

# sport, active recreation and social inclusion

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# sport, active recreation and social inclusion

Edited by Sue Campbell and  
Brigid Simmonds

Published by the Smith Institute

ISBN 1 902488 58 X

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## Foreword

### **Rt. Hon. Richard Caborn MP**

Minister for Sport

Department for Culture, Media & Sport

When I became Sports Minister in June 2001, I entered my new department with the words of the Prime Minister ringing in my ears. He told me that sport is an asset that is massively under-utilised in the UK.

Since that day, my Secretary of State Tessa Jowell and I have set about modernising the structures of Government to change the way Whitehall views sport.

Traditionally, sport has been seen as a sideline. Something that happens in the part of a newspaper that Government doesn't read. As a result, the public budget for sport has been small and has been distributed with no real strategy or vision. We have struggled to know why we fund it. There has been a feeling that sport is a good thing, but no tangible evidence to show why.

That is beginning to change. Because sport is so much more than jumpers for goalposts and small boys in the park. I strongly believe that sport can help many of my ministerial colleagues to achieve some of their objectives – much more cost effectively than some of the methods currently employed.

We are facing a timebomb in the state of our health. A recent National Audit Office report suggests that obesity costs the UK economy £2 billion each year and the NHS £500 million. Instances of diabetes in young children have grown alarmingly and promise to store up problems for generations to come. Sport and exercise can help reverse these trends.

In Finland, politicians looked to sport 20 years ago to tackle their appalling heart disease rates. They invested heavily in improving exercise and diet. And sport has delivered a massive reduction in those figures.

Evidence is beginning to show that schools which have a strong sporting ethos have fewer truants, fewer exclusions and better academic results. I see

sports projects in my constituency in Sheffield which have helped to keep young people out of trouble with the police; teaching them discipline, teamwork and the valuable lessons of winning with grace and losing with dignity. These are not isolated examples. They are mirrored up and down the country.

So the case is being made for more resources for sport – not in the traditional sense of backing sport as a gesture. But in the expectation that sport can deliver for society.

We are building new structures, helping governing bodies to rise to the challenges of 21st century sport and trying to draw in much wider constituencies who can bring expertise and a fresh approach to the table. Organisations like universities and teaching hospitals are big publicly funded assets which can offer much to – and gain much from – sport. The private sector also has much to offer through the growth in health and fitness clubs and the opportunities for funding of local authority sport and leisure centres. We need to be more lateral in our thinking; more creative in our approach.

Make no mistake, it will be a painful process. As the money goes up, so will the level of accountability. Governing bodies and groups which receive cash will be set targets, reviewed on progress and judged on their effectiveness. Some governing bodies will disappear. Some long running schemes will lose funding. Many egos will be bruised. And, perish the thought – some blazer orders will be cancelled.

But if sport wants to move away from pocket money sums, it must learn to play by adult rules. It must move from charity case to business case. It must play the long game – understanding what the vision is and the part they have in achieving it. If we are to benefit both sides – sport and government – we need to work in partnership. That means give and take. And it can mean accepting that 80% of a solution is better than nothing.

The public sector needs to respond too. Our funding agencies need to be leaner, more responsive, and have much more of a strategic view. They will stop telling people how to behave and start investing in other organisations plans to increase participation and improve performance.

At Whitehall level, the first thing I did was to set up and chair monthly meetings between funding agencies and Ministers from other government departments, including those covering education, local government, health and the Home Office. We in Government must co-operate much more closely than we have in the past.

But what that has achieved is a perceptible shift in the attitude shown to sport by government. All Ministers are under pressure to meet their targets. And if I can persuade colleagues that sport will deliver for them faster and more cost effectively, then they will invest in it.

It is happening. As part of the spending review settlement, the Department for Education and Skills announced £459 million for school sport. Money for some existing projects has been moved into the core education budget now – securing it for the future. That, in turn, has freed up tens of millions of pounds a year in the sports budget – which has allowed us, among other things, to breathe new life into coaching in the UK.

So increasing participation is a cornerstone of our vision for sport. Many of our resources are devoted to achieving that. But we do not lack ambition on the world stage. So just as we look to Finland for numbers (70% take part in 30 minutes of moderate exercise five times a week), we can take a leaf out of Australia's book for medals.

On the back of a dismal performance in the Montreal Olympics with no golds and finishing below New Zealand in the medal table, the authorities in Australia saw sport as a vital symbol of national pride. They established and funded the Australian Institute for Sport and embarked on a strategy that has turned Australia into one of the most feared nations in world sport. In cricket, rugby league, rugby union and other sports, the Aussies are the team to beat. Just ask Nasser Hussain.

But participation rates in Australia are nothing special. Their emphasis is clearly on elite success. I do not believe that would be acceptable here. The British are rightly a demanding nation. We want football in the playground and trophies in the cupboard. We are a successful country. We may not have won the football World Cup for 37 years, but across 60 sports, we were the

third best performing country in the world last year.

That is the challenge I and the Government must meet. And meet it we will. We have a new, holistic vision of what sport can achieve for Government. We are building simpler new structures which will deliver what the Government can achieve for sport.

We are spending unprecedented amounts of money on sport to help create a more successful, better educated, safer and healthier Britain. But we must understand value as well as cost. An Olympic gold or an Ashes win is priceless. It inspires others and helps talented young people realise there is a route for them to maximise their potential.

But there are no Ministers on the medal podium. At the moment we have a complex house of cards supporting our elite performers. I want to see much stronger relationships between the constituencies which perform that role. Athletes currently have to perform an intricate line dance with The British Olympic Association, UK Sports Institute, English Institute for Sport, higher education institutions and the private sector to maximise their opportunities. That has to be unacceptable. Our focus should be on the competitor, not on turf wars.

Government cannot provide all the answers. My job is to set the policy and develop a structure which will devise a strategy to make that happen. The most important part, delivery, has to be through the millions of volunteers, officials, players and coaches who make sport what it is.

I've talked a lot about structures and delivery. They are important if we are to achieve the goals we have set ourselves. But as valuable as sport can be for Britain, I want people to enjoy it as well. Sport can heal wounds in society; but sport should also be fun. And we should never lose sight of that.

## Statement

### Baroness Cathy Ashton

Parliamentary Under Secretary  
Department for Education and Skills

Physical Education (PE) and school sport are a key part of a broad and balanced education for all our young people. High quality PE and school sport can have a wide ranging impact on young people. It can contribute to a range of key areas:

- *education* – it can help progress in learning and raising standards;
- *health* – it can increase activity levels and improve mental, physical and social development;
- *physical/technical development* – it can improve physical and technical sports skills and sports performance;
- *socialisation* – it can encourage young people to work with others, and help improve pupils' attitude and behaviour;
- *citizenship* – it can encourage social responsibility and leadership; and
- *creativity and innovation* – it can stimulate young people's creative instinct and encourage them to be innovative in their approach to learning.

Some schools already understand the contribution that PE and sport can make to the education of our young people. However, I believe that *all* pupils should have an entitlement to at least two hours a week of high quality physical education and sport, within and beyond the curriculum.

To this end, my Department has agreed a joint PSA target with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport to increase the percentage of 5-16 year olds spending at least 2 hours a week on PE and sport to 75% by 2006. £459 million is being invested over the next three years (2003-04 to 2005-06) to fund programmes to help deliver this target. Schools are encouraged to target the use of their resources and energy to consider the needs of all pupils. In this way they are able to ensure that the needs of young disabled people, ethnic minority groups, gender groups, the gifted and talented, young people from different cultural or religious backgrounds, and those with special educational needs are fully met.

## Statement

### **Sir Alex Ferguson**

Manager of Manchester United

We have got to get sport back into our schools.

Professional sport at the top has never been better with science and technique combining to produce a quality that at times makes me marvel.

Obviously I see it best in my own sphere. Our football players have never been fitter, stronger, faster or more technically developed. Add in a more sophisticated coaching and tactical approach with the result that the Premiership features some marvellous games.

I am sure there has been a similar development in all athletic spheres, both in this country and abroad. People are running and swimming faster. In fact our leading people in all sports are brilliant.

Looking at the bigger picture, though, I have the feeling that the pursuit of excellence has left those who only get as far as playing for fun, plus those who have abandoned all athletic activity, trailing far behind.

This worries me because I believe sport at all levels is vital for a healthy society.

Not only are there worrying statistics about overweight youngsters with implications for their future health, but also young people are missing out in an area that I believe develops qualities important for happiness, as well as health, in life.

I am thinking about the self-discipline that sport teaches, the importance of teamwork in the work area, the ability simply to get on with other people, to succeed graciously and to fail with equal good grace.

Life is reflected in sport and if you can teach respect for opponents, then you are on the way to a better racial understanding and a more cooperative community generally.

You have to learn to lose as well as win. I hated losing when I was young, so much so that my father at one point started to watch me play in our school matches because he had heard I was a little too committed and over the top. Perhaps I wanted to win too much and he was there to reign me in.

I was reminded of this when we played Real Madrid in the quarter-finals of the European Champions League this season, and at a Press conference before our match in Spain, I was questioned about our attitude to playing against such distinguished opponents, and I found myself stressing that we respect all our opponents.

It's something sport teaches you when you are young. When you win you don't crow and shove it in the face of the opposition. There has to be dignity, if only because it may be your turn next time.

Defeat has to be accepted with a similar dignity, which I hope I did, and I know the players did, when the next day in Madrid we were given a chasing! The tabloid mentality of some of our newspapers these days doesn't help with their extreme reaction to winning and losing, especially at international level. They stoke up the pressure and it needs character to handle the way modern-day sport is approached.

The foundations for learning how to cope with that are also laid down at schoolboy age, which is another reason why I say we have to get more sporting activity back into our schools.

I see boys when they arrive at our Academy and it seems obvious to me that despite being the best young footballers there are, many of them are lacking in what I can only describe as basic athletic skills, and I believe this is because they don't get enough PE in their schools.

We had a staff meeting at our Carrington training ground earlier this season and everyone agreed that youngsters these days lacked mobility, balance and speed, and we put this down to the fact that nowadays they don't get the kind of work in the gym that we had in my day.

The private independent schools still get their gym work and organised games, but that represents a relatively small percentage of our young population.

So where do the vast majority of our youngsters learn the give and take of competition, the discipline and the teamwork that sport helps to foster?

I am sure there are problems involved with teachers giving up their spare time to run teams, as well as schools being able to find the resources for pitches and equipment, but it's my view that an education is not rounded unless it makes provision for sport.

It's even more important as we move to an ever more softer upbringing with our young people.

We live in a more affluent society and we get more boys from good family backgrounds, which when you are coming into a very physical and competitive profession can present problems. I wouldn't say the modern generation is exactly mollicoddled but I don't think many of them experience the kind of rough and tumble that marked my young years. I'm sure we were more athletic, running and jumping all over the place, more daring and more inclined to get into fights and scrapes.

When for instance was the last time you saw a gang of boys in the street with their jackets down for goalposts and playing in the snow? Not recently I bet but it was commonplace in my day. So I don't think the kids we get now are quite as robust.

Is it coincidence that out of 35 boys in one year at Lilleshall, the national school for the country's most promising players, had 19 cases of spinal stress fractures, including one of our own boys?

Football academies have filled a vacuum and we soon get our youngsters in shape, but what about those who are not good enough to link up with the professional clubs?

I believe Manchester United are arguably the best club in Britain at discovering and developing footballers. I wouldn't put anyone near us. We are good at it. We know how to deal with it because we have a staff second to none who have all been involved and at the club for a long time.

I will take away from Manchester United many things when I retire as manager, great memories, successes and happy times but it has been creating the best youth set-up in the country that has been the most satisfying part of my time with the club.

Sport is a gateway for young people growing up and it's why I believe that the foundations should be laid in school.

As I say, it's essential we get sport back into our schools!

## Statement

### **Tony McNulty MP**

Parliamentary Under Secretary  
Office of The Deputy Prime Minister

Having nowhere to go and nothing constructive to do is as much a part of living in a distressed community as poor housing or high crime levels. Sports and active recreation provide a good part of the answer to rebuilding a decent quality of life. Getting involved can be good for health, it can lead to people learning new skills, making new friends and to a strengthened community spirit.

To reflect these strong links, many of my Department's renewal programmes are allocating resources to sports related activities. The Neighbourhood Renewal Fund has been used to employ a team of Sports Development Workers in Newham and Manchester; the New Deal for Communities in the Derwent area of Derby is developing strong links with the County Cricket Club. The Neighbourhood Management pathfinder in Hastings is employing a team of locally recruited young people to create sporting opportunities in non-traditional settings. Football is played in supermarket car-parks under mobile flood lights because this space is where the young people congregate.

There are many other examples of this type of sports provision taking a role in community renewal. And we are keen to support this work as the Department's PSA 1 target is dependent on significant progress being made in a number of the areas (such as health and crime) where sport can be reasonably expected to contribute to the aim.

Despite examples like those above, I accept that the value of sport in contributing to wider social objectives has sometimes been underestimated in the past, and I am fully committed to current efforts to rectify this. It is particularly important that greater investment is made on developing sport for all of the community, on training sports workers to operate with renewal in mind and to support local people to provide sport for themselves and their communities.





Recently the local education authority (LEA) for which I work held a well attended Saturday event for young people in local schools and colleges to promote community involvement and get their opinions on what impacts on their lives. When asked to choose priorities for expenditure of money being invested in young people by the Local Strategic Partnership, they placed sports development as their highest priority above information and communications technology, social space, music and performance, and advice, health and guidance. They were particularly keen for professional training in sports development by coaches and other involved adults.

Many young people were aware that the area is one of the possible contenders for a British Olympic Games bid and clearly saw some of the employment opportunities that might be available. The other issue emerging strongly was the contribution sporting involvement made on the lives of young disabled people and the success of the recent Paralympic Games had raised their expectations greatly.

As headteacher of a large Sports College in an area of social deprivation in the east of London, this was not a surprise to me. I have the opportunity each week to witness the large number of young people and adults from our school, partner primary schools and other schools and organisations in the local community who use our facilities, seven days a week. As a school that is currently benefiting from the New Opportunities Fund (NOF), which is financing fast tracking the development of a new sports hall, we know that numbers will increase greatly when these facilities are completed.

During ten years of headship, I have seen physical education (PE) and sport having a positive impact on all aspects of the school's life. In local schools, and in other areas of the country that we have worked with over the years, through shared projects and more recently Beacon work, the picture is the same.

Many people who advocate the positive impact of sport are people who have either been, or are, able sports people. However, my own background as a child and an adult definitely does not reflect this. It has at times been a source of amusement that someone whose highest sporting achievement was coming second in an egg and spoon race at primary school, now leads a Sports College! However, my advocacy of the importance of sport comes

from its contribution to the areas that I hold dear as a long-term educator in the inner city. Firstly, the importance of the development of the achievement, potential and self-esteem of all young people, regardless of the challenges they face, whether through their social background, physical disability, learning needs, gender or ethnicity. Secondly, the importance of the development of an inclusive school community which encourages young people to respect each other's faiths and cultures, positively understand and respect differences, to see beyond another's disabilities and to celebrate and enjoy being part of a diverse environment.

As a co-educational Sports College and Beacon School, in which over three quarters of our students come from ethnic minorities, two thirds have English as an additional language and includes students with a range of learning and physical challenges, including autism and visual impairment, it has been vital to us that our involvement in sport helps to enhance and promote the achievements of all these young people across all aspects of their academic, personal and social development.

Success in developing these areas impacts not only on our school ethos but on our local community where, apart from our local football club on a Saturday afternoon, we are the largest concentration of adults and young people. What we achieve, and how we work together in partnership with primary schools and the wider local community, has a significant impact on social cohesion and confidence locally.

I am confident that our development as a Sports College and more recently as a pilot for the School Sport Co-ordinator (SSCo) programme, has consistently supported our continual raising of achievement and the development of a socially inclusive and culturally harmonious ethos. Our sports work was most recently recognised by Ofsted, as contributing to our development as a very successful school, with well above value added outcomes at GCSE:

*“The school’s status as a Sports College has had a strong influence on improvement, particularly in the way it supports pupils’ learning and involves the community.”*  
*Ofsted, 2001*

Research by a range of bodies, including higher education institutions, the Youth Sport Trust and the Technology Colleges Trust, has highlighted positive developments in Sports Colleges across the country. The nature of sports activities and teaching has meant that whilst there is an emphasis on developing individual skills, the majority of activities also involve a strong ethos of teamwork and collaboration. This has meant that partnerships with other schools and community organisations often already existed and could be further developed. The skills and willingness to develop new partnerships were readily available. This has meant that new resources from the Government can be used in a very focussed manner.

**What are the ways in which sports have impacted on school improvement?**

*Achievement*

Raising standards has to be the key aim of all school improvement strategies and projects. Whether promoting health, encouraging participation or developing social inclusion, the end result needs to have some impact on what individual students achieve in their literacy and numeracy skills, in the range of academic tests and exams and in staying on rates post-16. A wide range of research has shown sport impacts on all of these areas.

Research carried out for the Technology Colleges Trust by Professor David Jesson of York University in 1999-2000 showed specialist schools achieving considerably better results (52%) at GCSE than was predicted from their Key Stage 3 results (46.5%). The 52% compares with 41.5% for all other comprehensive schools. The analysis also showed that specialist schools are improving their results at approaching double the rate for all other comprehensives. For Sports Colleges good added value has been shown and it is particularly important to note many are in areas of considerable deprivation and challenge.

Our experience, which reflects what is happening generally in Sports Colleges and other schools with a strong sporting participation, is that sport impacts considerably on motivation and involvement of young people across the ability range and subsequently on their overall achievement.

