Briefing for the Public Petitions Committee

**Petition Number:** 1434

**Main Petitioner:** Nairn McDonald

**Subject:** Sports Funding in Schools

Calls on the Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to make sure every school can provide adequate sports facilities and resources for their students and to create a minimum level of facilities available.

**Background**

School funding is a matter for local authorities, which includes the funding of the PE curriculum. Sportscotland run a [sports facilities fund](https://www.sportscotland.org.uk/) for facilities that will benefit the community generally. Since 2007, over £21 million has been invested through this fund in facilities throughout Scotland (S3W-36240).

A [national audit of sports facilities](https://www.sportscotland.org.uk/) in 2006 found an ageing stock of sports facilities, although there were many good examples of high quality facilities. In relation to schools it found that: “Facilities in local authority schools account for £20m of required expenditure. However, significant improvements have already been made under the Scottish Executive’s school rebuilding programme, whilst further improvements will be secured from other school projects currently underway. The further education sector is also investing substantial sums in new and upgraded sports facilities.”

[Building Better Schools](https://www.gov.scot), the school estate strategy issued jointly by the Scottish Government and COSLA in 2009, sets out the aim of making school facilities more available to the local community. In addition, the Scottish Government’s Commonwealth Games 2014 [Legacy Plan](https://www.gov.scot), includes the creation of [Community Sport Hubs](https://www.sportscotland.org.uk/) across all local authority areas. The Scottish Government has set a target that 50% of these hubs must be based in schools. The initiative is being led by Sportscotland, which has set aside £1.5m per annum to 2015 for the programme. The most up-to-date list of hubs details and locations is available [here](https://www.sportscotland.org.uk).

Further, the [Active Schools](https://www.sportscotland.org.uk/) network aims to increase the number of opportunities for all children to get engaged in sport and also try to build bridges with sports clubs and other community organisations to give pupils a ‘pathway’ to continue their participation in sport outside school.
Scottish Government Action

Reaching Higher – the 2007 national strategy for sport recognised the importance of quality facilities and recommended opening up school sports facilities to the community.

The Government has a target that by 2014, every pupil in S1 to S4 has at least two hours or two periods of PE a week.

“Sportscotland has identified an additional £3.4 million to be distributed to authorities over the next two years to help deliver the pledge. This will be supplemented with a further £2.4 million package of national developments led by Education Scotland to increase the support available to local authorities and teachers. Each local authority will work in partnership with sportscotland and Education Scotland to agree an action plan which will help support delivery of their commitment.” (News release 29th March 2012)

Scottish Parliament Action

Physical activity was the subject of a debate in the chamber on 17th May 2012. This included discussion of physical education in schools. http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28862.aspx?r=7031

In the last Parliamentary session, the then Health & Sport Committee undertook a wide-ranging inquiry into sport. Its final report focussed on physical education (PE) in schools as a way to encourage better physical literacy and greater participation rates in sport and other physical activity. Amongst its recommendations, it wished to see greater leadership from the Scottish Government to ensure better PE provision and the meeting of the PE target. It also considered the Active Schools programme. Whilst acknowledging the good work that was taking place, particularly with primary schools, it considered little progress had been made in the early years of secondary school. It wished to see better coordination between partners at a local level and agreement nationally on how to take the programme forward. As regards facilities it wished to see:

- greater use of sports hubs to facilitate sporting opportunities and to provide a base for sports clubs
- the unlocking of the potential for school facilities to be used by the wider community

The Committee received a response from the Scottish Government to the report on 21 August 2009, and a response from Sportscotland on 2 September 2009. The Parliament held a debate on the Committee's report on 16 September 2009.
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