



House of Commons
Digital, Culture, Media and
Sport Committee

**Sport in our
communities**

Fourth Report of Session 2021–22

*Report, together with formal minutes relating
to the Report*

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The Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee

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Summary

Sport and exercise are important elements of many people's lives and, before the pandemic, community sport and activity in England had been estimated to generate around £85.5 billion of social and economic value. However, the Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted a number of important issues facing community and grassroots sport.

Despite the Government allowing people to exercise outside for one hour a day, either alone or with their household, during lockdowns, team sport and group exercise was halted; gyms, leisure centres and swimming pools were closed down. After each successive lockdown, sport has been one of the first things to return but activity levels for 2020 fell below the figures for the previous year among adults, young people and children.

Sport groups and organisations have faced unprecedented challenges: to simply keep themselves going for such a prolonged period, during which sport could not actually be played, was an achievement in itself. Existing issues were exacerbated by new challenges such as the sudden need for social distancing, and financial models which discouraged the accumulation of reserves left clubs and organisations, right up to National Governing Body level, in a precarious financial situation. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has provided an opportunity to reflect on what needs to be done to ensure the long-term survival and prosperity of the community and grassroots sport sector.

1 Introduction

1. The sport sector in the UK encompasses a wide range of individual, community, regional, national and international activities. It is managed and supported by organisations that range from football clubs worth millions to small volunteer-run community groups. According to Sport England, community sport and activity generates £85.5 billion of social and economic value in England and that “every £1 spend on sport and physical activity generates an economic and social value of £3.91”.¹

2. In 2019, our predecessor Committee published a Report on *Changing Lives: the social impact of participation in culture and sport*, which noted the value of sport in breaking the cycle of crime, improving pupil engagement education and broader social impacts.² These benefits are reflected in the Government’s Sporting Future strategy and its five “key outcomes” for participation in sport: physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing, individual development, social and community development, and economic development.³

3. We began this inquiry in mid-October 2020. England had just embarked on a new three-tier system for Covid restrictions whereby different geographical areas of the country were subject to different rules depending on the prevalence of the virus. By the end of the month, the Prime Minister had announced another lockdown across the whole of England in order to prevent a “medical and moral disaster” for the NHS.⁴ As a result, much of the written and oral evidence we received was submitted during lockdowns when many sporting organisations, no matter their size, were unsure about their long-term survival.

4. As we publish this Report, the country is in a significantly different, and arguably improved, position: over 60% of the adult population across the UK has received at least one dose of a Covid-19 vaccine,⁵ mass pilot events, both in- and outdoors, have taken place,⁶ and the rates of hospitalisation rates are significantly lower than they were at the start of 2021.⁷ What is more, sport and exercise were some of the first businesses and activities to reopen as part of the Government’s roadmap out of lockdown. For example, outdoor sports facilities, including tennis courts and open-air swimming pools, reopened on 29 March 2021, and people were also able to take part in “formally organised outdoor sports”.⁸ Gyms reopened on 12 April 2021 and indoor adult group sports and exercise classes returned five weeks later.⁹

5. However, this now improved position does not negate the experience of the last 18-months of thousands of sports groups, organisations, volunteers and participants across the country. This Report explores some the challenges faced during the Covid-19 pandemic and the support made available by the Government but it is not intended to

1 Sport England ([COM0053](#))

2 Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee, Eleventh Report of Session 2019–19, [Changing Lives: the social impact of participation in culture and sport](#), HC [2019–19] 734, chapter 1

3 UK Government, [Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation](#) (December 2015), p 10

4 UK Government, ‘[Prime Minister’s statement on coronavirus \(COVID-19\): 31 October 2020](#)’, accessed 2 July 2021

5 ‘[Covid vaccine: How many people in the UK have been vaccinated so far?](#)’, BBC News, 1 July 2021

6 UK Government, ‘[Information on the Events Research Programme](#)’, accessed 2 July 2021

7 UK Government, ‘[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) in the UK](#)’, accessed 2 July 2021

8 Cabinet Office, ‘[COVID-19 Response - Spring 2021 \(Summary\)](#)’, accessed 21 June 2021

9 Cabinet Office, ‘[COVID-19 Response - Spring 2021 \(Summary\)](#)’, accessed 21 June 2021

relieve every challenge of the last 12-months. Instead, we have focused more on what needs to be done to sustain, support and grow community and grassroots sport as we emerge from the pandemic.

6. We would also like to take this opportunity to applaud the work that many sports groups, organisations and teams have done across the country in supporting their wider community during the pandemic. From boxing teams delivering food parcels¹⁰ to rugby clubs delivering prescriptions and shopping to people shielding and self-isolating,¹¹ their efforts have not gone unnoticed.

7. Sport is a devolved policy area, so this Report focuses on England. We are, however, grateful for the evidence we received and heard from organisations based in the other nations.

10 England Boxing ([COM0015](#))

11 England Rugby, [‘RUGBY’S VALUES & IMPORTANCE OF VOLUNTEERS’](#), accessed 24 June 2021

2 Participation

8. Every year, Sport England conducts surveys and produces reports on activity levels across England: Active Lives Adult, published twice a year and Active Lives Children and Young People, published annually.¹² Between November 2018 and November 2019, Sport England found that 24.6% of adults were inactive (less than 30 minutes a week), 12.2% were fairly active (an average of 30–149 minutes a week) and 63.3% were active (at least 150 minutes a week).¹³ The World Health Organization states “low or decreasing physical activity levels often correspond with a high or rising gross national product”, and that, globally, 28% of adults were insufficiently active.¹⁴ Using 2018–19 as the most recent example of a ‘normal’ year, 36.8% of adults in England were insufficiently active: almost 9% more than the global average.¹⁵

Covid-19 and activity levels

9. In December 2020, Dr Esther van Sluijs, Group Leader, MRC Epidemiology Unit & Centre for Diet and Activity Research, told us of the potential impact of lockdowns on peoples’ activity levels, health and wellbeing:

Such a prolonged period of inactivity will not only have a significant influence on later morbidity and mortality but also have an impact on people’s ability to restart their physical activity after the pandemic, as they will have likely lost their levels of fitness. They might have increased weight and will have established sedentary habits that are really difficult to overcome. A lot of these factors are barriers to increasing physical activity.¹⁶

10. There was a significant drop in activity levels during the first lockdown between mid-March and mid-May 2020,¹⁷ but the overall drop in activity levels for the survey period ending November 2020 was not as bad as initially predicted.¹⁸ The most recent Active Lives survey, which covers the first nine months of the pandemic in the UK, showed that the number of inactive people rose by 2.5%, the number of fairly active people fell by 0.7%, and the number of active people fell by 1.9%.¹⁹ In May 2021, Tim Hollingsworth CBE, Chief Executive of Sport England, told us:

The reduction [in activity levels] that we did see—and the latest figures is through to November last year so it does not take into account the period earlier this year of further lockdown. The reduction that we did see, which was about a 1.9% reduction, was expected and perhaps if anything was not as deep and was not as profound as we might have feared.²⁰

11. The impact of successive lockdowns on activity levels was not as bad as initially feared but the Committee is concerned about the consequences of the final lockdown

12 Sport England, ‘Active Lives’, accessed 22 June 2021

13 Sport England, [Active Lives Adult Survey November 2018/19 Report](#) (April 2020), p 5

14 World Health Organization, ‘Physical activity’, accessed 22 June 2021

15 Sport England, [Active Lives Adult Survey November 2018/19 Report](#) (April 2020), p 5

16 Q153

17 Qq176–179

18 Q464

19 Sport England, [Active Lives Adult Survey November 2019/20 Report](#) (April 2021), p 6; Sport England, [Active Lives Adult Survey November 2018/19 Report](#) (April 2020), p 5

20 Q464

from December 2020 onwards which has not yet been covered by an Active Lives survey. The Government and Sport England must renew their efforts on encouraging people back into sport to pre-empt any further drops in participation during ‘Lockdown 3’. *We recommend that the Government initiate a sporting equivalent of the ‘Eat Out to Help Out’ campaign, entitled ‘Work Out to Help Out’, to incentivise volunteers and participants to get involved, participate in organised sport and support the sporting infrastructure, both in England and across the UK.*

Children and young people

12. Data collected by Sport England showed that during academic year 2019–20, the number of children and young people in England who were active decreased by 1.9%, although activity levels still remained higher than in 2017–18.²¹ Whilst some of this drop could be attributed to children not taking part in physical education classes during school closures, even in the summer term of 2020 when schools reopened, the number of active children was down 2.3% compared with the same period in 2019. The equates to over 100,000 fewer children meeting the level of activity recommended by the Chief Medical Officer compared to the previous year.²² Overall, in 2020, just 51.1% of children and young people met the recommended level of activity of, on average, 60 minutes of activity a day.²³

13. As with the findings of the Active Lives Adult survey, which we refer to later, Sport England found that there are significant inequalities between demographics: boys are more likely to be active than girls, those from low affluence family are least likely to be active, and of all the ethnicities, Black children and young people are the least likely to be active.²⁴ However, Sport England did find that activity levels amongst children and young people with a disability or long-term health condition were the same as for those without one.²⁵

14. The Mayor of London told us that some clubs had already reported “marked drops in agility levels in the primary schools where they deliver” programmes as well as “an estimated 3–6kg average weight gain March-September [2020] for 8–10 year olds”.²⁶ Some organisations have also raised concerns about the risk of school closures and lockdowns to physical literacy among primary school children,²⁷ and the England and Wales Cricket Board told us that it is concerned about the risk of “losing a generation to sport, depriving them of the physical and mental wellbeing benefits of taking part in sport, whether it’s playing, coaching, volunteering or indeed deriving a living from the game”.²⁸

15. The proportion of children and young people not achieving the minimum amount of daily activity recommended by the Chief Medical Officer is of significant concern. Before the end of this year, the Government should initiate a nation-wide communications campaign, similar to that of the ‘5 A Day’ campaign, to emphasise the importance of children and young people engaging in at least 60 minutes of moderate activity every day.

