

Higher Education & Community Sport

A Partnership Plan



Executive summary

Sport England, British Universities & Colleges Sport (BUCS) and higher education institutions are coming together to create a new, dynamic, and effective partnership. Sport England believes that, by working with this independent and diverse sector, we will increase our collective impact by delivering sporting outcomes and wider benefits across higher education.

The motivation for the partnership will differ from institution to institution, or even within individual universities, as will the ability and speed at which partners can engage. It's about creating an inclusive environment in which all universities feel they can offer something to the partnership through the development of shared goals and outcomes, rather than the imposition of an agenda. Sport England believes that higher education is an important part of the sporting landscape and therefore the incentives to be part of the partnership will be attractive and rewarding.

This partnership plan sets out the proposed short- to medium-term steps needed in order for Sport England, BUCS and higher education to create a sustainable relationship.

Developing the partnership

Sport England and BUCS will establish, by September 2009, a memorandum of understanding confirming our commitment to increasing and sustaining student sports participation. It will outline key roles and responsibilities for both organisations. The long-term ambition is for all 133 English higher education institutions to be working with us. In particular, we will strengthen and develop relationships between higher education institutions, national governing bodies of sport and county sports partnerships. In 2009 we will be working with a minimum of 20 higher education institutions; this will rise to a minimum of 40 by 2010 and a minimum of 60 by 2011.

Raising the profile of higher education sport

The following will be key to developing and agreeing shared goals: raising the profile of higher education sport; recognising the sector's wider contribution to sport; contributing directly to both institution and sector-wide outcomes. Sport England will be an advocate for higher education with other sporting landscape partners (including national governing bodies of sport, county sports partnerships and other funding bodies), promoting the contribution higher education sport makes to the sector's wider outcomes. BUCS acts as the voice of higher education sport at a national and regional level. Together we encourage higher education institutions to work with us to identify communication and marketing opportunities to promote higher education sport and demonstrate its impact to government and higher education bodies such as Universities UK and the Higher Education Funding Council for England.

Increasing and sustaining participation through higher education

As a major contribution to Sport England's target to get one million adults doing more sport by 2012/13, we aim to get 300,000 students from across further and higher education, doing more sport. This must include increasing and sustaining student participation within under represented groups - including women, people with disabilities, individuals from black and minority ethnic communities and those from deprived backgrounds.

Sport England will provide targeted three year funding to BUCS to enable them to facilitate and co-ordinate strategic sports development across higher education. Sport England, BUCS and higher education institutions will make the case for a HE/FE Sport England lottery themed funding round (c£10 million) to drive increased student participation. By the end of 2009, a minimum of 10 national governing bodies of sport will be working through higher education to increase and sustain participation. This will rise to at least 20 in 2010 and 30 in 2011.

Measuring the impact of higher education sport

Building on the Active People Survey and other existing data sets, Sport England, BUCS and higher education institutions will work in partnership to design and launch, by 2011, a broader set of measures to demonstrate the importance and impact of higher education sport (both participation by students and the wider community). This will help provide information to influence university leadership and allow for appropriate benchmarking both across the sector and across the full spectrum of sporting activity.

We will also enhance the collection and dissemination of good practice to show what works and maximise the value from existing assets and resources within the sector to drive up and sustain student participation and community access.



Introduction

This partnership plan will be of particular interest to Vice Chancellors and Directors of Sport, their equivalents and student counterparts. It seeks to build a new, dynamic and meaningful collaboration between higher education, Sport England and other partners, including national governing bodies of sport (NGBs). Working together we will deliver not only sporting outcomes but also wider benefits for higher education, its students and the wider community.

In June 2008, Sport England published its new strategy (2008-11) to support the foundations of sporting success through the creation of a world leading community sport system. The strategy was welcomed and received a strong mandate from across the sporting landscape.

As a contribution to the sporting legacy of the 2012 London Games, Sport England will:

- **Get one million people doing more sport;**
- **Reduce post 16 drop off;**
- **Increase satisfaction;**
- **Improve talent pathways; and**
- **Get more youngsters doing five hours of sport each week.**

As part of the one million target, Sport England believes that 300,000 of the participants doing more sport could come from across the further and higher education sectors. The Sport England strategy aims to address the fundamental challenges facing community sport. It represents a significant shift in focus and places a greater emphasis on working with and through NGBs. NGBs are the custodians of their sports.



“Whether you are a member of a team or play sport socially, the skills you develop on the pitch can be utilised on campus and in the community. This partnership plan will support the higher education sector offer new opportunities to students looking to support their local communities and develop those all important transferable life skills following graduation.”

