

Culture, Media and Sport Committee

Game On: Community and school sport: Government Response

First Special Report of Session 2026–27

HC 462

Culture, Media and Sport Committee

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Publication

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First Special Report

The Culture Media and Sport Committee published its Fourth Report of Session 2024–26, [Game On: Community and school sport](#) (HC 593), on 20 April 2026. The Government Response was received on 24 June 2026 and is appended below.

Appendix: Government Response

Introduction

The Government welcomes the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee's report on community and school sport, which was published on 20 April 2026. We recognise the critical role that sport and physical activity play in improving physical and mental wellbeing, boosting social connection and bringing communities together. The Government is committed to supporting community and school sport, ensuring everyone, regardless of background, has access to and benefits from quality sport and physical activity opportunities.

The Government is absolutely committed to ensuring that every child has the opportunity to participate in sport and physical activity, and recognises the crucial role schools play in delivering this. Since the publication of the Committee's report, the Government has confirmed it is investing £1 billion in school sport over the next three years.¹ This includes funding for the new PE and School Sport Partnership Network which will ensure more young people have access to high quality PE and school sport and break down the barriers to PE, school sport and physical activity for children who are less active.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/1bn-boost-to-pe-and-school-sport-to-end-fitness-postcode-lottery>

This funding is alongside the £400 million we will invest over the next four years to transform grassroots facilities for the communities that need it most, as well as the more than £250 million Exchequer and Lottery funding Sport England invests annually to support grassroots sport.

The calls for a cross-Government ‘Movement for Health’ strategy aligns with our current work on the National Plan for Physical Activity, due to be published later this year, which will set out the Government’s approach to tackling inactivity. The plan demonstrates the Government’s commitment to place-based working that embeds physical activity into local systems and strengthens ties between sport, health, leisure and civil society sectors.

We have provided a response below to each of the recommendations directed at the Government. We have consulted other government departments including the Department for Education (DfE), Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

1. Healthy Finances

We recognise the pressures on the public finances. Investing in sport, however, by creating a more active population, will eventually lead to significant savings, particularly in the health and welfare budgets. We recommend that the Government increase the 0.3% (£3.8 billion) share of total government expenditure on sport and recreation to at least 0.6% (£7.6 billion at current levels of Government spending) over the next ten years. (Recommendation 1, Paragraph 12)

We are committed to delivering sustained investment into sport and recreation, ensuring funding is targeted at the least active communities.

At least £400 million will be invested in new and upgraded grassroots sport facilities over the next four years, promoting health, wellbeing and community cohesion, while removing the barriers to physical activity for under-represented groups, such as women and girls, people with disabilities, and ethnic minority communities.

This includes investing £85 million in this current year (2026/27) into new and upgraded facilities via the Multi-Sport Grassroots Facilities Programme. At least 40% of funded projects are multi-sport, meaning more people can participate in a wider variety of sports and activities that appeal to them.

The Government has also confirmed that it is investing over £1 billion in school sport over the next three years to ensure more young people have access to high quality PE and school sport and to tackle inactivity levels.

Sport England, our arm's length body for grassroots sport, also invests over £250 million annually into communities that need the greatest levels of support and experience the greatest levels of inequality. This includes investing £250 million in 92 Place Partnerships focused on areas with high physical inactivity, social need, deprivation, and health inequality, delivered through local stakeholders including Active Partnerships and local authorities.

The Government will also invest more than £500 million to support the delivery of world class major sporting events hosted in the UK over the coming years, including UEFA EURO 2028, and the Tour de France and Tour de France Femmes Grand Départs 2027. The Government is committed to delivering international events with pride and seeking new opportunities to create a legacy to inspire the next generation of talent while promoting physical activity.

We recommend that the Government play a more proactive role in convening and enabling alternative sources of investment in grassroots sport and physical activity. This should include supporting models that leverage private and institutional finance, encouraging greater alignment between corporate social responsibility, investment and community sport outcomes, and promoting collaboration between public, charitable and private funders. (Recommendation 2, Paragraph 18)

The Government is committed to supporting sustainable economic growth in the sector, and ensuring this translates into tangible outcomes that span grassroots participation through to elite performance.

The Multi-Sport Grassroots Facilities Programme has an objective to maximise value for money of Government's investment through leveraging national and local partner funding. Across the programme in England, 100% of projects will be required to source at least 5% of project costs from local partners. On average, projects will secure 33% of project costs from these sources.

