School Sport & Activity Sector partnership summit shapes the future of PE, school sport and physical activity.

Monday 2 October, 2023

On 25th September more than 120 people from 70 organisations gathered at Villa Park in Birmingham for the School Sport & Activity Sector partnership (SSASP) summit, to hear from government, industry leaders, young people and subject matter experts in the world of PE, physical activity and sport.

The School Sport & Activity Sector Partnership came together in 2019 in response to the publication of the government's School Sport & Activity Action Plan released earlier that year. The aim of the partnership was to ensure a collective response and a united voice to government on the future of PE, physical activity and sport in schools. From the beginning, the Youth Sport Trust have led the way, bringing over 70 organisations together to take collective action and by using the strength of their united voice, ensuring every young person can benefit from the positive outcomes that participation in PE, school sport and physical activity can bring.

David Marshall from British Gymnastics has been involved in the sector partnership from the beginning. Talking about the importance of the partnership he said:

> "This provides a great, unique opportunity for so many people across the sector to come together to talk about ways to improve school sport and activity. Individually we all do positive work in this area, but the Youth Sport Trust bringing people together with different backgrounds and perspectives is what makes days like this so worthwhile.
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> Meetings like today really help to drive collaboration that continues beyond the day itself, and helps to forge connections that are crucial to driving improvements not only across the sector, but help us to improve our own organisations delivery and supporting young people."

The day itself included:

- Opening address from **Ali Oliver, CEO of Youth Sport Trust** that highlighted some of the recent updates in the sector, including the recent OFSTED PE report that showed hours of PE dropping in secondary schools and the recent government strategy updates. Ali finished by reminding delegates that while Government could set the strategy, it was the people in this room who could make the change happen.
- Staff from the **Department for Culture, Media and Sport** presented alongside colleagues from the **Department of Education** about the recent strategies and updates from the government. Last year's partner summit helped to inform both the **Get Active** strategy and the **School Sport and Activity Action Plan** that were published earlier this year and the civil servants in attendance confirmed that conversations and insights from today will help to inform future policy and direction.
- **Sally Bacon OBE** from the **Cultural Learning Alliance** delivered a keynote speech, sharing the learnings she had taken from the setting up of a shared partnership in the art and culture sector. Sally highlighted the fact that evidence is absolutely key and outlined the four key elements she believed help to build sector support: **Consultation**, **Coalition** is king, **Clarity** is key and **Crafting** the value narrative out of a solid evidence base
- Throughout the afternoon, the delegates joined smaller sessions, starting with the partnership's 'action groups' exploring key themes and key system issues in the context of youth engagement, workforce development and physical literacy. Building on the themes of knowledge sharing and learning, a series of TED Talks were delivered by experts from across the school sport and physical activity sector on topics such as Equal Access in Education, Working with Pupil Referral Units and What are the Learnings from Opening School Facilities.

It was so helpful and instructive to have members of the **National Youth Sport Forum** join in the sessions and breakout discussion to provide that all important youth voice and context throughout the day.

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The day finished with a call to action to challenge everyone in the room to continue driving that united voice, working out how we can build for the future and how we can align collectively to drive change to improve life chances for young people.

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