

# England and Wales Cricket Board – Written evidence (NPS0177)

## INTRODUCTION

As the National Governing Body (NGB) for cricket in England and Wales (ECB), we are responsible for all aspects of the game from grassroots through to the elite level. We are a not-for-profit organisation, with all revenue generated being reinvested to sustain and grow cricket. We are the only NGB which funds every aspect of our sport: international teams (men's, women's and disabilities), professional clubs and the recreational game.

The House of Lords Select Committee Inquiry into a National Plan for Sport and Recreation is timely; six years on from the launch of *Sporting Future*, the UK Government's strategy for an active nation, and with the consequences of the pandemic only just beginning to emerge, now is the right time to examine how the sector can work to provide solutions to the persistent and ever evolving challenges of increasing participation in sport and physical activity for all.

The ECB believes that the aims of *Sporting Future* and its 5 outcomes, together with the objectives in Sport England's *Towards an Active Nation* and more recently *Uniting the Movement*, remain the right ones.

However, the UK Government, non-departmental public bodies, national governing bodies and the wider sports sector need to double down on our collective efforts if we are to redress the inequalities that have emerged through COVID and address longer term systemic challenges.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE INQUIRY

The ECB believes the UK Government has a greater role to play in tackling the long-standing and newly emerging challenges of participation.

Specifically, we believe the Government should:

1. work more closely with sports to close the gender gap in participation.
2. work more closely with sports to get every child playing team sports, alongside individual activity.
3. work with sports to develop a bespoke plan to tackle stubborn inequalities in participation among certain groups and the linked societal issues that come with this.
4. collaborate with sports to improve data collection and research and analysis across the sport sector.
5. continue to invest in multi- sport facilities and other outdoor and indoor spaces where people can be active.

## **DETAILED ANALYSIS**

### **1. Work with sports to close the gender gap in participation**

Covid-19 has caused unprecedented disruption to the activity of children and young people.

While 49% of all children and youth aged 5-18 currently participate in the 5 largest team sports (Cricket, Football, Hockey, Netball and Rugby Union), there remains a stubborn and persistent 29% gender gap.<sup>1</sup>

If we closed the gender gap this could bring an additional £1.4BN worth of benefits in one year of childhood and an additional £98M healthcare savings in one year of adulthood.<sup>2</sup>

#### **CASE STUDY: DREAM BIG DESI WOMEN**

The ECB's Dream Big Desi Women programme, in partnership with Sport England, is an exemplar of targeted sport development intervention that is yielding tangible results. The programme uses a network of community champions to identify and support women from South Asian communities to participate in the ECB's ALL STARS (5-8 yrs) and DYNAMOS (8-11yrs) to become cricket activators.

The programme, which has a target of reaching 2000 women, has just surpassed its 1000 milestone in year two of the four-year partnership. We have also worked closely with key partners including Mental Health First Aid England and Microsoft to provide additional training and to date we have trained over 120 Mental Health First Aiders and 60 women have had access to digital skills training. The programme is improving the employability prospects for women, who are typically further away from the jobs market.

#### **Specific Ask of Government:**

- Recognise that challenges exist to close the gender gap and ensure equal opportunities.
- Address inequalities in demand and supply to ensure all girls have equal opportunities to participate in sport both at school and in the community.
- Continue to improve provision of team sports in schools – most notably ensuring children have access to at least 60 minutes of sport and activity a day and that we improve the development of newly qualified teachers so that they feel confident and able to deliver high quality sport and PE.
- Develop programmes and campaigns to change mindsets and perceptions of women in sport.

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<sup>1</sup> Sports impact children: Sports Return on Investment Report by Portas Consulting, March 2021 (copies available upon request.)

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

## 2. Work with sports to get every child playing team sports

The current 49% participation rate across the 5 major team sports contributes £4.5BN annually in childhood and £738M in one year of adulthood.

Getting every child playing team sports could produce £4.7BN additional benefits in one year of childhood and an extra £326M healthcare savings in one year of adulthood vs. today.<sup>3</sup>

While we have seen a proliferation of individual activity during the pandemic, participation in team sports to benefits society more broadly including improved educational attainment, improved health outcomes (the most deprived children are 2-4 times more likely to be obese than the least deprived) and improved social outcomes.

### **CASE STUDY- ALL STARS/ DYNAMOS**

Participation in cricket is thriving at the 5-11 year old level through the ECB's national cricket programmes ALL STARS and DYNAMOS.

In 2021:

- Record numbers participated – over 100,000 have taken part in National Programmes including:
  - o Over 27,000 girls
  - o Over 3,150 children with a disability
  - o Over 13,000 children who are ethnically diverse
  - o Over 10,000 free places for All Stars and Dynamos (to date)
- 10% more recreational games this year than in 2019.
- 230% increase in junior fixtures in August on Play-Cricket – the ECB's digital cricket platform.
- 100 Disability Champion Clubs.
- 10,000 children engaged in school breakfast clubs.
- 160 hubs being developed across Core Cities, engaging with over 20,000 unique young people this summer.

While this is a strong base (in a mostly out of school setting), we are still seeing too much of a post code lottery when it comes to levels of children's physical literacy in an education setting.

