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The Scottish Parliament  
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Dear Lewis

Thank you for the invitation to provide evidence to the Health and Sport Committee on Tuesday 22 January. We always welcome the opportunity to increase the visibility of our work and that of our partners to Scottish Parliament. Your letter of 31 January raises issues that could be broadly categorised as relating to school sport, to other aspects of the sporting system, and to **sportscotland's** ways of working. I have grouped my responses under these headings below.

Yours sincerely



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## School sport

### Active Schools - Growth

Active Schools is one of our flagship programmes, delivered in partnership with local authorities. It provides young people with quality opportunities to take part in sport and physical activity before school, during lunchtime and after school. As this is extra-curricular activity it does not have 'a captive audience' and each Active Schools Co-ordinator tailors the programme to the needs of the individual school.

It is a programme with a strong track record of growth and success, and we are pleased that the Committee recognised the success of the programme in your 2018 Sport for Everyone report. The data clearly demonstrates the significant growth of the programme over the four-years of our current Corporate Plan. With 2013-14 data as the baseline, the following four-year period up to and including academic year 2017-18 has seen:

- 14% increase in young people attending Active Schools sessions (annual distinct participants), an extra 38,427 individuals engaged in the programme.
- 24% growth in visits to Active Schools sessions, over 1.4million additional visits per year.

Active Schools annual data reports are available at:

<https://sportscotland.org.uk/schools/active-schools/active-schools-report-2017-2018/>

Of course, we recognise that there will always be room for further growth and we are committed to continuous improvement. With this in mind, in 2018 we commissioned two pieces of independent research to understand how the programme is working. The evaluation of our Schools and Education portfolio, including Active Schools, undertaken by Research Scotland can be read here:

<https://sportscotland.org.uk/about-us/our-publications/archive/evaluation-of-sportscotland-s-work-in-schools-and-education-environment/>

Research Scotland also conducted a large-scale surveys of Active Schools participants to understand the impact on individuals. This shows the significant number of Active Schools participants who would be classified as 'inactive' without their Active Schools activity, as well as the positive impact on participants wider wellbeing. This research is available at:

<https://sportscotland.org.uk/about-us/our-publications/archive/asof-contribution/>

### Active Schools - Equalities data

In discussing our plans to improve the quality of the equality data we collect, we were specifically referring to our Active Schools programme. We have been able to collect and report some data on gender and social-economic status:

- 46% of all visits to Active Schools sessions are by girls and young women.
- 18% of participants are from Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) quintile 1 compared to 19% from SIMD quintile 5.

This data is encouraging, demonstrating participation more representative of the population than overall sport and physical activity participation. However, we plan to improve the detail of this data by moving to collect the gender of distinct participants in addition to the gender breakdown of visits, and by collecting postcode data for all participants where currently our SIMD analysis is based on the Research Scotland survey sample. We have started collecting this data in academic year 2018-19. There are challenges as the ability of each Active Schools team to access this data varies by local authority. We are working with each local authority to overcome these challenges. We expect to publish data for some local authorities this year, and this will immediately support local operational planning to ensure the programme is meeting the individual needs of each school. However, it will be future years before we have a comprehensive national picture and see multi-year trend data.

## **Access to the school estate**

In 2013 **sportscotland** undertook an audit of community access to school sport facilities. This report is available at:

<https://sportscotland.org.uk/about-us/our-publications/archive/school-estate-audit/>

The audit found that 89% of school sport facilities are available for public use. The study found that whilst this capacity was available, usage was significantly lower, with 35% of indoor space and 19% of outdoor space used in term-time. There is variation within these figures - for example, 61% of secondary school indoor space was reported as utilised.

As the Committee will be aware, **sportscotland** is not responsible for management of the school estate. We also recognise that each school is unique. With that in mind, our role in widening access to the school estate is to influence. We work in partnership with local authorities to support various aspects of planning, including facilitating the development of local sport and sport facilities strategies, comment on planning applications, producing design guidance, and supporting operational planning at individual school level, including developing Community Sport Hubs within schools.

## **Community Sport Hubs in schools**

Community Sport Hubs are a community-led approach bringing together sport clubs and key local partners, including local authorities and leisure trusts, to develop and grow the sporting offer in their community. There are currently 106 Hubs based in school facilities across Scotland.

Given that there are 367 secondary schools in Scotland, there is clearly a way to go before every secondary school is operating as a Community Sport Hub. As a grassroots-up programme built on the ethos of community empowerment, each Hub is unique and takes time to develop its own vision and values. If they are to be sustainable, development of school-based Hubs must be driven by both the local sport and local school community, rather than being imposed from above.

## **Other aspects of the sporting system**

### **Physical activity data - Older people**

We have seen a clear increase in the popularity of walking versions of traditional sports, such as walking football and walking netball. At present, we do not collect data on this separately to our overall data for those sports (e.g. walking netball membership will be included in the overall membership of Netball Scotland). We will talk to relevant Scottish Governing Bodies of sport (SGBs) about what data is useful to collect in relation to walking versions of these sports. Scottish Government national datasets including the Scottish Health Survey and Scottish Household Survey provide data on overall physical activity levels and sports participation disaggregated by age.