These include:

- Development of team work and collaboration, developed in the PE curriculum and activities, impacting on the way young people work in the classroom across their studies.
- Development of leadership skills, encouraging young people to participate in developing a positive working ethos in their schools.
- Better collaboration between primary and secondary schools, through school sport co-ordinators. This has meant the development of skills and improved teaching of sport in both phases and more widely encouraged sharing of good practice at the transition stage.
- Strong links with the citizenship and equality curriculum, both through participation in projects such as Kick Racism out of Football, Girls in Sport, and in the development of sports leadership projects such as Step into Sport.
- Strong links to the national literacy strategy, e.g. through schools and football clubs working together on literacy schemes and feeding into improvements, reflected in approaching the national targets.
- Sporting links and opportunities with further and higher education that give pathways post-16 for more young people, ultimately helping to raise staying on rates and providing sports related jobs.
- A clear demonstration that the more young people are involved in sporting activities the more their self-esteem and confidence grows and they are able to take on academic challenges. All of us can identify young people who would have been disaffected or non-attenders who have achieved really creditable results, largely through participating in sports activities and teams and having the support and guidance of coaches and teachers. Some of these young people have even gone on to participate at regional or national level and become role models for others.
- Enhanced teaching and learning strategies being developed through sport, using ICT and cross curricular projects such as the England and Wales Cricket Board's First Innings.

- Greater parental links through their involvement as spectators/supporters or through the increasing number of coaching opportunities. This is a good link to becoming involved in the wider aspects of school life and supporting their children's learning.
- The positive impact that involvement in a sporting activity has on the disaffected, potential excludee or non-attender, affects not only these young people but ultimately all young people in having a positive rather than a disruptive atmosphere in which all can study and learn effectively.

In my own school, which has a very low rate of exclusion, a wide range of sporting activities have undoubtedly been a significant factor in 'holding on' to challenging students and leading them into more positive lifestyles.

We have been able to consistently show added value in relation to raising our young peoples' experience and the skills, positive atmosphere and active involvement of young people in sport has made a major contribution. When we held the last meeting of our Student Sports Councillors, the room was packed with young people contributing ideas and working to initiate activities. The profile of these young people was diverse, including young people from a range of ethnic backgrounds and all levels of ability. All were contributing ideas and proposals for developing an inclusive ethos.

### **Social inclusion**

Whilst the wider issue of social inclusion is addressed in a separate paper, it is important to highlight the impact sports has on developing a socially inclusive ethos in school. This impacts directly on raising achievement in schools but also on the local communities around schools.

The Sports College initiative, NOF and the SSCO programme have all greatly helped to develop opportunities for extra curricular activities for our young people and their parents, those in partner primary schools and others in the local community. The resources enable the school to open in the evenings, at weekends and in the holidays, offering a wide range of team and individual activities and coaching. Hundreds of young people attend these sessions. They include young people with disabilities and from across the diverse ethnic groups of the school and area. The SSCO programme here, targets

2,500 young people across 20 primary and four secondary schools.

The PE and sport teaching team is diverse and can be culturally sensitive, and hence attracts groups, e.g. young women from Asian backgrounds, who are often not involved in sports activities. We have also been able to involve and train coaches from different ethnic groups who have targeted young people who would not normally participate and those who might have been involved in negative activities outside the school day. Coaches from the African/Caribbean and Asian communities offer focussed and relevant activities and have also been able to train some of the young people to become helpers and move on to coaching training. Some of these young people are now working to gain entry to post-school courses that will enable them to take up full time or part time sports positions. The school is a major resource in the area and sports funding has been an important factor.

The impact on the school and others participating can be seen in a number of ways:

- Participation in sport has impacted on crime levels in the area. With the highest participation ever in the summer sports school, levels of anti-social behaviour in the area dropped significantly.
- The levels of girls participation has greatly increased and we believe does link with low levels of teenage pregnancy. Involvement in sports activities and clubs provide alternative sources of support and involvement.
- Cultural harmony in the school has been praised by Ofsted, the Social Exclusion Unit and the Commission for Racial Equality. Participation in sport strongly contributes to this. Young people work collaboratively together, spend time in activities outside the school day and learn more about each other. Parents from diverse groups come together in support of their children and indeed participate in some activities, e.g. fitness training and netball.
- Many of these activities feed into schemes such as the Department for Education and Skills Millennium Volunteers programme and involve young people improving their schools and communities through participation and developing their citizenship skills.

- School based mentors have developed boxing opportunities on site with a number of boys who present a challenge and are at the edges of disruptive behaviour outside of school. They are now linking in to the work of the local policy community sports activities outside the school day. The scheme helps keep these boys positively involved in school and beyond and is impacting on their literacy and achievement.

Many of these opportunities link to other aspects of Government spending and enhance the impact. One of our mentors (a parent from the African Caribbean community) employed through the Excellence in Cities project has developed her skills further through coaching young women in our school and the local community. She has encouraged young women who would previously have not been involved, to participate in a netball club in the evenings and at weekends. They are now feeding players into the county side and participating in national events. The impact on their confidence and self-esteem is highly significant and has impacted on their achievement and probable long-term education involvement.

These improvements are being reflected in schools across the country, whether they are in areas of conflict between different communities or long term employment. Sports activities based in schools are impacting on opportunities, confidence, social cohesion and achievement of young people. For some young people they may be the only experience they have of social and community involvement.

### **Health**

If young people develop a healthy lifestyle early on, the potential for ill health later in life and consequent costs to society are lessened. A healthy young person is going to attend school more regularly and consequently be more able to achieve. Sport plays a major part in having healthy lifestyles through developing fitness, encouraging participation and helping young people develop self-esteem.

Child obesity is on the increase as is the prevalence of mental health issues amongst adolescents. Many young people are not participating in activities outside the home and whilst the growth of ICT is welcome, undoubtedly one of the negative impacts is the time spent in sedentary individual activity.

Similarly the number of adults failing to take minimum levels of activity to keep fit has also grown and has long term implications for health care.

We have found that whilst lack of facilities is a barrier to participation and greatly welcome NOF resources to improve the situation, other factors have an impact. Lack of confidence affects both young people and adults, and often prevents them making that first step to developing personal fitness. Sports Colleges have been able, through the additional resources, to work on new strategies to address this. We have been able to address many girls reservations by introducing more fitness activities and adopting practices that are more culturally sensitive, e.g. being flexible on the clothes allowed for sports and being aware of the customers of different faiths and accommodating them in the sports programme. We are then able to disseminate this positive way of working into other schools and sporting organisations, helping to greatly increase participation.

Many parents have been happy to come to classes based at the school, but would have reservations about going to a fitness centre or even a council facility. They may feel self conscious about their level of fitness or body image. The school is able to work with them and often provide pathways into other local facilities and activities. By encouraging these adults to become healthier, we also help them become more confident and able to participate in school life and likelier to enjoy improved health and life expectancy. What is good for the individual is also good for the school.

A further aspect of our work with primary schools is the contribution to health. In the SSCo programme the skills of primary teachers delivering the PE curriculum is being developed and new activities are being introduced through the secondary outreach work. This will not only be beneficial whilst the children are in school but will build skills and interest in a wide range of sports. We have been able to work with a range of national governing bodies of sport across a range of sports including football, cricket, tennis and rugby who are working to make their sports interesting and attractive for the earlier years of education. The seeds are being sown for active adult participation.

Sports Colleges across the country are involved in a range of positive developments impacting on health. Many of these schools work in areas

that are Health Action Zones, including ourselves. Our work on developing positive lifestyles has involved our students, students in our feeder primary schools, other secondary schools in the area and their feeder primary schools, parents and other adults and young people in the local community. A particular strength has been our work with the Asian community, where a number of health issues have been highlighted.

Overall the range of activities we have developed which have had a positive impact on health have included:

- An annual sports convention for female students in all the secondary schools in the LEA. This has particularly targeted the less active girls, involving them in activities to promote health and lifestyle.
- Aerobics, football, Tai Chi, Indian classical dance, table tennis, netball and tennis are available for local adults, impacting on their health. Parents are particularly encouraged to be involved.
- We run a Saturday morning fitness group for Asian women.
- There are tennis sessions for the over 50s and we have worked with the University of East London on a range of activities targeting the elderly to help them to maintain mobility. Our students have assisted and contact between the young and the elderly has been strengthened.
- Participation in the national Girls in Sport programme developed by the Youth Sport Trust and Nike, developed materials and strategies that would encourage girls to 'Eat Well, Play Well = Stay Well' by participating in sports and fitness activities. It has a particular emphasis on body image and self-confidence.
- As part of the Healthy Schools Initiative we have worked in partnership with local health organisations and researchers to identify and explore areas of concern and to help address them.

This work helps to address many of the health targets for our area of London. Research in the school by several health research organisations showed that our young people had above average confidence, self-esteem and self-image

and were more actively involved in a range of extra curricular activities. The consequent impact on raising their achievement has been clear to us. Sport impacting on health is additionally making a positive impact on school improvement.

### **Partnerships**

Through involvement in the sports initiatives and activities described, we have developed links with other services that have greatly benefited the school. We work in partnership with our LEA and other council services and within the Local Strategic Partnership, to place sport and its benefits at the heart of local improvement.

We work with higher education on action research into improving teaching and learning, young peoples health, parental involvement and inclusion. We work with our local community forum, other local schools, from nursery to post-16, to improve and develop teaching and learning.

We work with NGBs to influence and help develop policy and practice, e.g. work with the Lawn Tennis Association to help develop tennis in the inner cities and open it up to more participants from ethnic minority communities.

Schools with a strong sports emphasis have always worked with other schools and community organisations through sports fixtures and events. They have been well placed to take on new partnerships and make them work, benefiting the schools and the wider community and addressing many national priorities.

### **The future**

The increased funding and support from the Treasury for school sport is very welcome. It will enable us all to build on the proven positive practice that has been developed particularly within Sports Colleges and the SS Co programme.

The development of new facilities, particularly through NOF, will open up opportunities for young people across the country, but will particularly help in areas of high deprivation whether in the cities or in rural areas.

In education, the impact of sport on raising standards, developing citizenship, improving health and well being, supporting social inclusion and the inclusion of young people with disabilities, and increasing parental involvement will continue at a greater pace.

The role of sport in supporting the improvement of education and the delivery of the Government's economic and social policies will be further strengthened and rightly so.



## **Introduction**

Sport is a powerful tool for the regeneration of communities environmentally, economically and socially. It delivers dramatic changes to our landscape our opportunities and the lives of individuals and communities.

It has the power to transcend the ordinary because of the power of the subject and its ability to evoke emotional response and human engagement in a way that other levers for regeneration quite simply cannot do. Thereby it provides the basis for life changing experiences in breathtakingly transformed environments which impact on prosperity and well being.

Sport has the ability to contribute across the entire regeneration agenda. The examples used in this pamphlet showcase contributions to crime abatement, youth intervention, tackling health concerns, educational attainment and racial harmony as well as wealth creation.

Sport is such a very special force for good if resourced, harnessed, nurtured, cherished, celebrated and evaluated, it could deliver even greater investment and rewards for our future.

### **Case Studies in Regeneration: Economic, Environmental and Social**

The impact of real examples is evident in the case studies chosen.

The methodology applied has been to separate the “story” from the statistics. Care has been taken to quantify wherever possible outcomes as well as outputs in separate fact boxes.

The economic and environmental benefits of the examples used have been immense. Care has been taken to measure the outcomes in terms of hectares reclaimed or jobs created.

Most care though, has been taken not to sanitise the subject, not to lose the sense of heartbeat and community which differentiates and elevates sport. The style deliberately tries to capture the power of the subject – whether it be the sob of a young offender – who achieved nothing at school – on opening his examination results telling him that he is now a qualified Grade 1 Lawn

Tennis Association Coach – or the Saturday roar of a 48,000 soccer stadium which has transformed dereliction and decay into a glorious amphitheatre staging performances resulting in delight and despair and creating 1,850 jobs in the process.

Those who in trying to sell the case for sport, and forget its soul are missing the point.

### **Ripple Effects of Regeneration at Silksworth, Sunderland**

The four outdoor tennis courts languished in the shadow of the pile of acrid, smoking shale which burned continuously at 1,200°C. Silksworth Colliery site, with its 67.5 hectares of partially flooded derelict land, became Europe's largest reclamation and regeneration scheme in 1971. A £1.3 million derelict land grant enabled the ground to be cleared. The development started with five playing fields and two lakes. Over the years it has evolved and is now a unique complex featuring a 153 metres ski slope (built on a hill of now cool shale), BMX track, athletics track, adventure playground and floodlit Omniturf playing area. A £600,000 Tyne and Wear County Council grant was used to relocate the previous colliery welfare tennis courts to what is now a major indoor tennis facility on the Silksworth site.

### **Partnerships – Sport and the Community**

Sunderland City Council, in partnership with Puma UK, the Lawn Tennis Association, Sport England and the local community, delivered the scheme. It has the largest tennis centre in the region and is a magnet for both the local community and talented young players across the region. It is also home to the North-East Wheelchair Tennis Squad. But the ex-miners who had worked alongside the development group will most rejoice in the fact that the site is now a centre of excellence for their sports - and that they were an integral part of the team who nurtured the project. Drawing the community into the regeneration of their physical and social environment is a principle which is fundamental to ownership and long term success.

Those involved listened, cherished and regenerated a cultural activity which was precious to the community. The history and transformation of the area is captured in visual display in a multi-purpose Heritage Room at the site.

The development continues today with outreach teams of tennis development officers working in local schools. Biddick School staff in Washington were particularly proactive and obtained a Community Tennis Partnership with the LTA, then applied to the DfEE for Specialist Sports College Status. The school was the first in the North-East to receive it. It was then invited to pilot the then Department for Education and Employment Masterclass programme – tennis development officers now train youngsters from 17 feeder primary schools across four year groups. The DfEE has awarded Biddick and the local authority Active School Partnerships status.

### **Environmental and Economic Impact**

Meanwhile the demise of the burning pit heap and its regeneration into a spectacularly beautiful green space led to private sector housing investment overlooking the former colliery. 348 houses and investment in improved infrastructure led to a £14 million commercial investment. One street is actually called Ski View (it sounds better than Pit Heap Terrace). The vegetable and dahlia packed allotments, originally created for the miners who had no gardens, nestle next to the estate. Sainsbury's has built a supermarket which currently employs 230 part-time and 34 full-time staff.

The four shale tennis courts have made way for an exemplar regeneration project born out of a pressing need for neighbourhood renewal and economic prosperity. The ripple effect of regeneration – with sport at the heart.

**Fact file**

**Cost:** £5,470,000 (£20 million today's value)

**Jobs created:** 85 part-time, full-time and casual staff on the complex.

Sainsbury's employ 230 part-time and 34 full-time staff

**Funding:** £2.1 million from Tyne and Wear County Council, ITI Phase 1 and 2 Tennis Centre, National Lottery, Durham and Cleveland I.T.A. Sport England.

Housing Investment and Infrastructure: £14 million

**Partners:** DoE, Sport England, LTA, North of England Ski Association, Durham and Cleveland LTA, the community of Silksworth

**Output:** Visits to Silksworth Sports Complex, 1999: 335,000 Local; regional, national and international competitions at Complex, 1999: 54 including 1 international and 16 national events.

**Awards:** The Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors' Award for the design of the reclamation and development of a contaminated site (1986) and LTA Indoor Tennis Centre of the Year (1991)

*“A key element of our success in bidding for designation and subsequent identification as one of the country's leading sports colleges has been the active partnership between the school and the Council. Support from its sports development team has significantly extended and enhanced the already excellent provision. It is clear that without the partnership the opportunities for primary and secondary schoolchildren and the wider sporting community would be seriously affected!”*

*Bob Stone, Deputy Headteacher, Biddick Specialist Sports College.*

*“Partnership between the Lawn Tennis Association and Sunderland City Council is one which the LTA would like to emulate throughout the country. Since 1988 the Council has had a vision and commitment to change the local community's perception of tennis, from an elitist middle class game, to a sport which is accessible to all. This has been achieved through massive regeneration through facilities and partnerships with commercial, sports, government and voluntary organisations.”*

*Phillip Sandilands, Director of Facilities, Lawn Tennis Association.*

### **Premier League Regeneration**

Sunderland Association Football Club has an excellent reputation for working with communities. The Club uses the sport of soccer to engage with young people in order to communicate key messages and motivate young people to learn.

Its community workers and the players themselves deliver coherent messages about lifestyle, learning and health in a very ‘unworthy’ manner. The Club Captain has promoted school meals in television advertisements positioning good nutrition and participation in sport as being crucial to producing premiership athletes. The Club has a long tradition of motivating school children to attend school and not truant by having a loyalty scheme linked to free match tickets. The Club’s ‘classrooms’ deliver curriculum English and Maths in a stimulating environment.

One of the greatest contributions to regeneration however was the building of the Stadium of Light.

Inter Milan, Barcelona, Real Madrid, Feyenoord and Bayern Munich have all taken part in free-of-charge, under 19 football festivals at Silkworth Sports Complex in Sunderland. The local Council looks after no fewer than 73 football pitches, they have hosted National Mini Soccer Festivals – and thousands of youngsters have learned about sport, teamwork, kicking out racism in free classroom sessions at Sunderland AFC.

Yes, the region is football crazy and it is scoring goals on many fronts. Partnership with the 123 year-old Club via Football in the Community encourages children to eat healthily and stay fit – the Club has free use of fitness facilities and in exchange first team players promote healthy eating and school meals. The Sport in Schools initiative means the club delivers most of the football development and coaching to the City’s schools plus lessons in life skills (the Club has won the Community Club of the Year Award).

