



DEPARTMENT FOR CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Government Response to
the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee Report on
Drugs and Role Models in Sport: Making and Setting Examples
Session 2003-2004

*Presented to Parliament by the
Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport
by Command of Her Majesty
October 2004*

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GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT SELECT COMMITTEE REPORT ON DRUGS AND ROLE MODELS IN SPORT: MAKING AND SETTING EXAMPLES. SESSION 2003-04

The Government welcomes the Report of the Select Committee's inquiry into drugs and role models in sport. We are grateful to the Committee for its acknowledgement that the Government is fully committed to eradicating the use of drugs and doping methods in sport and for its positive comments about the UK's national anti-doping programme.

The Government is pleased that the Committee not only recognises that despite the attention given to individual doping cases in the media, there are actually very few cheats. Furthermore, we welcome the Committee's acknowledgment of the international effort made by the World Anti-Doping Agency into tackling drugs in sport, through the acceptance and implementation of the World Anti-Doping Code by sport and governments.

A huge amount of effort and imagination goes into developing and delivering programmes that widen participation in sport across all sections of society. Nevertheless, we must also address practices that can undermine our ability to realise the full range of benefits that sport has to offer.

One of these detrimental practices is the use of performance enhancing substances and methods. Simply, the Government is of the view that the taking of performance enhancing substances and methods is cheating, unfair and contrary to the spirit of fair competition. Drug misuse can be harmful to the athlete's health or to the safety of other competitors taking part. Making sport drug-free is, therefore, one of the priorities for this Government's policies for sport.

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Given the apparent ingenuity and foolhardiness of the minority of sportspeople who seek to cheat, we recommend that the DCMS, UK Sport, DoH and MHRA jointly determine whether to seek to pre-empt the abuse of new medical research and developments by sportsmen and – women or their coaches. (Paragraph 30).

Government Response

The UK's national anti-doping organisation, UK Sport, has recently launched an initiative called *Start Clean*, which is a strand of the European Year of Education through Sport. *Start Clean's* audience is 13 to 17 year olds, and aims to teach them about drug-free sport to improve their confidence, respect for health and well-being, commitment to personal achievement and problem solving, and communication skills.

UK Sport is recognised by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) as a world leader in education and information provision because of its well-structured and diverse education programme on drug-free sport. Notwithstanding that the UK's programme already meets the international standard outlined by the WADA, we recognise that we can always do more to educate athletes about the consequences of drug misuse so that there can be no excuse for athletes and their support personnel for not knowing, or not having access to advice about prohibited substances and the drug testing programme.

We are also taking on board a recommendation from the independent review that was conducted earlier in 2004 into the UK's national anti-doping organisation. UK Sport has increased to £150,000 the amount of funding allocated to deliver education, which represents a three-fold increase on the previous year's spend. This will help UK Sport to continue to improve the content and widen the scope of the education programmes to help athletes make the right decisions about what substances they can and cannot use.

The Government is also doing much to tackle drug misuse in wider society. We are approaching this in two ways: rehabilitation and prevention.

The Department of Health is leading on a number of programmes to rehabilitate drug addicts and is on target to double the number of people in treatment from 100,000 in 1998 to 200,000 by 2008. In 2002-03, 140,900 people received treatment. The Government will be spending £243 million and £260 million in 2003-04 and 2004-05 respectively to further develop the array of rehabilitation support services.

In regard to prevention, the Department of Health and the Home Office, in May 2003, jointly launched *FRANK*. *FRANK* is an innovative drugs campaign that aims to prevent young people from experimenting with illegal drugs and to give advice and help to anyone who is affected by, or wants to know about drugs.

We are also of the opinion that advances in the world of medicine, and as a result the risk of athletes abusing new medical practices to gain an unfair competitive advantage, needs to be tackled at international level, supported by sport, national governments and national anti-doping organisations.

WADA, because it represents a global partnership between national governments and the sporting movement, is best placed to lead on research into doping in sport. Part of the Government's contribution to the running costs of WADA has meant that WADA has been able to pool resources and set aside £1.57 million for new research projects. WADA's research programme will benefit anti-doping organisations and athletes worldwide. An international

approach ensures maximum impact and value for money. In addition to international research, UK Sport has allocated £50,000 to research projects to be of benefit to addressing areas that are of particular importance or relevance to the UK.

