seemed to be, rather like in schools, there are some that do it really well and have very positive outcomes and some that do very little at all. As a consequence of this report being published and the Department accepting 11 of the 12 recommendations, in practical terms what do you think will be different as a consequence?

Edward Argar: I come back to a number of things. There is some very good practice. I talked about Saracens and Rhinos. There is a whole range of football clubs, cricketing clubs, rugby clubs and so on who go into different prisons.

There is an element of it being patchy, is possibly the best word for it, for two reasons. One is it depends on the links you have locally to different clubs, because often a lot of it, over and above the internal provision by your instructors in the gym, is what other clubs, football clubs, rugby clubs, you can leverage in to help work with them. The second bit is that although it is not a direct correlation, there is a link between the facilities that are available within a particular prison building. I know Rosie said there was not a direct link but in some cases there was with an old Victorian building. I think Phillip cited Wormwood Scrubs, a bit of scrubland, essentially, that they made work, but it is very different from even, for example, HMP Onley, which I went to, which has huge AstroTurf pitches that can be used all year round.

We are seeking to build on Rosie's report and the review of the PSI, and indeed what comes out of your Committee's report. We have taken a national lead through Jason's team, trying to get a degree of consistency.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Governors have a lot of autonomy within that. That is absolutely as it should be and we have added funding that they can access—£0.8 million in 2018-19, £1.8 million per annum from 2019 to 2020—which they can compete for and bid for to provide additionality for sport, education, where they feel that the existing provision under contract can't do that.¹ We have that baseline standard and we have also provided extra money and extra flexibility for those governors to deliver additionality.

Chair: It is not much, is probably the answer. I sense Mr Farrelly will want tweak on that.

Paul Farrelly: I don't tweet. It is not good for—

Chair: Tweak on that.

Paul Farrelly: Tweak. I thought you were talking about me tweeting. I certainly don't tweet.

Edward Argar: I am with you on that.

Q335 **Paul Farrelly:** There is just one point I wanted to make in case it gets a response. I was quite sceptical of this inquiry at the start because the social impact of participation in culture and sport sounds really fluffy, but when we had that first session with Phillip Lee, Rosie Meek and John McAvoy, it was one of the most powerful sessions that I have been involved in in 12 years on this Committee. Phillip, of course, had just resigned for a completely different reason unrelated to the report. The reaction to the report inside Government seemed to have been to leak it to get the bad headlines out of the way, so it became, with martial arts, "Kung fu convicts" in *The Sun*, as I recall.

Chair: Just for the record, when we initially invited Phillip Lee he was the Minister. We didn't invite him after.

Paul Farrelly: It covers a range of sports as you have said, and you have said the record is patchy. The whole history of it seems to have been treated from a PR point of view rather than taking it on its merits and doing further work where you feel that you need more evidence. I would hope from what you are saying that you are going to get away from the PR aspects of this to asking people what they think and if there is more pilot work to be done then ask the staff and the governors and lay it out as proper evidence.

Edward Argar: Yes. I think any policy, any independent report we commission, deserves and should be looked at on its merits as exactly what it is, a significant contribution to the debate in this area, in this case by someone who is extremely eminent and knows what she is talking about. There are policy decisions to make on the back on that as to whether as a Government you accept or reject some of those recommendations. That is why I was very clear when I took over—and I have seen it noted in that evidence session, I think, by the Committee

¹ Note by witness: To clarify, this funding applies specifically to the youth estate.



saying, "When are we actually going to get Rosie's report let alone the Government response?"—that I was very keen that it was published in full without us seeking to change it in any way. I take your point that the middle of a recess is not ideal but I still wanted to get our response out swiftly rather than the accusation of, "You have waited another six weeks to do it", hence why I did it in August. I wanted to be very honest and take each one in turn.

I hope that you will see in the comments I made and in the response that I signed that the tone is not Punch or Judy or anything else; it is a very respectful tone because I am grateful for what Rosie did. Since I have been in this post I have met her to discuss it and with officials on what we can do to work through those recommendations and on the implementation of the 11 we accepted. We had a perfectly open conversation about number 7, I think it was, which was the boxing one that we didn't accept. I am discussing with officials what we can do to look further at the evidence base on that one and whether there is evidence we are not aware of, or she was not aware of, that exists within this country of how we might get that. I think it is important we look at it objectively.

One of the other things, which I hope shows my and our commitment to her work and driving it forward, is we have agreed—and I think it is due in January, I forget the date—to a follow-up and we are aiming to do that in January as a one year on. Where are we with this? What progress have we made in each area? Where is there still more progress to do? Let's have a conversation then about some of the areas that are outstanding.