21 Sport England, [Active Lives Children Survey Academic Year 2019/20](#) (January 2021), p 6

22 Sport England, [Active Lives Children and Young People Survey Coronavirus \(Covid-19\) Report](#) (January 2021), p 6

23 Sport England, [Active Lives Children and Young People Survey Coronavirus \(Covid-19\) Report](#) (January 2021), p 6

24 Sport England, [Active Lives Children Survey Academic Year 2019/20](#) (January 2021), p 7

25 Sport England, [Active Lives Children Survey Academic Year 2019/20](#) (January 2021), p 7

26 Mayor of London ([COM0114](#))

27 British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences ([COM0115](#))

28 England and Wales Cricket Board ([COM0106](#))

Inequalities between demographics

16. Participation in sport across England varies greatly between demographics and, year on year, Sport England repeatedly finds that there are significant, persistent inequalities in terms of activity levels.²⁹ Men are repeatedly more likely to be active than women, those in lower socio-economic groups are less likely to be active, and those with disability and long-term health conditions are less likely to be active than those without.³⁰ Written evidence pointed out to us that these inequalities have been further exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic.³¹ Sport England provided £20 million through the Tackling Inequalities Fund,³² with “awards made to key local partners to maximise the ability to support the activity of those in more socially deprived areas of the country”,³³ but this fund is described as a “targeted fund that’s been designed to deal with the ‘here and now’ issues caused as a result of coronavirus”³⁴ rather than as a permanent, long-term funding opportunity.

17. The Sport and Development Coalition told us that inequities in sport go further than the issues caused by the Covid-19 pandemic:

inequalities and discrimination in the sector mirror broader societal inequalities and extend to customer service experiences, the workforce and leadership of the sector

[...]

Sector-led research showed 40% of BAME participants report a negative customer service when taking part in community sport and leisure compared to just 14% of white British. Across the signatories of the Sport and Recreation Alliance Black Lives Matter pledge, just 1% of paid coaches, 2% of volunteers and employees were black.³⁵

18. Ollie Dudfield, Executive Director of the Sport and Development Coalition, expanded on this point when he appeared before us: “There may be cultural practices not being respected. There may be no opportunity to have coaches or activity leaders from the communities of individuals who are looking to participate”.³⁶ Lisa Wainwright, Chief Executive of the Sport and Recreation Alliance, told us that the sector needed to “ensure that there is a welcoming environment for anybody who wants to take part and contribute” by “understanding the needs of different communities”.³⁷

29 For example: Sport England, [Active Lives Adult Survey November 2019/20 Report](#) (April 2021), p 9; Sport England, [Active Lives Adult Survey November 2018/19 Report](#) (April 2020), p 7; Sport England, [Active Lives Survey November 17/18 Report](#) (April 2019), p 2

30 Sport England, [Active Lives Adult Survey November 2019/20 Report](#) (April 2021), p 9; Sport England, [Active Lives Adult Survey November 2018/19 Report](#) (April 2020), p 7; Sport England, [Active Lives Survey November 17/18 Report](#) (April 2019), p 6

31 For example: Sported Foundation ([COM0018](#)); Mayor of London ([COM0114](#)); Zamma Fit and RimJhim Consulting ([COM0082](#)); UKactive ([COM0050](#)); Sport for Development Coalition, School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences, Loughborough University and Division of Sport, Health and Exercise Sciences, Brunel University ([COM0061](#))

32 Sport England, ‘[Tackling Inequalities Fund](#)’, accessed 6 July 2021

33 Sport England ([COM0053](#))

34 Sport England, ‘[Tackling Inequalities Fund](#)’, accessed 6 July 2021

35 Sport for Development Coalition ([COM0061](#))

36 Q383

37 Q384

19. In our Report, *The impact of Covid-19 on DCMS sectors*, we recommended that DCMS should establish:

a fund to invest specifically in helping those people whose activity levels have been adversely affected by the lockdown restrictions—including older people, BAME people, disabled people, women, people from lower socio-economic backgrounds and those unable to access physical activity content online—to ensure that the progress that was being made in physical activity levels within these groups is not set back by Covid-19.³⁸

In its response to that Report, the Government said that “tackling inequalities and focusing on the people who need the most help to live active lives [would] be a key focus of Sport England’s new strategy”³⁹ which was subsequently published in January 2021.⁴⁰ Within the strategy, Sport England says that it will “have a laser focus on tackling [inequalities] in all that we do, because providing opportunities to people and communities that have traditionally been left behind, and helping to remove the barriers to activity is vitally important”.⁴¹ It states that it will “experiment with different approaches to tackle inequalities [...] and share learnings”⁴² and provide “effective investment models” to, among other things, reduce inequalities.⁴³

20. Year on year, we continue to see persistent gaps in activity levels between different demographics. This issue has been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic and certain groups in society continue to be disproportionately impacted. We acknowledge the support provided through Sport England’s ‘Tackling Inequalities Fund’ but support must be focused, as a matter of priority, on ensuring that activity levels among, in particular, women, disabled people and people from a BAME background recover and improve in the long-term. We recommend that the Government reconsider our previous recommendation to ring-fence further funds to ensure that the progress that was being made in physical activity levels within these groups is not set back by Covid-19, both by encouraging participation and by attracting leaders and volunteers from a range of communities and backgrounds across the UK.

The role of volunteers

21. Much of the community and grassroots sport sector in the UK is facilitated by volunteers: Sport England told us that “sport and physical activity has traditionally been dependent on a disproportionately high number of older adults volunteering to support grassroots activity”.⁴⁴ However, that group of volunteers is shrinking and the problem has been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic.⁴⁵ For example, Nahimul Islam, Founder and

38 Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee, Third Report of Session 2019–21, [Impact of Covid-19 on DCMS sectors](#), HC 291, para 11

39 Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee, Third Report of Session 2019–21, [Impact of Covid-19 on DCMS sectors](#), HC 291, para 2

40 Sport England, ‘[Uniting the Movement](#)’, accessed 24 June 2021

41 Sport England, [Uniting the Movement](#) (January 2021), p 9

42 Sport England, [Uniting the Movement](#) (January 2021), p 10

43 Sport England, [Uniting the Movement](#) (January 2021), p 35

44 Sport England ([COM0053](#))

45 For example: Mayor of London ([COM0114](#)); Active Essex ([COM0054](#)); Sport for Development Coalition, School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences, Loughborough University and Division of Sport, Health and Exercise Sciences, Brunel University ([COM0061](#)); British Fencing ([COM0027](#))

Director of Wapping Youth FC, told us that many volunteers were “struggling to adapt to the virtual lifestyle” which suddenly emerged during lockdowns,⁴⁶ but that volunteers were essential to his grassroots football club:

We have 46 volunteers who operate in our organisation, and that is it. We barely employ anyone. For us it is crucial to increase and retain our volunteers at all times. From our management board to our trustees to our parent governors to our youth council, it is all voluntary.

[...]

With the reduction in volunteers coming through recently, it has been super tough for how we operate our organisation logistically—the admin side of things, the paperwork, the funding applications. We tend to get a lot of coaches who want to volunteer, but we do not really get board members who want to volunteer their skills in accounting or treasury, or to be secretaries or admin staff.⁴⁷

22. Louise Morby, Senior Lecturer in Sport Development, Leeds Beckett University, also told us that sports like netball are “99.9% dependent on volunteers” but that “the biggest barrier [...] is the burden that comes along with being a volunteer who is not necessarily a coach”.⁴⁸ Louise told us that, when she was Chair of, and a coach at, her netball club, as well as Chair of the West Yorkshire Junior Netball League, she was dedicating an average of five hours every night to her voluntary roles.⁴⁹ It is likely that scenario has become all too familiar to many volunteers across the county during the pandemic: clubs still needed to apply for funding opportunities, produce return to play guidance and keep their membership as engaged as possible whilst not actually being able to meet or play.

23. During our roundtable events, a summary of which can be found in the Annex to this Report, we heard from many clubs about the challenges their volunteers had faced. For example, participants told us that over the last year they have had to take on additional roles such as navigating club finances to calculate how, or if, they could amend subscription fees in light of not being able to play, trying to support club members’ mental health and well-being during lockdowns, and setting up remote, online sessions for people to take part in from home.⁵⁰

24. One theme which emerged during this inquiry was the call for more support from local authorities. Louise Morby told us that “there are not many sport development units remaining within the local authority setting” and that whilst active partnerships and district activity partnerships had a role to play, community sport organisers “really miss that voluntary sector support at a local authority level”.⁵¹ The Local Government Association cautioned that sport spending may be “more vulnerable” to funding cuts as councils have to balance increased financial pressures with funding their statutory services such as social care. However, the call for more support from local authorities was echoed during the roundtable events. For example, some clubs highlighted the deficit in skills

46 Q292

47 Q309

48 Q311

49 Q315

50 Annex 1

51 Q294

among volunteers (such as accountancy and skilled trades) and some suggested that local authorities could provide skilled council workers to sports clubs on a cost basis to avoid clubs having to engage external services at the market rate.⁵² Other clubs also highlighted the difficulties they faced in navigating the grants system and suggested that advice from their local authorities on how to do so would be welcome.⁵³

25. Sport England has made the issue of the declining volunteer workforce in sport a key focus in its new ten-year strategy, *Uniting the Movement*. It says that it will focus on “working with others to take an honest look at the support and experience for volunteers [...] focusing on what’s needed to make giving [volunteers’] time easy, meaningful and supported, now and for the future, and in doing so, reducing the drop-out rates”.⁵⁴ However, declining volunteer numbers have been an issue for a number of years and the strategy provides little detail on how Sport England intends to tackle this issue.