2. We commend the efforts of UK Sport, and all the relevant sports authorities and governing bodies within the UK, for the steps already taken. We regard the position of WADA – accepting demonstrable progress and determination to succeed – to be a much healthier approach than legalistic nit-picking. The international push for drug-free sport depends heavily on negotiated consensus and the winning over of hearts and minds across a complex sporting landscape of markedly different disciplines, countries and cultures. This process takes time and we believe that it is vital to keep the fundamental objectives, principles and values embodied in the World Anti-Doping Code to the fore. (Paragraph 42).

Government Response

The Government agrees with the Committee that the World Anti-Doping Code represents a major watershed in the global fight against doping in sport. The Code will harmonise anti-doping activities and processes across all countries and sports. Once the Code is fully implemented we should see more consistency in the way anti-doping matters are managed, including increased clarity and uniformity on the sanction for a doping offence. UK Sport has the Government's support in working with sport's national governing bodies to implement the Code into sport's rules and regulations in accordance with WADA's timescale.

The Government has given its full support to the development of WADA since its inception by the International Olympic Committee in November 1999. The UK was also very much involved in developing the articles of the Code. In addition, in March 2003, the UK, along with 51 other governments, led the way by signing the Copenhagen Declaration signifying our commitment to the World Anti-Doping Code. As of 31 August 2004, 152 governments have signed the Code. Take-up of the Code has been helped by the UK urging those Commonwealth countries that attended the Commonwealth Sports Ministers meeting in August 2004, to engage with the drug-free sport campaign.

The Government, like the Committee, gives praise to the sporting movement in the way that they have engaged with drug-free sport. To illustrate, all of the 202 national Olympic organisations have agreed to adopt the Code. Their commitment demonstrates that sport is taking ownership of the problem of drugs within an international framework provided by governments and sport coming together under the auspices of WADA.

The momentum for taking forward the international campaign, and in particular the implementation of the Code, will continue apace. This is due to WADA representing, and being jointly funded, by sport and governments. In January 2005, the UK will take up its seat on the Foundation Board, thereby, making a significant contribution to the decision and policy making process of the Agency.

3. We believe that the prevalence of performance-enhancing drugs in sport should not be over-stated. There is no doubt that a small number of sportsmen and -women will deliberately or recklessly take, or do, anything to gain a competitive advantage. There also seem to be those who seek to profit from the development of new ways to help cheats to do so. However, it seems equally clear that a significant number of sportspeople commit violations as a result of carelessness, ignorance and/or sheer bad luck. In assessing the situation, and presenting data, these categories should not be conflated, nor should it be forgotten that, even when taken together, these sportsmen and -women represent a tiny minority. (Paragraph 47).

Government Response

The Government agrees that perceptions about the extent of drug abuse in sport can be different to the fact. This is we believe in some part a result of the media attention that doping cases attract, especially when a popular sport or high-profile sportsperson is involved.

Nevertheless, the facts speak for themselves. The UK's drug testing programme combined with strong educational support has been a huge success in helping to rid sport of drugs. Out of the 29,114 tests that were carried out across 40 sports in the last five years (1999-04), of these only 431 showed adverse findings, which represents just 1.5% of all tests. The UK's results compare favourably with those from other parts of the world which average at 2%, suggesting that UK athletes are not attempting to cheat in a manner that is disproportionate to other countries, and that the drug-free sport policy is an effective deterrent.

A cornerstone of both the World Anti-Doping Code and our national programme is the principle of strict liability. That is, the principle that an athlete is responsible for what is found in his or her body. This is recognised by the sporting movement and governments as the only practical way that the fight against doping in sport can properly work. However, it does mean that it is not possible at the test analysis stage to distinguish between whether an athlete has deliberately tried to cheat or has inadvertently ingested a prohibited substance.

If it is proven that a doping violation has taken place, procedures for conducting a disciplinary hearing allow for specified mitigating circumstances to be taken into account, whereby the disciplinary panel may decide that the sanction should be reduced or eliminated. Furthermore, WADA's List of Prohibited Substances and Methods makes reference to those substances that are particularly susceptible to unintentional doping because of their availability and presence in licensed medicines.

