

# **Transcripts of the House of Lords Select Committee on a National Plan for Sport and Recreation roundtables with community sport organisations (NPS0160)**

**Wednesday 17 March 2021, 16:00-17:30**

## **Transcript of group one**

**Attendees:** Amanda Dawes, *Youth Spot Bar C.I.C*; Henry Hazlewood, *The Lord Taverners*; Yashmin Harun, *Muslimah Sports Association*; Peter Mason, *Sir Tom Finney Preston Soccer Centre and Football Club*; Raymond Sweeney, *Ikkaido*; Tomasz Sawko, *University of Bath SU*.

**Members:** Lord Willis of Knaresborough, Baroness Blower, Lord Hayward

**Lord Willis of Knaresborough:** I'd like to welcome you all very much indeed and I want to make the most of this hour and five minutes that we've got. Can I start by asking the two other Peers who are with us to introduce themselves?

**Baroness Blower:** Hello, I'm Baroness Blower and I'm very interested in this Committee. I haven't got as broad a background in sport as some of the other Members, but I am a former teacher and I'm involved with Show Racism the Red Card which is an education charity that uses football extensively.

**Lord Hayward:** I'm Robert Hayward. I've been a Member of the House of Lords for five years. I was a rugby referee, I've done marathons and was Founder/Chairman of the world's first gay rugby club, which operates out of West Ham.

**Lord Willis of Knaresborough:** I am Lord Willis. I am an ex-Headteacher. My interest is mainly in health and I'm particularly interested in health research and seeing how sport and recreation actually impacts on that. But in my former days I was a detached youth worker working on the streets of Chapeltown in Leeds, during the riots at the time, trying to find exactly what we're trying to do today; trying to find facilities and trying to find outlets for young people to actually do positive things with their lives. All three of us are very keen to hear from you. I'm going to ask you all to introduce yourselves and then say how you got involved with your organisation in helping the target audience. If I could start with Yashmin.

**Yashmin Harun:** I'm Chair of Muslimah Sports Association. I'm also Director at London FA and Director at British Fencing. I started Muslimah Sports Association, or MSA, in 2014 because I really enjoyed sports at school- I was into football, netball and all the sports- but when I left school there wasn't an outlet for people that looked like me to play sport so I decided to set something up for my community and engage with Muslim women and young girls. Now we provide around 15 activities a week, pre-COVID, and engage them in different activities across a broad range: from badminton to football to yoga. So, a bit of everything really.

**Peter Mason:** I was, when I was working, a senior police officer. 23 years ago my son was at school and they didn't have any facilities for a football team, so my wife and I made the fatal decision then of taking them on and sorting out the football opportunity. 23 years later we now have 32 football teams. We have football sessions for refugee adults, refugee children and asylum seekers. We have girls only. We have disabled adults, disabled children and able bodied. We have approximately 30% BAME coaching staff and about 30-35% BAME attendance footballers. We have around 20 female coaches. We have 155 volunteers, we don't have any paid posts, and I'm also Chairman of Sir Tom Finney Football Club, Sir Tom Finney Soccer Centre, the Lancashire FA's Inclusion Advisory Board, the Preston Sports Forum, which represents all sports related volunteers in the Preston area, and a few other bits and bobs. So I keep myself busy in my retirement.

**Raymond Sweeney:** I'm a level 4 karate coach and I gained my qualifications in Spain because there are none in the UK. I have autism and I'm visually impaired. I am a psychologist, a qualified tutor and assessor. I founded Ikkaido, which is a charity that uses the philosophy of martial arts and also make safe non-contact adaptations in martial arts to improve the lives of people suffering from trauma and wellbeing issues as well as those with disabilities. All of our staff, and all of our board of directors, are disabled or from disadvantaged backgrounds. Two of our coaches are the Sport Coach UK Disability Coach of the Year and both of them are ex-clients of Ikkaido. We're a regulated vocational and educational training centre and we're actually a Centre of Excellence for Europe as well providing innovative, inclusive qualifications in tutoring, assessment, leadership and the coaching of people through martial arts and I do stress that- it's about the coaching of people using martial arts to do it, not about the coaching of martial arts. And we're currently developing the world's first inclusive and accessible digital learning platform for coaching and education. Funded by Erasmus, we're also developing a European wide strategy for inclusive and accessible health enhancing physical activity from grassroots participation right through to policy. And we use an integrated system thinking view that illustrates the benefits of having a neuro-diverse and inclusive workforce. That's what these things are borne out of, it's the nature of our organisation. We sit on the United Nations Global Compact for the Sustainable Development Goals Diversity and Inclusion Panel in the UK, we're members of UN Women. We have special consultative status to United Nations. I got involved, because when I came back from Spain 12 years ago someone at Oxfordshire County Council phoned me up and said "you look interesting, come and see us" and I went along to see them and they asked me to do some sessions of martial arts for disabled people. They said to me that every single one of those people is going to have a different disability, so you'll be given a group of 6 with a blind person, a deaf person, a wheelchair user, profound learning disabilities. I ended up teaching 65 people in one day and they were surprised when I agreed to do it, because they couldn't find anyone else to do it. And that led me to think something needs to be done. I had a few interesting people help me out as well; I bumped into Ian Rose the Paralympian on that day, and he and he said this is great fun let's do it together because he could

see the impact that it was having. We created participation for 3000 disabled people across the UK using this methodology as a way of growing participation, but we also did it for Muslim women, young disabled children- and their parents- and violent youth. So we used the same methodology.

**Amanda Dawes:** I've worked in the childcare industry since the age of 16- I'm 35 now- and I've worked my way up the ladder in the industry from a practitioner to a manager to running seven settings in the borough of Barking and Dagenham, and that's after school clubs, breakfast clubs, holiday clubs, pre-schools and nurseries. I've also worked in the boroughs of Newham, Redbridge and Hackney. And the reason why I'm here today, for Youth Spot Bar, is because of my journey through the childcare industry and seeing how it is hard for parents to get that extra activity or find work being a single parent, or even having two household members in the home. Youth Spot Bar launched in 2018. That was around the time when knife crime was really hitting the streets, and I was at a place in my time where I was running all these settings for other organisations and I wanted to create something of my own, and provide something that I saw was missing in these organisations. I've always been told why don't you open up your own nursery, or your own club, and I think what triggered it more was seeing the deaths of our young people on the streets, and that made me say it's time to take myself away from that and start doing Youth Spot Bar. We were in the library researching words, and throwing words around, and then the name came about and then from there the journey happened. I started contacting different people in my community, finding out how to start, how to register and just from there started to build a community. We've got 6 young volunteers, who have stuck with us since then, and they help us with our recruitments and we do so much in the community whether it's projects, events, workshops and it's all based and tailored around trying to sustain that financial sustainability, because we live in a high poverty borough. The idea with Youth Spot Bar is to really be active, but to also give young people and children something so that they have other skills, for example to help them in employment. Sometimes you'll find you'll have an interview and you're so nervous, but you've got great skills, but those nerves block you from getting into the right job or stops you from making your potential, so if you have other skills where you can design or sell or create your own football club, then you can overcome that barrier that stops you from feeling that fear of trying to accomplish something.

**Tomasz Sawko:** I'm the SU Sport Officer at the University of Bath, an elected representative of around 20,000 students and a trustee of the charity the SU Bath, specifically looking at the sporting remit. My journey has been through volleyball and beach volleyball- getting involved as a committee member, starting to take on coaching and leadership responsibilities and really finding that I enjoyed that. I worked on developing sitting volleyball for students with disabilities and beach volleyball branches of the club. But now I oversee a membership of just over 6000 students, and about 50 different sports clubs, so quite a diverse range of sports and demographics meaning we encourage localised inclusion initiatives.

**Henry Hazlewood:** I'm Head of Programmes at the Lords Taverners which is a leading UK youth cricket charity. We run a number of national programmes that are focused on either young people with disabilities or young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. Essentially our programmes are all based around community integration and community hubs. They're long term projects that run all year round and our focus is really not around numbers it's about that personal impact and development on our young people. So essentially cricket is our hook, it's our engagement tool, and then we work with those young people over a long period of time to give them brighter futures and stand them in good stead for their adult lives. My personal journey, after finishing university I developed an interest in charity and that's off the back of basically having a youth that was just filled with sport. So sport has been a significant part of my life and I think I grew to have a realisation that not everyone has the same access and ability to dive into those opportunities that I was lucky and fortunate to have as a young person. I had a parent that basically dedicated everything to allow me to do that and we work with groups that unfortunately don't have that opportunity so that's the gap that we're trying to bridge.

**Lord Willis of Knaresborough:** We're particularly interested today in looking at what are the barriers to increasing participation particularly for those disadvantaged groups. We want to know what you found are the barriers, what are the challenges to you and in particular what are the solutions. Perhaps Yashmin you could start because I'm very interested, particularly in Muslim women, young Muslim women who are really struggling up here in Yorkshire to have their voices heard quite frankly.

**Yashmin Harun:** So, for me when I left school there wasn't the correct environment for me to continue playing sports; people didn't understand my background and my culture and the clubs that were around didn't fit in with that. I would have to accommodate their community environment, rather than have them accommodate me, which was ok but because I was wearing the hijab it just wasn't suitable for me. So what I decided to do, and this was many years after I left school, was just start one basketball activity to see what the engagement would be and to do that I needed to make sure that we had the correct hall, that we had the correct coach in place- it had to be a female coach- and it had to be an exclusively female only environment. So it didn't matter what they wore, whether it was the correct sports gear or not, they were allowed to wear what they wanted to wear. It was more about social engagement as well, so the emphasis was on coming and having fun rather than a structured sports set up. They were allowed to go off to the side-lines if they wanted to, and have that social engagement, as well as play the sport. Through that we found that the ladies were more committed, because they were building friendships as well and from there we started to get more and more ladies engaging. And then once we started MSA we asked the ladies what other activities they wanted us to start up; so they asked for badminton, they asked for yoga, they asked for martial arts and we started to steadily grow. And it's using the same three principles really: the right time, the right venue, and the right coach. The coach is really fundamental, it has to be a female coach, not necessarily from a Muslim background, but they need to understand the culture

and the community that they're engaging with. So for example, if it was at a prayer time that they were given the time to go and pray if they needed to. If it was at fasting time, then that time to break their fast. So understanding what the needs to that community are was really important. And because I lived through that I had my lived experiences we had that instant connection as well. I'm not a coach but I was able to get coaches and put all the pieces together to facilitate that.

**Lord Willis of Knaresborough:** Just please now chip into these conversations. Baroness Blower do you want to come in here?

**Baroness Blower:** That's really interesting what you had to say there Yashmin, but if others of you on the call, let's start with Amanda, if you can specifically say your ways of engaging young people and if you want to give us any examples of positives that have happened or any barriers or difficulties. I think that someone said specifically about giving people better lives and more opportunity, I think that was you Henry, perhaps you could come in after Amanda and just say what that actually looks like. We know what cricket looks like, what does the other stuff look like.

**Amanda Dawes:** We're a new company, we just started out in Barking and Dagenham in 2018 -as I said around the time when street crime was really high- and the positive impact we had is being able to get the opportunity from Everyone Everyday, which is a charity based organisation that's come into our borough where they provide facilities that we can book out and use. So that came in very handy for us because there's no youth clubs, not in the certain interests of our young people that we have today. A lot of them are into their music, or making music, or things that may not relate to aspects of other organisations that come in. And again touching on the culture that they may have or the background that they may come from. So with having that space we were able to get a lot of young people within Barking and Dagenham on our first project that we did, and it was about teaching young people life skills. For example simple cooking skills, we had a professional chef who came in and taught our young people how to cook. Our attendance was 30 young people including adults. And also, we had a video that we watched, which was Black Panther, which something of deep culture for those unrepresented groups in our borough. That was a great topic and it highlighted a few aspects to their futures and how they think their futures will look in the next 10 years.

**Baroness Blower:** Thanks Amanda. Maybe say a little bit about the stuff that you do beyond cricket Henry.

**Henry Hazlewood:** As I mentioned, what is core to our programme is that it's long term, it's not short-term intervention. Often, we're working with communities that have a level of mistrust with sort of that short-term intervention that is actually damaging in the long run. So for us before we start any new project, we work on initially a three-year basis to be able to deliver that project and I think that's really important. And trust is really really important for us. We run cricket sessions and if you turned up to 90% of those they would look somewhat like a cricket session, but we're not talking leafy fields with

pavilions and wearing cricket whites it's more youth centres- it's like a youth club that does cricket. Then, after a period of engagement, we try and build in what we refer to as some of the wider outcomes which is all around that personal development and building brighter futures. And we have projects all around the country including Wales and Scotland, and actually they look slightly different from location to location, because an important aspect of that is that those wider outcomes tailor to what's really relevant in that community. We do a variation of things, and a lot of that happens within a session, so it might be tailoring a session that really focuses on qualities like leadership as a starting point, or it might be a more bespoke part of a session- or an external session- where we bring in a partner and we do something that is more hard hitting around employability. Another example of that is in our West Midlands project where we integrated and worked really closely with the police. There was a big issue in that local community with lots of our young people that are engaging, that are largely from the Asian community, and a mistrust with the police. We worked very closely with the police and embedded some of the PCSOs into our session. They turned up, they took their uniform off and they supported our coaches to deliver coaching sessions and that worked really, really well. Six months down the line they reported that some of the kids that were spitting at them on the streets stopped and were addressing them by their first names which is just one example of how it is tailored to the community.

**Peter Mason:** Just to build on a couple of things. First of all to Yashmin, over the last 23 years getting Muslim women involved has been very problematic. As I said before we have refugee/asylum seeker adults, refugee/asylum seekers children we have girls only groups. I have female Muslim coaches, I've been into schools with the female Muslim coaches. The big blocker for Muslim ladies participating in sport is facilities as Yasmin articulated. Trying to get a facility that is female only, anywhere, is just not happening. We're very fortunate in that we work in partnership with the University of Central Lancashire, we use their facilities and I have an average of 55 students a year volunteering with us and we pay for their qualifications. But getting facilities that are just female only, to get the Muslim girls in, is just not happening as they are not there. It really is problematic, and I know that's negative. On a positive side we have partnerships with British Red Cross, we have partnerships with Lancashire Police and Lancashire Children Services and we take a lot, I say a lot, but we take on average each week 10-15 disadvantaged children that have been referred to us by the police or by children services. On our grids we will have millionaire's children playing football with disadvantaged kids, or referred children, and you can't tell the difference. Again, I'm sure people will back me up when the children are playing, they don't see colour they just see children playing football. That's it, end of, it's just adults and parents that complicate things. We do quite a unique project, we run young coaches courses and we will put any child over the age of 12 who wants to become a coach, we will send them on age related courses with the Lancashire FA. We will then put them with an experienced coach at the soccer centre and we will pay for them to do their courses and what we ask them to do is put the time back in to volunteer. So we've got now four disadvantaged children, who are now adults, who are still with us coaching as a

result of being at the soccer centre, being trusted, being given a kit, being put in roles of responsibility with a mentor and 2 of them are now at university doing sport related degrees, having gone through college, just simply because they had that structure in their lives, that ownership, that responsibility and help. And again from my years as a police officer, children aren't born bad it's the situation they find themselves in that makes that.

**Raymond Sweeney:** A lot of that really resonates with me too. One of the things that we did is we used the schools too, but we didn't go there to get the kids involved we went there to get the teachers involved. We gave training to teachers as activators and particularly inclusive- that's our big thing is inclusion- so we were doing inclusion training for them at the same time as activating, and they can use that whole thing to activate to any sport. Then it was about signposting to clubs that are out there in their neighbourhood in the thing that they were really interested in. But that's the bit that's missing- and it's clearly identified in all the research as well- that teachers don't have sufficient training in inclusion, and also sports have been pushed out of the agenda in schools too. And again that view that sport is the hook that enables you to create personal development pathways for people is the way to go definitely. And for us it's about engaging them, and we've got something that's iconic that we use, we're using martial arts and the whole point of it is that martial arts are a pathway for personal development, so we introduce them to education early on. It's 14plus for us, but it's all about educating the kids with different kind of life skills and then taking them through a low-level qualification and then on to leadership ultimately coaching, tutoring accessing. All about transferable skills, all about soft skill development especially, and all in an inclusive environment which is about inclusion as well. We've got the same stories of people whose lives had collapsed really, they'd absolutely collapsed, and bringing those people back to flourish actually, to absolutely flourish. So people from our environment have gone from no qualifications, and a terrible background of abuse and trauma and disability and have gone on to become a PE teacher in a school using these qualifications and then transferring the skills across. I think for me I've got a very different approach to things as well; I focus on inclusion not on working in silos. So we don't target a particular group and say 'ok this is a session for wheelchair users' it's a session for everybody. We kind of do reverse inclusion and we have mainstream people come along to our sessions and they learn how to coach and how to be inclusive. And for us it's a strange idea, having a target group, because what you're doing is actually excluding people from everybody else. You've got a separate group going on and that's actually not inclusion, that's integration it's where you create separate groups of people. So when you look at one of our sessions, we've got everybody there, anybody there. It's society, it's what society looks like. And that's really effective and really powerful for people, the message is really powerful.

**Lord Willis of Knaresborough:** I'm interested, as you were all talking there, about one of the challenges which we've seen in the papers today and that's the report which has come out on soccer and particularly safeguarding when teaching young people, particularly young boys in this case, mostly young boys in terms of soccer. And I just wonder how all your organisations deal with the

business of safeguarding and making sure that the current regulations are carried out. Does that create a problem for you?

**Peter Mason:** It doesn't create problems. We have, as I said before, 155 volunteers and every one of our volunteers is either DBS or CRC checked so they're all covered by that. We don't have any less than two coaches on any coaching session. We have parents involved on a regular basis as volunteers but what does concern me greatly is that if you are a football club like we are, and we're affiliated to the local authority the local football association we have standards to meet. If you are a youth club, or a church club, or anything like that you can go and teach children without having any safeguarding qualifications or indeed coaching qualifications at all. And I see that on a regular basis with my other hat on as Inclusion advisory board/sports forum lead. Those that run clubs are acutely aware of the issues, and do it correctly, albeit again there are people who dance around it and have one checked person amongst four of five who aren't checked on a field is wrong. We just need to really tighten up on it and make it unlawful to be with children without having the checks otherwise it will never stop.

