

# **Sport England – Supplementary written evidence (NPS0172)**

## **Introduction**

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

## **Executive Summary**

1. We have sought to address the specific questions posed by the Committee, following Sport England's oral evidence on 30 June below. Our commitment to ensuring high safeguarding and duty of care standards for children, young people and adults is absolute. Our *Uniting the Movement* strategy sets out our determination to ensure safe environments for sport and physical activity for all, and we welcome any opportunity to discuss our 10-year vision to transform lives and communities through sport and physical activity with the Committee.
2. The ambitions at the heart of *Uniting the Movement* are the result of a consultation process that involved thousands of people and hundreds of organisations over an 18-month period. The strategy was fundamentally co-created with partners from both across and beyond the sport and physical activity sector, and throughout this process, the same issues, opportunities and areas for action emerged.
3. We are therefore very confident in its ambition. There is widespread support from the sector for each individual priority area within the strategy, and as we have sought to transform the way we work into one of deep collaboration and partnership, this too has been well received. Our swift, agile and flexible approach over the course of the pandemic has been widely welcomed, both in evidence to this Committee and others, and we have been clear that we will seek to maintain this approach moving forwards.

## **Safeguarding and Duty of Care**

### **National coaching register and accreditations**

4. As mentioned in Sport England's oral evidence to the Committee, the possible establishment of a common framework for accreditation of coaches is part of an ongoing area of work between Sport England, UK Sport and the Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA).
5. A project has been underway for three years, following Baroness Grey-Thompson's 2017 Duty of Care in Sport Review, that has been considering

the breadth of workforce governance within the sport and physical activity sector – the structures, systems and processes that shape the accountability and efficacy of the sector’s workforce, their norms and actions.

6. There are a number of phases to the project. The first phases sought to investigate the appetite for, amongst other initiatives, a single registration process for coaches and other frontline workforce as we seek to improve the regulation of those working in sport and physical activity. We found that there is a broad appetite for improvements here across the sector, but some concerns around how these might be implemented. We are now in the final stages of a research phase to assess the measures already in place across the sport and physical activity sector, other comparable sectors, and how successful each of these are. This research will help to inform and identify the approaches that should be considered by the sector to improve participant safety and wellbeing.
7. The next phases – to be delivered into 2022 – will be a co-design and consultation process with the sector to identify specific interventions or improvements. Following this we will carry out a development phase to test and pilot each individual measure to assess which work most effectively, before refining and iterating each as required.
8. We recognise the need to act at pace here. However, we must be confident that any interventions will drive the cultural and behavioural change that the sector requires. We intend to publish a clear action plan and roadmap for this work – a central pillar of our strategic implementation plan for workforce and coaching transformation – in 2022.

### **Adult duty of care requirements**

9. In our oral evidence to the Committee, our Chief Executive Tim Hollingsworth committed the organisation further to reflect on the question as to whether adult duty of care requirements should be mandatory to receive public funding.
10. Ahead of this, our commitment to ensuring safeguarding standards – for children, young people and adults alike – remains absolute. As we set out in our initial written evidence to the inquiry, we work closely with DCMS and a range of partners across and beyond the sport and physical activity sector to ensure that robust safeguarding standards are implemented. All organisations in receipt of grant funding from Sport England are required to demonstrate that they have appropriate policies and procedures in place to safeguard children and adults at risk.
11. Our new *Uniting the Movement* strategy set out our determination to ensure safe environments for sport and physical activity for all. We committed ourselves to advocating for and supporting the professional regulation of the sport and physical activity sector to ensure it is respected domestically and internationally as a safe, credible and well-governed industry. It will be essential to ensure that organisations we partner with and invest in demonstrate a duty of care towards everyone involved in their sport or activity.