All of these things were taken into consideration when the Taylor Report signalled the end of the Club’s life at Roker Park. The Club had plans to develop a stadium and retail park on green belt land several miles out of the City Centre. However, the derelict former Wearmouth Colliery site, on the

north side of the city, was identified as an excellent setting for such a major development. The demise of the shipyards had left sad and ugly scars on the riverside landscape. When the club agreed to move to the site the Stadium of Light became a major part of the regeneration not only of the colliery site but served as a catalyst to regeneration of the city centre itself and the renewal of pedestrian flow from the town to the river.

The stadium is also served by two Metro stations, part of the new extension of the Tyneside Metro, increasing accessibility and promoting use of public transport.

The design of the new £18 million stadium is inspired by the north east's traditional industries – coalmining, shipbuilding and glass manufacture. When the two most recent extensions are complete the stadium will seat around 52,000 making it one of the largest in England.

#### **Fact File**

**Cost:** Reclamation £5 million, Construction £2.5 million, Car Park £1 million, Misc. Works £500,000,

Cost of Main Stadium £15 million, Construction of the North Stand £6.9 million, Construction of South Stand (not yet started) up to £10 million

**Jobs:** 1,850 full and part-time

**Funding:** Bob Murray £2 million, Term Loan £3 million, Sponsorship £3.5 million, Sale of Roker Park £550,000

**Visitors:** Attendance per match (average) 38,724

**Grants:** Football Trust £3.25 million, FA Contribution £250k

*“The Club’s partnership has led to innovative regeneration on a massive scale. Ultimately the main benefactors of this long-standing relationship and this superb development are those we all want to satisfy – the people of Sunderland and the communities of the north east.”*

*Bob Murray, Chairman SAFC.*

## **Neighbourhood Renewal Through Sport**

Focussed thematic neighbourhood renewal projects are proving to be most successful in delivering the complex cocktail of social regeneration needs.

Hendon in the North East of England is one example of working with one highly deprived community to help itself whilst physically regenerating a derelict area.

High mortality rates, 85% of residents using their GP within the last month, 74% households with no car, 87% unemployment, 29% of children in single-parent families, crippling crime levels and an isolated growing ethnic population – a vivid picture of life in the East End of Sunderland begins to emerge.

The City of Sunderland Partnership has successfully made bids under the Government's New Deal for Communities scheme and a massive East End regeneration plan is underway.

But in spite of its many problems, the area has traditionally had a strong community spirit. In 1997 its community forum, Hendon 2000, applied to Sport England for sports facility funding. Sport England asked for a repackaged proposal with the Council as the lead agency.

### **A £6m centre of excellence**

The new Raich Carter Sports Centre opened in 2001. It has training facilities, children's play area, swimming pool, sports hall, state-of-the-art fitness suite, full size synthetic floodlit pitch, exercise studio, soft play area, bar/meeting rooms and an ICT suite.

#### **Aim:**

The centre will harness a major enhancement of sporting facilities to community regeneration through sports opportunities and the creation of an exemplary centre and a symbol of optimism for the future of Hendon and Sunderland.

**Objectives:**

1. to address the strategic needs for a major sports facility in a deprived area of the city that will also serve the city as a whole
2. to promote and develop sport in the community
3. to provide an example of design excellence for a multi-use sports facility
4. to integrate sport and the activities of the centre with other regeneration initiatives in the area to contribute positively towards addressing issues such as youth crime, poor health and poor environmental quality
5. to create employment for local residents

**Its key role in regeneration**

The Back on the Map Partnership in the East End has successfully bid for £54m worth of New Deal for Communities funding. It is committed to delivering set targets around five main themes, including health. The centre is involved in its operation and working groups and is vital to helping it deliver its objectives.

**Other reasons why Raich Carter Sports Centre is a winner!**

Well, you could ask the local deaf society, or the kids who are excluded from school, or the autistic youngsters who feel they've found a home where they're not stared at and ridiculed. Or you could pop down at one in the morning and see the young Bangladeshi men enjoying a game of football (they all work in local restaurants and takeaways and once the last chicken tikka's been served up and washed up, they head down to Raich Carter!) and in a few weeks' time you could ask their wives – who usually only meet in each other's homes – how they enjoyed their first experience of swimming in a public pool (screened off and perhaps wearing leotards instead of full length clothes).

Or you could chat to the mums who do a workout in the gym while their youngsters are having fun in the crèche. Or to the dads who pop down with the kids after school for a game of badminton. Or the 70 or so Age Concern pensioners who turn up twice a week for a swim.

Inclusion and integration are at the very centre of Raich Carter. Staff blew up balloons to make the first visit by mums and children from the city's women's refuge that bit special. Deaf children who came to swim as an exclusive group now join other youngsters in the soft play area. Asylum seekers have been

actively sought out and now regularly use the gym facilities with other residents. Deaf adults used to ask for their own swimming sessions but now they mix with other swimmers, too.

Staff noticed one young lad who regularly arrived at 4pm and stayed until closing time at 10pm. They saw him finishing off half eaten bags of crisps and the dregs from other people's discarded Coke cans. They actually started to pay for him to join in the activities but realised the problems were far deeper than just money. They were right. Ronnie was nine years old, experimenting with drugs, in trouble with the police, living in an unstable family and on the "at risk" register. So they talked with Social Services who were aware of his situation and quite amazed that the centre staff wanted to be involved in helping him – to a lot of people he just spelled trouble.

### **Community inspired**

The origins of this centre, show that it is rooted in the community, continually fuelled by community aspirations, is responsive to its needs, is accountable to it as a stakeholder and encourages participation at every level.

### **The raising of community spirit**

The very fact that the Sports Lottery Fund was willing to invest £4.9 million in a sports centre in one of the neediest areas of the country came as a tremendous boost to the East Enders of Sunderland. They had taken body blow after body blow but the lottery believed in what they were trying to accomplish!

Much thought went into the design of the building which stands as a powerful symbol of regeneration. It is architecturally stunning and has the respect of the community, largely because it conceived it, gave birth to it and continues to nurture it. This is demonstrated by its low levels of vandalism. Since it opened it has only suffered one broken window and a broken cycle rail – and that's in an area of high crime (20,600 recorded crimes per 100,000 population compared to 11,620 across the city and 10,111 nationally).

The DCMS Policy Action Team 10 report concludes that sport has a beneficial social impact and can contribute to neighbourhood renewal. It produces well-being, increased confidence, team spirit and inclusion. It's a great diversionary tool for young people. The fact that hundreds of people from

the East End are enjoying sport every day of the week must have a positive effect on community spirit.

From its opening on May 31 to the end of the financial year on March 31, it had 210,764 attendances. It has 6,700 members – 4,056 are local people. Its management committee negotiated New Deal for Communities funding so free membership could be offered to local residents. The queue went out of the building and into the car park – as a result almost half are now members. Negotiations are currently underway to extend free membership to every resident.

It is a community focal point. Weekends are booked out months in advance for children's parties (they hold eight per weekend); over 1,300 young people attended a modern apprentice day; over 1,100 local adults turned out for a Post 16 learning week; local interest groups use meeting room facilities; there are 47 user groups including every school in the area. It has strong links with other community projects, adding to an already cohesive approach to the area's regeneration.

#### **Accountable and Responsive to Local Stakeholders**

The centre is managed by a company specifically set up for the task. It comprises of five local councillors, two representatives from Hendon 2000, a member of the local business sector and a representative from the centre user group. The council's head of indoor recreation is company secretary. It employs all staff, sets performance targets and sets policy direction. The fact that local people are recognised as equal partners and help to manage it has further boosted community spirit and confidence.

#### **Viability and Sustainability in the Longer Term**

The city council is committed to meet the annual net deficit (£186,286 in 2001/2002) by grant payment. Income exceeded projections for 2001/02 by £2,000. New income targets are set annually by the board and all three assistant managers receive individual targets.

The first round of New Deal for Communities funding for free membership (see above) released £57,000 into the centre's account. The next is to run for three years and will produce an annual payment of £54,000 if free membership is appropriated.

The centre is proactive in attracting users. It sits on the same road as a handful of major employers and has negotiated corporate memberships deals with three of them. Alternatively, it responded when a small local garage applied on behalf of its ten staff.

The centre is future-proofed in that the city council would take over its management if the need ever arose.

### **Addressing local needs identified by the local community**

The centre sees flexibility as one of the keys to its success. It has created its own slogan... 'we're a can-do centre... and if we can we will!' When it first opened, hundreds of local people flocked to the 'come and try it day' and the centre refused to take block bookings for the first four weeks. Instead it ran a flexible programme in response to local demand to establish both general and specific need. Consultation is ongoing.

Other highlights showing consultation and responsiveness include:

- The setting up of the centre's first Royal Life Saving Society course which will lead to poolside qualifications so local people – particularly Bangladeshi young men who have expressed a keen interest – can find employment or alternative employment (even within the centre itself).
- In October the centre is linking with Hendon 2000, which runs the ICT suite, to do an e-vote project in local schools. Programmes will be created in the suite and trained local people will then take a bank of laptops to local schools for children to use. They will give their views on the preceding summer programme and what they'd like during the next holiday break.
- The user group and the centre recently sent out 3,500 questionnaires to local schools about options for a new membership deal – there was a 17.1% return. The same questionnaire has appeared in Eastwise the local community publication – results are still coming in. The local community has also expressed a need for pricing deals – the centre is introducing a series of combination activity offers as a result.

- The use of an all-weather pitch as a temporary playground for a school next to the centre – its new premises are currently under construction on the same site.
- The introduction of football from 1am-3am for local Bangladeshi restaurant workers.
- A taster aqua fit and swim session for Bangladeshi women.
- The provision of an instructor in the fitness room for one-to-one advice/instruction.
- Early opening – this one was trialled unsuccessfully but would be introduced again if demand increases!
- A signer works alongside our swimming instructors during sessions with the local deaf society.
- It has signed up as a centre for work experience for youngsters from local schools.
- There are plans to run an exercise-on-referral scheme in which local GPs refer some patients for exercise to boost their health.

### **Demonstrate a proven track record of success**

Hard evidence of improved health and lifestyle, reduced crime and other positive social impact will become more apparent as initiatives within the city unfold.

Back on the Map has clear targets to fulfil. So, too, has Sunderland's innovative Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA) which has placed young people as a cross cutting theme. A raft of challenging stretch targets has been agreed between the council and government and Raich Carter will help their realisation.

However, Sunderland takes the view that every person who walks through the doors of Raich Carter Sports Centre is a sign of its success. Little Clayton Hill,

aged ten, used to play out on the unsafe streets after school. Now he swims with his group of friends. Thomas Smith's whole family use it. It is a living, breathing example of community-led regeneration which truly is making a difference where it really counts – in the everyday lives of people in the neighbourhood

### **Factfile**

**Cost:** £6,125,000 (excl. land value and VAT)

**Jobs Created:** 30 full and part time

**Funding:** Lottery Sports Fund £4,972,000,

Football Association £25,000,

Northern Electric £10,000,

Barclays Bank £30,000,

City of Sunderland £1,088,000

*“Raich Carter Sports Centre is a tremendous example of what can be achieved when the local authority and the local community work together. That partnership was vital to the realisation of the community's dreams”*

*Kevin Marquis, Volunteer and Board Member Hendon 2000.*



## Introduction

The purpose of this paper is not to present robust evidence for the claimed positive social impacts of sports participation – much current evidence is anecdotal, limited and rarely definitive (Coalter et al, 2000; Long and Sanderson, 1998; Collins et al, 1999; Witt and Crompton, 1996; Strategy Unit/DCMS, 2002). Paradoxically, the apparent theoretical strength and coherence of the description of sport’s potentially positive contributions has led to a widespread failure to undertake systematic monitoring and evaluation - theory permits the assumption of outcomes. Although this paper is not concerned with the measurement of the effects of sports participation, it is essential not to underestimate the substantial methodological difficulties involved in this necessary task (Coalter, 2002; Taylor et al, 1999).

This paper outlines the theoretical potential of sport to contribute to the current social inclusion and community regeneration agenda. It suggests that there is indicative evidence of sport’s potential, which can be improved greatly via a clearer view of the nature of sport, a better understanding of the personal and social issues which it seeks to address, robust monitoring and evaluation to inform policy and practice, new ways of working and a more proactive, needs-based, approach which seeks to manage for outcomes. Some of the implications of this analysis are summarised in a quote from a report by the Leisure and Environmental Protection Department of Newport County Borough Council (1999, p 4):

*“While sport can have a positive role to play in addressing social cohesion, this is unlikely to happen if it is organised, or promoted along conventional lines. Engaging the most disaffected...can best be achieved through the deployment of a combination of community development and sports development resource”.*

Consequently the paper seeks to address a number of questions:

- What is the presumed contribution of sport and why is it assumed that sport can make such a contribution?
- How does sport have such impacts? Do we have sufficient evidence on which to base policy and practice?

- Are such impacts inevitable, or do we need to manage for outcomes?
- Can sport achieve such strategic policy objectives on its own, or is there a need for systematic partnership working?

Firstly, it is worth briefly examining the broader social policy context which has set the new policy agenda for sport.

### **The changing policy context and the potential relevance of sport**

Central to the so-called ‘third way’ (the development of a politics between the state and the market) is a multi-faceted concern with the strengthening of the institutions of civil society. Reflecting the work of Putnam (Putnam, 2000) there is a desire to strengthen both social capital (the social relations within communities and between communities and the wider society) and human capital (self-esteem, self-organisation, employability). The core desire is to move social policy and provision from a simple ‘redistributionist’ approach, which promotes ‘passive citizenship’, to the promotion and enabling of ‘active citizenship’.

This is reflected in a broad shift from viewing urban regeneration largely in economic/infrastructural terms to one which places more emphasis on the development of people (see Table 1). In this approach emphasis is placed on social processes and on ways to enhance social cohesion and the organisational capacities of communities. For example, Giddens (2000, p 104) has argued that the new policy agenda is less concerned with “gradations of inequality” than with “mechanisms that act to detach groups from the mainstream” – with ‘connectedness’.

**Table 1. Changing policy context**

Urban regeneration	▶	Community Development
Physical infrastructure	▶	Civic infrastructure
Housing		Capacity building
Capital investment		Social cohesion
(Jobs)		Social capital
Redistributioninst	▶	Relational
		Social integrationist
		'connectedness'
Passive citizenship	▶	Active citizenship

Issues of 'social cohesion' are addressed by strengthening the social and civic infrastructure of communities (Forrest and Kearns, 1999). Investment is made in programmes and processes which develop social capital, skills, confidence, self-organisational capacity and strengthen social networks. Thomas (1995, p2) provides a useful working definition of this approach:

*“Community development is the strengthening of the social resources and processes in a community, by developing those contacts, relationships, networks, agreements and activities outside the household that residents themselves identify will make their locality a better place in which to live and work”.*

The increased emphasis on facilities which promote social contact and a variety of social and recreational networks (Thomas, 1995) has clear implications for sport (and all cultural services) (Coalter, 2002). For example, Collins et al (1999) suggest that sport and physical recreation can provide personal opportunities for socialising and integration, with associated communal benefits of increased community coherence. The Hillary Commission suggests that sport contributes to social cohesion by facilitating the building of social networks, increases a general sense of satisfaction with the community and provides opportunities for co-operation and participation.

The Policy Action Team 10 report (DCMS, 1999) adopted a more ambitious agenda by arguing that sport can contribute to “neighbourhood renewal by improving communities’ performance on four key indicators – health, crime, employment and education”. In Scotland the *Social Inclusion Strategy* stated that:

*“Arts, sport and leisure activities...have a role to play in countering social exclusion. They can help to increase the self-esteem of individuals; build community spirit; increase social interaction; improve health and fitness; create employment and give young people a purposeful activity, reducing the temptation to anti-social behaviour”.* Scottish Office, 1999, p 22.

This policy emphasis marks a shift away from traditional approaches based on developing sport *in* communities to the development of communities *through* sport - from a simple ‘sport for all’ philosophy to a concept of ‘sport for good’ (Caborn, 2002). However, this raises a number of significant questions about the nature of sport’s presumed contributions and the processes through which such impacts can be achieved. Such questions are not ‘academic’, but have major implications for both policy and provision. It is these issues to which we now turn.

### **Sport: structural properties and presumed outcomes**

The presumption that sport can contribute to community development, urban regeneration and the multi-faceted ‘social inclusion’ implies that participation in sport can produce outcomes which strengthen and improve certain weak, or negative, processes, structures and relationships thought to characterise deprived urban areas.

Academics have listed structural properties, processes and potential outcomes associated with participation in sport which may lead to a wide range of outcomes for participants (Keller et al, 1998; Svoboda, 1994; Wankel and Sefton, 1994; Reid et al, 1994; Collins et al, 1999) and these are broadly summarised in Table 2.

**Table 2. Potential outcomes of sports participation**

- (i) Physical fitness and health
- (ii) Mental health/psychological well-being  
Anxiety/stress/sense of well-being
- (iii) Personality development  
Self-concept/self-esteem/confidence/improved focus of control
- (iv) Socio-psychological benefits  
Empathy/tolerance/social skills/team work
- (v) Sociological impacts  
Community identity/coherence/integration

The theoretical premise informing Table 2 is that improved *sporting outcomes* (increased participation) will lead to certain *intermediate outcomes* (i.e. positive impacts on participants); these will lead to certain attitudinal/behavioural changes (e.g. reduction in anti-social behaviour; improvement in educational performance, increased employability); that an accumulation of these changes will lead to broader *social outcomes* (e.g. social cohesion; general reduction in vandalism).

