

The British Mountaineering Council – Written evidence (NPS0103)

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?

The first thing to highlight regarding this question is there's no mention of the National Governing Body for sport which the majority of local sports clubs will be aligned to and will seek guidance and support from the in the first instance. There's also no mention of local activity/youth groups that work with communities, for example a group working with people from ethnically diverse backgrounds. Without understanding their cultural norms, we will miss a large part of society we are looking to engage with. Partnerships are absolutely critical to anyone having the opportunity to enjoy any sort of physical activity, particularly those from lower social economic backgrounds, from ethnically diverse backgrounds and those suffering with long term health conditions.

It is imperative that the Active Partnerships work closely with the National Governing Body who will provide the guidance on increasing participation, supplying opportunities for coaching/training and support to provide exit routes to participants in their chosen sport.

There is no group detailed above that can work in a silo and provide better opportunities to anyone in society to access a particular sport or activity. It is the responsibility of the NGB's to work with Active Partnerships and Local authorities to fully understand the local issues, cultural and social norms that will drive success.

We have to be mindful that sport and physical activity isn't just related the leisure centres. As we have seen during the pandemic more and more people are running or walking for their physical and mental wellbeing. These activities cost very little but must be carried out safely and with the environment around them respected, particularly hill walking.

A wider group of partners needs to be supported to have truly great effects on the nation's health. For example, a person arriving at a Youth Hostel in the Lake District to enjoy a walk must be given the information and tools to carry out their chosen activity safely and with confidence. This involves ourselves as the British Mountaineering Council, Mountain Training, and the YHA to put that person at the foot of the mountain. The National Trust to maintain the paths they may walk on the Ordnance Survey to provide the mapping services to keep the person on the right path or to find their way back and the local tourist board to point the person in the right direction to find the information.

In terms of funding National Governing Bodies should be at the forefront of developing opportunities for everyone to enjoy their chosen sport and activity. It is the responsibility of the NGB to use that funding that will assist all the partners above to create better opportunities for the general public. We welcome the Sport England strategic plan which will detail their objectives for the next ten

10 years, maybe it would be wise that funding structures reflect this rather than the four year cycle we currently work towards in relation to Sport England funding.

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.

It is important for any child to take part in sport and physical activity that it is made enjoyable and without constant comparison to other pupils. The education system needs to look past team sports and merely delivering football to boys and netball to girls or other sports that are traditionally in the school curriculum. For example, schools should look to encourage individual activities. For example, indoor climbing. A great example of this is [Kingsway School in Rochdale](#) , which has imbedded climbing into all their years groups. A couch to 5km programme would be very simple, yoga – strength and conditioning at school is often over looked and activities like this are accessible and if funding like the school sports premium is used effectively come a no cost to the child.

Following the pandemic there has been an increase in walking activities and this has allowed children to be active and reducing their screen time. Simple activities need to be considered and a move away from constant competitive sports.

There is a real need to address the physical activity needs of young people at all school levels. A noticeable theme is the perceived lack of enthusiasm by physical education teachers to be concerned with children that lack athletic ability. If a child was struggling at maths or English it would be unlikely that a young person would be brushed aside and ignored. It would be perfectly understandable that teachers would look to address their needs through differentiation, extra lessons and resources. However, unlike maths and English it has to be acknowledged that physical education is not a core subject.

We need to supply activities to children that are accessible outside of school, easy to access for parents and without major financial cost. With regards to team sports, schools could consider dodgeball. An activity that doesn't require much space or cost, it's a fun activity that has participants moving and working up a sweat. Clear exit routes between schools and clubs is absolutely vital to continue sport and activities beyond the classroom.

Developing the schemes of work for these new sports and activities is a simple process. Researching national governing body sites for ideas wasn't burdensome and some ideas for young people to engage in physical activity were simple to locate. This does reflect badly on the current education system and does bring into question why this hasn't been developed previously. It could be argued that a more joined up approach between the Departments for Culture Media and Sport and the Education should be encouraged.

Whilst it should be accepted that the young people taking part in these activities will not achieve a recognised qualification, there is a duty of care to ensure that pupils are educated on physical health and wellbeing.

Lessons could extend to subjects like nutrition and general wellbeing for example, making students aware of the benefits of sleep and strength and conditioning should be considered.

These approaches allow students to move away from the view that physical education is about athletic ability and towards a more welcoming and relaxed environment. Physical Education Teachers need to be more considerate to the pupils with a lesser physical ability than others and to engage with those students too.

Differentiation for all activities allows the teacher to work with the student to gain knowledge and further understanding of the subject. Indoor climbing is an activity that allows students to flourish in a relaxed environment with no pressures that team sports can bring. It promotes, teamwork, leadership, physical and mental wellbeing improvements. Activities like this should be carefully considered for a lifelong learning that physical activity is as important as mental knowledge.

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.

