

#GETYOURKITON

A Guide to Grassroots Sport and Recreation



SPORT+
RECREATION
ALLIANCE

Foreword

Grassroots sport and recreation plays a huge role in the lives of millions of people across the length and breadth of the UK. From school sport and local clubs through to community schemes, grassroots sport and recreation provides a diverse mix of opportunities for people of all backgrounds and abilities and, for a small few, provides the foundation for a career at the elite level.

Grassroots sport and recreation matters for many reasons. Most obviously, it provides the means for millions of people up and down the country to enjoy the simple pleasure of taking part for its own sake. But it also provides much more than that. Grassroots sport and recreation is a means of delivering a much wider social impact: it helps people to lead healthier lives, to develop new skills for employment and to engage with their local communities.

As co-chairs of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Sport, we are passionate about taking part in sport and recreation and are passionate advocates for its power to change lives and communities. We welcome the Government's new strategy *Sporting Future* which recognises this enormous social value and the role sport and recreation can play in delivering wider Government objectives. The key now is to deliver on the commitments made in the strategy.

This is where you come in as a parliamentarian. *Get Your Kit On – A Guide to Grassroots Sport* is a means to help you to become a champion for grassroots sport and recreation and to use your influence, both in Parliament and in your local community, to help ensure an environment in which it can thrive. We hope you find it of use and will be encouraged to join in future All Party Parliamentary Group activities.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Justin" with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

Justin Tomlinson MP
Co-Chair, All Party Parliamentary
Group for Sport

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tanni Grey-Thompson" in a cursive style.

Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson
Co-Chair, All Party Parliamentary
Group for Sport

Contents

1. [What is this guide and who is it for?](#)
2. [Section 1: Understanding the sport and recreation landscape](#)
3. [Section 2: School provision](#)
4. [Section 3: Grassroots clubs](#)
5. [Section 4: Outdoor recreation](#)
6. [Section 5: The social value of grassroots sport and recreation](#)
7. [Section 6: What does success look like? Case studies](#)
8. [Your role as a parliamentarian](#)
9. [Further information and contacts](#)

What is this guide and who is it for?

Become a grassroots champion

This guide is designed to help you, as a parliamentarian, navigate the landscape and to arm you with the key information, contacts and resources to become a champion for grassroots sport in your local community.

You can champion grassroots sport and recreation in a variety of ways, both in Parliament – for example by tabling questions, participating in debates and running APPGs – but also at community level by ‘getting your kit on’ and engaging with your local clubs and grassroots organisations. You can support them by promoting their activities, providing advice and support and linking them to sources of funding and expertise.

Using the guide

The guide comprises six sections. Section 1 provides a broad overview of the current sport and recreation landscape while Sections 2-5 cover specific areas of grassroots sport and recreation in more detail. Section 6 shows how you can put this guide into practice, with case studies demonstrating how grassroots sport and recreation can be supported and used to deliver real benefits in your local community.

To keep things simple, sections 2-5 of this guide are set out in the same straightforward format:

- **Setting the scene** – Background information including details of key legislation, organisations and initiatives.
- **Key issues** – A summary of the main issues facing grassroots sport and recreation organisations identifying where further action is required.
- **What can I do to help?** – Actions you can take as a parliamentarian to help support grassroots sport and recreation in your local area.
- **Additional resources** – Useful links to further information and resources to help you.

In addition to this guide, more support and information is available by contacting the Sport and Recreation Alliance: policy@sportandrecreation.org.uk.

Section 1: Understanding the sport and recreation landscape

Sporting Future: A new strategic direction

The Government's new strategy for sport and physical activity – [Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation](#) – establishes the broad sports policy framework for the coming years and the roles to be played by key sector partners. These sector organisations are described in more detail below.

Sporting Future identifies five key outcomes where the Government believes grassroots sport and recreation can make a positive contribution and which will guide future funding decisions:

- Physical health
- Mental health
- Individual development
- Social and community development
- Economic development

Sporting Future also puts a particular emphasis on engaging those that are currently inactive as well as demographic groups that are significantly under-represented in current participation figures, notably black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) groups, women and those with a disability.

Importantly, *Sporting Future* is a cross-departmental strategy reflecting the Government's recognition of the important role that grassroots sport and recreation plays in delivering a wide range of policy objectives. In addition to *Sporting Future*, a number of other government departments and their related strategies therefore have an important role to play.

Local authorities

Local authorities have a central role to play when it comes to the provision of community sport and recreation. Local authorities are the biggest public sector investor in sport and physical activity, [spending over £1 billion per year](#), excluding capital spend. From local parks to leisure centres, they provide opportunities for local communities to be active and to participate in grassroots sport and recreation of all kinds.

In addition, [local authorities are responsible for the health outcomes for their local populations](#) following reforms to the public health framework in April 2013. Investing in grassroots sport and recreation is therefore an important means of delivering improved public health at a local level.

However, there currently isn't a statutory requirement on local authorities to provide sport and recreation and, in the current constrained financial environment, it remains a challenge for local authorities to support sports programmes, clubs and community facilities.

Home Sports Councils

In broad terms, the home nations' four Sports Councils – [Sport England](#), [Sport Scotland](#), [Sport Wales](#) and [Sport NI](#) – are responsible for strategic funding of grassroots sport and recreation in their respective countries. [UK Sport](#) is the UK-wide Sports Council responsible for strategic investment in elite-level Olympic and Paralympic Sport.

Sport England launched its new strategy [Towards an Active Nation](#) in May 2016, with the aim of targeting investment in grassroots sport to deliver against the five outcomes set out in *Sporting Future*. As well as continuing to support people who already take part in sport, the strategy places a greater emphasis on funding initiatives aimed at the inactive and groups that are typically less active such as women, disabled

people and those from BAME and lower socio-economic backgrounds. Sport England is also now responsible for promoting participation amongst children (from 5 years old) outside of school.

Likewise, the other home nations' Sports Councils have their own strategic plans for funding grassroots sport and recreation in their respective countries which include similar objectives.