Samantha Gill
Sports Officer, Sheffield Hallam University

Sport England is seeking willing partners and wants to develop shared goals and outcomes rather than impose an agenda. Building this type of relationship will connect and embed higher education into the emerging world leading community sport system. It will ensure the sector’s current and potential contribution to community sport is fully recognised.

Sport England has supported a range of projects with individual or groups of universities. For example, Sport England has jointly funded an innovative social networking project with Channel 4, for BUCS to work with 19 universities and six sports (athletics, judo, table tennis, volleyball, badminton and squash and racketball). This project will contribute to growing participation by testing new ways of communicating with students, using Facebook as a mechanism to encourage sports participation. At least 12,000 new participants will take part in the project by December 2009.

We have also invested into the Sport Universities North East England partnership, which has undertaken significant community outreach. However, it is acknowledged that there are many other examples of partnership working across England. Through working in a stronger more effective partnership, Sport England can help the sector do even more.

Since the launch of the Sport England strategy, a number of steps have been taken:

- **In July 2008, the Higher Education Stakeholder Group was established to help inform Sport England’s thinking.**
- **In October 2008, BUCS (British Universities & Colleges Sport) was launched as the new national voice of university sport and Sport England published a partnership pamphlet to explore options and promote further debate.**
- **In February 2009, BUCS and Sport England brought together representatives from 43 English higher education institutions (HEIs) and other sporting organisations to discuss how Sport England and the sector could work together. The event has informed the development of this partnership plan.**
- **In April 2009, Sport England formally created, for the first time, a dedicated team to lead on higher and further education matters.**



This plan sets out the proposed short- to medium-term steps which we will take, over the next 18 months (July 2009 to December 2010), to develop the partnership. The actions are designed to be strategic.

Between 8 June and 3 July 2009, Sport England, supported by BUCS, consulted on a draft version of this plan with higher education and sport partners to make sure that the proposed actions achieve a broad consensus and as such have the genuine support needed to achieve them.

There were 67 written responses to the consultation;

- **97% of respondents agreed there is a need for a partnership plan between Sport England and the higher education sector;**
- **86% of respondents agreed that the four sections covered all the key areas; and**
- **97% of respondents said they or their organisations would sign up to help deliver the plan.**

A session was also held at the BUCS Annual General Meeting in June where a number of institutions provided feedback.

Actions have been marshalled around four core themes:

- **Developing the partnership;**
- **Raising the profile of higher education sport;**
- **Increasing and sustaining participation through higher education;**
- **Measuring the impact of higher education sport.**

Within each theme, actions have been proposed for Sport England, BUCS and higher education. Whilst each has their own actions, they all contribute to achieving shared outcomes and this will be demonstrated through joint success measures.

The plan concentrates on the 'Grow' and 'Sustain' themes of the Sport England strategy, so that we can create a relationship with all types of universities. Many individual universities have the capacity and capability to help NGBs develop their talented athletes. The new partnership created will help continue to build and nurture this support as appropriate.

This will remain a living document; it will evolve and develop after further consultation with the sector and will be updated, from time to time, via the web. Sport England is also working with further education – however this plan focuses on higher education.

It is important to recognise and respect the independence of individual institutions and the diversity of the higher education sector. The motivation to work in partnership will differ from institution to institution but also within an individual institution itself. For Vice Chancellors it may be about raising the status and profile of their university, or improving student satisfaction. For Directors of Sport it might be talent development or competitive sport, while for others the focus will be widening participation across all students and reaching out into the community.

Equally it is important to recognise that an institution's or other partner's readiness to engage will differ. Sport England will seek to work with a range of HEIs at differing levels and speeds, and this plan seeks to create inclusive not exclusive partnerships.



Developing the partnership

This section identifies how a new, dynamic and effective relationship between Sport England, higher education and other community sport partners (particularly NGBs) can be established. This has to be sustainable and offer a consistency of opportunity across England. Sport England has invited BUCS to work with us to help build a stronger partnership.

Partnership principles

The partnership will be characterised by:

- **Trust, honesty and respect;**
- **Shared goals and objectives;**
- **Clarity of roles and responsibilities;**
- **Effective measurement;**
- **Incentives and accountability;**
- **Transparency;**
- **Flexibility (in terms of actions and ways of working); and**
- **Good governance.**



“Getting more people to be active and play sport should be an integral part of all higher education institutions’ offer to students and university staff. This plan will support best practice from the sector to widen participation and demonstrate the importance of HE sport to the wider sporting landscape.”

