

## **Dr Liz Durden-Myers – Written evidence (NPS0028)**

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### **Opening Statement**

Physical inactivity is a global health crisis, responsible for an estimated 5million deaths worldwide<sup>1</sup>. Solutions to the global challenge of physical inactivity have tended to focus on interventions at an individual level, when evidence shows that wider factors, including the social and physical environment, play a major part in influencing health-related behaviour<sup>2</sup>. A multidisciplinary perspective is needed to rewrite the agenda on sport, physical activity and recreation if population-level public health benefits and engagement levels are to be demonstrated and improved. This approach may also encourage individuals and communities to not only to participate but thrive through sport, physical activity and recreation.

With health and fitness levels mediating the effects, symptoms and likelihood of recovery from COVID-19, it has never been more important to mobilise and create an active, healthy nation. Making sport, physical activity and recreation more accessible for all is of paramount importance if we are to reduce the burden of inactivity-related ill health and improve the health and wellbeing of the population. Any new strategy needs to consider the effects of COVID-19 on sport, physical activity and recreation engagement as well as the impact on the industry more broadly. The new strategy should address how the industry can recover from the effects of COVID-19 restrictions as well reinvigorate a renewed approach to engagement in sport, physical activity and recreation. This is also an opportunity to repair the effects of social isolation and social distancing by using sport, physical activity and recreation as a vehicle to reconnect the population; connecting individuals with one another, their environments and supporting organisations.

This call for evidence comes at a timely juncture where it is possible to re-imagine and re-define the vision for the sport and recreation sector post COVID-19 restrictions. Specifically, this response focuses on how physical literacy and a

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<sup>1</sup> British Heart Foundation (BHF) (2017) *Physical Inactivity Report*. Accessed online: 20<sup>th</sup> January 2021. Available at: <https://www.bhf.org.uk/informationsupport/publications/statistics/physical-inactivity-report-2017>

<sup>2</sup> Speake, H., Copeland, R.J., Till, S.H. *et al.* (2016) Embedding Physical Activity in the Heart of the NHS: The Need for a Whole-System Approach. *Sports Med* **46**, 939–946.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s40279-016-0488-y>

whole system approach can be used to support and inform the new National Sport and Physical Activity Strategy. Both of these concepts will help to inform a more inclusive and impactful approach to encouraging all to thrive through sport, physical activity and recreation.

## Response to Questions

### 1. **How can local delivery, including funding structures, of sport and recreation be improved to ensure that people of all ages and abilities are able to lead an active lifestyle? For example, how successfully do local authorities and other bodies such as Active Partnerships, Leisure Trusts, local sports clubs and charities work together, and how might coordination be improved?**

It could be argued that across the country there are areas where communication, collaboration and a collective strategy is evident across a range of partners with the aim of promoting sport, physical activity and recreation. These areas among others would benefit by adopting and integrating a whole system approach within their strategies and policies. A whole system approach would unify and assist the coordinated efforts across parliament right through to local delivery partners. There are three phases that can help stakeholders adopt a whole system approach:

1. Collectively form an understanding of the issue, context and wider system
2. Create a plan for action collaboratively with a wide set of stakeholders. Actions should be aligned and jointly prioritised
3. Learn and refine as you go by involving stakeholders and embedding monitoring and evaluation. Considering the "so what?" and "now what?"

A whole system approach is not a new idea and has permeated a range of fields including national policy, academia and local partnership delivery:

#### **National Policy**

##### **Public Health England (2020)<sup>3</sup>**

- A whole system approach to obesity
  - Whole systems approach to obesity: a guide to support local approaches to promoting a healthy weight
  - Whole systems approach to obesity programme: learning from co-producing and testing the guide and resources
  - Engaging NHS system leaders in whole systems approaches to physical activity
  - Opportunities to strengthen place-based systems approaches to consider and address associated health inequalities
  - Annexes: opportunities to strengthen place-based systems approaches to