Sport Wales' [A Vision for Sport in Wales](#) identifies five key priorities for the development of sport in Wales including the development of 'sporting communities' that enable children and young people the opportunity to participate in at least five hours of high quality sport each week.

sportscotland's [Raising the Bar](#) focusses on two key outcomes – participation and progression. The first of these is about ensuring resources are invested in the most effective way to get more people playing sport in schools and clubs whilst the second is about ensuring talented athletes have a clear pathway from the grassroots through to elite representation.

Sport NI and the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL)'s [Sport Matters](#) is a ten-year strategy running from 2009-2019 that establishes a range of targets in three key areas: driving up participation at grassroots level, improving NI's elite performance and developing high-quality places for people to participate in and watch sport.

National governing bodies

National governing bodies of sport (NGBs) have responsibility for governing and managing their specific sport. NGBs tend to be independent, self-appointed organisations that govern through the common consent of their members. Sport England and the other Home Sports Councils operate a recognition process that enables NGBs to become recognised as the sole governing body for their sport. NGBs typically oversee their sport or activity, promote participation and set the rules and conditions under which competitions take place. They are based around the country and vary in size, ranging from the larger NGBs that oversee established sports with significant grassroots and professional structures to smaller, often volunteer-led NGBs that promote emerging or developing sports.

Almost all NGBs have a significant and far-reaching grassroots club network that provides the bedrock of grassroots sport and recreation across the country. Many, like the [Football Association \(FA\)](#), the [England and Wales Cricket Board \(ECB\)](#) and the [Rugby Football Union \(RFU\)](#), have regional and county structures that support clubs and competitions in local areas.

Regional and local partnerships

There are [45 County Sports Partnerships \(CSPs\)](#) covering England and are brought together under the [CSP Network](#). CSPs are networks of local agencies committed to working together to increase the number of people taking part in sport and physical activity. They also support the delivery of sport and activity programmes in collaboration with partners designed to meet local need.

Sporting Future committed Government to commissioning an independent review of the role of CSPs. The aim of the review was to establish the role CSPs should play at a local level to deliver the strategic outcomes identified by Government and to identify areas where the efficiency and effectiveness of CSPs could be improved. The [review conclusions](#) were submitted to the Minister for Sport in August 2016. The review confirms that CSPs and the CSP Network play a key role in helping to deliver grassroots sport and recreation and makes a number of recommendations designed to maximise their future effectiveness. An important theme of the review is that CSPs should collaborate with a wide range of partner organisations, including local authorities, [Local Enterprise Partnerships](#) and bodies in the health and private sectors, to meet local needs.

In Scotland the picture is slightly different. sportscotland supports [Community Sports Hubs](#) which provide a focal point for local clubs and sports organisations. The hubs also provide information, support and advice to assist local people to engage in more active and healthier lifestyles. In addition to Community Sports Hubs, Local Sports Councils are responsible for supporting grassroots clubs in particular regions. For more information visit the [Scottish Association of Local Sports Council website](#).

In Wales, [Sport Wales operates four regional offices](#) which work closely with local authority partners, clubs and associations to meet local needs.

In Northern Ireland, [Sport NI](#) works in partnership with governing bodies, district councils and clubs at a local level.

School sports organisations

The [Association for Physical Education](#) (afPE) is the representative organisation for people and organisations delivering or supporting the delivery of physical education in schools and the wider community. It aims to promote and maintain high standards and safe practice in all aspects and at all levels of physical education, as well as influencing developments in physical education at national and local levels.

The [Youth Sports Trust](#) (YST) is a national charity that aims to maximise children's wellbeing, build their leadership and life skills, and help them achieve beyond the classroom by developing inclusive physical literacy and character. YST currently delivers the School Games.

Equality and diversity organisations

Equality and diversity is central to both Government's and Sport England's strategies. Increasing diversity in sports participation, volunteering and the workforce are key priorities, as well as making sports facilities and stadia more accessible.

There are several national organisations that lead on specific issues including the [English Federation of Disability Sport \(EFDS\)](#), [Sporting Equals](#) – which works to increase the involvement of BAME participants in sport – and [Pride Sports](#) which leads on improving Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) access to sport.

These national bodies are also supplemented by local organisations that work to deliver inclusive opportunities so that everyone has the chance to benefit from being active.

The Sport and Recreation Alliance

[The Sport and Recreation Alliance](#) is the umbrella organisation for the governing and representative bodies of sport and recreation in the UK and represents approximately 320 members – organisations like the RFU, UK Athletics, the Ramblers, British Rowing, the Angling Trust, and the Exercise, Movement and Dance Partnership.

Our role, like every trade association, is to speak up on our members' behalf, represent their views in Parliament and to provide them with services which help them to deliver sport and recreation, growing participation and making the sector more sustainable. We provide the secretariat to the APPG for Sport and are a [key point of contact for parliamentarians](#) seeking advice and guidance on the sport and recreation sector.

Section 2: School provision

Setting the scene

School sport and physical education (PE) allows children and young people to learn basic physical literacy and helps form the basis of life-long active habits. In the context of a rising childhood obesity crisis, it is therefore vital that PE is encouraged as part of a [balanced curriculum](#) but also that it is recognised as a means of improving broader educational attainment and equipping young people with important life skills.

Primary PE & Sport Premium

In 2013 the Government introduced additional funding to improve provision of PE and sport in primary schools in England in the shape of the [Primary PE & Sport Premium](#). This funding has since been committed until 2020. The PE & Sport Premium is ring-fenced but individual schools have the freedom to choose how they do this. Schools can use the money to hire specialist coaches to work with teachers, upskill staff and run after-school clubs.

In the [2016 Budget](#) Government pledged to double funding for the PE & Sport Premium from 2017 using funds from the introduction of a sugary drinks levy and this has now been confirmed in the new [Childhood Obesity Plan](#). In addition, Government pledged to provide a further £285m to enable 25% of schools to extend the school day which will enable schools to deliver additional sport and physical activity.

PE provision in primary and secondary schools is assessed by Ofsted as part of the broader [schools inspection framework](#). In addition, primary schools are held to account over [how they spend the PE & Sport Premium](#).

