

English Football League Trust – Written evidence (NPS0097)

The EFL Trust is the charitable arm of the English Football League (EFL) and was established in 2008 to oversee the remarkable and diverse work of EFL's Club Community Organisations (CCOs). Our vision is 'Stronger, Healthier, More Active Communities.' We use the power of the Club badge and the affinity countless numbers of people have to their team, to deliver a wide range of community initiatives focusing on raising people's aspirations and quality of life. Our core purpose remains to support the CCOs in our network to help us achieve our vision. We focus on:

- Improving health and wellbeing
- Raising aspirations and realising potential
- Building stronger, more cohesive communities

The network engages with over 880,000 participants every year, has over 3,500 working on CCO delivered projects and invests over £59m in their community every year. The EFL Trust supports the network by securing programmes for our CCOs to deliver significant impact in their communities.

Question 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? 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?

1.1 Several of our 72 EFL Club Community Organisations (CCOs) have a good relationship with their Active Partnership with some receiving funding via these groups, however this is not universal. We have examples where local authorities have integrated physical activity into public health strategies and provided better outcomes. Equally we are aware of examples where a CCO delivers sport/physical activity funded by the Local Authority. Charlton Athletic Community Trust have delivered the Royal Borough of Greenwich's universal youth provision, Young Greenwich, since 2012.

1.2 Active Lancashire chair the Lancashire United steering group in which all our CCO's across Lancashire participate in. This group leads on the United Together programme, the primary focus of which is reducing re-offending. They have drawn down funding from probation and Sport England previously to fund a coaches from our CCO's to work with clients who are engaging in United Together seeing the value in the club badge and the provisions we have to offer.

1.3 Preston North End have worked with Active Lancashire in Preston Prison, on a 'Through the Gate' initiative which looks at engaging with the offenders prior to release in the Preston area. Leyton Orient work with London Sport who deliver for Sport England in London. This partnership has included work on an active research piece, which Sport England funded and commissioned. City Community Trust (Exeter) have a great relationship with Active Devon and have delivered a host of programmes in collaboration with them.

Question 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.

2.1 Our 'Joy of Moving' approach was developed in partnership with our corporate partners Ferrero, Rome University and the Italian Olympic Committee. In the UK and Ireland we have used this methodology to develop two key projects: **Move & Learn** and **Joy of Moving Festivals**. Move & Learn is targeted specifically at children aged 9 and 10 - a key milestone in a child's development - and is designed to appeal to **every child** in some way. Consisting of lessons in schools delivered by CCO coaches, plus a series of home-based family challenges, children learn about the importance of physical activity and how to eat a balanced diet. We also work hard to support and encourage schools to adopt the ideas and approach in the longer term. We are all aware that children who lead less active lifestyles are more likely to develop long term health conditions during their teenage years and throughout adulthood. We see this in rates of Type 2 Diabetes and Cardiovascular Disease. Therefore, early intervention, in and out of educational settings, is all important.

2.2 Our programme features specially designed games and activities which help children to develop in four major areas - **physical fitness, motor coordination, cognition and creativity**, and **life skills**. Children respond with huge positivity, telling us that they have a better understanding of why it's important to be active and to eat a balanced and varied diet. They are also more motivated to stay active. Over a half million children have taken part during the last seven years. More details are available at <https://www.joyofmovingresourcehub.co.uk>. Many of our CCOs also provide support for schools extra-curricular sport and games outside of the Joy of Moving programme. During the pandemic, many CCOs have been relied upon to continue this work as a key support to children's health and wellbeing. CCOs can offer school, extra-curricular and community activities. This provides consistency of delivery to a young person, and offers an option to have a continuous experience therefore supporting continued involvement outside of school.

2.3 Together, we are playing our part but we encourage Government departments to work towards a step change in children's activity levels. The UK is creating problems downstream by physical education being an increasingly peripheral subject. It must be a core subject. We need Government to make sure initial teacher training adequately prepares young teachers to teach PE, that schools are measured on the impact of the physical education they offer, and for the budgets allocated to be strictly ring-fenced and audited. We at the EFL Trust are also call on other major sports organisations to put aside what they see as their responsibility to their sport and to instead focus on their responsibility to the children of our country. We need to reach out to children with a fresh new broader offer.

2.4 Our CCOs have high quality coaches and are all DBS checked. The EFL Trust provide a structured CPD programme in line with our projects to ensure this quality, with inclusion and mental health training encouraged, to understand the holistic young person, and certainly that at primary school the focus is around

participation and enjoyment, and not winning. We employ people who are representative and understanding of local community needs.

Question 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.

3.1 We have a broad range of examples of success in engaging across all areas listed and more.

3.2 Our **FIT FANS** programme is an evidence based gender sensitised lifestyle behaviour change intervention for overweight and obese adult football supporters typically male aged 50+. FIT FANS uses interest in football to attract adults aged 35-65 to a 13 week healthy lifestyle multi component programme delivered by coaching staff at their local professional football club charity. FIT FANS harnesses the power of the club brand and association with the club. It is known locally as FIT REDS, FIT UNITED etc. to appeal to fans using the club nickname. It also uses tried-and-tested behaviour change techniques, peer support and reinforcement and creates social bonds that last.