For example, Sport England (1999) suggests that the various outcomes of sports participation can contribute to the reduction in youth crime, improve fitness and health, reduce truancy and make a positive contribution to young people's attitude to learning, assist in community regeneration (especially by acting as a catalyst in multi-agency co-operation), improve the environment and provide opportunities for 'active citizenship' via volunteering.

However, as with any social processes, the outcomes in Table 2 are “only a possibility” (Svodba, 1994) – in fact the outcomes could equally be negative. Consequently, a direct linear effect between participation in sport and positive outcome cannot be assumed – even for such apparently strong and direct effects as improved fitness and health. For example, much of the research evidence relates to the health benefits of *physical activity*, rather than sport per se. Further, research suggests that even among those predisposed to sport, the frequency of activity required to achieve and sustain health benefits is unlikely to be possible for many (Roberts and Brodie, 1992).

Although there are strong *theoretical* grounds for assuming potentially positive individual and social outcomes, there is a widespread lack of systematic empirical research about *intermediate* and *social outcomes*. Perhaps even more importantly from a policy perspective, there is limited understanding of the mechanisms and processes via which such positive outcomes might be achieved in ‘real life’ situations.

This lack of robust evidence to underpin policy and provision does not imply that sport does *not* have the various impacts listed in Table 2. Rather, the absence of monitoring and evaluation data illustrates the urgent need for information on ‘best practice’ and a more widespread understanding of the processes underpinning successful outcomes.

Allied to this is a need for a clearer view of the nature of sport and its potential, combined with a better understanding of the nature and causes of the personal and social issues which it seeks to address.

### Types of sports

Just as the processes underpinning social exclusion and community deprivation are varied, so are the processes and relationships associated with sport. Despite this, in much of the public policy debate, the formal benefits of sports participation tend to be associated almost solely with traditional, competitive, team sports (ILAM, 1999; Department of National Heritage, 1995).

However, ‘sport’ is a collective noun which often obscures more than it reveals. Its potential variety is hinted at by the definition in the Council of Europe’s European Sports Charter:

*“Sport means all forms of physical activity which, through casual or organised participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental well-being, forming relationships or obtaining results in competitions at all levels.”*

Reflecting this, Table 3 illustrates that it is more appropriate to refer to sports and their wide range of processes, social relationships and presumed physical, psychological and sociological outcomes.

**Table 3. The variety of sports and processes**

- **Individual, partner and team**

Each is based on differing social processes and interactions, providing different experiences for participants.

- **Cognitive, motor and physical skills**

Rugby and hockey require an understanding of rules, strategy and spatial awareness; aerobics, gymnastics place a greater emphasis on motor skills; weightlifting places emphasis on physical skills.

- **Contact and non-contact**

- **Criterion-based or norm-based**

This relates to specific sports and, more generally, the way in which they are organised. Criterion-based activity enable participants to establish their own standards.

Norm-based approaches require participants to achieve standards of performance established by others. Research evidence suggests that for many vulnerable young people, criterion-based activities are more effective in developing self-esteem and confidence.

- **Competitive and recreational**

Nearly all sports can be undertaken as a recreational activity (in which winning and losing are relatively unimportant) or competitively (where winning and losing are central to the experience).

Such, often ignored, heterogeneity is regarded as a major strength by Sport England (1999), who state that “the wide diversity of activities sport offers enables individuals of all ages to participate at the level and intensity that suits them”. In terms of contributing to the solution of particular personal and social problems (low self-esteem; poor fitness and health, crime and vandalism, community fragmentation) it is best to regard sports as a series of *social relationships* and *social processes* in which it is assumed that certain types of learning, or ‘socialisation’, occur. From this perspective the main issues are: what *sports processes* produce what *outcomes* for which *sections of the population*, in what *circumstances*?

Such an approach permits the avoidance of traditional, sports-centred, ‘product-led’ approaches and the possibility of a needs-based approach, in which the needs of individuals, groups and communities are matched to *relevant* sports. As Patriksson (1998, p 128) has argued:

*“The point is that sport has the potential both to improve and inhibit an individual’s personal growth. The futility of arguing whether sport is good or bad has been observed by several authors. Sport, like most activities, is not a priori good or bad, but has the potential of producing both positive and negative outcomes. Questions like ‘what conditions are necessary for sport to have beneficial outcomes?’ must be asked more often”.*

The fact that positive outcomes are only ‘a possibility’ and may differ between sports illustrates that the formal listing of the inherent properties of sports ignores the vitally important distinction between *necessary conditions* (i.e. participation in sport) and *sufficient conditions* (the conditions under which the potential outcomes are achieved). Clearly it cannot be assumed that any or all of the range of benefits outlined in Table 2 will automatically be obtained in all circumstances by all participants – a wide range of other factors will be important, including:

### *Salience*

Participation in sport is just one of many things which people do, therefore its impact will depend on the relative *salience* of the experience and its associated values. Here, the diversity of sports is clearly a strength.

For example, for young people at risk there is evidence of the need for small-group or individual activities which are non-competitive, emphasise personally constructed goals and have a minimum of formal rules and regulations. Sugden and Yiannakis (1982) suggest that certain adolescents reject organised, competitive mainstream sport because it contains components similar to those which they have already failed to resolve – adherence to formal rules and regulations, achievement of externally defined goals and competitive and testing situations. Serok (1975) suggests that delinquents prefer games with fewer and less specified rules and with fewer requirements for conformity.

Further, despite a long term increase in aggregate levels of participation in sport and physical recreation, there are persistent and relatively stable socio-demographic differences. There is evidence that the differences are explained as much by culture, attitudes and values as they are by the more traditional ‘constraints’ perspective (cost of participation, lack of time, lack

of transport) (Coalter, 1993; Roberts and Brodie, 1992) – such factors need to be borne in mind when seeking to use sport to address wider social issues.

### *Nature and quality of experience*

The nature and extent of any effects will depend on the nature and quality of the experience. Sports are not a homogenous, standardised product – the nature of the experience of the same activity will be subject to wide variations. This raises important questions for provision, management and training – what is the optimal learning environment?

### *Participation: frequency, intensity and adherence*

Although these factors are especially important in order to obtain fitness and health benefits, they also have clear implications for the development of technical and social skills and the development of particular attitudes and values.

More generally there is a clear need to understand better the causes of the problems which sports-based programmes wish to address – to adopt ‘needs-based’ strategies and to *manage for outcomes*. For example, the causes of crime are many and complex (and not simply ‘opportunity-led’, as implied by many sports-based diversionary schemes). In this regard Utting (1996) argues that, to be successful and impact on the propensity to commit crime, programmes need to achieve at least some of the following:

- improvements in cognitive and social skills (see also Asquith et al, 1998);
- reductions in impulsiveness and risk-taking behaviour;
- raised self-esteem and self-confidence;
- improvements in education and employment prospects.

Utting’s (1996) emphasis on the need to address the development of transferable skills points not only to the potential of certain activities, but also the possible benefits for sport in entering into partnerships with other agencies – to include sport as an ingredient of wider developmental programmes.

### **Integrated development programmes and the salience of sport**

From this perspective the *salience of sport* for many young people permits it to be used as a medium to reach at-risk youth in a way that other agencies may be unable to do (Witt and Crompton, 1996; Crompton and Witt, 1997). This potential of this approach can be illustrated by two initiatives:

#### *Playing for success*

This programme links schools and socially deprived under-achieving pupils to learning centres within football clubs. One example is the ten week after-school hours programme provided by Leeds United Football Club – using the brand name of Leeds United to attract children with low self-esteem to high quality education classes (Leeds United Community, 1999). Subsequent testing of these pupils indicated substantial improvements in Key Stage 2 and 3 maths and reading and improved IT skills. School feedback indicated perceived improvements on motivation, self-esteem and confidence, literacy and numeracy and study skills (although there was a variation between schools in the evaluation of the strength of such changes).

However, the football components of this scheme appear to be more promotional than educational. The ‘brand’ of the football club and the high quality location of the Study Centre at Elland Road are clearly factors increasing the attractiveness of the programme and for many children represented a ‘value added’. However, the reasons for the apparent success of the Centre are almost wholly educational. The evaluation by the National Foundation for Educational Research (Sharp et al, 1999) suggests that the measured improvements result from such factors as a high ratio of staff to pupils, an informal, supportive atmosphere and encouragement from staff allowing pupils to make choices and develop independent study skills and pupils responding to incentives.

Nevertheless, although the learning outcomes are clearly related to a distinctive learning environment, the *Playing for Success* initiative illustrates the potential contribution which professional football clubs can make to multi-agency programmes aimed at wider aspects of personal, educational and social development.

### *Midnight Basketball Leagues*

Basketball is increasingly being used to 'take children off the streets' because it is low cost, requires a minimum infrastructure, is a family-orientated sport, provides access for all, has a low injury rate and, perhaps most important of all, has strong connections with wider aspects of youth culture, music and fashion. Wilkins (1997, p 60) claims that the Kansas City Night Hoops programme has produced "an overall 25 per cent decrease in crime" and that "other cities who run hoops programs report similar results".

However, these apparently positive results (and it is not clear that they can be related directly to the programmes) are not simply a function of participation in sport, but of a more complex process. As with *Playing for Success*, sport (basketball) is the key to making contact with at-risk youth. However, "the most urgent objective" was education and life learning (Wilkins, 1997, p 60). With basketball as the central attraction, the programme includes non-traditional education components which seek to develop employment skills, personal development, self-esteem, conflict resolution, health awareness and substance abuse prevention. The programmes are highly structured, with the provision of an identification card which is punched every time participants attend an education/life learning programme or event. Consequently, while sport plays a central role in this programme, the clear implication is that 'diversion' must be complemented by *development* and that sport cannot achieve the desired outcomes on its own, especially among those most at risk.

Such integrated approaches, combining diversion with development, are positively evaluated by Utting (1996, p 84), who suggests that sporting and leisure activities have a positive role to play as "ingredients in wider ranging prevention initiatives". The most promising programmes are regarded as those which both furnish some evidence of positive outcomes, but are also governed by a clear rationale and strategy for achieving their objectives. More importantly he suggests that programmes can only be successful if they are concerned with other aspects of young people's everyday lives, including school attendance, training opportunities and job-search and include follow-up work with participants in their own communities.

### **The way forward**

Despite some limited examples of best practice, for a number of reasons sport has not fully realised its potential contribution to a range of social issues. Based on existing evidence (Coalter et al, 2000), a number of steps need to be taken to increase the effectiveness of the contribution of sport to issues of urban deprivation and social inclusion.

### **Outcome evaluation and evidence based policy**

There is an urgent need to address issues of *outcome evaluation*, as the presumed theoretical benefits of sports remain largely unexplored. Where monitoring is undertaken, it mostly involves the collection of simple volume *output* measures of performance – classes provided, numbers attending, coaches qualified. Even at this level, much of the data is of limited value – with a widespread failure to differentiate between visits and people, little record of frequency of attendance and the extent to which the programmes have penetrated into the relevant communities, i.e. are ‘socially inclusive’.

Although there are major difficulties in measuring, some of the desired outcomes must be acknowledged – problems of attributing cause and effect, deciding on appropriate timescales within which some impact might be expected and resources to undertake such research all present significant problems (Coalter, 2002). If such investment is to be cost effective such information is vital (it should be noted that Sport England are currently undertaking major evaluations of the Sport Action Zones and Active Communities programmes).

### **From product-led to needs-based approaches**

The failure to address issues of outcomes is explained partly by the fact that most policy and practice is based on the supposed theoretical strength of the arguments for the inherent properties of sport and the *presumed* outcomes. This has often led to rather amorphous desired outcomes – increased community cohesion, civic pride, community spirit, personal confidence and sense of well-being. However, in order to *manage for outcomes* it is essential to design programmes more coherently, target resources more efficiently and address a variety of personal and social issues more effectively. To do this programmes must be based on a more in-depth understanding of the causes of the issues to be addressed, the rationale for provision and produce much

more precise statements of desired outcomes – there is a need to move from objective-led management to management by objectives.

To inform the design of programmes and achieve the optimal allocation of resources, there is a clear need to recognise that such effects are ‘only a possibility’ and to understand and manage the relationship between inputs, outputs, *sporting outcomes* (increased participation), *intermediate outcomes* (impacts on participants) and broader social outcomes. (Coalter, 2002; Sport England, 2002).

This implies a clear need for diversionary and promotional projects to be based on more precise understandings of the issues they wish to address. For example, the definitions of ‘at-risk’ and the causes of criminality; lifestyle issues and factors influencing exercise adoption and adherence; the emotional, psychological and educational needs of the long-term unemployed in employment and volunteer-development schemes; the nature of inter- and intra-minority ethnic group differences. The variety of sports (Table 3) presents a wide range of possibilities for such people-centred rather than sports-centred approaches.

#### **New ways of working and ‘credible leadership’**

Evidence indicates that traditional, facility-based, approaches may not be appropriate to address many of the issues and reach the target constituencies in deprived urban areas – “developing sports activities in deprived communities will necessarily take a different form to developments in more affluent areas” (Leisure and Environmental Protection Department of Newport County Borough Council, 1999, p 5).

The ingredients of success seem to be a varying combination of an outreach, bottom-up approach; the use of local facilities; building on existing structures and traditions; recruiting local people; adopting a needs-based rather than a product-led ‘sports-development’ approach; addressing issues wider than sport and physical recreation (McDonald and Tungatt, 1992). In addition, the use of local (often non-sporting) facilities also contributes to their retention and strengthens the civic infrastructure and local amenity value.

It is also worth noting Witt and Crompton’s (1996, p16) conclusion that,

locally recruited and credible, “leadership is perhaps the most important element in determining the positive impact of a program, since it shapes what participants derive from their experience”.

### **Beyond participation: involvement and development**

Utting (1996) and others have stressed that the broader social role of sport can only be realised if it either delivers, or enables access to, a range of generic transferable skills. This is unlikely to be achieved via the passive ‘consumption’ of sporting opportunities provided for people. Perhaps this is best summed up by a Department for Culture, Media and Sport (1999a) statement in relation to museums and social inclusion which has much wider relevance:

*“If social inclusion policies are to be effective, it is vital that individuals and representatives from excluded groups are involved in developing, introducing and monitoring the museums’ initiatives”.*

### **Partnerships: sport as an ingredient**

There is much indicative evidence that sports’ contributions to issues of social deprivation and social exclusion are most effective when they are one of the ingredients in wider ranging programmes. For example, the *salience* of sports has been used to contact those which other social services cannot, to involve people in urban regeneration processes or to attract under-achieving pupils to extra-curricular education classes and long-term unemployed to employment schemes. Further, in addressing many social issues it is clear that ‘sport cannot do it alone’ – schemes for sports-related unemployment, or using sport to develop volunteers, illustrate the need for parallel support programmes for education and personal development (Coalter et al, 2000).

It would seem that sports’ contribution will be maximised via multi-agency working in integrated and developmental programmes (in which the nature and extent of the contribution of sports is clearly identified and mutually agreed).

### **Education and training**

Because of the various issues outlined above, there is a clear need for a more systematic approach to education and training if sport is to maximise

its contribution. Firstly, the differing professional perspectives which are inevitably involved in multi-agency working require the development of new collaborative frameworks, in which all partners recognise their contribution and are facilitated to work together. Secondly, the balance between developing sport in the community and the development of the community through sports means that a range of skills relating to the appropriate balance between community development and sports development are needed. Some draw radical implications from this shift in emphasis, stating that “in my experience it is much easier for a youth worker or a community volunteer to learn the sports skills side...than it is for the sports person to learn the coaching and leadership side” (sports development officer for the West Midlands Police quoted in Robins, 1990).

### **Sustainability and volunteering**

The development of volunteers is central to many sports-oriented projects, reflecting philosophies central to policies of social inclusion – ‘empowerment’, ‘ownership’, ‘active citizenship’ – or the desire to ensure sustainability after the end of short-term funding. However evidence suggests that most volunteers (especially those recruited from the long term unemployed) will require substantial encouragement, training and support (MacDonald and Tungatt, 1992). For example, although some programmes provide subsidised sports leadership and initial coaching courses, many recruits are reluctant to apply such training and/or lack the educational skills to progress.

In this regard many agencies (especially in sport) have commented on the need for more systematic approaches to the recruitment, training and support (examples of suggested training include assertiveness, disability awareness, equal opportunities, financial management or basic community group management).

More generally, there must be doubts about the ability of many programmes in deprived urban areas to achieve long-term sustainability solely on the basis of volunteer effort. Research evidence suggests that using sport to develop communities requires ongoing support and encouragement from professional officers and such longer-term commitments need to be recognised in the planning stages of any projects.

**Long-term planning, investment and integration**

Too often sport-based schemes aimed at addressing issues of deprivation and social inclusion are regarded as ‘demonstration projects’ which are either in receipt of short-term, ad hoc or ‘quick spend’ funding (which also leads to negative evaluations among residents who have been subject to a never-ending series of initiatives). Further, there is a tendency for much of the work to be left to recreation staff, or to small sports development teams.

However, if sport is to contribute to processes of community development and social inclusion it will be essential to view its contribution in the medium to long term (too many people expect quick results from such work). Further, it will be necessary to integrate it more firmly into broader strategies for community development both to legitimate and consolidate such work.

In this era of ‘sport for good’ and outcome-based policy provision, it is perhaps worth ending this paper by raising the issue of ‘sport for sport’s sake’. All provision in areas of urban deprivation should not be made wholly on instrumental grounds and assessed by measurable outcomes (this is rarely the approach adopted for other ‘socially included’ members of the community). There also remains a case for simply developing sport in the community and providing all citizens with equal opportunities for participation.

