

GIVING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE A SPORTING CHANCE: A DRAFT STRATEGY FOR SCOTLAND

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

Vision

The draft Strategy sets the following vision: “We want Scotland to be the best place in the world to grow up actively”.

Q1 Is this the right vision for Scotland?

Yes No

We welcome this initiative and Ramblers Scotland is committed to contributing towards the delivery of this strategy, which is important in changing the culture of Scotland to be a place where people are more active at all stages of life. We support the comments of the Scottish Sports Association relating to the need for resources, targets and actions in order to deliver this strategy, and for the need to gain support across all government departments for its delivery.

Q2 Does the draft Strategy provide the right framework to achieve this vision?

Yes No

We support the framework set out in the Strategy but feel there is one major omission, that of the recognition of the role that walking in particular, and outdoor recreation more generally, can play in engaging young people in sport and physical activity. Active travel and swimming are mentioned in the strategy, but we would make the case for walking to be included too.

While we fully recognise the wide range of benefits which participation in sport can bring, we also suggest that some young people do not enjoy the competitive element which sport can foster, or enjoy sports indoors, sports which need co-ordination skills, or sports which have a specific framework of rules. We believe that outdoor recreation can play an important part in offering an alternative and encouraging a large number of young people to be more physically active. This is often overlooked in the PE curriculum within many schools. We believe walking as a PE activity should be developed within schools, particularly to appeal to those young people who may otherwise feel excluded from sport.

We are aware that children and young people who are active at an early age are far more likely to continue to be active in later life, with all the benefits to health which that brings. As a longer term aim, our vision is for Scotland to learn from the situation in Norway where trekking groups for young people have been set up which form a pathway from school sports to family life, and thus help to embed walking into everyday social activities. These groups can be independent of schools, and we already have examples within Ramblers Scotland of our own walking groups in Edinburgh and Glasgow for young people in their 20s-30s which we are aiming to extend into other areas of Scotland. We have produced a short film to showcase the various activities undertaken by Edinburgh Young Walkers

which can be seen at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cg6b1leSzbs>

Walking has the advantage of being free (apart from some investment in footwear and waterproof clothing), and of being an activity which young people can do with their families outside school and without the need for special facilities. It is also possible for young people to continue walking for the rest of their lives, even if they have some years away from the activity due to other interests or pressures of time, whereas many sports will cease to be part of their active lives once they leave school. Finally, Scotland's outdoor environment is well-suited to recreation opportunities, whether walking, mountaineering, canoeing or mountain biking, and we believe that all schools should lay the foundations for young people to explore this environment. All too often, it is only pupils at private schools which take advantage of these opportunities.

Q3 How does/could you/your organisation contribute towards achieving the vision?

As a Scottish Governing Body of Sport we would be happy to contribute towards the achievement of this vision. We have 55 walking groups across Scotland so we are experienced in setting up groups and working with volunteers. With the appropriate funding support, we would welcome the opportunity to engage with schools and young people, and to support them in setting up their own walking programmes and walking groups. We are already working on pilot schemes to foster relationships between Ramblers groups and their local schools, by establishing programmes of family walks within their general group walks programme, and by volunteer Ramblers group members mapping routes around the school estate to encourage more individual walking during lunch times, etc. We have made a short film to highlight the work done at Newbattle High School to embed walking into the curriculum and are in discussions with a range of partners to explore how this idea can be taken forward. The film can be seen at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n6ge_VzEsNg.

Great opportunities

Young people told us that they want opportunities to be involved in sport in a range of ways: opportunities to learn; opportunities to have a go; opportunities to develop; opportunities to take part in events and competitions; opportunities to lead; and opportunities to celebrate sport and attend significant sporting events.

Q4 How can we build on the existing opportunities?

No comments

Q5 Are there other opportunities which should be considered to encourage children and young people to participate in sport?