We are not complacent and fully recognise the importance of continually improving education and information programmes to help athletes train and compete free from drugs. In addition to the *Start Clean* education programme, UK Sport's *Stay Clean* initiative helps world class athletes have greater direct contact with drug-free sport experts and with other athletes who act as ambassadors for drug-free sport.

A wealth of information resources are available to athletes, their support personnel and sport's governing bodies. These include fact sheets, leaflets about testing procedures, the Drug Information Database and an online database for reporting of positive test results. Further details of UK Sport's education programme for athletes and support personnel is given in our reply to recommendation 12.

4. We believe that there are sufficiently worrying indications of dangerous levels of steroid use, outside elite sport, to warrant specific research by the Government into the extent of the illicit trade and use of steroids amongst gym-users in the UK. We recommend that the Government commission comprehensive research into the prevalence of steroid use. The status of anabolic steroids under the law, and the regulation – or rather the non-regulation – of gyms and fitness clubs in this respect, should be reviewed in the light of the results. (Paragraph 53).

Government Response

Colleagues at the Home Office have responsibility for undertaking research into drug misuse, including misuse of steroids, and use the British Crime Survey to estimate the prevalence of drug use among the population in England and Wales. Prevalence rates for steroid misuse have decreased in recent years. Since 2001, the Survey has been carried out annually with a considerably larger sample size to ensure more effective monitoring of the Government's ten-year strategy for tackling drug misuse.

At present, 54 anabolic steroids are classified as controlled substances under Schedule 4 Part II of the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001. However, steroids when in the form of a medicinal product are exempted from the prohibition on possession and excluded from the prohibition on importation and exportation in the form of a medicinal product for self-administration.

The Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs keeps the position under regular review, but has no immediate plans to undertake any additional research in this area. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Home Office also keep in regular contact on this issue and will keep the situation under review.

5. The information collection and analysis relating to drugs in elite sport is currently unsatisfactory in view of the seriousness with which the Government claims to be taking the matter and the importance of robust data in establishing an effective level of deterrent and preventative action through the testing regime. We expect that the development of international cooperation under the auspices of WADA and efforts of national agencies to achieve WADA compliance will help. We recommend that further resources be allocated to UK Sport to remedy this deficit with respect to British sportsmen and -women whether they are tested here or abroad. (Paragraph 56).

Government Response

The Government welcomes the Committee's recommendation, and can confirm that steps have already been taken by UK Sport to address this.

UK Sport, in recognising the need to improve collection and manipulation of the data to undertake more sophisticated analysis, is developing a new computer system to help achieve this. The system, once fully operationally, will also enable UK Sport to interface with WADA's Clearing House system, which has the potential to hold a huge amount of valuable international data. UK Sport is represented on the WADA working party that is developing the specification for this system.

UK Sport will keep this under review, and in particular, the additional resources that may need to be directed towards this project as its scale and complexity grows.

6. We recommend that all sports governing bodies in the UK agree a joint tariff of penalties for anti-doping violations based on sanctions set out in the World Anti-Doping Code. (Paragraph 69).

Government Response

The Government fully supports the standardisation of sanctions under the Code, as we believe that sanctions need to be sufficient to deter athletes from taking prohibited substances. We also welcome the tough provisions set out in the Code that deal with support personnel, such as coaches and doctors, who have been found to have committed a doping offence. This, we believe, sends a strong message that these people are just as responsible as the athletes for good ethical behaviour.

All 28 international Olympic summer sport federations and all 7 international Olympic winter sport federations have now formally accepted the World Anti-Doping Code. Among the international federations that are also recognised by the International Olympic Committee, 26 out of the 28 have accepted the Code, with only the International Golf Federation and International Automobile Federation not yet having done so.

As a result of sport's international federations signing the Code, their national governing bodies are working towards Code compliance. There is a presumption that in signing up to the Code, organisations have accepted and will implement the articles relating to sanctions into their rules and procedures. The Code, for the first time, also makes it clear to athletes and their entourage what constitutes a doping offence.

The UK's national anti-doping policy, currently being updated by UK Sport to take account of the Code, will require UK governing bodies to comply with the sanctions set out under the Code. In addition, the Government has made it a condition of eligibility for public funding that governing bodies accept the Code, which includes the new rules governing sanctions. This will go a long way to help improve the consistency of sanctions across sports.