Q336 Jo Stevens: Can I follow on from what Paul has asked you? When Professor Meek gave evidence to us at the start of July she said that she had done her report and the examples in her report of good practice were there because they were so infrequent. There were so few of them that she was able to put most of them into the report itself. Can you understand our disappointment in terms of the questions we have been asking about a key recommendation simply being dismissed?

Edward Argar: I can see where you are coming from but I do not think it is fair to say it has simply been dismissed. We have set out our reasons for that. As you will be aware when you ask for an independent report, it does not mean you accept every single recommendation. No Government has ever accepted every single recommendation without thinking about it because, as I say, you get the recommendations from an independent report and then you consider it from a policy perspective and which ones you believe should be accepted and which ones not.

In this context we accepted 11 without dismissing them, we accepted them openly and fully and we will work with Rosie on how we can implement them. There is one where, for the reasons we have set out, we did not feel it was the right one to accept on that basis. That shows



HOUSE OF COMMONS

no disrespect for the report. That is a decision that Government make on a policy response to recommendations or to reports that are put to them.

Q337 **Jo Stevens:** I listened to the response that you gave about the delay in the publication of the report. Do you know why there was such a delay prior to your appointment in it being published?

Edward Argar: I don't, I am afraid. I can only answer from when I was appointed in late June. I asked about this because I was conscious that it had been commissioned and there had been some discussion of it. I asked to see it, I asked where we were with it and I was keen we got it published as soon as possible before the summer recess. Given that, I was not able to get the response out before the summer but I published it as soon as I could, having had the chance to consider the report fully and then respond.

Q338 **Jo Stevens:** You mentioned some small amounts of money that are going to be spent on sport in prisons, but your budget has accepted the largest amount of cuts as a proportion of any Government Department since 2010. I think by 2020 it is something like 80% cuts. It is a significant amount for the MoJ budget. How are you going to deliver any of this when funding cuts are being accepted like that?

Edward Argar: There are a number of things here. We are delivering this already with the budgets that exist. I mentioned the £0.8 million for 2018-19 and then the additionality of £1.8 million beyond that per annum. It is important to note that that is not the totality of it. That is an additional pot of money that governors can compete for and put in requests where they deem that the existing contract provision around education does not cover their needs or there is something they particularly want to innovate around or have in their establishment. That is additionality over the existing education contracts, over the existing provision of PEIs.

Q339 **Jo Stevens:** Do you accept your Department has taken the biggest hit out of any Department?

Edward Argar: Overall the MoJ has made savings, as have other Government Departments. That was a consequence of the financial situation in 2010 and what was necessary.

Q340 **Jo Stevens:** Do you accept that your Department has taken the biggest hit? It is not a difficult question.

Edward Argar: Ms Stevens, we have taken a significant cut in our budget, that is clear, that is a matter of fact and that has been acknowledged. I think it was acknowledged most recently in Justice questions when the Secretary of State responded to Mr Hanson, Member for Delyn, in the Chamber. What we have been clear about is that within those budgets we have continued to be able to deliver on education, on sport. As I mentioned, staffing is a key factor in that. We have 690 PEIs, only 17 vacancies. That is deemed to be the right level of staffing for our



HOUSE OF COMMONS

gym provision and our sports provision. We have maintained that and we are enhancing it with that additional money.

- Q341 **Jo Stevens:** Does that not assume, though, that you have sufficient prison staff to enable prisoners to be brought out of their cells in order to undertake these activities? You will know that most prisoners are in their cells for between 22 and 23 hours a day.

Edward Argar: I will come back to that. On staff, you will have seen the commitment by the Government to recruit an additional 2,500 prison officers and we are now over that. I think we are now at 3,650 ahead of the time when we said we would hit the 2,500. There has been a significant investment in additional prison officers, which is making a significant difference on the ground and on the wings in those prisons.

- Q342 **Jo Stevens:** Is the time that prisoners are spending out of cell increasing?

Edward Argar: Take the youth estate, which I am directly responsible for, they have their 30 hours a week of activity, three hours of which is sport. We deliver that. There are, in exceptional circumstances, times when that cannot be delivered in a particular instance or for a particular reason. I am confident the investment we have put into additional prison officers does facilitate a regime where those prisoners in youth institutions but also across the estate can access the education and sporting opportunities that they have a right to.

- Q343 **Jo Stevens:** You mentioned earlier on that your priority is the welfare and safety of the workforce and of prisoners.

Edward Argar: Also other prisoners, yes.

Jo Stevens: Doesn't that ring rather hollow when the statistics for violence in prison, both prisoner on prisoner and prisoner on prison staff, are at record levels?