**Tomasz Sawko:** We kind of touched upon the point of the importance of representation- actually seeing through different under-represented groups' eyes when we're looking at production of, or development of, sessions. We also touched on the accessibility element of ensuring that these communities do feel included. I really liked what Raymond said there around embedding inclusion within any sort of qualifications and leadership programmes. That seems to me like an absolute basic in terms of national governing bodies and actually developing qualifications for coaching. Embedding inclusion so that people can come along from any different background and feel like actually this sport does take into account who I am, it does take into account my previous experiences- that's of paramount importance. National governing bodies have different levels of inclusion-based focuses in their coaching qualifications and we're really missing a trick.

**Yashmin Harun:** Can I come in on that? Because we've already suggested having an Inclusion and Diversity Officer just as there is a Welfare Officer and a Safeguarding Officer, so I think that's really fundamental in getting this correct as well. Diversity and inclusion always come as an afterthought for many organisations, especially NGBs, it seems to be something that's at the end of the agenda and people have already got bored of listening to it. It needs to be higher up on the agenda, it needs to be at the forefront for there to be change and I don't think at the moment it's there. It's always the afterthought. An event happens and then people start talking about inclusion and diversity and it needs to be the other way round. There needs to be some kind of leadership and taking it forward. Can I come back on the venue point as well? When we started football we couldn't find a female coach so what we did is we ran a Level 1 and engaged the community, so we had 16 women from the community get their level 1 for football and they went back out into the community and started coaching. And in terms of the venue, we started at a usual secondary school, that doesn't have a gallery, and we spoke to the caretaker and said it's a female

only class so please don't come in, or ask for permission before you enter, and they really understood what we were asking for and they respected that. So, I think just having that conversation with whoever is running that venue, they'll appreciate what you're trying to achieve and respect that. Also, mother and daughter sessions seem to work. When we started our women's football the women just wanted to drop their daughters off and then we turned around and said no, you can't do that, you have to join in and then eventually the women got involved in the football and the girls started to drop out. And from there we've created two 5 a side teams and an 11 a side team. So it starts off in small steps, and you will get some setbacks but if you persevere you do get there.

**Raymond Sweeney:** The problem with coaching is this: there are basically two or three elements of coaching, there's coaching theory and then there is the sport. And what's happening everywhere in the world actually, and I've been banging on about this for about ten years, is that those two modules are the ones that are delivered to coaches and then inclusion is an afterthought and a little mini course that people can do. And it's wrong. The base pair should be inclusion and coaching theory and the sport is the bolt on. So that's the area that we've been working on and developing qualifications that look like that. They're actually transferable across any sport, because the base pair are what's important how to coach people and how to include everybody.

**Lord Hayward:** Can I follow on from what Yashmin said just now which was something that I'm very interested in. She implied that she discovered that having got one group, you then involved the mothers, and almost by accident you got another group in. Can I ask Amanda and Henry the same question is there anything that you just discovered by chance that has worked really well?

**Amanda Dawes:** Our young people. We've got a group of six of them, they're from black and Asian groups, and they are our spokespeople and whenever we're doing any projects they're the ones that go out for us, because we find it difficult when we approach the young people or sometimes the parents due to cultural backgrounds. Some African parents may not allow their children to go out at certain times, some Jamaican parents are the same. Or they might not like a particular area, or they've never been there before so they don't want, they don't want their child to go there. But if our young people go to them through school, because they go to different schools, we use them as the advocates to go out there to chant what we're doing as a youth club so they can come to our projects and see how we're performing. So we do a lot of outdoor sports as well which they like, such as rounders and other old school games which they like. And we get their mums involved also by having the younger children come along. Because one of our young people might go to their friend who has a younger sibling and the mum is really shown what we're doing so they're interested. It's coming from someone that they trust and that's how we get them in really. Someone asked me the other day how we're getting the young people in and we just really use the young people, because I've found that when you go out onto the streets and try to speak to them they're either too busy on their phones, or they're caught up talking to other kids on the street and you don't really get to channel it into them. But that's something that we're

really looking to pursue again once lockdown is over, to really go back out on the streets and using different techniques to try and get them involved, while having our young leaders with us.

**Henry Hazlewood:** The nature of our project means that we have to be very fluid and flexible and actually things don't pan out often as we planned. Working in communities and disadvantaged areas sometimes we have the best laid plans and we have to rethink that. I think one of the successes that came out for us is particularly in our disability sector, where we talk about parent engagement. The longer that our programmes have gone on we've seen that we've got great impact, not just from the individual, but from the wider community and in particular families and parents and seeing what that means for family and parents-particularly when you're talking about young people with disabilities. It's that reassurance that they are leading a fulfilling life and have those opportunities. I think also, on the flipside, working in disadvantaged communities we see parent engagement a lot less. There's huge challenges and barriers around parent engagement and that's sort of an emphasis of what we're doing is actually really hard. We are trying to work with hard to reach, disengaged young people and essentially engage them and get them to come off of, many time off of their own backs, to a cricket session or a session on a weekly basis and there's two points that I want to make on that: one, when you're talking about barriers and things that are really important I think it's to instil that level of understanding with the people that you're working with, in particular young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. We know that out of the blue you might just get a young person that stops attending, and then you might all of sudden see them again and actually it takes a really skilled individual and a lead and almost that youth worker role to understand those young people, and ask the right questions, and understand where that young person is coming from to build that level of trust which is really important. I think leaning on that as well, one thing that's really important that we talk about a lot is role models. And I think we as a society fall into the trap of when we think of role models we always think of a professional sports person, and for us it's actually about stripping that back and making that role model relatable, and someone that can speak the language of that young person and has real life experience. So with disability we use role models to showcase what you can do and not what you can't do, which is often then message that those young people get. And we see that with parents as well, often it's the parents saying 'my child can't do this' but actually if you show them someone that is doing that, and has a disability and is leading a really fulfilling life, that's a really powerful message. Equally, I would say the same on the disadvantaged side. We've had role models that have lived an early life of drugs and crime and have flipped that over and are now giving positive lifestyle messages that's a core ethos of our programmes as well.

**Lord Hayward:** Can I just intervene there? I saw Yashmin nodding and given that she's set up a football and basketball and other sports in her community it doesn't come to mind that she might have role models. Where do you find role models from?

**Yashmin Harun:** We use our own community just like Henry said. Our ladies have become role models for the next generation because when I was growing up there were no role models. My role models are the women that work with me who've become qualified coaches, who have become volunteers who are now going into the youth council, on the FA council, getting director positions through MSA. They've become the role models to show that there is a pathway into sports that it isn't a taboo within our community anymore. It's a genuine pathway that they can pursue, and the community should embrace that. There was also a point I wanted to make around the terminology as well. Being classified as disadvantaged communities and hard to engage would put the community off immediately, because why would I admit that I'm disadvantaged just because of the colour of my skin or my ethnicity or my background. That ultimately puts me off of wanting to engage with you, just because you're the white man who is trying to engage with me. Those terminologies need to fundamentally change within the sports industry because you're not doing anyone any favours, you're just making the gap wider. If we are to engage, we need to think about the terminology that we use. In reports it may be ok but when you're using it publicly you need to think about the terminology being used.

**Henry Hazlewood:** I would absolutely agree with that and that is never outwardly facing, in terms of our programmes. We don't, for example, market our programmes as 'come along to our disadvantaged sports session' because there's equal sensitivity around disabilities in that same respect.

**Peter Mason:** Just a couple of very quick points on the unintended consequences on the positive side. By the very nature of having inclusion we've managed to win a few awards for promoting inclusion. Simply by having inclusion of children playing, the parents by definition all mingle whilst they're waiting for those children, whilst they're playing. We've seen it happen where children whose parents can't afford vehicles, or can't travel, the other parents on the team will arrange to pick them up. So unintended consequences; integration and it just works really well. Some practicalities that prevent inclusion: when you're talking about adult and children refugee/asylum seekers for them to play in any age group of competitive football they have to have international clearance, which having gone through that several times now, that is one heck of a process- certainly getting a refugee or asylum seeker adult international clearance. By definition, they don't want to go back to where they came from to get them to say that they're ok. But even children playing under 7/8 you have to get international clearance. And also another blocker, practicality for inclusion is around insurance. I know Raymond was saying that he has all different groups training together, we have grids of disabled under 4s to under 16s playing alongside able bodied all playing together, but to interact them they wouldn't be insured. The coaches wouldn't be insured so therefore null and void insurance. Having children sometimes with learning disabilities as opposed to physical disabilities who are able to play competitive football, but not in their age group because of their learning disabilities, to actually get permission for them to play a year down, which they are comfortable playing, again is a massive blocker and

it shouldn't be. It really shouldn't be, but it is. And these are the practical things that I think most of us as coaches are coming against on a weekly or daily basis.

**Raymond Sweeney:** I was just going to say that there is another issue that all of this learning that's here within this group, all of this good practice, what it boils down to is that we amongst us have created strategies to do all of this stuff and there is no way to pass these strategies onto other people. And that's about people being able to run the business, let's say, of a physical activity organisation. No one is trained to do that, there is no training to do that. It's just 'ok I'm a sports coach so now I can go and deliver'. It's also about having people with the skills to take people out of the physical activity environment and moving them onto education, employment and entrepreneurship and again a coaching pathway is a great way to do that as it gives people an alternative pathway for education for their lives.

**Baroness Blower:** One of the things that we've been asking all our witnesses is what is it that the Government might do in all of this. Clearly, you have outlined things that you're all doing very well within your own parameters but are there other things like setting standards or providing qualifications or whatever it might be. Are there other things that you think Government should do more of or should do differently? I think we'd be interested to know what you think the role for central government is in any of this, because if we develop a plan, it would be a national plan that we would want government to adopt.

**Amanda Dawes:** I just want to come in on something that I find is a barrier for us in developing outdoor sport. And it's to do with the parks and getting the consent. As we know England is not hot all year round, we don't always have the hot sunshine, and based on people's behaviours we have to take that into consideration as a company when we promote to get those unrepresented groups involved in sports activities using the outdoor spaces. So one of the things that we do is a lot of pop-up outdoors and we use the local parks to do that. The challenge that we find is if we've not planned it, and we know that we're getting good weather that week, Youth Spot Bar want to come out to one of those local parks and the barrier is that, because of the time frame that you have to request for that consent to use the park from the local council it then clashes with wanting to do more of those activities. It means that you're having to plan these things and you could plan it but then that weekend it rains and so you're then not able to carry out that activity and we haven't got the facilities to still run it.

**Lord Willis of Knaresborough:** What would be your solution for this?

**Amanda Dawes:** My solution is why can't companies and organisations like us have a sort of license given to us to run those sessions on that basis and we sign something to say we will clear up after ourselves- because I know that the mess that some organisations leave behind has been a problem. We are trying to get funding to get an actual bus so that we can go to different locations and get people more active, because they use the parks but maybe for sunbathing or the kids are doing things, but they have no equipment. But we've got a lot of equipment, a lot of sport gear, such as cricket bats, football- even boardgames

and floor games- that we can get parents and children involved in playing. Our mission is to get a borough sports going on so we can include the different councils to stop that postcode crime that we've been getting in our communities.

**Lord Willis of Knaresborough:** So an access license, with certain conditions, would be a strong suggestion. So on Baroness Blower's question what do we want the government to do? At the end of our report we've got to make a number of recommendations for the government to actually do things. What should the government do?

**Yashmin Harun:** One of the things is the terminology like I mentioned. Another thing is venue prices, for example for us to hire a hall it costs £48 an hour, astro-pitches cost £150 an hour. It's ridiculous prices for community groups and charities to be forking out that kind of money.

**Lord Willis of Knaresborough:** Who should pay? Where should the money come from?

**Yashmin Harun:** It's the schools being able to offer them, those venues, at a cheaper price for these community groups and charities. It shouldn't be offered for free necessarily but there should be a concession.

**Lord Willis of Knaresborough:** Our problem is that the schools will say 'well we don't have the resources to be able to let that out other than at a course'. So should it be the local authority or the government that actually gives grants. What recommendation would you make?

**Yashmin Harun:** I would say the Government because the local authorities are going to say that there have been cuts for them as well so they can't cover the bill. It has to come from central government. And also help with funding applications because the bureaucracy that they ask from small organisations, the paperwork that is involved in writing a small application for funding, is ridiculous. They are volunteers at the end of the day, they're not paid staff running these organisations. They've given up their time to help the community and they are expected to be set up like a big charity organisation with finance background and all different departments to be able to write this funding bid, and it's really hard work to be doing that. So there needs to be some changes to make it easier for smaller organisations to apply for the funding.

**Lord Willis of Knaresborough:** OK. We've had access licenses, we've got venue subsidies, we've got bureaucracy. Pete, what are you coming in with?

**Peter Mason:** Building on what was said before about parks, I disagree about the licensing. But my main issue is that far too many facilities now are education establishment based. So the local government have not kept up the parks because they've moved everything to schools. The COVID pandemic, and what we're going through now, has just highlighted the fact that if we take the educational establishments out of the facilities then there are no facilities for charities to use because the parks have been let go. The solution is an overall national strategy looking at increasing facilities availability in parks and pitches so that the general public can access them. Funding to be provided to the local councils for that to happen. Your education establishments, now it's not their

fault because they put it out to third party companies who hire out the facilities on their behalf and want to make a profit so they basically rip us off- we've been paying exactly the same as you Yasmin. We have a big park here that would cost £500,000, I know that's a lot of money, to completely redo with new drainage, a 3G football pitch, an indoor pitch and they haven't got the money to do it. So things like that where it is ringfenced money to improve local areas for the use of all whether it's charities or football or whatever sport is required. Please make money available for sustainability. The grants are all in the main for new items, for new ventures, and there are no grants for sustainability. So for example I have 500 children and adults playing football and I have 150 every Saturday training but I have a £20,000 shortfall because all of our refugee, asylum seekers, those from disadvantaged background get it for nothing, those that can afford to pay do pay, those that can't don't and we have to cover that £20,000 shortfall by fundraising.

**Henry Hazlewood:** First one, I think it's been covered quite a lot, but it's around workforce. I'd like to see more schemes and drive for young people to actually take the step into becoming coaches, and to develop, and to have a more rounded offer, and I think the same can be said for volunteers. I think you obviously get passionate volunteers but what's really important is that volunteers feel incentivised and that also needs to lead to and be recognised as something. So volunteers are a massive challenge for us, and I feel if there were more backed schemes for there to be an element that could be more recognised, and potentially lead to employment, that would be a real help for us. I think we have taken good shifts in this, but I think there still steps to be taken in terms of just not focusing on elite sport and also those surface numbers. I think the clue is in the question that you guys gave, which is that you're really going to have that impact through retention, and people that are with sport for a long period of time and making that the focus. I also think it's creating that societal shift that when we think about sport, we don't just think of winning World Cups or Olympic gold medals it's what sport offers, and we're all advocates of that. For us as well, in particular coming from a cricket background, I think having access to sport on the TV is really important and I think that's not very accessible to a lot of communities and I think that does make a big difference.

**Yashmin Harun:** I just wanted to say about the women's football being on TV I think that's really important and it doesn't get enough coverage. With the Euros coming next year I think it's really important that there is more coverage of women's football on TV.

**Peter Mason:** A big bugbear of mine is people keep using the phrase grassroots sport. For all of us here we're not grassroots, we're below grassroots. Grassroots keeps stopping at professional clubs community sections. For all of us on this call we are below that, so people keep saying it goes down to grassroots. It doesn't, it never reaches us the finances, it never gets down to our levels.

**Tomasz Sawko:** I guess the main one is embedding localised sport specific inclusion strategies into all national governing bodies strategies. So actually looking at where are our specific under-represented groups. You look at male representation in cheerleading for example versus American football and female

representation. Looking across the whole landscape of sport we can say that there are specific under-represented groups, absolutely, but we need to be looking at a more sport specific level and we need to make that compulsory for governing bodies.

**Amanda Dawes:** As I say I'm really keen on the parks, because as an organisation we don't have our own building, and to reach the broader community and those under-represented groups we would do well with having that barrier closed where we would just have that license. And also, I do feel very strongly about the funding as well because we are a new organisation and we're learning about how to do these forms. It would be good if there was a portal with all these sorts of organisations, a bit like what we do for childcare for Ofsted where everyone is on a panel and the funding is given out, but everyone's organisation has been given to this body; you've got everything about us, what we do, our long and short term goals and the things that we've done. And then having that portal where you could request that funding.

**Lord Willis of Knaresborough:** We've actually seen that system elsewhere in Europe so you're not talking about something that's impossible to do. Thank you all very much indeed and I'm sorry that some of that has been hurried but it has been really useful for us to hear some below grass roots voices.

(End)

## **Transcript of group two**

**Attendees:** Imrul Gazi, *Optima Sports Foundation*; Rainbow Mbuangi, *Metro Blind Sport*; Steve O'Connor, *Fulham Reach Boat Club*; Martin Symcox, *Metro Blind Sport*; Benthe Tanghe, *Newcastle University SU*; Anne-Marie Waugh, *RollaDome All Skate*.

**Members:** Baroness Morris of Yardley, Lord Addington, Baroness Brady

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** Thank you for your time today. I really just want to iterate how important this session is to us, because we've had a lot of sessions and we've learnt so much from people who are doing such good jobs and such good work. Every time we end up thinking how we get to the ones that we can't normally reach, because if it's only about the people who have always done sport and recreation we don't really as a country make much progress, and we're really keen that we understand better those organisations who are managing to work with underrepresented groups of people who sometimes just don't choose to get involved in sport and recreation. As well as finding out what you do in your groups, we hope in particular that you're going to help us to understand that a little bit better and perhaps give us some ideas as to the recommendations we can make at the end. As we've said, I hope it will be quite informal, but we will start the discussion off and see how it goes. My name is Estelle Morris. I'm a member of the House of Lords and I've been asked to facilitate this group today. I've got two colleagues from the House of Lords with me who are also on our committee. What I'm going to do to begin with is to ask them to introduce themselves, and then ask you to introduce yourselves. Baroness Brady, would you just like to introduce yourself to the group?

