

McDonald's UK – Written evidence (NPS0080)

Overview

1. McDonald's UK welcomes this opportunity to provide a response to the Lords' Committee inquiry on a National Plan for Sport and Recreation. This submission outlines McDonald's own support for local grassroots football, and details how we hope to work with the Government to encourage young people into a lifelong love of sport and an active lifestyle.

The importance of a national plan for sport and recreation

2. We know first-hand just how important community led sport and activity is, and we welcome the Committee's dedication to removing barriers to participation in sport. The coronavirus pandemic has made starkly clear the importance of sport and recreation, and of maintaining an active and healthy lifestyle. Physical activity and sports are essential not only for individuals' health, but also for the sense of community and togetherness they foster. Grassroots sport can also help young people build confidence, make friends, and improve their health.
3. The Covid-19 pandemic has had an incredibly damaging effect on the uptake of community sport. Local clubs and teams have had to pause their usual training and activities, and parents and children have been unable to partake in activities during lockdown. We have worked hard to keep our Fun Football centres open for as much of the pandemic as possible, offering free sessions for children in line with coronavirus regulations. We also sought to offer [online content](#) for those who couldn't get out of the house, with Lionesses star Lucy Bronze and former England international Peter Crouch offering free activities to help keep families active at home.
4. As the country begins its recovery from the pandemic, it will be more important than ever to support community groups through funding and investment in this crucial area. In many instances, the pandemic saw a groundswell of community spirit and we hope that, as the country begins to reopen, grassroots sports can be at the centre of those communities.

How McDonald's is supporting the Government's aims and ambitions to encourage active and healthy lifestyles through sport

5. For the past 19 years, McDonald's has been the official Grassroots Community Partner for all four UK football associations in England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. We are immensely proud of this partnership, which will help ensure that we continue to play a role in encouraging young people to have a lifelong love of sport and an active lifestyle.
6. Our goal now is to deliver five million hours of football to 500,000 children across the UK by 2022. Although our programme has been disrupted by the coronavirus pandemic, we have still been able to deliver four million hours of football to 250,000 children by 2021. We hope to exceed our original goal by the end of this year. In 2021 we plan to run over 650 Fun Football centres across the UK and a further 15 Fun Football festivals, in major public spaces to promote our programme and the benefits of sport, if coronavirus restrictions allow.

7. Through our grassroots programmes, McDonald's UK has also trained over 30,000 football coaches, helping to encourage children and young people to participate in sport – including those who have never played football before. We do this work because we believe it will lead to increased participation and retention of children and young people in sport, and in turn a healthier and happier generation. To date, we have supported over 10,000 grassroots clubs via the UKFA's club and league accreditation programmes, allowing children from all backgrounds and communities to experience the sport for the first time.
8. We believe strongly in the local delivery of sports programmes and have used our franchise system to ensure that people all over the country are supported in leading an active lifestyle. Since 2008, we have run our Club Twinning programme, linking over 900 of our restaurants with local football clubs. These local community relationships provide a range of support, including receiving kit and equipment, business advice, and assistance with hosting community football events.

Conclusion

9. McDonald's is fully supportive of the Committee's inquiry into a national plan for sports and recreation, and we know first-hand just how important community led sport and activity is in encouraging an active and healthy lifestyle. At McDonald's, we will continue to play our part through investment in community initiatives, and welcome any opportunity to support the Committee and the Government in increasing participation in grassroots sport and recreation.

29 January 2021