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The aim of this paper is to discuss the opportunities for sport and health within a Government framework. It will seek to define key areas, look at the opportunities created through modern policy making, try to rationalise the current stage of sport and health, and explore some of the challenges presented to moving forward.

### **Defining Sport and Health**

Nowadays for public policy purposes a broad definition of sport is typically advocated. “*Sport means all forms of physical activity which, through casual or organised participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental well-being, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competition at all levels*” (Council of Europe European Sports Charter, 1993). Sport has a long tradition and, as defined here, can be viewed as a human universal found in virtually every known culture, but perhaps most famously in Greek religious traditions through the Olympic Games (circa 776 B.C.). In evolutionary terms, sport has experienced a shift from extrinsic political, military, religious, and economic motivations towards modern day notions based on intrinsic motivations, such as participation for its own sake.

Sport is a part of culture rather than an aspect of nature, but as a species *Homo sapiens* cannot escape their evolutionary history – modern man has evolved to move! Over the ages many scholars have recorded this basic natural fact, including Hippocrates. “*Generally speaking, all parts of the body which have a function, if used in moderation and exercised in labours to which each is accustomed, become healthy and well developed, and age slowly, but if unused and left to idle, they become liable to disease, defective in growth, and age quickly*” (Hippocrates, 377-460 BC). This typifies the positivistic approach that has predominantly been employed by researchers linking sport and health; i.e. measuring the demonstrable cause and effect of an intervention. This approach is reflected in the broad definition used at the start linking sport and health, with sport aimed at “*...improving physical fitness and mental well-being*”.

Conceptually, not many disagree that sport has a role to play with regards to health. However, what is missing in many arguments is the epistemological perspective, and understanding post-19th Century developments in both sport and health is important in beginning to understand how modern

day practices have emerged. The sociological terms used to describe the development of modern sport, such as secularisation, rationalisation, specialisation, bureaucratisation, and quantification, all suggest that the formal and structural characteristics specific to 21st-century sports are the characteristics of modern society generally. Indeed one could reasonably confer comparable terms to the development of modern healthcare. Despite this, few would instantly suggest congruence in operational terms between sport and health.

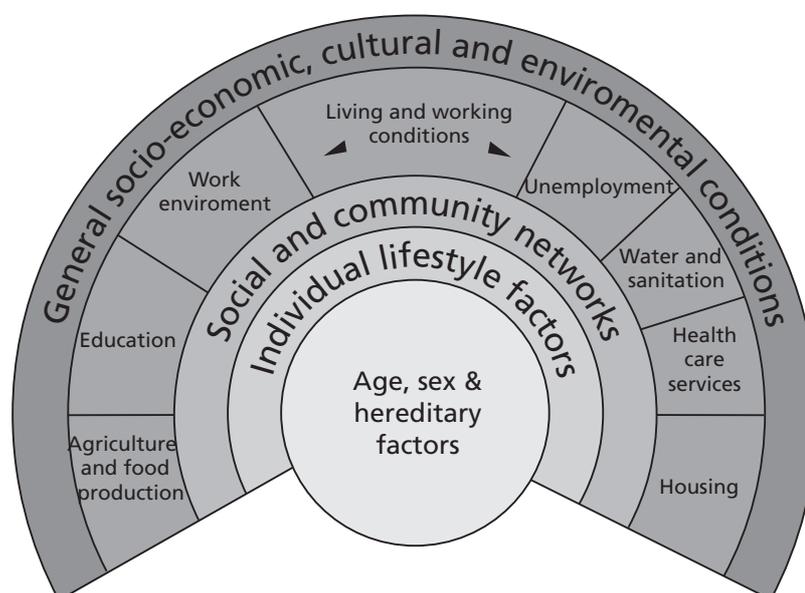
A major problem in the literature per se is that *sport* and *health* are repeatedly and casually used as ‘umbrella terms’ under which many assumptions or presumptions are made or intimated. E.g. anecdotally both sectors could argue that the other is cash rich whilst they themselves are cash strapped and without greater definition of the specific areas being discussed about both could have valid claims. A further viewpoint also needs to be considered, that of the general public. Reviewing a definition for health can eloquently highlight this need, as health professionals will be more likely to view the term ‘health’ in a more objective fashion than the general public to whom ‘health’ might be a more subjective measure.

Explicitly defining health depends on the context of the word. Most standard definitions consider health from physical, social, psychological, and spiritual dimensions, normally relating each dimension on a continuum from positive to negative, with health being the product of the interrelations of all the dimensions. Health is also viewed as a state of being, moving in a positive or negative direction, so timing would seem to be a crucial element in determining a person’s health. However, to the average person in the street, ‘health’ denotes their being outwardly free from illness or disease. Perhaps one of the most widely quoted definitions of health from the 1946 constitution of the World Health Organisation (WHO): “*Health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity*”.

This definition has suffered from criticism for being too simplistic, or indeed utopian, how many of us could claim to be healthy according to the definition! Importantly though the definition moves thinking away from the biomedical model of health. Another consideration is that the description is

more about health at an individual level and makes no reference to societal health. It would be difficult for an individual to be ‘healthy’ in a diseased society, the problem with this concept is that health, in lay terms, is normally only considered through the physical or mental dimension. So good health and well-being require a clean and harmonious environment in which physical, physiological, social and aesthetic factors are all given due importance (see figure 1.).

**Figure 1. Dahlgren G. & Whitehead M. (1991) Policies and strategies to promote social equity in health** (from *Physical Activity & Inequalities*, HEA, 1999).



### Current opportunities for Sport and Health

Since its rise to power in 1997 the Labour Government has been engaged in a wide programme of modernisation through education, welfare, local government, social services and health. This process is a policy process, with policy defined as the “*translation of Government’s political priorities and principles into programmes and courses of action to deliver desired changes*” (NAO, 2001). Understanding the process of modern policy-making should be seen as a prerequisite for any sector or organisation that expects to draw down significant exchequer funding. With Government Department’s responsible for some £350 billion of public expenditure it immediately becomes clear why this process is important and for more information on policy-making refer to the National Audit Office (HC 289 Session 2001-02) and a discussion paper by the Performance and Innovation Unit (2001).

A ‘one size fits all’ approach is no longer deemed practical in policy terms because of the recognised interplay between a range of factors – social, economic, and environmental. This has given rise to the notion of ‘joined up solutions for joined up problems’ and cross-cutting policies (impacting on several Departments and areas). Partnerships are now the order of the day but, although most people accept that the challenges facing modern society require different solutions and ways of working than have traditionally been employed, this is a drastic cultural shift for many policy implementing agencies.

Working in partnership takes time; trust needs to be developed, as does a level of understanding to allow a shared vision for the partnership. I would suggest that currently sport and health are at the formative stage of partnership and that there is a lot more work to do. In practical terms health (as healthcare) is central to any Government and is viewed a basic right of the population, not so sport. Therefore the onus falls initially to sport to create a better understanding of health.

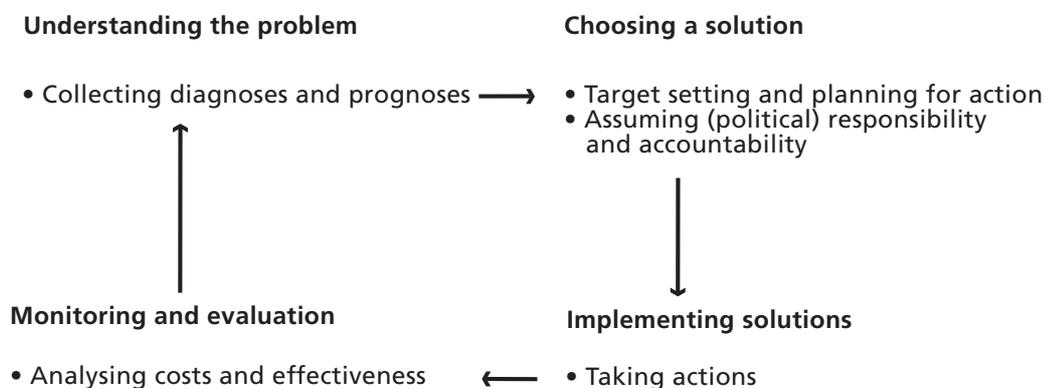
### **Understanding Health**

The first point to realise is that health policy is not stagnant, but rather a dynamic process. Targets are now routinely used in health policy development (e.g. National Service Frameworks) and these provide measurable outcomes on which to judge the efficacy of a policy. Figure 2 gives a simple overview of a target driven health policy development cycle. The cyclic model allows policy development to remain dynamic as elements of the cycle may change over time. Recognition in policy is important to help achieve action although it does not necessarily mean that the right course of action is always followed or that action is guaranteed. Figure 2 also serves to remind us that whilst the diagram suits for policy formation it also serves as a base model for implementation of any intervention to achieve desired policy outcomes.

The policy start point for any current debate should be the Government’s (1998) health White Paper *Saving Lives: Our Healthier Nation*. This was a comprehensive, targeted and focused attempt to begin to add years to life and life to years, and to address the issue of health inequalities at a population level. *Saving Lives* and its predecessor the *Health of the Nation* were radical in the sense that they were the first health documents to set targets for health

gain. It also issued a public health challenge and pointed to partnership working as key to addressing social, economic, and environmental determinants of health whilst concurrently reorienting and modernising the NHS giving a higher priority to health improvement. It also reflected the findings of the Acheson Report into Health Inequalities, which recognised the impact of poverty and disadvantage on health.

**Figure 2. The Health Policy Development Cycle** (Van Hertton & Gunning-Schepers, 2000).



The easiest way to conceptualise and use policy is to start at the top and perhaps the best way to illustrate this for health is to use an analogy; think of the White Paper as a car chassis and adding further policy documents, from a range of agencies, will provide the necessary components to drive the vehicle. All these further documents will be geared to reflect the core principles of the original White Paper. Therefore, without establishing a logical policy framework it can be very confusing for agencies to identify areas for joint working. There is a further temptation in health terms to assume that this simply means the National Health Service, however, as already shown this would be a gross underestimation of health.

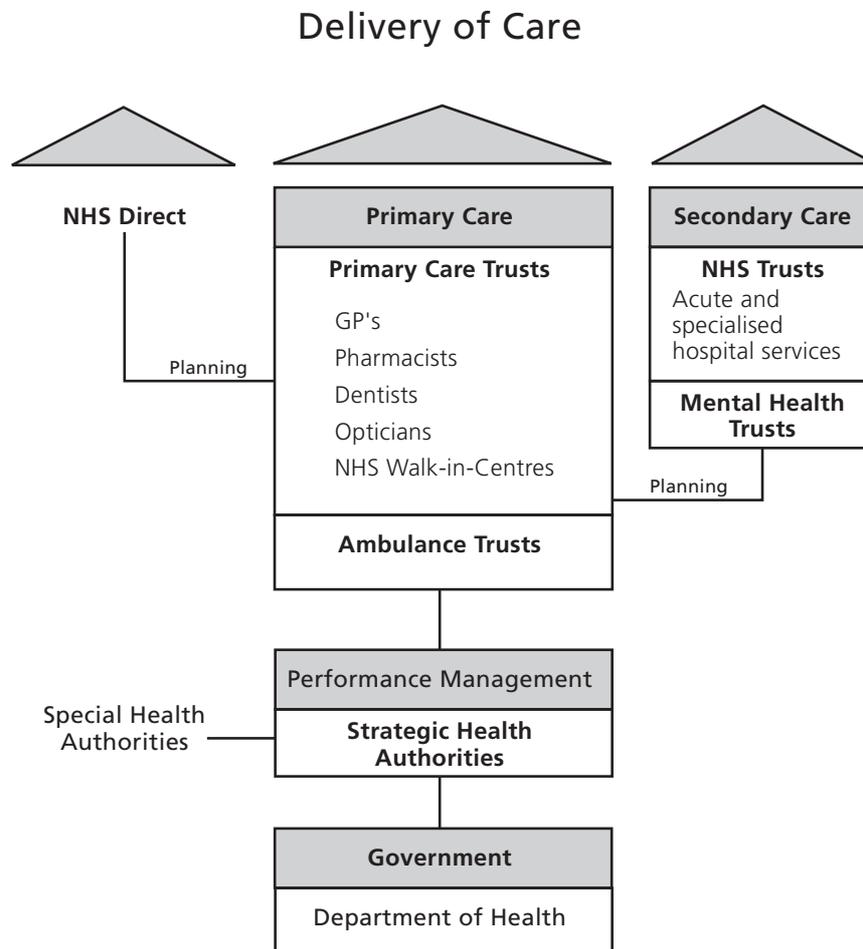
In terms of health delivery, it is the Department of Health's job to ensure that high quality health and social care services are available to the people of England. It is responsible for:

- Management of the overall health and social care system;
- Developing policy and managing change in the NHS;
- Regulation and inspection of the NHS (although this function is increasingly a devolved function through specialist agencies e.g. Commission for Health Improvement);
- Intervention, should problems occur within the NHS.

It must be remembered though that the NHS is not part of the Department of Health. It has its own plan of action launched in July 2000 – *the NHS Plan*. This is a 10-year plan outlining the most urgent priorities for the service in the 21st Century; it is the biggest change to the NHS since its formation 50 years ago. The priorities are tackling the biggest killers e.g. coronary heart disease and cancer, and identifying the most urgent changes needed within the system to deliver modern and equitable services designed to improve health and well-being. The new principles for the NHS are a National Framework of standards and accountability, devolution to the local level, improved rewards and conditions of employment (flexibility, incentives, rewarding success, shedding bureaucracy), more patient choice and more contestability.

In *Shifting the Balance of Power* (2001) the Secretary of State for Health identified some of the mechanisms to drive the change put forward within the NHS Plan. At the heart of this was a radical reorganisation of the structure for Primary Care (see figure 3). Primary Care being central to the NHS as 86% of all health problems managed in the NHS are managed entirely within primary care (NHS, 1999). Twenty-eight new strategic health authorities (SHA's) will replace the ninety-six existing Health Authorities. All Primary Care Groups would become Primary Care Trusts (303 in total) and new NHS Trusts would emerge in the secondary sector. SHA's were proposed to have a duty of responsibility for performance management for health and inequalities and not just for health service delivery. This performance management is extended to encompass partnerships and not just the actual organisation.

**Figure 3. How the NHS works** (©NHS, 2002)



In keeping with a commitment of central Government to reduce health inequalities a further proposal was to integrate NHS regional offices into the Government Office for the Regions with a Public Health Group in each Regional Office. Recognising that many of the levers for change needed to address broader health inequalities lie outside NHS structures. The Health Development Agency (HDA) outlines how this may work:

“At the local level, local strategic partnerships (LSPs) will lead the work on neighbourhood renewal, initiated by local authorities and including private,

public, voluntary and community sectors. The NHS will be a key member. LSPs will be expected to set local targets for tackling deprivation, including local health inequalities targets. (DETR, 2001). The NHS can take a lead in developing the health inequalities targets across the plans covered by the LSP. All NHS organisations will undertake local modernisation reviews during 2001, to agree how the NHS will work with its partners to deliver *The NHS Plan* and its targets. Reducing health inequalities and improving access to health and healthcare ‘*should be reflected in everything that the NHS does, and in every part of the NHS performance management and planning processes*’. (Department of Health, 2001a).

This includes the development of local measures of success to assess whether inequalities targets are being met. These will form part of the health improvement and modernisation plan (HIMP) 2002-2005/7. The HIMP provides the strategic framework for action to reduce health inequalities, and should link across to the community strategy and neighbourhood renewal strategies, working within the LSP (Department of Health, 2001b). Primary care trusts (and care trusts as they develop) will take the lead role in the delivery of NHS services and programmes to reduce health inequalities, working with other NHS Trusts and in partnership with local authorities and other agencies and groups at local level”. (HDA, 2001).

This sketched background is merely the scantiest of introductions to a complex and evolving system that has at its heart a radical shift away from the perception of a sickness service to a modern and equitable prevention and treatment service. It is this fundamental rethink that offers the greatest opportunities for sport to interact with health on a level never before possible and one, which thus far sport has been slow to acknowledge. So in putting itself forward sport needs to acknowledge the role of healthcare but better define its broader role in helping to achieve health, using a multi-faceted definition of health. The Wanless Review of long-term health trends helped the NHS receive a substantial increase in exchequer funding meaning some £40 billion of extra resources will be made available by 2007-8 taking the projected spend for the NHS to over £100 billion (Budget 2002). This extra resource could potentially provide some of the resources necessary to enable sport to support health at a level previously unimagined.

However, care must be taken in the construction of an identified framework for sport to add value to health. Sport must not make the mistake of believing that just because people should be physically active that sport in anyway has a divine right to NHS funding or any other funding for that matter. There could easily be a counter argument suggesting that sport is actually a drain on healthcare resources, especially through Accident and Emergency Departments where many participants end up after engaging in sport. A Sports Council report (1991) estimated the overall costs of sports injuries to be in the region of £996 million for 1989/90. Compare that to the Strategy Unit's (2002) projection of a cost saving of around £500 million per annum with a 10% increase in adult activity. Now imagine the extra value that sport could add to health by simultaneously decreasing sports injuries and increasing physical activity.