School Games

In terms of competitive sport, the [School Games](#) gives primary and secondary school pupils the opportunity to compete at both school and regional level, with the most talented competing at a national level. The School Games is open to all and encourages young people to participate in competitive sport across all levels of ability and experience. Disability sports are included at every level of the competition.

Sporting Future committed Government to a review of the School Games and how to maximise its impact on the key strategic outcomes established in both the Government's and Sport England's new strategies. Sport England published an [executive summary](#) of the findings in August 2016 which contains a number of recommendations to develop the School Games programme further.

School facilities

School sports facilities, including those in the independent sector, are often some of the best available. As such, it is important that they are open to the whole community outside of school hours for local people to use. Where this works well, the benefits to both local people and the school are enormous: local people are able to access high-quality facilities and the school can bring in vital additional income.

However, there remain many school sports facilities – including independent school facilities – that are not open to the local community. It is vital that these assets are, where possible, made accessible. Sport England has developed a [toolkit](#) to assist schools in how to go about doing this.

Outdoor learning

Evidence shows the positive impact that quality outdoor learning experiences can make to children and young people's personal and social development. Outdoor learning is identified in the physical education curriculum but many other subjects can be taught outdoors including science, maths and geography.

School Sports Partnerships

School Sports Partnerships (SSPs) are networks established to bring together local schools to increase the quality and quantity of PE and sports opportunities for young people. Prior to 2011, each local area in England and Wales had a SSP.

Ring-fenced central Government funding for SSPs was withdrawn in 2011 as part of a national policy decision but schools in a number of areas have voluntarily retained the SSP structure.

Key issues

- Childhood obesity and a range of associated health conditions are significant and increasing problems. In the UK, over a fifth of children aged 4-5 are already overweight or obese. School sport can play a key part in addressing this challenge but it requires concerted action at both national and local level to ensure physical activity is at the heart of every local school's offer.
- Too often children are not receiving high quality PE, especially in the early years. In order for this to change, there needs to be more investment in teacher training, particularly Initial Teacher Training for primary school teachers, to ensure quality activity from the start of the education journey.
- The Primary PE and Sport Premium is an important source of additional funding to support primary schools but it needs to be spent effectively to ensure the biggest impact. Primary schools need further guidance on the options available to them and support to embed good practice.
- School sports facilities are still under-utilised outside of school hours. Wherever possible, existing school facilities – including playing fields – should be protected and made available for local community use. There are good examples of where this is working.
- Learning outdoors provides children and young people with the opportunity to be physically active across the school curriculum (in addition to PE and competitive sport) and has been shown to improve academic attainment. Outdoor learning should be promoted in all education settings and children should have the opportunity to enjoy regular residential outdoors experiences.

What can I do to help?

As a parliamentarian you can:

- Raise the profile of school sport at a national and local level, in particular highlighting its role in tackling childhood obesity and raising educational attainment.
- Hold relevant Government departments to account for the commitments to school sport set out in *Sporting Future* and call for increased investment in teacher training.
- Support and encourage your local schools to offer a broad range of sport and recreation activities including the provision of out-of-hours clubs and learning outdoors.
- Highlight good practice and signpost local school leaders to examples of how to spend the Primary PE & Sport Premium.
- Encourage schools to open up their facilities to the local community and highlighting opportunities for local clubs to use them.
- Campaign to protect or re-use existing school sports facilities, including playing fields, where schools close or are re-configured.
- Encourage your local schools to participate in the School Games.

Additional resources

Legislation

[Academies Act 2010](#)

[Education Act 2002](#)

Documentation and guidance

- [Childhood Obesity: A Plan for Action](#)
- Sport England '[Use Our School](#)' resources
- Sport England '[Designing for PE and Sport](#)'
- Ofsted [report](#) on effective use of PE and sport premium for primary schools
- DfE [guidance](#) on disposal or change of use of playing field and school land
- UCL Institute of Education [study into sport and primary school academic performance](#)
- DfE [report](#) into evidence on physical education and sport in schools
- Sport and Recreation Alliance [Concussion Guidelines](#) for education settings
- DfE [advice on the disposal and change of use of playing fields and school land](#)

Organisations

School Games: www.yourschoolgames.com

Youth Sport Trust (YST): www.youthsporttrust.org

Association for Physical Education (afPE): www.afpe.org.uk

Section 3: Grassroots clubs

Setting the scene

There are around 150,000 grassroots sports clubs across the country. These clubs are the lifeblood of sport and recreation. They help people maintain healthy, active lifestyles and are often the launch pad for future elite success. Not only that, they serve as invaluable social hubs within their communities, bringing people together and providing opportunities to participate and volunteer in sport and recreation.

Many grassroots clubs are doing brilliant work in tough circumstances and it is vital that both national and local policies – including everything from tax and giving rules to music and alcohol licensing requirements – help them to thrive.

Funding

Funding is invariably a key issue for grassroots clubs. Many operate with limited resources with most income generated from member subscriptions and supplementary income including from club bars. [Sport and Recreation Alliance research](#) indicates only around a half of clubs make a small surplus and this is almost always reinvested into the club. In the current, challenging economic climate it is more important than ever that clubs can access investment easily, maximise their income and become more efficient.

There are a number of different funding streams available for grassroots sports clubs and the biggest hurdle is often simply knowing which one is most appropriate for the circumstances.

Most national governing bodies of sport (NGBs) operate schemes offering grants to their affiliated clubs, either directly or through their associated charitable foundations. Similarly, many governing bodies have commercial arrangements through which affiliated clubs can access free or discounted kit and equipment and take advantage of specific deals, for example on insurance.

In addition, Sport England and the other Home Sports Councils run a number of different funding programmes which are open to a wide range of organisations including sports clubs and voluntary or community organisations.

Community Amateur Sports Clubs

The [Community Amateur Sports Clubs \(CASC\)](#) scheme was established in 2002 to support grassroots sports clubs through the tax system. HMRC is responsible for the CASC scheme and for approving CASC registrations. To qualify for CASC status, a club must be:

- Open to the whole community.
- Organised on an amateur basis and promote participation in an eligible sport.
- Non-profit making, re-investing any surplus back into the club.