Last year, the Government announced £5 million of funding into basketball-led grassroots sport facilities match funded by the NBA providing £5 million for grassroots programmes through to 2028.

The Government wants to build ambitious, long-term partnerships with philanthropists to deliver tangible national renewal within our communities. 'Our place to give,' our recently published philanthropy plan sets out how

the Government will work in partnership with local government, civil society and philanthropists to address barriers and strengthen place-based philanthropy.²

We are actively exploring further investment opportunities that provide value for money, including through partner funding and leveraging private finance. Earlier this year, we brought the sector together for an investment focused roundtable on alternative sources of investment. We will continue to work closely with the sector to encourage further collaboration between public, charitable and private funders.

We recommend that the Government requires Sport England and other public funders to further simplify and standardise funding application processes to make them more accessible for grassroots organisations. This should include piloting alternative application formats such as video or interview-based submissions, introducing a lighttouch initial eligibility stage, and improving pre-application support.

(Recommendation 3, Paragraph 23)

The Government recognises the importance of ensuring funding application processes are accessible to grassroots sport and physical activity organisations.

Sport England is continuously improving its grant making and funding application processes across the whole investment portfolio. In recent years, they have introduced their Movement Fund to improve customer service and simplify the application process.

In 2026/27, Sport England will introduce a new platform to further improve the investment experience for applicants, as well having dedicated funding and resources to support how they invest.

We recommend the Government strengthen accountability for the PE and Sport Premium by introducing clearer national reporting requirements, consistent benchmarking and more robust scrutiny through Ofsted. As a first step, we invite the Government to set out, in its response to our report, a detailed breakdown of all funding it is allocating for school sport, including information about how much funding individual Government Departments are contributing.

(Recommendation 4, Paragraph 29)

On 21 May, the Government confirmed that it is investing over £1 billion in school sport over the next three years. This includes £580 million for the new approach to school sport, the PE and School Sport Partnerships Network. The new Network will replace the existing PE and Sport Premium and put

2 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-enrichment-framework-for-schools-and-colleges/enrichment-benchmarks>

an end to the one-size fits all model that has failed too many children for too long. It will build strong partnerships between schools, local clubs and National Governing Bodies (NGBs), breaking down barriers to PE, school sport and physical activity for children who are less active (i.e. doing less than 30 minutes of moderate physical activity each day). Following a commercial process, the new PE and School Sport Partnerships Network will be fully up and running from Spring 2027.

A further almost £200 million will go towards improving school sporting facilities, which could be used to make facilities more accessible for children with SEND or additional equipment, alongside a one-off £100 million PE Premium payment to support primary schools during the transition year.

Schools receiving the PE and Sport Premium have always been required to report on how this money has been spent and on the impact of this through school level reporting published on their websites.

To improve accountability and increase transparency on how PE and Sport Premium is being used by schools, from the 2024/25 academic year we introduced a mandatory digital reporting form, which enables us to see more broadly how the PE and Sport Premium is being spent by schools. This does not replace the requirement on schools to publish these details on their website.

The digital form helps us to identify any unspent and non-compliant spending of the PE and Sport Premium along with compliance to the Conditions of Grant. The Conditions of Grant outline to schools how, and what the PE and sport premium grant funding can be used and spent on. They also include all the requirements (terms) a school must conform to in order to receive the funding, and the consequences of what may happen if these are not adhered to. The data gathered from returns also provides us with an additional evidence base to help further develop our policy thinking.

On inspection, inspectors will look at how resources are allocated and used effectively, especially in respect of how this supports curriculum and teaching across the school. While Ofsted does not specifically assess a school's use of the PE and Sport Premium during inspection, inspectors will expect schools to develop pupils' understanding of how to keep physically healthy, eat healthily and maintain an active lifestyle, including by providing them with enrichment activities and opportunities to be active during the school day, and will consider this when evaluating pupils' personal development and wellbeing.

On 15 June, the Government published the Enrichment Framework,³ which sets out benchmarks and resources to give every school and college the tools to offer high-quality enrichment across arts, sport, nature, civic life and life skills. Ofsted will consider a school's enrichment offer as part of how it assesses personal development, and parents will be able to see their local school's offer through new 'school profiles' with useful information on a school's offering. The £132.5 million 'Every Child Can' programme will fund activities within school and in communities at weekends and in the holidays. It is structured around the same 5 categories as set out in the 'broad and well rounded' benchmark in the Enrichment Framework.