### **Joining Sport and Health**

In terms of joining up sport and health, the door was first opened for sport within Saving Lives, where the Government stated its intention to “*help support the enthusiasm for physical activity and for better health*” (p 25) by publishing a Sports Strategy. This would build on existing initiatives such as sports and leisure opportunities at a local neighbourhood level, exercise on referral through primary care, and specific sports programmes for identified chronic disease states e.g obesity. Unfortunately the ensuing document *A Sporting Future for All* (DCMS, 2000) did not reflect any link back into health although this is not surprising since the document was written with no input from the Department of Health. Perhaps even more damning was the statement that the “*strategy provides the context for local authorities to link the value of sport to the wider benefits of health, social inclusion, regeneration, educational opportunities and crime prevention*” (p 39), as the document certainly did not provide the ‘context’ from a health perspective and arguably some of the other areas either.

The document did however; present a vision of sport in education, sport in communities, and sporting excellence. Perhaps it is through sport and physical education in schools that the document has had its biggest impact. Within the overall modernisation of education, sport has managed to attract combined funding of almost £1 billion of extra investment for school sport, through routes identified initially within *A Sporting Future for All* and

subsequently expanded upon within *The Government's Plan for Sport* (2001). This funding covers investment in both capital and human resources and is backed by targets for minimum provision of physical education (PE) within schools.

Perhaps one of the key elements in driving the sport and school agenda forward was the joint appointment of a specialist advisor, Sue Campbell, between the Department's of Education and Skills (DfES), and for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). Operating at Ministerial level, Sue Campbell has been able to provide the link between policies and funding streams inter-Departmentally, and also to ensure that the policy development cycle (see figure 2) is followed. The real breakthrough has perhaps come in terms of securing a joint DfES/DCMS Public Service Agreement (PSA) Target and mainstream Exchequer funding to expand the national network of school sport co-ordinators. The significance of this was noted at the time by the Culture Secretary, Tessa Jowell who stated "*This is a huge vote of confidence in the power of sport to make a real contribution to people's lives*".

Redressing the balance after such a long period of under-investment for sport in schools needs to be heartily welcomed but sport needs to be cautious over its laxity regarding efforts to concurrently engage health. The wider perception seems to be that increased investment in school sport will automatically lead to increased levels of activity, thereby conferring some form of sustained or improved health. Again care needs to be taken here to define exactly how sport will sustain or improve health, as the PSA targets of a minimum two hours of PE per week at secondary level, fall far short of the Government's own recommendations of a minimum level of one hour of moderate physical activity on most days of the week for young people to maintain health (Young & Active, HEA, 1998). Further considerations are that activity levels at a young age seem to be a strong predictor for continued participation and that sports participation declines steeply with increasing age.

Within the Government's Modernisation programmes evidence-based practice is seen as a key tenet. Monitoring and evaluation of the impact the extra investment for sport in education will bring, is crucial to sustaining commensurate funding levels in the future. However, there has been little

effort thus far to begin to shape the data collection to directly impact on health agendas. In the past sport has been castigated for making claims over its many benefits that have lacked rigorous supporting evidence. However, perhaps it is time for sport to be judged on an equal playing field. The following is taken directly from an NHS working group report into research and development in primary care.

*“...much primary care clinical activity, including the way care is organised, is unsupported by any substantial body of evidence. This “evidence gap” limits the provision of the highest quality care and makes primary care vulnerable to consumer demands for direct access to specialist care. The primary care “evidence gap” is not a single entity – it encompasses evidence gaps about implementation, effectiveness and applicability as well as gaps in basic scientific knowledge” (DoH, 1999).*

Improving health within schools also means effective joint action of which sport has a (undefined?) role to play alongside others, e.g. the Department of Health has been engaged with the DfES and others to organise the *five-a-day programme* to improve access to, and consumption of, fruit and vegetables. This national programme is seen as a key feature of prevention strategies especially connected to CHD and cancer reduction targets. Much has been made of the potential combination for healthy eating and PE to begin to address the obesity epidemic.

*Tackling Obesity in England* a National Audit Office (2001) report provides startling facts (see figure 4 for summary) that are only just beginning to be recognised. The report states *“The Department of Health cannot be expected by itself to be able to ‘cure’ the problem”*. It further acknowledges, *“...whilst Government Departments are working closely together...there are opportunities to build further on the success of joint working to date”*.

The report has been oft quoted at recent sport related conferences as proof of the need to invest in sport for health. However, the reasons for the rapid rise in obesity are many and complex reflecting wider 21st Century social issues and changes in peoples value and belief systems. I do not believe that as yet sport is able to articulate these issues or has adequate systems or partnerships in place to begin to address them. Sport can offer many positive opportuni-

ties to help address the obesity epidemic but it must do so from a realistic start point and begin to provide evidence of how it may contribute, realising that this is a population level problem that will require strategic planning and action cascading nationally, regionally and locally.

**Figure 4. Main findings from the NAO obesity report.**

***'Tackling Obesity in England'***

- 1 in 5 adults are obese.
- Obesity rates have trebled in the last twenty years.
- 18 million sick days per year lost to obesity.
- £0.5 billion annual cost to the NHS
- £2 billion cost to the wider economy

Furthermore in health circles the discussion is not simply on obesity as a stand-alone issue but also of the associated complications of being obese. For example Diabetes UK estimated that the NHS spent £5.2 billion treating diabetes and its complications (9% of the annual healthcare budget). The US has had earlier experience of this problem and the following is an excerpt from a report *Physical Activity Fundamental To Preventing Disease by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services* (2002).

“Physical inactivity and its associated health problems have substantial economic consequences for the U.S. health care system. In the long run, physical inactivity threatens to reverse the decades long progress that has been made in reducing the morbidity and mortality associated with many chronic conditions such as cardiovascular disease. A physically inactive population is at both medical and financial risk for many chronic diseases and conditions including heart disease, stroke, colon cancer, diabetes, obesity, and osteoporosis”.

This is a stark warning but the US also offers hope in terms of prevention programmes as overweight people displaying mild glucose intolerance following a diet and exercise regime have been found to delay or prevent the development of Type II diabetes.

Sport has suffered from a lack of definition and recognition within health, partly because of its ineptitude to define itself; sport is generally recognised in health terms as sports medicine (a distinct branch of health) or through sports injuries. Sport is not yet naturally associated with the weight of evidence for physical activity that exists in the health literature. Two major reviews captured this evidence in the 1990's *Physical activity, fitness and health – a consensus statement* (Bouchard et al, 1993) and *Physical Activity and Health: A Report of the Surgeon General* (Centre for Disease Control and Prevention et al, 1996).

The problem is on one hand physical activity is now recognised as crucial for health from a theoretical perspective, but practically this is not reflected in health interventions on a scale large enough to produce the desired outcome. The popularity of so-called 'exercise referral' schemes operating in primary care is a good example of the issues faced.

A Health Education Authority review into *Promotion of Physical Activity in Primary Care in England* (Biddle et al, 1994) found that the majority of the 260+ schemes reviewed had no credible evaluation linked to them, no clear exit strategies, and a lot of them were not able to show a clear and strategic rationale for the establishment of the scheme in the first instance. A later review (Riddoch et al, 1998) into the *Effectiveness of physical activity promotion schemes in primary care* found similar methodological problems still existed (although the reviews were not strictly comparative). However, this has not discouraged the Secretary of State for Health, Alan Milburn who states in his forward for the National Quality Assurance Framework (NQAF) document for Exercise Referral Systems (DoH, 2001). "*Referral systems will form an important part in the delivery of local action plans to increase activity levels, reduce obesity and help tackle chronic disease. Together with services to reduce smoking and improve diet, these will make an important contribution to improving the nation's health*".

The physical activity fraternity had been buoyed by the publication of the NQAF and by the inclusion of physical activity milestones within the National Service Framework (NSF) for Coronary Heart Disease (CHD). NSF's are based on the Cancer services model, which was widely hailed as a success, and six NSF's are currently active or planned for Cancer, Mental

Health, CHD, Older People, Diabetes and Young People. For performance management they have defined national quality standards and annual milestones for preventative and clinical services.

A couple of caveats exist however, the first being that the NSF for Mental Health had no reference to physical activity when first published, despite a weight of evidence supporting a causal link between physical activity and improved mental well-being. The second was highlighted at the *'Taking Action – meeting the milestones for physical activity in the national service frameworks'* conference organised by The Department of Health (2002), where proponents of physical activity got a wake up call over NHS performance management issues, when the topic speaker, a Chief Executive of a Strategic Health Authority (SHA), explained “*physical activity was not yet on the radar screens of SHA’s*” and that “*de facto there existed a hierarchy in terms of priorities within the NSF for CHD*”.

Further evidence of this being a wider issue within health was a very poor response rate from PCT’s (although not publicly acknowledged by the Department of Health) to the first two milestones relating to physical activity for the NSF for CHD. These milestones were: “*By April 2001 all NHS bodies, working closely with local authorities would have agreed and be contributing to the delivery of the local programme of effective policies on ...increasing physical activity; by April 2002 every local health community will have quantitative data no more than 12 months old about the implementation of the policies on... promoting physical activity*”. There are many reasons for this, not least the speeding up of the NHS Plan and the structural changes required. Thus sport needs to (pragmatically) pursue its case and ensure that in NHS performance management terms the original milestones are reflectively met.

### **The Next Steps for Sport**

I wonder whether sport could have achieved similar outcomes to those in education, if *A Sporting Future for All* had had a targeted focus on health? I’m tempted to answer probably not, but we’ll never really know. Perhaps more importantly the educational outcomes achieved thus far provide a benchmark from which sport can begin to judge itself in terms of its relationship with health. Sport England has recently seconded an individual to work

within the Department of Health. Whilst potentially a start for the sport and health agenda, this action does not mirror the strategic level appointment that exists between DCMS and the DfES for sport and education.

The joint Strategy Unit/DCMS report *Game Plan: a strategy for delivering Government's sport and physical activity objectives* has given us "... a blueprint for sport" (Tessa Jowell, 2002). The report was commissioned by the Prime Minister in response to a series of high profile problems within competitive sport such as the national stadium project, losing the World Athletics Championships, and emergency funding required for the Commonwealth Games. It sought to establish where and how Government can best add value to sport given the amount of public funds received. Interestingly, one of its major recommendations is that Government should push for a substantial increase in participation in sport and physical activity primarily because of the weight of evidence supporting significant health benefits. It also highlights a strong need for organisational reform before more investment is forthcoming, as sport is currently blighted by too many agencies fighting over the same resources and, in certain cases, seeking to achieve the same goals.

This organisational reform must be in line with a more inclusive definition of sport and a vision to define distinct roles and responsibilities for sport. The resources, both human and capital need outlining e.g. if sport is to support health through increased participation, who will deliver this – sports coaches, PE teachers, personal trainers, sports development? The popularity of Sport and Exercise Science degrees show no sign of abating within Higher Education and yet for the many thousands of graduates there is still not a defined and recognised career path; yet within the NHS there is a chronic shortage of key staff and Alan Milburn has just announced the need for 30,000 more therapists and scientists, 35,000 more nurses, midwives and health visitors, and 15,000 more consultants and GPs by 2008 (Delivering the NHS Plan, 2002).

In wanting or expecting sport to deliver significant outcomes for health, and as both sport and health undergo major structural reorganisation then great care must be taken in building and maintaining any relationship. A more strategic link between sport and health is needed to achieve the aspirations and recommendations of the *Game Plan* report. There have been many calls

for the Department of Health to have a physical activity strategy, including one from Sport England (policy briefing 03/10/02). However, this seems to be at odds with the idea of creating a cultural shift to the perception of sport away from elitist towards a spectrum ranging from elite to active recreation (encompassing physical activity). Surely any physical activity strategy has to be part of an overall Sport Strategy, which in turn is congruent with relevant White Papers in Health, Education, and Transport? (Is sport passing the buck?). The problem here is that in wanting to be accepted for a more inclusive definition of sport there is a lead-time between expression and acceptance. With regards to health, ‘physical activity’ is seen as the ‘best buy for public health medicine’ but in policy terms, physical activity needs to be recognised within sport, and sport within health.

Looking to the future, sport needs to reflect Modernisation principles in constructing its arguments. Devolved responsibility, accountability, performance management, value for money, and a greater choice are the new mantras for the NHS. The Department of Health has set out its stall and its plan of action in clear terms yet sport seems to be waiting in the wings for its invite to the party. Strong leadership is needed to steer away from the short-term projects and strategies that currently proliferate and unless it defines a way forward from a policy context it is difficult to imagine sport impacting on health in anyway likely to influence fundamental practice and Exchequer funding. Whilst there is good practice in some regions and the potential to make an impact locally, sport needs to take a leaf out of health’s book; *“In addition to giving visible and committed leadership, people in leadership roles need to manage for health, understanding the principles of population health, of working in partnership, and of the “long haul” needed to effect change and of working with people and communities”* (CMO’s report into strengthening the public health function, DoH, 2001).

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A list of all *The NHS Plan* targets, milestones and associated strategic targets for the NHS is available at: [www.doh.gov.uk/nhsperformance/modreview](http://www.doh.gov.uk/nhsperformance/modreview)





## Bullet Point Summary

- Sport makes a key contribution to society in Britain, as around the globe, in health, social inclusion and community well being.
- Issues remain for Government (and representatives of the public, private and voluntary sectors) about how best to provide the sport and leisure facilities we need now and in the future – to maximise sport’s contribution to our national life.
- If we are to build a healthier, happier society, more funds are sorely needed. Sport England estimates that as much as £3 billion is required to bring current leisure stock up to standard – but in reality we need a further £7billion to meet today’s needs.
- The public sector cannot do the job on its own. Like anything else in sport, real progress towards the agreed goals requires the public, private and voluntary sectors to work together more and more effectively.
- The main providers of leisure are local authorities with 2,000 facilities throughout the country. But, this is non-statutory provision; as local authority budgets are further constrained, the necessary funding for leisure is reducing.
- The warning signs continue – National Lottery funding is also reducing and Exchequer funding specifically for sports facilities is standing still (especially when compared with funds for education and health).
- Local authorities are starting to get some of the funding they need from the private sector – an obvious partnership for them to pursue. Since the introduction (1989) of Compulsory, Competitive Tendering (CCT), followed by Best Value and now the introduction of PPP and PFI processes, local authorities have benefited from private sector funding (several examples are in this paper).
- But – more warning signs! Local authority expectations are high; on present rules and practise. The existing approach to PFI and PPP schemes

cannot meet the need around the UK for new facilities.

- So, central and local government cannot rely on these processes to bridge the big gap between resources and needs. Another (perhaps complementary?) funding solution must be found, and quickly.
- The private sector is investigating one big idea, the creation of a leisure fund. This could provide leisure PPP's with up to £1 billion of investment. The work is ongoing and needs Government support. With this level of assistance and support the private sector has the capacity and appetite to make significant inroads to bridge the funding and needs gap for sport and leisure.
- More ideas, more money, more constructive solutions, more effective cooperation between the three sectors, are needed. Sport can make an even bigger and better contribution to the nation's health and well being; we must all work together to agree and find the best ways forward.

## **Introduction**

Some would argue that "Sport" has never been as high on the government agenda as it is today. The Rt Hon. Richard Caborn, Minister for Sport, is determined to see Sport, in every sense, being successful. He and others are recognising the value Sport can bring to our society, for example, through health, crime prevention, and social equity, to name but three.

The main providers of facilities for people in this country to participate in some form of sport and recreation are the local authorities. They provide between them some 2,000 leisure facilities from swimming pools to sophisticated leisure centres, from football pitches to tennis courts and this has been the case for many many years. This provision has almost come to be taken for granted, but as we enter this new millennium this provision is under threat.

This provision of sport and leisure facilities is not a statutory requirement and, as local authority finances become even more constrained, local

authorities are unable to find the money to maintain their existing facility stock let alone provide new ones.

If you look at figures from Government spend purely on sport, it can be interpreted that Government spends £1,135 per person on health, compared to somewhere between £1.38 and £23 on sport. (Sport is obviously important to people as consumer expenditure on sport and recreation has grown by 30% to £10.4 billion in the ten years to 1995. The National Audit Office Report ‘Tackling Obesity in England’, published in February 2001 proposed that there should be a cross-government strategy to promote the health benefits of sport and physical activity.

In 1988 Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) for the management of local authority leisure facilities was introduced by the then, Conservative government. This required local authorities to put all their sport and leisure facilities out to CCT. The policy was not altogether successful, the process was resisted by a number of local authorities, but others grasped the opportunity being provided. In many cases, the companies who were awarded contracts made massive improvements to the management of the facilities, but also and perhaps more significantly, invested private money into those facilities either for refurbishment or even new build: both to the clear advantage of the customer.

Private sector companies like CCL Leisure and Leisure Connection are not only offering capital and revenue investment to local authorities, they are also offering to operate local authority facilities at lower subsidy levels than the local authority Direct Service Organisation (DSO). These arrangements can include a profit-share agreement with the local authority. At the current time they operate 20% of local authority facilities.

