

# **Royal Yachting Association – Written evidence (NPS0127)**

## **About the Royal Yachting Association (RYA)**

The RYA is the national governing body for all forms of sailing and power boating within the UK. Originally formed in 1875 to bring some form of organisation to yacht racing the organisation has evolved significantly since then and now covers a wide range of areas across both leisure and commercial boating. It is a not for profit members organisation with a membership in the region of 112,000 people who have interests in all forms of boating on the coast and inland waterways. We have nearly 1,500 affiliated clubs and classes.

The RYA manages the British Sailing Team and is responsible for one of the UK's most successful Olympic medal winning sports.

In very broad terms the RYA has 4 main areas of focus:

- Training – The provision of training and certification to both the leisure and small commercial vessel sectors, supported by the provision of a range of world leading publications and training resources. RYA Training is a global operation with 2,400 recognised training centres and 25,000 RYA trained instructors.
- Participation – Our Sport Development team encourage opportunity and access for all to be able to participate in all types of boating and water sports activities
- Performance – To identify, support and retain the best competitors and volunteers across all forms of racing. Our coaching and development schemes actively support our country's top sailors from talented juniors to Olympic and World Champions.
- Membership – To understand, represent and promote the interests of RYA members and the British boating public in general.

## **RYA Response to Inquiry Questions**

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

Sport is delivered across a range of different local providers using money from various sources and administered by a number of government departments. Local authorities are a key investor in sport and physical activity through a range of funding streams including grant money (both National Lottery and Central

Government) and from local tax raising revenue as well as private investment. Currently delivery at a local level is not on Statutory footing.

There needs to be better co-ordination of opportunities at a local level. This could be achieved through the creation of national and community sport & recreation hubs to create a network of activity tourism offices, signposting those in local communities towards opportunities. Currently, knowledge and understanding of opportunity to get involved in different activities is often passed through personal connections, resulting in the advantaged having more access and awareness,

whilst those traditionally excluded become more isolated and unable to break the mould. Such an infrastructure would mean that sporting bodies could run national campaigns knowing that there was the capability for local signposting to facilities and participation opportunities.

These community hubs could also be tasked with ensuring that facilities are available and accessible more frequently. Many facilities sit idle for much of the calendar as they are under the control or ownership of a particular club or association. The community hub could work to form partnerships between different user groups for the benefit of more regular access and participation and work with local authorities on strategies to achieve 'Active Communities'. Where facilities are concerned, there is always a focus on Green Space. Equal consideration needs to be given to Blue Space (canals, rivers, reservoirs as well as coast and sea), as so much physical activity takes place on, or beside Blue Spaces.

Schools must play a key role and be motivated and measured on their ability to teach physical literacy and take the role within the local community to connect young people to sport and their local facilities and sporting clubs. The clubs in turn need to be supported and motivated by their respective NGB's to maximise on this connection and build a lifetime of sporting engagement and passion. A flexible school "physical curriculum" is needed, enabling schools to work with different sports clubs to enable students to try a range of sports in addition to the traditional ones that are taught (football, rugby and cricket etc). Schools should also signpost to non-school sport, encouraging young people to try as many different forms of physical activity as possible.

**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.**

Regular participation in sport and the benefits of this are usually established during a young person's formative years. If we want to influence and bring systemic change to increase participation, we need to give opportunities to all young people, and particularly those whose families that are not likely to encourage their children to engage in sport. Regular participation should be initiated by the school and then supported by local clubs.

Schools should be funded, and outcomes assessed, based upon the whole contribution to a pupil's development. To achieve this, physical activity and wellbeing should be central to any Ofsted assessment. School sport should feature a broad range of activities to give the widest possible exposure to the opportunities available, rather than forcing activity into a few select sports. To achieve this, schools need to be linked to activity provision and facilitate opportunities for pupils and parents to be involved outside school hours.

School sport and activity should also be focused on benefit and outcome rather than performance until habits and preferences have been established. This is evidenced with the RYA Onboard model - [RYA OnBoard Impact Report 2019.pdf](#) – where attention is focused on linking to the curriculum, overall benefits and enjoyment. There is an absolute need to promote benefits, outcome goals and transferrable skills that sport helps young people to develop that brings improvement in school and home life.

**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.**

The Sport England led initiative 'This Girl Can' has been powerful in increasing female participation in sport and exercise. There should be more national promotional campaigns targeting other communities depicting 'normal people' feeling good about being more active, showing a range of sporting activities and how they are accessible for all, with more role modelling and "just like me" imagery. The Government should have an ongoing marketing campaign about how being active makes you feel good and to celebrate the mental health benefits of an active lifestyle.

In encouraging participation from under-represented groups, it is important to highlight different benefits and angles for different people and tailor marketing to address people's unique motivations, barriers and abilities. The RYA Sailability #MoreThanSailing campaign targeted inactive disabled people to help them understand what sailing can do for them in respect of increasing physical activity, improving wellbeing, connecting with others and learning new skills.