We were concerned about reports that the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) had sought to renege on commitments to provide funding for physical education. Given the importance of PE and sport to improving health outcomes, and the potential in the longer-term for consequential savings to the NHS, we expect DHSC to put its share of funding into the school sport system, along with funding from the Department for Education and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. (Recommendation 5, Paragraph 30)

It is absolutely right that school sports are adequately funded particularly given the positive impact physical activity can have on children's health.

As set out in its 10 Year Health Plan, DHSC is committed to supporting all people, including children and young people, to have fun and reap the physical and mental health benefits of movement. Supporting our children and young people to be more physically active is also an important part of the wider Government commitment to raise the healthiest generation of children.

Physical activity is important throughout the lifecourse, though particularly throughout childhood to develop healthy hearts and minds and support maintenance of a healthier weight.

This is why the department has provided funding and support to PE and Sport Premium and School Game Organisers Network for a number of years.

The Government has now confirmed that it is investing over £1 billion in school sport over the next three years.⁴ DHSC has committed to provide a significant funding contribution as part of this, alongside funding from DfE and DCMS. This will fund: the new approach to school sports, the PE and School Sport Partnerships Network; improvements to school sports facilities; and support for primary schools as we move to the new approach.

3 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-enrichment-framework-for-schools-and-colleges/enrichment-benchmarks>

4 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/1bn-boost-to-pe-and-school-sport-to-end-fitness-postcode-lottery>

This funding commitment underlines the Government's continued determination to improve access to PE, school sport and physical activity, especially for children who are least active and therefore have the most to gain, whilst managing wider pressures across primary prevention priorities.

This funding complements DHSC's wider action to raise the healthiest generation of children by implementing junk food advertising restrictions on TV and online, a move that we expect to remove up to 7.2 billion calories from UK children's diets per year, and working with DfE to update the School Food Standards.

2. Healthy Spaces

We recommend that within six months of this report being published the Government commission a comprehensive national audit of sports and physical activity facilities, working with Sport England and sector partners. The Government should publish a timetable for the audit and report on progress within 12 months. (Recommendation 6, Paragraph 36)

The Government recognises that comprehensive data on sports facilities is crucial to ensuring communities have access to spaces to be active.

Sport England manages and maintains the national sport facility database Active Places. At present, the database holds information on c.124,000 sports facilities in England, across c.43,000 sites. Active Places search and filter functions enable users to build detailed reports on the current facility stock by region and/or local authority.

We are working with Sport England to improve data collection, including an option to build on existing systems and initiatives, such as Active Places, OpenActive and Moving Communities. Through these tools we are looking to develop a greater real time understanding of facility utilisation.

We recommend that a statutory duty be placed on local authorities to provide sporting and leisure facilities in their communities. We further recommend that, as part of the wider increase in spending on sport and recreation, the Government provide councils with extra capital funding sufficient to enable them to meet this duty. As we have said, spending on sport and recreation should be seen as investment. (Recommendation 7, Paragraph 44)

We agree that sport and recreation should be seen as an investment into local communities.

The New Burdens Doctrine is clear that anything which issues a new expectation on the local government sector (irrespective of whether it is legislation, guidance, or any other changes) should be assessed for new burdens.

The Government is committed to reducing the burdens faced by Local Government and as such does not believe a statutory duty is necessary. The Local Outcomes Framework published in February 2026 sets out the priority outcomes delivered at the local level, including measures of physical inactivity in both adults and children. We want to work in partnership with local government and other local partners to reduce physical inactivity.

In June last year, we also committed £400 million to transform sports and leisure facilities over the next four years. We are working with national sports organisations and local authorities to deliver capital funding, ensuring that it promotes health, wellbeing and community cohesion.

Sport England are also investing £250 million through to 2028 working with 92 Place Partnerships in the top 20% for inactivity, social deprivation, and health inequality. This funding will help bring together local leaders, policy and decision-makers to understand the barriers and issues people face to getting active, therefore co-creating solutions.

