

HEALTH AND SPORT COMMITTEE

Wednesday 14 January 2009

Session 3

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HEALTH AND SPORT COMMITTEE

1st Meeting 2009, Session 3

CONVENER

*Christine Grahame (South of Scotland) (SNP)

DEPUTY CONVENER

*Ross Finnie (West of Scotland) (LD)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Jackie Baillie (Dumbarton) (Lab)

*Helen Eadie (Dunfermline East) (Lab)

*Michael Matheson (Falkirk West) (SNP)

*Ian McKee (Lothians) (SNP)

*Mary Scanlon (Highlands and Islands) (Con)

*Dr Richard Simpson (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTES

Joe FitzPatrick (Dundee West) (SNP)

Mr Frank McAveety (Glasgow Shettleston) (Lab)

Jamie McGrigor (Highlands and Islands) (Con)

Jamie Stone (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)

*attended

THE FOLLOWING GAVE EVIDENCE:

Oliver Barsby (Scottish Association of Local Sports Councils)

John Beattie (Physical Activity Strategy Review Group)

Tommy Boyle (Winning Scotland Foundation)

Gavin Macleod (Scottish Disability Sport)

Charlie Raeburn (Former Member, Review Group on Physical Education)

Chris Robison (Scottish Sports Association)

Graham Watson (Winning Scotland Foundation)

CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Callum Thomson

SENIOR ASSISTANT CLERK

Douglas Thornton

ASSISTANT CLERK

David Slater

LOCATION

Committee Room 1

Scottish Parliament

Health and Sport Committee

Wednesday 14 January 2009

[THE CONVENER *opened the meeting at 10:02*]

Subordinate Legislation

Mental Health Tribunal for Scotland (Practice and Procedure) (No 2) Amendment Rules 2008 (SSI 2008/396)

The Convener (Christine Grahame): Good morning. I welcome everyone to the Health and Sport Committee's first meeting in 2009, in session 3. I wish everyone a happy and prosperous new year. I remind all members and people in the public gallery to switch off mobile phones and BlackBerrys. Apologies have been received from Jackie Baillie.

Agenda item 1 is consideration of one statutory instrument that is subject to the negative procedure. The instrument amends various rules that govern the operation of the Mental Health Tribunal for Scotland. The Subordinate Legislation Committee did not draw the rules to our attention. No comments have been received from members, and no motion to annul has been lodged. Do we agree that the committee wishes to make no recommendation on the rules?

Members indicated agreement.

Decision on Taking Business in Private

10:03

The Convener: Under item 2, the committee is invited to agree to consider in private at future meetings any draft report on its pathways into sport inquiry, in line with its usual practice. Is that agreed?

Members indicated agreement.

Pathways into Sport Inquiry

10:03

The Convener: Under item 3, the committee is invited to agree to delegate to me the responsibility for arranging for the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body to pay, under rule 12.4.3 of standing orders, any witness expenses as a result of the pathways into sport inquiry. Is that agreed?

Members indicated agreement.

The Convener: Agenda item 4 is evidence for our inquiry. I welcome the witnesses: John Beattie, who chairs the physical activity strategy review group; Charlie Raeburn, who is a former member of the Scottish Executive's review group on physical education; Tommy Boyle, who is a programme manager at the Winning Scotland Foundation; and Graham Watson, who is the executive director of—I can just read the title from here—the Winning Scotland Foundation. I had better not let anybody see that I had to check whether I could read that. I am a driver, but I could not see the information from here.

Ian McKee (Lothians) (SNP): That is on the record now.

The Convener: I know. I wished everybody a happy new year and good luck, but I think I have done badly for myself. We will move on swiftly. By the way, the *Official Report* need not record that—a bit of editing, boys.

We will move straight to questions from members.

Mary Scanlon (Highlands and Islands) (Con): I will start with a general question. I went through the committee papers last night and I am also boring enough to have looked through this year's draft budget. Of course, sport is covered by three budget headings—those for local authorities, education and health—so I had difficulty in tracking down the spending.

I also read the submissions, and it seems that everyone recognises the problems, which include difficulties with volunteers and coaching, a weak sports infrastructure, the high cost of qualifications and so on. If the witnesses had three wishes, or even a magic bullet, what would they want to be done within the health budget—or whatever other budgets—to make the difference that we are all looking for? I could not find that information when I read the submissions last night.

The Convener: I ask panel members to self-nominate by indicating to me that they wish to speak.

Graham Watson (Winning Scotland Foundation): I am happy to comment on that question on behalf of the Winning Scotland Foundation. As an organisation that was set up about three years ago with the support of the Scottish Government, philanthropists and Scottish business, we have noted opportunities to use sport in the wider areas of education and health in Scotland. Sport now makes a major contribution to the curriculum for excellence, so we have the opportunity in Scotland, particularly in the window up until 2014, to be vigorous about using sport in the widest context and to draw on budgets that come from the wider areas of health and education.

As some committee members may know, this year we have launched an innovative programme, positive coaching Scotland, which we have brought from the United States—it is the first time that the initiative has left North America. The programme is designed to do two things. First, it is designed to reduce the sport drop-out rates by giving youngsters a much more wholesome experience through their interaction with coaches, teachers and parents. Secondly, it is designed to give young people the opportunity to see winning for what it is. Winning is personal success achieved through hard work and effort; it is not about the scoreboard. We have tangible programmes in 13 sports that we are working on in partnership with five local authorities.

We now have the opportunity to accelerate some of those initiatives so that we can address the lack of coaches, including qualified coaches, and the issue of coaching not being seen as a profession in its own right. In addition, we can address some of the challenges related to volunteering and the use of school infrastructure.

What you can see, and what we have seen in our initiatives so far, is that a significant amount can be achieved in a very short period by collaborating and working in partnership with, in our case, business, sport, Government and philanthropists. That is one of the most exciting opportunities for the role that sport can play in Scotland.

Mary Scanlon: Can I ask—

The Convener: Other people want to comment; then you can ask a supplementary.

Charlie Raeburn (Former Member, Review Group on Physical Education): It is difficult to answer the question right at the start, because I want first to address the question: what is sport? There are many reasons why someone might do sport, so different partners might be involved in providing opportunities. I will mention four of those.

The first is education. I believe that sport can play a role in making schools better places and schooling a better experience. It is intriguing that in England the sport world seems to have made that case very effectively: £1.5 billion is being spent on the physical education and school sport agenda. That is a very large sum of money. Wales is doing the same as England, and both are clearly moving away from us. I would encourage education to get involved—it is good that health has been involved for a while—for education reasons. We can prove that education and sport link together and we can improve the education agenda, not least because of two areas that the committee will be particularly interested in: health and wellbeing. Now that health and wellbeing are part of the new curriculum for excellence and schools have to be health promoting, it is clear that sport could be a big piece of that jigsaw.

The second partner is local government. However, I am worried about the way in which the funding is going at the moment. There is a danger that, because of a gap in funding due to the tightness of the budget, money might be taken away from sports development to fund the active schools programme, which has clearly been quite successful, particularly in the primary sector.

The third partner is the health service, which has been very good at getting behind our efforts—of course, in this regard, we are talking about physical activity and physical recreation as well as sport. When you talk to Learning and Teaching Scotland, you should ask about what is happening with the idea of having health and wellbeing as part of the curriculum and try to find out how successful the health-promoting schools are.

Wellbeing is an important health issue that has not been given enough consideration. As there is at least one psychiatrist on the committee, I point out the acute connection between health and wellbeing and the need for people to belong, which there might be an opportunity to exploit.

The last partner is the Scottish corporate world, which we have not yet exploited properly. There is real interest in the corporate world in the business of sport and in getting the community more involved.

John Beattie (Physical Activity Strategy Review Group): Mary Scanlon asked a good question. To take an accountant's approach, I would say that the first thing that you have to do in any situation is find out what the problem is. In the situation that we are concerned with today, the problem is that very few people do sport. We can talk about the subject and meet every Monday from now until 2014, but nothing will happen unless we have in place health improvement, efficiency, access and treatment—HEAT—targets, national performance framework targets and

outcome measurements relating to physical activity, participation, exercise levels and so on.

At the moment, sports data are vastly inflated. They include data on physical activities such as social walking and social swimming. We must first find out how many people take part in sport, and we need to decide whether we are talking about competitive sport or fun sport.

How do we measure the number? A tiny amount of people do sport—we are not talking about half the population. Two thirds of Scotland's adults are completely inactive, so how can we expect massive participation in sports?

My argument is that, first of all, there should be a national performance framework with HEAT targets to increase general exercise levels. We have much less understanding of what being Scottish means. We are no longer a country that prides itself on its sporty population. An analysis of the Commonwealth games shows that, at the moment, our medals are won for us by people who went to our fee-paying schools—that is a national disgrace.

When I got involved in the review group, I thought that it would be all about sports such as rugby and hockey, but it is actually about the fact that our poor people have no access to facilities—they have no access to sport at school, for example. We need to give them the chance to become Liz McColgans. Chris Hoy is a fantastic ambassador, but, to my mind, that clouds the issue.

We need to measure participation in sport properly. For example, 1 per cent of the population plays rugby—I think—and very few people are involved in sport. We need to use HEAT targets and the national performance framework to get the whole population involved in activity and exercise. We need to realise the link between exercise and sport, and the issue has to be owned.

I have to be honest and say that I find the civil service to be very obstructive. The reviews that we are asked to do are limited and unambitious, the targets for physical exercise are unambitious, and our target for participation in exercise is unambitious. I say that as someone who has been a part of all that work.