### **Physical activity data - Teenagers**

The disparity in the percentage of the population meeting the physical activity guidelines between the ages of 13-15 and 16 years-old, is due to the different technical definitions used. The measure for children (under 16s) is one-hour every day, whilst for adults (16 and over) it is 150 minutes per week. These measures are not comparable. The definitions are based on the Chief Medical Officers' recommended physical activity levels for adults and children. Physical activity data is collected through Scottish Government's Scottish Health Survey and any changes to the data reported would be determined by Scottish Government. Our focus is to work with partners to reduce the drop-out from sport in the 13-15 age group, particularly amongst teenage girls.

## **Professional sport**

We recognise the high-profile many professional sports clubs enjoy within their communities. We believe there is potential for this profile to be leveraged to benefit community sport. For professional clubs with an artificial playing surface, this can include community use of their facilities. For example, Hamilton Academical FC have significant community activity on their main pitch, while St Johnstone FC have a community pitch adjacent to their stadium. When supporting local authorities to develop sports strategies, we encourage engagement with all local sports organisations, including professional sports clubs.

## **sportscotland's ways of working**

### **Assessing outcomes**

We are committed to a systems-approach to developing sport in Scotland. We are therefore reliant on our partners in the sporting system if we are to continue to develop sport. As we plan for our next Corporate Strategy, understanding the strength of these partnerships is vital. Our partnerships are also a mechanism to collect the data that allows us to measure our success. We are in the process of holding strategic partnership meetings and reviews with all 32 local authorities and all the SGBs in which we invest. Whilst there are inevitably some challenges, this process has confirmed to us that overall our partnerships are strong and as a result we are well placed to deliver in the future.

### **Reviewing data**

We are currently finalising our new Corporate Strategy. In developing this strategy, we have reviewed our progress over the 2015 to 2019 period of our current Corporate Plan. This has highlighted many areas where working with partners including local authorities and SGBs, strong collective progress has been made. These areas include Active Schools, School Sport Awards, Community Sport Hubs, support for local sports clubs, developing young leaders in sport, and performances at the Commonwealth and Olympic Games. Our research has demonstrated that not only are our programmes engaging more people in sport, but that participation is having a positive impact on their lives. We have also identified areas where we believe there is more progress to be made, including inclusion in sport, and this will be reflected in our new Strategy. We will produce a review of the full four-year Corporate Plan period. I will be pleased to share this with the Committee when it is published later in the year.

### **Future priorities**

The consultation was part of the development process for our new Corporate Strategy and has played a vital part in shaping our future direction. We expect to publish this strategy in May and again I will be pleased to share this with the Committee. This Strategy and accompanying two-year business plan will further emphasise our commitment to improving equality and inclusion in sport. It will also identify a number of areas for development that came through the consultation, including parental engagement and better-connected pathways through sport.

### **External funding**

The Transforming Scottish Indoor Tennis Fund (TSIT) and the Changing Lives Through Sport and Physical Activity Fund (CLTSPA) are examples of leveraging additional funding for Scottish sport through partnership working. In partnership with the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) and Tennis Scotland, we announced £15m funding for indoor tennis facilities over the next 10 years. The TSIT fund provides a single application process, with grants then awarded by **sportscotland** and the LTA directly to the applicant. The £1m CLTSPA fund is a partnership between **sportscotland**, The Robertson Trust and Scottish Government. Again, it provides a single application process, in this

case administered by Spirit of 2012. These arrangements allow the additional funding, from the LTA and The Robertson Trust, to reach frontline sports organisations without the need to pass through sportscotland.

## **Lottery funding**

Lottery income has been declining for several years and this has negatively impacted on our annual budget. One area that we have reduced spending is capital investment through our Sports Facilities Fund. Places are an important enabler for sport, and our Corporate Plan 2015 – 2019 set out our ambition for people to have access to a network of quality places where they can get involved in sport. Our impact measures include that “we will have targeted our resources around the development of places for sport where they can have the greatest impact on participation and progression in sport”. In our Annual Review 2017-18 we reported that we had updated our Sports Facilities Fund guidelines to ensure we can prioritise and target our available resources more effectively, but also that the amount we invested in facilities significantly reduced from £8.5m in 2015-16 to £2.2m in 2017-18.

The welcome announcement in the Scottish Government budget for 2018-19 and draft budget for 2019-20 of an underpin of our National Lottery income has helped to stabilise our budget position and improve our ability to plan. This is allowing us to look again at the level of capital investment we can make in sports facilities.

## **Value for money**

We are proud of the scale of the work that we and our partners in the sporting system deliver, reaching schools, clubs, sports facilities, coaches, volunteers, grassroots participants and performance athletes right across Scotland. Our Annual Reviews (<https://sportscotland.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/publications/annual-reviews/>) and independent evaluations of our work (<https://sportscotland.org.uk/about-us/our-publications/archive/wider-evaluations/>) demonstrate our effectiveness. Research Scotland's assessment on our contribution to the Active Scotland Outcomes Framework (<https://sportscotland.org.uk/about-us/our-publications/archive/asof-contribution/>) found clear evidence of our impact on physical activity levels, health and wellbeing. In addition, a recent study on the Economic Impact of Sport by the Sport Industry Research Centre at Sheffield Hallam University (<https://sportscotland.org.uk/about-us/our-publications/archive/the-economic-importance-of-sport/>) calculated that sport makes a £2.7billion contribution to the Scottish economy and accounts for almost 65,000 full-time jobs, with significant increases in both employment and consumer expenditure since 2010. When considered against the relatively modest funding we receive, we strongly believe that this evidences that we and our partners are delivering great value for money to the Scottish public purse.