**Baroness Brady:** Thanks Estelle, and good afternoon everyone. It's a real pleasure to meet you this afternoon, although who would have thought we'd all be on [Microsoft] Teams this time a year ago. Thank you so much for giving up your time, as Estelle and Lord Willis have said, it's really important that we hear from you today – you can be candid and honest, and we want a frank and open discussion. It's our job to put recommendations at the end of our report about how we can get more people active, so anything you can tell us that will help us to put forward the right recommendations would be really valuable. As Estelle said, I'm a member of the House of Lords and I'm also the Vice Chairman of West Ham Football Club – I hope there might be a West Ham supporter among you but possibly not, though that is irrelevant. So I look forward to our discussion.

**Lord Addington:** Hello, I'm Lord Addington. I've done this subject in parliament for a long time, and I'm what's left of a half-decent rugby player.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** Can I just ask if I can use your [peers] first names as we go on with the discussion? Unless anyone tells me otherwise in their introductions I think that's what we'll do. I'll call out your [participants] names and if you could just introduce yourself and at the same time give us a very brief overview of your organisation, in particular how you manage to work with groups that are maybe underrepresented or who are not easy to draw into

sport. I think that will help us if we have that overview. Steve, can I start with you please?

**Steve O'Connor:** Good afternoon everyone. My name is Steve O'Connor. I'm founder of a charity called Fulham Reach Boat Club. We started in 2014 and the vision for our charity is rowing for all. We try to use the sport to teach skills like teamwork, confidence and focus, and try and use the good that you learn from sport to help people improve their lives. We proactively go after people who need that help, and specifically we work with 14 local state schools and teach 1,300 young people here how to row. We operate holiday hunger courses for children on free school meals in the summer holidays. We have 200 members from the local community that row with us and we also operate in 5 prisons across the South East.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** Thank you. Imrul, can I go to you next please?

**Imrul Gazi:** Hi guys. My name's Imrul Gazi, I founded Optima Sports in Redbridge maybe about 2 years ago now. We work predominantly with the communities in and around Redbridge, and Barking and Dagenham. We work with BME groups but mainly youngsters in and around the area to facilitate sports activities focusing on football, cricket, tennis, etc. As we come out of this lockdown my hope for the next few months is that organisations like ourselves are going to be keen getting these kids, who over the last year in particular have been stuck at home on gadgets – I've got three kids myself, so I know how hard it is, and how important it's going to be over the next few months to get these kids out and about and getting active. I work in the NHS, away from this, so I know the impact it's had on obesity and mental health, not just for adults but more importantly for kids. Our focus is predominantly kids in the Redbridge, Barking and Dagenham area – we're obviously very close to Karen's football club as well. So that's our focus; very much over the next few months and years getting kids active and out and about, out of the house, more importantly.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** Thanks. Martin, would you want to go next?

**Martin Symcox:** Good afternoon everybody. My name's Martin Symcox and I'm the CEO of Metro Blind Sport, and also I'm a national sport development lead at the Thomas Pocklington Trust which is a national sight loss charity. Metro Blind Sport has been around since the 70s, and our aim is to create fun sports and physical activity opportunities for blind and partially sighted people of all ages and abilities, primarily who live in Greater London. We fundraise for the opportunity to then create, share, and deliver a range of core activities which include athletics, bowls, cricket, football, tennis, swimming and so on. We also work in partnership with other organisations, including other sports clubs, sight loss organisations and other charities to deliver additional activities like climbing, white water rafting, cycling, and walking. Very much for the people who come and join us, the joy of simply being able to participate in sport can be life-changing, and so we engage qualified coaches who've been trained to incorporate specialist equipment that enables blind and partially sighted individuals to enjoy meaningful participation and the various mental and physical benefits that sport delivers.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** Thank you. And you've got your colleague Rainbow with you today from the same organisation, so Rainbow do you want to just introduce yourself and perhaps give your perspective of the organisation as well?

[technical difficulties – Rainbow unable to connect]

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** Benthe, do you want to tell us about Newcastle?

**Benthe Tanghe:** I'm the Athletic Union Officer at Newcastle University Students' Union. In my role, I oversee our 65 sport clubs and in general am a student representative as Sabbatical Officer. Relating to today, one of the reasons I'm here is because we have a programme of widening participation where we try to get students from minority backgrounds to get involved in sport. Thank you for having me.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** Anne-Marie, I'm glad you've managed to get into this meeting – all we're doing at the moment is just saying who we are and just giving a short overview of your organisation. Are you ready to come in and do that now?

**Anne-Marie Waugh:** Yeah that's fine. I'm Anne-Marie, I'm the founder of RollaDome All Skate. It's a small charity that uses roller sports to engage young people. We use it as an engagement tool as a non-traditional sport to give young people an opportunity to keep fit, keep healthy, and not necessarily participate in traditional sport which a lot of them tend to veer away from.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** Let me ask one more little question then I'll open it to my colleagues to come in. You don't all have to contribute to all the questions, otherwise it might get a bit monotonous, so just come in when you want to. When you set up the organisations, were you trying to reach those people who don't usually join, or was there just something about your organisation that happened to attract them? Or are they in fact only 2% of the people you attract? Because different organisations have different objectives, and I've not quite got that feel. It doesn't matter one way or the other, but how central it was to your organisation to reach the people who wouldn't normally meet? Martin, do you want to start off with that?

**Martin Symcox:** Absolutely. Metro Blind Sport was founded because there was little provision. It was set up when a few visually impaired young people left school and found there was just a lack of provision for them to play cricket and football, which they were used to doing whilst they were at school. There weren't enough players available to make a team, let alone 2 to have something competitive, and that's very much why we would encourage family members to be part of that journey, not only to help get young people to and from activities, but also to make the team so that meaningful sport and physical activity can be played. We were very much set up with blind and partially sighted people at the heart of the work that we do.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** Ok, thanks. Anne-Marie?

**Anne-Marie Waugh:** When we started – we started in 2009 – one of the reasons we started up was I had taken myself back to something I had done as a child, which was roller sports, which I hadn't done for many years. But whilst doing it my background was consultancy, so a lot of people thought I could make magic happen. One of the things I kept on hearing was that young people were really keen to get involved but there was nowhere for them to skate, there were no programmes for them to skate. One of the things we found when doing research was that young people thought it was an old persons' sport. They didn't want to do netball, cricket, football at school; the girls didn't want to participate with anything like that. So we just literally thought we'll give it a go and we'll put on one event and gather feedback from there. What we learnt was that young people enjoyed it because it was something they could do on their own; it was something they could also do as part of a group if they felt confident enough; it was something they could do at home as sports and leisure with their family. As soon as it was a non-traditional sport and it included music and there were other facets to it, they showed such an interest. We've been fortunate enough in the last 11 years to meet numbers of over 10,000 young people per year.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** Ok, thanks. Steve?

**Steve O'Connor:** We actually got use of our site through planning consent from the local council as part of a [section] 106 agreement; a developer built lots of flats and had to put a boat club in. By that it made sense to work with local state schools and get their young people rowing. But crucially we wanted to do it as part of the PE curriculum, not just for those that would have been keen, so we saw everybody in the school, which was really important because for a sport like rowing there's a lot of perceived barriers – going out into the middle of a river and the fear of water being one – and so we thought it was really important to get everyone down there. I think what it also did, in terms of what Anne-Marie said, is that it gives that other sport option to people that would be seen as non-sporty if you can't play football, cricket, netball or rugby. You can be seen as un-sporty at school at the moment, but quite often there's that additional sport like rowing – if you can't kick or catch you might be quite good at rowing, that's certainly true for myself. Being able to offer a sport like that helps some children who are deemed un-sporty to become sportier and keep that sport with them for life.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** Benthe, you sort of indicated that at university you weren't getting some of the groups that you felt you ought to get, so say a little bit about that bit of your activities.

**Benthe Tanghe:** As we're top ten in the BUCS league at this university, we do attract a lot of student athletes, but at the end of the day exercise is important for everyone. I think what I try to do is communicate to all students not that they have to be amazing at something or have to be high performance. I'm just as happy if they go for a 30-minute walk as going for a long run. Also what we find is that in general is you get the students who already played a sport at secondary school then come to university and continue playing, but that group that already fell out with sport in secondary school won't be playing at university and they will probably never get back to it – that's the group we're trying to

reach. It's especially women, where there's so many stigmas like 'running like a girl' and that sort of stuff. We're really trying to get that group involved, and it doesn't have to mean high performance. Any way of getting involved is great.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** Ok, thanks. Imrul?

**Imrul Gazi:** Yeah, similar to what everybody else has said, I think we've already touched on it. It's really working with kids. The focus has been young girls and boys in our area just to get them out more than anything else, just getting them out and active. It doesn't matter what it is, it's not a team that's going to play in a league, it's just getting them out in the neighbourhood. We don't have a facility, so we train in 2 local parks. It's become somewhere to go for parents to get the kids out and interact as well. It's not just for the kids, there's a lot of health and wellbeing from a parent's perspective. They're interacting for an hour and a half or a couple of hours; we get them involved in the sessions. From our perspective, that is the real focus. It's not with an end goal in mind that we're here to set up a football team, a tennis team or a cricket team, for us it's just getting them out of the house and providing a safe and structured environment in which they're able to enjoy themselves. If they enjoy it we do have a pathway, there are clubs in the area that we will direct them towards.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** Thanks. And now my colleague Karen, do you want to come in now?

**Baroness Brady:** Thank you so much, it was really interesting to hear from everyone. There's a couple of things I'd like to know. I'd really like to hear from you what the challenges and the barriers are to getting more people involved. I'd also like to understand a little bit about funding – who's paying for you to put on the sessions? Are you charging the individuals? I know some of you are charities – tell me a little bit about your funding.

**Anne-Marie Waugh:** We do a variety of things – we may have a project which has been funded, whether it's the lottery, Peter Harrison or other funders; we may also run a project because we know it's needed but we have no funding, and that tends to be heavily staffed by volunteers. We are also fortunate enough to sometimes have corporate funding that allows us to put projects on. A lot of the time, the majority of things we do are because we want to do them, and the volunteers are available to do them. Our members do pay a small amount of money to participate but we try to make sure it covers the majority of the expenses and any staffing costs. For barriers – funding is always a barrier, there's no two ways about it – there's very little available and there's a lot of us asking for it. For our particular sport one of the barriers is finding spaces to do activities in, so school halls, sports centres... it can be quite tricky because people were quite reserved about roller sports but I think we've overcome a lot of those barriers, but we also had to fight for times and slots within those spaces because everyone's using those spaces. We've had a lot of spaces closed down which means that everybody moves into one centre. We also have issues where some of the larger multi-sports organisations book most of the sports halls in our borough for the whole of the summer term which means we can't book it.

We have issues trying to use the parks. So many issues for us are about venues, space and times that work for the participants. As for the participants that want to participate, if we ran something every evening we would be full, but it's finding the spaces and organisations to allow us to use spaces, having sufficient funding to be able to recruit staff and manage our core costs more than anything else.

**Baroness Brady:** Is it word of mouth how you build up, how you've got to 10,000? Is it a friend telling a friend telling a friend?

**Anne-Marie Waugh:** No, we do a lot of advertising, and again we're really lucky with some of the young people that have grown with us help us with our social media and come back and volunteer their time, so a lot of it is advertising and promotions. We do a lot of radio interviews; we'll do whatever it takes to get the message across. If we were to put on a roller disco it would be packed; if we put on structured sessions they tend to get packed. We also work a lot with our local authorities, so we do after-school clubs in some of the schools, whether it belongs to the school or we use their facilities to run an after-school programme. We try to work with partners in a strategic way to gain access really, to be able to deliver the services.

**Baroness Brady:** I don't mind who goes next, whoever would like to.

**Imrul Gazi:** Yeah, I'll go. In terms of echoing what Anne-Marie said, facilities are a really big problem in London. That's a major issue. We're a pretty new organisation and obviously Covid has had a big impact on what we do. I've never applied for any funding. everything I do is self-funded, and we charge the parents a minimal amount. Me and my son run the organisation – we do the coaching, we provide the time, and it's something that I'm very keen on. I'm no different to any other voluntary organisation up and down the UK – it's about the volunteers, it's about us giving our time. It's more than just the money. I've got children and I know what it's like as a parent to be able to provide and have this facility, and as a coach I'm able to give back, and that's the main thing. But obviously facilities are a massive problem, not just to me but I think to any organisation that's trying to provide a structured session or a sport to the community. We're all fighting for the same court, we're all fighting for the same area, but what we find is sometimes one organisation will have a monopoly over everything, and the smaller ones like ourselves miss out. The other problem I have is, obviously being in Redbridge, I guess we're not seen as deprived – the couple of times I've gone to apply for the money it's not available because I'm not seen as a deprived area. So again, the kids in our area are missing out, but these kids are also having different issues in that they are stuck at home and, I keep on mentioning it, let's say middle class kids are stuck at home with nothing to do so they're on their gadgets – they are as important as those stuck in inner-city areas who do have places to go but there's not enough coaches in these areas to provide them with the coaching. It's a Catch-22 situation, but the solution I think is more facilities but that's not going to happen. I'm a bit stuck as to which way to go, but in terms of my own selfish perspective organisations such as myself in areas like where I live, maybe make it more accessible for us to get these pots of funding and not be frowned upon because we live in certain

areas. That would be my ask. But like I said, we're all trying to achieve the same goal here.

**Baroness Brady:** Thank you very much. Steve, I think you wanted to come in next.

**Steve O'Connor:** I think for a sport like ours we have a perceived barrier with decision-makers, particularly in schools, whereby they assume something like rowing is for independent schools, because it is predominantly dominated by them. There's not that awareness about what we deliver so we really have to go out and almost grab people and bring them down and show them that it can be possible. One of the sort of detailed barriers we're finding is that more and more children can't swim, and it feels like such a fundamental thing to be able to do – when you go rowing in the middle of the Thames that can be an issue. I just echo what's been said already about club space. I think for our sport the natural limit on participation is the number of rowing boats available, and that's limited by the number of sites available. If we're not planning to build lots of boat clubs specifically for the participation of the schools, we need to utilise what's already there. All of these boat clubs in particular are empty during the days, but it's difficult to get in and get the clubs to be able to give access and use their equipment and sites and so on. Those are some of the key barriers for us. In terms of funding, we cover 50% of our costs through our own income – memberships, courses, one-to-ones, and things like that – and the other 50% is fundraising, so grants and trusts, individuals, regular giving and that sort of stuff. We've just hired our first fundraising manager, because it is becoming tougher and we think we need someone to focus on that to try and capitalise.

**Baroness Brady:** Thank you. Martin?

**Martin Symcox:** From a barrier perspective, for blind and partially sighted people it's very much the perception that the belief that blind and partially sighted people can't do sport, and therefore it's the knock-on effect into that lack of information about sporting opportunities. For example, Metro Blind Sport deliver visually impaired tennis sessions, but they occur once every other week in Islington, so people have got to travel, they've got those barriers to overcome of travel that can be expensive if people are travelling with a guide. One of the other key barriers for us is the lack of quality and affordable equipment. So sticking with tennis, a visually impaired tennis ball has to be imported from Japan and costs upwards of £8.50 each. You can get 8 standard tennis balls for that price. It's similar with netballs; we're about to put on a netball programme and I've had to get hold of people in Australia and New Zealand to get a netball that's got audible sound included in it. Those are some of the barriers that occur, and it's just the knowledge of people, whether that's teachers, or knowledge of people that work in facilities of how to include blind and partially sighted people in sport, how to welcome them into facilities. From a funding perspective we're very familiar to what Steve mentioned – a mixture of trusts, grants, supporters, but we very much try wherever we can to make opportunities free. If people want to travel to take part in competitive sport then we will fundraise to support them with a subsidy to pay for travel and accommodation costs where needed.

**Baroness Brady:** Thank you. Rainbow, I don't know if you wanted to add anything to your colleague?

**Rainbow Mbuangi:** Hi, I'll quickly introduce myself. My name's Rainbow. I play professional football for the Metro Blind Team. I volunteer for football organisations like Metro Blind Sport and the Thomas Pocklington Trust... [mic cuts out] basically the whole kind of barriers that we face is the curriculum. We changed the curriculum, so for example on a Wednesday afternoon we have enrichment, we come off our timetable and we do the skills, abilities [mic cuts out] ... also that come along with the Sightbox, that's a charity that I'm part of, and that's about nationally and internationally helping other blind and partially sighted people who don't have that help with sports. [mic cuts out]

**Baroness Brady:** Rainbow, I'm really sorry to interrupt you but it's really difficult to hear you. I think the connection is still quite bad.

**Rainbow Mbuangi:** Sorry, can you hear me now?

**Baroness Brady:** Yes that's better.

**Rainbow Mbuangi:** Sorry. Yeah, so with Sightbox I go around to schools, universities, colleges, and different organisations teaching blind and visually impaired children but also sighted peers as well about awareness of blind sports, because I think that's a key thing about blind sports is getting awareness out. Some of the stats that we've found, one of them is that 80% of blind people are unemployed, so we want to change that; and also in society blind people have 4 to 5 less friends than their sighted peers, which is a massive difference when you actually think about it. The key thing is about reverse inclusion, so the whole type of awareness of the stereotypical view that blind people can't do it, and we want to change that to the fact of blind people can do it. My kind of motto is, I don't have a disability, I just have a different ability. It's about changing that and becoming the trainer of trainers, reversing the [lack of] inclusion of the blind and the sighted. The costs are very important, because the costs are for travel and also equipment. Like Martin has just mentioned, with football it's like £35 for a blind football, but usually you can go to a shop and buy a normal football for about £5 or £10, so there's a massive difference there. With travel, for example with me when I'm travelling to universities, that is the cost and that's one of the things that especially we ask from the government is the type of funding and seeing where we can actually fund. I know at the moment there's a government scheme called the Turing Scheme, and that is actually something that I am applying for – it's about basically sending students, internationally as well, around the world about teaching education, about sports, and my kind of role is going nationally and internationally to teach about blind sports to less abled blind children.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** Ok, thanks. I don't think Benthe has come in on this yet.

**Benthe Tanghe:** For me it's quite different because obviously I've got the university which helps with funding which is great. But I think there's two things – there's the money that would be really useful, and luckily we get quite a lot of

funding from the university which we can use for participation bursaries which less privileged students can apply for, and we can make sure they can do the activities, it's not just sports it's any extra-curricular [activities]. But I think the bigger picture here is what I kind of touched on already, is that especially with women is the barriers of how we get into sport. That is really difficult to tackle. We have the 'The Girl Can' campaign next week – those are campaigns that are really useful, we definitely see a rise in women being like, 'okay, I can participate in sport, you don't have to look a certain way, you don't have to be perfect...' So yeah, I think the funding obviously, any funding for everyone here is very useful, but it's those deeper layers in 'why am I not involved in sport, how do I get involved in sport, and what's holding me back,' especially for women but for everyone really.

