Participation

Phase 1 of the Committee inquiry found evidence of barriers to participation across age and gender. Barriers included caring/family commitments, shortage of suitable nearby facilities and cost. As mentioned above, Phase 2 of the Committee inquiry seeks to consider community based approaches to removing barriers to participation in sport and physical activity.

1. Can you provide examples where a community based approach has been successful in removing barriers to participation in sport and physical activity?
SALSC are not an organisation leading on the delivery of sport and physical activity, below are some examples we are aware of:
- Jog Scotland
- Walking Football
- Bounce Back to Netball
- Active East
- Crags Sports Centre – Edinburgh
- Spartans Community Football Club
- Park Run

2. What were the key ingredients to that success?
SALSC believes there are a number of ingredients bringing success to the above community based approaches:
- Focus on participation
- Community engagement
- Partnership working
- Sport for Change thinking
- Passion and desire from groups to make a difference
- Understanding the needs of the community
- Funding
- Upskilling and recruitment of volunteers

3. Were there any approaches that were particularly successful in increasing participation among certain social groups, like women, ethnic minorities, certain age-groups?
SALSC recognises the need to increase participation among certain social groups is important to continue to increase participation, successful approaches include:
- Non-competitive approach
- Come and try sessions
- Focus on the fun and social aspect of sport and physical activity
- Adaptation to needs of particular groups – timing, location, equipment etc
- Respecting the needs of Characteristics protected by the Equality Act
• Partnership working with community organisations working with identified social groups
• Understanding the needs of the community as a whole

4. To what extent are these approaches unique to a particular area and set of circumstances, or replicable in other parts of the country?
Approaches are adapted to be reactive and unique within particular circumstances, SALSC believes approaches can be replicated across the country through the sharing of learning and good practice, reducing duplication and promoting collaborative working to include partners from across agencies and sectors.

Community and volunteers

Phase 1 heard from the Scottish Sports Association that “another significant legacy opportunity from the Games was converting the unparalleled interest in volunteering at the Games (50,811 applications in total) into sustained volunteering interest; to date our understanding is that this supported conversion has been minimal.”

The Session 4 Committee Inquiry into Community sport also highlighted the importance (and challenges) of retaining volunteers by ensuring adequate training and development opportunities.

5. What are the barriers facing volunteers, (either those wanting to volunteer for the first time or sustaining ongoing volunteering)?
The SALSC membership of Local Sports Councils are led by volunteers, many barriers are faced by volunteers across sectors, these are not exclusive to volunteering in sport:
• Time
• Costs to the volunteer – transport or IT access
• Culture
• Family responsibilities
• Understanding of role and commitment
• Perceived risk and liability
• Qualifications
• Training and support
• Work
• Generational
• Language
• Lack of knowledge
• Motivation
• Confidence
• Value of volunteering

6. How might these barriers be overcome?
A cultural change is required across volunteering, the role of volunteers is evolving, with a shift in to the importance of good governance within clubs they are identifying the need to involve volunteers with specific skills sets to improve management and development. Barriers can be overcome through a number of ways, including:
• Awareness Raising
• Education
• Strong clubs
• Funding
• Highlighting benefits and rewards
• Updating recruitment methods
• Community connections – councils for voluntary service
• Specific roles
• Building relationships
• Recruiting a variety of volunteers from across all sectors of the community, including age, race and disabilities for example
• Investment and funding

7. What are the challenges in retaining volunteers beyond the short term?
Volunteer retention is an issue faced across sport, SALSC’s member Sports Council face the same challenges, which include:
• Time pressures and conflicts
• Other commitments – family, work
• Knowledge and understanding of the role is misunderstood
• Lack of a specific role for the volunteer
• Volunteer support from the club or group
• Lack of skills development or training
• Lack of rewards for the volunteers
• Insufficient funding available to offer the support a volunteer requires

8. What examples are there of good practice to encourage and maintain volunteers in community sport and are there lessons to learn from other sectors around attracting and retaining Volunteers in sport?
There are many examples of good practice in community sport, sport needs to get better at sharing these and learning from others in the voluntary sector. SALSC are working with Volunteer Scotland to share lessons learned and to improve good practice within our network.
• Clear role descriptions
• Support from within the club
• Support from within the community
• Mentoring opportunities
• Recruitment and selection processes
• Positive experience sharing
• Having rewards & recognition processes
• Personal development
• Volunteer awards and recognition