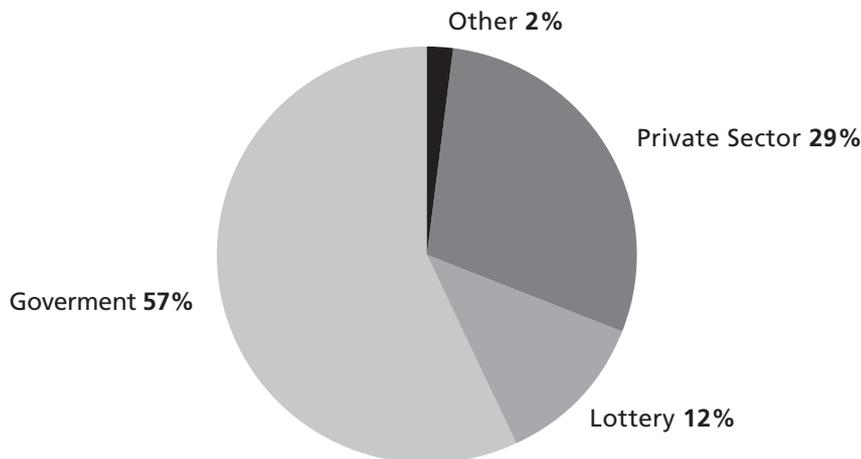
One of the drawbacks to CCT was the prescribed length of contract, maximum of 6 years, which did not allow the management companies sufficient time to obtain a return on their investment. In 1997, the compulsory element was removed from the equation and replaced by “Best Value”, which gave Local Authorities much more freedom to negotiate better contracts, which have now evolved into Public Private Partnerships and PFI schemes. A further development has been the growth of Trusts and

non-profit distributing organisations (NPDO), who manage facilities with the benefit of tax relief (rates and VAT) from central government: a hidden subsidy.

This article looks at the history of the private sector in PPP and PFI, with examples of specific projects. It examines whether Government intervention to promote a role for the private sector could reduce public funding for sports facilities. This could lead to real improvement in the stock of facilities which are needed to encourage people and communities to become more active.

### The Context

To put this subject into context it is worth noting that local authority spending on sport and leisure facilities is far in excess of any other funding for sport. According to figures from DCMS, Government funds 57% of the £396 million which goes into sport. Of this, local Government funds 95% and central Government 5%. The private sector contributes 29% mostly through sponsorship and TV deals, whilst the Lottery contributes just 12%, out of which the New Opportunities Fund provides 49% and Sport England 46%. UK Sport contributes the additional 5%.



But, prior to discussing the history and indeed highlighting some of the successes of PPP and PFI schemes, it is important to place everything in context.

PFI and PPP projects in the leisure field are very new and there are still very few successful schemes. The major criticisms of the schemes include the cost of the process and the length of time required to completion. Whilst the expectations of local authorities is unrealistically high, in reality, with the current levels of credit support, it is unlikely that PFI and PPP schemes will be able to satisfy the requirements for refurbishment and new build of facilities. Recent research carried out by Sport England, found that £10 billion is need to restore local authorities sports facilities to a good and acceptable standard. Local authorities can not and should not rely on this process as an answer to their difficulties. It is essential that another, perhaps complementary, process is found and found very quickly. If a solution is not found then we can foresee a time in the very near future when the facilities will have to be closed and the true private sector will become the only providers. We will then not have “Sport for all” but “Sport for those who can afford it” a situation quite different from this governments current agenda.

#### **PPP Case Study – Tower Hamlets**

In 1998 all the sports centres in Tower Hamlets were put out to competitive tender and CCL Leisure were appointed to manage all five centres for five years. In November 1999 the newly built Whitechapel sports centre was also awarded to CCL. Since 1998, CCL have invested £830,000 in the leisure centres. This included £250,000 for York Hall, £220,000 for the Tiller Leisure Centre, £220,000 for the John Orwell Leisure Centre, £50,000 at St George’s Pools and £40,000 at the Whitechapel Leisure Centre. CCL’s investment has not only been to income generating facilities, but has also improved the fabric and decoration of the building. The investments CCL have made have enhanced the good working partnership they have with the Council and have brought benefits to both parties, with a considerable reduction in the management fee for the Council and a two year extension of the contract helping CCL to pay for the investment.

CCL have not only improved the sports facilities in Tower Hamlets, but they have used the relationship with the Council’s Sports Development Team to encourage all sectors of the community to participate. They have also reduced the cost of participation. Two good examples of this are:

- Prices for football pitches at the CCL centres have been reduced or pegged in the last two years, as research showed that the original prices were a barrier to local people participating, particularly from the large under 16 Asian community.
- Women's only sessions have been introduced at many centres at peak times and at reduced rates to encourage women, and particularly Muslim women, to participate in a female only environment.

This is an excellent example of partnership in an area of social deprivation. The local authority has gained financially from the involvement of the private sector through improved facilities and reduced revenue support. The contract also provides for CCL to make available £60,000 per year of free time in support for sport. They work with Tower Hamlets to identify clubs who need financial support to become established. The criteria for the support being granted covers the targets for the Borough e.g. Children, Ethnic Minorities, Women. It is a true partnership, with decisions taken together and flexibility in the contract to ensure that it is the community who gains. The improved revenue financial position has provided an opportunity for Tower Hamlets to re-invest in the community sport and leisure provision.

#### **PPP Case Study taken from Torbay Best Value Audit report**

In 1998 Torbay Leisure Centre was in need of capital investment to address the backlog of repairs and to improve the facility to meet customer expectations but the Council did not have the funds needed to secure the future of the centre. Through a negotiated tendering process, also linked to a contract for the Festival Theatre in Paignton and Princess Theatre in Torquay, the Council granted a 20-year lease with a management agreement to CCL Leisure Ltd to manage and invest in Torbay Leisure Centre. This arrangement will result in an investment of £450,000 within the first five years of the lease, with a further £450,000 invested between Years 5 - 15. We noted significant improvements, including refurbishment of the fitness suite, café area, children's play area and reception. Additional projects for improvement in the future will include the replacement of the surface for the synthetic turf pitch.

Despite being a 20 year lease the Council retain close involvement via an Advisory Management Board which meets regularly to discuss issues of joint

interest and ensure the contract fulfils its overall objectives for the local community.

In total this partnership arrangements has resulted in more than £10 million in investment into Sports and Arts facilities and a reduction in subsidy from the Council in excess of £325,000 per annum.

### **PPP Case Study of Wokingham District Council**

Following a period where, like many other authorities, the Leisure Facilities had suffered from a lack of reinvestment, and an unsuccessful bid for Lottery Funding had been made, Wokingham District Council undertook an assessment of the options available to improve its delivery of Leisure to the community. Consultation with the local community on strategic need were a major part of the decision making process and the Authority opted for a partnership management agreement with Leisure Connection for a period of 16 years. The total investment package involved some £7.2 million of which £4.5 million was committed by Leisure Connection.

The principles incorporated in the agreement over the 16-year period allowed for the substantial improvement of the authority's Leisure Facilities. The main element of these improvements were a £3.8 million extension to the Lodden Valley Leisure Centre to meet an identified strategic need. It also provided for enhancements to other facilities and arrangements for the ongoing safeguarding of the authority's assets over the period of the contract.

Throughout the 16 years of the contract the authority retains ownership and control of the policy to be adopted within the facilities and also retains responsibility for the structure. During the first 6 years of the contract the authority has agreed to pay an increased subsidy to cover the main period during which much of the improvement work would be undertaken. After this period and for the remainder of the contract the arrangements move towards a net income based contract with income share thresholds being in place.

In summary the areas, which both parties feel were critical to the success of the venture, were:

- The introduction of a competitive process;
- Good tender information and documentation;
- A strong multi discipline client team;
- Cross party political and senior management support;
- And not least: a genuine partnership approach with open dialogue.

The perceived key benefits are seen as:

- The achievement of substantial inward investment;
- The provision of a new pool and improved facilities;
- Streamlined management;
- A united cross authority package for residents;
- Reduced day to day involvement by the authority in operational matters;
- Council retained ownership and focus on the policy decisions.

## **PFI**

The Private Finance Initiative has taken some time to embrace the sport and leisure industry, but there is much more that it can do. The first two PFI schemes came with credits from the Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions. A £5 million pool project was announced for Sefton Borough Council which is due to open in the spring of 2003. It has been followed by a project in Uttlesford which embraces five local leisure centres. For purposes of definition, PFI deals are those where PFI credits/revenue support has been provided by central government to an authority to support the procurement of facilities.

### **PFI Case Study Uttlesford District Council**

The PFI contract with Uttlesford District Council was awarded following a competitive process and the award of PFI credits to the Authority to carry out substantial improvements to the Leisure facilities within the authority's control.

The total value of the funding package was £9.9 million and allowed for the building of two new facilities at St Helena School at Great Dunmow, where the facilities include a new pool, sports hall and fitness suite and a new all weather pitch, and at Stanstead, where a new sports hall and fitness suite are

to be built. In addition substantial refurbishment of the Lord Butler Leisure Centre at Saffron Waldon will be undertaken.

This, being only the second Leisure PFI to be completed created many hurdles which had to be overcome to meet the affordability levels of the authority. The process of future PFI deals in the leisure sector will, we are sure, benefit from the experiences gained in the processes undertaken at Uttlesford. Streamlining of the processes particularly relating to both the assessment of undertaking and the evaluation process, together with the simplification and creation of standardised contractual documentation, will lead to reductions in the very high fee base associated with the completion of the PFI process. The end product at Uttlesford includes a 32 year contractual commitment between the partners of the project.

The partnership was formed between Uttlesford District Council and the Leisure Connection lead consortium, consisting of Leisure Connection and Linteum Ltd. These consortium partners formed the Special Purpose Company to raise the necessary funding and they also supplied the bridging capital needed to complete the financial packaging. The banking partner in the consortium was NIB and the Construction partner was Pelikan. The construction of the contractual arrangements consists of Uttlesford Leisure Limited as the occupier of the premises, who in turn have appointed Leisure Connection as the leisure management company. The Special Purpose Company is responsible for the premises for the period of the contractual arrangement after which, the properties revert back to the local authority.

Work has now commenced on site and Leisure Connection start the operational work at the Lord Butler site in December 2002.

As already mentioned before we believe that there are many lessons to be learned from this exercise, but essentially we need to get the message across that the following aspects of PFI in Leisure are essential for a successful contract:

- The pre-tender work to establish the parameters of the contract are essential. More work is needed to ensure that a partner can be selected and that the detailed work up of content and cost reflect the affordability of the authority at an early stage.

- The timescales involved need to be fully understood by all parties, as the process is lengthy and involves a committed consortium team and a dedicated cross discipline team from the authority to bring the process to a satisfactory conclusion.
- A recognition of the special position of Leisure PFI in the financial world needs to be made. The fact that the Leisure PFI, by its very nature, carries a revenue risk is one area that distinguishes this process from that of the more familiar Hospital and School PFI project.
- More work is needed on the process to minimise the levels of fee cost contained within the project. Continued standardisation of documentation and the elimination of pre bid risk costs are just two of the areas which need to be addressed.
- All parties must be fully committed as the resource needs are substantial and cover a relatively long time scale.

DCMS first received a £90 million allocation for PFI in 2000 to be spent over 3 years. It has since made a second allocation of £120 million under the most recent Comprehensive Spending Review. The problem for the sports sector is that these credits cover all the responsibilities of DCMS and so libraries, arts facilities, heritage projects feature strongly in the list. On average only three sports projects are given PFI credits in any one year. There are currently about thirty different schemes throughout the country at different stages of development. The following case studies act as illustrations of what can be achieved. But, as stated above, if there are only to be three sport PFI projects per year then this will have a ludicrously small impact on the overall problem.

#### **PFI Case Study Amber Valley Borough Council**

This project was approved by the Government in June 2001 and is part funded from PFI Credits totalling £12.1 million. The project involves the new build and refurbishment of three leisure facilities within three different towns and will provide modern facilities that meet Sport England standards and legislative requirements including the Disability Discrimination Act.

The project was published in the OJEC at the beginning of January 2002 and it projected to reach financial close in March 2003. It is one of the four PFI projects that have been “bundled” together to use the 4ps standard guidance and procurement packs for leisure (drafted by PMP Consultancy) and to generate savings from the simultaneous procurement of these schemes. It is anticipated that savings will be made in private sector bidding costs from the use of the same documentation and advisor costs from standard positions.

The project includes the transitional wet and dry facilities, but also includes an IT Suite and Youth Centre, in partnership with the local college and a healthy living centre and treatment rooms.

Bidders are free to manage the development phase of the project, ensuring that there are minimum facilities open to the general public. Emphasis has been placed upon achieving the national standards for Quality Management in Sport and Leisure (Quest), sports development and participation rates. These are all key outcomes required by the new standard documentation.

#### **PFI Case Study Penwith District Council**

This project is one of the four PFI projects being “bundled” under the 4ps, together with Amber Valley, Breckland and the London Borough of Lewisham.

The project is for the design, build, finance and operation of a single site wet and dry scheme in Penzance, near Lands End. There are currently no dedicated dry facilities for the community within the town or visitors.

On the basis of the low population levels and the areas economic status, the project received PFI Credits of £5.9 million towards financing the project. Although this assisted the affordability of the project, the local authority has had to include additional resources from its own budget to make it affordable.

The project was submitted to the OJEC in 2002, following the approval of PFI Credits in 2001. It is projected to reach financial close within 15 months of the OJEC notice and is using the standard documentation.

### Key Issues for PFI projects

*Non-Statutory Service:* The provision of sports facilities is not a statutory service. One reason for the decline in local authority funding for sport centres is that funding is discretionary. This also means that local authorities have limited resources to finance new PPP/PFI contracts. An increase in the availability of PFI credits, particularly for more disadvantaged areas, along with Capital Modernisation funding made available for the refurbishment of local authority sites, could improve this situation enormously.

*Procurement:* The length of time taken from OJEC to Financial close is an issue shared by both the public and private sectors. The estimated time it takes to procure a DBFO contract in all sectors is probably between 18 months to two years. In some cases the transactions have taken considerably longer due to their complexity or because of delays in achieving consents. Although the costs of delays, through negotiation, planning or otherwise are more commonly being passed to the public sector to meet, again this does raise issues about value for money.

This is linked to the cost of bidding required to conclude these transactions. It is estimated that local authorities will incur costs of between £250,000 and £350,000 and each bidder will also incur a considerable level of fees dependent upon the stage in the process they reach and the length of time the procurement process takes. This is a particular issue for the leisure market which has a limited number of operators and lower value projects. For the leisure PPP market to become more sustainable, the bidding costs on all sides need to be reduced. One way of tackling this is for the local authority to contract with a team of architects to develop a design, and outline costs which meets the authority's requirements, prior to placing the project on the market. This allows the authority to obtain a good design (which must meet Sport England's technical standards) and saves money from the reduction of the overall architects fees relating to the project, set against the probability that there will normally be at least four architects bidding for the scheme. The architects are then novated to the preferred bidder. This approach is being used at Portsmouth City Council for the major redevelopment of their leisure facilities. This has the potential to be an alternative best practice model.

**Guidance:** PMP Consultancy has worked with DCMS and the 4ps (funded by local Government) on standard guidance and documentation to support and encourage the market. This guidance was developed following a significant consultant exercise with banks, leisure operators, insurers and local authorities. The Standard Guidance is beginning to take effect on leisure projects. It would be helpful if the Government were to ensure that all projects requiring public funding comply with this guidance

**Financial Reporting Standard No 5:** The Balance sheet treatment of the assets provided under a PPP/PFI scheme is fundamental to the delivery of these type of projects. If the investment is treated as public sector, the local authority has to set aside resources to an equal value of the payments made under the contract. Unfortunately there is no national audit view as to whether income generated from third party users of a leisure facility affects the balance sheet treatment of the transaction. Views by District Auditors are dependant on whether this income is a property related risk, or an operational risk. Central Government guidance to be used by all District Auditors would be extremely helpful.

### **The Leisure Fund**

Business In Sport and Leisure has been working for some time with PMP Consultancy, Leisure Connection and CCL Leisure on the creation of a Leisure Fund, which would raise the funding available for community sports facilities. Currently individual consortia are looking at developing funds through individual banks who are there to support their existing bids. General funds require significant deal flow and funders seek to reduce their risks at all opportunities. There is still nervousness within the funding community, both for debt and equity about the opportunities in the leisure market. Typically a fund will be made up of equity investors (10% and 20% of the fund) and debt providers (80% and 90% of the fund). Current funding is for relatively small projects, which exposes individual banks to market failure.

A number of funders have expressed interest in hedging this risk by syndicating a fund i.e. having a series of banks investing debt and/or equity into a combined fund. This would maximise market confidence, reduce risks to individual funders and maximise the level of funds available to support the

leisure market. In addition it would increase the opportunities in the market place and reduce risk and the cost of bidding for individual projects.

### **Potential Scale of the Fund**

The debt would be syndicated with a series of banks perhaps four or five, providing £150 million to £250 million each into the fund. This would create a debt fund of between £600 million and £1 billion. It is currently being discussed with bank providers including those currently in the market and those interested in investing, but seeking additional security. The Leisure Fund, through its scale, reduced costs and shared risks would provide this.

The equity fund would come from a series of parties including existing leisure operators, private equity funds and public sector provision. The public sector provision could come from the Government through PFI credits and Capital Modernisation Funds, with gap funding from the Sport England Lottery Fund.

Funding from the Government would allow projects to be developed in the more deprived areas of the country, where a commercial scheme would not work. Local authorities would continue to put revenue into the running of the centres, but would know how much that revenue was over the period of the project's life.

The overall Leisure Fund would provide Leisure PPPs with up to £1 billion of investment. If successful, subsequent funds could be developed and released to support subsequent needs.

### **Conclusion**

As mentioned above, Sport is high on the government agenda, not just for Sports sake but also because of the proven contribution Sport can make to a healthier and better society. There is no doubt that recent statistics on obesity compel Government to invest in a more active nation. However, there is no point in investing in schemes which encourage people to take more exercise, if facilities where they can exercise either do not exist, or are not of a standard to attract people to visit them. Whilst new school facilities will be coming on stream, few will be available outside school hours for the local community. Local authorities are by far the largest provider of community sports facilities in this country. A new initiative is needed to allow the private

sector to work with Government to design, build, finance and operate sports facilities in partnership with local authorities. This needs a real will to work across Government to achieve this, but the cost to the public purse could be significantly reduced if such a partnership was made to work.