**Baroness Brady:** How are you tackling that at the university? How are you getting the women involved, what messages are you sending out that are working?

**Benthe Tanghe:** Yeah, so for example next week – that's what I've been really busy with today as well – we're having the 'This Girl Can' campaign which is a national campaign as well and very recognisable for women where we try to make the messaging around 'we just want you to get active' and it doesn't have to be that high performance level which is what a lot of people feel like, 'ok I'm not good enough so I feel like I can't get in there.' It's opening up sports sessions which are for women only that makes them feel more comfortable to join because unfortunately still – for example with the gym even I, and I've been a student athlete for years, I go to the gym and see the men with the heavy weights and it feels like 'okay I might not be good enough to do that.' It's insecurity as well, and I think especially when you're a teenager that develops and when you come to university you don't really get rid of it until at some age, I hope, you don't really care any more about it. But I think it's crucial when we get new students that we get them in right away, that we get them involved the right way, because in their second and third years it gets more and more difficult to get them in. I think it's mainly about messaging, so how do we try to get people involved in sport, how do we tell them what we expect of them, beside obviously the financial barriers for a lot of students.

**Baroness Brady:** So the message is 'be active' rather than 'be sporty?'

**Benthe Tanghe:** Absolutely, yeah. It comes back to, and I keep saying this, that I am just as happy if you go for a thirty minute walk every day as if you run a marathon. I'm just as happy because it's about getting active, and you know with the pandemic a lot of students face serious mental health problems, and I know exercise is not the final cure, it doesn't completely erase it, but it does definitely help. That's why we're trying to use sports to get students active and to help them try to get balance in life, try to get out of the house instead of just sitting at home in the same room all day. It's been very useful but it's hard to reach students, especially if you've not been involved in sports so far.

**Baroness Brady:** Just to clarify, are you saying that if you don't get them straight away when they join university it becomes harder and harder to get them involved as they go on through the course?

**Benthe Tanghe:** Absolutely. Because if you get them early on they meet their friends in their teams as well and establish your entire university life because you will live with those friends, you keep each other on track, whereas if someone doesn't feel comfortable to join – and it's not just with sport, it's with our societies – if they don't join right away they feel more scared to join later as they get older and we kind of lose touch with them unless they come as a masters student and we say 'hey, have you tried this out?' For us it's crucial – have they been involved in secondary school [sport] and have you felt comfortable enough to join, and then do they get into university and in their freshers week – that's our busiest week, that's when we try to get all of them to join.

**Baroness Brady:** And my final question: what is the biggest club you have, what is the activity that attracts the most [people]?

**Benthe Tanghe:** In terms of members it would be the ski and snowboard club, but that's because they go on a trip each year. In general it's the conventional sports, it's netball or football or rugby where we get a lot, but as well with those sports we have a different team for men and women obviously, and the men attract way more students than the women do because they don't feel comfortable joining. For the netball we have more than 90 women in our club, so the high performance one, and then we have around 200 in our more recreational one which compete against each other rather than against other universities. I think it's that linkup between the club side and the recreational side we have below that and how can we link that up as well... I play football as well, I used to play football here at Newcastle University, and initially when I came here we would have trials and when people didn't make the team we'd say 'sorry you didn't make it,' whereas now we've started to change the messaging to 'you didn't make this team, because it's high performance, but we also have this alternative.' In that way, it's a small thing in messaging and how we tell them they didn't make the team, but it makes a lot of difference in that they don't feel rejected and too scared to join again, they know there's an alternative that they can do. It's all about messaging, it's really crucial but difficult.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** Ok, thanks. Did you want to come in again briefly, Rainbow?

**Rainbow Mbuangi:** Yeah, so mine are about the points that have just been mentioned, which apply to blind and visually impaired people as well. I think it's definitely getting the blind people and especially children straight away, especially in schools – a massive thing is in PE lessons where the children are brought out of them to do braille and the key types of skills that a blind person would use (mobility, braille, using tactile objects). It's that perception of 'no, blind people still need PE lessons,' and once they've been taken out of those PE lessons they can feel 'I don't deserve to be in sports.' So it's getting children straight away from a young age, getting them into sport to then know that

'yeah, I can do this.' It's the support from the family, the family perspective also with a stereotypical view of 'blind people can't do it,' the family then kind of holds the child back and has a hold on them. So it's about supporting the athlete and also the family of the child, because it's [about] knowing that they can do it and spreading the information that they can. That also comes with the training that coaches, teachers, and also other jobs that include working with blind and visually impaired people need to have because, for example, the school I go to has a college that is post-19 connected, and the college helped me because there's teachers there who have NQTVIs. You've got schools out there that have blind and visually impaired children, but they don't have NQTVI (National Qualification for Teachers of the Visually Impaired).

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** Ok thanks for that Rainbow. Imrul, you've had your hand up for a little bit so let's go to you.

**Imrul Gazi:** Yeah, just touch in on what Rainbow just mentioned – around the activities from a government perspective and what they can do nationally. The emphasis around sport in schools is – I think over the last decades has taken a back seat. Sport has to be given as much importance as English and Maths within the schools, as does competition. I think especially now with what's happened, if we're going to make an impact in the community and the work we're doing away from their day at school, for them to be encouraged and understand the value of sport and for them to appreciate it more, the government and you guys and the MPs nationally just need to put more emphasis on sport within schools. Make it a compulsory part of the curriculum, but also at the same time we need to start encouraging competition. Competition is healthy – I just feel that sports have taken a real back seat, and just participation has become the be all and end all. That is something that we need to shout from the rooftops. Anyone who has any influence can do something and push forward or higher up the agenda in terms of education.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** That's a really important point. Funnily enough it's what we were thinking about last week, so it certainly will be reflected in our reports findings. Dominic?

**Lord Addington:** Hello everyone. One thing I'd like to come back to very briefly when we go around, just commenting on how much time – I think Benthe this is one that doesn't apply to you – do you spend hunting down sources of funding? We've had people going through and talking about it coming from various places. As someone who has been involved in rugby clubs and other sports, when you're hunting down funding from various sources... must give us an idea about how many hours it takes – and just give a very short answer there because it's a boring techy one. I was just wondering about when it comes to bringing in the whole family into the process and backing up to get children involved, how successful have you been there and how crucial is it? I think I know what the answer is but I need to hear it from you guys about where we go on that. Imrul?

**Imrul Gazi:** I don't know if I'm in a position to comment because we're relatively new in terms of our stage and where we're at as an organisation, we

started and we got rolling and we got the numbers in and then we had Covid. So I've kind of gone backwards. My expertise isn't funding – like I say, I'm doing in for my community and the area in which I live. But I have recently been looking and it isn't easy. Unless you're someone who does it on a day-to-day basis and has experience of it... someone like myself is relatively new to all of this, to come in and apply for a pot of money is quite daunting to be fair, and I'm sure others will agree with what I'm saying that it's not the easiest task. But you have other organisations around the UK who are used to it and they know where to look, they're used to applying for pots of money and it's the organisations that are getting the pots of money over and over again. This is the issues that I find, I'm constantly fighting a losing battle with this. But ultimately my goal isn't the pots of money, my role is to get kids out of the house. It depends what you're looking to do.

**Lord Addington:** And for parents? The relationship with the parents, how important is that?

**Imrul Gazi:** For me that's the be all and end all. If we're going to get to the kids we need to have engagement from the parents. They're a vital tool in getting the kids out and about, I think marketing also has to be focused at the parents as well as the kids.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** Steve, how do you get on with parents? How important is that for you?

**Steve O'Connor:** Likewise, if you can get an engaged an active parent behind a young person you're just going to have so much better engagement over the longer term. It's something we try and work on, we engage with the parents of all the juniors we work with and keep them updated with what's happening and run sessions specifically for them as well so they can be involved and understand it a bit more. I think it's important to recognise thought that some young people are coming from a situation where it can be a single parent household and that parent doesn't have the capacity to help. In that situation it's thinking about what are the roles models, mentors, and key people that we can use to help that young person, because they need a figurehead to show them why it's so important. In terms of fundraising – before I hired someone I was probably spending two thirds of my time as a minimum chasing down funds, whether that be researching or creating the application, and then reporting back. It's dropped down now that we've hired someone to look at it, but it's definitely the biggest challenge and the largest amount of work. For our organisation it's still the biggest challenge we've got at the moment.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** Let's go to Anne-Marie.

**Anne-Marie Waugh:** All our parents are involved, so the first thing our parents do when they make their booking is they complete a membership form. The bottom section of that form asks the parents how they want to be involved in the volunteering – it can be anything from refreshments, administration... We are really lucky; all of our parents do a small volunteering role. Some might do admin, some might do the register... We also have something called the young leaders and the buddying schemes. Our children start at the age of four, so once

they've done one term the new intake buddy up with someone the same age group, the older children then start to train up to become trainee sports coaches. We have seen our parents stay with us even though their children are no longer skating with us, and similar you see with some of our young people who have gone to university, gone to college, still come back and volunteer. I can put my hand on my heart and say if I called twenty of them from five years ago, as we did at Christmas when we were doing a Times article, and it was those young people and their families that still repeatedly support us. So we get our parents involved from day one and we are lucky, they want their children to do sports and they are always asking for other signposting. What we also do with young people and parents, they guide us to the next things the young people are interested in. We've actually started to integrate things that they've asked for – so some of them are interested in music, some of them are doing DJing and music production courses; a lot of them like to take pictures for social media during the session, especially when they want to skive off something they're not too keen on. However, we've been taking their lead and we've set up social media courses, so we did a social media course with Capital Radio to get sixty young people into work. We expand and we follow their lead, their guidance. What we don't deliver we signpost to partners or other local organisations who can facilitate those things. Going back to grants, I could spend thirty-six hours a week just doing grants, and I think Steve touched on it. You reach a point where you need somebody to do that. In some years we just haven't claimed any grants because we've been so busy delivering we don't have the capacity to stop and make those grant applications – they are lengthy. Also what comes with them is the monitoring afterwards. So you deliver, then you do the monitoring, it is a full-time job and we do have an external freelancer who dips in every so often. But what we also find with grants, they're always based on projects, when we've reached a point where we need core funding to grow and sustain the organisation. Sometimes we just don't apply for grants and we just deliver, and literally just cover our costs.

**Lord Addington:** Can I just come in there, because it's a very important point? Anyone who works for any charity comes across the core funding – I should have asked you about that, I mean just a nod here would be great. Is this really a problem? The unsexy stuff really is so vital, and you've been basically meeting most of that with your own members making contributions.

**Anne-Marie Waugh:** Yes, you're absolutely right. The core funding... I mean the people that run the organisation need to be paid, this is why we end up having volunteers for such a long period of time. Core funding is everything to do with our office space, facilities space, insurance, digitalisation, mobile phones, websites... Project funding is fairly easy to get if you've got the time to give it, but actually we've reached the point where we need core funding, we need to sustain the organisation and allow it to grow. That is extremely difficult.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** It's almost a badge of pride with some foundations and people that are giving the money that they don't support core funding, and you see it on the application – we will not support core funding – because they get accused of putting money into administration rather than

activities. As yet as you've said that they were mainly volunteers, but if you [don't have them] you need that core funding. I'm just going to come back for a brief question because I've got to save my last seven minutes for the last round of main recommendations, but Benthe – I wanted to ask you, I think this might be no, but do the articles of the students union stop you using some of your facilities for use of people who are not students? I mean, in Newcastle your sports facilities must be some of the best in the city – are you able to open them to people beyond the student community and if so, how does that go?

**Benthe Tanghe:** I'm personally not in charge of the sports facilities, we have a sports director for that, so the university is in charge of that and I'm in charge of the students and the sports clubs we have. We do open up our facilities, we actually have a new gym, but more importantly we have a new sports park. But they have to book in, and they do have to pay money for it. We have a lot of young secondary and primary school students on our pitches at weekends, so we do open up so we can make good use of it.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** Karen, let's go back to you now for anything further that you wanted to ask.

**Baroness Brady:** No, not at all. It's been so interesting listening, I think clearly one of the recommendations that I presume this group will make is that there should be one person who could help you with your grants and core funding that you could hand over to them, that's centrally funded by government so you're not bogged down in the paperwork.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** Maybe it would be useful – can you put your hand up if you pay somebody for fundraising? [Steve, Martin, and Anne-Marie raise their hands] Ok, that's interesting. That's to do with the size of the organisation as much as anything presumably, because to pay somebody you need to be a sizeable organisation don't you.

**Anne-Marie Waugh:** I think from our point of view it's not so much that it's a sizeable organisation. When I'm in meeting like this I think it's hard to visualise – I'm in my dining room, I use an office space which has been given to us free of charge by British Land because it saves on the business rates. We don't have a permanent base, we don't have a permanent site, we're constantly moving our equipment around when our free space has been taken away from us. I do everything from PR, marketing, finance, HMRC... We are literally one or two people trying to run an organisation, and every single facet of it has to be done by one or two people and a little bit of help from volunteers. So it's not because we're huge, it's because there's no more time; I personally can't put any more time into grant applications, submitting our accounts to... you're literally a small set of people doing massive amounts of work which has to be done legislatively, plus we're a registered charity so there's huge paperwork to do.

**Baroness Brady:** And that must be holding you back?

**Anne-Marie Waugh:** Absolutely. I mean, I can't explain how much it holds me back, if I say I've reached the point of bankruptcy on several occasions, possible

nervous breakdowns, complete burnout, I don't have holidays. I am doing absolutely everything.

**Steve O'Connor:** One conversation I have with friends around this – they say, 'well I'll give money, but I want it to go directly to the beneficiaries,' and I say to them if we can't keep the lights on then nobody is going rowing. It's almost like a visceral reaction to the word 'overhead' that we need to try and get past.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** Martin, can you just say a little bit about that because you must work really closely with parents, just a relatively short answer because then I want to go to the wind-up question. Does the conversation we've heard on fundraising and how you get your money reflect in your organisation as well?

**Martin Symcox:** It absolutely does, yeah. Fundraising takes up a third of my time, I suppose, in terms of trying to get support. I think if I just touch upon the family element, certainly for people who are blind and partially sighted, then many families feel overwhelmed receiving a sight loss diagnosis, and they can find it particularly difficult to be optimistic about a future for their child – that's where sport and physical activity being done as a family can be a platform to much more in life. We've had young people come along to cricket sessions, or tennis sessions as a family, and they've heard from others – they have a husband or wife, or they've been on holiday and travelled and been to university, and that inspiration really does help. Families seeing that as well is important, and if I may just quickly say one thing about consuming sport as well. Going along as a family, my love for sport started with going to watch sport with my family. That can absolutely happen for blind and partially sighted people – premier league clubs do audio description and welcome people in, but it's at the elite level that it's available and maybe not at lower level clubs or other sports that less people go along to. I think for us just thinking about how people can consume sport and get the love for sport from taking part and watching it could be really important.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** Ok, thanks. Now this is the last question... what one recommendation would you want to see us put in the report? Don't forget this is a report to government but it's not always asking the government to do something, it could be suggesting they work with other people to do things. Imrul?

**Imrul Gazi:** I think the biggest aspect for me is around the availability of funds and also facilities, that has to be key. Somehow making them more accessible to smaller organisations and really just varying who gets that pot, and what the capabilities are from that organisation and what they're actually doing. From a bigger perspective, like I touched on, I want to see more sports within school as well, given more of a prioritisation. That for me has to be top of the agenda, that's something that government can really do immediately as well.

**Steve O'Connor:** I'd like to see a requirement for all schools to deliver the same hours of PE as they do for STEM subjects. I think that during lockdown we've seen what the mental health implications are of young people not being

active, so I think if we can get them more active mental health will improve and grades in STEM subjects will improve – so I think it's as important as those.

**Anne-Marie Waugh:** I couldn't agree more – I competed for Middlesex in all my schools. I think getting schools back on board and reminding them of the importance, similar to what Imrul said, of supporting organisations like us who can deliver those services so we can make sure we've got best practice, we've got DBS's, safeguarding training. But I think as Steve and Imrul said, get the schools back on board. It's just the benefits of physical activities, to really get that message driven home again and supporting us as organisations who can be delivery partners for the schools.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** Steve and Anne, do you sometimes feel you're compensating for what's not happening in schools?

**Anne-Marie Waugh:** Yes.

**Steve O'Connor:** Yes – 100%.

**Benthe Tanghe:** I actually mentioned this to our executive board at university last week – we all know how important sport is and we all know the benefits, but we're not utilising it enough. We're not using it enough in the ways that benefit not just mental health but at the end of the day it affects how you study. I know I represent students here, but like everyone has said it starts from a very young age, it starts at school. That's the way you keep on track for the rest of your life. I think we need to invest more, and it's not just money, it's also campaigns and awareness, it's getting people involved, and it starts at a very young age.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** Yes -and Martin, your one recommendation that you'd like to see us take on?

**Martin Symcox:** I'd like to see an increase in the skills and knowledge of local sports organisations, providers and facilities about disability sport, and the fact that sport and physical activity can be and should be more accessible and inclusive.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** Martin, do you know how many organisations there are like you in the country? Is there a network of people who are working with this target group?

**Martin Symcox:** There is a network of individual clubs that focus on an individual sport, so there will be a VI football club in Merseyside that Rainbow mentioned, but there's not an organisation like ours that delivers multiple sports.

**Baroness Morris of Yardley:** Ok, so unique in that sense. Rainbow, what would be the one recommendation you would recommend to put into our report?

**Rainbow Mbuangi:** I think what Martin just mentioned about the skills and getting the awareness out is very key, especially in schools – putting in training, teacher training, coaching training; some type of awareness out there, getting information to the teachers so then they know within PE lessons and sport lessons. Something that I feel really strongly about is around the media and

promoting role models – for example, me being a blind England athlete, I'm not promoted as much as a role model as someone like Marcus Rashford is at the moment. I think he's a great person and I look up to him greatly and I see myself in his shoes. But you only see really people who have a disability promoted when it's a competition – so for example, Ellie Simmonds, you only see her in the Paralympics or the run-up. Apart from that you don't hear 'oh, she's done this, she's done that,' and something that should be moved forward is the awareness, getting the role models out there of people who actually do a lot within the community or do a lot within sport who have a disability.

