



Culture, Media and Sport Committee

Thursday, 18 December 2025

Bjørn Gulden
CEO
Adidas
[By email]

Dear Bjørn Gulden,

Following the success of the UK's Deaflympians in Tokyo last month, returning to the UK with 12 medals, we are writing to companies with a history of sponsoring elite athletes to understand why obtaining sponsorship is so challenging for elite deaf athletes.

In October this year, the Culture, Media and Sport Committee heard from the head of UK Deaf Sport, Chris Ratcliffe, and GB Deaflympians, Nathan Young and Henry Hughes, about the struggles of deaf athletes to fund their preparation and participation in elite sport, including the Deaflympics. Elite deaf athletes require the same equipment, kit and flights as their Olympic and Paralympic counterparts and the product placement opportunity on a global stage is still there.¹

Chris Ratcliffe told us that they and the commercial company they hired to commission sponsorship unsuccessfully approached hundreds of companies and ended up spending more looking for sponsorship than they secured in return. At the same time, elite deaf athletes in the UK are the only disabled elite sports group that has no access to public funding whatsoever. For Tokyo, the 65 UK athletes who took part had to raise £250,000 between them, this was just to enable them to represent this country, against other nations that do provide funding.

We recognise that there is reduced exposure of the Deaflympics compared to other parts of the Olympic family; however, we have already seen a positive response to our calls for broadcasters to do more to promote the Deaflympics,² and alongside our calls

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We are therefore writing to ask:

- What support, if any, have you offered or provided to elite deaf athletes in the UK?
- What are the barriers to providing such sponsorship or support in future?
- What you intend to do to explore sponsorship potential with the UK Deaflympic team and Deaflympians going forward?

There is significant sponsorship available for able-bodied athletes and we welcome the increase in sponsorship for Paralympians over the last decade. However, all elite athletes need to be supported, and we would urge you to consider the opportunity of supporting our GB Deaflympians.

We would appreciate a response by the end of January 2026.

Yours sincerely,

Dame Caroline Dinenage MP
Chair, Culture, Media and Sport Committee

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Culture, Media and Sport Committee

Thursday, 18 December 2025

Peter Gräsch
CEO
Arena
[By email]

Dear Peter Gräsch,

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Christoph Lohse
European CEO
Blue Seventy
[By email]

Dear Christoph Lohse,

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Sean Doyle
CEO
British Airways
[By email]

Dear Sean Doyle,

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Michael Rubin
CEO and Founder
Fanatics
[By email]

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John Mix
CEO
Finis
[By email]

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**Culture, Media and
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Thursday, 18 December 2025

Duncan Robert McLean
CEO
Funkita, c/o Way Funky Company
[By email]

Dear Duncan McLean,

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Culture, Media and Sport Committee

Thursday, 18 December 2025

Akito Mizuno
President and CEO
Mizuno
[By email]

Dear Akito Mizuno,

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Culture, Media and Sport Committee

Thursday, 18 December 2025

Joe Preston
CEO
New Balance
[By email]

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Culture, Media and Sport Committee

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**Elliott Hill,
President and CEO,
Nike
[By email]**

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Lucynda Davies
UK & Ireland Managing Director
Puma
[By email]

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Marc Le Roux
CEO
Reebok Europe
[By email]

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We recognise that there is reduced exposure of the Deaflympics compared to other parts of the Olympic family; however, we have already seen a positive response to our calls for broadcasters to do more to promote the Deaflympics,² and alongside our calls

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Culture, Media and Sport Committee

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We are therefore writing to ask:

- What support, if any, have you offered or provided to elite deaf athletes in the UK?
- What are the barriers to providing such sponsorship or support in future?
- What you intend to do to explore sponsorship potential with the UK Deaflympic team and Deaflympians going forward?

There is significant sponsorship available for able-bodied athletes and we welcome the increase in sponsorship for Paralympians over the last decade. However, all elite athletes need to be supported, and we would urge you to consider the opportunity of supporting our GB Deaflympians.

We would appreciate a response by the end of January 2026.

Yours sincerely,

Dame Caroline Dinenage MP
Chair, Culture, Media and Sport Committee

³ Letter from the Chair to Rt Hon Lisa Nandy MP, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, regarding funding Deaflympians, 18 December 2025

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Culture, Media and Sport Committee

Thursday, 18 December 2025

Chirag Patel
CEO
Speedo
[By email]

Dear Chirag Patel,

Following the success of the UK's Deaflympians in Tokyo last month, returning to the UK with 12 medals, we are writing to companies with a history of sponsoring elite athletes to understand why obtaining sponsorship is so challenging for elite deaf athletes.

In October this year, the Culture, Media and Sport Committee heard from the head of UK Deaf Sport, Chris Ratcliffe, and GB Deaflympians, Nathan Young and Henry Hughes, about the struggles of deaf athletes to fund their preparation and participation in elite sport, including the Deaflympics. Elite deaf athletes require the same equipment, kit and flights as their Olympic and Paralympic counterparts and the product placement opportunity on a global stage is still there.¹

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Culture, Media and Sport Committee

Thursday, 18 December 2025

Matt DiLorenzo
CEO
TYR
[By email]

Dear Matt DiLorenzo,

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Culture, Media and Sport Committee

Thursday, 18 December 2025

Kevin Plank
CEO
Under Armour
[By email]

Dear Kevin Plank,

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Culture, Media and Sport Committee

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Culture, Media and Sport Committee

Thursday, 18 December 2025

Shai Weiss
CEO
Virgin Atlantic
[By email]

Dear Shai Weiss,

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Culture, Media and Sport Committee

Thursday, 18 December 2025

Mark Hammersley
VP Swimming Division
Zoggs
[By email]

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