

Minister for Commonwealth Games and Sport

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Health and Sport Committee



LEGACY 2014
XX COMMONWEALTH GAMES
SCOTLAND

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Dear Convener

ADDITIONAL RESPONSE TO REPORT ON INQUIRY INTO SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY SPORT

Following publication of the Committee's report, this letter sets out my response to Recommendation 4 which sought:

"An update with input from sportscotland and other key players, on all aspects of volunteering in sport before Parliament moves to summer recess in 2013. The Committee is particularly interested in qualified coaches and the state of readiness for the increase in demand for club sport that is hoped will materialise on the back of Glasgow 2014."

As we discussed when I appeared before the Committee during its evidence session, questions relating to the longer term motivation of the thousands of volunteers who keep sport alive in Scotland are of vital importance. Whilst this is true, generally, it is particularly important that the 2014 Games "bounce" is met with the levels of support and encouragement required to build a lasting sporting legacy for Scotland.

In considering the current position it is important not to overlook the fact that there has been significant progress in this area. Best estimates are that there are 195,000 volunteers working in sport in Scotland and, of this figure, 90,000 are coaches. This represents 4.5% of the Scottish adult population and these figures reflect the importance that sport plays in the lives of men, women and children throughout the country. Having said that of course, it is important that we are not complacent and I am keen to ensure that we provide leadership in our support of volunteers and also nurture a volunteering culture.

A strong and sustainable coaching and volunteering base is crucial to the delivery of all our sport and physical activity objectives. And our success in increasing levels of participation, supporting a strong club network, delivering athlete pathways and getting the best out of individuals, will stand or fall by the number of people who give up their time on a regular and committed basis.

I am glad to be able to report to the Committee there is much good work already being undertaken at community level in partnership with **sportscotland**, the sports governing bodies and individual clubs to meet these challenges. This letter provides further details on a range of interventions and initiatives which are addressing these challenges.

Club Development Support

There is a widespread recognition amongst governing bodies that, for many, they do not have sufficient resources to develop their sport and club networks in a structured way. In order to address this **sportscotland** is already providing further investment in the form of regional development managers (RDMs) who, through the governing bodies and working directly with clubs.

The RDM's work within six Regional Sporting Partnerships (RSPs) which create strong connections between local and national partners including all 32 local authorities and the governing bodies. This regional approach brings national partners together to ensure that clubs and their athletes, coaches and volunteers are supported to play their part in the sporting system. The key focus for RSPs is to understand the needs of local sport clubs and work with them to grow and develop.

Club Self-Improvement Tool

For many clubs the issue of course is not an unwillingness to grow and develop their capacity; rather it is a lack of awareness of what support is out there to assist them as they navigate their way through what can be a cluttered landscape of development and funding advice. Whilst the introduction of the regional development managers will go some way to tackle this, **sportscotland** are currently developing an online facility, in essence a toolkit, which will be launched within the next few months. This will provide clubs with a simple self-assessment programme focusing on 6 key areas in the Club Sport Framework. This new resource will provide clubs with a simple but tangible way of understanding what their needs are and the opportunities that they have to improve. Areas covered include:

- Organisation
- Connections
- Promotion
- Sustainability
- People
- Places

By using the tool, individual clubs will undertake an interactive journey through these six priority areas and at the end they will be presented with a clear picture of what they do well and where they can improve. Crucially, the toolkit will also signpost clubs to additional support and resources, including potential funding streams to tackle the areas where improvement is required.

Direct Club Investment Programme

There is of course general recognition within the sector that in order for some clubs to grow and develop in a sustainable way, direct investment is required. That is why, working directly with the governing bodies, **sportscotland** has launched a new direct club investment programme. In 2013/14 some £500,000 has been allocated for this new initiative.

There are two key strands to this programme:

- Achieving sustainable growth in the active membership of clubs will not only increase the range of opportunities they offer but will also increase the number of people taking part in club sport; and
- The progression of athletes aspiring to world class performance. Supporting clubs to create an environment where the highest standards of coaching practice time and attitudes are nurtured and promoted will be crucial.

Both **sportscotland** and the governing bodies are confident that this investment programme will help clubs with ambition to make a step change in their delivery through targeted resources which would not otherwise be available, for example professionalising their coaching infrastructure, developing a pathway for women and accessing better facilities. Up to £10,000 per project is available to individual clubs. Whilst the sums involved are small when compared to other sports investments, in many cases the amount of money required to achieve this step change at club level is not that great.

It will be for individual clubs and their partners to consider what they can bring to the project and then **sportscotland** will provide additional support to help add value. When making investment decisions **sportscotland** will consider projects against the following principles:

- Impact – ability to deliver against outcomes;
- Sustainability – ensuring the work will be sustained by the sport over time;
- Holistic approach – ensuring the appropriate partners are working together;
- High standards – improving the quality of club sport; and
- Additionality – adding value not replacing what exists already.

sportscotland will use the Regional sporting partnerships to identify and support around 50 clubs during 2013-14 and will make investment decisions on specific projects twice during this period, in June and September. Any investment must achieve specific outcomes and **sportscotland** will monitor the outcomes throughout each project to ensure it is having an impact.

