

Association for Physical Education (afPE) – Supplementary written evidence (NPS0154)

afPE is extremely grateful to be asked to give evidence at the House of Lords Select committee. During the weeks since the session several issues have arisen and afPE feel it is important that some areas are further highlighted. Without doubt we, across the whole sector, believe that physical education (PE) sport and physical activity are critical components of children and young peoples' development. PE is a statutory entitlement for every child from 5 to 16 and it must be implemented in a manner that will make a difference to children and young people's physical, emotional, social and cognitive development. PE school sport and physical activity, are inextricably linked and each one is an important part of the jigsaw ; but due to the external pressures of school league tables and the emphasis on academic results, time for PE on the school curriculum in a number schools, has reduced significantly. Not least is swimming in primary schools and Swim England has reported that 150,000 children left primary school in 2019 unable to swim 25 metres or carry out a safe self rescue. The last 18 months, as a result of the pandemic, has seen the closure of swimming pools further adding to the potential number of pupils who will not have obtained the statutory PE requirement for swimming. With staycations and children being urged to go outdoors, their safety in and around water is a major concern. This important life skill should be a major focus for every primary school, and also in year 7 at secondary school for those pupils who cannot swim.

We know that the committee is extremely supportive with regard to the value of PE, sport and physical activity. The afPE Task Force evidence has clearly highlighted that we need the status of PE to be improved through high quality accredited and non accredited professional learning; commencing in initial teacher education with opportunities offered throughout a teachers' career. afPE also recognises that all relevant and correct advice together with appropriate support should be available to the work force. We recommend that a multi agency system is put in place involving those organisations who have the relevant expertise; it is important that there isn't a conflict of interest and that a sustainable structure is put in place. This workforce could be selected from separate existing infrastructures. What we must try to avoid is trying to do the same things differently because it is important we find a new and different solution. If previous strategies had worked one must ask why we are we where we are now?

In order for the legacy to be built around healthy active life styles, it is critical that the foundations are built as securely as possible. PE is the statutory entitlement foundation stone and if it is of high quality the evidence clearly shows that children and young people will transition into sport, leading on and into active life styles. If this can be measured through the league table structure, schools where PE is not at the heart of school life will have to recognise its importance and invest in the workforce as well as the subject.

Thank you for considering afPE's supplementary evidence.

Response to Lord Addington's point

Are local sports clubs good deliverers of sport outside their own expertise? Are there examples of that? There is a tendency to say, "We must recruit. We must get people involved", which is another way of turning people off because they get involved in something that is not for them, but they might say, "Can we go on to something else?" Do you have examples where that has worked or has not worked? Knowledge about failure is fine.

afPE's response:

NGBs and local sport clubs provide a phenomenal amount of opportunities which enable sport and physical activity to take place. Volunteers are at the centre of a great deal of provision. However the Association for Physical Education (afPE) believes that it is important that all providers comply with the appropriate regulations regarding qualifications and that DBS checks are in place. In addition appropriate mentoring and support must be in place to protect both those that are providing the service as well as the clients. Providers should plan any related costs in to their budgets. Historically the Sport England Clubmark which was a cross sport accreditation scheme for community clubs that had raised the standards of delivery, welfare and programmes within clubs was really helpful and instilled confidence in its clients. Since August 2019 Sport England is no longer providing general support for accreditation through Clubmark, but we understand they are developing a new self-analysis tool. afPE believes that a regulatory frame work that prompts a self review resulting in an appropriate and rigorous implementation strategy will help to support all those involved.

We have examples where clubs have made a significant difference which we could send to you outside of this report. However, delivering outside of their expertise does have significant implications. afPE has worked extensively with the FA and other providers to upskill them; in addition we advocate an appropriate qualification for coaches in the activity that will help to ensure the appropriate progressions and health and safety areas are all covered. Regarding any school provision within the curriculum the duty of care is the responsibility of the teacher and PE must be taught within the context of that curriculum. It is important to note that sport emanates from PE. Therefore a teacher should lead and be supported by coaches in order to ensure an up-skilling of the school work force in specific techniques within sporting activities. The teachers must ensure sound pedagogical principles are in place so that progress can be made in physical education.

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