Yes No

As a first step, walking activities should be included within the PE curriculum. Then, we believe that walking clubs should be set up within each school. These clubs would (a) provide an alternative to competitive sports, (b) provide a way of increasing levels of physical activity in young people and (c) provide a pathway for pupils to continue walking as a leisure activity for the rest of their lives. There is potential for existing walking groups within the community, such as Ramblers groups, to engage with local schools and offer family walks to encourage walking outside the school curriculum.

Great people

We agree with young people that to achieve our vision we need to develop and support leaders and workers who are committed, capable and confident.

Q6 How can we build on what we already do to develop and support leaders and workers to provide high quality experiences for children and young people?

Ramblers Scotland would welcome the opportunity to work with school PE staff to set up walking groups, or to train our own members to become engaged in their local schools and offer walking activities.

Q7 Are there sufficient opportunities for leaders and workers to develop the right skills?

Yes No

No comments

Q8 How can more people be encouraged to become leaders and workers?

No comments

Great places

We agree with young people that as well as great people we need great places to be active. We aim to ensure that children and young people have a more accessible network of places where they can take part in sport and physical activity and that those places better meet their needs and expectations.

Q9 How can we build on the current use of facilities in schools and communities and ensure they are welcoming environments for children and young people?

We welcome the comments in the consultation document regarding sporting facilities on school estates, but would suggest that all Community Sports Hubs and schools estates should consider setting up:

- Walking routes and path networks which integrate the surrounding area with these facilities and can be used by members of the community as well as school pupils, both for walking opportunities and for outdoor learning activities.
- Existing walking groups could be encouraged to use the Community Sports Hubs as a base for their activities, but we also suggest that each school considers setting up its own walking group.
- Our Medal Routes project is currently working to establish 3 short, circular routes of approximately 15, 30 and 60 minutes from a central 'hub'. Community Sports Hubs and schools both provide a useful 'hub' for these routes and should be encouraged to create Medal Routes for pupils and members of the public alike to use for short walks.

Q10 Are there any areas where improvements could be made to encourage children and young people to participate in sport?

Yes No

As outlined above, we believe the role of walking and outdoor recreation has been neglected in the strategy.

Higher profile

The final ingredient to achieving success is ensuring that the talents and success of young people will be celebrated and communicated. We should see, hear and read more about children and young people's sport in their communities and about people who have come from their communities who now compete on the world stage.

Q11 Do you hear or read enough about sport and sporting opportunities for children and young people in your local community?

Yes No

Sporting achievement is well covered in local media but more could be done to promote ordinary walking and cycling by children and young people.

Q12 How can the profile of youth sport be improved locally and nationally?

Sport in Scotland tends to be dominated by football. Much more could be done to promote the full range of sporting opportunities that are available, from seashore to summit, and reduce the emphasis on football.

General

Q13 Please give any additional views you have on any aspect of the draft Strategy.

As part of the legacy of the 2014 Commonwealth Games, we believe that levels of physical activity across the entire population should rise significantly. The best way to do this is by massively increasing levels of walking and cycling, and schools have a big part to play in making sure that young people can travel actively to school, enjoy outdoor learning as part of their regular school day, and take part in sport which also includes outdoor recreation activities.

Q14 We would welcome your views on how sport can be made inclusive for all children and young people.

There are special difficulties for disabled children and young people which require a culture change in many schools so that, instead of seeing such pupils as creating a problem that has to be dealt with, they instead see it as an opportunity and challenge to educate ALL pupils on how to integrate disabled pupils into the normal PE regime and other activities (eg Duke of Edinburgh, Outward Bound, scouts and guides etc).

Q15 We would also welcome your views regarding the impact that the draft Strategy may have on business or the third sector.

A massive increase in walking and cycling will bring significant economic benefit to many rural communities through increased expenditure in shops, cafes, pubs and accommodation providers. Also, a big programme of new path and track construction is needed in most parts of Scotland to support walking, cycling, etc. Such a construction programme will bring major employment opportunities, spread through all communities across the length and breadth of Scotland.