Dear Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport,

**JOG SCOTLAND**

On 21 February the Committee held an evidence session on ‘Sport for Everyone’. The Sport for Everyone inquiry is considering the degree of progress made in recent years around access to and barriers to participation in sport in Scotland.

At the evidence session on the 21 February the Committee heard from various sporting organisations and academics, including Scottish Athletics.

During this evidence session the issue of funding for the jogscotland programme was raised. It is our understanding that the Scottish Government (via sportscotland) has provided £100,000 of funding per year to Scottish Athletics to fund the jogscotland programme since 2008/9 but from April this year no further funding will be provided.

Scottish Athletics advised that jogscotland has grown from 21,111 members in 2011 to 39,987 at the end of 2016, an 89.4% increase, which suggests that the programme is popular and successful. They also advised most participants (68.6%) are inactive when they join the programme and join for a variety of reasons including physical health, mental health, social and enjoyment. The majority of participants are 40 years + and female (77%).

This suggests to the Committee that the jogscotland programme is successfully encouraging a cohort of inactive people to become more active and at the same time helping to reduce health inequalities by encouraging more women to participate in physical activity. Jogging is also a relatively inexpensive activity to participate in and as such has an impact on socio-economic inequality.

- Can you advise the thinking underpinning the decision to stop funding the jogscotland programme from April 2017?

In a letter to Miles Briggs MSP, dated 17 January 2017, the Minister for Public Health and Sport advised that sportscotland has provided Scottish Athletics with a one-off payment of £65,000 to enable them to develop and pilot a system that records individual participation and activity by using mobile technology. The purpose being to provide Scottish Athletics with the ability to fully demonstrate the impact jogscotland
is having. We observe the obvious contradiction between terminating a programme and at the same time seeking to retrospectively assess its impact.

The Committee understands there are budget constraints being placed on most at present but is unsure why funding has been stopped for an apparent success story. We would welcome your comments on this unusual approach, your views on how the potential impact of terminating the funding of the programme are to be ameliorated and finally information that the jogscotland programme will be reinstated should the assessment demonstrate positive and cost effective benefits.

I would be grateful for a reply to our letter by the end of March.

Kind regards,

Neil Findlay
Convener