Following recent changes to the scheme rules, CASCs must now meet a number of additional requirements on trading income, member fees and participation. The key benefits of CASC status include:

- 80% mandatory business rate relief.
- Gift Aid on qualifying donations made by individuals and companies.
- Exemption from Corporation Tax on profits from trading income if less than £50,000 per annum.
- Exemption from Corporation Tax on profits from property income if less than £30,000 per annum.

Charitable sports clubs

Separate to the CASC scheme, many sports clubs are registered charities, a status which provides similar benefits to the CASC scheme in terms of tax and giving.

Charitable status is different to CASC status. Charities are regulated by the [Charities Commission](#) and clubs seeking charitable status must meet a number of criteria in order to become a registered charity.

Tax and charitable giving

There is a wide range of other tax and giving arrangements that grassroots clubs can benefit from but it is important that clubs are aware of and comply with the relevant rules.

In particular, specific rules apply to sports clubs in the following areas depending on their particular circumstances:

- VAT on [sporting supplies](#) and the [construction of new facilities](#). In particular the VAT treatment of new facilities – such as a clubhouse – differs depending upon the precise status of a club and the way in which the building will be used.
- [Charitable giving to sports clubs](#). Clubs can reclaim Gift Aid on donations (25p on every £1 donated) provided they are registered charities or CASCs but certain rules apply.
- [Business rates](#). CASCs are entitled to mandatory 80% relief and some local authorities offer [discretionary rate relief](#) for sports clubs (subject to certain qualifying criteria). In addition, the Valuation Office Agency has specific [guidance on rating valuations for sports clubs](#) which recognises that clubs' ability to pay must be taken into account in any valuation.

Alcohol and music licensing

Grassroots sports clubs and community organisations very often have bars and run events to help raise much-needed funds to support activities and improve club facilities. Where clubs sell alcohol or play music, they need to ensure they have appropriate licenses to do so.

Alcohol licenses are issued by a licensing authority, in most cases the relevant local council. Music licenses are administered by [PRS for Music](#) and [PPL](#) who issue licenses and collect fees on behalf of copyright owners, record companies and performers. In most cases a club will require a licence from both PRS for Music and PPL but depending on the circumstances a club can apply for a single, joint licence through PPL.

However, acquiring licenses can be an expensive and time-consuming process. For many grassroots clubs operating on limited income, steep increases in licensing costs can sometimes be unaffordable.

Volunteers

Sport is the biggest single volunteering sector with approximately 3.2 million people volunteering regularly. In total, sport volunteering is [estimated](#) to be worth £53 billion to the economy. Volunteers not only provide an invaluable resource but they also benefit from taking part. Volunteering can improve people's wellbeing, get them active and combat social isolation. It can also help individuals gain valuable skills and act as a route into employment.

For many clubs it is a challenge to recruit and retain dedicated volunteers to support club activities. According to [Sport and Recreation Alliance research](#), the typical sports club relies on an average of 24 volunteers to function – every volunteer therefore makes a vital contribution to grassroots community sport and recreation clubs up and down the country.

Safeguarding

Grassroots sport and recreation clubs provide opportunities for millions of young people and adults alike but it is important that key groups – in particular children and adults at risk – are able to participate in a safe and secure environment. Safeguarding is therefore vital for any grassroots sport or recreation club.

Safeguarding refers to the process of protecting children and adults to provide safe and effective care. This includes all procedures designed to prevent harm.

Information about safeguarding children is available from the [Child Protection in Sport Unit \(CPSU\)](#) which is a partnership between the [NSPCC](#), [Sport England](#), [Sport Northern Ireland](#) and [Sport Wales](#). There is a similar partnership in Scotland between [Children 1st](#) and [sportscotland](#).

The Sport and Recreation Alliance is also part of the Sports Safeguarding Partnership, which brings together key stakeholders to set the strategic approach to safeguarding in the sector. The CPSU and Sport England are also members of this partnership and this really helps to share information and good practice.

Safeguarding adults is as important as safeguarding children. Adults at risk are those who have health or social care needs and who are unable to safeguard themselves as a result. The Alliance is part of the [Safeguarding Adults in Sport](#) project which provides support to a number of NGBs, sports organisations and clubs to develop good practice in safeguarding adults at risk.

Community assets

Sports facilities, playing fields and green spaces ensure clubs have the courts, spaces and pitches they need to help local communities to lead active, healthy lifestyles. Keeping these assets available for grassroots sport and recreation is therefore key. Here are several ways community assets can be safeguarded:

- Community [asset transfer](#) involves the transfer in ownership or management of a public facility to another organisation to run for the benefit of the community. In certain circumstances this mechanism can be used to enable grassroots clubs or community organisations to take on the management of facilities for local benefit.
- The [Right to Bid](#) scheme allows communities to nominate land and facilities that play a valuable role in delivering sport and recreation. Clubs which use facilities not owned by a local authority have the ability under the scheme to nominate the facility to give them extra time to secure funding in the event that the facility is up for sale.
- Playing fields and other public recreational spaces can be protected. [Fields in Trust](#) is a UK charity that works to safeguard recreational spaces and campaign for better statutory protection for all kinds of outdoor spaces. Fields in Trust currently helps to safeguard over 2,600 open spaces for long term sport and recreation use.

Key issues

- Grassroots clubs very often do not make a surplus and, if they do, it is re-invested into the club. Clubs need support to help them become more financially sustainable, by bidding for investment funding, growing income (e.g. from commercial activity and charitable giving) and becoming more efficient.
- Clubs do not always have expert knowledge of the tax system and need help and support to understand the rules. Taking expert advice is particularly important where a club is planning to undertake a major project such as building a new clubhouse as the VAT rules are very specific and applying them incorrectly can have major financial consequences.

