



Association for Public Service Excellence

# **The future of Local Authority Sport and Leisure services**

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# The future of Sport and leisure

## Questions

- Why do we provide sport and leisure services?
- What do you think is the role of Councils in providing sport and leisure services going forward?
- What impact do you think COVID-19 is going to have on future service delivery
- Can you help and contribute to the conversation?

# Co produced review-The future of public sport and leisure (starting a conversation)



- Scope

- Provision of Leisure Centres, Pools and Sports facilities, indoor and outdoor (but not grass sports pitches)
- Sports development/community sport
- Physical activity interventions/Supporting the development of physical activity opportunities.

# History



## Current issues/ Questions

- Connectivity to Health eco-system essential, but more difficult in 2 tier
- Community Sports development often gone (replaced by a focus on inactive)
- Sport and Leisure facilities of varying standard and ageing.
- Supporting people to be active outdoors (for free) more cost effective than indoor facilities?
- Leisure centre financial model based on generation of significant levels of income, and now hard to move away from. Efficiencies often lost from the system forever.
- Focus on bottom line rather than purpose? Are these services increasingly focusing on those that can afford it?
- Importance of leadership and skills within the Council (irrespective of delivery model). Systems leadership increasingly important.
- Diminishing capacity with COVID response
- Government support for services welcome (eg NLRF), but not enough looking ahead. Uncertain consumer behaviour moving forward.
- Positive feedback on Sport England approach, but focussing on those that are inactive, levelling up. (e.g. Sport England “Uniting the movement”)
- What makes Public sport and leisure services unique?

# The World Health Organisation (WHO)

## Framing the role of public sport and leisure services

The World Health Organisation (WHO) have produced a Global action plan for physical activity 2018-2030. The WHO paper sets targets to reduce world Physical inactivity by 10% by 2025 and 15% by 2030 using:

- Active Societies (social norms and attitudes/what people see)
- Active Environments (Spaces and places)
- Active People (programmes and opportunities)
- Active Systems (governance/policy enablers and collaboration)

# ISPAH

<https://www.ispah.org/resources/key-resources/8-investments/>

## 8 INVESTMENTS FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY



1. WHOLE-OF-SCHOOL PROGRAMMES



2. ACTIVE TRANSPORT



3. ACTIVE URBAN DESIGN



4. HEALTHCARE



5. PUBLIC EDUCATION, INCLUDING MASS MEDIA



6. SPORT AND RECREATION FOR ALL



7. WORKPLACES



8. COMMUNITY-WIDE PROGRAMMES

## Early findings from Survey and roundtable discussions

- **Over 250 responses**
- **Roundtable discussions ongoing**
- **Significant further savings and cuts** of 10% or more (more than 1 in 4 Councils/respondents). But most likely understated?
- **Main drivers for Sport and leisure centres** are a) Health and wellbeing and b) Inequalities/inclusion c) Pools/swimming/learn to swim.
- **Main drivers for physical activity** are the same with young people 3rd replacing pools/swimming/learn to swim.
- Nearly **40% thought services position had weakened since COVID**. However, nearly **40% said they thought it had strengthened**. Confidence not high?



## Early findings from Survey and roundtable discussions

- **Financial drivers more significant than wider outcomes**
- More can be done to a) provide **better evidence** and b) **scrutinise outcomes**
- Pockets of good practice but not at scale? A very high % felt they **could be commissioned to do more**, (there is capacity for more transactional commissioning), but need to better align with health sector and is the sector skilled up enough to deliver at greater scale?.
- **One in three adults now can't swim. Likely to worsen?**
- **Public sport and leisure services should be doing a lot more to support levelling up and health inequalities.** Whilst there are high volumes of users, most are relatively well off. Services should be redesigned along Marmot principles. (but how?)
- **Do we need a consistent clear narrative about the (unique) public sector role sector?** Sport/Leisure/Recreation/Wellbeing/Health? How important is it in terms of how we describe ourselves? Perception by central government?

# Discussion

## Part 1

- Why do Councils provide these services?
  - Is there a need for a clear national narrative on the role of Councils in this sector? Does central government understand?
  - What makes public sport and leisure unique?
- How can the sector support work on health inequalities? (Marmot)
- How should these services support COVID recovery?

## Part 2

What change (if any) is needed?

- How to change?
- Role of local, regional, national networks?
- How to balance the need/desire for change whilst also seeking investment support and recognising ongoing budget pressures.