An important strand of the Code is that sportspeople, who have committed a doping violation, should receive a fair, expert and timely disciplinary hearing and, if necessary, appeal. In order for a hearing to be fair, an athlete, if he or she chooses to, must be allowed to exercise his or her right to prove to the panel that mitigating circumstances exist. This may result in the panel reducing or eliminating the penalty.

An athlete, if wanting to prove no fault, would need to show how the substance entered his or her body. Owing to the strict liability principle that underpins the Code, an athlete that has his or her sanction reduced or eliminated would still technically have committed an anti-doping violation.

7. We agree with the Government that harmonisation of the principles behind the effort to combat drugs in sport across all sports and all countries will be a benefit. However, the terms of the debate need careful definition, as harmony and consistency of approach cannot necessarily equate to a uniformity of outcome in each individual case. (Paragraph 73).

Government Response

On the basis that those responsible for results management adhere to the articles and principles in the World Anti-Doping Code, we cannot see why there should be any significant variance of sanctions in the outcome of individual cases.

WADA will be closely monitoring compliance with the Code, and as with all new practices it is important for athletes and the bodies responsible for anti-doping to feedback to WADA any difficulties they experience with exercising the Code. This will ensure appropriate consideration and, where necessary, subsequent revisions.

We should however be mindful that the Code is seeking significant convergence across countries and sport, and this process is likely to take time. Nevertheless, if WADA is dissatisfied with the way that organisations are applying the articles of the Code, WADA may exercise their right to seek redress at the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

8. We were presented with absolutely no evidence in support of the fundamental case for a new agency, namely that the Performance Directorate within UK Sport, or the organisation as a whole, ever acted to inhibit the operation of the Drug-Free Sport Directorate to allow a UK sportsman or -woman to compete for a medal, or other trophy, to which he or she was not entitled. We recommend, however, that UK Sport take whatever steps deemed necessary to separate and clarify the twin chains of command within the agency to ensure that any such perceptions are laid to rest once and for all. (Paragraph 79).

Government Response

The Government welcomes the Committee's acknowledgement that UK Sport is best placed to continue to act as our national anti-doping organisation. The independent review undertaken earlier in 2004 showed that UK Sport, excepting a few minor improvements, offers the UK the most efficient and robust vehicle for delivering a transparent, fair and accountable drug-testing programme.

The UK Sport Council and the “UK Sports Cabinet” (the five Ministers responsible for sport in the UK) endorsed the recommendations that there does however need to be clear lines between UK Sport’s Drug-Free Sport Directorate and its other functions. This can be achieved through robust practices and standards, new governance arrangements and transparency.

Since the review, UK Sport has appointed the consultants, PMP, and the law firm, Moorhead James Solicitors, to investigate a new management and corporate governance structure for drug-free sport to deliver greater scrutiny and accountability. The conclusion, which has been accepted, was that UK Sport should establish a scrutiny panel, which would report directly to the Chair of UK Sport.

The drug-free sport scrutiny panel, which will be fully operational by April 2005, will be made up of up to four individuals. The panel’s chair will not be a member of the UK Sport Council, and it has been proposed that one of the panel members should be a retired athlete with an unimpeachable record for probity. It is expected that the scrutiny panel will meet quarterly to oversee the implementation and the furtherance of the drug-free sport programme. In addition, the panel will appoint separate auditors to audit specifically the operations of the drug-free sport directorate from those used by UK Sport’s performance sport directorate.

9. If the Government is serious about its support for drug-free sport then it must enable UK Sport to develop the Sports Dispute Resolution Panel into a national tribunal service for the management of anti-doping cases. This service must be able to protect sports governing bodies from liabilities arising out of errors in its conduct of their cases. (Paragraph 93).

Government Response

UK Sport has commissioned the Sports Dispute Resolution Panel (SDRP) to undertake a costed options appraisal for a new national tribunal service, which when received, will be discussed with Ministers. The matter of liability will require careful consideration, as the costs involved are likely to be significant. Liability will be tackled as part of SDRP’s study.

10. To tackle the issue of consistency across sports we recommend that the UK Sport seeks to establish as much coordination as possible between the FA – and any other governing bodies who wish to manage their own cases – and the new service, along the lines suggested by the PMP report. (Paragraph 94).