- Business rates and other costs associated with music and alcohol licensing can often be among a club's biggest items of expenditure. It is therefore vital that clubs are assessed on a fair basis that takes account of affordability and ability to pay.
- Volunteers are the lifeblood of grassroots clubs but it can be difficult for clubs to recruit and retain people with the right range of skills. Similarly, the benefits of volunteering are not always made clear to prospective volunteers. Clubs therefore need support to find the right people locally and provide prospective volunteers with a clear route into roles that suit their particular circumstances.
- Grassroots clubs should provide a safe environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults. At a basic level clubs must have appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures in place but embedding good practice takes time and support as well as committed volunteers.
- Clubs and community organisations are reliant upon access to local facilities, pitches and open spaces to deliver sport and recreation. However, these facilities need to be safeguarded and, where necessary, clubs need support and advice on how to use mechanisms like community asset transfer and Right to Bid to take ownership of these assets.

What can I do to help?

As a parliamentarian you can:

- Help your local clubs access funding opportunities provided by national governing bodies (NGBs), Home Sports Councils and other organisations.
- Signpost your local clubs to resources to help them on a range of issues including the Community Amateur Sports Club (CASC) scheme, business rates, VAT, charitable giving and licensing.
- Lobby Government to ease the regulatory burden on grassroots clubs through the simplification of relevant tax and giving rules and the removal of unnecessary red tape.
- Encourage local authorities in your area to offer discretionary rate relief to your local sports clubs.
- Highlight the role played by sports volunteers in your local community and the value to volunteers in terms of building confidence, improving skills and finding routes into employment.
- Encourage local clubs to access the advice and support provided by their national governing body (NGB) on safeguarding to ensure young people and vulnerable adults can participate in a safe and secure environment.
- Support local clubs and community groups to protect local sport and recreation facilities and signpost them to advice on how to take on the ownership and operation of community assets.

Additional resources

Legislation

[Community Amateur Sports Clubs Regulations 2015](#)

[Protection of Freedoms Act 2012](#)

[Localism Act 2011](#)

Documentation and guidance

- Sport England [information on funding](#)
- Sport England's [Club Matters](#) resource for sports clubs
- Sport England [information on National Governing Bodies](#)
- HMRC [guidance on Community Amateur Sports Clubs](#)
- Advice on [claiming Gift Aid as a charity or CASC](#)
- Valuation Office Agency [guidance on rating valuations for sports clubs \(business rates\)](#)
- VAT rules on [sporting supplies](#) and [buildings](#)
- Home Office [guidance on alcohol licensing](#)

- PPL information on the [joint music licence for amateur sports clubs](#)
- Locality information on [Community Asset Transfer](#)
- Sport England's [Asset Transfer Toolkit](#)
- DCLG [information to Right to Bid](#)
- My Community Rights [Right to Bid toolkit](#)
- DCLG [plain English guide to the Localism Act 2011](#)

Organisations

CASCinfo: www.cascinfo.co.uk

Charity Commission: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission

Valuation Office Agency: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/valuation-office-agency

Child Protection in Sport Unit (CSPU): www.thecpsu.org.uk

Fields in Trust: www.fieldsintrust.org

PRS for Music: www.prsformusic.com

PPL: www.ppluk.com

Section 4: Outdoor recreation

Setting the scene

Outdoor recreation is the UK's favourite pastime. From walking, climbing and cycling through to horse riding and kayaking, being active outdoors is a passion for millions of people across the country. Outdoor education is also a crucial part of children's learning, helping to build their understanding of the natural environment.

The UK has some of the most visited national parks that support significant economic activity locally and regionally. The Sport and Recreation Alliance's [Reconomics](#) report found that in 2012/13, over 42 million adults in England visited the natural environment generating a visitor spend of £27 billion. Walking tourism alone supports almost a quarter of a million jobs. This demonstrates that when people get active outdoors it supports local jobs and businesses.

In addition to outdoor recreation, active travel involving cycling and walking form key elements of a joined-up approach to maximising the benefits of being active outdoors.

Access

Under the [Countryside and Rights of Way Act](#), walkers have the right to roam across parts of the countryside (most mountain, moor, heath, down and common land) in England and Wales. Cyclists, equestrian activities and motorists also have rights of access on some of this land but it is more limited than for walkers.

In Scotland specifically there is a general right of responsible access for outdoor recreation for non-motorised users on all land and water. This is enshrined in the [Scottish Outdoor Access Code](#).

Forests and woodland

Forests and woodland are valuable facilities for a great variety of sport and recreational activities.

The [Forestry Commission](#) is the single largest landowner providing sport and recreation opportunities in the country through the management of the public forest estate.

Coast and waterways

The [Marine and Coastal Act 2009](#) creates a right of access on foot to the beach, cliff and inland route, where appropriate.

The legislation allows flexibility for current land use and for the first time, where existing paths erode into the sea, a replacement route can be quickly put in place – securing people's right to walk and climb the coast forever.

The first stretch of the England Coast Path opened in Weymouth in July 2012 and since then seven additional sections have opened. A further 60 sections of path have either been approved or are scheduled for completion in the next few years with a Government target to have the Path completed by 2020. Similar coastal paths exist in [Scotland](#), [Wales](#) and [Northern Ireland](#).

Over 90% of the population live within two miles of a waterway, yet access provision is patchy. In England and Wales, there is no automatic right to launch a boat, canoe or other vessel, or to access by foot the riverbanks of unregulated rivers. There are over 41,000 miles of rivers with no general access, meaning only 4% of linear rivers in England and Wales can be accessed for informal recreation.

The situation is different in all other European countries – as well as Scotland and Northern Ireland – where access is more liberal.

The [Canal and River Trust](#) was set up to manage Britain's waterways for public benefit and enjoyment – including public access on foot – in recognition of the fact that walkers are amongst the largest groups of people to use canals and rivers.

Cycling and walking

The Government is currently considering responses to draft plans for a [new cycling and walking strategy](#). The Government's vision is that cycling, alongside walking, will become the natural choice for shorter journeys, regardless of age, gender, fitness or socioeconomic background - beginning with encouraging children to walk or cycle to school where possible.