26. Community and grassroots sport is heavily reliant on a relatively small volunteer workforce who have worked tirelessly through the pandemic to keep their clubs going. This shrinking workforce is one of the biggest challenges facing community sport post-pandemic. Sport England has placed an important focus on the issue in its new ten-year strategy, *Uniting the Movement*, but the sports groups affected by the declining number of volunteers need help now. *In addition to our proposed ‘Work Out to Help Out’ scheme, we recommend that the Government should set out, in its response to this Report, how else it will work with Sport England over the next 18-months to encourage people to volunteer across the community and grassroots sport sector and reduce drop-out rates among existing volunteers.*

52 Annex 1

53 Annex 1

54 Sport England, [Uniting the Movement](#) (January 2021), p 37

3 Funding and facilities

Financial implications of Covid-19

27. Many community and grassroots sports organisations have, for a long time, been in a precarious financial situation. For example, Nicola Walker, Chief Executive of Sported, told us that “before Covid even hit, many of our groups weren’t sure that they would be in existence in six months’ time, so this was already a very fragile environment for these very small groups”.⁵⁵

Reserves

28. Many grassroots and community sports clubs, teams and organisations have little or no financial reserves. Sported told us that only 38% of their members had a reserves policy, and 33% did not have “enough reserves to cover three months running costs”.⁵⁶ Sport England told us:

The majority of grassroots sports clubs exist on a hand-to-mouth basis. They have very limited reserves, and the culture of most as voluntary run organisations, means that they do not want to be seen to be charging participants more than needed to cover basic running costs. For clubs who are asset owners, restricted activity also halts their primary income stream whilst required expenditure persists.⁵⁷

29. StreetGames told us that 27% of their organisations did not have any reserves at all,⁵⁸ and lots of those which did “spent their reserves to give additional support, outside of sport and physical activity, supporting the wider needs of families and children and young people”.⁵⁹ The Sport and Recreation Alliance reported that 60% of self-employed workers across the sports sector “have no reserves and face substantial losses”,⁶⁰ and Marg Mayne, Chief Executive of Mytime Active and treasurer of Community Leisure UK, told us that many leisure centres have “limited reserves because [they] reinvest reserves back into the community and community programmes”.⁶¹

30. The problem of diminished reserves also extends to National Governing Bodies (NGBs). Sport England told us that, in recent years, NGBs have “sought to diversify their income” by investing reserves to develop new commercial revenue streams.⁶² Having not managed to replenish their reserves to normal levels, the issue was exacerbated when the pandemic hit and income and membership numbers fell. As it stands, Sport England’s funding model incentivises NGBs to “spend all funds within a specific timeframe” but in its written evidence, Sport England suggested that in order to protect NGBs better from

55 Q342

56 Sported Foundation ([COM0018](#))

57 Sport England ([COM0053](#))

58 StreetGames ([COM0063](#))

59 Q342

60 Sport and Recreation Alliance ([COM0076](#))

61 Q268

62 Sport England ([COM0053](#))

future shocks such as that experienced through the Covid-19 pandemic, measures could be introduced to grant NGBs “greater flexibility around reserves accumulation” so they can be “more resilient in the face of future adversity”.⁶³

31. Many National Governing Bodies and other sports groups and organisations were not financially stable enough to fully support themselves through the economic shock that was caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. There is a balance to be found between ensuring enough money is spent to improve participation and support community and grassroots sport, and ensuring organisations can be more financially resilient in an emergency. We recommend that the Government work with Sport England, UK Sport and the National Lottery to review and revise the current funding models to enable sports organisations to accumulate greater reserves and, as a result, have more of a cushion to support themselves with should another situation like the Covid-19 pandemic occur.

Other income and outgoings

32. At a time when sources of income for clubs and organisations such as venue hire fees or takings from clubhouse bars had dried up due to lockdowns, fixed costs remained the same leaving those without reserves at serious risk of closing.⁶⁴ Pitchero told us that “the clubhouse economy has also been traumatised with little to no matchday revenue or hospitality/venue hire income”⁶⁵ and, during our roundtable events, we heard even more detail about the huge impact such closures were having on clubs. For example, one rugby team told us that, in 2019, revenue from the club’s bar and café was about £108,000 but that, in 2020, it was around £8,000. Another rugby club told us how it uses clubhouse revenues to fund other activities for members but that, having only been open 16 weeks of the year, takings were around 30–40% of normal levels. On top of diminished reserves and significant drops in income, clubs were also having to introduce “significant health and hygiene protocols to ensure they [were] COVID-secure”.⁶⁶

Support during the pandemic

33. Overall, Sport England has dedicated £270.5 million in funding during the Covid-19 pandemic for grassroots sport via various funds.⁶⁷ Some of the funds, such as the Community Emergency Fund (£35 million), have now closed or stopped taking applications, but some remained open well into 2021.⁶⁸ When Sport England gave evidence to our inquiry, *Impact of Covid-19 on DCMS sectors*, some of its initial support packages were already oversubscribed:

We are over-subscribed; you are right. I think that has been indicative, probably as much as anything else out there, of the immediate level of crisis that has hit our sport and physical activity sector. Normally, we have two open funds: our community asset fund and our sport grants fund. They, too, run to a budget annually of about £20 million. Normally, over a year we would expect to get about 4,000 application for that fund. In the last five

63 Sport England ([COM0053](#))

64 Active Essex ([COM0054](#))

65 Pitchero ([COM0035](#))

66 The LTA ([COM0070](#))

67 Sport England, ‘[Funding, innovation and flexibility](#)’, accessed 2 July 2021

68 Sport England, ‘[Our funds](#)’, accessed 2 July 2021

weeks, we have had over 7,500 applications to the community emergency fund, so that tells the story of how much the local clubs are in need of that immediate support.⁶⁹

34. However, the emergency funding that was made available had a positive impact. In March 2021, Nicola Walker told us that the number of Sported’s members who did not think they would survive the pandemic had fallen to one in ten, “partly because of the funds that have been available, which have been swiftly delivered in some of the nations” and partly because “the smaller the group the less their outgoings were, so one of the advantages of not having paid staff, of not having facilities, is that they could mothball for a while and then hopefully start to reopen when they could”.⁷⁰

35. During our roundtable events, a number of participants emphasised the role that some of these funds had played in keeping their clubs solvent during the pandemic.⁷¹ For example, an outdoor racquet club told us that it had received a grant for £1,500 and that “without grants [it] couldn’t survive”.⁷² Some clubs from smaller, minority sports had also received some money which they stated was in small pots but “was enough to get over some of those hurdles” they were facing. As well as relying on grants, many clubs also praised their members who had continued to pay subscriptions and membership fees during this period, despite not being able to play or train.⁷³

36. However, even in normal times, applying for grants takes time. Nahimul Islam, Founder and Director of Wapping Youth FC, told us that clubs can “put in ten funding applications and [...] only get one. That is the reality of it.”⁷⁴ Nicola Walker of Sported told us that “every funding application is slightly different” and that “each funding application needs a different set of criteria around your governance, and around your measurement and impact”.⁷⁵ Furthermore, Ms Walker told us that different applications have been written in a certain style which, suffice to say, is time consuming and does not always result in very high success rates.⁷⁶

37. Even in normal circumstances, volunteers in grassroots and community sport dedicate a significant amount of time to applying for funding. Organisations such as Sported and StreetGames play an important role in supporting their members to complete applications but the extensive administrative burden associated with these applications seems unnecessary, and has only increased during the Covid-19 pandemic. To reduce the administrative burden on volunteers across the sport sector, we recommend that the Government work with governing and funding bodies to introduce a standardised application methodology for grassroots and community sport funds.