We ask the Government to set out in its response to our report the measures it intends to take to relieve any adverse effects on sporting facilities from its recent business rate changes. We further recommend that the Government undertake a full impact assessment to ensure that potential economic, social, and operational consequences for sport and leisure facilities are fully understood. (Recommendation 8, Paragraph 46)

At the Budget, the Valuation Office announced updated property values from the 2026 revaluation. This revaluation is the first since the pandemic. In recognition of the impact of this reevaluation, the Government has introduced a support package worth £4.3 billion to protect against ratepayers seeing large overnight increases in bills.

The Government has also started the work of reforming the business rates system by introducing new permanently lower multipliers for eligible retail, hospitality and leisure properties. These new multipliers are worth nearly £1 billion per year and benefit over 750,000 properties, including many sporting venues. Unlike Retail, Hospitality, and Leisure Relief, the new multipliers are permanent, giving businesses certainty and stability, and there is no cap, meaning all qualifying properties on high streets across England benefit.

As a result of these measures, over half of ratepayers see no bill increases this year, including 23 per cent whose bills go down. Furthermore, most properties seeing increases have them capped at 15 per cent or less this year, or £800 for the smallest.

When designing these policies, the Government considered a range of evidence on the impact they would have on different types of properties.

We recommend that the Government retain Sport England as a Statutory Planning Consultee. For its part, Sport England needs to redouble its efforts to turn its responses around swiftly.

(Recommendation 9, Paragraph 52)

Sport England plays an important role in the planning application process and provides expert advice on sport and physical activity and supporting grassroots sport in communities.

The Government recently consulted on reforms to the statutory consultee system and asked for views on the impacts of removing the statutory consultee status of Sport England. We consulted with Sport England to understand the impacts of these proposals. No decision will be made on Sport England's role until feedback on the proposals has been fully reviewed.

A Government response to this consultation will follow. Regardless of the outcome of that process, Sport England will continue to engage in the planning process through public consultation and targeted notifications.

Sport England responds to over 99% of applications within the 21-day window. They are committed to continuing their efforts to turn responses around swiftly.

We recommend that any future planning reforms include a robust and enforceable mechanism to protect playing fields and sports facilities, safeguarding these vital community assets for future generations.

(Recommendation 10, Paragraph 53)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published in December 2024, sets out that access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity are important for the health and well-being of communities, and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change.

The NPPF is clear that open space should not be built on unless there is clear evidence it is no longer required, or equivalent or better provision is secured in a suitable location, or development of the site is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.

Between 16 December 2025 and 10 March 2026, the Government consulted on changes to the NPPF. That consultation included proposals to safeguard against the loss of existing open space.

We are currently analysing the feedback received and will publish our response in due course.

We recommend that the Government legislate to require local authorities and housing associations to remove unnecessary “No Ball Games” signs, to make public spaces more usable for children’s play.
(Recommendation 11, Paragraph 59)

The Government shares the Committee’s ambition to ensure that children and young people have safe, accessible spaces for play and physical activity.

We are supportive of removing unnecessary “No Ball Games” signs to increase spaces that are more accessible for children and young people subject to local circumstances. Ultimately, this is a decision for Local Authorities.

This work is in line with our commitment to place-based working and we will update the Committee on any further steps.

We recommend that the Government reinstate support for opening school sports facilities to communities, but that it do so through a long-term, place-based funding model, learning lessons from the experience of the Opening School Facilities Fund. The new programme should be locally informed, include clear sustainability and lifecycle cost requirements, and be aligned with wider community sport and health strategies to ensure lasting impact and value for public money.
(Recommendation 12, Paragraph 63)

The Government is committed to opening up access to school sports facilities and we expect this will be a key aspect of the PE and School Sport Partnership Network.

The new PE and School Sport Partnerships, announced in June 2025, will better connect schools with National Governing Bodies, local clubs and other providers. The model will build on learning from current and previous initiatives, such as opening school facilities, and support schools to make more effective and strategic use of their assets, including facilities.

On 21 May 2026 it was announced that responding to longstanding calls from schools and sports organisations, a further almost £200 million will go towards improving school sporting facilities, which could be used to make facilities more accessible for children with SEND or additional equipment, alongside a one-off £100 million PE premium payment to support primary

schools during the transition year. The Government is working with Sport England to develop this funding programme which will target the areas of greatest need across the country and will communicate more detail on the process for allocating this funding shortly.