Key issues

- Responsibility for outdoor recreation is split across different departments, notably the [Department for Culture, Media and Sport](#) (DCMS), the [Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs](#) (DEFRA) and the [Department of Health](#) (DH) and similarly, cycling and walking are the responsibility of [Department for Transport](#) (DfT). What's needed is a strategic, cross-departmental approach to support the outdoor economy, cycling and walking to deliver on the Government's objectives in *Sporting Future* and Public Health England's aim to get Everybody Active, Every Day.
- Many people already enjoy being active outdoors but more can be done to maximise the benefits of outdoor recreation to individuals and communities across rural and urban areas. This includes ensuring people know what opportunities exist and that there is sustainable public transport infrastructure that provides people with easy access.
- The outdoor economy is worth £27 billion and outdoor recreation makes a significant contribution to local and regional economies in terms of jobs and visitor spend. This contribution needs to be protected and built upon in partnership with local communities.
- Funding for cycling in England is currently around £5 per person each year, some way below other European countries. Government should provide support for active travel wherever possible and ensure funding for cycling and walking delivers maximum value.

What can I do to help?

As a parliamentarian you can:

- Raise the profile of the outdoor economy at national and local level, highlighting the value it brings in terms of jobs and tourism spend.
- Support organisations and businesses in your local area that are part of the outdoor economy - including National Park operators, activity providers, local retailers and the hospitality industry - to work together to better promote and deliver accessible outdoor recreation activities.
- Highlight examples of good practice in terms of access to the outdoors and encourage Government to look at ways to improve access for all users across the UK.
- Hold Government to account on its target to complete the England Coast Path by 2020 as well as lobby for investment in associated outdoor recreation that maximises the benefits to local communities.
- Encourage Government to strengthen national planning guidance to better protect our best and irreplaceable landscapes, as well as support local authorities to consult with their communities to protect existing outdoor spaces and create new, inclusive places for children and families.
- Ask Government to invest in sustainable public transport infrastructure, working with communities to identify and meet local needs
- Push the Government to commit more funding to make cycling and walking the modes of choice for all short journeys, including through investment in dedicated active travel infrastructure.

- Signpost local people and businesses to information and support on how to develop more active travel habits.

Additional resources

Legislation

[Marine and Coastal Act 2009](#)

[Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000](#)

Documentation and guidance

- Sport and Recreation Alliance [Reconomics](#) report
- Forestry Commission [interactive access map of woodland](#)
- [Woodland Trust access to woods outside of public ownership](#)
- Natural England's [coastal access project](#)
- National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) [guideline](#) for walking and cycling for travel or recreational purposes.

Organisations

Canal and River Trust: www.canalrivertrust.org.uk

Forestry Commission: www.forestry.gov.uk

Natural England: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england

Sustrans: www.sustrans.org.uk

Woodland Trust: www.woodlandtrust.org.uk

Outdoor Industries Association: www.outdoorindustriesassociation.co.uk

British Cycling: www.britishcycling.org.uk

Climb Britain: www.thebmc.co.uk

The Ramblers: www.ramblers.org.uk

Section 5: Public health and social value

Setting the scene

Grassroots sport and recreation delivers a wide range of benefits, from improved physical and mental wellbeing to broader social benefits in terms of reduced crime and better social integration.

The case for championing grassroots sport and recreation is compelling:

- Physical inactivity is the fourth largest cause of disease and disability in the UK – 33% of men and 45% of women are not active enough for good health.
- Physical inactivity costs the UK an estimated £7.4 billion a year.
- Exercise can be as effective as anti-depressants for those with mild clinical depression.
- The financial costs of youth offending are significant. It is estimated that each young offender costs the country £47 thousand per year and targeted investment in sport projects can cut reoffending rates dramatically and save public money.

In this context it is essential to encourage an environment in which grassroots sport and recreation is seen as a key part of the solution to wider health and social problems. Sport and recreation provides proven, cost-effective and inclusive activities so it is crucial that the sector has the right support to help it to meet these challenges.

Physical health

Improving the nation's health and tackling inactivity are priorities for Government and decision makers in public health, including health professionals at a local level. Participating in grassroots sport and recreation can assist those who already suffer from health problems as well as prevent ill-health, saving vital resources in the process.

The sport and recreation sector is well-placed to contribute but more can be done to fulfil its potential to help individuals and communities live happy, healthy lives.

Linking grassroots sport and public health is key. The Sport and Recreation Alliance's joint report with ukactive – [Physical activity and health](#) – explains how the sport, recreation and physical activity sector can play a central role in improving physical and mental health outcomes and sets out what is needed to ensure national and local frameworks encourage joined-up working.

Sport England has made tackling inactivity one of its key priorities and is committed to investing at least 25% of its total funding over the next four years to address it.

Mental health

Every year, one-in-four people will experience a mental health problem. Yet it is still something the majority of us are loathe to talk about or address. This is something that has to change. The sport and recreation sector has the power to help tackle mental ill health and the stigma that surrounds it.

The Sport and Recreation Alliance, alongside the Professional Players Federation and the mental health charity Mind, created the [Mental Health Charter for Sport and Recreation](#) to do just that. The Charter commits signatories to take positive steps to address and encourage people to be open about mental health issues. The Charter was launched in 2015 and now has over 250 signatories.

Mind also has a vast wealth of resources and supports local delivery through its [Get Set to Go](#) campaign, aimed at helping people engage with sport and physical activity in order to improve their mental health.

Social value

Grassroots sport and recreation provides social value in terms of its indirect benefits: boosting productivity, supporting individual and community development as well as reducing the burden of crime on local communities. The Sport and Recreation Alliance's report – [Uncovering the Social Value of Sport](#) – shows just how much sport can give back to individuals and the communities they live in.

Importantly, *Sporting Future* places a heavy emphasis on the wider social value of sport with Government now committed to including the individual and community benefits of sport when measuring performance against its strategic objectives.

Youth crime and anti-social behaviour

Youth crime and anti-social behaviour are complex social issues but the risk factors are well-established. The cost is equally clear– offending by young people is estimated to cost the economy between £8.5 and £11 billion per year.

Grassroots sport and recreation can help to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour by acting as a diversion, supporting behaviour change, breaking down barriers and teaching new skills. Many Sport and Recreation Alliance members such as [England Boxing](#) and [StreetGames](#) already do great work supporting the reduction of offending and reoffending through their programmes.