<sup>3</sup> Public Health England (PHE) (2020) *Whole system approach to obesity*. Accessed online: 20<sup>th</sup> January 2021. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/whole-systems-approach-to-obesity>

consider and address associated health inequalities

#### **Public Health Scotland (2020)<sup>4</sup>**

- A whole system approach has been adopted by Public Health Scotland. A whole system approach involves applying systems thinking, methods and practice to better understand public health challenges and identify collective actions. Adopting a whole system approach to Scotland's Public Health Priorities is a long-term endeavour. It will require new partnerships between a broad range of stakeholders to deliver better lives for the people of Scotland. All stakeholders have an important role to play in the successful delivery of the public health priorities using a whole system approach. Relevant organisations will vary depending on the priority but will include: Academia, Community Planning, Health and Social Care, Local Government, National Government, NHS, Private Sector and the Third Sector.

#### **Academia**

- Speake, H., Copeland, R.J., Till, S.H. *et al.* (2016) Embedding Physical Activity in the Heart of the NHS: The Need for a Whole-System Approach. *Sports Med* **46**, 939–946. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40279-016-0488-y>
- Rütten, A., Frahsa, A., Abel, T., Bergmann, M., de Leeuw, E., Hunter, D., & Potvin, L. (2019). Co-producing active lifestyles as whole-system-approach: theory, intervention and knowledge-to-action implications. *Health promotion international*, 34(1), 47-59.

#### **Local Partnership and Delivery**

- **Move More plan, Sheffield UK<sup>5</sup>** - The Move More plan is a value-based, whole systems approach aiming to create a culture of physical activity resulting in Sheffield becoming the most active city in the UK by 2020. Taking into consideration the socio-ecological model for physical activity promotion, the approach has six outcomes: Empowered Communities, Active Environments, Active People & Families, Physical activity as Medicine, Active Schools and Active pupils, Active Workplaces and an Active Workforce . These outcomes will be assessed using routinely collected data. Promoting long-term adherence to physical activity should be targeted through addressing the needs of and promoting activity for children, families, adults and older adults in specific contexts (e.g., workplaces, schools, communities, green spaces). Making the physically active choice the easy choice can be possible by designing Sheffield's spaces to promote opportunities for physical activity and to reduce sedentary behaviour. Moreover, the plan is based on principles such as reducing inequality in

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<sup>4</sup> Public Health Scotland (2020) *Applying a whole system approach*. Accessed online: 20<sup>th</sup> January 2021. Available at: <https://www.publichealthscotland.scot/our-organisation/about-public-health-scotland/supporting-whole-system-approaches/applying-a-whole-system-approach/>

<sup>5</sup> Move More Sheffield (2020) Accessed online: 20<sup>th</sup> January 2021. Available at: <https://www.movemoresheffield.com/>

physical activity participation, making exercise enjoyable, communicating consistently with the public to raise awareness, ensuring interventions are evidence-based and promoting partnership with numerous organisations across a broad range of sectors.

Once organisations have been brought together using a whole system approach it is then important to facilitate coordination and collaboration by providing a common language or goal. This has been successful in Scotland and Wales by using **physical literacy**<sup>6</sup> as the concept that binds and aligns organisation agendas and strategy.

**2. How can children and young people be encouraged to participate in sport and recreation both at school and outside school, and lead an active lifestyle? If possible, share examples of success stories and good practice, and challenges faced.**

More information could be provided outside of this call for evidence due to word and length restrictions.

**3. How can adults of all ages and backgrounds, particularly those from under-represented groups, including women and girls, ethnic minorities, disabled people, older people, and those from less affluent backgrounds, be encouraged to lead more active lifestyles? If possible, share examples of success stories and good practice, and challenges faced.**

Physical literacy is symbiotic with inclusion. By adopting a physical literacy approach, you intentionally plan for inclusion across the lifespan, maximising the individual potential of all.