3. Healthy Schools

We recommend that the Government strengthen the national curriculum by confirming that as part of the new approach to school sport announced in June 2025, a minimum of two hours of high-quality PE each week will be mandatory. (Recommendation 13, Paragraph 74)

The Government recognises the importance of ensuring all pupils have sufficient time for high-quality physical education. The independent Curriculum and Assessment Review, which published its final report on 5 November 2025, found that, despite PE's significant physical, mental and educational benefits, delivery is inconsistent across schools, with variation in quality. It recommended a clearer purpose, stronger progression, improved clarity in areas such as dance, swimming and outdoor and adventurous activities, increased focus on physical activity, and clearer separation between compulsory PE and GCSE PE.

The Government has accepted these recommendations and is strengthening the PE curriculum across all key stages to give it a clear purpose for all pupils, so that schools recognise the need to protect two hours of PE time for all pupils throughout their time at school.

We recommend that the Government require schools to have a policy to give every child the opportunity to achieve at least 60 minutes of physical activity a day. We further recommend that the Government set clear expectations for activity to be woven into the school day, through short movement breaks, active travel, and wrap-around provision. (Recommendation 14, Paragraph 75)

The Government recognises the important role schools can play in helping children to be active in and around the school day. This can include high-quality PE, introducing active uniform, encouraging active travel and increased opportunities through wider school provision, including breakfast clubs and other wraparound activities. Through our wider work on PE, school sport and physical activity, we will continue to support schools to create environments that encourage pupils to be active, while allowing flexibility to respond to local needs and circumstances.

Partnerships will have an outcome to reduce inactivity, and we envisage that supporting practice during and around the school day will be part of it.

We recommend that the Government make physical education a core subject within the national curriculum. (Recommendation 15, Paragraph 76)

The Government is focusing on improving quality, clarity and consistency through curriculum reform, wider school sport policy and targeted support for schools, an approach expected to deliver more meaningful impact without the complexity of legislative change. We have sought to balance breadth with depth, ensuring all young people have access to a portfolio of crucial knowledge balanced with the choice that facilitates a love of learning. We have also sought to ensure that these opportunities are open to all so that young people are not held back by background or circumstance.

The Government should publish a plan to strengthen initial teacher training in physical education and physical activity and ongoing professional development for all teachers, particularly at primary level. (Recommendation 16, Paragraph 80)

Supporting teachers to teach high quality PE is a planned core aspect of the PE and School Sport Partnership Network. We expect there to be a universal offer available to all primary and secondary schools, as well as targeted support where a need for this has been identified.

The Initial Teacher Training and Early Career Framework (ITTECF) sets out the critical knowledge, skills and experience that teachers need to have the greatest possible impact on the outcomes of the children in their classes. It was developed using the best available evidence about what makes great teaching.

The ITTECF includes content on subject and curriculum knowledge. This means that for some teachers, including primary teachers, their initial teacher training and induction will include content on teaching physical education. Additionally, all ITT courses leading to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) must be designed so that teacher trainees can demonstrate that they meet all the Teachers' Standards at the appropriate level. The standards require teachers to have a secure knowledge of the relevant subject and curriculum areas; and foster and maintain pupils' interest in the subject.

Recognising that new evidence emerges over time, we plan to undertake a review of the ITTECF in 2027. At which time we will seek views from interested parties to see if we need to amend our position to reflect any change in priorities and available evidence.

We understand the Committee's concerns about the use of coaches in PE lessons. At the same time, where this is done well, with high-quality coaches working alongside teachers, coaches can bring real benefits, including

helping to upskill teachers, introducing pupils to new sports and activities, and providing specialist expertise. This is reflected in the PE and Sport Premium guidance, which is clear that where coaches are funded through the premium, they should not replace teachers, and teachers should accompany pupils to maximise the impact of coaching.

The planned PE and School Sport Partnership Network will support schools to identify high-quality coaches who can complement teaching and help build teacher confidence and capability, rather than replace teachers.

In addition, the Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, alongside associated secondary legislation, will ensure that from 1 September 2027, external sports coaches used by primary and secondary schools to support PE lessons must work under the supervision of a teacher with QTS. Supervision does not necessarily mean that a qualified teacher must be physically in the classroom with an unqualified teacher. However, robust, formalised arrangements must be in place to ensure that a teacher with QTS is overseeing the quality of teaching and learning so that children receive high quality teaching that meets the Teachers’ Standards.

