HEALTH AND SPORT COMMITTEE
YEAR OF YOUNG PEOPLE 2018
SUBMISSION FROM sportscotland

About sportscotland

sportscotland is the national agency for sport 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.

There are a range of organisations involved in delivering sport in Scotland, including local authorities and their leisure trusts, Scottish Governing Bodies of sport (SGBs), other representative bodies, sports clubs, higher and further education institutions and third sector organisations. Overall, sportscotland is responsible for around 10% of public funding for sport in Scotland\(^1\) so we recognise that it is critical that we work in partnership with and provide leadership to the key players involved, both strategically and operationally.

How well are the views and interests of young people taken into account in health and sport policy?

68% of children between the age of 2 and 15 having played sport in the last week.\(^2\) Adult participation in sport is highest amongst young adults with 70% of 16 to 24-year olds having participated in sport (excluding walking) in the last four weeks.\(^3\) It is clear sport is an important part of many young people’s lives in Scotland.

sportscotland is committed to ensuring that the sporting system meets the needs of young people and is responsive to their views. Our Corporate Plan highlights that “as a [sports] sector we should focus on developing young people as leaders in sport because they are key to the future sustainability of the sporting system”.

We have five principles that are central to our work and support the sport sector in ensuring that young people have the opportunity to influence and lead sport. These include:

- Young people’s contribution as leaders in sport is meaningful and important and is accepted as such by the sector. The sport sector gives them responsibility to play a key role in sport and development.
- Young people’s views are heard and valued across the sector. Young people and their views influence decision making and drive change.

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• **Influencing National Policies and Programmes**

The Young People’s Sport Panel (YPSP) was established in 2012 to ensure those directing sport in Scotland have input from a young person’s perspective.

Led by sportscotland, supported by Young Scot and the National Lottery, the YPSP provides a national platform to represent a voice of young people from across Scotland to help influence and shape the future of sport in Scotland and to raise the profile of sport. The members, aged between 14 and 25, are recruited from a range of backgrounds and locations to ensure they provide a diverse voice for young people in sport. Central to the programme is the principle that their views are heard and valued, and they can influence decision making and drive change.

The third cohort of fifteen panel members aged between 14 and 25 is approaching the end of their two-year term. With the panel now embedded within sportscotland’s thinking and ways of working, a fourth cohort has just been recruited for the 2018-2020 period.

Members of the panel undertake a range of responsibilities during their time on the panel. This includes consulting on new programmes and initiatives, speaking at events, contributing articles for publication on topics they are passionate about, and other project-work.

There are many examples of how the YPSP has influenced national policies and programmes, including:

- Speaking at and participating in many of sportscotland’s national and regional stakeholder forums, ensuring the voice and perspective of young people is heard and included. Most recently, on 12 June a YPSP member spoke to an audience of around 100 senior staff from our key partners (SGB chief executives and heads of development, and local authority sports development and Active Schools managers) as we consulted on our new Corporate Plan.

- Contributing to and influencing the development of specific policies and programmes, such as the new Standards for Child Wellbeing and Protection in Sport, sportscotland’s Clubs and Communities Framework and future direction of the Community Sport Hubs programme, and Scottish Disability Sport’s Disability Inclusion Training.

- Providing a young person’s perspective to national partners’ forums, including two members joining the Minister of Public Health and Sport’s Women and Girls in Sport Advisory Board, speaking at SAMH’s launch of Scotland’s Mental Health Charter for Physical Activity and Sport, and joining the panel at the Scottish Women In Sport’s conference to discuss their experiences in school sport.

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Influencing Others

As the national agency for sport we recognise that we have a crucial role in leading, supporting and coordinating the key deliverers of sport and this includes working with our partners - SGBs, local authority sports development and Active Schools teams, Community Sport Hubs, clubs, schools and others - to ensure that young people can influence their policies and programmes. We recognise that many of our partners are fully committed to listening to and empowering young people in sport. These organisations would be able to provide their own examples of the work that they have undertaken to facilitate this.

Examples of our work influencing partners include:

- **Roll out of the panel approach**: We have supported the YPSP to develop a Young People’s Toolkit to help partners set-up their own panels or engage better with young people. This work has resulted in four SGBs and four local authorities being directly influenced to set-up panels, to meet their own needs and context. More are in the pipeline and the YPSP model is attracting interest from sporting organisations outside Scotland and from non-sport organisations within Scotland.

- **School Sport Awards (SSA)**: This is an initiative designed to encourage schools to continuously improve physical education (PE) and school sport opportunities. One of the criteria of the Awards is setting up an SSA Committee to lead the school through the application process. This committee is made up of young people to represent the views of pupils and all applications have to include statements from young people as part of their evidence. This has led many schools to set-up permanent school sport committees to influence sport in the school.

- **Active Girls**: Our Active Girls Solutions Workshop is a new programme supporting schools and other partners to understand ways of engaging girls and young women in sport and PE. These workshops have been designed following input from hundreds of girls engaged in our school-based Fit For Girls programme. Girls are involved in both hosting and facilitating the workshops, during which an emphasis is placed on the need to listen to the views of girls and young women.

- **Young Leaders in Hubs**: The development of Community Sport Hubs is a key legacy programme from the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games. As with our other work, we have committed to ensuring that young people are involved in how Hubs are run. The Young Leaders in Hubs programme supports Hubs to embed young people’s involvement in decision making as members of the Hub steering group or management committee.
What are the priorities in health and sport for young people?

Young People are a diverse group, representing a significant percentage of all sporting participants in Scotland. It would therefore be too simplistic to articulate a single set of priorities for young people. Young people are in a better position to answer this question themselves and we view our role as giving young people the platform to do so.

The current (2016-2018) cohort of the YPSP were asked to collectively identify their priorities at the outset of their term on the panel. They agreed that they wanted to focus on equality within sport. In particular they have focussed on the inclusion of people with disabilities within sport, and equality and non-discrimination for LGBT people participating in sport.

The Panel members have also shared views on more specific elements of sport through the My Sporting Life series of articles as part of our online publication Sport First. This has included articles on the role of sport in employment, the personal impact of sports volunteering, the challenges of balancing competitive sport and education, and ways to make sport accessible. These articles have stimulated interest from partners in understanding more about young people’s views on these issues. (See https://sportscotland.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/people/young-leaders/the-young-peoples-sport-panel/the-work-of-the-sportpanel/)

Our monthly #SportHour conversation on Twitter has proved another valuable tool for understanding the priorities of young people and ensuring that a wide range of young people are able to have their views heard. Each month a different theme is set for the hour and a small set of questions posed. Whilst the conversation is open to all, it has proved effective in providing a space for young people to share their views on an equal footing.

For further details:
Malcolm Dingwall-Smith
Strategic Partnership Manager
sportscotland
malcolm.dingwall-smith@sportscotland.org.uk
0141 534 1155