

Sport England – Written evidence (NPS0100)

Introduction

Sport England is an arm's length body of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, and a National Lottery distributor body, with the responsibility in England to transform people's lives by getting them active and playing sport at a grassroots and community level. We are committed to using our advocacy, insight and investment of Exchequer and National Lottery funding to harness the wide-ranging benefits of sport and physical activity for individuals and communities across the country.

Executive Summary

1. We launched our new *Uniting the Movement*¹ strategy on 26 January 2021 following consultation with thousands of people and hundreds of organisations over the past 18 months. It was overwhelmingly well received by partners across government, the sport and physical activity sector and wider stakeholders, and sets out how we will invest our time and resources as an organisation over the next decade.
2. This evidence is submitted based on its purpose, ambition and content, and it draws on the five big issues that *Uniting the Movement* will focus on in particular: supporting the sector to recover and reinvent post-Covid, connecting communities through activity, building positive experiences for children and young people, strengthening sport and activity's connections with health and wellbeing and creating and protecting active environments. It builds on the positive lessons learned from delivering our previous strategy *Towards an Active Nation* which was itself rooted in the Government's ambitions set out in 2015 – not least that investment in sport and physical activity must be linked to a broader social and economic benefit to the nation.
3. Working with partners across the sport and physical activity sector, we have made great strides to break down the barriers that exist for many to get active, but we acknowledge that there is much more to do. Tackling inequalities is the focus sitting at the heart of our new strategy, and as we work to make progress against these five key areas, there will be a sharp focus on those who are being left behind.
4. The coronavirus pandemic has presented sport and physical activity organisations with significant challenges, but we have acted decisively to support the sector, investing more than £220 million of National Lottery and Exchequer funding² to date. As we continue to manage the ongoing uncertainty and restrictions, we recognise that further action and support may be needed, and we are working closely with government on what might be required. In support of the launch of *Uniting the Movement* Sport England announced that we will make a further £50 million available within

¹ <https://www.sportengland.org/news/new-strategy-puts-sport-and-physical-activity-heart-nations-recovery>

² <https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/coronavirus/funding-innovation-and-flexibility>

our 2021/22 budget specifically for our continued response to the challenge presented by the pandemic.

5. Alongside this direct investment Sport England is also currently managing and administering the £300 million Sport Winter Survival Package on behalf of DCMS and the £100 million National Leisure Recovery Fund on behalf of DCMS and MHCLG. As a result we are directly influencing the support being directed both to the community leisure sector as operated through Local Authorities, and to those sports leagues and clubs directly impacted by the enforced absence of spectators.
6. We believe that the pandemic also presents an opportunity for transformative change across the sector. Community sport and activity generates £85.5 billion of social and economic value in England, and there is an opportunity to establish sport and physical activity as a key pillar at the heart of our communities, embedding activity across our local systems as we collectively recover from Covid-19, and helping to optimise the long-term health, wellbeing and social development of the population.
7. As the arms-length body responsible for grassroots sport and physical activity, we invest approximately £300 million of Lottery and Exchequer funding each year to support the development of opportunities for people to be active. We work extensively across all areas of this inquiry, and have sought to highlight key issues for the Committee's attention, but welcome further dialogue as required.

Q: 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?

8. Our local work has shown us that local systems are most effective when people's lived experiences are understood and used to change the system to respond to their individual and community needs. This relies on strong relationships, and high levels of trust and collaboration: principles we have sought to embed across our work.
9. Fundamentally, we believe that local people hold the keys to unlocking long-lasting, positive change in their communities. We know from our local work that the answers to complex social issues lie in large part within the distinct communities where people live, and that involving and giving ownership to local communities and the organisations that work with and for them is often where sustainable solutions can be found.
10. At whatever level decision making is taking place, it is important that there are leaders acting as advocates and influencers for the role that sport and physical plays in local areas, and the instrumental contribution it makes to a broad range of outcomes. This is critically important to ensure that sport and activity remains connected and relevant and can respond to local changes.

Sport England Local Delivery Pilots

11. In our 2016-21 *Towards an Active Nation* strategy³ we set out a vision to invest in Local Delivery Pilots⁴ (LDPs) to test bold new approaches to

building healthier, more active communities across England. In December 2017 we announced the 12 pilot places that we would be working with, and over the past two years we have worked closely with each pilot area, supporting them with significant resources and expertise to deliver system change in their communities

12. A mix of large and small, rural and urban, each is targeting different audiences and fixing their focus on specific outcomes. In Exeter for example, the council has developed a programme as part of the LDP to create new homes and infrastructure that simultaneously reduces congestion and improves the health and wellbeing of residents by shifting travel patterns and making year-on-year increases in physical activity. Meanwhile in Calderdale, local commissioners and care workers are reconsidering social care, building physical activity into client care plans to help older adults to maintain activity and strength levels, preventing their deterioration and maintaining independence for longer. Taking a 'whole systems approach' is challenging Sport England and the pilot places to think and do things differently, and we are capturing valuable learning⁵.
13. Collaboration across organisations and within communities is key, but the permission and support from commissioners and funders like Sport England is critical too. There is a need for flexibility in what committed funding can be spent on, and likewise, the ease and accessibility of the process to apply for it.
14. It is important to not see sport and physical activity as the route into communities; it is often necessary to find creative ways to embed sport and physical activity into other organisation's existing work, as a means to support their priorities. Activity and movement more broadly may often be a by-product – whilst it is unlikely to be under-represented groups' priority, this does not mean that they are not interested in being active – and the importance of active environments to support people to become and stay active should not be understated. We must be comfortable with recognising the whole spectrum of movement, physical activity and sport as ways to encourage the nation to be active.