Government Response

The Government believes that it is in the best interest of the athlete, and sport as a whole, for sport to own and to decide on how it will resolve the problem of drugs in sport. Consequently, the Government agrees with the Committee that sport’s governing bodies should decide how best to manage the disciplinary hearing and appeals process.

With the implementation of the World Anti-Doping Code, it is important that UK Sport ensures that the UK’s national appeals structure is fair, consistent and robust.

It has always been our intention that a national tribunal service be established as an optional service to governing bodies, but the Government believes that it is for the governing body to decide whether it wants to use this service. Our view is that governing bodies are best placed to decide how they want to undertake hearings and dispute resolution. This could for some organisations involve using an external tribunal service or, like the Football Association, they may elect to do this in-house. It matters little whether the disciplinary and appeals process is internal or external providing the processes adhere to the standards and principles outlined in the World Anti-Doping Code.

11. UK Sport, in concert with the Department and relevant sports governing bodies, should establish a common accreditation process for any new arrangements, with provision for periodic review, to assure the public, and all sports, that robust and equitable systems are in place. (Paragraph 95).

Government Response

Following receipt from SDRP of their option appraisal, UK Sport will consult the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, sport's governing bodies and other key stakeholders on the study.

To complement the creation of a national tribunal service, UK Sport intend to develop good practice guidance on principles and standards that both external organisations, like the national tribunal service, and the governing bodies who have decided to undertake the disciplinary process in-house, will want to adopt.

We welcome the Committee's suggestion that there is benefit to be had from having a common accreditation process for those organisations involved in hearings and dispute resolution. UK Sport will consider how an accreditation process would work as part of their brief to establish a national tribunal service.

12. While we would welcome a voluntary move by the pharmaceutical industry to introduce a labelling scheme aimed at identifying medicines containing substances banned in elite sport, we would regard moves to impose such a requirement as a possible misdirection of effort and of anti-doping's scant resources. Other avenues such as the provision of training and awareness-raising material for GPs and, in particular, pharmacists might be fruitful (and such efforts could start in cities hosting significant sports events). (Paragraph 100).

Government Response

The Government agrees with the Committee that raising the awareness of the risks associated for athletes in the taking of licensed medicines is one that is best tackled through education. This is being addressed in three ways: through professional development programmes for pharmacists, UK Sport's Drug Information Database and associated educational resources, and through the Therapeutic Use Exemption scheme.

The Department of Health funds the Centre for Pharmacy Postgraduate Education at the University of Manchester, which provides education and continuing support for the professional development of pharmacists. The work undertaken by the Centre demonstrates that Government recognises that pharmacists have a role as educators in the area of drug use and medicines in sport.

The Centre offers a comprehensive education programme, one element of which is the use of licensed medicines in sport. This particular strand provides pharmacists with valuable information in order to give appropriate advice to athletes on drug related matters.

This complements the work that UK Sport is doing in concert with the British National Formulary to extend the information available to General Practitioners and pharmacists. To illustrate the extent of communicating the message of drug-free sport, during the 2002 Commonwealth Games in Manchester, UK Sport distributed information packs to pharmacists in and around Manchester that potentially could have serviced athletes and their entourage. UK Sport will continue to do this for other major sporting events.

In addition to the drug information line and e-mail service, UK Sport has developed a sophisticated and much admired Drug Information Database that provides athletes with a useful guide on the status of UK-licensed medications and substances so that athletes can make informed decisions about the taking of prescribed and over-the-counter licensed medicines.

This Database helps over 45,000 sportsmen and women a year and, more importantly, those that have used the database say that it has been an invaluable tool in training and competing free from prohibited substances.

Furthermore, UK Sport is working with the Canadian anti-doping organisation, Canadian Center for Ethics in Sport, to launch a global drug information database, which when ready will be shared with other anti-doping organisations.

To complement these initiatives, WADA's Therapeutic Use Exemption scheme has made significant strides in this complicated area. The scheme removes the ambiguity surrounding the giving of sanctions to athletes that have unwittingly taken a performance enhancing substance because it is an ingredient in the medication they take for the treatment of a medical condition. To illustrate, a diabetic athlete, without a Therapeutic Use Exemption, would normally violate anti-doping rules through the taking of insulin to treat his or her condition owing to insulin being a prohibited substance in sport.