We should be aiming to ensure that children get more than two hours of PE a week in schools and thinking of ways in which we can get our population to walk more, cycle more, have fun and exercise. We pull our sporting talent from the group of people who engage in those activities.

If I have one message, it is that, in this country, the political profile of exercise, fun exercise and sport is not anything like as high as it should be, and the will to ensure that it is higher is also not as

great as it should be. That is my honest assessment, and I think that the civil service has to be given a boot.

The Convener: Mr Boyle, would you like to say something?

10:15

Tommy Boyle (Winning Scotland Foundation): I think that I should, after all that.

In the Winning Scotland Foundation, we are encouraged to challenge conventions, and I will reiterate what John Beattie has just said.

It is useful to consider the issue from a business perspective and to think about the supply chain that we are dealing with. The foundation of sport is laid down in our children's school years. We have a target of two hours a week of PE in schools, but only one local authority in Scotland is meeting it. In England, there is a target of five hours a week for curricular and extra-curricular PE. A proper evaluation would make the problems clear at an early stage. We need to increase the number of hours of PE in school, although that has financial implications.

Leaving aside the issue of the number of hours of PE, we need to consider what the children do in that time. The situation varies dramatically across the country. A magic solution would certainly involve creating a joined-up, aligned strategy across Scotland so that every child not only learns to swim, but comes out of primary 7 physically co-ordinated, able to participate in games, fit, healthy and ready to take on the second stage of their education.

When we were at school, we had perhaps as little as one hour of PE a week. However, we had three or four hours a day on public playing fields. That is not the case for today's children, and one of the biggest issues that we face concerns what we can do to replace those lost hours. As Charlie Raeburn said, a lot of work has been done in that regard through sports development. However, the reality is that the resources that have been allocated to fund active schools co-ordinators have gone only a small way towards bridging that gap. Further, Scotland has a well-documented problem with coaching. There is an urgent need for us to address the quality of coaching in primary and secondary schools.

The Convener: Which local authority is meeting the target of having two hours a week of PE? It would be useful to have the name on the record, as other local authorities might wish to challenge that view.

Tommy Boyle: I think that it is East Renfrewshire Council.

Mary Scanlon: The answers to my question were interesting, although I note that little was said about the lack of volunteers, for example.

Mr Watson, you spoke positively about working together in partnership with local authorities and so on, but when I read the papers, I come across a lot of discussion of the obstacles and barriers. How have you dealt with those challenges?

Mr Raeburn, the point about wellbeing was excellent. Can you give us a pointer on the issue of children's wellbeing? Dr Simpson is probably well acquainted with that hugely important issue, and we probably do not talk about it enough.

Mr Beattie, I admit that I did not look up my HEAT targets this morning. Can you remind me what the HEAT targets are for sport in school?

John Beattie: I do not have expert knowledge, but I do not think that there are any.

The Convener: It has been confirmed that there are no such targets.

Graham Watson: The Winning Scotland Foundation is very much a business-oriented and business-led body. We are about action rather than words. However, we have found that there are some extremely innovative local authorities and some very forward-thinking governing bodies in Scotland. The Scottish Football Association, with which we have a major partnership, is incredibly well led and sees football as driving significant cultural change in Scottish sport.

As with everything in life, to a great extent, leadership is important. There are tremendous leaders in education and local government in certain areas of Scotland—in Charlie Raeburn's former local authority, West Lothian Council, for example. Partnership with such people is easy. Of course, the challenge is taking to all 32 local authorities projects that people such as us are involved in with a few local authorities.

Charlie Raeburn: I want to make a small point about the target of two hours of PE. I understand that Perth and Kinross Council has moved down that route—it has another 17 PE teachers—and that Clackmannanshire Council has done a lot in that respect. However, only one national audit has been done, at the start of the four-year cycle of the implementation of the PE review.

I have just retired, and have worked out in my head only recently why our northern European neighbours have supported community clubs for years. They do not seem to state this in the way that I would do, but I think that, politically, they have supported such clubs for years because they encourage people to belong to local organisations—whether they are blues bands, such as the one that John Beattie plays in, sports clubs or chess clubs—and think it important that

people belong to extended families. I remember a headteacher, who went on to work with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education, saying to me that the emotional heart of the school, and what contributes to that, is important. We have a big agenda, especially in a society that is sometimes seen to be crumbling away. Where is the opportunity for people to belong to something?

I know that some members of the committee are outcome focused. We did work in West Lothian on developing community clubs—indeed, work on that is still being done—and the outcomes demonstrate that participation rates increased by 30 per cent as a result of developing more sustainable clubs. We have evidence on that, as the SFA is starting to record club membership. The wellbeing agenda is probably one of the biggest of all the different agendas that we try to fit into.

Ross Finnie (West of Scotland) (LD): I want to go back to the beginning. John Beattie talked about not kidding ourselves that everyone plays sport. We have difficulties with people who lack physical co-ordination. A Scottish Rugby Union witness made an interesting comment about “physical literacy”. I ask all the witnesses to focus on that.

The committee has tried to avoid dancing on the head of a pin in distinguishing activity from sport, but, to be blunt, that is pretty difficult for witnesses and the committee. Some PE co-ordinators are more focused on sport—they believe that everyone will play a sport—than on addressing the fact that their audience will not want to play a sport because of their physical illiteracy. What are the fundamental things that should be done about that narrow issue before we try to address the issue of attracting more people into coaching? I do not dismiss the coaching issue, which is important, but I want to go back to the beginning and talk about the point that Scotland has reached, with evidence on physical illiteracy emerging. Do the witnesses believe that we have reached that point; if so, why have we reached it, and what is the most important thing that we can do to address the matter?

John Beattie: Scotland is a fantastic country. When I was a wee boy growing up in Borneo, my dad told me that Scotland was a special place.

First, we should try to get the whole population of Scotland active. There are three tiers: physical literacy, movement and health benefits. I was the paid person at the end of the process. My limp tells people that I played a contact sport at the top level for my country, but I am unusual. We must target the people at the bottom. At the moment, two thirds of adults are totally inactive and two thirds of teenage girls are inactive. We cannot suddenly ask the majority of teenage girls to be

sporty; rather, the plea should be to measure things and try to get everybody down at the bottom level active. We should have an active Scotland.

The middle bit is social sport—I am referring to people with club memberships and corporate interaction with all sorts of bodies. That is important.

Then there is the elite level—Chris Hoy, my son and his friends playing rugby, the wonderful work that is being done in football and all the rest of it. We cannot achieve at that level without an active population—without women walking to work and so on.

However, I am a middle-class boy, and more important than me are the poor people. The vast majority of their children cannot walk to school or cycle around because it is not safe to do so. If we could get the right activity level for the country, well, wow—what a chance we would then have of becoming a more sporty country and of winning more medals. We cannot do that unless we increase the base of general activity, with a national performance framework and with targets and outcomes to be met. HEAT targets would help us to appreciate what is good for our wellbeing. It is very hard to be active, sporty, obese and depressed at the same time. I am sorry, Ross, but, to my mind—

Ross Finnie: I am not disagreeing with you at all.

John Beattie: The issue is about how many people we can get active first. We can then pick our sportspeople from those active people.

The Convener: That probably fits in with the committee's thinking. We want clarity, and we recognise that we have to increase rates of activity at a very early age, from toddlers onwards.

John Beattie: Physical activity is general movement; PE means classes and exercises two or three times a week, say. On the question of being sporty, we must measure how much sport is done, and not cloud the issue with information about social swimming, for instance. If my wife and my daughter go swimming once in a two-month period, they are counted as two swimmers. That approach vastly inflates the statistics. Let us find out exactly how many people swim, and then get the population active. We can ask then whether we can increase participation in sport from there.

Charlie Raeburn: I appreciated Ross Finnie's comment about dancing on the head of a pin.

An awful lot of partners are involved. I have been at a few funerals—people end up going to more and more of them at my age, and we appreciate the different parts of people's lives. Health is a big part, and how people live is the

other part. One is independent from the other, in a way, and we should not assume that someone who is physically active—as a lot of people are—will naturally play sport.

Graham Watson and I have been working on the issue of peer-group pressure on adolescent girls: at the age of 13 that pressure is such that, suddenly—and despite having been keen before—they decide that it is not cool for them to play sport. I do not dismiss the idea of developing sport, which we must consider as well as increasing rates of physical activity.

In the PE review group, we were convinced that a serious issue was evolving around inactivity and, in particular, physical literacy. The PE review reported on the age group three to 18. I am holding up the draft outcomes on health and wellbeing, which you may have spoken to Learning and Teaching Scotland about. At the moment, the outcomes do not say much about three to five-year-olds; nor do they say much about 16 to 18-year-olds. That is a bit concerning.

We need to engage with the whole world of play. It is a challenge to society that we do not play any more. There are lots of aspects to the matter, which John Beattie's strategy review group reported on. However, I return to the issue of interconnections. There are real and legitimate reasons for supporting the development of sport on its own, and almost for its own sake.

I found it interesting to speak to John Beattie earlier. He was hobbling along here for the meeting, and he is really frustrated with his present inability to be as physical as he usually is. We forget that we need that aspect. I advocate treating everything as part of the jigsaw, but we perhaps need to treat different aspects in different ways with different partners.

The Convener: I want to check that we have received information about the age range that you talked about. Is that in our Scottish Parliament information centre briefing paper?