A healthy workforce is profitable for companies with less time taken off work through stress, physical and mental health issues. Government could introduce initiatives and incentives to encourage organisations and employers to support their work force to be more active.

There is a key role for sports clubs in this area and Sport England and NGBs can influence this through programmes to encourage clubs to focus on different and diverse communities and create the welcome, and environment that will encourage inclusive participation.

**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?**

*Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation* was important in showing a commitment to sport in the UK at a senior government level and the ambition set out in the strategy was good, particularly in respect of the need to work across government. The five outcomes are a useful statement of priorities but there has been a problem in quantifying how well investment has delivered against each of these over the strategy period to date. Overall, we endorse the focus of *A New Strategy for an Active Nation*, and its intent to influence the five outcome priorities. Although this is being led by Sport England and partners, we would like to see the remit be embraced as part of Education.

**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?**

The reporting via UK Sport and Sport England has a focus on impact and context, which is positive. There should be more co-ordination of research and surveys by sharing of outcomes between sporting bodies, to enable stakeholders to share best practice and learn from successful initiatives.

There should be scope for a more joined up approach across Government with relevant Government departments (DCMS, Education, Health) cooperating and collaborating on research and data to deliver a more accurate picture.

Improved data collection would help to measure the impact of those who participate in multiple different activities and quantify how this contributes to a lifelong engagement and positive outcomes

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

Over the years sport has been seen to transcend racism, homophobia, transphobia, misogyny and ableism. Clearly, there are still issues to be worked on in respect of diversity, equality and inclusion in sport and individual NGBs need to take a leadership role in respect of their sport.

The RYA is proud to have been the first UK National Governing Body to have achieved the Equality standard for Sport in 2016, and to have maintained accreditation to the Standard. We have undertaken significant work in the past on aspects of diversity including disability and gender with ongoing success. We are launching a new Diversity Strategy in February 2021 that has an initial focus on ethnicity. This strategy aims to deliver an RYA that reflects the diverse nature of the society within which we operate and makes all forms of recreational boating inclusive, accessible, and attractive to all.

**7. What can be done to improve and implement effective duty of care and safeguarding standards for sport and recreational activities at all levels**

The Governance code was a step forward that brought a significant amount of change across NGBs. This is another area where NGBs must provide leadership for their sport in respect of the safeguarding of children and adults at risk, and to provide support to affiliated clubs.

The RYA places high priority on the safeguarding of young children and adults at risk which is reflected in our safeguarding work and codes of practice. Our sport has a culture of young people becoming involved in instructing and coaching at club level and we have had concerns about the debate related to Positions of Trust and sports coaches, in that there could be unintended consequences that would criminalise young volunteer coaches or instructors involved in relationships with partners of a similar age. We will continue to contribute to this discussion to ensure understanding on this point and guard against anything that would deter young people from becoming involved in instructing and coaching in our sport.

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

The size of the pool of people engaged in sport and the quality of their experience is the baseline resource we have to develop elite performance from. In simple terms the bigger this is the better. The larger the group and the higher their baseline level is, the higher our performance overhead is. We can achieve much more with more healthy and active people than with less.

At some point (maybe already reached) Elite sport will become a very niche activity only available to the privileged few who are healthy and have had a reasonable sporting education. If you want more Nobel prize-winning scientists, you need a very good and wide-ranging STEM type programme in schools. If you want World class sporting performance, then you need the equivalent in schools. As a country, if we had a larger constituency of healthy and better educated sporting population we can and would achieve more

As an NGB we are already fully held to account for any investment in us to deliver medal success. This is done through our membership, our executive, our Board, UK Sport, Sport England and the BOA. The quality of sporting governance and therefore accountability in UK NGBs already leads the world.

**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.**

Norway, has a government strategy for sports that is very powerful. Which sets out policies and guidelines encouraging all young people to get involved with sport at a young age, and tries to mitigate against competitive parenting and the promotion of elite sports too soon.

[https://www.sportanddev.org/sites/default/files/downloads/sportpolicydocument\\_2011\\_2015\\_1.pdf](https://www.sportanddev.org/sites/default/files/downloads/sportpolicydocument_2011_2015_1.pdf)

The Netherlands is a very strong school and club model. Where local schools rely on the clubs to deliver sports activity.

France have a highly regionalised approach, that sees school children in Brittany engaging with sailing, whereas all those in Rhone Alps will have skiing as part of school sport.

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

A national plan for sport and recreation would need to focus heavily on delivery and it must be a singular point of focus for devising and implementing government policy on sport and recreation. Government interest in sport and recreation currently crosses numerous government departments. A national Plan is only worth doing if it can pull these strands together and be delivered by one single department with overall budgetary and delivery control working with a body like Sport England. This approach would deliver more senior ministerial responsibility within government for sport and recreation.

Royal Yachting Association

*29 January 2021*