The role of Active Partnerships

15. Following the County Sport Partnerships Review in 2016, and the recommendations emerging from this, the core role of Active Partnerships (APs) was redefined, focusing on local capacity-building support, coordination and advocacy. The emphasis here was placed over and above the delivery of particular activity projects, as we recognised that in many instances the local delivery landscape is well-served to deliver here and that duplication should be avoided.
16. Local intelligence and insight will remain vital, and Sport England will continue to value our relationship with APs and their assistance in

³ <https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/sport-england-towards-an-active-nation.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.sportengland.org/campaigns-and-our-work/local-delivery>

⁵ <https://www.sportengland.org/campaigns-and-our-work/local-delivery#hearingfromthepilots-10866>

brokering and supporting local partnerships. Our intention is for the network to provide capacity in each corner of England, supporting local authorities and the voluntary and community sector partners often leading delivery, and connecting sport and non-sport organisations and infrastructure to the people on the ground.

17. The distribution of our Tackling Inequalities Fund – part of our £220 million Covid response – is a good example of how successful this can be where, using APs’ local intelligence, capacity and brokering skills, Sport England funding has been devolved to a local level. The network of APs are close to community organisations and so are well-placed to reach those who need it most, with Sport England again capturing significant learning from throughout this process.

The integration of public leisure, sport and civil society

18. Sport England has long supported local councils with strategic leisure planning to ensure that services deliver local outcomes for communities. The Covid-19 pandemic has placed an enormous strain on local public leisure provision, but the government’s £100 million National Leisure Recovery Fund⁶ highlighted above, and administered by Sport England, seeks to support eligible public leisure centres to reopen to the public.

19. Built public leisure infrastructure has an important role to play – alongside community clubs and organisations, active travel networks, green spaces and schools – in providing greater opportunities for people to get active and to maintain an active lifestyle long-term.

20. Likewise, volunteering and the role of sports clubs and community groups can unlock even greater cooperation and participation locally: collaboration between sport and non-sport networks will always be key to enabling more people, regardless of their background, to be active. This has been reiterated by projects supported through our Volunteering Funds⁷, with multi-partnership approaches a key part of the success of programmes like Derby County Community Trust’s ‘Winning Minds’ initiative⁸, and Cheshire Wildlife Trust’s ‘Go Wild, Get Fit’ project⁹.

Q: How can children and young people be encouraged to participate in sport and recreation both at school and outside of school, and to lead an active lifestyle?

21. Children and young people’s activity levels have been disrupted by Covid like never before. In the 2018/19 academic year 46.8% of children were active for 60 or more minutes per day¹⁰, and our latest Active Lives Children and Young People results¹¹, released earlier this month, show that

⁶ <https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/national-leisure-recovery-fund>

⁷ <https://www.sportengland.org/campaigns-and-our-work/volunteering-funds>

⁸ <https://www.derbycountycommunitytrust.com/programmes/mental-health/winning-minds>

⁹ <https://www.cheshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/GoWildGetFit>

¹⁰ <https://www.sportengland.org/news/active-lives-children-and-young-people-survey-academic-year-201819-report-published>

this fell to 44.9% for the 2019/20 academic year, alongside a marked fall in key elements of physical literacy in the period following the first national lockdown.

22. Physical literacy – the combination of our enjoyment, confidence, competence, understanding and knowledge of how to be active – is essential. We know that the greater children’s physical literacy, the more active they are likely to be, and in turn that they report improved wellbeing over and above their less active peers. We will be increasing our focus on the importance of physical literacy even further as an organisation, and it will be crucial that building this foundation is a focus for government, schools and the sport and physical activity sector alike.

School sport and physical activity

23. The *School Sport and Activity Action Plan*¹² (SSAAP) sets out government’s intent to strengthen the role of sport in children’s school lives, and we are working closely with the Department for Education (DfE), the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and sector partners to deliver against the actions within the Plan.
24. We welcome a review of the SSAAP to ensure that it speaks to how we can tackle some of the stubborn inequalities that exist. We must maintain a laser focus on tackling the inequalities we see around children and young people’s activity levels too: a theme at the heart of our new *Uniting the Movement* strategy.
25. We are ready to support the commitments made in the government’s 2019 general election manifesto too, in particular the development of a Primary Teacher Training programme, continued funding and support for schools to help them open their sports facilities outside of school time, and greater accountability around both schools’ use of the Primary PE and Sport Premium and, via Ofsted, their broader school sport and activity delivery.
26. We recognise that schools are under enormous pressure – now more than ever – but it is vitally important that dedicated time for children to be active is protected as a key part of the school day. We are concerned that some schools are sacrificing time in the curriculum designated for PE in order to redeploy resources towards core curriculum subjects. This presents a very real threat to the physical literacy, health and wellbeing of the next generation, and must be halted as a matter of urgency.
27. Research¹³ conducted as part of our £13.5 million Secondary Teacher Training (STT) programme¹⁴ showed that helping children and young people to be active during the school day can play a key role in helping them to catch up on work missed as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, and can really support their mental health. We launched the STT programme in 2018 to help PE teachers to foster a more positive attitude

¹¹ <https://www.sportengland.org/news/childrens-activity-levels-down-many-embrace-new-opportunities>

¹² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-sport-and-activity-action-plan>

¹³ <https://www.sportengland.org/news/physical-activity-can-help-children-catch-missed-work>

¹⁴ <https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/secondary-teacher-training-programme>

to PE and to offer a more diverse programme of activities as part of the curriculum and after-school clubs. The programme has reported positive changes in the quality and prioritisation of PE, school sport and physical activity delivery, and it continues to grow, having engaged more than 2500 schools (over 70% of secondary schools) across England to date.

