



Northern Culture All-Party Parliamentary Group

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NCAPPG Sport Inquiry Minutes 15th November 2022, Online

WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

Jason McCartney MP – Chair

- The focus of today's session is about youth participation in sport
- Sport can play a massive role in communities
- Sport has amazing cultural value
- What is needed to boost the cultural value of sport in the North?
- How much more value could sport add to Levelling Up when it comes to opportunities and culture?
- How can sport drive cultural value, identity, and diversity, and contribute to the North's rich seam of talent, and also grow the North's economy?

Panel 1

John Downes – North East Director of Street Games

- We've been around for 15 years and have a network of over 1400 organisations – well over 50% of which are in the North
- Started off in 2007
- Our evidence over the last 15 years shows that sport can help boost communities by generating human capital and also social capital
 - Human capital = individuals' skills, knowledge, and wellbeing
 - Social capital = the communities, connections, and relationships
- With effective designed sport programmes, you can really generate a stronger social infrastructure for younger people to benefit from
- Building a community atmosphere where sport is the glue
- Through effective design of programmes, you can help improve people's engagement with their community, making them an active citizen in their communities, build relationships locally and add to the culture locally
- Sport can help build leadership locally
- The main thing we need to think about is access
- To boost opportunities, we need to think of the access people, and especially young people, have to sport
 - This can be brought about via locally embedded organisations with the skills, relationships and capacity to build local opportunities
 - Improve access to be audience at live sport
- In the last year alone, we have helped around 10,000 youngsters be part of the audience at sporting events where they wouldn't be able to afford to go
- Recently launched a commission

- Place based approaches work
- Local organisations are critical to building the atmosphere

Paul Walmsley – *Research Fellow in Children’s Rights and Social Justice at the University of Liverpool & Executive Researcher at Nobody Left Behind*

- School and Education isn’t for everyone
 - Our one size fits all education system means that these marginalised young people are falling through the gaps
 - We decided to set up a safety net with 3 schools in deprived areas of Liverpool
 - 15-20% of students in these schools are often deemed ‘unruly and disruptive’
 - We took them out of the school environment and into a boxing gym – using boxing as a conduit for them to express themselves and to have relationships with other people outside of school but during school time
- With some of them not wanting to attend college upon turning 16 we decided to set up a virtual college to up-skill these youngsters and other disadvantaged people
 - 7 week program engaging with young people, ex care leavers, ex-prisoners, women in the Muslim community who felt marginalised, and other marginalised communities
 - 4 weeks sport -> 3 weeks up-skilling in construction and civil engineering with 14 companies on-board who then speak with the program attendees about future careers
- Sport and Creativity are important in building valuable skills
- ‘Relationships, jobs, and families stop bullets’
- It’s not just about the sport and the culture, it’s also about storytelling

Daghan Irak – *Sport Sociologist at the University of Huddersfield*

- We can contribute to our democracy through inclusive sport
- Democracy is all about inclusion and exclusion
- Sport is a good way of measuring a country or regions democratic culture
- Participation in sport doesn’t happen automatically, it needs to be democratised
- Are we doing enough to fix the divide between those with access and those without?
- Are we including everyone in democracy related processes?
- Are we including everyone in sport related processes?
 - Conclusion: we are not, not yet
 - But, we do not have enough data
- Is our sport environment inclusive enough?
 - Does it include ethnic minorities
 - Different genders
 - Different social classes
- Find out who is excluded from sport and for what reason
- We need to not only produce world class athletes, but also world class sports journalists and officials
- There needs to be more opportunities for women to get involved in sport
 - Especially sports journalism
- We are developing a project with Huddersfield Town to organise Women’s football clinics and also sports journalism clinics for female students in underprivileged areas

Jason McCartney MP - *Chair*

- Talks of the benefits of a Sheffield boxing gym which helped to transform the lives of young people
 - Both mentally and physically

Question

Duncan McVey – *Uni Lecturer and Grassroots sports coach*

'I think there's a business case for increased use of technology in grassroots sport and for regulation and standardisation of the activities'

Jason McCartney MP – *Chair*

- Highlights Huddersfield summer football programme which had fee paying and FSM entitled kids in the same groups

John Downes – *North East Director of Street Games*

- There is a case for technology, and it can really help providers and organisations
- There is a digital access problem
- 50% of the young people we talk to don't have access to Wi-Fi or games-consoles at home
- We need to consider what the term 'Grassroots Sport' is
- People in deprived communities have far less access to grassroots sport
- Grassroots delivery needs investment to engages with those who are marginalised
- Build trusting relationships between adults/sports volunteers and those who aren't engaged

Jason McCartney MP - *Chair*

- (To Paul) How do you get to go into the schools? Is it hard? Do you invite yourself? Or are you invited? How do you identify the kids that you are going to focus on?