Facilities

38. The issue of facilities has been repeatedly raised with us throughout this inquiry. Lisa Wainwright, Chief Executive of the Sport and Recreation Alliance, told us that research

69 Oral evidence taken on 5 May 2020, HC (2019–21) 291, Q86 [Tim Hollingsworth]

70 Q342

71 Annex 1

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74 Q316

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undertaken with Sheffield Hallam University showed that “77% of the clubs [questioned] said the biggest limiting factor for people taking part is access to public leisure facilities”,⁷⁷ and Nicola Walker of Sported told us that, for smaller community and grassroots clubs, facilities “are a constant challenge [...] in terms of trying to get access to affordable facilities they can use at a time that suits their young participants”.⁷⁸ Swim England also told us that the nation has “an ageing pool stock” and that swimming “facilities are in crisis absolutely”.⁷⁹

39. David Pond, then Chief Executive of Great British Wheelchair Rugby, told us of the difficulties that clubs with more complex requirements, such as wheelchair rugby teams, face when trying to access facilities:

The first thing is that many of [the] halls of course are in leisure centres, so we need to rent those leisure centres. Costs are high. You probably only have about eight or 10 wheelchair rugby players accessing that at any one time. They have to foot the bill for that. Most of those will probably be on disability allowances, or certainly on very low ability to pay for any high cost at all. In addition to that they have the cost of their equipment, their wheelchair, which itself is about £3,500 to £4,000 for a sports wheelchair to play, which they need to be able to fund as well. That is an issue. Another issue is the floor type. Many new leisure centres will not allow wheelchair rugby to be played. They are sprung wooden floors and they cannot be utilised. Ironically we are better off trying to find some of the older type halls with the hard wooden floors that we tend to be able to use much more easily, so there are issues around that.⁸⁰

40. Our roundtable sessions also highlighted a number of issues regarding the lack of facilities. One netball team told us that, even before Covid, there used to be “a ‘punch up’ over who had first dibs at a school’s sports hall”, and a cricket team told us that “places to access the sport are being squeezed even tighter and there is more and more competition to access them all the time”.⁸¹ A number of participants also told us that facilities were looked at in terms of square metres: if leisure centres think that they can make more money out of a space by renting it out for an aerobics or spin class of 20 people, it is likely that they will favour that approach rather than renting it out for four people to play an indoor racquet sport.⁸²

Impact of Covid-19 on facilities

41. Nicola Walker of Sported told us that the issues facing clubs and organisations have been hugely exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic:

The facilities point cannot be overestimated: 85% of the grassroots sports that we support do not have their own facilities [...] The operators of those facilities are going to have to create social distance and have potentially

77 Q390
 78 Q335
 79 Qq407–408
 80 Q449
 81 Annex 1
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fewer groups and customers coming through. The nervousness is that community sports are disadvantaged in that respect, in that they do not necessarily pay the same rates that others might.⁸³

42. Unfortunately, the reduction in capacity at venues due to the need for social distancing was not the only impact that the Covid-19 pandemic had on access to facilities. A number of participants at our roundtable events told us that, when they were allowed to return to play, clubs which rely on facilities owned by other organisations sometimes found that they no longer had access because of a lack of upkeep during the lockdown periods.⁸⁴ With many organisations putting staff on furlough, maintenance had not been carried out to the same level and, in some cases, the facilities are now unusable.⁸⁵

43. Sport England is concerned about the number of formal facilities and informal places and spaces available for people to get active and to take part in grassroots sport, whether leisure facilities, school facilities for community use or public green spaces.⁸⁶ Sport England told us that:

Access to appropriate facilities has been a critical issue and one of the biggest barriers to reopening for many sports. It will remain a pressing issue long-term, as apprehension about declining facility stocks continues.⁸⁷

School facilities

44. Throughout our inquiry, we have heard about the importance of school facilities to the survival of smaller community and grassroots sport groups. Lisa Wainwright of the Sport and Recreation Alliance told us that, although there is a large stock of school facilities, their research had found that “72% of people ... lacked access to school facilities”.⁸⁸ Again, this problem has been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. For example, British Fencing told us that a number of their clubs have found that schools are no longer willing or able to open up their facilities because they are “reserved for pupils [...] or halls [are] now being used as classrooms”.⁸⁹ This problem had also been experienced by a number of participants in our roundtable events: due to the higher cost of commercial facilities, many clubs rely on renting school facilities but even when restrictions were lifted in summer 2020, groups were still unable to return to school facilities.⁹⁰

45. The Minister for Sport and Tourism, Nigel Huddleston, told us that “40% of all sporting and leisure facilities in the country are behind school gates” but that “they are not used at all to the extent that they should be used”.⁹¹ The Minister told us that the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport was “working closely with the Department for Education” to try to tackle this issue and that the Government is “starting some initiatives to try to open them up more”.⁹²

83 Q332

84 Annex 1

85 Annex 1

86 Sport England ([COM0053](#))

87 Sport England ([COM0053](#))

88 Q391

89 British Fencing ([COM0027](#))

90 Annex 1

91 Q492

92 Q492

46. **School facilities have the potential to help solve the facilities crisis currently facing community and grassroots sport. Renting out school facilities at a fair, affordable rate not only benefits the sports groups but also creates an additional revenue stream for the schools. *In its response to this Report, we recommend that the Government set out the ways in which it intends to encourage schools across the country to make their facilities more available to community and grassroots sports clubs at a fair rate.***

Community Ownership Fund

47. On 3 March 2021, the Government announced a new £150 million Community Ownership Fund to enable community groups to bid for up to £250,000 matched-funding to “help them buy or take over local community assets at risk of being lost, to run as community-owned businesses”.⁹³ The scheme will run across all nations of the UK and the first round of bidding for the fund was due to open by June 2021. It was announced that a “full bidding prospectus” would be published at the same time to set out “detailed advice on how to structure a bid, what activity to undertake to support this, what information to include, and the criteria by which bids will be assessed”.⁹⁴ However, the Government did not open applications or publish a bidding prospectus until mid-July 2021.

48. When asked whether he thought the Community Ownership Fund was going to go far enough, the Minister for Sport and Tourism, Nigel Huddleston, said:

It is a fair question of whether it will be enough. We are in the early stages yet. There is £150 million announced. The first applications are coming in next month, and then certain amounts have been allocated over the next few years, so we will see. I suspect and hope that, if it is successful and having the desired impact, we would be able to go back to the Exchequer and ask for more. Certainly, sport and sports facilities were identified in the prospectus, so it was important it got highlighted. It was not ring-fenced as such. That is probably a good thing, because who knows whether it is going to be more or less than we expected? We will certainly be very closely tracking how it is going to be used and what it is going to be used on. I have a strong interest in how it goes out.

[...]

We will see how it gets distributed. I am going to keep a close eye on it and, if successful, I will happily lobby the Treasury for more.⁹⁵

49. **We welcome the introduction of the Community Ownership Fund but, at a time where many community groups have faced unprecedented challenges, we are disappointed that the bidding process did not begin in June 2021 as the Government promised it would. Access to facilities has long been an issue for grassroots and community sport and we are concerned that the fund, in its current format, will not go far enough. We were also not persuaded by the Minister’s argument that ringfencing money for sports groups would not be a good thing. *In the short-term, we recommend***

93 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, ‘[Policy paper: Community Ownership Fund](#)’, accessed 29 March 2021

94 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, ‘[Policy paper: Community Ownership Fund](#)’, accessed 29 March 2021

95 Q505

that the Government set out the ways in which it will support community sport groups which are successful in applying for match funding through the Community Ownership Fund. In the longer term, we recommend that the Government ringfence money, either from the Community Ownership Fund or elsewhere, to enable sports clubs and teams to purchase and upgrade their own facilities.

4 Sports governance

National Governing Bodies

50. Within the complex sports structure in the UK, sitting below the Government and the non-departmental bodies such as Sport England and UK Sport, are the national governing bodies (NGBs). These organisations have responsibility for overseeing rules, clubs, coaching and competitions within their sports, and also decide “how to spend income generated by membership fees, TV rights, Lottery grants and investment from Government and the four UK Sports Councils”.⁹⁶ The NGBs have had a role to play in supporting their sports through the Covid-19 pandemic but they have also faced their own struggles. For example, UK Athletics told us that it had to undertake two restructures and make some “staffing cuts”, both in terms of back office and front-line delivery staff.⁹⁷ Swim England told us that it had to reduce its workforce by 30% and furlough all staff for at least one day a week for a period from November 2020 due to its reduced income.⁹⁸

51. However, some NGBs appear to have performed better than others, and the feedback we have received has been genuinely mixed. Some clubs acknowledged that, as the months went on, NGBs got better at interpreting Government advice and disseminating information to their clubs but other experiences were fairly negative overall.⁹⁹ For example, one outdoor athletics club told us about how it received constantly changing information from its NGB, often right at the last minute, and another outdoor sports club told us that it had received “about two emails” from its NGB and, when it did hear from them, it was to “take money” from the club.¹⁰⁰ Some clubs were also concerned that money provided to NGBs during the pandemic from central funding was not effectively trickled down to the grassroots.¹⁰¹ A similar concern was also raised about the amount of levels that information had to go through before it was communicated to the grassroots, thus increasing the possibility of information getting missed or lost in translation.¹⁰²

52. The evidence submitted to our inquiry about the performance of National Governing Bodies during the pandemic has been genuinely mixed. Lessons must be learned from the way funding and information was disseminated down to the grassroots during the Covid-19 pandemic. We recommend that Sport England conduct an audit of how National Governing Bodies communicate with their grassroots clubs and develop best practice guidance for all NGBs.