(End)

### **Transcript of group three**

**Attendees:** Stephen Ball, *Castleford RUFC*; Lee Dema, *St Matthew's Project*; Jess Eastoe, *Greater Sport*; Jenni Jemmott-Brown, *RollaDome All Skate*; Claire Smith, *Essex Cricket in the Community*; Skye Stewart, *Black Country Fusion FC*.

**Members:** Baroness Sater, Earl of Devon, Lord Knight of Weymouth

**Baroness Sater:** Welcome everybody. Thanks very much for giving up your time this afternoon. Thank you for spending an hour with us and giving some of your insights into the work that you do and perhaps giving us an idea of what things we could take away, as you've heard from our Chair, about the issues we're trying to face in terms of challenges and barriers, and things that might be causing you to not be able to progress further. And also some solutions that you might have to those issues. So we're really keen to hear from you and as he said this is a very informal chat. My name is Baroness Sater and I just wanted to introduce my colleagues.

**Lord Knight of Weymouth:** My name's Jim for these purposes but if you want to call me Lord Knight, you're really welcome to and I'm really looking forward to the conversation.

**Earl of Devon:** And I'm Charlie and you can call me that for the purposes of today. I am the Earl of Devon and I have a deep interest in the work that you're doing. I have two school age children who are quite involved in various sports, so I'm really fascinated to understand how you all operate and I look forward to the conversation.

**Baroness Sater:** My name is Amanda and for today please call me Amanda. If I kick off with a general question and then what will happen, we'll all dip in and out, ask you some questions and please feel free to come in on something. We're here to hear from you, it's about you today, so it's important for you to feed back to us. This is a question for all of you, and then we'll work around the room, we'd really like to know why, and how, you got involved with your organisation? And in helping your target audiences, how have you been able to target your audiences to engage in sport and recreation? And as we go round if you could start by introducing your organisation and what it does.

**Stephen Ball:** Hello everyone. My name is Steve Ball and I am a women and girls lead for Castleford Rugby Union Club, so we're in rugby league territory but we're a rugby union club. Initially, I started as a parent as did most of the people who coach at our club. My son wanted to have a go at rugby and in the summer, I helped to coach and then the next season I became a coach for tag rugby so that's the under 8s. And many, if not most, of the coaches in grassroots game start from helping out with their children's teams- that's my view anyway. My son gave up rugby after a few years, as he didn't like it that much anymore, but I continued to coach for a few years with various teams. Then there were 3 girls in my team who had to stop playing mixed rugby because you have to stop when you're 11, or going up to 12, and I decided that they needed a girls team so that they could continue to play, otherwise they would have to give it up. So we had three players to start with and after a few

years we then got to three age groups. That's under 13s which is years 7 and 8, under 15s which is years 9 and 10 and under 18s which is 11, 12 and 13. And we've had the girls teams for 12 years. 8 years ago I started to do an after-school club in two schools to give the girls their experience in rugby and a number of those from the school clubs came down and started playing at the club. And over the 8 years I've probably brought something like 65 girls from schools to play at our club. So we run three age groups now and at that peak of where we've had, because it varies each year, we've had approximately 65 girls training and playing games and our philosophy is we want players to enjoy themselves and to develop their skills and team play, and actually they get more enjoyment out of playing at a higher performance level. We've had many girls play at representative county levels and England under 18s and under 20s and we've even had three England Sevens contract players, and one of those girls I actually brought to the club from one of the schools so that's really good. And we've got between 20 and 30 ex-players who play, or who have played, in the Allianz Premier 15- that's the women's top level in rugby union- and the Women's Super League in rugby league and that adult league started three years ago. So that's how I got involved and my audience as it were.

**Lord Knight of Weymouth:** Just a very quick question to follow up, you talked about that classic journey from parent to coach and then moving into women and girls rugby. How many mums have made the journey from mum to coach?

**Stephen Ball:** Not many. We've got one mum at the moment, and one mum a few years ago took it over, and we had a student who was on work experience come to help us out. In fact we've had two female students who've helped out over the three years. We've got a link with Leeds Beckett University and they, hopefully, tell students every year, and they send a student to us so for three years we've had students as assistant coaches giving them work experience and helping us out with coaching as well.

**Lord Knight of Weymouth:** Is there any evidence that having more diversity in the coaching helps with the diversity of the participants?

**Stephen Ball:** I don't think so because I think it's the quality of the coaching, of the coach as a person, not what gender you are.

**Jenni Jemmott-Brown:** I'm from RollaDome All Skate. We are a registered recreational charity and we've been going for just over eleven years and I very similarly to Stephen started off as a side line parent, wanting to have a go at skating as everybody does, and then two weeks later I was on a Level 2 Coaching course and 5/6 years on the rest is history. I'm now the Operations Manager. So we work from age 4 upwards and we do literally everything to do with skating, whatever you can think of whether it's parties, one to one sessions, outdoor, corporate and discos. The whole lot.

**Earl of Devon:** Can I come in on that? I was just interested because my daughter is very keen on street dance which is maybe non-conventional type of sport, and I wonder if you've found that you attract people to roller-skating who maybe don't go for your normal team sports and whether you see different

participants than perhaps other more conventional sports that people see at schools.

**Jenni Jemmott-Brown:** Yes, we do. Sometimes people consider us as a sort of niche market and so they tend not to approach us as they think it might be expensive or if we haven't put enough marketing out there to attract people- so if we haven't been around the schools or around the youth clubs. We do get people who want to try it out, sometimes we get grant funding so it allows us to go onto council estates and people or children who have never tried it they'd have a rink and they'd come and go as the like over a week. But I must admit like Stephen it's very hard to get people like myself, that are sort of on the side-line watching to become coaches. That is quite hard and very rare.

**Baroness Sater:** Jenni, just a quick question. How important do you think it is to engage with the parents and carers and the wider family and what is your experience of trying to get more involvement?

**Jenni Jemmott-Brown:** So we do family group sessions because what generally happens is that they'll buy the children a pair of skates and they'll hold their hands in the park, but they want them to have some more skills. It generally for us starts off with the child doing it and then we create a discount to encourage the parent and we say to them "what are you going to do for that hour? You're just there watching, and you might as well join in and try it out" and it encourages other parents to come. So that's how we've got our parents. At the moment we haven't been doing families as such, we've been doing bubble groups, so if you have two families that is been a bubble then you can have a group which has worked really well.

**Jess Eastoe:** I am the Young People Equality Lead for Greater Sport which is the Active Partnership for the combined authority of the 10 boroughs in Greater Manchester. We are the Strategy Leads for GM Moving also. The reason I got the job; I started in November last year, it was a newly funded post but because of my experience as a youth worker, political and community activist across the 10 boroughs, I've pushed for many years for a youth voice to be something to be listened to, so that has led me to here. I don't have a background in sport, but I think that they appreciated that because I was coming at the job from a different angle. My main role is I'm the project management for a homelessness project which is currently in four boroughs, soon to be five, which is aimed at getting young people who have either faced homelessness or live in care to engage in physical activity with a funded mentoring scheme. I'm also in charge of a pan-GM, so all the ten boroughs, widening our networks to diversify our reach and really to change who we target for funding and connections. Instead of going to sportspeople to find the young people, we're going to the young people and matching them up with the sport. So it's all youth voice and everything is consultation with young people. It's going really well actually; I've started in the borough of Trafford because that has the least amount of youth provision. We've done a few consultations, but we're trying to manage expectations. Some of them have said they want to swim with dolphins; I can get you a membership at the leisure centre but not so much the dolphins. But I think the representation from targeting places of faith and community activists

that are already in the heart of the community and getting them to focus on sport and physical activity and add it in to whatever they're doing. If they've already have a cohort of young people that are already doing arts and crafts or are already doing some sort of activism, then you can work with them to consider the benefits of sports and physical activity. So that's the main project but internally we're on a culture shift with the GM Moving Strategy because of the GM Combined Authority. So internally we're tackling inequality in a proactive way so we're not reactive to things that are going on in the news or protests. We want to hit it hard that we are for equality, we are diverse, and we upskill our clients before we fund them. Those sort of messages and we make sure that no stone in GM is left unturned.

**Stephen Ball:** Listening to what Jess is doing I think it's fantastic, because I've had some experiences at working in a rugby league club foundation and what we were trying to do was to do similar things that Jess does but coming from that organisation. And the problem that Jess was hinting at, and I know that it's in some of the later questions, it's a matter of funding and projects. You've got to always have a project, you can't just give money to an organisation that's doing well, that organisation has got to come up with a project and that normally has got to be a project that is different and has got to have something new. And I know Jenni will have come across this where you've been getting some grant money, and we've got grant money from Rugby Union and Yorkshire Sport Foundation, they were the ones who funded me going into the after school clubs but that was like £15 an hour basically. Not a great deal but it covered my expenses, but the main thing is that funding. I think what Jess and Jenni have highlighted is the importance of how much goes a long way.

**Jess Eastoe:** Just on that point. This is my first job that I've actually had money. Before that I was in a local authority, so the youth projects that we were doing were always skint. What I've noticed now is with a focus on equality and diversity when I give out these forms to coaches and teams they will tick every box because they know they're in a diverse area, they know they're working with under-represented people, so what we are doing before we give them the money is we contact them and upskill them in those areas, whether it's LGBT or young people of colour, to make sure that the sportspeople who will deliver the youth work have professional development as well as the small grants that I tend to give out.

**Claire Smith:** I work part-time for Essex Cricket in the Community, so we're the community delivery arm for Essex Cricket. I got into working in sports because I was always active as a child and through school I was interested in PE. I did my degree in sport and ever since I graduated, I've had various different jobs always working with grass roots sport and I feel passionately about getting people active in whatever activity they choose. My role at the moment is Active Families Manager, so I try and get more families engaged through cricket. And one of the things that we've found is that it is often the mums that are the influence and who decide what activities the children and the family take part in. So we've put in a lot of time over the last few years in upskilling female coaches so that we've got that network of women who can then empower other women

and lead activities for women and for girls to take part in. We also run programmes in schools to train young people so that they've got the leadership skills to run cricket for themselves and for the younger pupils in their school. And we just have so much going on and we work very closely with the ECB on their national cricket programmes. Some of you might have heard of Allstars Cricket which is the grassroots entry level offer for 5-8 year olds. We're also introducing this year- a year delayed- a new programme called Dynamos Cricket which is for older children and those two programmes very much rely on parents to run the activities, so again it's the emphasis on upskilling the parents and as we've heard from Stephen it's often the parents that then take on these activities and make sure we have a sustainable cricket network.

**Lord Knight of Weymouth:** Essex is a wonderful, diverse county and I guess I'm interested in how you engage those mums? What works, particularly in the more disadvantaged parts of Essex of which there are some really entrenched pockets.

**Claire Smith:** My role in particular focuses on the East London area of Essex so in towards Newham, Waltham Forest, Ilford, Barking, Stratford if anyone is familiar with the area, and we work closely with an ECB project called Dream Big Desi Women which offers different levels of support for women, mainly from a South Asian background. So it's things like alternative clothing so they feel that if they're playing cricket, or leading in cricket, that they've got an option of different clothing to wear. It's often further support by providing a member, so somebody who has already done down the pathway, to support them and to be there at the end of the day on WhatsApp to answer any questions that they've got. We try to run a training programme that is female only because often women feel more comfortable if they're in a learning environment with other women.

**Lord Knight of Weymouth:** And Claire, that first contact with mums is it that you go to where those Asian mums already are and sell cricket to them. What's the approach that works?

**Claire Smith:** So there's a couple of different things. One is through established clubs that are already running junior activities and we get the mums as they are dropping their kids off and we try and engage them in playing cricket firstly and then take them off down the leadership route. But we have also started to run programmes in primary schools. In a lot of our areas the primary school is the safe place for the families. It is somewhere they are used to, somewhere that is safe for them that they trust, so once they've dropped the children off, you put a female coach in to run a session for an hour and sometimes these start off as fitness activities- because we know that cricket is not for everyone- so it might be that we start off with a Zumba session just to class it as fun and fitness and then we drip in the cricket later on. I think it's finding those safe places where people go to and feel safe and then taking the activity to them rather than expecting them to trek across. East London is quite a small area, but it can seem massive if you're travelling on public transport or relying on walking or cycling.

**Earl of Devon:** It's a question for Claire and Jess and just a short answer maybe but how do you go about identifying those kids who maybe don't have proactive parents and aren't otherwise involved in sport and active lifestyles. Those are the ones who are going to make the biggest difference.

**Jess Eastoe:** The under-represented young people who don't have family support so we stripped that back and we added circumstance, lower socio-economic status and adverse childhood experience to our monitoring and evaluation form to really grasp and understand the depths of what young people are going through, which then allowed us to upskill youth workers in that area. And then just a holistic place-based approach where you target the schools, the friends you do a recruitment drive involving everybody, every corporate parent that's involved with a young parent can be involved in a youth provision. Just widening the network. There's going to be a teacher that knows of a young person who gets pastoral care. Within the NHS they'll know. The good thing about where I work is that there are different teams. So yes, I do young people sports and movement based but we've also got an Age Well team which will work with the families as well, because the GM moving culture that we're trying to push across the boroughs is everybody's part of that. It might start off as something where the parents aren't involved but we do actually aim to get them involved as well.

**Claire Smith:** I think for us we engage with the schools. There is a national programme called Chance to Shine which is a cricket programme that teaches cricket in the national curriculum so it gives every child the opportunity, not just those that might pick to do an after-school club. So it's about providing it to them in the school where they are a captive audience and then hoping that they take that away and engage the parents after that.

**Baroness Sater:** I'd like to bring in Skye and Lee because we haven't heard from them yet and then we'll come back to a bit more of a discussion.

**Skye Stewart:** Hi everyone. I'm from Wolverhampton, in the West Midlands, and my involvement in sport is around football. I formed Black Country Fusion in 2016 as the first LGBTQ inclusive football club in the West-Midlands to enter a non-gay league. I spent 30 years of my life hiding away from sport because of my gender identity and after my gender surgery I decided that I had hid away from sports for far too long and I set up Black Country Fusion. We started off with a male team and then we gone on to build a further six teams including girls football, ladies football, veterans football for the over 30s and 35s. So basically all my knowledge is around grassroots. I haven't had much involvement in companies but I'm very passionate about building grassroots communities and especially in the Wolverhampton area, because we have a very diverse culture in Wolverhampton and I'm very proud to be from Wolverhampton and our diversity, especially around the LGBTQ community.

**Baroness Sater:** How did you extend it to women's teams? Did that just come naturally, or did you actively go out to try and increase the scope?

**Skye Stewart:** When I started off with the male team it was always my aspiration to build a football club. And for me not having a ladies team wasn't a

football club. It was never about one team for me it was always about growing. And obviously I had some amazing sponsorship from Carling who wanted to grow our club, really got behind our ethos, we filmed an advert for Carling so they were really supportive for us, but they wanted us to grow in our community and that's how we grew. Women's football is very hard to get people into just because there are a lot of stereotypes around it and the motivational side of it. It's about getting the right coaches in and we have a lot of male coaches within football and what I do find in women's football is that a lot of women don't really respond to male coaches in football, they prefer to have a female leading their session. And that's the same with girls as well, they definitely respond better to girls who can understand them and understand their changes, how their bodies are changing and things like that.

**Baroness Sater:** Great, thank you. I'm going to bring in Lee now and sorry you've been waiting.

**Lee Dema:** So I run the St Matthew's Project in the Tulse Hill and Brixton area of South London which started 17 years ago. I just started it by accident, I didn't plan to do it. It kind of went from a kickabout in a park. I grew up in the area and managed to get out and ended up back there and on St Matthew's Estate. One day I was taking my daughter for a kickabout, I used to go every Sunday, and a load of the kids in our block surrounded me one day and said can we come. And if I said no then I probably wouldn't be talking to you now. So it started from that really. And then I did a little tournament as a parent governor in my daughter's primary school, it was an Easter tournament as part of an after-school club and about 100 kids turned up. And then the housing association asked if I would do a summer holiday scheme as a volunteer and I said I alright, I was able to do it at the time, that was meant to last six weeks and that was 17 years ago. Just one thing led to another. I think if you get involved in something like this, it's very hard to get out. After four years it was getting really out of hand in that my daughters were really young, and it was getting bigger and the Football Foundation said why don't you put in for a community grant and do it for a job. And we did. And in 2011 someone said why don't you become a charity, and I thought ok. It's kind of gone like that all the time, people suggest things and I say alright then let's see how it goes and here we are. But I never sat down and planned and said what the world needs is a St Matthews Project, it's just one of those things.

**Baroness Sater:** To move forward, where would you like to see it in five years' time. What do you think you lack in support?

**Lee Dema:** I'd like to see us still going. In the last few years funders have recognised the worth of small organisations and so we've been more successful in terms of funding. Really, we live year by year, like a lot of small groups. But what we don't do now, we don't have big organisations coming to us asking us for bodies, getting heaps of money and saying, 'we can't get any kids can you provide us with some.' We stopped that years ago, we said, 'no if you can't engage with kids don't come knocking on our door' and I think funders are beginning to see that. In five years I hope we're still here.

**Baroness Sater:** Great. Stephen do you want to come back in?

**Stephen Ball:** I can sympathise and it's great because hearing from everyone, there's bits that everyone gets to know. As far as we're concerned it's difficult to get into the schools, we can't get the local authority to help us, as Jess is helping, because the money has been stripped from the sports and activities section of the council. The RFU don't go in as much as the cricket, and what we've got to do, and everyone will say this as well, where we're working with kids is that the parents are so essential. They'll help as coaches, as we've said before, but they're essential for roles as team manager, first aiders, general helpers, washing kit, taking people to training and to games and we have a policy of looking for games within an hours drive so we can drive an hour to get a game so that support is essential. Fundraising, promoting a sense of belonging and affinity with the club all that but again like Lee said with the money it's hand to mouth. I'm actually in the process of writing two bids; one for hopefully getting somebody on the government's new kickstart scheme and another grant which is for a female rugby engagement officer. Both of those roles are to go into schools and to try to get kids in year 6 as they're leaving school and the next year when they're going into the big school, so that we can get them in life long and try something that they haven't done before. And it's not a conventional sport for girls, rugby, not yet anyways so just to try something. But, well come back to it, and everyone has touched on it, is we're going hand to mouth and that little bit of money could go a hell of a long way. I sat on the Sport England launch a few weeks ago, and listened to that, and I made the comment afterwards that that is 45 minutes of my life that I will not get back, and then I read the 58 page policy document and thought where is the money going? And a lot of money has gone on that 58-page policy document.

