SPORTSCOTLAND
CHILD PROTECTION IN SPORT

Introduction

sportscotland has been invited to give evidence at the roundtable evidence session and to provide written evidence to answer two specific questions:

- Does the current situation regarding a number of former football players speaking publically about allegations of historical child sexual abuse in football have any impact on your area?
- What assurances can you provide that the current safeguards and culture of sporting organisations ensures that the allegations of historical child sex abuse in football could not happen today in sport?

Background

As the national agency for sport in Scotland, sportscotland believes passionately that sport makes a positive and valuable contribution to personal, community and national wellbeing in Scotland. Our vision is a Scotland where sport is a way of life, where sport is at the heart of Scottish society and has a positive impact on people and communities. We want to achieve this vision by building a world class sporting system for everyone in Scotland (shown in Figure 1).

The world class sporting system provides a framework that supports people to find their pathway into and through sport whatever their level of aspiration. There are a wide range of partners contributing time, expertise and investment into Scotland’s sporting system and partnerships are critical to effectively joining up different parts of the system.

Scottish governing bodies of sport (SGBs), local authorities and leisure trusts in particular are key partners within the sporting system and enable the delivery of many of sportscotland’s key programmes. We work together with partners to support and develop the system and better understand how the elements of the system influence and connect with each other to improve sport.
Child protection in sport
This section provides information in response to the Committee’s specific questions.

Does the current situation regarding a number of former football players speaking publicly about allegations of historical child sexual abuse in football have any impact on your area?

The horrific allegations of historic abuse in youth football have a significant impact on sportscotland and Scottish sport more widely. The safety and wellbeing of children taking part in sport and physical activity is a priority for us and all of our partners. These allegations have raised awareness amongst practitioners across sport about the need for appropriate practices, procedures and policies to respond to and manage any form of child abuse allegations.

For many years we have worked with Children 1st, Scotland’s national children’s charity, SGBs, local authorities, leisure trusts and clubs, and, collectively, we have developed a comprehensive and robust child protection system in Scottish sport.

What assurances can you provide that the current safeguards and culture of sporting organisations ensures that the allegations of historical child sex abuse in football could not happen today in sport?

sportscotland investment in Children 1st and SGBs
We invest £125,000 per annum through Children 1st, which is primarily aimed at supporting SGBs to implement the Minimum Operating Requirements (MORs) for child protection, which include safeguarding policies. Our investment also supports other services Children 1st provide, including: workshop delivery; the Safeguarding in Sport website; education and information materials; and, a helpline. Children 1st continually develop their service to meet current needs, and to take account of best practice and changes in legislation. In light of the recent allegations sportscotland and Children 1st’s Safeguarding in Sport team have provided further clarification and
guidance for SGBs, clubs, and other partners in Scotland advising how to respond to allegations of historic abuse.

In addition to our investment in Children 1st we also invest over £3 million annually into SGBs to support their overall administration and running costs, which underpin their work in child protection, PVG administration as well as other areas, such as equalities and anti-doping. This effective organisation investment supports SGBs with their financial management, organisational stability, leadership, viability, and planning and policy implementation.

**PVG administration**

Requirements of the PVG scheme position the responsibility with the employer or deployer for ensuring checks are in place for those that undertake “regulated work” under the terms of the scheme. In terms of SGBs their specific responsibility is in relation to checks for those that work or volunteer directly for them.

In terms of SGB member clubs, PVG checks are the responsibility of the club, as the deployer, as they have awareness of who is delivering what to whom, where and when. Many SGBs provide the administration and support needed around the processing of these applications on behalf of their clubs, but this is not a requirement.

**Safeguarding in sport service**

For over 15 year sportscotland has invested in Children 1st to provide the Safeguarding in Sport service, which supports SGBs, local authority sport and leisure departments, leisure trusts and sports clubs to help ensure children stay safe and have fun while taking part in sport. The service includes:

- advice on a wide range of issues from how to access training and resources to case specific advice and support regarding any child protection or welfare issue;
- consultancy to help organisations develop ways to keep children safe including recruitment, selection and codes of conduct;
- training to provide basic awareness about child protection or more detailed training for Club Child Protection Officers, officials and staff;
- support to SGBs and local authorities to adopt minimum operating requirements for child protection and network groups to share good practice.