Funding for Coaches and Coaching

sportscotland's volunteering and coaching frameworks are helping to build capacity by helping to retain the current coaching cohort and attract new coaches. During 2013/14 **sportscotland** will provide additional financial support to help deliver these aims by:

- Investing £340k in the positive Coaching Scotland programme which will further develop positive culture within schools and clubs and;
- Investing £200k for the "Class of 14" programme which is a direct initiative to increase quantity and develop quality of coaches within clubs aligned to the Commonwealth Games Sports.

Volunteering

As the Committee's report confirmed, there is a vast cohort of volunteers who, through diligence and commitment, ensure that Scotland's sports sector can operate and develop at grassroots level week in week out. For many, providing support and being part of the life of their club or specific community project is reward enough. It is important to acknowledge this when considering how best to sustain and encourage volunteers in the sector. But I firmly believe that there are areas of untapped experience where we can make a difference and help clubs with their on-going volunteer requirements. So, for example, there is a strong volunteer culture in the further and higher education sectors. That is why I recently met with the NUS to discuss how we can build on this to get students involved in volunteering at the grassroots level. Whilst further work on this is progressing, I believe that there is real potential here to build connections between the two sectors to deliver a mutually beneficial contribution to sport development. And I will be exploring other areas where we can tap into potential sources of volunteers.

Whilst some clubs struggle to retain and maintain levels of volunteers to cover their range of activities, there is clearly an appetite more generally across Scotland to be involved in supporting the Games and the Ryder Cup next year. As the Committee will know, the high volume of applicants for both these events was unprecedented. I am determined to ensure that we seize this opportunity to retain and encourage these applicants to be involved and remain involved in volunteering, not just for major events but also at the grassroots level.

Glasgow 2014 is one of the first major sporting events to have an application entry point for 16 year olds and figures show that 18% of applicants are aged between 16-18 and almost 40% are under the age of 25. Interestingly early figures show that 61% of applicants are female and 39% are male and that people from every local authority area in Scotland applied. In partnership with **sportscotland** and Glasgow 2014 we are looking at ways to signpost additional volunteering opportunities for these individuals and those who will be ultimately successful in volunteering for the Games.

Legacy

Along with our partners we have developed a range of volunteering and training opportunities which provide people across Scotland with opportunities to gain experience, develop skills and make a positive imprint on their future. Specific examples to which I would draw the Committee's attention include:

The **Legacy 2014 Scotland's Best** employability programme. This programme is designed to create training and volunteering opportunities linked to the cultural and sporting events Scotland will host in the coming years. In addition to quality volunteering and work placement opportunities for 1,000 young people aged 16 – 19, Scotland's Best will provide accredited training to allow participants to gain valuable skills and experience to help them get, stay and progress in education, further training or employment. It will also ensure these 1000 young people have the employability skills employers have told us they need.

The **Games Volunteer Qualification** will see the development of a skills legacy for the 15,000 Games volunteers, particularly how their Games experience, through their training and Games-time volunteer role, could be used as a pathway to future learning, training or employment. To support this all volunteers will be provided with a personalised SQA supported certificate which will include information on the skills gained during their Glasgow 2014 training and Games Time volunteering role, for example; team working, leadership, motivation, volunteering skills, communication, customer service and personal development.

The **Event Team Scotland** website which provides a one stop platform to connect event organisers with individuals interested in volunteering at events of all sizes throughout Scotland. To date the project has received over 1900 registrations from event volunteers with over 160 event organisers registering opportunities. As well as bridging the gap between those looking to volunteer and those organisers requiring support, the experience gained by volunteering at these events can be invaluable in enhancing existing and developing new skills.

We have also agreed with the 2014 Organising Committee to inherit 2014 Games volunteer data post games to the Event Team Scotland website. This will mean that following the Games, volunteers will be given the option to allow their data to be transferred directly on to the website registering them to receive further opportunities to volunteer at future events

Finally, a **bespoke volunteer support guide** is being developed which will sign-post opportunities that exist for volunteers beyond the Games including information on future volunteering opportunities, information on training providers and qualification options, employability guidance and links to useful web-sites. Also, the guide will encourage volunteers to reflect on and record their Games training and volunteering experiences and use this information to help them move towards and into work or further training

Recognition for Volunteers

I said earlier that for the many thousands of volunteers, participating in the work of their clubs and schools is all the reward they want. And whilst I recognise and applaud this approach I do feel that something more ought to be done to give recognition for the tremendous work which volunteers do, week in week out, at a national level. That is why I have tasked my officials with setting up a working group to come up with a series of proposals for how we might give proper recognition to the work of our volunteers. I want to see a national award scheme put in place, starting from 2014, which will go some way to addressing this oversight. I would of course be happy to take the Committee's views into consideration in the development of a national scheme along these lines.

Conclusion

I trust that the information set out in this letter is of help to the Committee. I firmly believe that the support for club growth, the additional investment into sports clubs and our plans for retaining volunteers provide the right framework upon which we can build a more resilient and robust sporting infrastructure. These policies will ensure our sports clubs, volunteers and coaches are well prepared to cope with the anticipated interest in sport post-2014 and beyond.

I look forward to hearing your views and discussion on these issues at the meeting on Tuesday 4 June 2013.

Yours sincerely

SHONA ROBISON