Dr Richard Simpson (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab): Is it not covered on pages 6 and 7 of the briefing paper?

The Convener: It is. Thank you. I just wanted to check.

Dr Simpson: There is a reference to the paper "Health and wellbeing draft experiences and outcomes". The different levels are described as "Early", "First", "Second", "Third" and "Fourth", rising from pre-school to senior school.

The Convener: Yes—I was just checking that we had that information and that we do not need to ask the witnesses for it.

10:30

Graham Watson: I wish to comment on something that we have noticed over the past couple of years, which goes back to the relevance of quotas. A report from the US surgeon general about the obesity crisis there noted that

"Children have never been good at listening to their elders, but they have never failed to imitate them."

We see a challenge in respect of how to educate parents about the importance and role of sport. Tommy Boyle can comment knowledgeably about that—we are putting a lot of effort into it just now. Government could contribute meaningfully to that without making a huge financial investment.

We must attack the problems in interaction between parents and youngsters. Many of the opportunities to give young people lifelong character-building skills and to meet the curriculum for excellence agenda come from the support network at home.

Would you like to comment further, Tommy?

The Convener: I would prefer that such requests came through the chair—but go ahead, Mr Boyle.

Tommy Boyle: First, I will go back to Ross Finnie's point. We need a joined-up approach that sets out what we are actually trying to achieve. One of the massive time bombs that we face as a nation is obesity and type 2 diabetes. We need an integrated strategy that starts before the child is born. What is the first thing parents do when they know they are going to have a baby? They buy the books and become experts on the first year of the child's life. What happens after they have encouraged their child to crawl and walk? Very little.

We do not communicate with parents to help them to understand the true value of sport in school and the wider community. The true value of sport is what the positive coaching project is about. The programme systematically communicates simple messages to leaders of local authorities, of national governing bodies and of sport. Most important is that the programme communicates those messages to parents, teachers and coaches in the community.

Tonight, for example, 400 children and parents are attending a workshop for parents, the aim of which is to communicate to those parents the real values, the big picture and the character-building life lessons that sport can provide. To answer Ross Finnie's question, we need as a nation to consider the longer-term value of sport academically, physically and as a preventive measure in the health of the nation.

The Convener: How did you advertise that workshop?

Tommy Boyle: We started a feasibility study almost two years ago. To cut to the chase, one of the biggest problems with the programme is how to hook parents in. We have developed a tremendous relationship with local authorities. We have mentioned Clackmannanshire Council, which is one of the best local authorities in the primary arena; the work there starts before primary school.

I assure you that I am getting to the point here. Last year, we trialled an approach to hooking in parents. We took Judy Murray to Alloa town hall as a spokesperson—or personality—to see whether that would work. It is a matter of trial and error, although colleagues in education know the answer: we need to have the children there to attract the parents. Tonight at Hampden, Gordon Smith and George Burley will be the high-profile people. The children there will be doing activities on cultural education within sport and the parents will listen to advice on character-building opportunities in sport.

The Convener: How did you engage the children and from which schools are they coming? Are they from less fortunate areas, as described by John Beattie?

Tommy Boyle: Yes they are. The programme covers five local authorities. It is centred on a cluster involving primary schools and the feeder national governing bodies. The event in East Renfrewshire is at Giffnock Soccer Centre, which is a football club where seven-a-side is played. The event in February will be at Barrhead boys club, which is in a deprived area.

We are running pilots across the full spectrum of the population, and we are trying to establish the best working practices and the model that is most fit for purpose. The project is partly to create a legacy programme that can be rolled out throughout Scotland.

Michael Matheson (Falkirk West) (SNP): John Beattie spoke about the need to make our society much more physically active—all parts of our society, and all generations. How will we go about that? I acknowledge the value of having targets so that we can measure how well we are doing. Tommy Boyle has spoken about younger kids, but how should we go about making a broad base of society more active?

John Beattie: Local authorities have a huge role to play, but at the moment there is nothing to incentivise a local authority chief executive to make his local population more active. The national performance framework has to allow for local authority money to be diverted to schemes that help to make people more active.

The question is complex. None of us has made any money out of this, but I came into it six years ago thinking that it would be quite simple—that it

would be all about physical education. We thought, "Let's change the world: let's give tax breaks to companies that provide showers and to companies that provide bike parking, and let's clear the streets of traffic and not allow any cars to drive anywhere near town." It all depends on how far politicians can go, and I know that your job is incredibly difficult.

There is a national physical activity strategy that has an incremental target for 20 years. In the summer we will find out where we are compared with where we were five years ago. The best thing that we can do is to put physical activity into HEAT targets and into the national performance framework so that we know that we are assessing and measuring outcomes. We should not confuse physical activity with sport—which is separate and clearly measured—and we should increase the profile of physical activity by means of a communications strategy. Most people in Scotland still do not understand that we are just talking about half an hour a day of some kind of exercise.

The issue is difficult. I could get the whole population active if we gave everyone five hours of PE; if people were not allowed to drive in town; if there were home zones where kids could play safely outside; if people were not allowed to park near schools; and if we had fantastic after-school sport and fun. However, the question of political will is very difficult.

If we had a target for the assessment of outcomes in the national performance framework, we would be some way towards a solution.

Charlie Raeburn: I already have one or two written responses to Mr Matheson's question. I was hoping that somebody would ask it.

A couple of big things could happen in the world of school. As I have already said, the ideas of health and wellbeing and health-promoting schools give us a real way in, via the current philosophy in the curriculum for excellence. Delivering health and wellbeing will be a huge challenge for everybody involved in schools, so I would want to increase the support that is given to PE, to school co-ordinators—particularly in secondary schools—and to the whole business of more overtly promoting health in schools because it is now a core part of schools' business.

The figure of two hours is supposed to be only a minimum, and there has been only one national audit, although some local authorities are doing their own audits. Continuous professional development for teachers will be a big part of the jigsaw.

Mary Scanlon asked about volunteers, which will be another challenge for schools—one that I do not think has been considered enough. For example, who would take adolescents?

We discovered an interesting and positive example while we were doing the PE review: a youth music initiative was announced to support music instruction, orchestras and choirs in schools. Perhaps similar ideas could be used to develop sport initiatives after school.

We were not allowed to talk about after-school activities in the PE review—I had hoped that we would do that—and talked only about formal PE. England chose to aim for five hours of PE a week in formal PE and what I would call the extended curriculum, or extra-curricular activity. We need to reconsider that. Maybe we can learn lessons from what has happened with music. I would be interested to hear the committee's views on that.

Another point is that community clubs should be defined, supported and developed. I am keen that local authorities get heavily involved in them. Centres should be provided to reduce the cost of facilities for clubs that become accredited. I would use the examples that my colleagues Tommy Boyle and Graham Watson gave. Tommy Boyle talked about the positive coaching materials that are available. We have "How good is our school?", so we could use the materials that we have to develop "How good is our club?", thereby ensuring that clubs are more sustainable. Many groups that are set up are not sustainable and many of the private organisations that are set up are aimed at primary-age kids, but there is no continuity. When the kids reach adolescence, who will take them at the age of the rebel?

My final suggestion is a simple one that is often discussed. We should make a better deal of opening up school facilities. In West Lothian, I was halfway through trying to open up the 11 secondary schools for use by clubs. The clubs do not need staff, so there is not a big cost. The capital is there. As long as we have sustainable, accountable, high-quality clubs—we need that incentive—we should be sweating the assets.

Michael Matheson: The importance of PE and sport in schools is coming across clearly in your evidence today, as it has done in previous evidence. When we argue with educationists about having more sport in schools, they say, "If we have more sport in schools, something else will have to go. The curriculum is already too crowded, even with the curriculum for excellence." What is your response to the suggestion that there is so much going on in schools that it is difficult to include more sport? It would, it can be argued, in fact be difficult to squeeze out any more sport.

Also, is there a tendency to expect our education system to deliver too much of the agenda? Should we expand capacity in extra-curricular sporting activities using the school estate and community clubs in partnerships? Should we try to extend that area of sport and

physical activity to increase people's capacity to participate?

Graham Watson: There is an enormous opportunity in the second part of that challenge, particularly in the window through to 2014. I refer to comments that were made earlier. Business in Scotland is now much more interested in the corporate social responsibility agenda, and there are some excellent models for that around the world. We are considering one from New Zealand, where people are brought out of the business world into a volunteering mode in partnership with governing bodies. That approach can help to deal with the problem that there are not enough volunteers to run extra-curricular sport. There is certainly scope for such partnerships to be developed. In New Zealand, it is the equivalent of sportscotland that drives the initiative.

We can do a lot, particularly if there are ways in which the school asset base can be opened up, which is a major opportunity. Schools should be available as close as possible to 24/7. If accredited clubs of the right standard use the facilities under initiatives of the type that we have discussed, there will be momentum behind the efforts to encourage kids to participate in sport and, most important, to stay involved.

Charlie Raeburn: The question about the delivery of health and wellbeing is a sensible one. I tried to refer to it in my previous answer. I am for the curriculum for excellence, but it will take almost a revolution to make it work. In my view, the only way in which all the things that are expected can be delivered is through serious partnerships. Serious support will be required from partners, including those in health. Without that, I am not sure that we will ever get close to meeting the aspirations of the health and wellbeing agenda or even those of health-promoting schools.

