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.

Can you provide examples where a community based approach has been successful in removing barriers to participation in sport and physical activity?

Scottish Rugby believes the key to increasing participation in sport and physical activity – particularly in groups that are “under-represented” – is through robust partnership with strong and sustainable clubs.

There is also a strong case to be made that the best place to inculcate a culture of participation in sport and/or physical activity is school. The benefits that participation in sport can have in creating confident individuals, responsible citizens, successful learners and effective contributors is massive, yet it’s our view that too few secondary schools across Scotland offer these opportunities. Look at what has been achieved in for example, Maxwelltown High School in Dumfries, Larbert High School, or Carrick Academy if you have any doubt about the positive impact sport can have across a school and its wider community. And that impact has been nurtured as a result of partnership between Scottish Rugby, local authorities and the Scottish Government’s Cashback for Communities initiative.

Initiatives to stimulate increased participation do not necessarily have to be led by the governing body. Some of the best examples of such initiatives have been sparked by activity within clubs rooted in their communities – but what has enabled the activity to capture imagination and, significantly, recruits has been the support, whether in cash, infrastructure, people or sharing of best practice, from the governing body.

- Women and Girls sections in clubs – Scottish Rugby’s Club of the Year, Ayr, has only launched its women and girls section this decade, responding to requests for rugby coaching from girls in its catchment. The coaching was led by the club’s director of youth rugby, Stuart Fenwick, and two players, Sylvain Diez and Robbie Ferguson, the latter who was recovering from cancer at the time. From that professional spine, with strong voluntary support, Ayr reached the top division in women’s rugby in Scotland by the 2016-17 season. They now employ a female rugby development officer to further nurture the growth of the game for girls and young women and their example has been mirrored at Carrick Academy, which has also recruited a female rugby development officer.

- Trust Rugby International – a partner organisation of Scottish Rugby, which has now won funding and recognition from the game’s worldwide governing body,
World Rugby – embodies the concept that rugby is open to everyone. TRI breaks down barriers to enable those suffering from learning difficulties or autism to play alongside those who do not in unified rugby, a full contact version of the game. From its origins at Kilmarnock RFC, TRI has centres now in Glasgow (Allan Glen’s RFC) and Edinburgh (Edinburgh Accies/Broughton) and will once again compete in the International Mixed Ability Rugby Tournament in Spain this August. http://trustrugby.org/ http://www.scottishrugby.org/news/17/06/22/scottish-rugby-donate-kit-clan

- Scottish Rugby became a signatory to the Scottish LGBT Sports Charter in August 2016 to underline our long-standing commitment to ensure access to our sport is open to everyone regardless of age, background, education or sexuality. Such commitment has to be measured on the ground; it has to be more than a PR exercise. Thus we continue to provide a weekend coaching clinic to Edinburgh’s Caledonian Thebans all-inclusive team each Autumn; we supported the Thebans’ bid to bring the Bingham Cup (also known as the International Gay World Cup) to Scotland in 2018 and will be amenable to support any follow-up bid for future tournaments, primarily because we believe that a successful bid could be the catalyst to inspire the creation of other LGBTI teams in other parts of Scotland. We are also supporting the LGBTI team, the Glasgow Alphas http://www.scottishrugby.org/news/17/06/13/alphas-seek-new-recruits

What were the key ingredients to that success?
For all of these examples there is a professional spine supporting the development, close links with clubs and successful partnership building (including with local authorities, other agencies and, on occasions, Scottish Government.

The women and girls example sees a club with a professional development spine and support from Scottish Rugby through the Women and Girls Development Officer. Other clubs, for example our Women’s Club of the Year, Stirling County, have also benefitted from a greater number of competitive fixtures for their girls through the President’s Conference and Club Cup.

All the Trust Rugby centres are based at established clubs and they also benefit from a professional spine and support from Scottish Rugby through a Partnership Agreement.

Thebans and Alphas are also linked with clubs- Thebans with Murrayfield Wanderers and Alphas with Whitecraigs and have support from Scottish Rugby (for example, player insurance)

1. Were there any approaches that were particularly successful in increasing participation among certain social groups, like women, ethnic minorities, certain age-groups?
- Publicity, profile and marketing campaigns have been very effective – a stark reminder that “you can’t be, what you can’t see.” More than 650 women/girls have actively signed up for rugby as new players over the last 18 months and we have seen a 35% increase in the number of women’s and girls’ teams during this period. The Women in Sport week and our #bethebestyou campaign have
maintained the momentum from the Rio Olympic Games and the 2017 Women’s Six Nations Championship – during which Scotland Women won their first games in the competition (v Wales and v Italy) in seven years. Significantly, both the Rio Olympics and Women’s Six Nations enjoyed TV coverage through mainstream media channels as well as via social media and online.

- Improved and appropriate competition and development opportunities – Our NDL – National Development League – has been integral in supporting and bringing through new women’s teams to our league structures. The introduction of a North League helped teams that were isolated geographically eg Caithness and Inverness Craig Dunain. The new competition structures for girls’ rugby have brought about a threefold increase in official competitive matches played in 2016-17 compared to the previous season (from 28-87).

