Evidence submitted by the Physical Activity for Health Research Centre (PAHRC) to the Health and Sport committee regarding the enquiry into Sport Participation in Scotland

Thank you for confirming that you are interested in our submitted evidence to your recent survey regarding sport participation in Scotland.

We understand you are interested in considering the degree of progress made in recent years around access to, and participation in, sport in Scotland, and in making recommendations in ensuring that the Commonwealth Games "Active Legacy" aims of increasing access to and participation in sport continue over the medium to long term.

The summary of our evidence submission is as follows:

1. There is a need for a wide definition of physical activity and the sub-component of sport
2. Active Scotland Division have substantial evidence for the questions you are considering
3. The current outcomes framework and the implementation plan developed by the National Strategic oversight group for sport and physical activity provide appropriate guidance on what needs to be done to improve the percentage of the population who are regularly active
4. What is needed is implementation of this plan at scale and with suitable resource

1. Definitions
   The first thing we would like to note is that ‘sport’ participation is only one domain in which people can obtain health enhancing physical activity. We would therefore encourage the use of the term physical activity [PA] here rather than sport [or perhaps sport and physical activity] to emphasise that everyday modes of activity such as walking or cycling, which have a far higher prevalence than sport in the population, are not ignored.

   In terms of ‘health’ which is one of your main interests in the committee, we would note that ‘sport’ is a minority activity for adults. Majority activities for health enhancing physical activity include walking, activities in the home and garden, and fitness and exercise (e.g. jogging or going to the gym). We have recently published a paper, which shows the modes of physical activity and the prevalence in the Scottish population, which underlines this point.

This figure shows how much each domain contributes to the total physical activity of adults in Scotland who meet the recommended guidelines [150 minutes over the course of the week]. The purple and green bars are team and non-team sport respectively. Together they make up 10-20% of total PA. The respective figures are even lower for adults who do not meet the guidelines.

2. We were surprised to see your survey because the Active Scotland Division of government already tracks this information through the Outcomes Framework. The data used in the framework come from nationally representative survey tools. Your survey results may differ from the statistics in the Outcomes Framework because it is not nationally representative. See

http://www.gov.scot/About/Performance/scotPerforms/partnerstories/Outcomes-Framework
3. The Outcomes Framework and the implementation plan developed by the National Strategic Oversight group on sport and physical activity provides adequate guidance on how to increase the percentage of the population which is regularly active and achieves the recommended 150 minutes of activity each week. Some groups need more support than others – for example older adults have low levels of activity and yet could gain enormous health benefits, and save NHS money by increasing activity levels. It is also clear that ‘sport’ is the least likely mode of activity for older adults to engage in for health benefits.

Much is already known about why some people are more active than others and the barriers that are faced in leading an active life. The evidence behind the outcomes framework provides this detail.

4. In our view what is now needed to move our rather static levels of participation in physical activity and sport is the implementation of the plans associated with the outcomes framework at scale and with appropriate resources.

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