*“Eating alone will not keep a man well; he must also take exercise. For food and exercise while possessing opposite qualities, yet work together to produce health”  
(Hippocrates, 400BC)*

The therapeutic and life enhancing value of exercise is not a new concept yet two-thirds of the UK population are insufficiently active to benefit their health. The ability of exercise to reduce the risks of many of the leading causes of ill health and premature death are no longer in dispute yet the real value of this truly remarkable medicine remains untapped. Exercise is simple, virtually anyone can have a go; it’s free in many cases and relatively cheap for the majority; it comes in a myriad of guises to suit all tastes; it benefits the individual, their relatives and peers and the ultimate health and wealth of the nation.

Smoking is a killer. It increases the risk of coronary heart disease (CHD), the UK’s biggest cause of death, by 2.5 times in relation to those who abstain. The government, quite rightly, is due to spend £100 million over the next 3 years in the pursuit of preventing uptake and reducing intake. The risks of physical inactivity for CHD is nearly double that of an active person. Not only is the risk double but activity has an independent and positive effect on virtually all of the other primary risk factors such as hypertension and high cholesterol as well as a considerable effect on many secondary factors such as obesity and diabetes. If promoting activity is potentially a more powerful mechanism of disease control than preventing smoking, does it not demand equal or greater attention from the government? 2.6 million people live with the consequences of CHD and these individuals need support, advice and a more positive approach to looking after their own health.

Women die younger in the UK than almost anywhere in the industrialised world, the UK has one of the worst records in coronary heart disease in Western Europe and the prevalence of obesity in the UK has nearly trebled in the past 20 years. The Public Accounts Committee stated within its report on obesity (2002) that “unless effective action is taken, over 20% of men and 25% of women will be obese by 2005, with important consequences for the NHS, the economy and the people involved”. Inactivity poses one of the most potent threats to the health, wealth and prosperity of this nation.

The Wanless Report last year detailed the unhealthy state of our nation and introduced the dramatic and concerning concept of Potential for Year's of Life Lost (PYLL). This statement summarises the appalling cost of ill health yet the report described how enhanced life expectancy is a reality if the government takes action. The report concluded that not smoking, physical activity and nutrition all contribute to a healthier nation and clearly any advice, support and improvement in these areas will have a positive impact.

The UK health and fitness industry will commence its assault on improving the health of the nation this autumn. Focusing upon one of the most easily identifiable causes of ill health, obesity. Galvanised behind its trade body, the FIA, it will support an initiative under the banner of 'On the Move to 2010'. Tackling the issue at root cause, FIA member clubs and centres will "adopt a school" in a move that will help children and parents identify the causes of obesity and help understand the mechanisms of a solution.

In many instances there are already good examples of health and fitness clubs linking with schools and colleges. This involvement can be seen at a basic level by providing access to clubs and centres or at a more integrated level by siting a facility within a campus and even, as part of a partnership arrangement, building separate facilities for specific school or college use. This positive private partnership activity should be encouraged particularly when the selling of school playing fields is still a reality. Whilst the FIA is against removing any resources that encourage activity, linking schools with health and fitness clubs may be a suitable compromise solution. In this way a certain percentage of the playing fields could be saved and the private investment would support its continuation and additional resources would support a school's activity programme.

On the Move to 2010 will take heart from existing good practice and co-ordinate a supportive UK network of links between schools and the fitness clubs and centres. It has been estimated that if obesity is left unabated the cost to the nation could be as high as £3.6 billion by 2010.

Physical activity has far reaching benefits and should often be coupled with lifestyle alterations to maximise impact and effect. A healthy diet is clearly a major factor in the fight against obesity. The advice and expertise that can be

tapped into at today's health and fitness facilities will assist in providing a full support system to this easy to identify, yet difficult to control condition. Obesity has been raised in many public debates and is almost an ever present in today's media pages and is appropriate as a central theme of the FIA's initiative. This should always be viewed, however, from a broad perspective, however, as raising activity within overweight people (which constitutes the majority of the population) will have positive effects on a considerable range of diseases that cause anxiety, grief and a huge burden on the NHS.

Health and fitness facilities are also a keen topic of conversation in the media but all too often misrepresented. Despite the fact that nearly 8% of the UK are members of a facility and the same again are users on a casual basis, good practice can be overlooked in the media. Basically it doesn't sell newspapers! The range of skills, services and provision available in today's FIA facilities is quite outstanding and is a far cry from the stereotypical 'sweat boxes' of yesteryear. Health and fitness facilities act as a community base, they provide a social framework throughout the spectrum of social class and they provide a positive outlet for young people.

The UK health and fitness sector employs 39,000 people in the private sector alone and due to its maturity is able to offer a number of career paths and exciting opportunities for school leavers. It is a very dynamic, progressive and growing industry and shows the characteristics of an industry in development. The infrastructure of a very positive industry is in place and it now needs support to grow further.

The industry is, to a large extent, fragmented and characterised by SME's although the movement towards floatation and consolidation has been historically important for the sector. At its height the London Stock exchange listed 10 companies operating within the sector, the greatest number in any single country in the world. Recent times have seen a number of de-listings as companies look to secure long term funding and their long-term future success. This driving force of the private sector, however, has resulted in dramatic change within both private and public provision.

First of all the UK fitness industry was commented upon by John McCarthy, the Executive Director of the US health and fitness association (IHRSA), as

the most advanced in the world. This is significant as 10 years ago we were trailing in the wake of the burgeoning business in the US. Secondly the private sector has had a considerable effect upon public provision. Driven by the move towards Compulsory Competitive Tendering in the mid 1980's the private sector paved the way for what is, without question, one of the central themes within local authority provision. The health and fitness facility is very often the hub of today's leisure centre offering.

This growth within public provision has provided tremendous opportunity, access and diversification for our industry. It offers access and a menu of services providing 'true' choice for those in employment and commonly free access for the less advantaged or unemployed. It creates an industry of 'true' social inclusion offering advice, support, facilities and the benefits of an active and positive lifestyle to all. Yet, as stated earlier, two-thirds of the UK population remain insufficiently active to benefit their health.

In 1996 the US Surgeon General produced a report entitled 'Physical Activity and Health'. A statement then followed along the lines of the Department of Health's warning on the dangers of smoking stating that, "The Surgeon General has determined that lack of physical activity is detrimental to your health". This statement is a powerful message supporting the clear benefits of physical activity. In 2002, President Bush made a statement to the Nation encouraging US citizens to take control of their own lives and to a certain extent their destiny, by becoming more active. The US now offers tax incentives for the obese to eat healthily and becoming active, tax incentives are also available in Holland for employers and employees to encourage health club usage. The value of exercise to the health of a nation is unequivocal and universally understood, the UK government should now back its world leading industry, take a proactive stance and become a world leading government in tackling the detrimental effects of an inactive population.

The UK currently has in excess of 5,000 clubs and leisure centres in addition to a strong and developing provision being provided on-site by progressive and forward thinking companies. Private companies, local authorities, trusts and charitable organisations operate these centres. It is an industry that is passionate about its product. There are very few industries that can truly offer

a life changing experience and people who work within the field of health and fitness feel privileged to hold such a position.

People are also passionate about their cars and spend considerable sums of money on purchasing, servicing and maintaining a product that depreciates in value and within a relatively short space of time is traded in for a more efficient model. By anyone's calculation maintaining and servicing the human body is cheap by comparison and in output terms, appreciates year on year of a working life and if treated correctly can serve you well for a lifetime without recourse to replacement parts! Physically active individuals are proven to be more productive in the workplace, have reduced absenteeism and if ill and hospitalised spend significantly less time on the ward than their physically inactive equivalents.

The Fitness Industry Association each year promotes a national campaign to encourage people to attend their local club or centre, get advice and take up exercise. Each of the participating sites work to conform to the FIA's Code of Practice, a minimum set of operating standards to ensure the public receive appropriate instruction and customer service in a safe environment. Commit to get Fit, introduces around 60,000 new people to exercise each year and for the past two years has been appreciative of the Department of Health's 'stamp' in support of this campaign. The event has an 11 year history of encouraging exercise; raising much needed funds for charity and offers a vehicle that drives a national message to get the nation moving. It is a key mechanism that FIA operators adopt in order to bring the value of exercise to the awareness and into the lives of the UK public. Already this is the largest fitness campaign in Europe and if the right partner can be sought, this campaign has the capacity to make a tremendous impact upon awareness of exercise benefits and activity levels.

The FIA is a non-profit trade body. It is guided by a board of directors under a mission that 'represents all elements of the industry and works proactively to promote best practice, facilitate the growth and development of the marketplace and to guide the public towards improved health and well being'. The FIA has in excess of 1,400 operator members and estimates that 40% of the exercising UK population do so in an FIA facility. It drives standards through its Code of Practice and through its support of the Register of

Exercise Professional's (REP's). The Register is an important development, supported by the Department of Health, to ensure that all instructors of exercise are qualified to competently perform their given role. These are important developments and should offer a framework from which to develop appropriate links with Primary Care Trusts and the medical profession.

This association between the fitness profession and the medical profession is one that must be nurtured. Currently there is an element of scepticism that creates a barrier to exercise by the very sectors that trade on their ability to prevent ill health. FIA member health clubs and leisure centres offer a pre activity screen for all new members and using the Department of Health guidelines, if two or more coronary heart disease risk factors appear, refer the client for GP authorisation. GP's, however, are reluctant to sign off patients for fear of accepting liability or on occasions charge for the service which can act as a deterrent. The FIA is currently making representations to the British Medical Association, Medical Defence Union and the Medical Protection Society to resolve this issue.

The recent introduction of the Register of Exercise Professionals, supported by the Department of Health, should work to assist in allaying GP anxieties that the centre and the individuals delivering the exercise instruction are appropriately qualified and appropriately insured. The irony of the current situation is that those individuals who are most in need of exercise and possess the motivation to take responsibility for their own health, are being prevented from doing so by the system that exists to encourage and support. A number of leisure centres and clubs (anecdotally) report that as many as 10% of new entrants are referred to GPs.

The health and fitness industry has a great deal to offer in improving the nation's health. It has a strong public provision that needs investment and has a strong private provision that needs support in equal measure. The advantage to the nation of the UK government supporting the sector is clear. Coronary heart disease costs the NHS £1.5 billion, Obesity costs £0.5 billion, absenteeism costs UK industry £13 billion, the statistics implicated by inactivity are alarming and these are only the headlines in terms of where increasing exercise may contribute positive change. Exercise can have a positive effect upon, cardiovascular diseases, certain cancers, non-

insulin dependent diabetes, osteoarthritis, osteoporosis, mental health and in the elderly providing a quality of life and prevention of falling (a major cause of ill health and even mortality).

Health and fitness club usage is the highest active participation 'sport' in the UK. It offers employment, career opportunities and an outlet for individuals from all walks of life and level of disability. It is a positive industry with a positive outcome for those involved. The value of exercise to the individual, the corporate world and the public sector purse is virtually without challenge. The FIA will continue to work with our members and the industry to ensure continued progression and development. The FIA welcomes the UK government to assist in this development to serve the UK public and national prosperity. The conclusion to this paper is best surmised by one of the most prolific exercise physiologists of our age, "anyone wishing to pursue a sedentary lifestyle should first undergo a stringent health test to assess whether they are fit enough to stand the inactivity." (Astrand 1986).

*Fitness Industry Association, 115 Eastbourne Mews, London, W2 6LQ  
Tel: 020 7298 6730, Fax: 020 7298 6731, Email: info@fia.org.uk:  
Web: www.fia.org.uk*



When Laurence J Peter wrote that “*left unchallenged, bureaucracy defends the status quo long past the time when the quo lost its status*”, he could have been referring to Sport England just twelve months ago.

We were, truth be told, an organisation living in the past. We were trying to use 19th century organisational structures to implement a 20th century approach to providing sporting opportunities to a 21st century nation!

The 2000 Quinquennial Review of Sport England concluded that we were too centralised, too controlling and too prescriptive. Furthermore, we were spending too much time delivering our own programmes, and too little providing much needed strategic leadership.

That is starting to change. Over the past twelve months we have been working closely with the Strategy Unit and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) to implement the recommendations of the QQR. And in doing so we have been guided by five fundamental principles for change:

- We must take full responsibility for the strategic leadership of the development of sport and active recreation in England;
- We must improve management and performance at local, regional and national level;
- We must delegate effectively to both our regions and our partners, rather than act as our own delivery agent;
- We must improve the effectiveness of our key partnerships by providing our partners with more support and – where necessary – challenging them to improve;
- We must work closely with the DCMS to provide leadership and drive.

The result of this partnership work is a new, very different (and we believe much better) organisation.

Perhaps the most immediate symbol of that difference is our new Mission, our *raison d’etre*. Our previous Mission, “*More People, More Places, More Medals*”, was a useful statement of *what* we were aiming to achieve... but it left our stakeholders and the public none-the-wiser about the *why* and the *how*. We believe that our new Mission is a clearer statement of our purpose:

*“To work with partners to create opportunities for people to get involved in sport, to stay in sport, and to excel and succeed in sport at every level”.*

Of course, having a Mission is not the same as achieving it, so we have underpinned ours with three clear business objectives; business objectives that now guide *all* of the work that we do:

- Increase participation in order to improve the health of the nation;
- Retain people in sport and active recreation through an effective network of clubs, sports facilities, coaches, volunteers and competitive opportunities;
- Make sporting success happen at the highest level.

We have placed emphasis on health in our first objective, but this does not mean that we are retreating from education, crime, social inclusion or any of the social issues upon which sport can have a positive impact. It is simply that we recognise and wish to stress the unique contribution that sport can make to the improvement the Nation’s health.

Lack of physical activity is one of the main causes of ill-health in England. People who are inactive are at greater risk of developing, among other things coronary heart disease, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, and osteoporosis. Indeed the National Audit Office estimates that inactivity costs the NHS alone £500 million per year, and may cost the country as a whole as much as £2 billion. We intend to use sport to bring about a substantial increase in activity rates and eventually – we hope – a reduction in inactivity-related diseases.

In working towards these three business objectives we are determined not repeat our past mistakes. In particular, we have in the past spread ourselves too thinly (and reduced our effectiveness) by trying to do too many things ourselves. Instead we will now be focusing on a four key functions:

- Providing the strategic lead for sport in England;
- Making focused investments through our partners;
- Providing advice, support and knowledge to partners and customers;
- Influencing the decision-makers and public opinion on Sport England.

Given the current under-funding of sport, getting our investment strategy right is going to be critical to our success. We have begun by putting our own house in order by ensuring that we are in a position to make more effective use of our Exchequer and Lottery funds.

We have liberated additional Exchequer funds by substantially reducing our costs. We have introduced better ways of working and streamlined our organisation. Our ‘streamlining’ has resulted in a reduction in our staff complement from more than 400 to fewer than 250. This admittedly painful process has yielded potential savings of around £2 million... money that will now be spent on sport rather than on Sport England. And our quest for new, better ways of working has led us to sweep away the old People, Places and Medals silos that prevented us from serving our customers in a holistic way. Instead we have created two multi-disciplinary ‘sports consultancies’ – investment and partnerships – that enable us to provide a coherent and tailored service.

Our next step has been to delegate more funding decisions to our Regions. Twelve months ago less than 7% of our total budget was allocated at the regional level. From September 1 this year, approximately 50% of our investment budget is being allocated by our regional offices, working in close partnership with the Regional Sports Boards. We believe this is the right thing to do in principle and for practice reasons. It ensures that all important investment decisions take into account local circumstances and local needs.

However, £200 million of Lottery and Exchequer funding only goes so far. One of our priorities going forward is to secure more funds for sport and active recreation from other sources, whether in the public, private or not-for-profit sectors. We are already working closely with organisations as diverse as central government departments, RDAs, schools and private companies to bring in this additional funding. And we have set ourselves the ambitious target of leveraging in £2 of funding from partners for every £1 that we ourselves invest; a target of an additional £0.5 billion a year.

Knowledge (developing and disseminating sport’s knowledge base) is one of our other key functions. We believe that we are uniquely placed to create, collate, disseminate and – where appropriate – help our partners to apply

knowledge about sport and recreation.

We say ‘where appropriate’ because one of the most frequent criticisms of the old Sport England was that we were too programme-led. The new Sport England is knowledge-led. For the most part it will be our partners – who are much closer to end-users – who decide how best to apply that knowledge, how best to deliver.

Accordingly, we have conducted a fundamental review of all of our activities, and we have concluded that there are a large number of programmes that it is no longer appropriate for us to continue. We will be conducting similar reviews of our activities on a regular basis in order to ensure that what we do meets our business objectives.

Looking ahead, we will also be conducting robust monitoring and evaluation of the funds that we invest through our partners to ensure that they are delivering on our key strategic objectives. It is only through such monitoring that we will know what works and what doesn’t. And it is only through monitoring and evaluation that we can identify best practice. Only with this hard evidence can we persuade the Government that sport should receive additional funding.

Sport England has made great strides in the last twelve months. We have recognised that we need to change, and we have taken the tough decisions to make them happen. We are confident that the new Sport England is less bureaucratic, less dictatorial, more efficient and more focused.

But we also recognise that sport in England is much more than just Sport England. There are also 438 local authorities, more than 400 national governing bodies of sport, over one hundred thousand sports clubs, and countless other organisations. All of them have roles to play that are just as important as ours. If the Nation is to have the sport that it deserves then it may be that many of these organisations also need to re-evaluate themselves.

Sport in England stands at an exciting crossroads. The time has now come for all those involved in sport to travel in the same direction.