If I may I would like to tackle each of those individually.

Women and girls, community is everything. Women and girls are unlikely to be individual walkers on their own. We don't recommend climbers go alone. It is vital for women and girls to have a support network around them. Personally, I have run a Couch to 5km programme, 80 of the 84 people that came to the programme were women, we never advertised it as women only. It was successful because, although running in the park people didn't feel like they were on show, friendships were forged and women didn't run alone. Just take a look at This mum runs, highlighted at the Launch of the Sport England strategy, 75 women turned up to a mere facebook request. You need women leaders, guides and champions.

We work with some wonderful ethnically diverse groups, Black Girls Hike, Muslim Scout Group and the Lindley Trust are just three great examples. Black Girls Hike has been featured on Countryfile, they have groups in Greater Manchester Coventry and London. They use a language appropriate to them, hiking for example is not a term we would traditionally use. We work with the Muslim Scout Group, like every group we work with to understand the needs and cultural differences that we need to be aware of. At your peril should you start at project without engaging with the local communities and allowing them to lead the focus. Finally, the Lindley Trust, we have a great relationship with the group just outside Tameside in Manchester, we take a lot of learnings from them, the key is they see they believe. You must have leaders from their culture, race and background. Without that initiatives to drive change fail. Start small, review and redefine.

We are starting to work with the older generation through initiatives like Sport England's WeAreUndefeatable Campaign. Again, community cohesion is key, we are aware that loneliness has increased in the over 50's because of the

pandemic. We need to facilitate walks and climbing opportunities to restore people's mental and physical wellbeing. This must be led in partnership with specialist organisations like help to aged and the Alzheimer's society.

Finally, for people from less affluent backgrounds you must provide better opportunities for self-growth and the chance of a job or volunteer opportunities allowing them to grow and succeed. It is no good providing an activity day for people in the Peak that are unable to afford the bus fair there, let alone the walking boots or climbing ropes they need. We need funding to be channelled to the right people, we must unite with organisations that work with children and young people from less affluent backgrounds so that they can be given the change to grow. For example, Youth Zones that are across the country, MOSAIC and Level the Playing must partner with NGB's to provide opportunities to engage.

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?

We do believe that these are the right priorities and can be related to people's lives to provide a better way to live. We're not sure if government is monitoring these. They are outcomes for Sport England and through the evaluation feedback some data has been received but it would be wise to see more of a push to gain further data.

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?

Capturing data on a mass scale like this is always going to be difficult, if not impossible. As someone who has been a racing cyclist for over 20 years, a runner in my spare time these days and constantly active, I have never once received a call and I don't know anyone that has. I'm unsure how it could be 100% accurate and Sport England have made this point in their new strategy that qualitative data is much more relevant than numbers.

However, a suggestion may be to look at the number of people using leisure facilities around the country, climbing walls, the number of clubs and their members, plus looking at footfall from our national parks.

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

The first thing we must do is engage with all these communities and groups. It is not and never has been appropriate to create initiatives to help people into sports without actually engaging with them and without understanding the issues first off.

This is what we have done at the BMC. We have actively reached out to groups like Black Girls Hike to learn about the issues they face both as women but also as a black woman. We have invited them to sit on our Equality Steering Group, involved them in our Partners Assembly and listened.

The key to working with any religious group is knowing the right people to speak to, for example the Imam at the local Mosque is a vital champion for your cause.

Very importantly though sport has been guilty of promoting people from ethnically diverse backgrounds and from a homophobic background on their social media. This is great but when negative comments are received some sports have failed to respond. We must safeguard everyone that we put out there because there will be people who do troll and abuse those we champion.

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

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and whilst there have been great strides in sport in the past twenty years I feel we have not gone far enough. Every NGB and Leisure provider will have a safeguarding policy. In smaller sports or sports with limited capacity this will be part of someone else's job role, even being led by a volunteer. Whilst the leads are very passionate about what they do, other areas of the sport or provider will have little knowledge of their responsibilities. It should be a requirement of all staff to undergo at induction safeguarding training appropriate for their level and interaction with young people and vulnerable groups.

Without this training taking place and the safeguarding work left to just one or two people, predators will still be able to infiltrate sports, clubs and leisure providers.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and it's vital for the protection of all that everyone understands that.

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.

I don't feel that the BMC is an elite sport so I don't feel we can answer this question correctly. However, what I will say is the BMC was created in 1944 to be the representative body for hill walkers, climbers and mountaineers. We are here to protect the rights of our members and listen to them very carefully to shape our future plans.

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?

N/K

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

Yes, and it was great to see the launch of the Sport England Strategy this week called Uniting the Movement. It is very important for the health of the nation that this plan is linked to physical and mental wellbeing and it was a relief to see this added.

Sport and recreation should be part of everyone's future regardless of their background. We need to allow people to have a positive relationship with sport and physical activity from an early age.

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