

PE1319/O

Equalities, Social Inclusion and Sport Directorate
Sport and Games Legacy Division

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Fergus D. Cochrane
Clerk to the Public Petitions Committee
TG01
The Scottish Parliament
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Dear Fergus

PETITION PE1319

Thank you for your letter of 7 October in which you seek the Scottish Government's response to a question in relation to Petition PE1319 submitted by Mr William Smith and Mr Scott Robertson. The Petition called on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to investigate the (1) legal status and appropriateness of professional SFA clubs entering into contracts with children under 16 years; (2) audit process and accountability of all public funds distributed by the Scottish Football Association to its member clubs; (3) social, educational and psychological affects and legality of SFA member clubs prohibiting such children from participating in extra curricular activity; and (4) appropriateness of 'compensation' payments between SFA member clubs for the transfer of young players under the age of 16 years; and to (5) increase the educational target from 2 hours curricular physical activity to four hours per week; and (6) develop a long-term plan to provide quality artificial surfaces for training and playing football at all ages across all regions.

We have considered the further question and our response is detailed below.

What is your position on the operation of the Scottish Youth Football Initiative?

As the Scottish Football Association (SFA) is the recognised and independent governing body for football in Scotland then they are the appropriate authority to determine all matters relating to their sport, which includes the operation of the Scottish Youth Football Initiative. The Scottish Government, in line with other Governments, recognises the independence of sports governing bodies and their right to structure their sport and organise themselves as they see fit.

The Scottish Government believes that both the Scottish football clubs involved within the initiative and the SFA have a duty of care for all of the young people involved within the initiative which must be upheld. The Scottish Government have previously written to the SFA seeking that they ensure the children's best interests are maintained at all times.

Yours sincerely

Derek Grieve
Head of Sport Development