**Lord Knight of Weymouth:** There's a couple of things that are going through my head on this, and I'll try to wrap them together if I possibly can, if it's not too torturous. And that's by saying with a number of you, Lee, Skye and Stephen in particular, you've grown these and then they've built up. And I'm just interested in the point to which you have the realisation that there are things that you have to do that are really important, like monitoring and safeguarding processes, and the duty of care regime, at what point does that kick in and how much of an obstacle is that for you? And how much support do you then get from the sport governing bodies, if they exist for the activity that you want to do. Let's start with Skye, and in your case I'm really interested in how responsive the governing bodies have been, particularly around the LGBTQ diversity angle that you come from.

**Skye Stewart:** In terms of the LGBTQ, the FA are very open about being inclusive, the national FA are promoting it, but it's just a tick-box exercise I'm afraid to say, they don't really follow it up. I've been transphobically abused, and I've taken it to the national FA who have just ignored it basically and there's been no comeuppance. I'm very lucky that I'm affiliated with Staffordshire FA, which is our county FA, who are very supportive of the LGBTQ community and they continue to push women's football and push inclusion in sport. But sadly in my opinion the national FA are, it's 365 days a year homophobia happens, it's

not just once a month when it's Rainbow laces or once a month when it's football versus homophobia. That's not good enough and we look to our governing body to provide us support. And that's not just with the LGBTQ community, that's with racism, with women in football no one is getting the support and we've seen that the recent happenings with the Chairman of the FA and hopefully when the new person comes in...it's my opinion that everyone with a fan number should vote on who is the chairman of the FA, we should vote the person in.

**Lord Knight of Weymouth:** Thank you. So in the absence then of the right sort of support from the FA, has anyone been there to support you in setting up crucial issues around duty of care for example.

**Skye Stewart:** Yes, so we have a safeguarding lead at our county FA level who we have to submit everything to. So if we apply for recognition as part of that we have to submit our safeguarding and there is also lots of safeguarding courses that we can go on to ensure that everyone's safeguarded, and that's not just for children there's also a safeguarding course for vulnerable adults as well which is really important.

**Lord Knight of Weymouth:** Lee, did you have a similar experience in terms of the support that you got?

**Lee Dema:** Initially we got support from Lambeth Council, there was group called Lambeth Sport and Rec Department, which has gone now through cuts and it's part of the parks department. The person who helped me still works for Lambeth and that's good. And again, with me they just said you can apply to the Football Foundation for the kit, and then the kids said they want a football team and that's the next step. You go to them and then they put you in touch with the FA, the London FA, and gradually again with me if someone says you should do this or that, and I'll go and do it and I began to learn. I didn't know what a CRB check was back then, I'd never heard of one, so you just learn, and I just learnt going along step by step.

**Lord Knight of Weymouth:** And Jenni, in your case, I'm incredibly ignorant about roller-skating I've no idea if there is a governing body that could support you. Was it Slough Council who gave you a hand in getting the infrastructure and making sure this was done properly?

**Jenni Jemmott-Brown:** Yes, Slough and we also got a grant from Berkshire council. Our governing body is BRSF, but we don't have any support from them at all, so much so that at the moment they're not even doing qualified coaches courses. I've been qualified for five years and they've not had another course since then, which I suppose does raise an issue in regards to safeguarding because sometimes we will have an influx of people that will want us to do a project, and safeguarding is very important because we have to scrutinise our coaches and we'll have to sometimes delay a job, so we'll delay them, rather than waiting and saying let's do the project that yes, it's ok they can be supervised, and someone will be with them. We've had to take a step back and say we're going to pace out our projects so that we've got all the paperwork in place and we've done everything so regimented as much as possible. We also

keep our safeguarding up to date, with all our safeguarding issues as much as possible.

**Lord Knight of Weymouth:** In your case if you've not got a governing body that's supportive, you have the support from Slough and from Berkshire, we heard that Lambeth have cut their support, we heard from Stephen that the councils weren't able to support the way they used to. Is that your experience in Slough as well? Do you think we've got a problem with the capacity for local authorities to support some of this now?

**Jenni Jemmott-Brown:** Yes, I think it's the same everywhere. At the moment what everyone is looking for in different sports is co-working. So maybe we'll team up with rugby and we'll put on a project so in a six-week holiday you'll do three weeks of introduction to rugby and then a three weeks introduction to skating. So we're working with other people and growing our network. I think that's the only kind of way forward if people keep trying to do everything on their own, we're not reaching as many people as we'd like to reach. So that's our way of reaching as many people as we can. We've got quite a few projects coming up where we're working in different boroughs, just because we're in Slough now, we're originally North West based, but we've worked as far as Leeds and Birmingham and it generally just depends on where the project is and where the need is.

**Lord Knight of Weymouth:** I've now got images of playing rugby on skates, but I'll try to get them out of my mind.

**Jenni Jemmott-Brown:** We've done basketball and football as well, but as you can imagine with football and kicking it's a bit dangerous.

**Earl of Devon:** One of the issues we're really focusing on is what are the barriers to participation for those that are hard to reach and I wonder if you could think of examples. Assume you have a young person who is keen to engage with your sport what are the typical barriers that your seeing that prevent that participation. And then if it's a funding issue, who do you think should be responsible for funding to overcome that barrier. And maybe Jess if I can ask you first given you're seeing such a broad range.

**Jess Eastoe:** I think there's a few barriers for under-represented young people. One being money, and transport I get quite a lot actually. There's been a lot of work in my region of connecting bus passes to local authority run gyms and sport centres just to decrease the cost for young people. I think the responsibility would fall onto a place-based response, including the councils involved in that. My previous experience, because I worked for a local authority for a number of years, was that there is just no money there for anything other than prevention and statutory services. So when you look at the youth service the only thing that gets centralised funding is youth justice. Anything to do with youth voice, anything to do with sport or health there is just no money there. To the point now that even though austerity measures have been stopped without investment you'll probably not get back to where we were previously. So I think there is a lot of onus now on people like Stephen and Lee who are doing things within the third sector because they're seeking funding from other places. So I

think if the third sector and the public sector worked together to have a community investment or some sort of funding pot for the community. Even the Youth Zone idea is third sector, public sector and private sector all as one and within those buildings that they use. So take that ethos, because we know it works, and put it within the community rather than inside a building.

**Earl of Devon:** That makes a lot of sense, a teamwork approach. Skye, I wonder if you have any specific instances of barriers that stop people joining you.

**Skye Stewart:** I think one of the things that we've found in Wolverhampton is that people are not hard to reach but they're hard to engage. So it's about going out into the community for us, so if there is a group of girls who are hanging out around outside the shops it's taking it to them and going to see them in their community. Trying to work with the council, but we can't play football in the streets, because I don't know if it's the same everywhere else, but you get these big 'No Ball Games' signs put up everywhere which stops a lot of street football. And Wolverhampton Council are now charging to play football on their grass, which is unheard of. For five years I've never paid to train in a public park, but I've received an email today that says all football teams, grassroots, have to pay Wolverhampton Council.

**Earl of Devon:** Is that a recent introduction?

**Skye Stewart:** Apparently, it's been for the past five years but no one knows about it, but no football team in Wolverhampton knows about this £20 fee to play football in the park and where does that stop. Do you have to pay £20 to play with your brother, between two people, what constitutes organised sport?

**Earl of Devon:** Jenni, do you have specific examples of barriers to participation.

**Jenni Jemmott-Brown:** Yes, it's the same as was mentioned previously. Because we find it hard to engage young people, we've created a package for them. So we'll say it will be a roller disco, but the first hour will be teaching, so we'll get them moving and then the second hour will be a disco so it's skating around and that will get them going. They used to have a bus, because we had some groups that lived at different side of the roads so it was a postcode issue, so the bus went around the estate picked up however many were ready and brought them to us and took them home safely because it was a safety issue so we had those sort of issues. In regards to the schools, because if it's introduced as a new sport, something that students had never done before the school has subsidised and used people's pupil premium to assist so that all students could take part and it balanced it out quite nicely. So those are some of the issues we've faced in the past.

**Lee Dema:** All of our activities are free. If you've got free football you can't fail to be honest. And we've got Matthews FC and St Matthew's Project. St Matthew's FC has a £10 signing on fee, there are clubs charging now a £500 signing on fee and they say they'll get them scouted and they'll get them playing for Arsenal and Chelsea. They're selling a dream that doesn't exist which is a problem. Not so much a postcode with us, because we've got wars within the

same postcode, and we've had lots of problems with youth violence or gang violence, whatever you want to call it, it has a big impact on what we do and where we operate. There's long running hostilities through generations now, you've got young kids who are at war with another area and they don't even know how it started they just pick up the baton, but they don't even know why they're supposed to hate these kids. We've lost seven young men, and quite a few life changing injuries. So even though we don't say that's what we do, it influences what we do. For instance, we've got a senior team now, and in their mid-20s, I've known some of them since they were little kids and some of them coaches. When it came to running our sessions with them in Brixton, they said they couldn't use the centre we usually use, even though they say they're out of that now, and they've got kids and jobs, so we have to run sessions four miles away in Crystal Palace, because it still effects what they do. So stuff like that.

**Earl of Devon:** Yes, a very important issue to consider, particularly you're providing services within communities that are strained. Claire, I don't know if you have any further thoughts on that?

**Claire Smith:** Yes. Probably something that hasn't been mentioned that we find is other things competing for people's time becomes a barrier. So if they're potentially going to the mosque after school or having a tutor after school or the parents are rushing off to work. And that's the same for me personally as well your physical activity that misses out if there are other priorities. So that is a barrier as well.

**Stephen Ball:** It's getting kids to our place. So somebody will say I can't do it tonight so we ring round parents to ask if someone can pick somebody up at the same time. We say if you can't get there, let us know and we'll try and get somebody to pick you up. What we would love is to be able to go out to the places where people are hanging about. We've got a clubhouse and grounds, but we haven't got the people to go out and meet the kids who are hanging about who might be able to come and actually play. We don't have the problems that Lee has, but we have the problems that Claire has. Parents will say it's dance tonight and Tuesday it's rugby, kids have got a heck of a lot on at the moment, and they have had for a number of years but it's trying to make sure that we can be there for them, but again it is a matter of how do we try and cover all the gaps that have grown up over the last ten years with the councils lack of sports engagement all that sort of things. It just chips away and you've got to keep trying to do your little bit and we would love to be able to link with somebody else. We would say bring your kids down and we can do a rugby session down here, but we can't go there and the council haven't got the youth services that they had in the past.

**Baroness Sater:** We haven't got very long, I wish we could go on for another hour, but sadly we've only got a limited time. There's one last question that we'd like to get from all of you, so please keep your answers very brief, and that is what could government do more of or differently that would make it easier to engage or retain your target group in sport and recreation activities? Can I start with Claire?

**Claire Smith:** Blimey, that's a big question. I think for me it's letting the schools focus more on a student's health and wellbeing and it not all being about academic achievement. And I think schools should maybe have some sort of measurement on how physically and mentally healthy the children are.

**Jenni Jemmott-Brown:** It's support and also not make the grants so hard to apply for because by the time you've done the grants, they ask for so much more details that it might only have been an hour project. So definitely support.

**Skye Stewart:** Consistency, in terms of the government have given us extra time to finish our season in football, but the local council have interpreted that in their own way, and the FA has interpreted it in their own way so we just need consistency to encourage people into sport.

**Jess Eastoe:** Sort of what Jenni said with the funding applications as I think they're quite tough in the third sector. I think more partnership working and I think there's a lack of investment in young people as a whole and I don't think their lives holistically is valued as much as just of education. So I think looking at a young person as a whole I think would benefit everything that they need, they need sport and physical education to be healthy and I think the value is there. And as a youth worker I would of course say youth voice.

**Lee Dema:** They should put back all the investment that they've cut over the last ten years into local authorities, youth services and the police.

**Stephen Ball:** Provide targeted support for clubs that are doing well and that requires involvement and delegation to NBGs, and as I say a little bit of money goes a long way. Fund local authorities for sport and leisure activation-there are so many jobs that have gone over the past ten years. Clubs themselves to do more engagement in schools, place more attention on the importance on PE in primary and secondary schools with more teachers who are PE specialists, and in primary schools particularly there has to be a more enlightened view of the benefits of activity of movement- teachers are too curriculum focused. Not enough teachers prepared to do exercise and basic agility and balance and coordination. I know that some kids come to me at year 7 and they can't catch a ball. In secondary schools girls are put off a lot about what they wear, and they haven't got the choice to wear the different sizes and their abilities and then we need more varied activities for girls like dance and yoga. And also, we've got to build partnerships with local sports providers to provide the right opportunities for pupils and increasing accessibility of their facilities.

**Lord Knight of Weymouth:** There's one question that I wanted to ask Jess earlier on and I never got a chance to. In your position you're trying to stimulate activity be it sport, be it other types of recreation or activity, and I'm just interested in the balance across that. How much does organised sport play a role and how much do people actually want to engage in activity that is less formalised than organised sport.

**Jess Eastoe:** It definitely depends on the young person. If you've got a young person that enjoys sport and understands the team and the sport, then I think it can work wonders because the assets you get from being in a team will transfer

into different sports and you'll often get young people who will get involved in numerous sports because they enjoy that sportsmanship. But for a lot of young people who have been scared from PE, or who've been excluded, or faced some sort of prejudice within it. I think diversifying the actual sport and movement that you're doing can be a real benefit to those that are inactive, that haven't considered it. So there's a massive push because of coronavirus to do an hour of exercise every day, and everyone is choosing to do a walk because it's the easiest or the safest so why not use this pandemic and turn something positive from that to continue that so fund walking groups and make walking safer. But that being said it's not just about the root it's about the community and if you have got an issue like turf wars, as Lee said, and we've got it as well making that safer and more accessible for people, because not everybody lives in the Peak District. If you've got an unsafe area you've got to make it safer. Like I said earlier, it's about looking at the young persons lives and what we can change through sport and movement.

**Baroness Sater:** Thank you all so much. It's been really enlightening and you've been so frank with us and it's great to hear from you directly rather than from others so thank you so much for giving up your time, you do some great work so thank you so much.

(End)

## **Transcript of group four**

**Attendees:** Emma Colverd, *Safe Haven Basketball*; Josh Denington, *Greenhouse Sports*; Cathy Long, *Women in Sport*; Helen Mason, *Freewheelin Dance*; Samir Sawhney, *Laureus Sport for Good*; Patrick Ward, *Essex Cricket in the Community*

**Members:** Lord Moynihan, Lord Snape

**Lord Moynihan:** First and foremost, a big thank you to you all for joining the call and speaking to us today. This is going to be very informal and we're really keen to hear about your experiences and to have a relaxed discussion. Let's start with a really broad general question, which is why and how you got involved with your organisations and how you help your target audience to engage in sport and recreation. At the same time, if you could tell us a little bit about the organisations that you work with that would be appreciated. It may be helpful to know who you are talking to today; Peter will introduce himself in a moment and has a long history in professional football, and football in particular is his passion, as well as many other sports. I used to be Minister for Sport and in fact during my time as the Minister for Sport we had the first major national inquiry into sport for people with disabilities. Since then I've gone on to be active with London Olympic and Paralympics Game, and sitting on the board of the London organising committee and also chairing the British Olympic Association for London 2012, and in fact Beijing for that. But if you can start off by introducing yourselves and telling us about your organisations and your target audiences. Patrick are you happy to start?

**Patrick Ward:** I work for Essex Cricket in the Community and we're part of Essex County Cricket Club. We're the community arm and we've had many names over the years but we're now Essex Cricket in the Community. I've been there since 2010 when I was appointed as Disability Development Officer. At the time it was a very new thing to have within cricket, someone just looking after the disability side, disability cricket has been going since the mid-90s but we're very new in terms of this sort of role. So I came in in 2010 and I set up a variety of cricket clubs with a disability section, but we've also engaged a variety of clubs to that engage in disability sport and then we've helped introduce cricket into that structure. So it's not necessarily a traditional cricket club and we have looked at multi-sport clubs and sport centres, targeted these and got involved there. We also run county cricket sides, so we're part of the National County Disability Cricket Championship in which there are four divisions going into 2021- fingers crossed everything goes to plan and we can play. We didn't get much play last year, but hopefully this year we will. In terms of my background, I got involved in disability sport mainly at university. I had a lecturer there, a gentleman called Richard Hunt, who was in charge of the EFDS for a while, he used to engage us all in disability sport and I got hooked from there really. So I've been involved with community sport for several years, but the job just happened to come up just at the time I was getting into cricket coaching and it seemed ideal really. It's one of those things where if someone said to you what is your ideal job description that would have been it, and I was lucky enough to get it, and I've been there ever since.

**Lord Moynihan:** What are the big hurdles that you face in doing the job that you're doing at the moment?

**Patrick Ward:** I think a lot of it is around awareness. A lot of people say they just aren't aware that disability cricket is an actual sport, that it's something that people can take part. People within sport aren't aware so people outside of sport must be even less aware. It's very hard to introduce it, there's still a massive stigma and people think it must just be a wheelchair sport. We do have a wheelchair format now, but that's only something that we brought out in the last couple of years, before that it was very much around learning disability cricket, physical disability cricket. It's getting people to understand that it can be played anywhere, clubs don't have to have a sudden training facility, they don't have to be accessible, they don't have to have specialist coaches they just really need to be welcoming. So that's one of the main issues we battle, as well as I said getting people aware that the sport exists. At the top level it's starting to get recognition now, but it's taken 10/11 years in my role for people in Essex to be aware of it so nationally it's going to be an event bigger problem.

**Lord Moynihan:** Thank you so much. Emma, tell us about Safe Haven Basketball and how you got involved and how you're helping your target audience.