28. Connected to this, we also continue to develop and grow a number of innovative programmes which are helping children and young people to be active. Most recently we have been piloting our innovative £1.5 million Studio You¹⁵ programme: a new online video platform designed to help teachers engage less active teenage girls via non-traditional PE activities including yoga, Pilates, boxercise, barre, and hip hop dance. The programme has been piloted in 21 schools across England, with a national rollout planned for later this year.

Out-of-school settings

29. Our work encompasses both in-school and out-of-school sport and physical activity, and while we are working across the SSAAP and have a portfolio of projects helping children to be active during the school day, activity outside of school is critically important to enable children to live an active lifestyle too.
30. The coronavirus pandemic has highlighted even more the importance of families being active together, and for some young people it has provided them a better experience of being active than prior to the pandemic. The latest Active Lives Children results show that though boys activity levels fell across May-June 2020 compared to 12 months earlier, girls' activity levels actually increased for the same period; it's possible that this is in part driven by boys' higher levels of engagement with unavailable team sports and that home-based activities better suited many girls.
31. Our Families Fund¹⁶ has invested £24 million into local and national projects since 2017, and has in particular supported organisations who have direct relationships with families across the country – the likes of Barnados, the Children's Society and Gingerbread. Projects have observed positive impacts on both families' communication and their relationships, how far both adults and children enjoy being active together, and crucially 58% of children and 40% of young people have increased their daily minutes of physical activity, alongside 48% of adults increasing their weekly activity levels. Notably, the most significant increases in physical activity levels have been in women and girls, family members from Asian and Asian British backgrounds, children living in the top 20% most deprived communities and young people with a disability or long-term limiting illness.
32. Informed by our Families Fund projects, we will be working to raise the profile of the importance of educating parents and carers on the benefits of their children being active, and will be continuing our work with local authorities and infrastructure partners to ensure that safe and accessible

¹⁵ <http://www.studio-you.co.uk/>

¹⁶ <https://www.sportengland.org/campaigns-and-our-work/families-fund>

spaces and places are available in local areas for families, children and young people to enjoy being active together.

33. Beyond family groups, satellite clubs are a key connector between school-based and community-based sport and activity, providing a diverse mix of new opportunities for young people to get active. They are primarily focused on young people aged 14-19 who aren't already active, and are designed around their needs to help young people to take part in sport and physical activity in a convenient and enjoyable way. The network of satellite clubs has grown consistently since their launch in 2013, and now numbers more than 5,700.
34. We know that enjoyment is the biggest driver of physical activity, and it is essential that fun and enjoyment are put at the heart of designing any new sport and physical activity opportunities for children. There must be a continued focus on both in and out-of-school provision, with all activity centred around enjoyment, inclusivity, accessibility and ensuring that every children and young person has a positive experience of sport and activity. We will continue our efforts to ensure that there is greater choice of different activities to take part in, and that children and young people are involved in the design and delivery of activity: we know that co-designing opportunities in turn increases young people's engagement.

Q: How can adults of all ages and backgrounds, particularly those from under-represented groups, be encouraged to lead more active lifestyles?

35. There are a wide range of factors that influence people's ability to be active: the environment around us, the opportunities available and known to us, and the attitude of others. There is no single solution that can be applied to enable all people to be more physically active, and a multi-faceted approach is always needed. One that considers the many different factors in people's lives, whether that be people's feelings and past experiences of physical activity, their environment and local community, or the support of enablers and influencers in their lives.

Learning from Sport England campaigns

36. People generally know how important it is to be active, but our challenge is to help them to feel like they can take part in the ways that work for them. Sport England has developed and supported a number of award-winning behaviour change campaigns – *This Girl Can*¹⁷, *We Are Undefeatable*¹⁸ and most recently *Join the Movement*¹⁹ – and all have been targeted by detailed insight, looking at physical activity from the target audience's perspective to identify and understand the emotional and practical barriers.
37. For *This Girl Can* it was fear of judgement, for *We Are Undefeatable* people finding it difficult to identify and relate the benefits of being active to their respective health condition, and for *Join the Movement*, believing that there was no way to get active with sports facilities and gyms closed.

¹⁷ <https://www.thisgirlcan.co.uk/>

¹⁸ <https://weareundefeatable.co.uk/>

¹⁹ <https://www.sportengland.org/jointhemovement>

38. The imagery used and stories shared for any marketing to would-be participants must be inclusive. In all our campaigns, we show people of all abilities, shapes, sizes and backgrounds getting active in different ways, and we have sought to celebrate what people have in common, rather than that which makes us different.
39. Our campaigns are proven to work. By showing others getting active, discussing the barriers and bringing together information that helps people to find ways to get active that are easy for them, we have helped more people to get active. Our ground-breaking *This Girl Can* campaign has redefined campaigns encouraging women to get active since it was launched in 2015. 3.9 million women reported taking some action as a result of the campaign, and *We Are Undefeatable* and *Join the Movement* have inspired similar engagement. Our evaluations have reported that 28% of respondents aware of the former campaign had increased their activity as a result, and in the first months of the coronavirus pandemic, 40% of those who recognised the latter had done the same.