Edward Argar: This is one of the reasons why you have seen the announcement by my colleague, the Prisons Minister, about both additional investment and staffing and steps to tackle some of the underlying drivers of that violence. Some of that is around drugs and psychoactive substances. You have seen Rory Stewart's very clear announcements about what he is doing to stop them getting in through the gates, to stop them coming over the wall and to track them down when they are in there. Yes, there is a challenge of violence in our prisons and that has been acknowledged very clearly by Ministers and that is why Rory Stewart and other Ministers have put in place a programme to tackle that. You have seen it particularly around the 10 key prisons that he has been talking about this year.

- Q344 **Jo Stevens:** Are there more prison officers in prisons now than there were in 2010?

Edward Argar: No.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Mims Davies: If I may, there is actually a meeting today with my Department, the prison service, the MoJ and Sport England to discuss synergies about existing Government work and what Sport England can do in adding to physical strategies and a review of the PE on the secure estate. We have a meeting in the New Year on this. I will make no bones that I have challenged the Minister on the boxing issue and will be discussing that further in the New Year. The community setting is obviously one setting and the Minister has his own focuses. I am looking at activity in terms of disadvantaged people coming into sport, or indeed different socioeconomic groups. We know in those particular areas this can be a particular concern.

I want to reiterate that there are definitely sporting opportunities in our prisons working through community relations; for example, the Premier League has its prison twinning service and you heard that about rugby. The team ethos, the feeling good about yourself, the chance of you reoffending less as a result is very important, because 17% of offenders enter the work place after release. If you do not feel good about yourself and if you do not have some of those skills that get you on to the next stage of life, sport can help you in that. This inquiry was described as fluffy by Mr Farrelly earlier but this is showing that it is simply not.

Paul Farrelly: No, it was my fear, my concern. Absolutely not.

Mims Davies: My point is it could be perceived to be being fluffy but the reality is that some of the ingrained challenges in our community are because it needs to be looked at and tackled cross-governmentally. We welcome the opportunity to showcase there is a bit more going on than perhaps you are seeing on the outside.

Michael Ellis: If I may just briefly, similar to this point, in a non-sporting context, there is also, of course, work going on with MoJ and DCMS in the arts in prisons. We should not forget about the good work that can be done there. My Secretary of State had a roundtable meeting with the Justice Secretary about that only last month, including a number of other actors in that area—the Young Vic, BBC and so on. Also if I could take this brief opportunity to commend what Arts Council England is doing with prisons. There are a number of programmes that are being funded through that route like the Geese Theatre and Clean Break and so on, where it is giving prisoners—young offenders and older alike—the opportunity to be creative and it is working very well in those areas. We are finding that work with MoJ is very positive.

Q345 **Chair:** Normally as a Committee when we discuss sport and arts it is in their own intrinsic value; in this inquiry we are looking in terms of the social aspect. For us it is about saying not that these are about providing nice extras but they do a job to help rehabilitate people, and that is very important.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Michael Ellis: They do. The creative arts, theatre and so on, also have a part to play in helping people be less recidivist, less reoffending when they are released from incarceration.

Q346 **Ian C. Lucas:** I have received a bit of good news on arts where a charitable foundation has just supplied a choir that has been working with substance abusers in the Wrexham area— they have been staggering along from week to week because of lack of funding—with longer-term funding. We do not have to be convinced about the value of these projects, which is why we are having the inquiry.

What I particularly wanted to ask was how the benefits of sport, music, and the arts within the justice area is mainstreamed. I am a little confused about the balance between what you require from the MoJ and how much autonomy the governor has. I would not like to think that a particular establishment was not receiving support in these areas because they could not find a local partner, for example.

Edward Argar: No, that is an extremely fair point. The national team work to do that and to help work with the governors and prisoners to make sure they do have national partners. The coverage is extremely good. Particularly some of the big sport clubs do amazing work, not just with one prison but a number.

Q347 **Chair:** We have covered a lot of ground but we have some more questions on health and obesity in particular. I appreciate the Health Minister said he had a hard deadline of 4.00 pm and now we are looking at another 20 minutes so we might have to draw a line here. Can we submit questions in writing to the Departments to follow up in that way?

Rebecca Pow: Shall I read out what my question would be? I very much wanted to ask the question about social prescribing. Your Department said all areas of local health and care systems were going to have social prescribing by 2023. How and where is the money coming from? Given that you have put such emphasis on obesity, halving childhood obesity, why is there not more in your chapter 2 about that? Is there enough money for it? Is there money from Treasury for walking to school, cycling to school—

Chair: I think we have to leave it there but we will write to you.