3.3 Funded by £2.25m from the national lottery, FIT FANS is initially supporting thirty localities with the highest rates of adult obesity and type 2 diabetes. It is also funded locally in a handful of other areas. We now want to use the initial investment as a magnet fund for health commissioners to join us on our mission to reach many more people. The intervention was designed in Scotland. The results of an extensive randomised control trial there, published in the Lancet, demonstrated significant long-term improvements in weight loss, physical activity, alcohol and calorie intake, blood pressure psychological wellbeing. The trial was a world first of its kind. At 12 months the mean difference in weight loss between groups, adjusted for baseline weight and club, was 4.94 kg (95% CI 3.95–5.94) and percentage weight loss, similarly adjusted, was 4.36%

3.4 A major follow up study conducted 3.5 years later reported that men in the research deliveries group had maintained an average weight loss of 2.9kg, and a 2.9cm reduction in their waist size. Men in the routine delivery group had maintained an average weight loss of 2.7kg, and a 2.6cm waist reduction 2.5 years after they took part in the FIT FANS programme.

3.5 The data from our delivery in England in 2020 (completed under lockdown conditions) reveals, from an average male start weight of 110.4kg, average weight loss of 7.2kg, waist reduction of 8.9cm, and reduction in BMI of 2.3. FIT FANS is an example of an evidence based intervention design which use the magnetism of football to achieve clinical outcomes. It is just the sort of programme that bridges the gap in policy between sport, physical activity and preventative public health.

3..6 Our Sport England/National Lottery funded **Extra Time Hubs** are pilots of a concept to create a national social movement of people in their retirement years. We are creating a 'shared interest community' - a critical mass of older people

who meet on a weekly basis to socialise and to do the things they enjoy. In doing so, we are nudging them towards improved connectedness and lifestyle habits. Extra Time Hubs harness the unique assets of our network, and the affinity and loyalty many people feel towards their football club, to bring older people together to enjoy themselves and to be active together. The concept has been recognised by the World Health Organization for its innovative approach to reaching and supporting older people. There are 11 clubs involved in the pilot phase. We aim to secure further investment and to have 72,000 members over the next ten years across our national network. Our Hubs are designed as a hub and spoke model - hubs being weekly social gatherings of members, and spokes being activity groups set up and led by members. These have led to organised low level physical activities such as Walking Football.

3.7 The **Female Football Development project** was a 3 year initiative with a target to engage 40,000 new women and girls. We used innovative methods combining football, fitness and dance to engage. The participants had built such a strong trusting relationship with female staff that over 12% went on to play regular grassroots football. 21% of participants came from BAME communities.

3.8 EFL professional male teams were challenged to support their community by having a ladies team in place (from a year 1 start of 55% of EFL teams that had a women's team this rose to 84% in year 3). We also trialled specifically targeting women of an older generation, with huge success- raising female participation 430% for women above 25yrs. This culminated in us running the first ever National Women's Tournament for those new to the game. We engaged the mental health charity 'If U Care Share Foundation', to run workshops, building confidence in staff, and supporting greater programme recruitment and retention.

3.9 Our '**Every Player counts**' scheme offers the chance for all to participate in football regardless of their disability. The quality of our coaches is crucial in all of our activity as is their continuous professional development focusing on young people's mental health, unconscious bias and the (FAs) four corner model of psychological and social alongside technical and physical. The relatability of coaches to the participants driven by the individual development of the participant is paramount, responding to feedback from participants to help design our activities.

3.10 Our network is well placed and poised to make an ever greater contribution to the priorities set out in the NHS Long Term Plan and to emerging integrated care systems. Our front line community health services, reach a demographic that is perhaps least likely to access primary care. We offer an expanding portfolio of person-centred support services in non-clinical settings, designed to encourage healthy choices and self-management of conditions, such as blood pressure testing with the British Heart Foundation, PSA checks for prostate cancer, the NHS Health Checks, cancer recovery services with Macmillan Cancer Support, dementia support groups, drug and alcohol recovery services, suicide prevention campaigns and adult mental health support groups.

3.11 The Covid pandemic has deepened our understanding and helped us to develop innovative new approaches to create social groups in a virtual space. Technology can help us to reach a wider audience and compliment work in a

physical space, allowing people to interact in innovative ways. It has also exposed us to 'digital poverty' and 'technophobia', helping us to understand people's barriers to participating in society and exercise which are inextricably inter-woven. Solutions to this include device loaning schemes and inter-generational projects to support older people.

Question 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?

4.1 They remain pertinent and reflect our own organisational mission. As part of what has become known as the 'sport for development' movement, we exist to serve the people of our communities and for us sport is a means to an end. We are a key strategic partnership with Sport England, have inputted to and welcome the publication of their new strategy. We continue to believe in our ability to create positive change and look forward to supporting the government deliver solutions as they refine their vision and objectives for sport and physical activity in a complex post Covid world.

Question 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?