The importance of insight and partnerships

40. An insight-led approach must always be taken, and we work with a vast number of partners to gather more learning and insight to complement the breadth of research that we carry out ourselves to inform the sector's work. Whether with Women in Sport to understand how puberty affects teenage girls' relationship with being active, with Sporting Equals to understand the importance of language in all communications, or with Age UK to understand the barriers for older adults, insight must always underpin how we seek to engage people around sport and physical activity.
41. We know that stubborn inequalities have existed between different demographic groups' activity levels for too long – research shows for example, that 4 out of 5 disabled people want to be more active²⁰. Prior to the pandemic, we were starting to see activity levels increasing across a number of under-represented groups, but Covid-19 has had a disproportionate impact on many of them – something we have also seen reflected through our more recent Savanta ComRes research.
42. This tells us that it is important to drive awareness, engage the audience and offer support and reassurance. The knowledge we have around how to support specific under-represented groups to be active, in conjunction with the massive disruption caused by the pandemic, provides an opportunity to ensure that the sport and physical activity sector rebuilds in a more inclusive way that is more responsive to the way that people want to take part in activity.
43. Creating partnerships with organisations who have expertise of working with specific demographic groups, and crucially are trusted by them, is critically important to addressing the challenges that exist too.
44. Sport England works with a range of disability partners²¹ to support disabled people to be active, including Activity Alliance, Disability Rights

²⁰ <http://www.activityalliance.org.uk/how-we-help/research/5563-activity-alliance-annual-disability-and-activity-survey-january-2020>

²¹ <https://www.sportengland.org/campaigns-and-our-work/disability>

UK, Mencap and Sense, and we regularly seek to share the learning and insight gathered through each programme with non-disabled partners across the sector. Similarly, partnerships with the likes of Women in Sport, Sporting Equals, Age UK and a range of sport for development organisations via the Sport for Development Coalition, all enable Sport England-funded programmes to reach deep into communities across the country.

Targeted investment and interventions

45. We know that co-creation of opportunities is important, and likewise that there must be choice of what, where and when opportunities are available in order to optimise engagement. Sport England continues to advocate for a 'someone like me' approach, and there is a key role here for our expert equality partners, local networks and community groups – many of the organisations that we have sought to support through the coronavirus pandemic via our £20 million Tackling Inequalities Fund²².
46. Our Potentials Fund²³, delivered in partnership with the #iwill Fund, has similarly highlighted the impact of youth voice, and has seen us pilot youth social action projects using sport and physical activity over the last three years. The fund was specifically targeted at those young people less likely to volunteer and has had considerable impact, with evaluation results²⁴ showing that the young people involved are more likely to see improved outcomes across all the government's ONS wellbeing measures.
47. Conversely, our £11 million Active Ageing Fund²⁵ continues to support 23 person-centred partnerships helping older adults to get active in ways that are relevant, practical and enjoyable for them, and our £4.5 million Tackling Inequalities and Economic Disadvantage Fund²⁶ is supporting 35 projects to engage lower socio-economic groups too.

Q: Are Sporting Future's five key outcomes the right priorities and how successful has the government been in measuring and delivering these outcomes to date?

48. As has been widely commented upon since 2016, the publication of the government's *Sporting Future* strategy²⁷ marked a notable shift in sport policy, with the five outcomes at the heart of the strategy a step-change from that which preceded them. We welcomed, and continue to celebrate, the strategy's focus on both physical and mental wellbeing, and government looking at sport and physical activity through the lens of the social outcomes that we know it can help to drive.
49. We regularly report our delivery against Sporting Future's five key outcomes to DCMS, alongside a series of KPIs that capture our progress

²² <https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/coronavirus/coronavirus-funding-and-flexibility>

²³ <https://www.sportengland.org/campaigns-and-our-work/volunteering-funds>

²⁴ <https://www.sportengland.org/blogs/volunteer-funds-what-weve-learned-so-far>

²⁵ <https://www.sportengland.org/campaigns-and-our-work/active-ageing>

²⁶ <https://www.sportengland.org/campaigns-and-our-work/tackling-inactivity-and-economic-disadvantage>

²⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sporting-future-a-new-strategy-for-an-active-nation>

across population activity levels, attitudes towards sport and activity, volunteer demographics and more.

50. Our confidence in the outcomes has not waned over the past five years, and they will remain at the heart of Sport England's work into the future. Our new *Uniting the Movement* strategy provides a framework for how we will continue to strive to make being physically active a normal part of life for everyone in England, and describes how we and the wider sport and physical activity sector need to change in order to move towards this.
51. Sport and activity is a key enabler for wider policy agendas, and whether developing the nation's human capital, the preventive health agenda, active travel or levelling up, we look forward to working with colleagues to ensure that sport and physical activity helps to underpin their efforts.
52. Independent research on the social and economic value of sport²⁸ undertaken by Sheffield Hallam University estimates that community sport and activity generates £85.5 billion of social and economic value in England – a return on investment of £3.91 for every £1 spent. Continued investment can reduce the burden on key public services with social returns with an estimated value of £9.6 billion from improvements in our nation's health and £41.8 billion from improved mental wellbeing.

Q: Is government capturing an accurate picture of how people participate in sport and recreation activities in its data collection, and how could this be improved?