We recommend that the Government issue guidance making clear that schools are expected to adopt PE kit and uniform policies that prioritise comfort, inclusivity and dignity—particularly for girls and pupils with protected characteristics. Schools should work directly with students to provide flexible clothing options, including guidance on sports bras, and take practical steps such as improving privacy in changing areas to reduce anxiety and encourage sustained participation in PE. The Government should also promote more practical, activity-friendly school uniforms, such as allowing sportswear or trainers as standard, to ensure pupils can move comfortably throughout the day. These measures would help reduce barriers to activity, lower costs for families and increase participation, particularly among girls. (Recommendation 17, Paragraph 86)

The non-statutory *Developing school uniform policy* guidance⁵ was updated on 7 November 2025. This update included new content to reflect commitments we made following the publication of the Women and Equalities Committee (WEC) 2024 report on *Health barriers for girls and women in sport*.

5 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-uniform/school-uniforms>

The guidance sets out that schools should:

- consider how comfortable a proposed uniform will be for pupils, including reference to some schools adopting active uniforms which allow pupils to move freely and promote physical activity throughout the day;
- consider how the uniform policy might affect pupils, especially those who share protected characteristics;
- actively engage with parents and pupils when designing a uniform policy or making any significant changes and take these views into account when determining the final policy;
- ensure PE kit is practical, comfortable, suitable for the activity and affordable; and
- consider how PE kit supports inclusion and participation for all pupils, for instance by giving pupils the ability to choose items in which they feel comfortable, and by promoting the importance of girls wearing sports bras.

We recommend that the Government require and support schools to deliver a broader and more inclusive PE curriculum that prioritises enjoyment, comfort and a welcoming environment for all pupils. Alongside a wider range of activities, we recommend that schools should offer supportive, age-appropriate competition that helps children learn from both success and failure without making excellence the sole focus. High achievers should be encouraged to reach their potential, but schools should place equal value on progress from inactivity to participation, recognising this as a significant success in its own right. (Recommendation 18, Paragraph 93)

The Government agrees that PE should support enjoyment, participation and progression for all pupils. The Curriculum and Assessment Review recognised that the PE curriculum in England places a distinctive emphasis on competitive sport and concluded that competition remains an appropriate and important part of PE. At the same time, it recommended strengthening the curriculum so that it has a clearer purpose for all pupils and better supports inclusion, physical activity and progression. The Government has accepted these recommendations and is strengthening the PE curriculum across all key stages so that it is broader, clearer and more inclusive, while retaining competition as a key aspect of high-quality PE.

We recommend the Government builds on the success of the School Games Organiser network with its new School Sport Partnership by increasing capacity and ensuring consistent national coverage. We invite the Government in responding to our report to set out how the

scheme will work in practice, how it will build on lessons from the School Games Organiser scheme, how much funding will go into it, and what mechanisms will be in place to ensure this funding is effectively distributed. (Recommendation 19, Paragraph 101)

The Government has now confirmed £1 billion of funding over the next three years for school sport. This includes £11m funding for the School Games Organisers (SGO) Network until the end of the 2026/27 Financial Year (March 2027).

DfE will shortly be launching a competitive tendering process to procure a National Delivery Partner to deliver the PE and School Sport Partnerships Network. Once appointed, the National Delivery Partner will be expected to review and assess the current delivery mechanisms in place for school sport, to determine the most appropriate, effective way to deliver the new partnerships model. SGOs will have a role in this and it will take into account the independent review of the SGO Network and its recommendations, published by Sport England in July 2025.⁶

The National Delivery Partner (once procured) will also be expected to establish the new PE and School Sport Partnerships Network, which will consist of existing organisations within the sector. Leaning on the current infrastructure, existing expertise from local and regional partners, Sport England, and NGBs. This Network aims to strengthen partnerships, identify and address barriers to PE, sport and physical activity, particularly for the least active children.

4. Healthy Communities

We recommend that the Government should provide national funding and guidance to enable local authorities, clubs and community organisations to expand inclusive initiatives, (such as Play Streets, walking sports and evidence-backed programmes like Big Sister), prioritising those that engage older generations, disadvantaged groups and young people with limited support networks. (Recommendation 20, Paragraph 109)

The Government shares the Committee's ambition to expand inclusive physical activity initiatives, prioritising those who face the greatest barriers to participation.