On the other part of the question, to my mind a minimum of two hours of PE a week is on a par with what happens in the majority of schools. As I mentioned earlier, it is significant that England has gone for five hours a week—two hours within the curriculum and three hours outwith—and has managed to succeed in that.

10:45

The most important word for me is engagement. As a revolutionary retired citizen now, I see the issue as being about what engages young people. In some ways, irrespective of whether we are talking about maths or sport, the question is whether we can engage young people and get them interested in school, life, their fellow pupils and so on. Part of the philosophy now seems to be that headteachers are given much more licence, but the downside of that—despite the best wishes

of Government—is that the academic and certificated side predominates. Nevertheless, much of how we relate to each other, our self-esteem, our confidence and so on can be delivered through the sporting world. One can, however, also imagine poor experiences—I am sure that some members had those—of PE and school sport. Rather than go with that, I would look for teachers who can engage young people. That is a critical point.

The Convener: I am one of those who had poor experiences of PE teachers—and of dentists.

John Beattie: Off the top of my head, I think that the statistics show that 40 per cent of schools in Scotland offer no PE in S4 and S5. In addition, two thirds of Scottish adults are totally inactive and the majority of teenage girls are sedentary. We have a physical activity strategy. If we had a target for physical activity in the national performance framework, money would be spent on it. However, schools cannot sort it all out.

The Convener: Dr Richard Simpson—I will give him his full title to show that I am even-handed—will move us on to the next issue.

Dr Simpson: It seems to me that we need targets, so we need first to measure what we have. As John Beattie said, we need to know exactly where we are. Given that we now have nursery school education across the country for three and four-year-olds, what targets should we set for the absolute foundations of physical literacy? I know that outcomes HWB 004C and HWB 005D refer to exploring different ways the body can move and so on, but what hard targets should we set that to ensure that, in providing Government funding, nursery education includes the foundations for physical literacy?

I ask for an answer on that question before I move on to a couple of other points.

Charlie Raeburn: I do not have a definitive response, but I know from discussions that the issue is serious. On play, I found in my work that early education headteachers are interested in physical activity and education but need support. Somehow, they have been marginalised in the debate.

On hard targets, a good place to measure the amount of physical activity that is included in the structured or semi-structured curriculum is the amount of time that is spent on it. The issues in physical literacy are basic body management and use. I always remember a wee boy in primary 3 who looked unbelievably unco-ordinated—this was when I was teaching, perhaps 30 or 40 years ago—who was, I discovered, being mollycoddled. I think that that has happened more and more. For targets, I would look at the outcomes to which you referred. They are not fleshed out but are just

pointers. Learning and Teaching Scotland needs to provide exemplars rather than just the open-ended outcomes that have been provided. Where are those examples? When are they coming forward? What kind of CPD is there going to be for, in this case, nursery staff? That is not clear—it is not going to be good enough to have it on a website. There needs to be crossover.

The Convener: We are talking about targets. Are you saying that certain children at a certain age should be able to do certain things—and that they should be fit to do those things?

John Beattie: The first thing that I learned is that the experts know an awful lot more than I do. If I was inquiring into the matter I would want the experts to tell me where we are with the physical literacy of our youngest people and the best way to proceed from there. We can use existing fantastic structures; there are great structures out there that help. Physical literacy is the ability to catch a ball, co-ordinate and move. That is not physical education: PE helps teach physical literacy, but physical literacy is other stuff, too. Given that I am not an expert, my gut feeling is that we should find out where we are with the physical literacy of our kids and let the experts guide us on how much we can increase that.

The Convener: The question will be quite difficult, so you can first reflect on your answer. We do not expect all answers to be full, especially if we are asking about matters that you have not thought about a great deal before. If you want to write to the committee, we will add that to the evidence that we will put to the three ministers when they come before us. The issue of cross-fertilisation between health, education and sport will be put to three ministers: the Minister for Schools and Skills, the Minister for Communities and Sport and the Minister for Public Health. If you have anything to add, it would be useful to give us material that we can use in questioning ministers about the effectiveness of what is going on, about what ought to be happening and about knowing where we are.

John Beattie: There is a national physical activity strategy, which covers physical literacy for pre-school children.

Dr Simpson: Is that strategy detailed and specific? Does it require every nursery school to undertake structured play, as opposed to children just going out into areas where they have their climbing frames and so on? It is great that kids will go out and play in the sandpit, but is there structured play that tests them on body movement, co-ordination, balance, ability to throw, ability to catch and how to run? It sounds silly to talk about how to run, because people just run, do they not? However, teaching people how to run at that stage is important.

I have grandchildren aged five and 10. The five-year-old has just got a Wii and it was fascinating to watch them doing balancing exercises for half an hour last night. I do not know how valuable that is.

The Convener: Are you doing those exercises with your grandchildren, Dr Simpson?

Dr Simpson: I do at least two and a half to three hours in the gym every week, because I do not have the time to do the sport that I would like to do.

What is being done on structured play, rather than just putting kids out into the playing field?

John Beattie: The national physical activity strategy says that we should be working towards every child being physically literate: society should be doing that. At the moment, because there are no national performance framework targets, local authorities find it hard to hit the right button. It is suggested in the strategy that every child should be active and physically literate if possible, but we are not spending money on that.

Dr Simpson: When Parliament started back in 1999, sport in schools was in a really dire state. We started with pilots in Clackmannanshire—in what was then my constituency—on school sport co-ordinators and we got, roughly, a 100 per cent increase in teenage boys being active and a 130 per cent increase in girls being active, because we introduced dance and other forms of activity. The pilots seemed to be successful. We now have 630 co-ordinators and 32 managers, but I am still getting the message from our witnesses that, despite that substantial input, we are not making progress. What is happening with those co-ordinators?

I ask Mr Raeburn to comment on part 4 of his paper, in which he states:

“Active Schools Co-ordinators have made a real impact in supporting school sport but the move to tackling inequalities, targeting inactive children, girls, disability, can take away from the universal impact of developing school sport for all.”

Will you expand on that? Are we doing the right thing with co-ordinators? Should we continue to put in a massive amount of resource? John Beattie was very critical of civil servants. The programme was developed by the Government and civil servants as well as by everybody else involved.

John Beattie: To my mind, the co-ordinators were brought in to paper over the cracks in education, if you like. In my view, if they had not been brought in, sports participation would have plummeted even further following several teachers' strikes and all the rest of it. It is a horrible old topic, but I think I am right in saying that sports participation has not changed in 20

years—despite all the spend—in almost every sport. What has been done has just maintained that level, which would otherwise have fallen, in my opinion.

Charlie Raeburn: As Mr Simpson said, the initial project was based in secondary schools. The people involved were called active schools co-ordinators, and their focus was on sport. Some years later, the project changed and the focus was on primary schools. However, the target was really physical activity and health. The project has had a lot of success. Primary headteachers appreciate the support from the active schools programme, which is frequently mentioned in school inspection reports. The programme contributes to schools in so many ways and is now regarded as being a big part of the health and wellbeing jigsaw.

We need to try now, however, to improve the situation for secondary schools. When we started the active schools programme in primary schools, we did playground games because there was a big emphasis on play. However, can you imagine doing playground games in secondary schools, where playgrounds are sometimes no-go areas? We have not developed the active schools programme enough, largely because of a lack of resources, as I said in my written response. A school might have only one day with a co-ordinator who is expected to deliver physical activity and health, although that person is only a co-ordinator. Who will actually take the primary or the secondary-age kids? We must give the co-ordinators more support.

This is not a fair comparison, but in New Zealand, which started the active schools concept, about 60 per cent of kids now take part in school sport. As John Beattie said, our figures cannot stack up against that. We have all sorts of challenges, with different agendas for addressing them, the active travel to school programme being a good one. However, what happens with sport? There is a certain age for secondary school kids to commit to sport. To see the whole process flower, the kids must practice over a long period as well as perform once in a while. If they participate casually in sport just once a week, I am not sure that we get the commitment that is necessary for learning. The secondary level needs real support to take things on several stages.

Graham Watson: Just to reinforce that, all the evidence that we have gathered in our work supports the positive impact of active schools co-ordinators, particularly in primary schools. It is important that that initiative is enhanced, encouraged and developed over the next few years, rather than being put at risk because of budgetary constraints in local authorities. There is already evidence that that is becoming a challenge in certain areas. It would be really disappointing if

such a successful major investment was not grown over the next few years.

Tommy Boyle: Two important points have come out of the discussion. Undoubtedly, the active schools co-ordinators programme has made a difference. However, one of the observations that most people make about the programme is that it is significantly different from local authority to local authority. The programme's level of success has been far greater in primary schools than in secondary schools. We need to ask how we can build the programme for the future.

The active schools programme is also a link from school to local clubs. The serious question to be asked is whether local clubs have the coaching and volunteering capacity to maximise the investment that we have made in the active schools programme. The answer is probably a big no.

11:00

The Convener: Why is there such a significant difference between local authorities?

Charlie Raeburn: As an ex-local authority manager, I think that it is because each local authority has a different structure. Of course, it also depends on how active a sports development team—if that or its equivalent exists—is in politicking.

A worry that I should flag up relates to the fact that 17 local authorities have received trust status. Much will depend on the trust agreements. Will the authorities be involved in capacity building in the community, or will they simply manage facilities? Given that capacity building might not bring in much money, that sort of development, which is what we need, might not happen.

The Convener: I am mindful of the fact that, in my area of the Borders, many swimming pools have become trusts. I take your point that some authorities might now have a different focus.