Diversity in sports governance

53. In 2016, UK Sport and Sport England launched their joint Code for Sports Governance (the Code) which set out the “levels of transparency, accountability and financial integrity that are required from those who ask for government and National Lottery funding”.¹⁰³ Whilst the Code sets a target for 30% of each gender on a board, it just says

96 Street Games, ‘[The National Governing Bodies](#)’, accessed 29 June 2021

97 Q410

98 Swim England ([COM0119](#))

99 Annex 1

100 Annex 1

101 Annex 1

102 Annex 1

103 Sport England, ‘[A Code for Sports Governance](#)’, accessed 19 June 2021

that organisations must “demonstrate a strong and public commitment to progressing towards [...] greater diversity generally on its Board, including, but not limited to, Black, Asian, minority ethnic (BAME) diversity, and disability”.¹⁰⁴

54. According to Sport England in 2018, just 5% of board members across Sport England- and UK Sport-funded bodies were BAME, and just 5% declared or considered themselves to have a disability. This put the diversity of board membership way behind the demographics of the wider population: at the same point in time, 13% of the population were BAME and 22% were Disabled.¹⁰⁵

55. A wide range of submissions raised this issue of a lack of diversity within sports governance with us, and some called for greater regulation of governance models.¹⁰⁶ The University of Edinburgh told us that “there is a significant, robust and growing body of evidence to suggest that sports governance models need further regulation in terms of diversity”,¹⁰⁷ and Dr Richard Tacon and Dr Geoff Walters of Birkbeck, University of London told us that “there has for a long time been a lack of diversity and inclusion in the sport sector”.¹⁰⁸ Dr Adam Cox and Christina Philippou from the University of Portsmouth also told us:

The current sport governance models are not fit for purpose as governing bodies have fractured responsibilities across clubs and leagues (even within sports), are lacking in regulation and diversity, and need to be reviewed. Providing financial support for distribution by these bodies should come with accountability conditions attached to the funds.¹⁰⁹

56. Sport England has, in recent years, made increasing the diversity across sports governance a focus and told us that, since 2019, it has been working with UK Sport and an executive search firm to:

identify and develop a network of senior, experienced candidates from a range of backgrounds, including Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic, disabled and LGBT+ to help organisations develop more diverse boards.

So far there are 172 individuals (65% Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) in the network and 33 appointments made to sports boards.¹¹⁰

57. In July 2020, it was announced that Sport England and UK Sport would undertake a formal review of the Code. In July 2021, initial changes were announced and the full revised version is due to be published in September 2021.¹¹¹ In their most recent announcement, the organisations reported that board diversity numbers had increased to 7.89% BAME and 13% with a declared disability.¹¹² Sport England and UK Sport also announced that

104 Sport England, [A Code for Sports Governance](#) (2016), p 26

105 Sport England, [Diversity in Sport Governance Annual Survey 2018/19](#) (2019), p 4

106 For example: Dr Adam Cox and Christina Philippou ([COM0008](#)); Dr Richard Tacon and Dr Geoff Walters ([COM0022](#)); The Football Collective ([COM0029](#)); University of Edinburgh ([COM0051](#)); Mayor of London ([COM0114](#))

107 University of Edinburgh ([COM0051](#))

108 Dr Richard Tacon and Dr Geoff Walters ([COM0022](#))

109 Dr Adam Cox and Christina Philippou ([COM0008](#))

110 Sport England ([COM0053](#))

111 Sport England, [‘A Code for Sports Governance’](#), accessed 5 July 2021

112 Sport England, [‘Changes made to strengthen Code for Sports Governance’](#), accessed 5 July 2021

“each relevant partner, including national governing bodies, will be required to agree a diversity and inclusion plan” which will be published annually to “deliver greater transparency about progress”.¹¹³

58. The lack of diversity in the upper echelons of sports governance is striking. We acknowledge the work being undertaken by Sport England and UK Sport to address the issue, including the recently completed review of the Code for Sports Governance, but we are concerned that governing bodies are still experiencing such a lack of diversity seven years after the original Code was first launched. *We recommend that Sport England and Sport UK should be required to publish, at least annually, information about the diversity of candidates for all advertised roles in their organisations and the boards that make those appointments.*

113 Sport England, '[Changes made to strengthen Code for Sports Governance](#)', accessed 5 July 2021

Annex 1: Summary of roundtable sessions

1) Between December 2020 and February 2021, the Committee held five roundtable sessions with sports clubs across the country. Participants came from the UK Parliament constituencies of East Hampshire, Ochil and South Perthshire, Pontypridd, Sunderland Central and Winchester, and represented a wide range of grassroots sports and clubs. In this summary of the roundtables, the clubs are not named and are referred to by titles such as ‘a rugby club’ or ‘an indoor racquet sport’.

2) Each session began with participants being asked about the impact that the last year, and Covid-19 restrictions, had had on their clubs and teams. Many participants, particularly those representing clubs who manage their own venues and facilities, spoke about the significant financial burden that the last 12 months has had on their groups. One martial arts club told us that it had to “close [the] facility, which is usually open to other martial arts clubs- [the] income is down 95%. It’s actually having a devastating impact from [our] point of view”. In addition, an indoor winter sports venue, which relies on money made in the winter to cover summer costs, told us that it had “lost 20% of business”. It added that it had to close four weeks earlier than it usually would which caused a cash flow problem; it couldn’t refund money to groups which had pre-paid but stated that this had gone down “surprisingly well” with its clients. The closure of clubhouses, bars and catering stands, which are a key part of clubs’ revenue was also discussed. One rugby team shared that “last year the clubs revenue from the bar and café was about £108,000, this year it’s around £8000”, and another rugby club told us how it “[uses] clubhouse revenues to fund activities but the club has only been open 16 weeks of the year so takings are around 30–40” per cent of normal levels. A cricket club also shared that even though the bar is its main source of income, due to Covid-19 restrictions, it had decided to keep it closed- even when play resumed- because “it caused all kinds of complications when we tried to open that”.

3) A further financial pressure faced by some clubs was the cancellation of annual events, competitions and tournaments which are a vital source of revenue and often their main source of income. One martial arts club usually runs two competitions each year which “are a major income for us and help carry us through the rest of the year”. Both of these had to be cancelled in 2020 and the club stated that without these it has “been struggling”. A women’s football club was also unable to hold its annual tournament and the manager told us that this “was a financial burden for us, a massive loss, because it’s a very well populated and well attended event”. An outdoor athletics club also had to cancel two of its high-profile events, one of which had to be cancelled in 2020 and 2021. Though it felt confident that it could “weather the loss of income”, it was concerned that it would not be able to raise funds for local charities as it normally would. It also highlighted that these events help to raise publicity for its group and are an important way to recruit the majority of its new members, so the cancellation of these event was a loss for the club in more ways than one.

4) Some of the clubs present at the roundtables had been able to access grants from local authorities and National Governing Bodies (NGBs) to help alleviate some of these financial pressures. One club from Pontypridd had been able to access the ‘Be Active’ grant and said it “was vital” because the club’s main form of income was fundraising which it had been unable to do during most of 2020. An outdoor racquet club shared

that it had received a grant for “£1500 which really helped us towards maintenance and without grants we couldn’t survive”. Those from smaller, minority sports had received some money which they stated was in small pots but “was enough to get over some of those hurdles that we’re facing”. Many participants noted that the funding seemed short term and was largely around floating people through the pandemic, and not for any long-term development or investment. A martial arts club also called for more funding stating that without that “we are going to lose clubs”. As well as relying on grants, many clubs also praised their members who had continued to play subs and membership fees during this period, despite not being able to play or train. One rugby club told us that “we’ve still got parents very happy to pay their subscriptions which has been an absolute life blood”. A martial arts club added “students have carried on paying even though they didn’t need to, and I did say to them they could reduce their fees”.

5) A small number of clubs taking part in the roundtables did report that they had lost members during this period. A martial arts club told us that it was “down from 80 members, to having 10 regularly coming to [our] training sessions”. This reduction in numbers had left the club feeling that it will need “to rebuild the club from the ground up”. Another martial arts club told us that pre-lockdown, it had 150 students and were now down to 100. An outdoor athletics club told us it had lost 100 members over the last year. However, it believed this was largely due to people “looking at their finances and thinking I’m not going to get much of the running club over the 12 months” and so felt that these may return once races and events were permitted.

6) Though many clubs discussed the negative impacts of the last year, some participants shared some positive experiences for their clubs since March 2020. A cricket team shared that it had been able to start a softball team last year and now has 49 women signed up. This is the first in the club’s history and it told us it had “already got sponsorship and they love it. It’s been brilliant.” A cricket team from another location told us that “we normally run four adult sides on Saturdays in the summer and we managed to field seven teams at one point as we had so many people who wanted to play”. A tennis club from the South East told us that membership has “never been as high as it’s been this year” and that many of those were people who “were previously working in London and couldn’t get back in time” were now working from home, meaning they have more time and flexibility to take part in sporting activities.

7) The next discussion point was around how confident the participants are that their club will be in a good shape next year. Many participants expressed concern about retention levels and how many of their members would return once restrictions were lifted. Many believed that the extended period without organised sport, and the stop/start nature that existed last year around restrictions, may have left members feeling disengaged or have caused them to move on. This was a view expressed by a hockey club which stated that “there is a risk that people have been sat doing nothing and got into other things and won’t come back at all”. A women’s football team shared this concern stating it will “probably lose some ladies because they’re balancing university and work and parenting and if you keep them fully engaged it’s great but once you stop engaging with them, or have nothing to offer them they start to reconsider their options”. An indoor racquet club supported the idea that months away will cause people to leave stating that without the “common interest” they start to “slowly disappear and do other things and it’s hard to get them back”. Cricket teams from three different locations expressed concern that the lack of indoor

winter net training would have a negative impact on people returning to the sport as they would not have played for seven or eight months by the time the summer season begins again. Concerns about the impact of extended time away was greater when participants were referring to older members, or those coming towards the sport's retirement age. An outdoor water sport said they feared older members saying "I think this is us for sport, we're getting on a bit" and an indoor racquet sport said that their older members were "really nervous about getting back into sport after a year off, and are they going to play competitively again and that's really upsetting them".