Key issues

- The physical health benefits of sport and recreation are well understood but the sport and health sectors still need to be better joined-up to maximise the impact. Too often health commissioners do not consider utilising sport and recreation as part of their strategies to tackle inactivity.
- Mental health still does not have parity with physical health in terms of profile and funding. Sport can have a huge positive impact but mental health needs to be given higher priority and sport needs to be recognised as a key mechanism for breaking down stigma around mental health issues.
- Although sport is recognised in *Sporting Future* as a tool to deliver wider social value, it is not yet embedded in decision-making at national and local level. More needs to be done to deliver on the Government's strategy to ensure sport is seen as the 'go-to' solution for delivering social good.

What can I do to help?

As a parliamentarian you can:

- Lobby Government to invest more in sport and recreation to prevent mental ill-health and to help people dealing with existing mental health problems.
- Encourage local grassroots sports organisations to sign up to the Mental Health Charter for Sport and Recreation and to develop action plans to tackle stigma and address mental health amongst participants, volunteers and employees.
- Become a Mental Health Charter Champion and take part in an activity session run by a Mental Health Charter signatory to see first-hand the difference it makes and help highlight their work within the local community.
- Promote the NICE guidelines for physical activity exercise referral schemes with health practitioners, from practice professionals to health commissioners.
- Support partnership working between local sport and recreation providers and health professionals.
- Facilitate closer working between sports organisations and local young offending and troubled families teams.

- Signpost local grassroots and community organisations to new sources of social investment funding for projects.
- Promote the role sport and recreation can play in delivering wider social benefits.

Additional resources

Legislation

[Health and Social Care Act 2012](#)

Documentation and guidance

- Sport and Recreation Alliance and ukactive report [Physical activity and health](#)
- Sport and Recreation Alliance report [Uncovering the Social Value of Sport](#)
- [Mental Health Charter for Sport and Recreation](#)
- Public Health England [Everybody Active, Every Day](#)
- The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) [guidance on physical activity](#)
- Home Office report into [Ending Gang Violence and Exploitation](#)
- Home Office press release: [Using Sport to Tackle Gangs](#)
- Youth Justice Board guidance for Youth Offending Teams on [How to reduce reoffending by children and young people](#)
- Chief Cultural & Leisure Officers Association (CLOA) report into the [Role of Culture and Sport in reducing Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour](#)
- Government guidance on [social investment](#)
- Government guidance on [social impact bonds](#)
- [Big Society Capital](#)
- APPG for Boxing report [Boxing: The Right Hook](#)

Organisations

Public Health England: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england

Youth Justice Board: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/youth-justice-board-for-england-and-wales

Housing Association Charitable Trust: www.hact.org.uk

Mind: www.mind.org.uk

Dallaglio Foundation: www.dallagliofoundation.com

Greenhouse Sports: www.greenhousesports.org

School of Hard Knocks: www.schoolofhardknocks.org.uk

StreetGames: www.streetgames.org

The Richmond Group of Charities: <https://richmondgroupofcharities.org.uk>

Section 6: What does success look like? Case studies

The preceding sections will have provided you with lots of information and guidance on how to promote grassroots sport and recreation but what does success look like?

The following case studies demonstrate how, when given the right support, grassroots sport and recreation has the power to deliver huge benefits to local communities. But success stories like these do not happen by chance; they are the result of a lot of hard work, planning and cooperation and, often, the support of parliamentarians at both local and national level.

Put simply, these case studies illustrate why you should #GetYourKitOn and support grassroots sport and recreation.

Case study 1: Grassroots community clubs – Broomwood FC

Broomwood Football Club is a not-for-profit, community-based football club located in the London Borough of Wandsworth. The club exists to provide children and young people, regardless of ability or background, the opportunity to play football and has been running for over 20 years. The club has a simple ethos – it is run for free by the parents and guardians of the children, with the whole family encouraged to participate. This all-inclusive approach helps to support boys and girls to get active and to develop their personal skills and friendships.

Through a number of different schemes the club has been able to create an accessible environment for local people and recently reached a record membership level of 830 youth members, including 100 girls, with 14 teams competing in the local youth league. The club also has a strong volunteer base with 200 adults volunteering on a regular basis.

Broomwood FC was the overall winner of the Sport and Recreation Alliance's 2016 [Community Sport and Recreation Awards](#).

Case study 2: Outdoor recreation – Sheffield: The Outdoor City

Sheffield has set its sights on spearheading an increase in outdoor recreation and attracting more people to both the city and the Peak District National Park, which sits within the city's boundaries. Sheffield City Council formed The Outdoor City Joint Venture which brought together a number of organisations, including the Sport and Recreation Alliance, from across the statutory, private and not-for-profit sectors. The Joint Venture has created and is now delivering a strategy to establish Sheffield as 'The Outdoor City'.

The council plans to monitor the impact on participation across the city over the coming years and has implemented a new marketing campaign in order to help generate interest. Central to the campaign is a new, easy-to-use website – www.theoutdoorcity.co.uk – that provides information on how people can run, walk, climb or cycle their way around the city. It includes tips on getting started, walking and running routes and practical information on parking and amenities which is crucial to attracting families. The Outdoor City work is linked to the city's physical activity strategy, 'Move More', recognising that the accessibility of outdoor recreation (particularly walking) means it has an important role in reducing health inequalities.

Case study 3: Sport and health partnerships – Ramblers and MacMillan ‘Walking for Health’ programme

Together the Ramblers and Macmillan manage the Walking for Health programme in England. The vision is that everyone has access to a short, free, friendly health walk within easy reach of where they live to help them become and stay active.

There are approximately 400 recognised Walking for Health schemes. All schemes are either accredited or working towards being accredited as part of the programme. The national programme team, hosted by the Ramblers working in partnership with Macmillan Cancer Support, provides the national infrastructure to facilitate local delivery, including providing support, advice, training, promotion, insurance and a database for monitoring and evaluation.