13. As with the medicines issue, we would have some sympathy with the likely resistance to formal regulation from the global supplements industry in the interests of a tiny fraction of its customers. However, there are some possible alternatives to Mr Richardson's, and UK Sport's, advice to 'just say no' which we suggest below. (Paragraph 104).

Government Response

The matter of nutritional supplements and sports foods is a complex one because of its impact on the principle of strict liability that underpins the fight against drugs in sport. What we do know is that at present no guarantee can be given to a performance athlete or the wider public that any supplement, be it a vitamin or mineral supplement, or a herbal remedy, is free from prohibited substances.

There are regulations in place to help protect consumers in this area that extend to comprehensive ingredients labelling (Food Labelling Regulations 1996), and a new EU Directive called the Foods Supplements (England) Regulations 2003, which comes into force on 1 August 2005. This newest Regulation will define the maximum limits for vitamins and minerals in food supplements, and the range and form of vitamins and minerals that can be used in foods. The Regulation also strengthens the labelling provisions provided by the 1996 Regulation.

In addition, the European Commission issued a document in April that begins to scope a new EU Directive that aims to harmonise the composition and labelling of sports foods. The Commission is also looking at ways in which this draft Directive could refer to WADA's List of Prohibited Substances, and Ministers are stressing the importance of finding a way to do this.

We fully recognise that we need to find a practical way of dealing with the risk of potential contamination during the supply stage of the raw materials, and cross-contamination during the manufacturing and packing process. To this end, the Government will be hosting a meeting later this Autumn with the trade associations that represent the sports food industry to look at how we might best arrive at a suitable solution.

However, many of our athletes compete internationally and some products on sale in other countries do not have to comply with our stricter labelling rules. Thus, any solution to this problem must be one that can be globally implemented by those who supply, manufacture and market nutritional supplements.

As a result, the Government believes that WADA is best placed to facilitate a remedy because they represent both sport and governments worldwide. We agree that governments are critical to the solution, as they will be expected to enact and enforce any appropriate regulations on the industry that come out from WADA's symposium on nutritional supplements.

We look forward to later in the year when the symposium has concluded its research and has identified a plan of action. The Government will focus more on international policy, and in particular will push for a solution on nutritional supplements, when it takes up its seat on WADA's Foundation Board in January 2005.

14. The Government needs to keep its focus on the realisation and implementation of the fundamental principles contained within the WADA Code and, while protecting and promoting existing effective systems, should seek to lift the performance of all sporting bodies to the level of the best with a mixture of advice, support, public validation of compliant practices and the judicious application of resources. (Paragraph 109).

Government Response

The Government agrees with the Committee that continuous review and improvement is necessary to ensure that the UK remains at the forefront in the fight against doping in sport.

UK Sport decides how much of its exchequer funding it will allocate to drug-free sport. This is so that UK Sport can properly manage the variations in cash flow that are common in drug-free sport as a result of fluctuations during the year and the Olympiad cycle, whereby the drug testing programme expands to account for testing peaks around major sporting events.

UK Sport has already allocated additional resources to the anti-doping programme for this and future years, which includes some additional personnel and a re-structuring of the management team. UK Sport is driving forward UK's compliance with the World Anti-Doping Code and will continue to promote best practice across all sports in matters relating to drug-free sport.

We also recognise that some of the smaller sport's governing bodies have difficulties in implementing a drug-free sport policy due to limited resources and expertise. However, that does not deter them from their willingness to embrace drug-free sport. Sport councils, in concert with Government funding, have for several years been encouraging and helping these bodies to modernise their structures and governance arrangements, so that they can increase their capacity to deal with new issues affecting sport, including fulfilling their obligations on anti-doping.

15. We believe that there are also important contributions that can be made in policy areas beyond the sporting arena, such as an assessment of the issue of steroid use outside elite sport and work on developing an approach to dietary supplements that could enable the problems of contamination, and/or undisclosed ingredients, to be tackled. (Paragraph 110).

Government Response

We note the Committee's recommendation and for which we have provided a full response under recommendations no. 4 and 13.

16. Given that observance of the rules is integral to good sporting conduct, especial efforts to ensure such conduct on the field of play should not be seen as an external burden on sport but rather it should be an objective of every responsible governing body, and sporting participant, at the elite or professional level. (Paragraph 118).