Dr Simpson: With regard to the top end of things, the Winning Scotland Foundation has made it clear that we need to get businesses involved. After all, children are more likely to become involved if their parents are. I was impressed by the fact that in Auckland there are 200 touch rugby teams playing interbusiness tournaments and so on. Businesses see such activity as hugely important because it provides bonding opportunities and builds corporate spirit. It is not being done in a charitable way, but nevertheless workers are fitter and are participating more.

Of course, rugby is the main sport in New Zealand; in Scotland it is football. How do we incentivise businesses to do what is in their own

interests, particularly in the current economic climate? Should we make the allocation of some of the loads of money that we are lashing out on small to medium-sized enterprises dependent on their fulfilling certain obligations in that respect?

Graham Watson: Yes. We have to join up our thinking about the support that business will give to the 2014 Commonwealth games. After all, business will want to be associated with Glasgow 2014. The challenge will be to ensure that any sponsorship that comes in or support that is given is viewed as part of the bigger picture, because business in and outwith Scotland has a great opportunity to get wider gains from those 14 or whatever days of competition. Even in today's difficult economic environment, businesses want their employees to see that they are doing good things. That said, opportunities to support employees' involvement in the community are still somewhat untapped, but models such as the New Zealand one that we have highlighted are good ones to follow.

The Convener: I ask that we keep our focus on the other issues that have been raised. I do not want us to get into the impact of recession—indeed, none of us will be able to work out its general impact, never mind its impact on sponsorship.

Ian McKee: We all agree that increasing the level of physical activity of everyone in the country will have health benefits; I also totally agree with Mr Raeburn's point about the importance in schools of wellbeing and the feeling of belonging. However, I still get concerned when sport is brought into the equation. My experience of sport is that, when I took up shotputting, I bruised my toe, and I rapidly became demotivated when I saw everyone else hurling the shot across the field. In many sports, there are losers as well as winners; when someone finds that they are a loser, they immediately get put in a different category and turn against the whole thing.

I appreciate that much of what you are talking about concerns guiding people into clubs and elite sport. However, that is a different activity. I do not know whether John Beattie's limp is permanent or temporary, but I know a lot of elite sportspeople whose health is not all that brilliant.

The Convener: Dr McKee, I did not realise that you were going to make a prognosis.

John Beattie: The limp is permanent, but I had a whale of a time getting it.

Ian McKee: Each to his own pleasures. [*Interruption.*] I am beginning to lose the thread of this dialogue.

The Convener: We are all losing it now.

Ian McKee: Other elite sportspeople have told us that success in their sport did not necessarily bring in other people, so it did not even act as an exemplar. Can you define the term "sport" a bit more and tell us how it will embrace everyone, given that in most sports there will inevitably be a lot of losers as well as some winners?

Tommy Boyle: That is a very complex question. With regard to motivating children, you mentioned the top level. I have been fortunate enough to coach thousands of athletes at grass-roots, world-class and Olympic level. As John Beattie made clear, it was a tremendous journey for the athletes and everyone else who benefited from the activity.

You also mentioned winners and losers. The programme that the Winning Scotland Foundation and business have invested in is designed to challenge the win-at-all-costs culture in coaching and sport in Scotland. That very mentality is part of the reason why many young people either do not participate in, or drop out of, sport. Beginning with our national sport of football—which, I have to say, is totally behind our approach—our programme is trying to come up with a different model that emphasises to children the benefits of making an effort, learning and recovering from mistakes. Every child is set task-oriented objectives and their performance is measured against those targets by the coach, the team, the parent and the community.

Instead of simply sending 22 players out on to a pitch on a Saturday and then treating 11 of them as failures or losers, with all the effects that that has on their self-confidence or self-belief—indeed, part of the problem with this nation is its lack of self-confidence—we take a mastery approach to coaching in sport. As I say, all children are set objectives from a very early age, encouraged to try hard to meet them and rewarded when they do so. I hope that by spending a lot more time with them, making more of an effort with them and putting more of a focus on learning the correct techniques, from pre-primary right through to whenever, we will change the culture in sport and encourage more coaches, volunteers, businesses and local authorities to establish what you might call a new kitemark or British standard—indeed, a kind of Council of Registered Gas Installers certification—for sporting clubs and sports coaches in Scotland.

Charlie Raeburn: The question is absolutely valid. People often think that sport is just for the guys who are any good. The scary thing is that, for the first time in all the time that I have been around, the country is doing well at the top, primarily because of the serious investment that is being made. Indeed, more investment is probably being made at the top than in most other areas.

However, sport is not all about being part of an elite—and it is not necessarily about making money out of little children, which is a more recent development. In West Lothian, we have devised a community club strategy. Friends in Denmark have told me that in this country we have a culture of telephone teams; instead of having a real club, you simply phone up the 11 best people you can put on the pitch. Football—or any sport—should be for guys with two left feet, or whatever the equivalent might be in other sports. After all, people still enjoy playing. When I was a physical education student, there were eight or nine football teams, the lowest of which were called “The Potholders” and “The Submariners”. Those people still loved playing the game.

However, in structuring any of this activity, you need to challenge the culture. Sometimes the sport itself forces you on to the Olympic route; given that most people are not on that route, we need clubs that are good for everyone. As Tommy Boyle pointed out, we need to build that ethos, challenge the culture and structure things accordingly.

Of course, that raises governance issues. The Scottish Rugby Union, which has given evidence to the committee, has separated the community side from the elite side. Such an approach makes sense, but the majority of sports are not taking it. As a school sports person, for example, I often find myself wondering where the voice of the school world is; it is simply not there. We have to build in a democratic aspect.

Your point is well made. We must make it clear that, if we structure things properly, sport can be for all.

John Beattie: I should apologise for talking too much.

Even though I was a rugby player, I find some aspects of sport almost indefensible. For example, I find it very upsetting that people can break their necks playing my sport. I think about it every day and, as a rugby coach, I have to wonder why that can happen.

I look at football and see how the man with the authority is questioned a lot by people in a public venue—that bit about sport worries me, too. The way that I rationalise the issue in my brain is that, rather than think about elite level sport, I think about a slightly overweight teenage girl and her mother and consider what we can do for them—what sport or activity we can get for them. It does not have to be my sport of rugby or shotput, but there must be something. We need to get everybody in the country fit, active and healthy and wanting to do something. There must be something for that teenage girl—even if it is aerobics or dance. To me, that is sport's real

message. On top of that, we get the cream—we pay those people and they win medals, make us feel good and take the risks of massive collisions. However, in general, the people at the bottom and in the middle are more important.

The Convener: I met a young girl in Penicuik who is part of a group of cheerleaders—hundreds of girls have chosen to do that. We have somebody coming next week who is involved in cheerleading. Ian McKee could have done that instead of trying to do the shotput.

Ian McKee: I would be grateful if Mr Watson or Mr Boyle could explain their organisation's plans for a tourist tax to improve sporting and physical activity in Scotland.

Graham Watson: A few months ago, we commissioned a piece of research to consider whether there is scope for developing a partnership in the run-up to 2014 between sport and an industry that will benefit from the sporting year of 2014, in which we will have the Commonwealth games, the Ryder cup and all the normal sporting events. The challenge is that when someone considers raising funds from the tourist industry, normally there are pleas from the industry that that could be detrimental to the demand for its services. The research that we instructed from recognised tourism experts was designed to find out whether we can forge a partnership between sport and the tourism industry that would be good for both partners and whether there is evidence from around the world that such partnerships work.

The initial piece of work leads us to think that it is worth pursuing the argument and discussion a little further. The aim is not to have a hostile confrontation between sport and tourism, but to find out whether the two can collaborate. The report shows that significant sums of money could be involved. We could generate and share between tourism and sport annual sums north of £30 million and potentially more than £100 million, which would be a tremendous additional influx of funding. That would benefit both sectors, not just one of them. The issue merits further study, which is what we tried to do. We wanted to stimulate debate with that piece of work.

The Convener: That is mentioned in the final paragraph of your submission, which talks about “a pool of new funding”.

Have you raised the issue with the Minister for Enterprise, Energy and Tourism?

Graham Watson: We have not raised it with the minister, although we have shared the research with other areas of Government and with sport and tourism organisations.

The Convener: I just thought that the minister might be interested in the issue from the point of view of the impact on businesses and how the money would be collected and distributed.

Helen Eadie (Dunfermline East) (Lab): I, too, discovered the joys of the Wii over Christmas. Perhaps like others in the room, I come from a very disadvantaged background. No one in my family played sport of any description other than my brothers, who played football; I never regarded that as sport, but just as boys' games. Any time I wanted to play a sport, such as tennis or hockey, I was frustrated because there was no one to teach me the rules. There is the theory of games as well as the practice. Is it mandatory in the curriculum for teachers to know the rules of all the basic games? Do teachers nowadays pass on those rules to pupils? They certainly did not do that when I was at school. I was attracted to a range of games, but the teachers never seemed to encourage us. I always wanted to play hockey, and I was frustrated when we did not get to do it although, occasionally, we did.

How many swimming pools are there in Scotland? My perception is that there is a great lack of swimming pools and they are popular. I was particularly interested in John Beattie's point about the decrease in participation—

11:15

The Convener: There were a lot of questions in there. The first one was about the teaching of rules for sports, which is a barrier, and the second one was about the availability of swimming pools. Is it fair to say that, Helen?

Helen Eadie: Yes.

The Convener: Could we start with the question on the teaching of rules?