### **Specific Ask of Government:**

- Ensure sport is central to a long-term joined up approach for health, education, and social policy.
- Shift focus from cure to prevention –creating the next generation of active adults by starting with developing physical literacy in children

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

### **3. Work with sports to develop a bespoke plan to tackle stubborn inequalities in participation among certain groups and the linked societal issues that come with this.**

- The decreases in physical activity levels since the pandemic have been seen in all ethnicities but those from the lowest socioeconomic background were most affected.
- The most deprived children are 2-4 times more likely to be obese than the least deprived.
- Over half of all victims of knife crime in London in 2018 were from BAME backgrounds. 41M is saved each year by crime reductions in the physically active population.<sup>4</sup>
- Several European studies have reported a positive correlation between sport and academic attainment.<sup>5</sup>

#### **CASE STUDY: CREATING OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH CHANCE TO SHINE STREET**

Street projects provide opportunities for young people in urban areas who, for a variety of social, economic or geographical reasons, are less likely to have access to or play cricket at a traditional cricket club. Chance to Shine Street helps young people less likely to be active play cricket regularly in their community. Two-thirds live in the most disadvantaged areas of England and 74% were not part of a sport club or team outside of school when they joined. Despite this, young people playing at Street display higher levels of physical literacy when compared to the national picture through Sport England research. This is their local club, where young people are active, make friends and develop themselves through playing. Street projects are free and run year-round, with at least one coaching session or competition taking place 356 days of the year across 211 projects.

Cricket was the key attraction for many young people – they had played tapeball cricket before and enjoyed watching and playing cricket with their families in the past. Street provided the opportunity to play a familiar type of cricket more frequently and with a purpose. Sessions are attractive because they offered 'serious' coaching and regular competitions. Others value the opportunity to make friends, be active and 'de-stress', supported by coaches they like and respect.

#### **Specific Ask of Government:**

- Create a joint cross-department and team sport taskforce to look at role of sport in tackling social good and ensuring that no one group is 'left behind' or excluded from the physical and mental wellbeing benefits of sport and physical activity.

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Source: Stead & Neville (2010), The impact of PE and sport on education outcomes.

- This group should also consider whether there is a specific additional research that needs to be commissioned in certain areas – for example, further demonstrating the link between educational attainment and sport.

#### **4. Collaborate with sports to improve data collection and research and analysis across the sport sector**

There is plenty more that the government can do in this space such as:

- Improve data collection around sport participation.
- Conduct national surveys on barriers preventing physical activity and sport participation.
- Ensure future data collection includes children up to age 18 in line with WHO and CMO guidelines.
- Track and evaluate government sport funding.

##### **Specific Ask of Government:**

- Facilitate increased collaboration across the sports sector.
- Adopt industry-standard guidelines and ensure the measurement of physical activity and sports participation and their outcomes.
- Expand data collection & research to increase robustness and level of insight and understand the impacts of other sports.

#### **5. Continue to invest in multi- sport facilities, and other outdoor and indoor spaces where people can be active, with sustainable transport to access them.**

In order to achieve the asks above we need sufficient, quality, accessible places where people can take part. It is vital to have spaces where communities can come together to connect and to improve their physical and mental well-being.

A November 2019 Lancet article by the WHO on the 'global epidemic' of childhood inactivity identified facility access as a major barrier –which is particularly relevant in dense cities like London.<sup>6</sup>

Access to parks and private use facilities contributes to the observed differences in participation in our sports at the Borough level.<sup>7</sup>

#### **CASE STUDY – LORD’S TAVERNERS MINIBUS SCHEME**

The Lord’s Taverners minibus programme is a vital resource, helping students to develop their interpersonal skills through sharing space with other students and taking turns getting on and off. The minibus also provides invaluable

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<sup>6</sup> Guthold et al (2019), Lancet; Portas analysis

<sup>7</sup> Sports impact children: Sports Return on Investment Report by Portas Consulting, March 2021 (copies available upon request.)

opportunities for students to go into the community and gain valuable self-confidence, work and life experience.

The minibuses not only provide an essential means of getting students to and from school, they also greatly enhance the curriculum and learning of young people, who benefit from engaging with the local community and accessing a wider range of sporting and recreational activities.

The minibuses are often specially adapted, with features such as tail lifts or unfolding steps. These changes make a big difference, allowing young people with a disability to get on and off the bus more easily and making the transition into the passenger seats much more comfortable.

In accessing a wider range of activities and events, the minibuses play a vital role in building confidence, social skills and a sense of independence. In the longer term, this helps to better equip young people to live enjoyable, fulfilling and independent lives.

### **Specific Ask of Government:**

- Targeted, ring-fenced investment for adapting facilities to children and youth and enabling their access (including access to sustainable transport).
- Additional enabling infrastructure providing safe access to facilities (e.g. school to gym transportation groups).
- Programmes for and adapted to children and youth of different ages, gender and abilities.
- Greater flexibility (e.g. allowing "ball games" in open spaces located within dense urban environments).
- Greater priority given to multi-use games areas (MUGAs) in planning development by local authorities.

### **CONCLUSION**

Ahead of the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review announcement, anticipated in October 2021, the ECB believes that maintaining current levels of funding into DCMS, DFE, DH (via the new Office of Health Promotion), and MHCLG is critical if the Government is to truly achieve its stated objectives of levelling up when it comes to sport and physical activity.

While we do not believe there is the need for a new wholesale plan of sport and recreation per se, we do believe a new approach to cross departmental working is needed if we are to truly unleash the benefits of sports participation for the whole nation. Our suggestion of a cross departmental taskforce at the heart of government would address the lack of consistency when it comes to the planning and delivery of sports policy. Furthermore, it would prevent the inherent tendency for sports policy to remain siloed in DCMS. Without this change at the heart of government, we fear sport and recreational policy will fail to reach its potential.

*20 September 2021*