Government Response

The Government agrees with the Committee's views, which are also shared by UK Sport and the home country sports councils. We believe that there are several dimensions to the issue of ethics in sports, which includes what happens on the field of play.

UK Sport's *Sporting Conduct* project is primarily concerned with ethical conduct on the field of play and involves discussing with players, coaches and officials the values of their sport. The aim is to provide sport with a framework from which they can devise practical and achievable strategies for tackling fair play issues, and to showcase the many effective programmes they already undertake in this respect. High profile sports have already taken part in developing the project, including tennis, golf, football, cricket, rugby league and rugby union.

UK Sport will also put into practice the conclusions from the report they commissioned on the wide range of initiatives that have been developed around the world to promote the concept of fair play.

17. There seems to be, however, implications of the public profile of sportsmen and -women that do create wider expectations than simply good conduct on the field of play. It is impossible to over-estimate the impact and influence of sportspeople on young people who admire, follow and emulate their heroes' activities on and off the pitch, court and track. We urge sporting authorities, managers and coaches to bear this in mind in all the advice, training and wider guidance provided to their athletes and players. (Paragraph 119).

Government Response

We are fully aware of the need to provide young people especially with accurate and balanced information about ethical matters, including drug-free sport.

We know that sport gives young people confidence and purpose to divert them from anti-social behaviour by teaching them self discipline and team work, which helps them to fulfil their educational potential, take up employment and be a useful member of society.

We also know that high profile sportsmen and women are influential role models, whose behaviour has a significant impact on young people as they aspire to emulate their sporting heroes. This is why UK Sport's *Drug-Free Sport Ambassadors* programme is so important.

In recognising that sporting heroes are in a unique position to communicate to youngsters that the use of drugs is unacceptable, the programme involves world-class athletes acting as a spokesperson for their sport on the importance of drug-free sport. For example, Alain Baxter has recently produced a video of his personal experience during and after the Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City, which has already been seen by potential participants of the 2006 Winter Olympics in Turin. Visual footage like this will be developed further to feature other athletes and to reach new audiences.

The English sports council, Sport England, launched in 2002 the *Sporting Champions* programme that uses sporting heroes and emerging talent to inspire and motivate young people to become and remain involved in sport as a lifelong activity.

The programme's sporting heroes visit schools to speak to groups of youngsters, at for example, school assemblies about their experiences of training and competition. In 2003-04, 91,840 children benefited from the programme. So far, Sport England has recruited 398 English sporting champions across 69 sports. In 2003, in concert with Sportscotland, the programme was extended to Scotland.

18. We look forward to detailed announcements from DCMS on how it will be tackling its new Public Service Agreement targets – set out in the 2004 Comprehensive Spending Review – to increase participation in sport amongst children and priority groups and halt the year on year rise in obesity amongst under-11 year-olds. We expect to see enhanced levels of investment in the key grassroots sports where the highest levels of participation can be achieved in the most cost-effective manner. (Paragraph 126).

Government Response

Announcements following the 2004 Spending Review settlement will be made later in the autumn. Lord Carter of Coles, Chair of Sport England, has been asked to report on how we can co-ordinate more effectively the national sports effort and resources and, in particular, on a proposal to involve private and public sectors together in a new national sports foundation.

We are already tackling participation for all 5 to 16 years olds through the National Strategy for Physical Education and School Sport, and delivering the recently extended PSA target that we share with the Department for Education and Skills, which seeks to increase the number of children in England who spend at least two hours each week participating in high quality physical education and school sport.

19. We recommend that the DCMS, Sport England, The FA (and other relevant sports governing bodies) sit down with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and establish an effective audit process that will be able to settle arguments over the real outcomes for sport from the implementation of planning policy in respect of playing fields. (Paragraph 128).

Government Response

We agree with the Committee that playing fields provide a vital recreational resource for schools and local communities.

We also recognise that the protection of playing fields needs to play an important part in our overall strategy for delivering the outcomes for facilities, which we set out in *Game Plan*, the Government's strategy for sport.

Tough restrictions on playing field sales have been in place since 1998 and these have significantly reduced the number of playing fields that have been sold. The number of cases where a careful assessment of a playing field strategy showed that there was a strong case for releasing the land for non-sporting use is now less than 10% of the total number of approved applications.