Charlie Raeburn: It is a good question. I gather that the committee will meet a number of PE staff next week, and they will help to answer it.

For colleagues up the road at the University of Edinburgh, where they do the BEd in PE, there will always be a debate about how practical the course is over its four years. From the point of view of the council, and as someone who used to employ people, I felt that teachers needed a lot of practical ideas and information—about the rules or the safety issues, for example—when they started work. Of course, the probationary period would help to give new teachers those ideas and information. We used to call it the freebie probationer year, because people do not teach full time.

In implementing the PE review, the biggest thing for staff is the introduction of CPD in a range of areas, not least of which is the need to take on

board the health agenda, which was not necessarily as overt as it is now. With the diversification of PE, which the PE review also calls for, there is a need to upskill the workforce. Of course, many of the primary teachers are class teachers as well as PE specialists, so you can imagine that our primary teachers will have to be Svengalis and take on a wide agenda.

I plead for more CPD. Some of that will happen. We used to do latest and best practice and after-school in-service training, but we might have to do something revolutionary, such as taking a week out of the holidays just to try and get a bit more fun. Easter schools used to be held for PE teachers; they had a fair social element, to make them more attractive. CPD is much needed to take things forward. There is nothing worse than a youngster going along to a class and the teacher not really knowing what to do.

The Convener: What about the swimming pools and other facilities?

Charlie Raeburn: Swimming is my activity. It is a serious issue, which was raised in the PE review. However, it is not mentioned a lot, largely because people are scared of the cost of maintaining pools.

We should see the potential of swimming, which is not just about what they call teaching people to swim. If someone can swim one length of a pool, does that mean that they are able to swim and that their swimming curriculum is over? It is the same with physical literacy; if someone in primary 1 can move really well, does that mean that their PE is over? A lot of issues come out of that.

Swimming has all kinds of benefits and it needs to be treated properly. As I said to John Beattie, all old games players end up in the swimming pool anyway, because they all get injured.

It would be best if swimming pools were close to schools. Travel is mentioned a lot, so we have to find ways to get facilities into local neighbourhoods. Put the swimming pools in the neighbourhoods and find cleverer ways of programming them. As someone who swims every day, I would say that many of you could easily swim if you enjoyed it. Swimming is a great form of exercise, but the pools need to be treated like all other sports facilities.

The Convener: Mr Beattie, are you volunteering to swim every day?

John Beattie: No, but swimming is a fantastic sport with which to explain the confusion between physical activity, social sport and elite sport. At the moment, if a mother takes her child swimming once in either June or July, our sports data count them as two swimmers. That is not right, because

they are just doing it for fun. It is a physical and social activity.

We have to nail our sports participation data before we start to think about increasing the numbers.

The Convener: The travel issue is important, not just because of the costs but because it eats into the school timetable more than any other activity. I speak having formerly taught two sisters who are now primary school teachers. That is a big issue for the educationists. Swimming eats into time because of travel, changing and so on. Charlie Raeburn's point about pool locations was well made, and is reflected in your written submission. When schools are being built, the facilities should be built at or near them.

Helen Eadie: I have one final question about incentivising schools across Scotland. Do we have a national awards scheme for the best practice in a school? If we do not, should we consider having one?

Charlie Raeburn: I understand that some local authorities have such awards in their teaching awards scheme. Many schools have excellent schemes. There are health-promoting schools, certainly. Our local authority also gives an award for sport in its ceremonies.

As my submission states, this is a serious issue. Very few secondary school teachers want to volunteer and if their efforts are not recognised—if they are treated differently from, say, the music teacher or the homework club teacher—that does not help. If they are helping the kids, there should be an even playing field, especially if we have a culture of helping the kids who have two left feet. Recognition is important and good practice needs to be shared. Unfortunately, we have not had a debate about after-school stuff; it keeps coming up, but we do not get the debate.

Helen Eadie: I wondered whether a national award would begin to raise the profile of PE and show what best practice is in Scotland. That might begin to establish some sort of value.

Charlie Raeburn: It would be helpful.

The Convener: On that note, I thank all members of the panel. Please feel free to write to the committee to add to your evidence if there is something that we have not touched on but which you wanted to raise. That would be helpful. If you want to respond to anything that the ministers might say—we do not invite witnesses back—please write and let us know before we settle our report.

Thank you very much indeed. If you can beat us to the tea and coffee, you are welcome to have one.

11:22

Meeting suspended.

11:31

On resuming—

The Convener: We continue with oral evidence as part of our inquiry on pathways into sport, and I welcome our second panel of witnesses. Oliver Barsby is policy director at the Scottish Association of Local Sports Councils, Gavin Macleod is Scottish Disability Sport's chief executive officer, and Chris Robison is policy director at the Scottish Sports Association. I believe that you listened to the previous evidence, so we will move straight to questions.

Helen Eadie: I am particularly interested in disability and sport, which we chatted about during the coffee break. Could you enlighten us by giving examples of barriers to progress and highlighting examples of best practice in Scotland?

Gavin Macleod (Scottish Disability Sport): How long have you got? Some of the key issues, particularly for young people, relate to the mainstreaming agenda in schools. I read one statistic that said that 10 per cent of young people had not taken part in any school sport over the past year—and that does not take account of those young people who are not getting a good experience. That is a big worry for us because, without access to quality PE, children with a disability will not take part in sport in later life.

The active schools programme has done a lot for access to extracurricular activity in school, but the fact that much of that activity takes place after school means that there are implications for transport systems, with kids having to be bussed home. Access to competitions is a big worry for us because the pull on staff resources and issues with supply teachers mean that mainstream schools are less able to release young people to go to competitions, with the result that we have fewer young people than ever in our programmes. That has a knock-on effect for us as a governing body as regards talent identification. If we see fewer young people and there is a lack of access to physical education and school sports, talented people will not come through.

There are some great examples of good practice, in both schools and the wider community, and many teachers are doing a great job. Following recent research, the City of Edinburgh Council has highlighted a huge need for further education and training on how to include young people and pupils in PE and sport. We are trying to address that. We have already worked with the active schools co-ordinators throughout Scotland, which has resulted in a 40 per cent change in practice. We have just piloted an education and

training programme in Midlothian, which we hope to roll out to every teacher in Scotland—I do not know whether that will happen, but the opportunity exists. The funding for our work, which has come to us from the Government through sportscotland, has been much appreciated.

Governing bodies are becoming more inclusive in their thinking, and the governing body in badminton is a great example of good practice. Three years ago, it was doing nothing for disability sport, but the mindset changed completely. People are the key to change, and the people in badminton decided to focus on disability and to put a structure in place. We now have three clubs in Scotland for badminton players who have a disability, as well as a national championships. We have won numerous medals at home nations level and this year, for the first time, we won medals at the European championships—one of our ambulant cerebral palsy athletes took a silver and bronze. The fact that that happened in less than three years shows that change is possible.

We talked about facility access during the suspension.

The Convener: We need the information on the record.

Gavin Macleod: I will elaborate. Physical access is an issue for us—if a building is not accessible, our pupils, schools and athletes cannot access facilities—but attitudinal barriers are much bigger. They can be broken down through education, training and support, and we are working on that.

We talked about the Fife institute of physical and recreational education in Glenrothes, which is housed in a 1970s building. It is not the most successful building in the world, but the attitude, programming, ethos and approach of the centre's staff have made it the number 1 facility for including disabled people in Scotland.

The Convener: You said that you had a pilot in Midlothian. Has it concluded?

Gavin Macleod: Yes. Our concern was that what we delivered for the active schools programme was not appropriate for teachers. I am not an educationist, so working with PE staff is daunting for me and credibility is an issue. However, at the end of the training, teachers told us that what was delivered was appropriate, because it gave them tools, tips and examples of how to include people.

We use the inclusion spectrum, which is a model that is accepted throughout the UK and further afield. The aim is not full inclusion or segregated activity: grey areas that exist in between, such as parallel activity and adapted activity, can be used to include people. The pilot was successful.

The Convener: I have seen that swimming pools can be extremely useful to children with disabilities and others, for social reasons, too. Is accessibility a particular issue in swimming pools because pulleys and so on are needed to help children into and out of the water?

Gavin Macleod: Access to swimming pools is an issue, but it is not huge. Most pools have features such as variable-height changing tables and pool hoists to get people into and out of the pool, and most pools have staff who are trained to deal with swimmers with a disability. Swimming is a great sport for including people across the full spectrum of disability, from the most to the least severely affected.

Michael Matheson: As you will have heard, previous witnesses suggested that a cultural shift is needed, so that society as a whole is more active from birth to later years. How could we make Scotland more active across the generations?

The Convener: Speakers are self-selecting. Who would like to answer?

Chris Robison (Scottish Sports Association): I will go first. The question is really interesting but, as has been said, difficult to answer. I am convinced that the key age to focus on is the younger years—particularly children of primary school age or below. I was interested in the talk about the nursery agenda. I have no experience of that but, given the model of how children's cognitive skills develop, it is sensible to take the windows of opportunity in the early years to bed in basic skills.

Why is that important? If children are competent and confident in their ability to be physically active, they have much more opportunity to participate in sport and more choice of sport. I relate that to learning to read: if someone can read, they can choose from a library of books. The focus needs to be on the younger years.

The Convener: Even if we did all that, what would happen if participation dropped in adolescence—somebody called that the rebel years? What are your concerns about that? Given that we want measurements and targets for nursery children, how do we prevent the break at adolescence, which mostly involves adolescent girls?