53. Sport England captures a huge quantity of data and insight through our research and programme evaluation that presents us with a clear picture of how people participate in sport, physical activity and many forms of recreation.

Active Lives

54. Sport England's annual Active Lives surveys²⁹ monitor the population's activity levels, attitudes towards sport and physical activity, and the social outcomes that being active helps to drive. The Active Lives Adult survey focuses on people aged 16 and over, while our Active Lives Children and Young People survey looks at the activity levels of children aged 5-16.
55. Data collection for the adult-based Active Lives survey has run continuously since November 2015, with a sample size of c.175,000 people each year: now in its sixth year of fieldwork, approximately 950,000 people have responded to the survey. Annual data is published in April and October each year, for the periods November to November and May to May respectively, and as above the results provide robust estimates³⁰ of population activity levels (according to the Chief Medical Officer's physical activity guidelines), participation in a wide range of sports and activities, levels of volunteering, attitudes towards sport and physical activity, and

²⁸ [https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/measuring-impact?section=social and economic value of community sport](https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/measuring-impact?section=social%20and%20economic%20value%20of%20community%20sport)

²⁹ <https://www.sportengland.org/know-your-audience/data/active-lives>

³⁰ <https://www.sportengland.org/know-your-audience/data/active-lives?section=measures>

associations between engagement in sport and the outcomes laid out in *Sporting Future*.

56. Households invited to respond are randomly selected, but the minimum annual sample size for each local authority is 500 people. The scale of the survey, and the geographical and demographic data it captures, ensures that the survey supports our understanding of key variations in engagement with sport and activity at a local authority level and across a range of characteristics.
57. The Active Lives Children and Young People survey is also an annual survey, and runs across each academic year, September to July, with results typically published in December. Data collection has run continuously during school term time since September 2017, and is now in its fourth year of fieldwork, with approximately 330,000 children and young people having responded to the survey to date.
58. Capturing data from around 100,000 children and young people each year across Years 1-11, the Active Lives Children survey provides similar data and insights to that of the adult-focused survey. In this instance however, the annual sample size target for each local authority is 300, with different questionnaires for Years 1-2, 3-6 and 7-11 to ensure the suitability of questions for each age group. Schools are randomly selected to take part, and are asked to arrange for up to three mixed ability classes in up to three randomly chosen year groups to complete the online survey, however it should be noted that for students in Years 1-2, parents are also asked to provide information about the activities that their children have done.
59. DCMS, Public Health England, the Department for Transport and the Department for Education are our formal partners for the surveys, with the research capturing valuable data on loneliness, local active travel, indicators of public health and data to support the Healthy Schools Rating Scheme, all which they can in turn deploy to inform their own work.
60. We are continuously seeking to further develop the surveys; for example, there are plans to explore how wearable devices might be used in future measurement to further improve and/or validate the quality and relevance of the data collected.

Evaluation of Sport England funded programmes

61. Sport England published our Evaluation Framework³¹ in May 2017, outlining the approach taken by Sport England and our partners to implement appropriate evaluation of programmes funded by Sport England investment. It ensures that high quality data is collected in a proportionate and consistent way and provides a step-by-step process to set up evaluation arrangements, plus a suite of tools and resources to support this.
62. We continue to review and regularly update the framework to respond to feedback. We have incorporated additional advice and guidance that has

³¹ <https://evaluationframework.sportengland.org/>

been requested by partners, and plan further engagement to identify what is working well and explore how we can improve our approach.

Wider consumer insights

63. We also carry out a variety of ad-hoc research projects which continue to build our understanding of consumers. This research is driven by the needs of the organisation and our strategic priorities, and focuses on demographic groups who are under-represented in sport and physical activity, or other audiences of particular interest.

64. Some of our more recent, pre-Covid research pieces here include our 'Sport for All?' research looking at the 'ethnicity gap' in sport and physical activity, and our *We Are Undefeatable* insight³² to help people with long-term health-conditions to be active. We do also retain older, but still informative, insight such as our 2015 *Under the Skin*³³ and *Go Where Women Are*³⁴ resources.

65. Our research and insight typically involves a mix of primary (both qualitative and quantitative) and secondary research, and though they vary in terms of scope, they broadly seek to build understanding of a specific consumer group, their existing perceptions of sport and physical activity, particular motivations for and/or barriers to being active and potential solutions to these barriers. We also look at insight into specific activities and behaviours, for example our insight around tackling inactivity³⁵ and our 'Major Activities' research into the six most popular activities across the population: walking, running, cycling, swimming, football and fitness.

66. We capture a breadth of sector understanding and insight too, whether that be insight into different activity settings, specific place-based insights through our LDPs, and evidence of the outcomes that sport and physical activity plays a major role in contributing to.

Covid-specific data collection

67. Active Lives adult survey results published in October 2020, and child survey results published earlier this month have provided valuable insight into the impact of Covid on the activity levels of the nation: a picture that will continue to emerge over the coming months.

68. We have also built our understanding of the demographic groups facing greater barriers to activity as a result of coronavirus. We have worked with Savanta ComRes to develop a more responsive tracking survey³⁶ to inform our response to the situation; much-needed due to the fast-moving nature of the pandemic.