8) As well as long periods of closure, the lack of competitive and contact sports as well as the reliance on intra-club friendlies, were also cited as reasons for why clubs may struggle to retain members. For sports that play during winter, many of them had not competed competitively for over a year which had impacted morale, and a football team noted that if restricted play and friendlies continued, players would start wondering "what is the point?". A cricket team told us that when it announced that it would not be playing a competitive league, "all our team except for one decided they didn't want to play. They wanted to play for medals, they wanted to play competitively". A martial arts club shared that it is difficult "to keep the interest going if they're not allowed to compete and win medals". All of the martial arts teams who took part in the roundtables stated that it would be hard to maintain interest if they were not allowed to engage in combat, contact or pair work. One martial arts leader talked about a young person in their group who was trying out for the Olympic team, which had since been put on hold, and that she is now telling coaches "I don't see the point, there are no competitions, why should I bother?". For him, and others taking part, there was a concern that a large group of young people, who may have had the ability to compete at elite level, "may fall through the gaps and miss out".

9) However, not all participants were concerned about retention of members and were extremely confident that members will return once restrictions are lifted. An indoor racquet sports club said that it knew that members were waiting for that safe to return email and would be there as soon as they could. A rugby club told us that the "kids are chomping at the bit to get back" and an outdoor athletics clubs shared that "all of our members are looking forward to getting back to competitions". Others hoped that the impact of being at home for prolonged periods of time, and the focus on health during the pandemic, would inspire newcomers to sport. A tennis club said "they've been locked down and haven't been able to do an exercise so I'm hoping it may be a good things for sport in general; that people are fed up of sitting and watching Netflix".

10) One of the biggest challenges raised by the sports clubs is access to facilities, and though this has been exacerbated by the pandemic it is a long-standing issue. A football team told us "there aren't enough facilities. We haven't got enough space for what we do now and as we grow it's going to get harder" whilst a cricket team shared "places to access the sport are being squeezed even tighter and there is more and more competition to access them all the time". The belief that this access to facilities would be harder due to Covid-19 was shared by a netball team which said "there has always been a shortage of indoor facilities. We used to have a 'punch up' over who had first dibs at a school's sports hall. I don't know where we rank now in terms of priority, have we lost our place in the queue?". All teams expressed a belief that if sports were to return, there needed to be enough facilities to do so. As well as Covid-19 restrictions impacting access to venues, there were also concerns that the actions and aims of leisure centres were further

decreasing the facilities available for community sports clubs. An indoor racquet sport told us how courts were looked at in terms of square metres, and that leisure centres determine that “we can make more money out of that box if you do fitness, rather than two people running around a box”. A martial arts team also shared that a sports hall it had previously used had been split in two, with half of it becoming a spinning suite, and it now has to schedule its classes around the spinning schedule, at times having to have a 45 minute break in the middle of its martial arts session.

11) In addition to leisure centres, many of the clubs who took part in the roundtable sessions rely on community halls and schools, and a number of these informed us that they have not been able to return to these venues, even when restrictions were lifted in the summer of 2020, and have not been told if these centres will reopen. Not only does this have an impact on the clubs who rely on these venues but, as raised by an indoor racquet club, it will also affect leagues which need a variety of clubs taking part to be successful and enjoyable for all. Teams shared that they have approached these venues with risk assessments and details on their Covid-19 protocols, but that they have remained resistant to hiring externally. An indoor racquet sport stated that “small venues need to be encouraged and some form of incentive to open themselves up so people can use them again; it will hurt a lot of clubs in a lot of sports if they don’t”.

12) The costs of hiring venues was cited as a significant challenge for a number of clubs which took part in the roundtable sessions. One martial arts club stated that it has “been running the club for 15 years and for those years [it has] been struggling to find a venue that was affordable for a small martial arts club. Everyone was charging commercial rates and most small community clubs just cannot afford commercial rates available at sport centres”. Due to the higher costs of hiring space in sports centres, many of the clubs involved relied on school halls and community spaces such as church halls. Though for many these were the only affordable venue, it was noted that “they’re not set up for sports” which creates further challenges for sports clubs. Some participants also voiced frustrations that venues continued to raise their prices, despite making no improvements to their facilities or offering any new services to clubs. One martial arts club said that it “was in a local school and it was quite an affordable rent, was there twice a week, been there 5/6 years then a new facilities manager came and increased hall rental but 150% got nothing extra for that price”.

13) Though venue costs were highlighted as an issue that existed before Covid-19, some of the roundtable participants expressed concerns that costs would increase, or become a bigger issue, due to restrictions related to the pandemic. One hockey club stated that Covid-19 restrictions would mean “reduced numbers on the pitch, but you would still have to pay for that pitch” and there was no indication that venues would charge less to reflect this change. This was a concern for the club, which had expressed that it wanted to keep fees as low as possible to ensure that players would return to the club. The concerns about venues charging the same fees, despite smaller numbers being able to take part, was shared by an indoor racquet club which said “If there is a church hall then normally we might have four matches going on, maybe we could have one match going on, because of the numbers involved but still have the same financial implications”.

14) A number of the sports clubs who took part in the roundtable sessions also stated their belief that sports and leisure centres were not doing enough to support the growth of community sports clubs. One racquet club noted that as courts were behind turnstiles or

gates, people were no longer able to “see the sport being played” which could be a key way of attracting newcomers to their sport. Others added that leisure centres do not support clubs promoting themselves with one racquet sport stating “getting marketing through the leisure centre is impossible. I can’t put anything through there, they say if it’s not being run by us, we’re not going to promote it”. Another club added that when it was starting out, it approached a local leisure centre which “wanted £10,000 to put a banner up in the foyer. I was a brand-new club so how was I supposed to afford £10,000 to put a banner up?”.

15) As well as problems with accessing indoor facilities, a number of clubs at the roundtables talked about issues with accessing outdoor facilities. One rugby team told us that it has 19 teams playing on one pitch which is “a lot of rugby on one pitch”. Outdoor teams also spoke about the difficulties of not having access to toilets or changing facilities leading to players having to get changed on the side of the pitch. But the biggest challenge with outdoor facilities is their maintenance, or lack thereof. An outdoor athletics club told how its track was in a “very bad state of repair” and that it feared that “a higher standard of runners who are looking to compete at a higher level, with the facilities they’re going to look to places where they are not at risk of injury”. A tennis club also shared that two of the outdoor courts at the centre it uses “are completely and utterly unusable” and if it grows as a club, or even retains its current level of membership post-Covid, it will “potentially struggle with facilitating the number of people on court at peak times”. A cricket team also spoke about how it needed to raise £65,000 to replace outdoor nets and astro-strip because its pitch is at “end of life, it will become unsafe this summer” and that it soon won’t be able to provide the facilities needed for its sport to continue.

16) Within two of the roundtable sessions, there were discussions around the apparent bias towards football when it comes to facilities, and the impact that this has on other sports. One hockey team shared that “a lot of pitches are being changed to 3G and 4G pitches that are suitable for football and not for hockey” and that this lack of facilities does not help get people into hockey. A rugby club shared that “everything has been put on hold in the city because they’ve had all the 4G pitches put in but there is no consideration really for any other sport”. Away from facilities, clubs shared other concerns about the apparent focus that football receives from schools, media and local authorities over other sports. As one indoor racquet club shared, “when everyone talks about sport, usually it’s about football”. A tennis club shared that over recent years football has become a club played 12 months a year, rather than just in the winter, and that this has seen a “huge drop off” in numbers because “traditionally the kids would play football in the winter, and once the season was over in April/May they then converted to tennis and cricket”. Others stated that schools should work with minority sports to work with kids who might not be interested in football but could find another sport that they are interested in, and ultimately get more people into sports. Those who were expressing concerns were not anti-football, but wanted to ensure that all sports were “given a fair crack of the whip” and felt that the current focus on football could be alienating young people who dislike of football, or team sports, may prevent them from engaging in any sporting activities.

17) All of the clubs that took part in the roundtable sessions were part of the National Governing Body (NGB) for their sport, and during the sessions they were asked to talk about the support and information provided by NGBs during the pandemic. The majority of them shared that during the first lockdown, and when restrictions were first lifted, there

was a delay in information being shared with clubs, but many accepted that this delay was understandable. Many also shared that as the months went on, NGBs became more effective at interpreting Government advice and sharing this with sports teams. Some teams provided particular praise to NGBs with one indoor racquet sport saying it had “superb support from our governing body both in terms of dialogue and funding and set out a clear roadmap for returning”. A rugby team stated that its NGB had been “absolutely fantastic about interpreting what the government was saying, giving us a huge amount of information sometimes on a daily basis, clear guidelines for all levels”. Some clubs also shared that they had been able to access webinars and complete coaching sessions from elite players over Zoom.

18) Though some people spoke positively about their NGBs during the roundtable sessions, others have had negative experiences during the pandemic. One outdoor athletic club spoke about the constantly changing information that was coming from its NGB and shared how it “got to the point where we were informing the club members on a Wednesday afternoon that ‘Sorry, training is cancelled tonight because the rules have changed’”. An outdoor teams sport also shared how it had to “pay full fees for our subscription even though we’ve had no financial assistance coming the other way”. This experience was echoed by a different outdoor sport team who shared that it had received “about two emails” from their NGB and that, when it has heard from the NGB, it has just been to take “take money off of us”. This club told us that it was required to pay all membership and registration fees for the season and that the NGB has “hidden behind the fact they are providing insurance, but the players can’t play” and that if it had not paid them by a set date then the club’s players could not have played if the season returned.