Local authorities are provided with core funding to fulfil their public health responsibilities through the Public Health Grant, which funds a range of health improvement services, such as physical activity and weight

6 <https://www.sportengland.org/blogs/school-games-organiser-network-review-key-takeaways>

management. Where appropriate, this could include funding community organisations that provide accessible opportunities for people to increase their activity levels. Local authorities are responsible for deciding how best to allocate their funding, including the public health grant, to improve the health of their population and fulfil their public health responsibilities.

Sport England's ten year strategy 'Uniting the Movement' reinforces their commitment to increasing participation in sport and physical activity for those from under-represented groups, including disabled people. They have ensured that each of their programmes impact directly on disabled people, alongside initiatives like the 'We are Undefeatable' campaign, and partnerships with Disability Rights UK, Activity Alliance, Aspire, Sense, International Mixed Ability Sport.

Sport England's Buddle website provides information, guidance and resources for community sports clubs and groups. This includes information on engaging different groups and people, including individuals with long-term health conditions, those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, disabled people, and people with Special Educational Needs (SEN).⁷

Sport England's Movement Fund provides crowdfunding pledges, grants, and expert advice to community groups and clubs to help successful projects that support people to get active. The Movement Fund can award anywhere between £300-£15,000 to successful projects and can cover a variety of costs for projects, including refurbishing or upgrading facilities, purchasing equipment, paying coaches, facility hire and volunteer expenses. 50% of Movement Fund awards (29 April - 5 May 2026) have gone to areas in the top 25% places of greatest need.

We recommend that the Government review the impact of the place-based funding model annually, publishing metrics to ensure that 'doubly-disadvantaged' neighbourhoods are being fully included in the process. (Recommendation 21, Paragraph 117)

DCMS is taking a place based approach to tackling inactivity and recently published updated guidance on place targeting to demonstrate how investment goes into doubly disadvantaged neighbourhoods.⁸

The Government is currently working with Sport England to prioritise areas of high need in their investment programmes.

7 <https://buddle.co/learning-and-support-resources/being-inclusive/working-different-groups>

8 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dcms-place-targeting/a-new-approach-to-place-targeting-across-dcms-programmes>

We recommend that the Government intervene in discussions between the Premier League, Women's Professional Leagues Limited, English Football League and Football Association to ensure that women's football is exempt from the restrictions on broadcasting in the 3pm on Saturday slot. (Recommendation 22, Paragraph 122)

The mechanism of the Article 48 statute is commonly misunderstood to be a UEFA article that is imposed on member federations. In fact, the Article is an opt-in statute, which domestic football National Governing Bodies are able to opt out of in consultation with domestic leagues.

The UEFA statute and its relevance to women's football can also be challenged by National Governing Bodies without Government intervention.

The Government could choose to request that the FA disapply the statute in full, but all this would do is open that broadcast window to all football—including international football—which would simply further crowd the broadcast schedule without any benefit to the women's game.

Due to these technical limitations of Article 48, Karen Carney's Independent Review of Women's Football did not recommend that the removal of Article 48 in football is the answer to the scheduling challenges women's football faces.

We recommend that the Government provide clearer national guidance and sustained funding to health, sport and local partners so that proven models can expand and more people, especially those with long-term conditions, poor mental health or at risk of inactivity, can benefit from accessible, community-based activity as part of their overall health and wellbeing support. The guidance should cover how activities like bowls and walking sports can be signposted via social prescribing. (Recommendation 23, Paragraph 130)

This Government agrees on the importance of ensuring that people, at risk of, and living with long-term conditions have access to movement opportunities that best meet their needs and circumstances. There is already existing guidance from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence which includes recommendations on how physical activity plays a role in the prevention of and secondary prevention of chronic diseases and conditions

We know that for most people living with a long-term condition, movement is safer than being sedentary, and so it is critical that people are supported to build some movement into their everyday routines and to do something that they enjoy and works for them.

This is why Local Authorities, through investing some of the public health spend on physical activity, and the NHS through for instance, referral to physical activity support and social prescribing, are already signposting people to and providing a range of services to support the needs and care for people identified as being physically inactive and/or diagnosed or at higher risk of a long-term condition/chronic disease.

