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.

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

Back in 2012, Elaine Wyllie developed The Daily Mile initiative whilst teaching at St Ninian’s Primary School. Her aim was to get pupils fitter and boost their concentration levels by running a mile around the playground each day. Said to only take 15 minutes out of the school day, The Daily Mile showed improvement in behaviour, fitness, and concentration. Early scientific studies show that the level of obesity at St Ninian’s Primary School is around 45% less than the national average. Further studies are ongoing, which are looking at the physical, cognitive, and emotional benefits of running The Daily Mile.

Whilst many millions of pounds have been spent on complicated and expensive initiatives to tackle the problem of physical inactivity and none of them have worked. Not one single initiative in the Western world has had any impact on childhood obesity – children continue to get fatter, younger. A shocking one in 10 children said to be obese when they start primary school and around a third of children considered to be overweight or obese when they leave.

The Daily Mile, however, has stood the test of time, is being adopted by schools and nurseries across the UK, and senior figures in Public Health believe that it is a powerful weapon in the fight against physical inactivity and obesity. The Scottish Government and other politicians, the Acting Chief Medical Officer for Scotland and the CEO of the Royal Society for Public Health, and other senior medical figures and educational organisations, have all said that every child should have the opportunity to do The Daily Mile. The initiative is an excuse-free way to improve children’s fitness levels. There’s no equipment, no set up nor tidy up needed and no time wasted. Children are encouraged to run around the school yard, or playing field.

Often, a simple painted track around a school playground can help pupils to get fit and have fun by encouraging them to run, jog or walk a mile a day for up to 15 minutes. For those schools with the resources, The Daily Mile recommends building a track or path with 5–10 laps. It’s okay to have more laps depending on your setting. Some schools for example, install a rubber mulch running track around their school field. A simple 1.5m wide track will withstand high footfall.
12. What are the remaining barriers to use of the school estate? Please also note any issues around term-time compared with school holiday time.

To make it easy for schools to implement this important initiative, The Daily Mile has put together everything schools must get started – a general information booklet; a sample of parent, teacher, and child feedback; a template letter for parents/carers; and an example risk assessment.

Before starting The Daily Mile, it is important that schools address a few important questions, including:

- Where will your pupils run the Daily Mile?
- Is there existing space for pupils to run The Daily Mile?
- Do you need a running track?
- How long is the track?
- Do you have a budget for a track?

School estate risk assessment:

- Overcrowding on the track?
- Uneven running surface, broken track? If any part of the track is broken up it should be repaired as soon as possible. In the meantime, children should walk where necessary
- Part of track out of teacher’s sight?
- Inclement weather?

To support the scheme during school holidays, The Daily Mile have seen communities come up with creative ways of helping pupils maintain fit and healthy lifestyles outside of term time. For example, Brio Leisure centre in Cheshire, is offering free junior memberships through July and August to local schools that run The Daily Mile. This gives children the opportunity to swim at any Brio pool, as well as play racquet sports such as Badminton or Squash completely free. Chester West and Chester Council have recognised that it is important to support The Daily Mile programme through the long summer school break and give pupils the opportunity to continue to exercise and keep active at Brio centres. The summer programme helps pupils in Chester maintain the achievements that The Daily Mile campaign has accomplished since it launched at six West Cheshire schools back in March 2016.

In Dudley they decided to put a track for The Daily Mile in an established public park so that children and their families could choose to run on it during the summer holidays and at other times. All the parks have display boards with routes and distances shown on them to help get people started.

The Daily Mile has also seen ‘Daily Mile Community Runs’, where parents, grandparents and carers can do a Daily Mile run with their child(ren) at a specified time. The children are then encouraged to go on to start The Daily Mile in their schools.
The Daily Mile encourages schools and councils across the UK to develop similar innovative ideas.

13. **How might these barriers be overcome?**
The Daily Mile is easy to implement and fun to do. There are very few barriers impeding schools from implementing the initiative. Even children who are reluctant to take part in PE enjoy and participate happily in The Daily Mile. Children with mobility difficulties should be fully supported to take part as well.

Remove the barriers:

- No kit, no ‘cool’ kit, no time wasted changing, no forgetting or losing kit.
- No equipment, no set up no tidy up and no time wasted.
- Teachers can be confident, as there is no staff training required.
- Removes barriers for teachers because no expertise is needed; it's simple, free and safely done in the familiar school environment where the children are every day. Also no need to measure or fill in paperwork (although for those motivated teachers that wish to, The Daily Mile can provide that).
- No need to be sporty – it is health and wellbeing, not PE or cross-country.
- Safety- takes place under supervision in the playground.
- No costs – it's easy and cheap to implement and closes the gap between the ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots’.
- Behaviour and concentration improves – and so does attainment.
- It’s every child, every day – no one is left behind.
- Children with SEN and other complex educational needs are included. It’s for every child, every day. Examples: young boy in Dudley with cerebral palsy participated in the Mile, as does a boy with Brittle Bone Disease.
- Children who don’t identify as ‘sporty’ nevertheless succeed at The Daily Mile because it's not perceived as sport or PE; it's a golden 15 minutes of childhood.