Paul Walmsley – *Research Fellow in Children's Rights and Social Justice at the University of Liverpool & Executive Researcher at Nobody Left Behind*

- Usually, I'm invited in
- It's not just technology but also resources that different organisations have – like Universities, Fire Brigades, Bus and Train services – they can also help
- The University of Liverpool have asset mapped their resources, and are allowing the use of their resources and facilities for the wider community when not in use
- In response to a question about 'What are the Premier League doing?': We have just done something with Everton and the PFA – academy drop offs are working with Nobody Left Behind to be up-skilled and to help find jobs
- Nobody Left Behind is currently funded by the DWP, Home Office, and the VRP (Violence Reduction Program) – funding which won't be there in 2 years' time
- All Nobody Left Behind profits this year being reinvested into a care home
 - Helping young, marginalised people through sport in semi-assisted living
- Nobody Left Behind are working with a number of companies to develop apprenticeship/employment/training opportunities in partnership with sporting opportunities
- Nobody Left Behind do need help from the Government and from Businesses

Jason McCartney MP - *Chair*

- How do we identify and encourage those kids that aren't participating or don't have the access?
- As a Sports Sociologist, how do we access those kids and get them out participating?

Daghan Irak – *Sport Sociologist at the University of Huddersfield*

- The most important thing is support from people
- We need more fieldwork

- Sports Sociologists should be working alongside all levels of government in order to really canvas areas
- We need to develop research projects on different communities, marginalised and discriminated groups

Andrew McPhillips – Northern Powerhouse Partnership

- How involved are Paul and John in helping those in kids need get more involved in the education sector and get access to funding and opportunities?

Paul Walmsley – Research Fellow in Children’s Rights and Social Justice at the University of Liverpool & Executive Researcher at Nobody Left Behind

- We’ve got policy and procedure that is now harming our young people
- Family trust is important
- We are too risk averse
- The rights of the adult sometimes top trump the rights of the child

John Downes – North East Director of Street Games

- Trusted adults play a massive role in the lives of these kids
- Family trust is important
- We can start mapping education, deprivation, crime rates, with where opportunities are, and access to facilities and resources are
 - See for correlations
- It’s about organisations like us (Street Games) having a role in coordinating that
- We have a role in developing a strategy
- In Newcastle there is a new 8 strategy called Evry which is about a commitment of all partners to think differently and reach those children with less access to sporting opportunities.
- Ultimately, we need more commitment from organisations in helping young people – it shouldn’t be ‘these are our young people, those aren’t’
 - We need to start viewing young people as young people, and not as a customer or as a commodity

Daghan Irak – Sport Sociologist at the University of Huddersfield

- I emphasise inclusion
- Sport is a good way of breaking negative mentalities – lack of confidence, self-belief, low aspirations
- People lack the trust in institutions due to past experiences

Panel 2

Leanne Azevedo – Reader in Health Research at the University of Huddersfield

- Just completed an evaluation project on the South East Arts Project (STAR)
- Dance sessions post-pandemic with professional dance artists at primary schools in Middlesbrough and Redcar
- 2 Weekly sessions for the whole school year
- We carried out interviews and focus groups with the teachers, children, parents, and dance artists
- Children reported being happy and full of energy
- Teachers at the beginning of the programme were reluctant to engage with the programme
 - Concerned about the vocabulary used by the dance artists

- Concerned about missed education
- Teachers have been converted, seeing children improving their literacy skills
 - Teachers have adopted a bit of this approach – Dance and Arts
 - Children were more engaged in class and less disruptive
 - The children were able to express themselves without judgement – boosting their confidence and creativity
- Teachers were concerned about boys’ involvement in dance
- Boys were more confident and skilful after the sessions
- Development of teamwork skills
- Improved parents’ evenings – had more positive things to say
- The teachers concluded that they’d like to see this approach adopted at a wider scale in their areas
- The intervention didn’t work as well for younger children (year 1), but did work well for older years (year 5)
 - The year 1 pupils primarily mirrored the behaviour of the Dancers and their teachers as opposed to using their creativity
 - There needs to be better communication between schools and parents – so that they know what is going on
- Overall, it was a positive experience