³² <https://www.sportengland.org/news/new-we-are-undefeatable-research-and-resources>

³³ https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/youth-insight_under-the-skin.pdf

³⁴ https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/insight_go-where-women-are.pdf

³⁵ <https://www.sportengland.org/know-your-audience/demographic-knowledge/inactive-people>

³⁶ <https://www.sportengland.org/know-your-audience/demographic-knowledge/coronavirus?section=research>

69. We started a weekly survey at the beginning of April 2020 before moving to a monthly survey from June 2020 onwards. Each wave of this survey is completed online by approximately 2,000 adults (16+) in England, with 15 waves of the survey to date. The data is representative by age, gender, region and social grade, and the results have provided a regular picture of physical activity behaviours and attitudes during the different phases of the pandemic. It has allowed Sport England, our partners, and the wider public to understand the amount and type of activity being undertaken, how activity is changing over time, who is being active, and what people are thinking and feeling about being active.

70. The Active Lives surveys continue to provide the most detailed and comprehensive picture of how people are participating in sport and physical activity. The Savanta ComRes tracking has complemented this by allowing us to very quickly explore and understand the impact of the pandemic on adults in England.

Q: How can racism, homophobia, transphobia, misogyny and ableism in sport be tackled?

71. Sport England is wholeheartedly committed to tackling all forms of discrimination in sport. Tackling inequalities is at the very heart of our new strategy, and we will continue our work to ensure that sport and physical activity is accessible, inclusive and welcoming to everyone, regardless of background.

72. In January 2020 we launched our 'Sport for All?' research³⁷, the most comprehensive ever picture of how people from diverse ethnic communities are taking part in sport and physical activity. It highlighted a distinct 'ethnicity gap' and shed light on the deep-rooted inequalities that mean people from diverse ethnic backgrounds are far less likely to be physically active.

73. Acting on the findings, in September we announced³⁸ alongside the other four Home Nations Sport Councils that we were joining forces to tackle racism and racial inequalities in sport. There are two main workstreams: data gathering and analysis, and targeted engagement of those with lived experience. The former is collating data to help us understand more about the racial inequalities that exist across the UK at every level of the sport sector across participation, coaching, leadership and administration. The latter is focused on providing a safe and confidential forum³⁹ for participants to share their experiences of racism and racial inequalities in sport so that we might better understand participants' lived experience. Both projects are progressing well and the five Sports Councils will collectively publish the findings in the Spring.

74. All sport and physical activity organisations should be working to actively tackle any form of discrimination, and we are also working with the other Home Nations Sport Councils to update the Equality Standard for Sport⁴⁰.

³⁷ <https://www.sportengland.org/news/sport-for-all>

³⁸ <https://www.sportengland.org/news/sport-councils-join-forces-tackle-racial-inequality-sport>

³⁹ <https://www.sportengland.org/news/tellyourstory-campaign-launches>

⁴⁰ <https://equalityinsport.org/equality-standard-for-sport/index.html>

We continue to work with partners including Sporting Equals, Stonewall, Pride Sports, Women in Sport and the Women's Sport Trust to deliver a range of training and resources to partners and the wider sport and physical activity sector to tackle all forms of discrimination as well. Clear and robust policies and procedures must be in place, but it is also important to challenge and prevent any more subtle, indirect or unconscious discrimination.

75. Sport England's *This Girl Can* campaign has directly tackled misogyny in sport, showing images of women and girls that we don't normally see in mainstream media and sports marketing, because they're not viewed as commercially attractive.
76. Our now 800,000-strong *This Girl Can* online community supports and encourages each other too. Early in the life of the campaign, one member asked for advice on what to do when a man shouted at her about the size of her bottom while out running, and she had 2,000 responses in two days. The campaign has not just changed individuals' frame of reference, it has provided a sense of solidarity.
77. The *We Are Undefeatable* campaign has also shown the importance of challenging the pre-conceptions that people hold about their ability to be active, particularly important in tackling ableism. It is important to give thought to where public health messaging and activity promotion should be tailored to the audience, how facilities and activities can be made accessible for all, and how we can overtly challenge discrimination and create allies and champions for equality of access.
78. Involving disabled people in all levels of decision making and ensuring that sport and activity organisations see the value of co-production, is key to tackling ableism in sport. Through our partnership with Disability Rights UK, organisations are supported and upskilled to embed co-production as a key tenet of the development of their projects, programmes and strategy. However, this shift will not come about through one project or organisation, but a transformational change in the approach of the sport and physical activity system to involving disabled people to develop new approaches, and in turn realise attitudinal change.
79. The improvement of disability representation in all aspects of sport and physical activity is another key theme of our work, extending beyond participation. We have been working with Perret Laver to diversify the boards of sports organisations since 2019, with our focus on improving the representation of people with an impairment at this senior level alongside seeking to balance representation by gender and across diverse ethnic communities. It is important that disabled people find and can access the opportunities that best suit them, and the pioneering See My Voice⁴¹ programme which Sport England have helped to fund similarly helps people with a visual impairment to volunteer in roles in sport.