Local schemes are run by a mix of local authorities, charities and volunteers. 5% of schemes have formal links with health and social care professionals to reach target participants. These are typically GPs and practice staff, exercise referral teams and health trainers.

A recent independent evaluation of the programme found:

- 19% participants moved from being inactive to more active after 4 months of participation with Walking for Health.
- The programme attracts a relatively high number of people with long-term health conditions and disabilities, such as cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure, heart conditions and physical disabilities.
- Participants reported improvements to mental wellbeing, reduced loneliness and increased social interactions including intergenerational communication.
- Volunteers who support delivery highlighted that the scheme provided the opportunity to ‘give something back’ to their community.
- Economic analysis found the programme has the potential to be highly cost-effective in terms of the quality of life improvement delivered and the financial return on investment to the NHS is estimated to be £3.36 per £1 invested.

Case study 4: Social value – Greenhouse Sports

Greenhouse Sports is a London-based charity that uses sport to engage young people who live in some of London's most disadvantaged areas and help them fulfil their potential. Their coaches work full time and run 49 programmes in mainstream secondary schools and schools for children with special educational needs, as well as four community clubs. They provide 'outstanding sports programmes' that nurture Social, Thinking, Emotional and Physical (STEP) skills to equip young people for life. To date, they have worked with over 38,000 young people.

Some of the young people that Greenhouse Sports have helped include Joshua, who had behavioural issues at school and was close to being permanently excluded. During a PE lesson, a Greenhouse Sports coach identified Joshua's potential and invited him onto their basketball programme. In the beginning Joshua would get frustrated and lash out at team mates and the referee. When this happened, his coach would take him out of the game and speak to him about these frustrations.

Over time, the discipline of basketball coupled with his coach's mentoring, had a huge effect on Joshua's behaviour. Joshua was given the responsibility of captaining his school team, building his confidence and giving him a positive focus. He now plays in a national basketball league and is training to become a coach.

Another young person helped by Greenhouse Sports is Adam, who has complex special needs and has limited mobility and sight. Because of this, he used to get angry and frustrated when he was unable to sit up or move. Three times a week Adam works with his Greenhouse Sports coach doing a mixture of sport activity, rebound therapy and hydrotherapy.

As a result of these sessions, Adam has developed his weight bearing abilities and his confidence and determination have also greatly improved. He is now able to walk independently without the use of a frame or walking aid. His home life and relationship with others has also improved, further helping him work towards his ultimate goal of achieving independent living.

Case study 5: Volunteering – Volunteer Kinetic, Manchester City Council and Greater Sport

Manchester Sports Development are part of Manchester City Council and work collaboratively with Greater Sport, the County Sports Partnership for Greater Manchester. The Manchester Sports Development team is responsible for the development of sport and leisure provision through volunteering, education and promoting the sustainability of sports clubs across Manchester.

Prior to using VolunteerKinetic, an annual brochure was distributed to sports clubs, leisure facilities and libraries containing information on local clubs, volunteer contacts and training opportunities. The process was expensive, time-consuming and difficult to keep up to date.

Government spending cutbacks in 2008 forced the team to rethink how they communicated with the public. They were left with a conundrum: how to sustain their volunteer programme with a smaller budget. A review concluded that what was needed was a one-stop-shop for sports volunteering which connected volunteers with events, clubs, training and other organisations and importantly which also allowed them to measure the success of the programme overall.

VolunteerKinetic offered the solution they were looking for: an internet-based system that would put volunteers in touch with people who needed volunteers, recording their activity and offering rewards and incentive to those participants who freely gave their time.

VolunteerKinetic launched in 2009 with 150 volunteers and with the aim of reaching 500 volunteers within two years. Existing volunteers and sports clubs were informed of the new system via mail shots, phone calls and word of mouth.

By utilising the power of the internet, Manchester City Council reached 2000 sports volunteers in less than six months and to date has over 5000 active volunteers registered on the system. The programme was such a success that Greater Sport made the programme freely available to the other 9 local authority partners and the total reach has now passed 8,000 engaged individuals.

Your role as a parliamentarian

As a champion for grassroots sport and recreation you can use this guide to:

- Ensure that all government departments work towards delivering the outcomes set out in *Sporting Future* by holding Ministers to account and, wherever possible, promoting the importance of grassroots sport and recreation in your parliamentary work.
- Work with local authorities in your area to find ways to support local grassroots sport and recreation organisations. This support may be financial but it may also simply be the provision of advice and guidance.
- Forge close relationships with your relevant Sports Council, particularly where it provides targeted investment in facilities and/or funding for local grassroots programmes in your area. You should also seek to help your local clubs and community organisations access funding and support from the Sports Councils.
- Build relationships with national governing bodies of sport (NGBs) at national level and, where relevant, county/regional level.
- Work with your local County Sports Partnership or Community Sports Hub and other relevant organisations to help strengthen local sports provision.
- Engage with grassroots clubs in your area to highlight their activities in the local community and to help address any issues they face.
- Encourage the provision of sport and physical activity in your local schools. This should encompass a broad sporting offer attractive to all and include additional, out-of-hours provision.
- Champion the community use of school sports facilities and encourage local schools to make their facilities available as much as possible.
- Raise the profile of the outdoor economy at national and local level, highlighting the value it brings in terms of local jobs and tourism spend.
- Support organisations and businesses in your local area that are part of the outdoor economy including national park operators, activity providers, local retailers and the hospitality industry to make it easier to get active outdoors.
- Promote closer working between local health professionals and grassroots clubs and organisations to ensure sport and recreation is part of the solution to mental and physical ill-health.
- Push the Government to commit more funding to make cycling and walking the modes of choice for all short journeys.

Further information and contacts

If you need further information on any of the issues raised in this guide please contact us – we're happy to help:

Sport and Recreation Alliance
Burwood House
14-16 Caxton Street
London
SW1X 0TH
Tel: 0207 976 3900

Web: www.sportandrecreation.org.uk

FB: <https://www.facebook.com/Sport-and-Recreation-Alliance-267366306717658/>

Twitter: @sportrectweets

Email: policy@sportandrecreation.org.uk