Chris Robison: If we can get the children physically literate, they will get involved in activity and the issue then becomes the continuance of that activity. Youngsters need a greater range of opportunities not only in schools but in after-school clubs, so that the children who do not want to play football, rugby, netball or hockey can do other activities. As was said, the transition years of secondary 1 to 3 are crucial, and I and the

governing bodies would support the provision of extra resources to secondary schools—whether for additional active schools co-ordinators or from the clubs coming in with assistance—to ensure that there is no break resulting in a drop-off in participation.

Michael Matheson: A concern has come through in evidence about the sufficiency of the level of PE that is provided, whether that is physical activity in primary schools or PE in high schools. I will play devil's advocate. Educationists often say that it is difficult to include more sport or physical activity in the curriculum because it is already very crowded, and there is a danger that we could become over-reliant on schools for the provision of physical activity and sport. What could community sports clubs do to improve the provision of sport in schools, both within and outwith curriculum time? How could that partnership be strengthened to build capacity in schools and local communities to create a pathway from schools into community clubs? Some work could be done in that area.

Oliver Barsby (Scottish Association of Local Sports Councils): That is a good question, which leads on from your previous question on building up the impact of sport and the social impetus for that. There is a place for sport in the curriculum, but schools are also important in providing the facilities. Mr Raeburn mentioned the schemes in Denmark and Scandinavia, where the idea is that a community sports club focuses not on a particular sport but on the community coming together and sport providing a purpose for that.

There are examples of good practice in places such as Inverness, where the school is the local facility that hosts sports activities. The parents and others who are perhaps not normally involved in sport are aware that it is happening and get involved because they live close to the school. Schools, and the school estate in particular, have an important role to play in facilitating sport without having to deliver the activity themselves.

Gavin Macleod: There is a real need to improve the links between school and community, and we see examples of good practice where the active schools programme provides that link. We have 16 branches around Scotland that act as multisport, pan-disability development groups, and the links into the active schools programme are critical. We are currently working in the Scottish Borders to produce a joined-up disability plan that includes schools, active schools, our local branch and the local sports clubs. The key is to provide that link and support structure right the way through, and the only way in which we will prevent the drop-off is by providing support for young people throughout their sporting careers.

From our point of view, the other key element is parental support to keep young people involved in a sporting environment—that could mean their physically transporting their children to the sporting activity. If that parental support continues, there is more chance of the young people staying involved in sport during adolescence.

Chris Robison: There are examples of new-build community schools that are used after school curriculum time. A new facility at Duloch, in Dunfermline, is attached to a primary school, so when the children go along and participate in the sport they are familiar with the environment. There is a cafe alongside the sports hall where the parents can get a coffee, or they can participate in a parents' class, such as badminton or short tennis. The idea of a community hub that is based around a school has real potential.

11:45

Dr Simpson: We have received excellent submissions from each of the three organisations represented on the panel. The submission from the Scottish Association of Local Sports Councils refers to the Scandinavian model of a community multisport club, which we have just discussed. Should we push formally to develop that? Is Inverness an example of the model working in Scotland?

Oliver Barsby: I will go into more detail on that example. The scheme in Inverness is called the commonhealth games. It is based in a new public-private partnership school that was built in 2000 and focuses on five key areas: fitness, skill improvement, academic study, hobbies and healthy eating. There is a partnership that involves the school and teachers, who deliver the academic side of things; the local health centre, which delivers health messages; and the local sports clubs, which have set up lunch-time and after-school clubs. That has created interest and led to the development of new sports clubs outwith the school. The scheme is an example of what I spoke about earlier—how a school can become a community sports club hub. That is the model that exists in Denmark.

I am sometimes scared of the term “best practice”. It is easy to think that we can copy and paste something from one place to another and assume that it will have the same success, but in fact success depends on the environment into which a model is put. We have to see whether the Scandinavian model would work here. I believe that there are other ways of achieving what we seek—we do not need to copy the model exactly—and the Inverness school is an example of how we can use existing facilities to create a central hub.

Dr Simpson: It would be helpful if you could provide the committee with further written information on the model, as it is interesting.

Oliver Barsby: I will do so.

Dr Simpson: We now have a lot of active schools co-ordinators, but they are mainly in primary schools and have not been as effective at secondary level. The Scottish Sports Association makes that point in its submission. What about the managers? Who is training them and ensuring that there is less variation across local authorities? Almost all the witnesses from whom we have heard have told us that the programme varies hugely across local authorities. Who is getting together the 32 managers, one for each authority, to co-ordinate them and to ensure that they know about—dare I say it—best practice in other authorities? How are they being supported and co-ordinated, or are they somewhat isolated?

Chris Robison: The direct answer to the question is that sportscotland works closely with managers, but a lot depends on where they and co-ordinators sit in their local authority. Some of them sit with leisure trusts, others with education departments, and some with sports development. It is important that managers, co-ordinators, local authority sports development teams and physical education staff work together closely. From speaking to staff at sportscotland over the past few days, I am aware of an example of close liaison in Stirling, where the active schools co-ordinators and the local authority sports development team sit in the same room and work together closely, and there is close liaison with schools and PE teachers. Where we have that kind of co-ordination, we will get results.

The suggestion of a national agenda for active schools is interesting. Sports bodies do not believe that we need a simple blanket model: what works in Highland will be slightly different from what works in Glasgow. It is right that local models should work themselves out, but it is important to have good people who are prepared to talk to one another and to work through to a solution.

The Convener: I am glad that you have made that point. When we were discussing community hubs, I had concerns about remote and rural areas, where children go to all the airts after school. There is no public transport for them, so the school bus has to take them at a certain time of day. The specific challenges in those parts of Scotland are completely different from those in urban areas.

Oliver Barsby: I support what Chris Robison said. I, too, come from a local authority background and have experience of active schools co-ordinators, who are managed by sportscotland. Sportscotland has quarterly meetings with the

active schools managers, although I am not certain about the content of those meetings. The success of active schools comes not so much from leadership from above as from partnership working with local authorities. I have talked with Stirling Council about its model, which is successful, and, having been based in Edinburgh, I know of the leisure trust scheme there. However, in my experience, such schemes can create an extra level of management that sometimes gets in the way and causes problems for close working between sports development staff and the active schools staff.

Ian McKee: I have a much more general question, although I may be asking the wrong people. It seems to me, as a relative outsider to the sports field, that there is an immensely cluttered organisational set-up. If someone takes part in sport at school and gets interested in it, they can join one of 13,000 sports clubs, which are governed by 70-plus governing bodies. Then there are 12-plus representative bodies, such as the Scottish Sports Association, Scottish Universities Sport and the Scottish Association of Local Sports Councils, which relate to sportscotland, the Scottish Institute of Sport and the national sports centres. Somewhere in that, we also get the Winning Scotland Foundation and Coaching Scotland. It seems to me as an outsider that probably more people organise sport than take part in it. Could the witnesses comment on that situation and explain to me whether it is a marvellous way of doing things or whether things could be organised more efficiently?

Chris Robison: I will have a go. What you said is a fair assumption to make from an external point of view. Indeed, we in sport are conscious of the organisational situation, most of which is as it is for historical reasons. On the 70-plus governing bodies, it is right that each sport has its own governing body. However, one of our agendas is to ascertain whether there can be any synergy or economies of scale from back-office support or from sports working together. For example, there could be a loose association of court sports or field sports that could help to reduce administration costs. Discussions about such matters are sensitive, but we have had some and are trying to progress them.

On the other areas to which Mr McKee referred, over the past 18 months, the Scottish Association of Local Sports Councils, the Sports Development Foundation Scotland, Scottish Universities Sport and the Scottish Schoolsport Federation have formed a loose alliance—it is not another organisation—to look at key issues such as coaching and school sports. Because we represent different constituencies, I do not know whether it would be a good idea to try to amalgamate the organisations, but we should

probably recognise that there is a cluttered organisational set-up that should be looked at closely.

Gavin Macleod: On that point, we are probably an example of good practice in our field. There are eight disability organisations in England, one for each disability group, with sports-specific disability bodies underneath that. However, we have one multisport disability organisation in Scotland. We deliver our sport in conjunction with the governing bodies. For example, our football programmes are undertaken in partnership with the Scottish Football Association and our badminton ones are undertaken with the Scottish Badminton Union. In terms of the proliferation of bodies, we are better off in Scotland in our area than they are south of the border.

The Convener: You are an example of best practice. I feel that that is the phrase of the day.

Gavin Macleod: We continue to preach that.

Oliver Barsby: From my experience of working with local sports, I am not sure that the problem to which Mr McKee referred exists just at the national level. We may have reached saturation point with the number of clubs in some sports. On Chris Robison's point about the historical situation, one of the obstacles to our following the Danish example of community sports hubs is that many individual sports clubs are strongly protective of their own history and background and are reluctant to get together to form a community sports hub. When I was based in Edinburgh, I found that there was a huge number of football clubs, each with its own history. I imagine that that situation is echoed throughout Scotland. There are not enough grass football pitches for the number of clubs. There is therefore a proliferation problem at the grass-roots level as well as at the national level.

Mary Scanlon: I have two questions rather than three, because Ian McKee asked one of my questions. First, Oliver Barsby mentioned a school in Inverness, which is where I live. Which school is it?

Oliver Barsby: It is Glen Urquhart high school.

Mary Scanlon: That is not in Inverness. It is in Drumnadrochit, at the bottom of Loch Ness.

