



Mr Fergus D Cochran  
Clerk to the Public Petitions Committee  
The Scottish Parliament  
TG.01  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP

Our Reference: DC/MC  
Your Reference:  
Date: 17 May 2010

Dear Mr Cochran

### **Consideration of Petition PE1319**

Thank you for your invitation to comment on Petition PE1319. We can provide the following comments.

#### **What are your view on the petition and the issue discussed at the meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> April?**

Following an independent review, commissioned by the Scottish Football Association (SFA) a few years ago, football in Scotland was divided into two categories; Performance Football (which concerns professional clubs and is administered by the SFA) and recreational football. The Council's interest focuses on recreational football rather than performance football. The Council has not had cause to consider many of the issues raised by the petition, however we recognise the importance of developing talented young footballers and protecting their interests and welfare. We therefore welcome public discussion of these matters.

#### **What monitoring do you do on under 16 years olds who are entering into these registrations/contracts with professional football clubs?**

We are not involved in monitoring of under 16 years olds entering into the registrations/contracts.

#### **What specific concerns have you raised either with individual clubs or with the football authorities?**

As far as I can ascertain we have not had to raise concerns with either clubs or the football authorities.

**What is your view on the impact the current system is having on education and welfare of under 16 year olds?**

We would make the following points:

Children develop at different rates and many children who show an aptitude at an early age do not develop into outstanding sportsmen and sportswomen as adults. This is reflected in the small percentage of children registered with professional clubs who end up on a professional contract. We have concerns that parents are not fully aware of the implications of signing a contract, perhaps influenced by the belief that their child is destined to be successful.

However, we are not convinced that the current system impacts negatively on children under the age of 16 and their education or their welfare. Indeed there may be an impact if a child moves freely between a number of clubs, as children need consistency in coaching approaches. We have had to address this issue at the School of Sport in Glasgow, in relation to another sport.

These comments have been drawn together following consultation with various services of the Council. I hope that they are of assistance to the committee.

Yours sincerely



**DAWN CORBETT  
HEAD OF CORPORATE POLICY/  
SERVICE REFORM**