### **Case management support**

12. Again, as mentioned in our oral evidence to the Committee, we are supporting a project exploring how outsourcing specific safeguarding expertise can help to ensure a fair and robust process where NGBs' capacity constraints make cases more difficult to manage.
13. The project is not exploring the outsourcing of safeguarding processes en masse, but specifically how NGBs' safeguarding processes can be supplemented and supported by the provision of outsourced case management expertise. This project has followed an initial safeguarding case management pilot which took place across 2019 and 2020.
14. Working with nine NGBs, this initial pilot tested and developed four support services:
- Initial case advice;
  - Investigation services and access to the National Safeguarding Panel for investigations, hearings and appeals;
  - An online case management system for children and young people, and;
  - Accredited training for NGBs' Lead Safeguarding Officers.
15. The evaluation of this initial case management pilot in autumn 2020 concluded that the programme successfully improved the effectiveness and ability of NGBs to handle safeguarding cases, and made a number of recommendations that are now being implemented by Sport England. This includes the phased roll-out of support services to NGBs to help them manage safeguarding cases in their sports effectively, helping to share expertise, ensure consistency and embed safeguarding best practice and oversight.
16. The nine NGBs from the initial pilot continue to receive the support services, with up to 12 more NGBs to be invited to join the project this autumn and further NGBs to be invited to join the project in Spring 2022.
17. Following their evaluation of the initial case management pilot, Sport England has funded LimeCulture CIC to oversee the delivery of the project and deliver a Development Programme to all Lead Safeguarding Officers in Sport England-funded NGBs. They will also lead the continued development of the online case management system and supporting documentation – including the integration of adults at risk in collaboration with the Ann Craft Trust – and a reporting system to help Sport England and sector partners to collate more data here.
18. Sport England has also funded Sport Resolutions to appoint, and provide administrative support for, appropriate members of the National Safeguarding Panel to provide initial advice and guidance to NGBs, undertake investigations where required, and support hearing panels.

## **Uniting the Movement**

19. Earlier this year we launched our new *Uniting the Movement* strategy: our 10-year vision to transform lives and communities through sport and physical activity.

20. The ambitions at the heart of *Uniting the Movement* are the result of a consultation process that involved thousands of people and hundreds of organisations over an 18-month period. The strategy was fundamentally co-created with partners from both across and beyond the sport and physical activity sector, and throughout this process, the same issues, opportunities and areas for action emerged.

21. These have been ratified by the breadth and depth of data and insight we hold too – what we've learnt from the past, and the trends we can see coming – and there is widespread support from the sector for each individual priority area.

### **Big issues and catalysts for change**

22. We identified five big issues that we will work with partners to address over the next decade in order to create a more active nation:

- Recover and reinvent – recovering from the biggest crisis in a generation and reinventing as a vibrant, relevant and sustainable network of organisations providing sport and physical activity opportunities that meet the needs of different people;
- Connecting communities – focusing on sport and physical activity's ability to make better places to live and bring people together;
- Positive experiences for children and young people – an unrelenting focus on positive experiences for all children and young people as the foundations for a long and healthy life;
- Connecting with health and wellbeing – strengthening the connections between sport, physical activity, health and wellbeing, so more people can feel the benefits of, and advocate for, an active life, and;
- Active environments - creating and protecting the places and spaces that make it easier for people to be active.

23. We also recognised that we need to create the right conditions for change across the above issues, and we identified five catalysts for this change that we need to focus on as an organisation too:

- Effective investment models – the right kinds of investment, timed well and delivered skilfully can stimulate demand, provide opportunities to get active, enable innovation, encourage collaboration, reduce inequalities and enable greater sustainability;
- Realising the power of people and leadership – the people who spend their time helping others to be active are our most precious resource and their potential is limitless. They're the key to adopting and achieving the ambitions in this strategy;
- Applying innovation and digital - times are changing, and so are people's expectations. In the face of significant opportunity and change, it's critical innovation, including digital, is applied to the big issues that are holding many more people back from being active;
- High-quality data, insight and learning – a shared understanding of the opportunities and the challenges that we face together is key to collaborative action;

- Good governance – good governance, and a commitment to positive, effective, safe delivery of opportunities at every level is how intentions and ambitions are enshrined into ways of working.

## **Implementing the strategy**

24. The co-creative process we followed across the development of the strategy now stands us in very strong stead to deliver against our objectives here. There is widespread support from the sector for each priority area, and as we have sought to transform the way we work into one of deep collaboration and partnership, this too has been well received by the sector.
25. We welcomed the positive comments made, to this Committee and others, on how we have changed the way we work in recent years. The Minister for Sport and a range of partners have spoken compellingly on the value we have proven. We know that our swift, agile and flexible approach over the course of the pandemic has been particularly welcomed, and we have been clear that we will seek to maintain this approach moving forwards.
26. Cross-government working will, however, be absolutely key to the successful delivery of *Uniting the Movement*, and we stand ready to work closely with DCMS and other departments across government to drive such collaboration. As mentioned in our oral evidence, Sporting Future did seek to align sport and physical activity policy with other parts of government for the first time. This was good intent for the time, but it is an area that may need more focus, particularly as we approach this year's Spending Review and the revision of Sporting Future.

## **Further information**

27. Sport England was grateful for the opportunity to give oral evidence to this inquiry. Should the Committee have any questions about this supplementary submission or require any further information, please contact:

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## **Sport England**

*16 August 2021*