⁴¹ <https://britishblindsport.org.uk/see-my-voice/>

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

Safeguarding children, young people and adults

80. We work closely with DCMS and a range of partners across and beyond the sport and physical activity sector to ensure that robust safeguarding standards are implemented, and all organisations in receipt of grant funding from Sport England are required to demonstrate that they have appropriate policies and procedures in place to safeguard children and adults at risk.
81. We have been working with the NSPCC's Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) since 2001 to provide advice and guidance, education and training, and evaluation and benchmarking to organisations across the sport and physical activity sector. We work with the Ann Craft Trust (ACT) to support the sector to robustly safeguard vulnerable adults in the same way, and they likewise provide a range of advice, guidance and targeted training for sports organisations. We fund the CPSU and ACT approximately £500,000 & £300,000 each year respectively, and supported by this investment, both organisations have developed professional safeguarding standards for use across the sector.
82. The CPSU Standards for Safeguarding⁴² and ACT's Safeguarding Adults in Sport Framework⁴³ provide a framework to help sports organisations to create a safe environment for children, young people and adults at risk. Both help to ensure all Sport England funded NGBs and APs have clear and robust policies, procedures and practice in place to best safeguard anyone who is engaged in sport and physical activity. Beyond their individual work, both organisations have also provided their expertise to inform professional safeguarding standards from the Chartered Institute for Managers of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA) for both children and young people⁴⁴, and adults and adults at risk.⁴⁵
83. We work closely with several other key partners to safeguard those taking part in sport and activity too, including the NWG Exploitation Response Unit (NWG), Sport Resolutions and a range of academics.
84. We are one of the partners involved in an Erasmus+ funded project⁴⁶ led by Edge Hill University looking into the prevalence of child abuse in sport, and we are working with Sport Resolutions and Lime Culture to support NGBs with the case management of any safeguarding issues that do arise within their respective sports. Linked to this, we have supported the development of a data tool by the CPSU and Loughborough University to collect anonymous data on safeguarding cases to help identify any trends

⁴² <https://thecpsu.org.uk/resource-library/tools/standards-for-safeguarding-and-protecting-children-in-sport/>

⁴³ <https://www.anncrafttrust.org/safeguarding-adults-sport-activity/the-safeguarding-adults-in-sport-framework/>

⁴⁴ <https://www.cimspa.co.uk/standards-home/professional-standards-library?cid=18&d=35>

⁴⁵ <https://www.cimspa.co.uk/standards-home/professional-standards-library?cid=18&d=319>

⁴⁶ <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplus-project-details/#project/603014-EPP-1-2018-1-UK-SPO-SCP>

and, where relevant, appropriate interventions. Following a successful pilot, a phased rollout of the case management process is in development, while approximately 35 NGBs are using the data tool already, with this number expected to rise as the case management process is rolled out.

85. We are working to increase parents' awareness of safeguarding too, and supporting them to make informed decisions about which clubs or activities their children attend. We are working with the Lawn Tennis Association to pilot the Safe to Play campaign⁴⁷, and in partnership with the CSPU, ACT, and the NWG, we have developed the Safeguarding Code in Martial Arts⁴⁸, with approximately 650 providers attaining the mark to date.
86. In 2018 we also established a Safeguarding Advisory Panel of individuals with lived experience of abuse and exploitation within sport, alongside a range of organisations who lead safeguarding practice across the sector. Chaired by the Chief Executive of the NWG and the Director of the Centre for Child Protection & Safeguarding in Sport at Edge Hill University, the Panel provides Sport England with expert advice and support regarding safeguarding in sport.
87. In August 2020, Sport England and UK Sport co-commissioned the Whyte Review⁴⁹: a fully independent review into allegations of abuse in gymnastics, led by Anne Whyte QC. The call for evidence ended in September, and a thorough review of the information captured and further interviews with witnesses who submitted evidence are ongoing. The inquiry's recommendations will be published in due course, to a timetable primarily set out by the independent QC leading the Review.
88. We have separately been engaging with DCMS and the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) to seek to include sports coaches as a position of trust within existing legislation. There has been significant interest here; the MoJ consulted on potential changes to legislation last year and are currently considering their findings.

Wider duty of care

89. Safeguarding children and adults against abuse or exploitation is a key component of our individual and collective duty of care, but we must be careful to protect the broader wellbeing of those who take part in sport and physical activity too.
90. We welcomed many of the recommendations made by Baroness Grey-Thompson's 2017 Duty of Care in Sport Review⁵⁰, and have been resolute in our advocacy of sport and physical activity's duty of care. We have supported UK Coaching in developing a suite of Duty to Care training resources⁵¹, including topics on diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, mental health and wellbeing. Though not a formal qualification, it is designed to enable coaches to demonstrate their knowledge of the

⁴⁷ <https://www.lta.org.uk/about-us/tennis-news/news-and-opinion/general-news/2020/february/safe-to-play-safeguarding-awareness-campaign-goes-live>

⁴⁸ <https://www.safeguardingcode.com/>

⁴⁹ <https://www.whytoreview.org/>

⁵⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/duty-of-care-in-sport-review>

⁵¹ <https://www.ukcoaching.org/duty-to-care>

principles of duty of care: something of which all sport and physical activity professionals should be aware.

91. Sport England has been working with Mind since 2014 to transform how we support the mental wellbeing of participants, athletes and the sector's workforce. We have supported them, UK Coaching and 1st4sport to develop an online Mental Health Awareness for Sport and Physical Activity course⁵², and through our wider partnership, we are working to help the sector to create long-lasting change around their practice to support participants' mental health.

Q: 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?

Talent development

92. Sport England is not best placed to comment on the overall opportunities and challenges facing elite sport, and we would defer to UK Sport as the arms-length body responsible for high performance sport in the UK to comment at length. We would however draw the Committee's attention to specific issues within the talent development system, where Sport England plays a key role in enabling and supporting the development of talented young athletes.