In other words, during 2001/02 and 2002/03, 90% of approved planning applications relating to playing fields led to the provision of better sports facilities or left them unaffected. Over that two-year period, approved planning applications on playing fields have led to an investment of almost £540 million in new sports facilities.

Tighter restrictions have also recently been introduced by the Department for Education and Skills on the sale of school playing fields – sales must now be an absolute last resort, proceeds must be used for outdoor facilities, and new facilities must be sustainable for at least 10 years.

To put playing fields at the centre of our strategic thinking on facilities issues, we have established a new group, the Facilities Strategy Board, which is chaired by the Minister for Sport, and incorporates the earlier Playing Fields Monitoring Group. The new Group will take a more strategic approach to facilities development whilst continuing to be vigilant on playing fields and open spaces. The Group will meet quarterly and includes representatives from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Sport England, the Big Lottery Fund (previously New Opportunities Fund) and sport's governing bodies through the Central Council for Physical Recreation.

20. We were deeply impressed by the extent of the commitment of sports in Britain – especially football – to the communities in which they are based and to wider society. We recognise that there are some very practical reasons why sports might invest to attract future generations of players, supporters and consumers and to ensure good relations with government. However, the existing partnerships between sports bodies and public authorities demonstrate that sport is a willing and able partner for the Government on a range of policy issues and indicates that there is the potential for further gains on the back of the effective investment of public resources. (Paragraph 136).

Government Response

We are committed to developing and utilising the positive partnership that exists between Government and sport to help us deliver on several important priorities. These include at risk children, developing community cohesion, enhancing social inclusion and participation at all levels of society.

To illustrate, the Football Foundation is the UK's largest sports charity, which is funded by the Football Association, Premier League and the Government. For every £1 invested by the Government, a further £5 is invested from football and commercial sponsors.

Since the Football Foundation was launched in July 2000, the Foundation has invested over £390 million in 1,660 varied projects. The Foundation currently invests in the region of £53 million annually into communities through supporting grassroots football and already has a further 350 projects worth around £125 million in the pipeline. In 2002-03 alone, over 2,000 young people benefited from the Foundation's initiatives bringing the total to 7,000 people having taken part.

Going forward, the Foundation will now reach beyond football and invest its resources in multi-sport pitches and modern facilities making a significant contribution to the fabric of community sport.

21. We recommend that the Department for Culture, Media and Sport lead a cross-departmental review of the existing array of sport-related initiatives to promote public policy benefits. This review should:

- **include a thorough assessment of the potential for further investments of public expenditure to achieve cost-effective contributions to Government objectives; and**
- **cover the full gamut of relevant policies and not just the promotion of elite sport and/or healthy and active lifestyles. (Paragraph 137).**

Government Response

We welcome this recommendation and acknowledge the need for Government investment to achieve cost effective contributions to Government objectives.

We are passionate about sport and the benefits that it, together with physical activity, can bring to the nation as a whole. *Game Plan*, which was published in December 2002, was a thorough analysis of where we were in terms of delivery of Government objectives for sport across the range of our activities.

Game Plan reviewed in detail where and how Government could add best value in terms of sports policies. In general terms the report identified three areas in which Government can maximise its impact: in the area of widening opportunities for participation in sport; using sport as a means to tackle health related problems, in particular obesity and; in improving our success at the elite level, including developing talent.

Significant progress has already been made in terms of meeting these key objectives and increasing participation and creating a more active nation is a challenge for the whole of Government. A number of Departments, including the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, are already working together through the Activity Co-ordination Team to develop a strategy for forging a healthier nation. Every new piece of research provides starker links between inactivity, obesity and disease. A healthier, more active lifestyle not only tackles obesity but also can protect against cancer, heart disease, diabetes and hypertension.

An increase in participation can therefore contribute positively to Government objectives and accrue wider benefits to the nation as a whole.

22. We believe that recently retired sportsmen and -women – with good track records and high public profiles – represent a pool of talent with particular potential for meeting the demands of new ‘role-modelling’ initiatives. (Paragraph 138).

Government Response

We agree with the Committee’s recommendation, and have several programmes in place including the *Drug-Free Sport Ambassadors and Sporting Champions*, which have been described in detail in our response to recommendation no. 17.



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