**4. Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation, the Government's 2015 sports strategy, outlines five outcome priorities: physical health, mental health, individual development, social and community development and economic development. Are these the right priorities and how successful has the government been in measuring and delivering these outcomes to date?**

I would prefer the strategy to emulate that of the World Health Organisation. The latest draft for global action plan on physical activity for 2018-2030 contains four main strategic objects: create an active society, create active environments, create active people and create active systems<sup>7</sup>.

#### **Create an active society – social norms and attitudes**

It is important to raise awareness of the multiple health benefits of physical activity and less sedentary behaviour for individual, family and community well-being. Implementation of community-based campaigns and regular mass-

<sup>6</sup> International Physical Literacy Association - <https://www.physical-literacy.org.uk/>

<sup>7</sup> World Health Organisation (2017) Physical activity for health: More active people for a healthier world: draft global action plan on physical activity 2018–2030. Accessed online: 20<sup>th</sup> January 2021. Available at: [https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf\\_files/EB142/B142\\_18-en.pdf](https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB142/B142_18-en.pdf)

participation initiatives in public spaces are also beneficial. Strengthen pre- and in-service training of professionals, within but not limited to, the transport, urban planning, education, tourism and recreation, sports and fitness sectors, as well as in grassroots community groups and civil society organisations, to increase knowledge and skills related to their roles and contributions in creating inclusive, equitable opportunities for an active society.

### **Create active environments – spaces and places**

Transforming public spaces to promote physical activity is a key contributor to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals<sup>8</sup>. Creating active environments would give rights to all people of all ages to have equitable access to safe places and spaces, in which to engage in regular physical activity. It is important to strengthen the integration of urban and transport planning policies involving the use of wheelchairs and public transport. Improvement of walking and cycling infrastructure to enable and promote walking, cycling and other forms of mobility would help to increase physical activity. Finally, the policy strengthening is needed in order to promote public amenities, schools, health care, sports and recreation facilities. For example, ensuring that school playgrounds are designed to encourage varied, physically active play<sup>9</sup>.

### **Create active people – programmes and opportunities**

Creating and promoting access to opportunities and programmes, across multiple settings, would help people of all ages and abilities engage in regular physical activity as individuals, families and communities. This could be achieved by strengthening provision of good-quality physical education and more positive experiences and opportunities for active recreation, sports and play for girls and boys, applying the principles of the whole-of-school approach in all pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary educational institutions, so as to establish and reinforce lifelong health and physical literacy, and promote the enjoyment of, and participation in physical activity, according to ability. Enhancing provision of, and opportunities for, more physical activity programmes and promotion in private and public workplaces, community centres, recreation and sports facilities, faith-based centres, nature and other public spaces and places, to support participation in physical activity, by all people of diverse abilities.

### **Create active systems – governance and policy enablers**

Creation of leadership, governance, multi-sectoral partnerships, workforce capabilities, advocacy and information systems across sectors to achieve excellence

<sup>8</sup> World Health Organisation (2017) Towards more physical activity in cities. Accessed online: 20<sup>th</sup> January 2021. Available at: [https://www.euro.who.int/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0018/353043/2017\\_WHO\\_Report\\_FINAL\\_WEB.pdf?ua=1](https://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0018/353043/2017_WHO_Report_FINAL_WEB.pdf?ua=1)

<sup>9</sup> NICE (2018) Physical activity and the environment. Accessed online: 20<sup>th</sup> January 2021. Available at: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng90/chapter/Recommendations#strategies-policies-and-plans-to-increase-physical-activity-in-the-local-environment>

in resource mobilisation and implementation of coordinated international, national and subnational action to increase physical activity and reduce sedentary behaviour.

**5. Is government capturing an accurate picture of how people participate in sport and recreation activities in its data collection? How could this be improved?**

Creating data systems and capabilities at national and, where appropriate, subnational level, to support monitoring and accountability and ensure regular population surveillance of physical activity and sedentary behaviour, across all ages and multiple domains. The development and testing of new digital technologies to strengthen surveillance systems by including wider sociocultural and environmental determinants and regular multi-sectoral reporting on implementation to inform policy and practice. Moreover, strengthening of the national and institutional research and evaluation capacity and stimulation the application of digital technologies and innovation to accelerate the development. Strengthen financing mechanisms to secure sustained implementation of national and subnational action and the development of the enabling systems that support the development and implementation of policies aimed at increasing physical activity and reducing sedentary behaviour.