93. In 2019, we launched our Talent Plan for England⁵³ setting out our ambition to create the world's best sporting talent system. The Plan outlines our seven principles for investing in talent and explains how we are working to develop the young athletes that will star on the international stage in the future.

94. We have two main objectives to this end: progression, and inclusion. We are seeking to develop a talent system that produces higher quality athletes across the entire talent pathway, and environments that deliver a positive development experience, encouraging retention in the overall sport system. We are determined to ensure that England's talent pathways are accessible and inclusive to all who have the ability and potential.

95. The COVID-19 pandemic has presented elite sport with challenges with regards to talent development. There has been a significant interruption to the training and competition for many athletes, but it has also meant that some of the traditional mechanisms for identifying and recruiting talent (those with the potential to perform at an elite level in the future) have completely broken down.

96. Where some sports are reliant on another sport or activity to enable or support the development of physical literacy, it is crucial that in and out-of-school activities that help to develop fundamental movement skills return as soon as it is safe to do so. We know that the coronavirus

⁵² <https://www.ukcoaching.org/courses/learn-at-home/mental-health-awareness-for-sport-and-physical-act>

⁵³ <https://www.sportengland.org/campaigns-and-our-work/talent>

pandemic has disrupted the population's activity habits, and the development of young sporting talent is no different.

97. Beyond Covid, the most prescient issues for NGBs around talent development are focused upon embedding inclusive practices, establishing and then leveraging new and non-traditional routes into high performance sport and maintaining accessible talent programmes, through managing costs directly incurred by the athlete. The former are two issues that Sport England's Talent Plan seeks to directly influence.

Accountability of NGBs

98. As a funder, one of the fundamental questions we ask is what the most appropriate approach to targets, measurements and objectives is to deploy alongside our funding agreements. We recognise that success can sometimes be transient, and that it is important to take a long-term view in some circumstances; we strive to employ a nuanced approach, where our accountability systems consider what partners have achieved, as well as how and why. We recognise that disproportionate accountability requirements have the potential to drive business malpractice, and it will remain important for Sport England to ensure optimal accountability from all organisations to whom we grant public funding, without inadvertently driving the malpractice against which we are seeking to protect the sport and physical activity sector.

99. The Code for Sport Governance⁵⁴ is another means to ensure that NGBs are accountable, both to Sport England and their members. The Code sets out the levels of transparency, accountability and financial integrity required from all organisations receiving Exchequer or National Lottery funding from Sport England or UK Sport. It has three tiers of requirements, proportionate to the level of funding granted, with the Code requiring the highest standards of governance from organisations requesting the largest public investments.

100. Sport England and UK Sport created the Code to improve the long-term sustainability of the sport and physical activity sector, giving organisations the tools to run themselves well and to professionalise their governance practices. Approximately 300 organisations have now been assessed as compliant at Tiers 2 and at Tiers 2 and 3, applying to those receiving £250,000 - £1 million and over £1 million respectively – just under 20% are NGBs, around 16% APs and the rest a range of charities, community groups and other organisations involved in sport and physical activity. We are currently carrying out a review of the Code with UK Sport to explore opportunities to develop the framework further. The review is set to be completed, and a new and updated Code published, in spring 2021.

Q: 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?

⁵⁴ <https://www.sportengland.org/campaigns-and-our-work/code-sports-governance>

101. As the English Sports Council, we are in regular contact with other nation's leading policy makers and often share best practice and learning with our counterparts all over the world. A recent example of this would be our work with Sport New Zealand in the first stages of the coronavirus pandemic, where we shared information on our respective approaches to sector support and preparing for a return to play.

102. International organisations like the World Health Organisation are also working to mobilise and coordinate world-wide efforts to encourage people to lead more active lifestyles. Their Global Action Plan for Physical Activity⁵⁵, published in 2018, provides a framework of effective and feasible policy to help increase physical activity across the life course.

Q: Should there be a national plan for sport and recreation?

103. A National Plan for Sport and Recreation would duplicate existing strategies and planning documents for sport and recreation, namely the government's *Sporting Future* strategy, Sport England's new *Uniting the Movement* strategy, and UK Sport's organisational and investment strategy.

104. As described above, Sport England's new strategy, launched in January 2021, sets out a vision for sport and physical activity for the next ten years. It outlines how Sport England and the wider sport and activity ecosystem needs to change in order to give the population the opportunities they need to be active.

105. Though we would contend that a new, separate, national plan for sport and recreation is not required, there is arguably an opportunity for a cross-government plan to bring complementary, existing strategies together. Joining up government policy across the likes of sport and physical activity, preventive health, national wellbeing, education, community and infrastructure design, planning and the protection of green spaces would be incredibly powerful. Should such pan-government efforts be led by robust insight, be resourced appropriately, and targeted where the need is greatest, it could drive hugely positive outcomes.

106. Most important is that policy change and ways of working within government, across the sport and physical activity sector and in wider society are coordinated. Cross-government, cross-sector working will be essential to drive meaningful policy and system change at both a nationwide and hyper-local level, and to ultimately help more people to live healthy, happy and active lives.

107. This is exactly what Sport England's new *Uniting the Movement* strategy seeks to achieve, and we hope we can work with all members of the Committee to raise the profile and support for our work here across both Houses, government and beyond.

Further information

⁵⁵ <https://www.who.int/ncds/prevention/physical-activity/global-action-plan-2018-2030/en/>

108. Sport England is grateful for the opportunity to contribute to this inquiry and would welcome the opportunity to give further oral evidence.

29 January 2020