5.1 We have been consistent in our position that Sport England are best placed to develop a consistent data collection and monitoring process for the sector. There are many different models and systems in place which can make measurement and analysis difficult and inconsistent. There is a need for standardisation which will not hamper creativity.

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

6.1 Education is central to our delivery; challenging prejudice and working towards greater understanding of different cultures is key. We have had success in social mixing objectives through NCS and other specific projects and how this educates coaches delivering sports activities.

6.2 Our approach is clear. Discrimination in any form is not welcome and the EFL, EFL Clubs and CCOs are united in the collective objective to eradicate all types of prejudiced behaviour from our game, ensuring the EFL is an inclusive and diverse environment for all. We believe that everyone taking part in a football match, attending on a matchday or taking part in community activities has the right to feel safe, valued and included. Work is continuing with the Premier League and the Football Association to improve processes and procedures in place to address discrimination. From the start of the season 'Not Today or Any Day' has featured on player shirts across the three EFL divisions – reinforcing the message that discrimination in any form will not be tolerated. Whilst progress has been made in this area, more remains to be done as we

continue to work with our Clubs and stakeholders to tackle the issue and actively promote inclusion and diversity across our matchdays and within the wider communities that our Clubs and Club Community Organisations serve.

6.3 We attach great importance to diversity across organisations in our trustees; management; delivery staff. We believe this helps us better understand issues and ensure they are addressed. We also incorporate user voice feedback and understanding of their experiences in strategy development.

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

7.1 It is vital that organisations providing sports and recreation activities are working with key organisations such as the Child Protection in Sport Unit, the NSPCC & Ann Craft Trust to review the framework of standards and to clearly define the responsibilities relating to safeguarding throughout all levels of organisations working within sport and recreation. This includes clarity of responsibility for board members and leadership teams, through to the designated safeguarding staff, project managers and delivery staff. This framework should include the minimum standards of training required at each level, ensuring that this relevant training is readily available via national safeguarding organisations or local authority training pathways in cases where organisations are unable to design and deliver appropriate training in-house.

7.2 It would be beneficial to raise awareness at local authority level of the significant access that sports and recreation organisations have to vulnerable groups and the key role they play in promoting their welfare and protection. Representation for local sports and recreation organisations at local safeguarding children partnerships and safeguarding adult boards would support partnership working, further allowing local authorities to recognise the role these organisations play in tackling local safeguarding issues. This would also allow for organisations to better understand local safeguarding issues, tailor their staff development appropriately to the key issues faced by their communities and be better prepared to prevent, recognise and respond to such concerns. Stronger partnership working would also encourage better outcomes for vulnerable groups accessing activities of sports and recreation organisations, as key information around the support needs of those already known to local authorities could be shared more readily.

Question 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 membership, promoting their sport and maximising participation.

8.1 Our Talent Inclusion Programme has us working close with 10 Club Community Organisation to support young girls who possess potential, by providing them with access and opportunity to the FAs England Talent Pathway. This starts from identification through community activities, understanding the barriers to continuing participation and working to put support mechanisms in place. Traditional routes of spotting talent are through clubs, but this misses

those who cannot or do not join. The FA are the first to recognise that they do not have the resource or local knowledge to reach out, hence the value of our existing activity delivered by EFL Club Community Organisations.

8.2 Player Support is key for those underrepresented groups and we have worked with many external organisations to ensure staff are confident when it comes to supporting the hard to reach player; UK Coaching provide accredited training for 'Coaching the Person in Front of you'. CCO staff are taught how to be truly person centred and to be aware of Understanding Unconscious Bias.

8.3 Children from low income families are 4.5 times likely to experience severe mental health, we work with the mental health charity "If U Care Share" Foundation, who provide insight on emotional and mental health awareness, improving the confidence of our staff to engage. We also partner with "Working with Parents in Sport" and "Women in Sport" as it important we understand barriers to talent for both parents and the child. Both the EFL Trust and FA recognise that social class, ethnicity and demography should not be the barrier and by working with the CCOs we can gain a real understanding of a broad range of equality, diversity and inclusion issues. The CCOs we work with have been carefully selected as they give access into some of the most deprived communities in the country where individuals and families faced daily challenges when trying to participate in sport or even progress. With provide life changing opportunities for young girls who possess the potential.

Question 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?

9.1 We are not best placed to answer this question.

Question 10: Should there be a national plan for sport and recreation? Why/why not?

10.1 Absolutely. The experience and wake up call of Covid 19 has only accentuated this necessity.

10.2 It is very timely that Sport England have just announced their new 10-year strategy, in the content of which and throughout the consultation they were clearly cognoscente of the compounded challenges facing the nation. We are delighted that Children and the most disadvantaged in society have been put at the heart of a "golden reset" for sport and activity- it is imperative we continue to transform fitness levels and tackle obesity.

10.3 We support the overall government direction but would reinforce our belief that a national plan needs to be underpinned by a strong understanding of regional and local needs. The differences in challenges and capacity reflected across our CCO network give is a great understanding of this and we will continue to be a pro-active and agile part of the solution.

29 January 2021