**6. How can racism, homophobia, transphobia, misogyny and ableism in sport be tackled?**

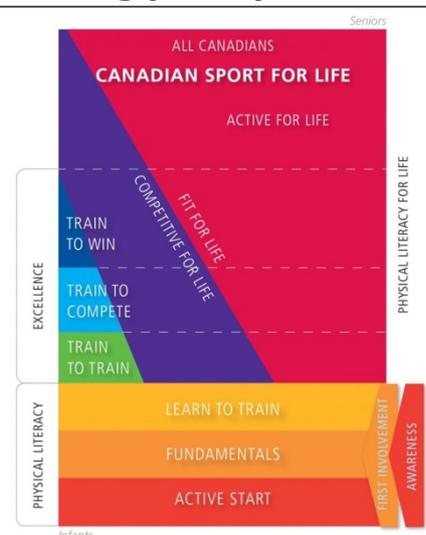
No comment (this is a specialist area beyond my specialism)

**7. What can be done to improve and implement effective duty of care and safeguarding standards for sports and recreation actives at all levels?**

The creation of a common charter for safeguarding and the characteristics of a safe (emotional and physical) environment for individuals could be created to allow organisation to audit themselves against / embed overarching principles that enable sport and recreation to take place in a safe and supportive environment.

**8. What are the opportunities and challenges facing elite sports in the UK and what can be done to make national sports governing bodies more accountable? For example, accountability for representing and protecting their membership, promoting their sport and maximising participation.**

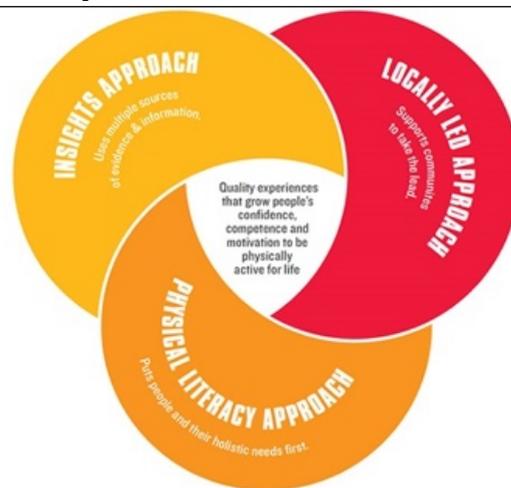
The process for measuring the success of national governing bodies needs an overhaul to equally value elite performance and participation. Participation in its own right and as the base of the performance pathway need equal appreciation. Physical literacy again could be used as a model to support this change. Sport for Life<sup>10</sup> have tried to implement this by intertwining physical literacy, physical activity for life and elite sporting pathways within their participation model. Please see diagram adjacent:



**9. What successful policy interventions have other countries used to encourage people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities to participate in sport and recreation, and lead more active lifestyles?**

**Physical Literacy Sport New Zealand**

Physical literacy has informed the Sport New Zealand approach to promoting physical activity<sup>11</sup>. It is one of their three core approaches<sup>12</sup> the others include an insight and locally led approach (see adjacent diagram).