**Emma Colverd:** I think I'm a grassroots. I have a daughter with learning disabilities. We lived in New York where she was a part of a really good volunteer run basketball club, that was part of the West Side basketball community. When I got back to London, we wanted her to play basketball, and she wanted to play basketball, but we looked for a club and couldn't find one, so I ended up starting one. I phoned Basketball England to see if I was right not being able to find one, and they said there isn't one, but if you would like some money to start one up we're doing a funding round because we're trying to encourage this sort of thing. So I ended up taking the money and running. We've been going since 2016, we started off with a club in Westminster and we've expanded to a couple of other London boroughs- Hackney and Southwark- because one of the other issues is that kids in London have a limited amount of distance that they are able to travel easily to get to a club. There wasn't a competition framework or network of any sort and we wanted competition to be part of our offer, so we wanted to expand and do that. I very much agree in terms of the difficulties that awareness is one of the real problems, I don't really understand why it is such a problem, but it is, and I think we've certainly struggled with that. I think that by being there for a long time, with not very many members, if you can stick at it for long enough people will become aware and it's a very slow word of mouth spread of information. There is no magic bullet, I haven't found anything that you just press and it works. In terms of other barriers, where do you start? Transport is one. I think engagement by family and carers is another, and I think once you've got family and carers involved it creates a wonderful community, but there is a lot of reluctance to leave the house yet again to help someone get somewhere. Of an evening the last thing you want to be doing is sit in a basketball hall when you've got supper to cook so those are the sort of barriers that a lot of families face when you've

got three other children. So there are a lot of very, quite intractable, problems around getting people into community sport if for example they can't travel under their own steam, things like that.

**Lord Moynihan:** That's a really good introduction. I tell you what would be really interesting, where there any clear differentiations in your experience in New York and here? In other words the approach to the community and the schools there, awareness, access to funding, was it very different in New York?

**Emma Colverd:** No, I don't think so. I think in New York there's less embarrassment about asking people with learning disabilities for money to pay for the sport that they want to do, that's one thing. Here we've taken an approach that is to be as inclusive as possible, whereas in New York if you can't pay you don't play, which is hard nosed but actually seems to work quite well for the club, I don't know how well it works for the individuals. On the other hand there were plenty of people with real financial difficulty who did play but they were supported by charities to do so. In terms of other stuff, no not really. But basketball is a much bigger sport in the States so probably with football you've got a readier audience with disability sport because everybody wants to play football whereas basketball, I think is growing massively and is very well suited to disability sport as well in many ways, but at the same time there aren't as many kids walking around in basketball jerseys in the UK as there are in the States so that's probably another thing.

**Cathy Long:** I joined Women in Sport about 4/5 weeks ago, so I'm very much the newbie at Women in Sport although Women in Sport has been going for some 37 years, which seems incredible really for an organisation in this space. Our vision is that nobody is excluded from the joy, fulfilment and lifelong benefits of sport and exercise. I'm really pleased actually that you're looking at this broader issue of exercise, because exercise and public space is something that we're particularly interested in at the moment. My background is in professional sport, mostly in football. I joined the Football Supporters Association back in 1999, when I was very young, and I was in the unusual position when I think about it now of campaigning on behalf of the white working class lads of Liverpool who I'd grown up with- and probably wasn't a big fan of at the time honestly- but I realised in those days that you were considerably disadvantaged if you were amongst that group and if you were going to football matches and you could be treated very badly. So that was where I got involved. I ended up running the fan embassy project at the Euro 2000, sitting on the Home Office Working Group for Disorder then, and then the Premier League said come and work for us and I kept saying no, because it's much easier to throw the bricks from the outside, but I think then I realised that it was an opportunity to get inside and change things. I was heading up all their policies, supporter relations and accessibility work. I wrote the Accessible Stadia Guide and the original Equality Standard, and I was on the board of Kick it Out for a long time. The Accessible Stadia Guide was interesting because we wrote it initially as a best practice guide, it was very much about let's not make the same mistakes we've made with stadia, because the new stadia that were built in sort of late 90s, were all built in a certain model that basically made it incredibly difficult for

a lot of disabled people and we were determined not to make the same mistakes again. I think what was interesting was that after lengthy debates with campaigners about whether this was best practice or whether it was a minimum standard, we all agreed that it should be a minimum standard and worked to make sure that all of the clubs that signed up to that and that was a really big change. I joined Women in Sport recently, I guess because I realised that I'd been working on behalf of various groups over the years, but actually hadn't done very much for women, and having been a woman working in sport I was really passionate about increasing the opportunities. If you ask about the barriers, it's a big question. I think what I've learnt is that it's a big piece of work to be done because of the history and actually how much women and girls have been excluded from sport for so long, and what an impact that has had both in terms of facilities, opportunities and cultural attitudes. It starts very young with toddlers when we're telling boys to jump up and down and be strong, and yes you can jump off that wall, and we tell our girls be careful, don't hurt yourself. So I think there is a lot of cultural attitudes and with a lot of it we think 'we wouldn't start from here.' At the moment we're working on a very utopian vision because we think we have to say let's pretend we're not starting from here, let's imagine if we were setting up this sport ourselves. We've been asking ourselves a lot of questions, for instance one of the oft quoted arguments in professional sport is about equity in terms of pay and the symbolism of that, whereas actually maybe if we set up a sport from here we might conclude- as a lot of people have done about professional football- that the model isn't right anyway. So should we replicating those models in women's sport; maybe we have an opportunity to do things differently, maybe we have an opportunity for the money to be divided more equitably across the sport. So we're urging caution on a lot of issues at the moment with a lot of the NGBs and the partners we're working with about where we want to get to. The barriers for girls are nothing new, but it starts young, it grows into all sorts of difficulties around body confidence, about what is expected of them, about clothing. It's really interesting because we think that some of the barriers could very easily be removed. There was a study in Australia recently which was all about saying girls don't like the clothes that they're made to wear for sports. Every single one of us women in sport said this was like us many years ago saying don't make me run around in navy knickers outdoor to play netball, I remember campaigning to be able to wear joggers to play hockey when I was 14. Some of these things really shouldn't be an issue, there are some things that we can change in our attitude to sports, and how girls do sport, that aren't all about expensive facilities. And I think, as I said, this piece about public spaces is quite interesting for us, it's also of course very timely because sadly women and girls are even more concerned about being out in public spaces, but it's similar to what Emma was saying about even often getting to a facility. Girls have told us that if they manage to book a 5 a side pitch to play football, they're often the last ones to be able to book which leaves them with a 10pm slot, and they don't feel safe going there at 10pm. There's been some really interesting research we've looked at from Vienna, and they've replicated it in Malmo, where they simply looked at playgrounds and the fact that teenage girls don't often use playgrounds. When they looked at it they realised it's simply because there is one entrance into a lot

of these play areas and it's crowded by teenage boys, and many women will say "I'm not going through this entrance as my best case scenario is I get a bit of abuse and I get out unscathed", whereas actually when they opened out the spaces and created extra entrances, and widened the entrances, suddenly the girls were feeling more able to take part. So we think there is a lot that can be designed into spaces that can simply make it easier for women and girls to take exercise.

**Lord Moynihan:** That's really interesting. Before I move on to Josh can I just ask you, if you've got access to it, if you could send us a copy of the research that was done on the Vienna model because I think we should look at that. Josh welcome, you know the question, it's an introductory question and it is very constructive, because we already have some of the barriers coming through. Tell us about Greenhouse Sports and your own experience and if you can touch on the same issue of barriers, to add to the ones that we've already heard, and where there is exclusion, accessibility, barriers for girls. These are all important issues and if you could add to those in your answer that would be much appreciated.

**Josh Denington:** Thank you very much for having me. I work for Greenhouse Sports, so we are a sport for development charity based in London currently with potential plans to look at other cities. We work in 50 schools in London, 45 mainstream and 5 of them are SEN schools, all secondary. We reach 75,000 young people each year, and our model is that we put a full time sports coach into these schools, who is very often highly qualified, coming from a professional background in either basketball, table-tennis, tennis or volleyball- they're sort of our four main sports- and they're a role model, a mentor, a counsellor as well as being a sports coach to these young people. We make sure that they don't get sucked in too much to being a PE teacher, because schools have PE teachers that are there to do that, but they're someone who bridges the gap between not quite a teacher, not quite a parent, and someone that these young people can come to and rely on. We focus on what we call STEP, which stands for Social, Thinking, Emotional and Physical and they're the four main capabilities we measure and feel that by playing sport with our coaches at Greenhouse we're going to have a positive impact on. That's my area. My background is in impact measurement, I'm responsible for measuring the impact we have as a charity on these young people. A bit of background; I've originally worked on how sport can be used as an integration tool for refugees living in the UK and really measuring the impact of that. Where I'm sat now is the Greenhouse Centre, so we were lucky enough about three years ago to open up our own community sport centre in Marylebone, in the Church Street Ward, which is one of the most deprived wards in London for child deprivation, so a really great location as we can tap into the corporate funding side of Westminster and Marylebone but also service the local community. So that's changed our remit a little bit in the last few years, in that instead of just going into schools and doing this outreach work actually we can invite people to come and work with us, working with adults and primary schools children and expanding our remit in quite an exciting way. Challenges for us; I guess the obvious one at the moment is COVID. We're very much a delivery, face to face organisation being in schools with young people

playing sport and that was pretty much stopped overnight. Some of our coaches have remained in schools working with the children of key workers, of vulnerable children, but for the other young people they've been at home with little access to our delivery. Since March 8<sup>th</sup> we've seen schools return back to full capacity, and we're seeing quite a difference in the young people that our coaches were working with for the last 8 months and those kids that have fallen behind whether it's academically or physically. So that's really a big one for us at the moment. I know someone mentioned transport, and that's a massive one for us. We see really big benefits when we have young people from our 50 schools playing sport with each other, against each other, meeting new people who don't just go to their school or aren't just their age. We also hear a lot about crimes, postcode wars, parents not wanting their children to go and travel to a different school because it's not safe for them, so as much as we want to create this hub competitive sport environment, it's not always that simple if a parent doesn't want their child getting on a tube or a bus and travelling to a different postcode. Cultural barriers, gender-based barriers is a big one for us, parents not wanting their young people involved in extra-curricular sports after school and in the evenings as they have to get home to look after siblings, or parents if they're carers. And lastly, from my impact perspective, it's less relevant to the delivery but an issue for me is always getting buy-in for something like measuring impact. Our coaches just want to coach and that's what they're there for, they love being face to face and being with the young people and I'm like a little devil on their shoulder asking for all of their data and making sure we can measure the impact. I'm constantly having to relay the benefits of why we are doing this, it's for funding, it's to prove out impact and some of them take to that and love it and others I get a bit more push back from.

**Lord Moynihan:** In a perfect world, how would you address the understandable parental concerns that exist. Would you like a Sport England initiative where they're communicating directly with parents over opportunities for an active lifestyle? You mentioned that the cohort of young people coming back to school at the moment are probably the least fit and the least active in generations and would you, in an ideal world, be calling for more resources, for clearer guidance and campaigns at the top government level in order to really focus, not so much on sport and recreation, but on active lifestyle sport and recreation.

**Josh Denington:** Without getting too political....

**Lord Moynihan:** Oh you can be as political as you want.

**Josh Denington:** It's a bit of a niche example but it's personal to me. I live opposite a set of tennis courts and a football pitch and the football pitch, whilst it's open space public access, there is now a padlocked fence around the goal and the entrance to the tennis courts has a padlock. I understand that there are health risks, and benefits of making these places non-accessible at the time, but I think that sends quite a difficult message for young people who are stuck in their homes. We're working with families of 5 in a one bed flat, and the public space that they would have previously accessed- even if it was in family members staying within their network- is now a real no go area. So for me I don't think it sends the right message, around this. We see the benefits of public

space, I see it's a little bit conflicting, but actually at the peak of lockdown the one thing you were able to do was go out for some exercise, we really wanted to tap into that at Greenhouse because we saw that physical activity was put on a pedestal and that's why we're here and do what we do. But I think that in terms of facilities for young people it's not as simple as it could be, for girls especially with everything that is going on at the moment which is magnifying the situation, going down to the towpaths, rivers and parks when it is dark is just not feasible for everyone. For me, facilities, whilst young people have been off school, to see them locked up padlocked up for me personally has been quite a sad one.

**Lord Moynihan:** Thanks very much indeed Josh. Samir, could you answer the same question and give us your experience?

**Samir Sawhney:** Thank you. I work for Laureus Sport for Good, who work in Sport for Development, and in terms of my role, I work on a really exciting programme which is in three parts of London called Model City London which is a place based approach in partnership with the Mayor of London and Nike. The focus there is, rather than do top-down approaches where funding is given to sports programmes and you kind of leave them to get on with their own devices, we give money to the whole community and get them involved with the decision making processes. We know about Essex Cricket in the Community because they work with me in Barking, and I know some of the team members there and they're doing great work. I know about Cathy's work with Women in Sport because we've engaged with them with some of the stuff around diversity and inclusion, with ethnic diversity for women, as well giving them bespoke offers like women's only sessions and venues that are actually bespoke such as allowing for women only hours rather than men walking around on the outside. And I'm aware of Greenhouse's work as well and the work that they're doing in schools is amazing. So our role really, in the three areas that I support the East London Coalition, a fancy group name for people who care about their community, is to work on ways that sport and physical activity- as we're discussing now- can make long term change, but in ways that suit the community. It isn't formulaic and it isn't assumptive. The biggest point I'd make from that side of my work is a lot of sport at the moment, when it's spoken at maybe geo-political or NGB level, is still extremely assumptive, so I'm going into the diversity and inclusion comments around the "letters" that make up the word BAME. I'm British Asian, not BAME and I think that's the biggest thing, that narrative needs to change. If I move over to the second aspect of the work that I do, which is I'm a sports coach, I've been a sports coach for the last 18 years, I come from an elite football playing background, dropped out at a young age and then went into coaching. I'm from Ealing originally, a leafy suburb in West London, but there were clear challenges in my career which I still don't see to have been changed: which is where is the mentoring and actual appetite and education investment for young coaches to actually be supported in a pathway that suits them. So I've become a coach mentor, but I've walked away from the Football Association because, being honest, I don't believe that what they're doing is fit for purpose. And at County Football Association level we've now seen, because of austerity, the change whereby the local football community mentors

programme is finished, and the FA has now taken that all in-house, and I can give you all these examples of diverse men and women who have no routes to get educated. The final kind of flip on that would be what Josh said about facilities. As someone who has worked in schools for a lot of my career as a PE practitioner, but also as a sports coach with my own organisation, the biggest annoyance that I have is that schools are forced to take on business managers who don't clearly see that they actually have the potential to be a hub for their community. So the Greenhouses in this world are actually far more important than just delivering an aspect of their work, they're actually supporting young people to make positive lifestyle decisions which then feed into a happier, healthier society, which then leads to better NHS waiting lists. From my perspective the challenge we have right now is why are the NGBs not being held more accountable- I'm not talking about money here- to actually develop the next generation of young people to become leaders? We have leadership programmes, we have all of this volunteers, we have NCS and other programmes, but actually how are those successes being communicated? As an individual my challenge, I would say, we don't have an appropriate pathway to showcase grassroots at the top. And from my work in the Middle East- I spent a bit of time out there- the one thing they've got right is they changed the school day and sport plays a major focus. Because of the weather and climate within it, so for example from 12-1 onwards it sports, and you have to take part in sport at least 2-3 times a week. They can afford it, and they do it.

**Lord Moynihan:** So if you could you'd change the whole structure of the funding and the objectives and priorities that are given to NGBs by, for example Sport England principally less so UK Sport because UK Sport funding is principally for elite performance athletes. But you would have a comprehensive reform of Sport England, and possibly would you even go further and consider the restructuring of the support to organisations, such as yourself and schools and governing bodies from the government?

**Samir Sawhney:** I think the reality is that it's a simple yes, it's obviously a lot of work. I think the biggest focus need to be, there needs to be some tangible change along with that sea-change which will take time. The biggest thing I find, so I'll give you an example of the work I've done in Southall as a private individual in my organisation- which has had major demographic changes over the last 30-40 years from a predominately white British population to a South Asian population to an Eastern European population- they don't feel part of the decision making processes so when top-down approaches with funding and opportunities come they don't clearly understand at what point they can develop alongside that opportunity. So it's a quick yes, but definitely one major thing school sport needs to be seen in a completely different way, because it's not elitist anymore. And I'm saying that as somebody who went to private school, and I used to play sport with community schools, there needs to be a sea-change in that.

**Lord Moynihan:** Samir, we'll come back to you on school sport and you can define what sea-change you would like to see, but first can we move to Helen. Please tell us about yourself, about the organisation and also if you can pick up

on some of hurdles that your colleagues have been talking about that would be really good too.

**Helen Mason:** Hello, thank you for inviting me. I'm based in Birmingham and I actually come from a slightly different point of view in that I'm a dance teacher. I'm self-employed, I don't work for another organisation. I run my own group called Freewheelin Dance, and we originally were for wheelchair users that would like to get involved in para-dance sport, so wheelchair dancing itself is a sport but not a lot of people have heard of it because it's very niche. We actually have a Team GB as well; we go internationally and all that kind of stuff. So as a dance teacher in Birmingham I teach a lot of different community groups and realised there is not a lot here for people with disabilities, just in the community to go along and join in a dance club. So there's lots of sessions for people that might access day centres, or if people are in care homes or residential homes, but nothing for your person who has got a job, or has their own life and is living independently but they can't just go to their local gym or spin class or aerobics class. So that's why I set up the group. We were originally just for wheelchair users, but we've expanded out now so anyone can come, so people with learning disabilities or different medical conditions and we teach from a standing or a seated point of view. You can join in whichever way you prefer. The barriers that we've faced are very similar to what lots of others have said. So obviously the awareness, trying to advertise something that no-one has heard of is really difficult, when you're saying, 'would you like to join a wheelchair dance they're like 'what is that?' so that in itself is quite tricky. Also, I find with a lot of people I've worked with in the past it's that thing that "society has told me no, so don't tell me I can." There's that kind of thing where people are getting very cross with me for suggesting that they could dance. So talking to wheelchair users and being like 'please come and join our dance group, you'd be brilliant' and they're like 'no I'm not so don't ask me to do that'. Just trying to change that perception because if society says you can't, you can't, you can't and then someone tells you, you can are you going to believe them? Are you going to go and give it a try and you're putting yourself in that vulnerable situation of exposing yourself and trying something new and that can be quite difficult? So, that's been a big thing. The other barrier is that our success has become a problem. When we started off in a little church hall and there were only five of us, not a problem, but now we have 30 people mainly wheelchair users, do you think we can find a centre that can fit 30 wheelchair users? No we can't. So that's a problem- finding an accessible space that's affordable as well. There are loads of massive, beautiful sports halls, but we can't use them because we can't afford them, so we're looking at just bigger church halls and hoping they've got a good enough ramp for us to get into. It's things like ramps, toilets, disabled toilets are so different depending on where you go, the Changing Places toilets that are coming up now are brilliant, they're exactly what we need, but trying to find somewhere that's got one of those is like gold dust. Just things like drop kerbs, a dropped kerb so that we can get from car to doors. Car parking spaces at centres, where you could fit a car that is specifically for people with mobility issues, and you need to open the back door and the ramp needs to come out, those kind of spaces. And I think a big thing is in advertising. Seeing yourself on

a poster makes you want to go, not seeing people like you in a poster doesn't make you want to go. So obviously for us we need to show different bodies, different disabled and abled bodies in the poster. It's the same as when you're going to a fitness class you don't want to see that super-fit model because it will put you off. You don't want to go to a class and feel completely intimidated, you want to feel like the everyday person is going so that you can fit in and feel comfortable. So those are the main things that we've come up against.

