

Chief Executive responds to DfE School Sport and Activity Action Plan Update

Wednesday 19 July, 2023

Today, the Department for Education published the School Sport and Activity Action Plan Update.

In responding to the update, **Chief Executive of the Youth Sport Trust, Ali Oliver** said:

"The Youth Sport Trust works tirelessly to promote the importance of physical activity and sport in the development of children and young people. We help schools understand the fundamental place of physical activity, play and sport in the education and development of young people, and children get their right to play and be physically active.

There is much we welcome in this Action Plan, not least the clear unequivocal statement, **PE and sport is integral to what makes an excellent school**. The significant commitment to investment, alongside clear expectations and accountability is much needed. However, we believe this should only be seen as the first step - less than half of children and young people meet the Chief Medical Officers guidance of 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity per day; which impacts on their physical and mental health, as well as progress and achievement in the classroom. The Youth Sport Trust stands ready, alongside partners to work with schools and the government over the longer term to increase opportunities for activity throughout the school day, ensure equal access, and develop an understanding children learn better when they are active.

The principles of improving quality, extending access, and embedding equality are all fundamental to transforming PE and school sport. We have partnered across the sport and education sector to call for a number of things which we welcome the inclusion of in the plan:

- We are pleased to see schools continue to be encouraged to deliver a minimum of two hours of PE for all pupils each week and equal access to all sports for boys and girls. This is fundamental to the development of physical literacy and gives every child the opportunity to find a sport they love and start to build a lifelong habit.
- Building on the success of the School Games, and the extension of funding for the School Games Organiser network alongside opening school facilities and the Holiday and Activities Food programme will ensure all children, particularly those from more disadvantaged backgrounds and more marginalized groups will get the chance to play. We are pleased that the School Games Mark will be used to celebrate schools delivering in this area, which will increase transparency and accountability, and encourage the culture change so no child misses out on the basis of their gender.
- Improving the use of the Primary PE and Sport Premium and what makes the biggest difference will ensure its effective use and give greater visibility of its impact.

This Action Plan sets out important policy and investment for the next two years which will be significant in taking much needed urgent action. However, we believe this should only be seen as the first step. What is needed is a long term, more radical and transformational strategy that addresses the scale of the wellbeing issues and inequalities facing schools, and which embraces the voices and influence of young leaders."

Abhishna Yogarajan – Youth Board Member said:

"Physical activity is so important for mental health and wellbeing, I'm really pleased to see the government committing to two hours a week of PE in every school but continue to believe that activity every day should be prioritised. It's important that this is extended to every young person regardless of the area they live in or the school they attend, has the opportunity to play and be active."

Stephen Munday, Chief Executive, The Cam Academy Trust, and Past President, the Chartered

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"We greatly welcome the publication today of the School Sport and Activity Action Plan Update. We are absolutely clear about the fundamental role of physical activity, play, physical education and sport in the proper education of all young people, regardless of their stage of education. These things are crucial in strengthening attendance, pupil achievement and positive behaviour by young people. We very much welcome the funding announced by Government to help to embed this in the curriculum of all schools across the country."

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