19) Teams were also concerned that money provided to NGBs from central funding, or the National Lottery, was not being trickled down beyond elite level to the grassroots. An indoor racquet club also that its NGB had informed them that if the club did not use their booking at a local sports hall, the NGBS would take it from the club and give it to elite players. A further frustration that people found was around how different NGBs interpreted the rules set by the Government. A martial arts club shared how it would be running outside, non-combat work (within the rules set by its NGB) and would see football teams engaging in sport with no restrictions. A final problem raised in relation to NGBs during the pandemic was around the passing of information from the Government through NGBs to regional bodies and then finally to individual clubs and teams. Some clubs felt that this caused a delay in information being shared, a “chopping and changing” of information and that there was “no doubt that something was missed”.

20) The majority of those who took part in the roundtable sessions were volunteers and as a participant from a football team told us, “we do it for the love of sport”. Over the last year, these volunteers had to take on different roles, outside of traditional coaching or administration, which have been an additional burden on people’s times. An outdoor water sport shared how a “big change has been trying to facilitate a decent atmosphere and keeping tabs on people’s mental health and well-being which is normally not too challenging if you can see them or have social contact with them”. Others have had to spend time trying to navigate finances to calculate how they will amend subs and whether they will have to give a discount. Many of the volunteers also shared how they have developed an online presence to engage members, share information and provide support and reassurance to members who may be struggling during the lockdowns.

21) During the roundtable sessions, some of the participants shared ideas for how volunteers and clubs could be further supported. One cricket club spoke about how its team tends to have a deficit in skilled areas (such as accountancy and skilled trades) so have to cover these costs by engaging external experts and tradesmen. This particular club suggested that issues like this could be helped if local authorities could provide an accountant that could be shared amongst clubs. They also asked whether skilled council workers to undertake things like plumbing could be provided to sports clubs on a cost basis. A martial arts club shared that, for many of its members, instructors were key role models who spend as much time mentoring young people as they do training. During the roundtable, the club asked if “the Government could offer support, whether it’s financially or whatever, to free up time for coaches to mentor, to engage and to inspire”.

22) Finally, a number of volunteers spoke about difficulties in navigating the grant system. A martial arts club called for someone from local government to provide advice on “how you can run your club, this is what you can apply for”. This was supported by a hockey club who said it needed someone to help it to navigate the system and “get the best response”.

23) To finish the roundtable sessions, participants were asked if they had any further comments on how to engage people in sport, particularly once Covid-19 restrictions began to lift. A football club suggested “an incentive, like a payment to a club, if they get so many people involved”. A rugby club stated that rugby should remain on terrestrial television as they see “big uplift in our club when England have done well in the World Cup” and that it encourages people who may not previously have thought about the sport. This viewpoint was shared by a cricket team who said that “they see a huge injection of numbers” when England are doing well and on the TV.

24) A number of participants felt that in order to encourage participation in sport there needed to be a “tide change in people’s attitudes” towards sport. One netball club told us that there needed to be “active campaigning” from the Government and local authorities as well as the individual teams “to encourage a return to sport, because I think the lethargy has set in behind the confusion”. For these participants, active campaigning should focus not only on the benefits of sport on physical health but also on mental health. It should also focus on promoting to people who may be nervous about taking part in sport that it safe, and that guidelines and PPE are in place to ensure that people can engage in a Covid secure way. One indoor racquet sport stated “more needs to be done to think about attitude change to ensure that sport is integrated back into the community. I don’t think it’s about finance, it’s about attitudes towards it”.

Conclusions and recommendations

Participation

1. The impact of successive lockdowns on activity levels was not as bad as initially feared but the Committee is concerned about the consequences of the final lockdown from December 2020 onwards which has not yet been covered by an Active Lives survey. The Government and Sport England must renew their efforts on encouraging people back into sport to pre-empt any further drops in participation during 'Lockdown 3'. *We recommend that the Government initiate a sporting equivalent of the 'Eat Out to Help Out' campaign, entitled 'Work Out to Help Out', to incentivise volunteers and participants to get involved, participate in organised sport and support the sporting infrastructure, both in England and across the UK.* (Paragraph 11)
2. The proportion of children and young people not achieving the minimum amount of daily activity recommended by the Chief Medical Officer is of significant concern. *Before the end of this year, the Government should initiate a nation-wide communications campaign, similar to that of the '5 A Day' campaign, to emphasise the importance of children and young people engaging in at least 60 minutes of moderate activity every day.* (Paragraph 15)
3. Year on year, we continue to see persistent gaps in activity levels between different demographics. This issue has been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic and certain groups in society continue to be disproportionately impacted. We acknowledge the support provided through Sport England's 'Tackling Inequalities Fund' but support must be focused, as a matter of priority, on ensuring that activity levels among, in particular, women, disabled people and people from a BAME background recover and improve in the long-term. *We recommend that the Government reconsider our previous recommendation to ring-fence further funds to ensure that the progress that was being made in physical activity levels within these groups is not set back by Covid-19, both by encouraging participation and by attracting leaders and volunteers from a range of communities and backgrounds across the UK.* (Paragraph 20)
4. Community and grassroots sport is heavily reliant on a relatively small volunteer workforce who have worked tirelessly through the pandemic to keep their clubs going. This shrinking workforce is one of the biggest challenges facing community sport post-pandemic. Sport England has placed an important focus on the issue in its new ten-year strategy, Uniting the Movement, but the sports groups affected by the declining number of volunteers need help now. *In addition to our proposed 'Work Out to Help Out' scheme, we recommend that the Government should set out, in its response to this Report, how else it will work with Sport England over the next 18-months to encourage people to volunteer across the community and grassroots sport sector and reduce drop-out rates among existing volunteers.* (Paragraph 26)

Funding and facilities

5. Many National Governing Bodies and other sports groups and organisations were not financially stable enough to fully support themselves through the economic shock that was caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. There is a balance to be found between

ensuring enough money is spent to improve participation and support community and grassroots sport, and ensuring organisations can be more financially resilient in an emergency. *We recommend that the Government work with Sport England, UK Sport and the National Lottery to review and revise the current funding models to enable sports organisations to accumulate greater reserves and, as a result, have more of a cushion to support themselves with should another situation like the Covid-19 pandemic occur.* (Paragraph 31)

6. Even in normal circumstances, volunteers in grassroots and community sport dedicate a significant amount of time to applying for funding. Organisations such as Sported and StreetGames play an important role in supporting their members to complete applications but the extensive administrative burden associated with these applications seems unnecessary, and has only increased during the Covid-19 pandemic. *To reduce the administrative burden on volunteers across the sport sector, we recommend that the Government work with governing and funding bodies to introduce a standardised application methodology for grassroots and community sport funds.* (Paragraph 37)
7. School facilities have the potential to help solve the facilities crisis currently facing community and grassroots sport. Renting out school facilities at a fair, affordable rate not only benefits the sports groups but also creates an additional revenue stream for the schools. *In its response to this Report, we recommend that the Government set out the ways in which it intends to encourage schools across the country to make their facilities more available to community and grassroots sports clubs at a fair rate.* (Paragraph 46)
8. We welcome the introduction of the Community Ownership Fund but, at a time where many community groups have faced unprecedented challenges, we are disappointed that the bidding process did not begin in June 2021 as the Government promised it would. Access to facilities has long been an issue for grassroots and community sport and we are concerned that the fund, in its current format, will not go far enough. We were also not persuaded by the Minister's argument that ringfencing money for sports groups would not be a good thing. *In the short-term, we recommend that the Government set out the ways in which it will support community sport groups which are successful in applying for match funding through the Community Ownership Fund. In the longer term, we recommend that the Government ringfence money, either from the Community Ownership Fund or elsewhere, to enable sports clubs and teams to purchase and upgrade their own facilities.* (Paragraph 49)

Sports governance

9. The evidence submitted to our inquiry about the performance of National Governing Bodies during the pandemic has been genuinely mixed. Lessons must be learned from the way funding and information was disseminated down to the grassroots during the Covid-19 pandemic. *We recommend that Sport England conduct an audit of how National Governing Bodies communicate with their grassroots clubs and develop best practice guidance for all NGBs.* (Paragraph 52)
10. The lack of diversity in the upper echelons of sports governance is striking. We acknowledge the work being undertaken by Sport England and UK Sport to

address the issue, including the recently completed review of the Code for Sports Governance, but we are concerned that governing bodies are still experiencing such a lack of diversity seven years after the original Code was first launched. *We recommend that Sport England and Sport UK should be required to publish, at least annually, information about the diversity of candidates for all advertised roles in their organisations and the boards that make those appointments.* (Paragraph 58)

Formal minutes

Wednesday 21 July 2021

Members present:

Julian Knight, in the Chair

Kevin Brennan	Rt Hon Damian Hinds
Steve Brine	Giles Watling
Alex Davies-Jones	Heather Wheeler
Rt Hon Damian Green	

Draft Report (*Sport in our communities*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 58 read and agreed to.

Annex agreed to.

Summary agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Fourth Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No.134.