**Lord Moynihan:** I'm conscious that there's so much constructive dialogue going on that we could go on for at least three hours, and not cover all the subjects. One takeaway is that if you've got any- and I don't want you to do lots of work on this- but if you've got papers or research for example on impact measurements then please send them to us. To me, this is most important session that we've had because we're engaging with people at the grassroots. Issues such as dual use, in the 80s dual use was a big issue, and the idea that we haven't got to a world where we recognise that getting people active needs community use of facilities and engagement between schools and the community, and making sure we find answers and funding to get those facilities used safely by all members of the community. To me that is an issue that we're going to really look at in great detail. Before I call Emma, I'm conscious that we're running low on time, and I'm conscious also that we've actually covered most of the questions in your initial answers that we were going to ask. As we go round again, following Emma, could you pick up on any points that anybody else has made, could you also put any major concerns you have about implementing the current safeguarding and duty of care obligations? That's one that Tanni (Grey-Thompson) would be focusing on if she was with us. And could you tell us more about what we should be doing, what the Government should be doing with schools. For example, you have to be radical; is sport and recreation in the right department, should it be out there in the DCMS or should it be in the heart of education, should it be in the heart of community or the heart of health? Any issues that you want to raise then please do, but if you can focus on those, or at least respond to those, that would be great. I'm conscious that Lord Snape hasn't come in yet, and I know he'll have a lot of questions so he will just intervene on any of your answers.

**Emma Colver:** My experience regarding schools, the point I wanted to make was that as far as schools are concerned they do at least offer sport in some way, shape or form, but what they don't do is encourage engagement in sport outside of school. So it all tends to be slightly siloed. There is a sort of approach whereby 'it's not my job to encourage little Johnny to go to a sports club on Fridays, my job stops at 3' and I've certainly found that as an obstacle to getting young people to me. I've gone into schools and said can you maybe arrange a school bus; we'd be happy to combine with you, but that's not something that's considered to be within the remit of schools. And I found that sort of silo approach very frustrating. Not just young people, but when adults or older young people, those who go to college or those going into work try to get access to sport they need to be able to penetrate that themselves, they need to be getting to the community themselves, they are no longer supported to do so and I also think that's a great oversight, particularly in terms of people with learning

disabilities or those with less confidence, like girls for example. There isn't any great expectation that anybody is going to encourage them to do this. There is a 'we will educate you and then you go and do sport in your own free time approach' which I don't think meets the needs necessarily of those who need a little bit more support to get engaged and to want to do it. It's sort of seen as oh you're good at sport, go and do it, but you're not much good or you never won a race in your life, speaking from personal experience I never got into sport because I was useless, as it, which I think is a real shame. You need somebody to work with the people who are never going to be on anybody's team, to say to them that doesn't mean you're a write off. And that needs to happen through the whole way in which schools, and colleges and tertiary education encourage participation in sport. On the duty of care it's quite a terrifying thing to take on as an amateur, which is what I am, and there's a lot of safeguarding that you have to take on board and then you just have to be prepared, I think, to understand that you can't eliminate all risk as well. It takes an element of bravery, I think, there's some courage involved and that doesn't always get recognised. It's very easy to say I won't do that because it's not going to be safe, and that narrows peoples life down. My daughter has epilepsy, do we let her climb an apple tree if she wants to climb an apple tree, she may have a seizure at the top and fall out, or do we never let he climb an apple tree because she may fall out if it. How do you balance that? I think it's a very difficult thing to do and I think you have to try and leave some room in there for people to take sensible decisions on the ground.

**Patrick Ward:** In terms of schools I think just to clarify what Emma said really in terms of the teacher side of it, it's very much that one will specialise in the sport that they're very good at and want to just go through that sport as much as possible. One sport may not be suitable for everyone in the school, or even 80-90%, so a wider range of sport offers in schools I think is crucial. And in terms of the linking in with the club, it is very much that they give you half an hour of PE and that'll be it. One of Cricket Schools programmes Chance to Shine was actually set up just to produce that link, to send coaches in from the club so that they can say 'oh you like cricket, come along and see me at the club house every Thursday night and we'll take it from there.' But that's taken a lot of money to do that, whereas teachers should really be looking out at those resources themselves, someone in the PE department, even if it's just putting a list up on the notice board that says these are your local clubs, this is where you can go. We're not asking them to do masses of work. One of the things that I did want to touch on, I know Helen mentioned it, and I think Cathy did as well, in terms of facilities. Sometimes you can't find the facility, but sometimes when you do, they just want to give you the Friday night ten o'clock slot, or the Sunday morning slot, or it's still a case of during the day. So if I'm looking to do a sport, or engage a new group, and they say come down at 1pm in the afternoon, but most of the people that I want to engage are actually working, how are they meant to get down at 1pm in the afternoon? And then when you do speak to the site, they say you can't have Monday-Thursdays between 5 and 9 because that's badminton's time. I've worked in a sport centre and I know what badminton clubs are like, and it is very much yeah that's fine we've got to

stay there, that's got to be badminton. As someone who is happy to play badminton, if all I could get was 8pm slot on a Friday that wouldn't stop me from playing badminton, but if I'm new to a sport, and want to get involved in a sport, then maybe going down at 8 on a Friday would stop me. So could there be some positive discrimination about new activities or starting up new sports, even for minority sports, to get these slots. I'm sure badminton wouldn't suffer too much of a hit if they couldn't have 6-7 on a Tuesday night, those that are very keen, because they're already in the sport, would find a way and move on. If you're trying to get into a sport you really need some encouragement, some positive push to get you in through the door, until you get that love and then you'll maybe be happy to move on to that Sunday morning slot. But getting you through the door, I think, is key.

**Cathy Long:** Two key points from me very quickly. Facilities and activities for girls and boys in school sport is really uneven. We think that any government funding should be linked to it being split evenly between the two. Title IX in the States works very effectively, we don't think it's the sole answer, there's a lot that's different in the states, and there is a lot that's culturally different, but actually if you insist that the money that is spent is spent evenly on boys and girls sport I'd think you'd find a considerable difference. And linked to that as well is R&D funding for sports tech and sport science. If anybody like me is an avid fan of reading Caroline Criado Pérezes' work, you'll know that so often things have been simply tested on men and boys. It took me a long time to realise why my Fitbit doesn't sit properly on my wrist; it's because it's designed for a man. It's supposed to sit further down my wrist, and my wrist is not straight like a man's wrist and it took me about three years to realise that was the case. So there is a lot of very strange stuff going on and we think that if government funding at least is put into sport tech and sport science then there should be an insistence that girls and women are involved, and perhaps then we'll actually find there's clothing and sports tech to suit them and encourage them.

**Lord Snape:** I drive my colleagues on the Committee crazy by asking this question to virtually every witness Cathy, but as a father of four daughters, none of whom played any sort of sport once they'd left school. All of them were interested in sport when they were at Primary School, around puberty they decided that queuing up for showers, nowhere to dry their hair- I'm not mocking them this is how the girls were- how do we get more women, particularly in secondary schools or those going into the world of work, how do we get them interested, back interested if you like, in playing sport.

**Cathy Long:** I think there are a lot of answers, and one thing I will do is share with you the work that we've done on teenagers, because we do a lot of research on the life stages. I think one of the key things for me though, is that sport at school tends to have been organised sport like hockey or netball which is actually quite difficult to pick up once you leave school, or once you're a teenager. I was quite jealous of boys who would literally need a ball and a yard of grass to have an activity. So I think we really need to do a lot of rethinking about sport but also a lot of rethinking about what's played, how it's played, the

clothing and all of those issues around body confidence that actually completely stop girls, once they're going through puberty, from wanting to be engaged in it. There is a lot of embarrassment that's associated with it and as I say this is the sort of thing we really should be able to remove. It's not necessarily expensive.

**Lord Snape:** You'll come back to us on it then. Will you? (*Cathy Nods*)

**Josh Denington:** Just on that last point as well, a fascinating one, I think some really interesting stuff has come out from Sport England's most recent Active Lives survey, around the difference between how boys and girls have been impacted by the lack of sport during lockdown. It seems that boys are really missing the organised, competitive teams sport, and actually activity levels have dropped, whereas for a lot of females activity levels has potentially gone up and seen an increase in things like walking and cycling. So more creative and less team sport focuses have come about and I think that is something that we at Greenhouse need to tap into. We're not yet sure how, because we're very much a team sport organisation, but I found that fascinating and something I'm aware of. We have an interesting relationship with schools because we're an in-school intervention, but we're not at all linked to schools, we just put a coach in a school to work there. And we see a lot of issues around facilities, whether that's the facilities of the sport hall or the facilities that our coach has been allocated. Some of them have a desk with a laptop they're given and space for them to work, others are put on a stool in a corner with a door knocking into it. Some of our schools have recently just got funding, others the ceiling is falling in and so the sport hall is out of action for a month. All of our schools are hitting a criteria of 70% of the young people living in areas of high deprivation and then meeting parameters for free schools and pupil premium, so we're working in schools that need us. But actually the facilities within those schools are so varied and wildly different that we can't possibly have this one size fits all approach as an organisation. Each coach needs to adapt quite a lot to the facilities in the school, particularly with COVID and testing. We've seen about 50% of our school halls in the last two weeks be taken over for testing. And obviously it's something that needs to happen, it's naturally important if it gets kids back into the classroom, but what then happens to PE? What then happens to after school schools clubs or lunch clubs when there are not quite the outdoor facilities maybe because of the weather, or because the outdoor facilities don't even exist because we're working in inner-city London. Historically, the issue was exams taking over sports halls and now it's COVID testing and I don't really see a solution or end in sight for it, and our coaches are rearing to go, want to be delivering sport in schools but the facilities have been taken away. We've put pressure on schools but obviously they're having to meet all these other requirements at the moment, so sport gets knocked down the pecking order, because that hall is such a great space for everything else they need to do.

**Samir Sawhney:** I think everyone has pretty much raised what I was going to say. I think the main thing here is, something that I've definitely focused on, is the tangibles that I briefly alluded to earlier. So the role of the schools, the role of the grass roots organisation, the role of the volunteer, the role of the coach all of those individuals and stakeholders feel disconnected and the pandemic has

obviously made that a lot worse. The main point I would make is that with austerity for example, with the changes to say park play, parks are now seen as green spaces but for a generation plus in the summer the goals disappear and that's a really simple concept, which is why do they keep disappearing when it's clearly obvious that children want to play sport in the summer? Why are we taking that away from them and using the example of 'well we need to maintain the grass' or 'it's for cricket' and that's nothing against Patrick, Patrick will clearly know cricket has a place to play year round now, it's not a summer sport anymore. Colin, when you were saying about who should hold sport, I think the biggest problem that we're having is that we're constantly looking for elite sports people to be the voice of sport at the geo-political level, but where are the Patricks, or Cathys or Helens? Why are they not sitting on these boards? I look at football for example- which keeps making this mistake time and time again- it keeps looking for, if we look at diversity and inclusion, ex-pros. What about the grassroots coaches or volunteers or 16 year olds who are truly going to be impacted? So, I think if you're talking about sea-changes, why are those people not being brought into the boards to just share every so often their views to really get an overview, because an adult- I'm 40 now- I can't represent those young people.

**Lord Moynihan:** But Samir, isn't there a further step to take. The structure that we've been talking about, the governing bodies, they've been around for 50-100 years, and the government structure has been around for the best part of 20-25 years now, and it's all been on sport. Elite sport has been at the heart of that and then you've got recreation, and if you turn that round and you put active lifestyle at the top of that and getting the population, allowing the population to access an active lifestyle, thinking about transport, thinking about all the hurdles that stops somebody going out and being active, it's a complete sea-change isn't it in terms of thinking. Shouldn't it be driven by the question; I'm sitting at home and I decide to be active, how can I be safe when I'm active, how can I overcome many of the hurdles and to do that you've got to basically rebuild the structure otherwise we will have less and less people physically active in the country and less and less people involved in sport. Do you agree with that?

**Samir Sawhney:** I agree and I think the key thing, and I am banging my own drum, but it is becoming more global is that place based approach where the community are involved in the shaping and designing of the programme, and where sporting provision is actually built into town planning. So it plays a major part with the structure. Barking and Dagenham are a great example, it has the largest urban regeneration going on in the whole of Western Europe with 10,000 homes, and part of their remit was you have to also ensure that sporting provision doesn't just play a part, it has resident led discussions. It's that simple.

**Lord Moynihan:** Thank you, because we've had some evidence on that and I think that's going to be a very important takeaway; the importance of engaging with you all, engaging with the communities and building up from that rather than it being top down.

**Helen Mason:** Everyone has kind of mentioned what I was thinking too, but the one thing that I did want to just say is that through COVID, although with my

particular group we've not met for a year physically because so many have been in the highly vulnerable or shielding categories, one thing that we did do is go online. So for a year now I've been teaching online, like this kind of thing (*using Microsoft Teams*), from my home, and they've been in their homes, but we've seen an increase in participants. We've taken away the barrier of 'you've got to get a taxi to take you there, or a bus to take you there, or you have fatigue issues and actually the energy it takes to travel to the hall is all you've got left and you've got no energy left for the actual dance class. It's taken away the geographical barrier of we're in Birmingham and now we've got people in Edinburgh and Devon dancing with us, because as long as they're free at that time, and they've got the internet they're up and running with us. So I think that's one kind of positive that we've taken from this year, and we're going to continue that, so even when we are allowed back together, we're still going to have some form of online because it's just taken away so many barriers that we're there. We were trying our best to battle with those barriers, but actually that just lifted the whole lid off and just showed a real big improvement of how many people could actually engage and actually participate. It's not the ideal situation, you know we'd much rather be together, but that's something to take from it.

**Lord Moynihan:** It's very useful. It is interesting, I think a lot of people are now beginning to think that 2020 is going to be a year in which one reflects on the importance of e-gaming, and active e-sports that are increasing communities through online activity. Even the International Olympic Committee announced recently that they were focusing on that more in terms of competitive sports but the possibility of engagement and continuous engagement online is important.

**Cathy Long:** I just wanted to echo Samir's points on the place-based approach and the importance of those public spaces. I live near a towpath near Wormwood Scrubs, and I'm just about the only person I know that walks from my house under the Westway to the tube station, because it's dark and the only other people that use it are teenagers with spray cans and I resolutely refuse to be afraid of teenagers with spray cans, but a lot of people are. So very simple things like better lighting and directional signage. And my other points was what we saw in the summer last year; how kids took over parks themselves, and made chalk markings on paths, and they showed us what they want and we don't necessarily have to have new facilities, if we can just make our towpaths more easy to use, if we just have sprint markings, or jump markings. Just encourage people to think differently about their route to work so that they've exercised by the time they get there.

**Lord Moynihan:** Can I just pick up on that because a number of people have talked about community issues along those lines. Should the funding mechanism be more directed through local authorities to local community clubs, rather than the current structure that we've got which effectively is Sport England working through a whole range of organisations. It seems to me that some who get the most money are those who have the best contacts and the sources within Sport England. It's very defused, it's very patchwork quilt in terms of funding. Should local authorities be playing a greater role in that?

**Cathy Long:** I'm probably not best placed to answer on the funding, but living in a rich borough of Kensington and Chelsea what I wouldn't want to see is the rich boroughs just being more able to do this because there may be more funding available and more ability in their structures. I live in an odd area of North Kensington where our part of the borough is very different from the rest of the borough. Maybe other people are better placed to comment, I think.

**Samir Sawhney:** I was just mentioning, because participatory grant management is something that's been used a lot where again it involves stakeholder development of funding bids. Local authorities you have to be a little bit careful of because they don't necessarily understand where those hidden organisations are, or how to contact them. And it can be seen that they have to deal with allegations of favouritism. I think there needs to be more of a focus on the community again being involved in creation and dissimulation of funds, via boosting and supporting the local voluntary sector in general, where there are other organisations who might be better placed and engaged with those groups.

**Lord Snape:** Just a general one Colin. We're based in London and lots of people who've given evidence to the Committee are based in London. This is a very big country and how do we get the views and ideas the problems that we face country wide, discussed on a country wide basis rather than, and I'm not being rude when I say this, rather than apparently concentrating on London and London based organisations.

**Cathy Long:** I think you'd probably need to have a real focus on getting some local organisations involved in certain areas and saying we're going to have a focus and we want to talk to people in say Liverpool or Nottingham.

**Emma Colverd:** I was just going to say that there are sport-based networks, for example, I've got a network throughout the country with other clubs doing what I'm doing. If you want to get them on board, I could get a string of people together fairly straightforwardly. It's just asking the right people, I think.

**Lord Moynihan:** Can I just thank you all very much indeed for joining us this afternoon and emphasise that please follow up with any written material that you've got that you think would be helpful to us. We're being very open-minded about this. This is the first time that the House of Lords have ever looked at this at select committee level so it just shows you that it's both timely and important, that hopefully we can have a significant influence from our recommendations. And if you think there are any specific recommendations that we should be focusing on, write to us, just drop us an email. Thank you all very much for giving up your time and a superb session. I really appreciate it.

**Lord Snape:** Thank you very much. It's been very useful.

(End)

*12 May 2021*