

The Impact of the Government's Spending Review on Sport, Physical Activity and Health

Sport England

Sport England will receive, from the Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport (SSCOMS), a 33% reduction in grant in aid revenue funding by 2014/15. They state:

'This is a significant cut, which will be tough for those who love sport and give up their time working in clubs, as coaches and as volunteers to help others take part in sporting activities.'

However, they plan to achieve the 33% savings by taking the following actions:

- Setting ourselves a target of reducing our own administration costs by 50% by March 2015
- Protecting the revenue funding for our major frontline deliverers, national governing bodies of sport, until 2013
- Reducing our grant in aid budget for NGBs for the 2013 – 17 funding cycle by no more than 15%
- Reducing our grant in aid budget for most of the other organisations we fund, including our national partners by around 30% over four years
- Protecting Sportsmatch for the next two years, with a full review in 2013.

Additionally, SE have received a reduction in their capital grant budget of around 40%.

The Government's Lottery reforms will see the share of the good causes funding for sport rise to 18 per cent in 2011-12 and then 20 per cent in 2012-13.

The Youth Sports Trust and the Loss of School Sports Partnerships

Extracts from SSCOMS, Michael Gove's letter to Sue Campbell, Chair YST:

'Our approach differs fundamentally from that of the last Government'

.... the department will not continue to provide funding for school sports partnerships', 'is immediately lifting the many requirements of the previous Government's PE and Sport Strategy, so giving schools the clarity and freedom to concentrate on competitive school sport. I am removing the need for schools to:

- Plan and implement the "five hour offer"
- Collect information about every pupil for an annual survey
- Report to the YST on various performance indicators
- Conform to a national blueprint for how to deliver PE and Sport and how to use staff and resources.

In giving schools this freedom, we are trusting school leaders to take decisions in the best interests of the pupils and parents they serve.

Over the next year, my Department will work closely with the DCMS to develop model to assist the Olympic-style approach to school sport.'

Chairman's Comments

The Sport England implications are not directly that serious for National Governing Bodies of sport in particular but more so for sport in general. However, the SSP demolition will have almost immediate and far reaching impacts. The removal of the management, measurement and reporting on children's sport, in school, out of school, in leading/coaching and volunteering will mean that these components were likely to be unmanaged. Many sports, have benefited from the increase in all these strategic threads: primary and secondary schools have run intra- and inter-school tournaments using their primary Link Teachers, School Sport Co-ordinators and Tournament Organisers with some help from our volunteers: across Herts' 12 School Sports Partnerships last season there were 21 different county-wide sports tournaments managed by these professionals: there were additionally 14 intra-SSP tournaments in Welwyn Hatfield SSP, for example. These resources, apart from our volunteers, are planned to disappear. Yet, the professionals are the very people who could have delivered the SSCOMS' 'Olympic-style approach to school sport'.

Of course there were many other benefits of PESSYP and the SSPs, not least the development of gifted and talented, the school volunteers, leaders and coaches and creating community links. The impact of a removal of SSP's and the reduced funding to Sport England and local authorities will hit sport, physical activity and public health very hard in many ways. We have already heard of sports centres closing at 6pm because the lack of local authority support.

Currently, government statistics show that only about 18% of the population do sufficient activity to avoid illnesses such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and some cancers and these cost the NHS many £Billions each year there are additional costs to the wider society, too. There were, in 2003, targets to achieve figures (similar to those in Finland, Canada and parts of Australia) of 74% doing sufficient activity by 2020. These targets have been difficult to progress towards and largely eroded.

The current cuts to sport and physical activity will increase the ill-health burden on all of us now, and as habits get ingrained, for a very long time into the future.