Oliver Barsby: Sorry.

The Convener: A blasphemy has been committed.

Mary Scanlon: I will make a point of visiting the school and report back to the committee. It is a first-class school, but it is not in Inverness.

Secondly, the Scottish Sports Association's submission recommends a minimum of five hours a week of physical activity, with primary 1 to 3

pupils doing the running, jumping, throwing, catching and swimming that we have discussed—Richard Simpson made a point about that. Who are you working with to achieve that goal? It is an excellent idea, but the landscape is so cluttered, as Ian McKee said. Have you made the recommendation to local authorities and the Government and been knocked back? How are you progressing the idea?

Chris Robison: Our member sports are clear that children's physical literacy—their basic fitness and movement skills—is not good when they present to clubs. We hear anecdotally that the clubs have to do a lot of work with young children to get them to a basic level. Ten or 15 years ago, that was not the case, probably because the children were running, climbing trees and doing all the things that we did when we were younger.

The question of our responsibility in that area is a difficult one. Governing bodies do not necessarily feel that it is their area of expertise. They observe the situation, but they feel that the schools should address it. That said, coaches in a number of sports are keen to assist in any way they can. I think that it was Helen Eadie who asked how we can upskill primary and secondary school teachers so that they know the rules of the game and how to deliver a range of sports. That is an interesting question. Governing bodies are keen to assist with that, whether by working closely with universities that train PE teachers or by going into schools to assist teachers or do some CPD with them.

It is in extra-curricular activity that sports clubs and governing bodies can really help. The two hours of PE is very much school business, although if there is any way in which we can help with that, we are keen to do so. The time cannot be made up to five hours during the school day, so that will have to be done outside school hours, and that is where clubs can really play a part.

There is a further point, which was touched on earlier. If we can get schools to open up facilities for clubs and they have a home within the school, there is a greater chance that the children will feel comfortable going along to them. If a club is within an environment that they are comfortable with, they are more likely to go to it. We can then develop the links between the school and the club.

Mary Scanlon: I listened carefully to that, but my thoughts arose from what John Beattie said about a lack of political will and about civil servants being obstructive. I understand how things can work. My question is this: given that the idea is such a good one, who are you working with to help to implement it? Are you talking to the right people? Do you find that there are barriers?

I have one more question, which is on travel, but I want you to address the previous one first.

The Convener: Let us deal with that one first.

Chris Robison: Perhaps we as an association, on behalf of our members, need to up the ante and put forward a stronger argument. I have spoken to the Government and I met a gentleman called Gordon Currie, who is in charge of the curriculum, but it comes down to whether local authorities and headteachers in schools want to make things happen. There is anecdotal evidence that, when the two-hour target was announced a number of years ago, a number of schools started to adjust the curriculum to try to meet it, but there has been no follow-up evidence or report on whether it is working. Our challenge is that our resources do not allow us to go and speak to the heads of education in local authorities and the headteachers, who we feel are the key people and, ultimately, the people who will make the change. There is a will on the part of the Government to make it happen.

12:00

Mary Scanlon: Travel expenses are a huge concern for Inverness. Helen Eadie mentioned swimming pools; I know some young swimmers in Inverness who, in order to swim competitively, have to travel to Stirling or Edinburgh to practise because that is where the nearest 50m pools are located. They find the travel expenses very difficult.

I went along to a school with active schools co-ordinators and I was impressed. On my visit, I met a badminton champion who is 15 years old. He has to travel from Culbokie, north of Inverness, to compete with people at his level. Is assistance available to help people at that level or at any level to compete? Various constituents have told me that they find travel expenses and travel time very difficult.

Chris Robison: It is a challenge. The answer is that funds are available, but it is a decision for the governing body. Each governing body will have its own performance programme and performance pathway and will allocate funds accordingly.

Mary Scanlon: Who holds the funds?

Chris Robison: There are two areas of funding. There is the Scottish Institute of Sport's funding. Athletes of a certain standard who are in the institute's programmes at the highest level receive funding from it, but I do not know the figures for each sport. At a lower level—the performance development level—the funds are held by the governing body. That funding is provided by sportscotland for performance programmes and it is for each sport to decide how it allocates the

funds. It is a massive issue and there is no simple answer, because there will always be a limit to what we can spend the funds on.

Gavin Macleod: As a representative of a governing body, I will give a practical example. As I grew up in the Highlands, I have experienced the barriers at first hand.

At a local level we have our branch, Highland Disability Sport, and we also have a development officer who is based with the local authority and an active schools co-ordinator who supports the athletes to come to national events and training. They get the guys down to Stirling and Edinburgh to take part in competitions and events. The next level up from that is our academy programme, so if we have a talented athlete who is based in the Highlands or the Borders, we have the funding that Chris Robison mentioned, which we can use to support their training expenses and travel expenses. We work with the athlete to help them to make the transition to the next level. Once they make the transition into the Scottish Institute of Sport or UK Sport programmes of whatever sport they are in, the big money kicks in and they will be funded for their travel, their training expenses and their coaching. The issue for us is to try, within our limited budgets, to support athletes so that they make the transition from our academy and below up to the United Kingdom programmes.

We currently have a wheelchair athlete up in Thurso. With the best will in the world, it is not practical to get him down to Inverness once a week, let alone Edinburgh or Stirling. We have a coach working with him regularly up in Thurso on his fitness programmes, his track technique and pushing on the roads around Thurso. We get him down to Inverness once a month and we also try to get him down to join the Scottish squad for training once a month. We try to provide as much support as we can within our budgets.

Oliver Barsby: I will add to what has been said. I was up in Inverness on Monday night at the Highland Sports Development Association meeting, when eight sports councils in the Highlands come together in partnership with Highland Council and the coaching development officer up there. When I attend those meetings, the big issue is often athletes attending events. I am not sure whether more funding is available to athletes from the Highlands or whether there is an equal pot, irrespective of where an athlete is based in Scotland. I am not sure, although Gavin Macleod would be able to put me right, whether more funding is available to athletes from the Highlands because of the extra distance that they have to travel. The other issue is the time that it takes to travel, regardless of the expense.

The Convener: That is something that researchers can find out for us if necessary. No

other members want to ask questions—I should never say that, because now Helen Eadie wants to ask another question.

Helen Eadie: Mr Beattie said that most members of the community can be involved in swimming. Is there research that can tell us where all the swimming pools in Scotland are? Are there areas where there are particular barriers to disability sport, such as a lack of qualified personnel to help?

I remember a councillor, who is dead now, bless her heart, who continually raised issues with me about the swimming pool in Glenrothes. With a small extension, that pool would have been capable of providing the necessary 50m for training that Mary Scanlon talked about. With relatively simple adaptations or extensions to some swimming pools, we could have many more 50m pools throughout Scotland. How many swimming pools out there would need only small extensions?

There are a lot of questions there.

The Convener: Yes. Helen Eadie asked how many swimming pools there are. Do you wish to have a stab at answering that?

Oliver Barsby: I cannot give you an exact figure. When I worked in Edinburgh, we reviewed the number of pools in Edinburgh. I sat on the swimming committee of all the swimming clubs there at the time. I know that sportscotland has a model whereby you can put in the number of swimming pools in the area and it tells you whether there are enough pools to suit the population of the area. Sportscotland might hold the information that you are after.

Helen Eadie also asked about the number of 50m pools, which is a totally different issue. You raised with the previous panel the issues of recreational sport and elite-level sport. I think that 50m pools are essential for the development of elite-level sport.

The Convener: I think that we can leave the numbers game to researchers. Thank you for telling us about the link.

Chris Robison: The issue is broader than just swimming pools. Health Scotland has just developed a very interesting database, which was primarily aimed at general practitioners who were making referrals for people who might need to do physical activity as part of a programme to improve their health. It has now developed a website on which people can enter their postcode and see all the local facilities, whether it is a walking club, a swimming pool, a running track or a badminton club. We are incredibly interested in that. Given that the 2012 and 2014 games will

increase people's awareness of sport, we are keen to work with Health Scotland on that.

The Convener: Thank you. That is very helpful information, although it is slightly off our pathways into sport inquiry.

Gavin Macleod: Helen Eadie asked about the availability of coaches and clubs for disability sport. It varies from area to area. We have issues about the inclusiveness of some sports clubs. Recently, I tried to find an archery club for a wheelchair user in the west of Scotland, but I could not find one that either was willing to accept that person or had an accessible facility for them. Some sports are very accessible and others are not. We want the best coaches to coach athletes with a disability, but the best coaches are the busiest and the most in demand, so we find that difficult.

In disability sport, there is not just the coaching issue but issues with the care staff and support staff who are required for some of the athletes with more severe disabilities. It is becoming more difficult to find those staff.

The third issue is that we promote separate activity and inclusive activity. Some of our athletes will never have the ability, confidence or will to be part of an inclusive setting, but they will be comfortable in a disability-specific setting. It is difficult to set up more of those clubs, because we are up against the numbers game; our numbers could be very small, particularly locally. Many leisure centres are numbers oriented, for very good reasons. It is difficult for us to set up clubs. However, we always try to ensure the transition to a mainstream club where the club is ready, willing and able to accept the athlete with a disability.

The Convener: Thank you. As I said to the previous panel, if you have anything to add, send it to us in writing, even after we have had the ministers before us. If there is anything that you want to reflect on and respond to, please do so. The written evidence will form part of what we do in our inquiry.

Meeting closed at 12:10.

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