**Minimum operating requirements**

As part of sportscotland’s investment agreements with SGBs, there are consistent Minimum Operating Requirements (MORs) for child protection, which have been in place for more than eight years. The MORs include the following:

- A named contact for the coordination of child protection, with a role description, who has attended recommended training.
A Child Protection Policy which reflects national guidelines, adopted by the Board / Executive / Management Committee.

A Code of Conduct for working with children and young people.

A variety of child protection training offered at appropriate levels for those working or volunteering with children and young people in sport.

A procedure for the recruitment and selection of those who work with children and young people, including access to PVG Scheme Membership checks.

A procedure for responding to concerns about the welfare or abuse of a child - within or out with sport.

A disciplinary procedure for managing concerns and allegations of poor practice, misconduct and child abuse, which includes provision for referrals to the Children’s List.

A procedure for reviewing the management of concerns about poor practice, misconduct and / or child abuse.

All invested SGBs are aware of their responsibilities under the MORs and Children 1st report to sportscotland on the status of SGBs against the MORs as well as usage of their helpline.

**Child Wellbeing and Protection in Sport Standards**

Children 1st have undertaken a review of the current MORs to bring them in line with current research, government guidance and changes in legislation due to the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. While the content of the MORs is still relevant, there was a need for progress and development to take a much broader and more child-centred and rights-based approach. The Child Wellbeing and Protection in Sport Standards will help achieve this.

The Standards are being developed by Children 1st in collaboration with SGBs and incorporate the existing MORs. They are broken down into three components: the child; the adults; and the sports organisations. There are eight standards each with respective minimum criteria that are appropriate for any organisation delivering sport to children and young people under the age of 18 years. Introducing these Standards will continue to improve the systems, support available and the application of best practice in this important area.

The development of the Standards was started prior to the recent historical child abuse allegations and is currently being piloted by 10 SGBs and a selection of their clubs to ensure their suitability for sport. Children 1st is also developing a self assessment tool which signposts organisations to templates, good practice and suggested evidence to support the implementation of the Standards. We hope to make this available online to provide greater access for clubs. We expect to launch and phase roll out of the Standards in late autumn 2017 once the pilot with SGBs and clubs is completed.

**Safeguarding training**
**Safeguarding and Protecting Children in Sport**

As part of sportscotland’s investment into the development of coaches and volunteers, we provide the initial education and ongoing development for tutors to deliver the Safeguarding and Protecting Children in sport workshops (SPC1 and SPC2). Since 2010 local and national partners have delivered over 1,500 workshops with over 23,000 attendances.

SPC1 is primarily aimed at coaches and volunteers who may come into contact with children. It explores best practice, guidance and examples relevant to those in contact with children and provides basic information on recognising child abuse and responding to concerns. SPC2 reflects on practice and builds on knowledge gained in SPC1, with outcomes including: increasing awareness, helping recognise the signs of abuse and poor practice, and helping to deal sensitively and effectively with issues that arise.

In addition, some SGBs, Scottish Gymnastics for example, provide a sport-specific version of this training for their sport. Attendance figures for these are held by each individual sport and are not part of the figures noted above.

**In Safe Hands**

Our investment in Children 1st supports the delivery of the In Safe Hands courses, which are designed to train Child Protection Officers in clubs and SGBs. These courses are mainly delivered through SGBs and local authorities with 17 courses delivered to date in 2016-17 with 376 delegates.

**Networking meetings**

All SGB Child Protection Officers and local authority safeguarding contacts and tutors can also attend the Safeguarding in Sport Networking meetings of which there are four per year with an average of 20 represented organisations at each meeting. Topics have included: Safety online; How to support children who display challenging behaviour; How to manage difficult conversations.

**SGB learning and development programme**

sportscotland invests over £40,000 per annum into SGB learning and development, via a programme supported by the Scottish Sports Association, which the wider SGB workforce can access. Recent workshops delivered through this programme have included: anti bullying; protecting vulnerable groups; and, investigating safeguarding concerns.

**Conclusion**

As the above highlights, sportscotland and its partners are committed to the safety and wellbeing of children taking part in sport. The current safeguards and culture should ensure that all individuals working with children and young people in sport...
today are aware of and take action in relation to their child protection responsibilities. Through our partnership with Children 1st we continue to ensure that the current culture and practice constantly develops to meet current needs, reflecting good practice and changes in legislation. Ultimately we all want children to stay safe and have fun while participating in sport.