Adjourned till Friday 23 July 2021 at 10.30 am

Witnesses

The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Tuesday 10 November 2020

Rick Parry, Chairman, English Football League; **Richard Masters**, Chief Executive, English Premier League [Q1–95](#)

Greg Clarke, Chairman, The Football Association [Q96–134](#)

Tuesday 1 December 2020

Dr Larissa Davies, Reader in Sport Management, Sheffield Hallam University; **Dr Claire Jenkin**, Senior Lecturer in Sports Development, University of Hertfordshire; **Dr Esther van Sluijs**, Group Leader, MRC Epidemiology Unit & Centre for Diet and Activity Research [Q135–182](#)

Kieran Maguire, Senior Teacher in Accountancy, University of Liverpool; **Dr Rob Wilson**, Head of Department, Finance, Accounting & Business Systems, Sheffield Hallam University [Q183–228](#)

Tuesday 12 January 2021

Rich Emerson, Chief Executive, The Climbing Academy; **Rebecca Passmore**, UK Managing Director, PureGym [Q229–262](#)

Huw Edwards, Chief Executive, UKactive; **Marg Mayne**, Chief Executive, Mytime Active [Q263–289](#)

Tuesday 2 March 2021

Nahimul Islam, Founder and director, Wapping Youth FC; **Louise Morby**, Senior Lecturer in Sport Development, Leeds Beckett University [Q290–330](#)

Mark Lawrie, Chief Executive, StreetGames; **Nicola Walker**, Chief Executive, Sported [Q331–358](#)

Tuesday 13 April 2021

Ollie Dudfield, Executive Director, Sport for Development Coalition; **Lisa Wainwright**, Chief Executive, Sport and Recreation Alliance [Q359–404](#)

Joanna Coates, Chief Executive, UK Athletics; **Jane Nickerson**, Chief Executive, Swim England; **David Pond**, Chief Executive, GB Wheelchair Rugby [Q405–463](#)

Tuesday 18 May 2021

Stewart Harris, Chief Executive, Sport Scotland; **Tim Hollingsworth OBE**, Chief Executive, Sport England [Q464–489](#)

Tuesday 25 May 2021

Nigel Huddleston MP, Minister for Sport and Tourism, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport; **Ben Dean**, Director, Sport, Gambling and Ceremonials, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport [Q490–525](#)

Published written evidence

The following written evidence was received and can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

COM numbers are generated by the evidence processing system and so may not be complete.

- 1 3Pillars Project ([COM0089](#))
- 2 Active Essex ([COM0054](#))
- 3 Allen, James ([COM0077](#))
- 4 Amo, A ([COM0081](#))
- 5 Association for Public Service Excellence ([COM0073](#))
- 6 Association of British Climbing Walls ([COM0066](#))
- 7 BADU Sports ([COM0059](#))
- 8 Baldwin, Mr. Richard ([COM0024](#))
- 9 Betting and Gaming Council ([COM0087](#))
- 10 Bickerstaffe, J ([COM0081](#))
- 11 Brassett, Mr Robert ([COM0034](#))
- 12 Bridgewater, Professor Sue ([COM0037](#))
- 13 British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences ([COM0115](#))
- 14 British Dressage ([COM0028](#))
- 15 British Eventing ([COM0086](#))
- 16 British Fencing ([COM0027](#))
- 17 British Inline Puck Hockey Association ([COM0032](#))
- 18 British Roller Sports Federation ([COM0031](#))
- 19 British Wrestling ([COM0045](#))
- 20 Brooks, Mr Callum ([COM0094](#))
- 21 Brunel University London ([COM0049](#))
- 22 Chiles Webster Batson Commission on Sport and Low Income Neighbourhoods ([COM0071](#))
- 23 Coach Core Foundation ([COM0011](#))
- 24 Cockayne, Mr David ([COM0037](#))
- 25 Community Leisure UK ([COM0078](#))
- 26 Connolly, R ([COM0081](#))
- 27 Cotswold Fencing Club ([COM0019](#))
- 28 Cox, Dr Adam ([COM0008](#))
- 29 Davies, Dr Larissa ([COM0095](#))
- 30 Department of Digital, Culture, Media & Sport ([COM0085](#))
- 31 Doar, Mr Thomas ([COM0097](#))
- 32 EMD UK ([COM0025](#))
- 33 ESL UK ([COM0065](#))
- 34 England Boxing ([COM0015](#))
- 35 England Korfball ([COM0072](#))

- 36 England Netball ([COM0069](#))
- 37 England and Wales Cricket Board ([COM0106](#))
- 38 Erdington Rugby Football Club ([COM0044](#))
- 39 European Healthy Stadia Network ([COM0067](#))
- 40 Evans, Mr. Rhys ([COM0080](#))
- 41 Federation of Sports and Play Associations ([COM0047](#))
- 42 Frith-Salem, Ms Rosanna ([COM0081](#))
- 43 Gale, Dr Laura ([COM0079](#))
- 44 Gillett, Dr Alex ([COM0009](#))
- 45 Goldstein, Russell ([COM0100](#))
- 46 Gracie Barra Jiu Jitsu UK ([COM0108](#))
- 47 Ives, Dr Ben ([COM0079](#))
- 48 Jeffrey, Mr Jody ([COM0003](#))
- 49 Jenkin, Dr Claire ([COM0118](#))
- 50 Keal, H ([COM0081](#))
- 51 King, Dr Neil ([COM0090](#))
- 52 Lewes Football Club ([COM0017](#))
- 53 Liverpool Futsal Club ([COM0092](#))
- 54 Local Government Association (LGA) ([COM0020](#))
- 55 Mackintosh, Dr Chris ([COM0079](#))
- 56 Maguire, Mr Kieran ([COM0037](#))
- 57 Mayor of London ([COM0114](#))
- 58 McCarthy, L ([COM0081](#))
- 59 Meek, Professor Rosie ([COM0040](#))
- 60 Mencap ([COM0109](#))
- 61 National Futsal League ([COM0033](#))
- 62 New College Leicester ([COM0010](#))
- 63 Newark Sports Association ([COM0046](#))
- 64 O'Donnell ([COM0057](#))
- 65 Palfreeman, Liam ([COM0100](#))
- 66 Pennington, Mrs Amanda ([COM0016](#))
- 67 Philippou, Christina ([COM0008](#))
- 68 Pitchero ([COM0035](#))
- 69 Postlethwaite, Dr Verity ([COM0077](#))
- 70 PureGym ([COM0116](#))
- 71 Reading Royals Futsal Club ([COM0101](#))
- 72 Reed, A ([COM0081](#))
- 73 Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA) ([COM0074](#))
- 74 Rugby Football League ([COM0055](#))
- 75 Rugby Football Union ([COM0075](#))

- 76 Staniford, Dr Leanne ([COM0079](#))
- 77 Symons, Dr Helen ([COM0077](#))
- 78 South East Regional Forum (Squash & Squash57); Essex Squash Rackets Association; Surrey Squash; Sussex Squash; Kent Squash; and Middlesex Squash ([COM0013](#))
- 79 Sport England ([COM0053](#))
- 80 Sport and Recreation Alliance ([COM0076](#))
- 81 Sport for Development Coalition; School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences, Loughborough University; and Division of Sport, Health and Exercise Sciences, Brunel University ([COM0061](#))
- 82 SportCheer England NGB ([COM0068](#))
- 83 Sported Foundation ([COM0018](#))
- 84 Sporting Change ([COM0107](#))
- 85 Sporting Equals ([COM0060](#))
- 86 StreetGames ([COM0063](#))
- 87 Sutton United Football Club ([COM0001](#))
- 88 Swim England ([COM0119](#))
- 89 Swim England ([COM0038](#))
- 90 Tacon, Dr Richard ([COM0022](#))
- 91 Taylor, Steve ([COM0030](#))
- 92 Tennent, Dr Kevin ([COM0009](#))
- 93 Thompson, Ms Anne ([COM0079](#))
- 94 The Climbing Academy ([COM0117](#))
- 95 The FA ([COM0111](#))
- 96 The Football Collective ([COM0029](#))
- 97 The LTA ([COM0070](#))
- 98 The Ramblers ([COM0064](#))
- 99 UK Cheerleading Association ([COM0084](#))
- 100 UK Sport ([COM0093](#))
- 101 UKactive ([COM0050](#))
- 102 University of Edinburgh - Academy of Sport ([COM0051](#))
- 103 UsforThem ([COM0056](#))
- 104 Walters, Dr Geoff ([COM0022](#))
- 105 Ward, Richard ([COM0102](#))
- 106 Webber, Dr David ([COM0006](#))
- 107 Wong, Rachael ([COM0036](#))
- 108 Zamma Fit; and RimJhim Consulting ([COM0082](#))

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Session 2021–22

Number	Title	Reference
1st	The future of UK music festivals	HC 49
2nd	Economics of music streaming	HC 50
3rd	Concussion in sport	HC 46
1st Special	The future of public service broadcasting: Government Response to Committee's Sixth Report of Session	HC 273

Session 2019–21

Number	Title	Reference
1st	The Covid-19 crisis and charities	HC 281
2nd	Misinformation in the COVID-19 Infodemic	HC 234
3rd	Impact of COVID-19 on DCMS sectors: First Report	HC 291
4th	Broadband and the road to 5G	HC 153
5th	Pre-appointment hearing for Chair of the BBC	HC 1119
6th	The future of public service broadcasting	HC 156
1st Special Report	BBC Annual Report and Accounts 2018–19: TV licences for over 75s Government and the BBC's Responses to the Committee's Sixteenth Report of Session 2017–19	HC 98
2nd Special Report	The Covid-19 crisis and charities: Government Response to the Committee's First Report of Session 2019–21	HC 438
3rd Special Report	Impact of Covid-19 on DCMS sectors: First Report: Government Response to Committee's Third Report of Session 2019–21	HC 885
4th Special Report	Misinformation in the COVID-19 Infodemic: Government Response to the Committee's Second Report	HC 894