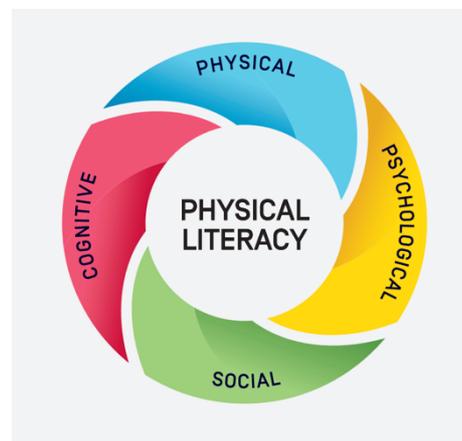
Sport New Zealand describe physical literacy as:

A person’s physical literacy is a combination of their motivation, confidence and competence to be active, along with their knowledge and understanding of how being active contributes to their life. Everyone has their own unique physical literacy that contributes to their overall wellbeing. It determines if and how they value and choose to be involved in physical activity throughout their life. The more physically literate someone is, the more likely they are to be physically active for life. It is important to note that a person’s physical literacy:

- reflects their context, environment, culture and world
- is a holistic concept, involving physical, social, emotional, cognitive and spiritual dimensions.

**Physical Literacy Sport Australia**

Sport Australia state that “Everyone has the potential to value, develop and maintain positive physical activity behaviours for life”<sup>13</sup>. They have integrated physical literacy within their work describing that physical literacy involves holistic lifelong learning through movement and physical activity. It delivers physical, psychological, social and cognitive health and wellbeing benefits. The Sport Australia Position Statement on Physical Literacy outlines their



<sup>10</sup> Sport for Life (2021) Accessed online: 20<sup>th</sup> January 2021. Available at: <https://sportforlife.ca/>  
<sup>11</sup> Sport New Zealand (2021). *Physical Literacy Approach*. Accessed online: 20<sup>th</sup> January 2021. Available at: <https://sportnz.org.nz/resources/physical-literacy-approach/#:~:text=A%20person's%20physical%20literacy%20is,active%20contributes%20to%20their%20life.&text=It%20determines%20if%20and%20how,physical%20activity%20throughout%20their%20life>.  
<sup>12</sup> Sport New Zealand (2021) *Three Approaches*. Accessed online: 20<sup>th</sup> January 2021. Available at: <https://sportnz.org.nz/media/1259/spnz-ag1039-spnz-three-approaches-aw3.pdf>  
<sup>13</sup> Sport Australia (2021) *Physical Literacy*. Accessed online: 20<sup>th</sup> January 2021. Available at: [https://www.sportaus.gov.au/physical\\_literacy#:~:text=The%20Australian%20Physical%20Literacy%20Framework,physical%20skills%20and%20fitness&text=the%20social%20skills%20to%20b](https://www.sportaus.gov.au/physical_literacy#:~:text=The%20Australian%20Physical%20Literacy%20Framework,physical%20skills%20and%20fitness&text=the%20social%20skills%20to%20b)

commitment to creating a healthier generation of more active Australians.

The Australian Physical Literacy Framework activates this commitment through the establishment of a common language to support all Australians develop their physical literacy, at every stage of life.

They state that physical literacy gives you:

- physical skills and fitness
- the attitudes and emotions that motivate you to be active
- the knowledge and understanding of how, why and when you move
- the social skills to be active with others.

They also have a range of case studies<sup>14</sup> show how physical literacy can be successfully integrated into sport and physical activity programs. They all highlight the importance of:

- a holistic approach – addressing all four physical literacy domains
- adopting a participant centric approach – being empathetic and considering the impact on participants
- using a settings based approach – modifying the activities and environment to suit all participants.

#### **10. Should there be a national plan for sport and recreation? Why/why not?**

Yes, this National Plan can unite a range of organisations and sectors in a coordinated approach to promoting sport and recreation, signposting and advocating key concepts and principles essential to this mission including a physical literacy and whole system approach.

#### **Closing Statement**

Thank you for the invitation to respond to this call for evidence. I look forward to following the progress of the new National Plan for Sport and Recreation.

*26 January 2021*

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[e%20active%20with%20others](#)

<sup>14</sup> Sport Australia (2021) *Physical Literacy Case Studies*. Accessed online: 20<sup>th</sup> January 2021. Available at: [https://www.sportaus.gov.au/physical\\_literacy/case-studies](https://www.sportaus.gov.au/physical_literacy/case-studies)