Young people face many choices and the drop-off in physical activity during the teenage years is a challenge for all sports. The problem is already acute enough for young males but it is even more so for young females. In tennis, Judy Murray’s “She Rallies” initiative aims to grow the female tennis workforce and to attract and retain more women and girls in the sport. Currently only 23% of tennis coaches are female and playing figures are comparatively low, with twice as many boys than girls playing tennis aged 9 to 17 and girls comprising only 30% of British Tennis membership aged 8 and under. We support Judy Murray’s contention that female coaches/development staff can have a particularly positive impact on female players. For young females in general, sport is a social activity which is about fun, friendship and family. There is a confidence gap with young women and girls, which requires to be addressed through a specific approach – namely, the engagement of female Development Officers who provide young women and girls with role models and ambassadors.

4. To what extent are these approaches unique to a particular area and set of circumstances, or replicable in other parts of the country?

- We firmly believe these approaches can be replicated.

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.

2. What are the barriers facing volunteers, (either those wanting to volunteer for the first time or sustaining ongoing volunteering)?
The main barrier for volunteers is one of time. Many volunteers (or potential volunteers) are worried that if they do commit they will be asked to do too much. Sports governing bodies and professionals must be aware of the demands we place on clubs and their volunteers. There are the non-negotiables – for example PVG checks and the importance of emphasising player welfare and safety. As has been observed, Scottish sport is reliant on the volunteer and there must be empathy from the governing body and other agencies. Most of all, we must show the volunteer the difference their selflessness makes to their club, community and wider society in Scotland.

6. How might these barriers be overcome?

- Listen to the experience of volunteers themselves and learn from it. Clubs who have successfully recruited volunteers – eg North Berwick and Perthshire have shared their strategy. They say it’s better to get ten volunteers each giving one hour of their time in a sphere of the club in which they have genuine interest/expertise than having one over-pressed volunteer trying to juggle four or five different roles and being burnt out.

- Clubs with youth sections, particularly primary aged activities, represent a great parental market for future volunteers. It is easier to attract and retain volunteers if there is a connection to the sport and a vested interest. Encourage the parents to become involved – the rugby club is not a crèche. Parents can be a big part of it too.

3. What are the challenges in retaining volunteers beyond the short term?

- Answered above.

4. 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?

- Volunteers should be recognised and volunteering celebrated. Scottish Rugby has a monthly award, sponsored by its principal partner, BT, to laud the efforts of the Volunteer of the Month. Our Volunteer of the Year, Elaine Martin from East Kilbride, became involved as a parent and is now running girls rugby at the club. There is huge pride from Elaine in her involvement.

1. Can you provide examples of innovative joint working between clubs and public bodies that are utilising available sources of funding?

- At a time when many local authority budgets are under pressure and clubs’ own fund-raising has to be ever more imaginative, the requirement for partnerships with governing bodies, local and national government and other funding agencies, intensifies. Scottish Rugby has its own Club Sustainability Fund [http://www.scottishrugby.org/domestic-rugby/club-services/club-sustainability-fund](http://www.scottishrugby.org/domestic-rugby/club-services/club-sustainability-fund) and has also worked closely with other bodies, for example, The Robertson Trust; Friends of Scottish Rugby, to explore other funding
streams. European initiatives such as Erasmus Funding, can also be considered just now.

**School estate**
The Committee has heard evidence during phase 1 that there remain on-going difficulties in communities accessing the school estate. Similar problems were raised by the Session 4 Health and Sport Committee in its 2013 report on Community Sport. These include problems around janitorial time out of school hours and issues around PPP (Public Private Partnership) contracts. The Committee is interested in hearing views as to what the problems are and solutions for how they might be overcome.

2. **To what extent is the school estate currently being used effectively to increase opportunities for sport and physical activity participation?**

- There are some examples of best practice where the school estate is used by clubs eg Waid in Anstruther and Leith, where social areas have been created to provide clubs with an identity, a home, which clubs need to thrive. Deprived of those roots, the club misses out on the opportunity to raise badly-needed monies to assist with its activities. In general terms, however, it would seem that not enough use is made of the school estate.

3. **In what ways has access to the school estate for communities improved in recent years?**

- Some of the new school community campuses are better set up for engagement with the community. For example, the new school in Alford has the swimming pool and other community accessible facilities all under the same roof.

4. **What are the remaining barriers to use of the school estate? Please also note any particular issues around term-time compared with school holiday time.**

- Cost of hire
- Block bookings/booking systems. Some clubs will block-book facilities to get access when they need it, but then not use the entire booked time. Ideally greater flexibility of bookings – to take into account bad weather – would help to remove barriers
- Janitorial or staff cover to ensure facilities/changing rooms are available – in particular outwith school time, especially at weekends and holidays.

5. **How might these barriers be overcome?**

- Subsidised hire – an investment in our country’s young people and longer-term health – to encourage maximum community use of facilities
- Increase flexibility of booking systems
- Scottish government to take the lead to ensure buildings are accessible and fit for purpose for community use outside school time