These opportunities, some of which are delivered by local leisure providers and/or the voluntary and charity sector include aquatic/swimming classes, exercise classes, falls prevention through strength and balance classes for older adults, walking groups, parkrun/walk. At a national level, DHSC provides entry level population wide free digital support through NHS Couch to 5k and NHS Active 10, which are helping millions of people to move more.

Local authorities also work with partners including the voluntary sector, businesses and sports clubs to support local communities with access to public leisure services, green and blue space, recreational space and playing fields, sports facilities, parks and outdoor gyms, playgrounds and access to walking and cycling routes.

The We are Undefeatable campaign, funded by Sport England and run by the Richmond Group of Charities, inspires and supports people with long-term health conditions to move in ways that work for them.

We recommend that the Government should publish a comprehensive volunteering policy for sport and physical activity. This should include linking volunteering to career development and skills pathways; establishing national awards or recognition schemes for volunteers in community sport; expanding flexible and inclusive volunteering opportunities; and improving digital tools to support recruitment, retention and coordination of volunteers. (Recommendation 24, Paragraph 138)

We recommend that the Government work with Sport England to identify steps that can be taken to streamline volunteer administration. This might include establishing a central register so that qualifications and DBS checks can be carried between sports and activity groups. (Recommendation 25, Paragraph 140)

We welcome the recognition of the role of volunteers and the intention of improving their experience across a number of areas. Sport and physical activity depends on a large workforce, currently 10.5 million volunteers, 2.6 million coaches, and c.600,000 people in paid roles. These people are deployed across 150,000 community sports clubs and beyond, in a sector where 78% of businesses are Small Medium Enterprises (SME's).

Within Sport England's Uniting the Movement strategy, there is a focus on improving the volunteer experience as well as seeking to diversify the sport and physical activity workforce so it becomes more representative of the communities it serves, as well as meeting changing needs.

We agree that the volunteering administration process should be streamlined to reduce the administrative burden on volunteers.

For the last three years, Sport England has worked with the Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA) to understand the conditions by which the workforce in sport can be governed effectively, and the steps that would be required to develop a national workforce register.

DCMS recently collaborated with Sport England and the Open Data Institute (ODI) around developing an open data standard for volunteering opportunities. We are continuing to work to explore how an open data standard may help improve volunteer administration, particularly in identifying ways to make it easier to volunteer and to streamline processes. This includes the development of a new national workforce register.

5. Conclusion: The Case for a Strategy

We recommend that the Government publish a cross-government 'Movement for Health' strategy by 31 December 2026. This strategy should establish clear national objectives to 2030, set out departmental responsibilities, and define the mechanisms through which health, education, planning, transport and community policy will contribute to increasing activity levels across England. (Recommendation 26, Paragraph 149)

The Government is currently working on a National Plan for Physical Activity, a commitment in the Government's 10 Year Health Plan: Fit for the Future. The intention for the plan is to outline the Government's shift to a place-based approach to tackling inactivity, which focuses on local delivery and investment. It will demonstrate what steps Government departments and public bodies, including DCMS, DHSC, DfE, Department for Transport and Sport England, are taking to increase physical activity and tackle inactivity through a place based approach.

This approach will encourage cross-programme and cross-system collaboration, involving stakeholders from the sport, leisure, health and civil society sectors, working directly with communities to invest locally and target groups that need the most support.

The plan will set out a consistent target to annually reduce inactivity rates through a place based approach.

We recommend that the Government establish a time-limited, crossdepartmental working group with a clearly defined set of objectives and a formal methodology for measuring progress and outputs to support the delivery of the strategy. This group should be chaired at senior ministerial level to ensure authority and accountability, and comprise senior officials and ministers from all relevant departments—including the Cabinet Office; Culture, Media and Sport; Education; Health; Local Government; Transport; the Treasury; the Women and Equalities Unit; and Work and Pensions. The group should publish regular, transparent updates against its objectives. (Recommendation 27, Paragraph 150)

A number of departments, public bodies and stakeholders are involved in increasing activity and decreasing inactivity and collaborate effectively across Government. Through the National Plan for Physical Activity we intend to set out clear, measurable objectives for improving the health of the nation by tackling physical inactivity.