James Reeves – Senior Press and Advocacy Manager Football Beyond Borders

- It is important to involve more young people in the conversations that will affect them
- 46 programmes delivered in the North West – around half of the programs they operate
- We work in areas that are disadvantaged and with young people that are disengaged at school but passionate about football
- We use sport to reengage them with education
- Sport is important for health and wellbeing as it can provide two important things:
 - Inclusion
 - Long-term trusted relationships
- Sport can help people manage and regulate their emotions
- Football provides a safe space to explore their own identity and group identities
- 12% of 18- to 34-year-olds have either no or one close friend
- There aren’t enough good role models for young people, and those there are do not have the training or expertise to support them properly
- Cultural competency is really important
- It’s important that youth workers are representative of the youngsters they are working with
- We need to improve the recruitment and training of youth workers
- Focus on passion for the sport over technical development
- Football Beyond Borders is about creating inclusive environments where young people can play, experience joy, be praised and feel real passion about something
- Quality relationships aren’t built in holiday programmes, they are built over a number of years with trusted individuals
 - The current funding of the voluntary and community sector receive does not help with this
- It’s impossible to build long-term relationships without guaranteed job security for youth workers over a number of years
- We want to join the National Youth Agency’s call for 10,000 new youth workers and a review of the way funding happens in the sector
- We’d like to see a review of the statute guidance – especially those outlined in the Timpson review and those pertaining to the Special Educational Needs Green Paper

- Something that hasn't progressed as much as we'd like
- Health and well-being can only be supported as long as the wellbeing of those providing the support is ensured – more support for youth workers and teachers

Jason McCartney MP - Chair

- Emphasises how there are so many jobs and opportunities out there – it's just about matching those up with the right people
- How do we give the young people the chance to access these opportunities? How do we give them the confidence and skills, experience, and personality to access them?
- It's not about educational attainment, it's about giving young people the opportunity and a chance to shine.

James Reeves – Senior Press and Advocacy Manager Football Beyond Borders

- Agrees there are so many opportunities now provided for by local councils and by things like the apprenticeship levy, however the issue is not that they are not available but instead that young people aren't engaging with them enough.
 - This is due to lack of exposure and the cultural representation
 - Young people aren't going to access a career or route that they do not see in front of them or that they aren't exposed to at school
 - If they don't get to try these things at least once, then they won't know if it's for them
 - We need to develop young people's passions for these industries much earlier on
- Lack of representation in different occupations
- Lack of opportunities to engage with these industries and occupations for young people

Jason McCartney MP - Chair

- Lists off a number of programs a school in his constituency engages with.
- How do schools balance providing these extracurricular opportunities whilst maintaining their position in the academic league table?

Leanne Azevedo – Reader in Health Research at the University of Huddersfield

- It is a challenge
- Attempts to incorporate physical activity with education
- There needs to be a better use of PE lessons – more time is spent on bureaucracy rather than on the actual physical activity
- Continuity and long-term programmes are important so that they can build relationships with peers
- By being more active, academic achievement can improve or stabilise

Philip Watson

- Schools do prepare young people for after school and employers do not commit to young people

Paul Walmsley – Research Fellow in Children's Rights and Social Justice at the University of Liverpool & Executive Researcher at Nobody Left Behind

- We need to change the measuring tool
- We need to change elements of the education system
- Common sense is not that common and common sense needs to be the approach

James Reeves – Senior Press and Advocacy Manager Football Beyond Borders

- There are adaptations that need to be made

- Data suggests that the most protective factor for kids leaving school is them achieving their GCSE's in English and Maths
- There are some really good examples of good practice
- 80% of school exclusions happen in 10% of schools
- There are some schools where vulnerable young people are able to thrive – we need to try and extrapolate these processes out to the 'cold spots' where it is not happening
- Schools should be seen as places that provide solutions rather than being seen as the problem within this
- An additional £1,000-£1,500 needed per vulnerable student is needed to enable schools to provide the support that young people need

Jason McCartney MP - Chair

- I've been looking at some of the educational reports
- Nearly 90,000 young people have dropped out of education since the pandemic

Leanne Azevedo – Reader in Health Research at the University of Huddersfield

- We need to invest in the north, not just in sport but also in arts
- We need to work with and learn from academies that are doing things right in regard to engaging with young people and integrating them into the community
- Shared learning is quite important

James Reeves – Senior Press and Advocacy Manager Football Beyond Borders

- There is such a wide variety of cultural identity across the North which means there is a greater pressure on a range of opportunities and activities
- Exposure to opportunities is imperative

Jason McCartney – Chair

- Thanks the panellists for their contributions
- It's not just about funding, it's about how it's delivered, how we access the young people and how we partner up with other organisations
- Over £250m of government funding is going into youth outreach programmes
- How do we measure the success?
- How do we identify the young people who are still missing out on the opportunities?