Ed Smith
Chair, BUCS

Sport England wants to build positive relationships based on a clear understanding of partners’ priorities and shared goals (which will need to be developed). The partnership will seek to create and deliver high quality sporting opportunities for both students and the wider community. By working together, Sport England and higher education can stimulate innovation, seek out new ideas, learn from previous experience and challenge the status quo when it is no longer representative of what is needed.

Institutions are being asked to sign up to the aspects of the plan on which they are ready, willing and able to work. Sport England will work with the HE Stakeholder Group to outline and articulate the parameters for ‘a sustainable partnership’. There will not be ‘a one size fits all’ approach and we need to understand and recognise the partnerships that already exist.

The actions in this section aim to strengthen relationships between higher education and sport at a local, regional and national level, enabling higher education to be fully embedded in an emerging world leading community sport system. It will require clear roles and responsibilities to be drawn up, particularly between BUCS and Sport England, which will include clear communication pathways between all partners.

Actions

Sport England will:

Host the HE Stakeholder Group and use it to inform the development of thinking and the partnership.

Act as the facilitator to strengthen and develop relationships between NGBs, county sports partnerships (CSPs) and higher education to increase and sustain student and wider community sport participation, supporting talent development as appropriate.

Provide advice to higher education through its facilities and planning team on the development of local partnerships to improve facility access and usage.

Conduct an audit of HEIs to outline current and potential sporting provision and partnerships with community sport.

BUCS will:

Act as a conduit, using its networks, knowledge and expertise to facilitate a stronger relationship between HEIs, Sport England, NGBs and CSPs.

Encourage HEIs to complete the audit and promote existing relationships with community sport.

Higher education institutions will:

Work in partnership with Sport England, BUCS, NGBs and CSPs (as appropriate) to increase and sustain student and wider community sport participation.

Complete an audit to outline current and potential sporting provision and partnerships with community sport.

Success measures

The long-term ambition is that all 133 English HEIs will have the opportunity to be part of the partnership. In the short- to medium-term, Sport England will be working in partnership with **a minimum of:**

- 20 HEIs by the end of 2009;
- 40 HEIs by the end of 2010;
- 60 HEIs by the end of 2011.

Memorandum of Understanding between Sport England and BUCS in place by September 2009.

HEI audit completed by October 2009.

Evidence of sustainable partnerships between HEIs, Sport England and other community sport partners (the specific definition and measure will be developed over the next 12 months).



Raising the profile

The following will be key to developing and agreeing shared goals:

- Raising the profile of higher education sport;
- Recognising the sector's wider contribution to sport; and
- Contributing directly to both institution and sector wide outcomes.



“Universities are centre-stage in encouraging young people to achieve their full potential, and in developing the skills they will need to build up the UK's economy as we emerge from the economic downturn.

Sport can be an important part of this, as it brings people together and encourages leadership and teamwork. This partnership between Sport England, BUCS and universities will be an incentive for students to keep fit, but it will also inspire interest in the Olympics — fast approaching in 2012. I hope to see as many universities and students as possible taking up this opportunity and taking up their favourite sports.”

David Lammy MP
Minister for Higher Education, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

It is essential that higher education sport can articulate and demonstrate not only the contribution it can make to the student experience but more importantly the significant contribution it can make to academic achievement, gaining transferable skills and improving the employment prospects of students.

The contribution higher education makes to community sport is a valuable element of their activity. It will be necessary to raise the profile of higher education sport with community sport partners, to demonstrate the added value it can bring to achieving sustained participation.

This section of the plan outlines the actions which will help to raise the profile of higher education sport, so that it is recognised as important by students, academic departments and higher education decision makers. It is anticipated that this will result in increased kudos and funding from within the sector and from partnerships with NGBs and other sporting landscape partners. It will embed higher education within the community sport landscape.

Actions

Sport England will:

Champion higher education internally to:

- Identify other key partners;
- Identify other sources of partnership funding; and
- Maximise the use of its communication tools to demonstrate higher education as a partner in developing and delivering community sport.

Advocate higher education as a key delivery partner within the community sport system. This will be achieved through promoting the contribution higher education sport can and does make to the achievement of community sport outcomes to other sporting landscape partners (including NGBs, CSPs and other funding bodies).

Develop a stronger relationship with Universities UK (UUK), Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and government departments to understand their outcomes and promote higher education sport's ability to contribute to their agendas.

BUCS will:

Act as the voice of higher education sport at a national and regional level to advocate its interests.

Work with UUK and HEFCE to advocate the inclusion of sport in each HEIs strategic aims and objectives.

Actively encourage and promote the business case for university/institution engagement within local communities to contribute towards higher education and community sport outcomes.

Act as an advocate for the broader higher education sector to represent the interests of students, staff and BUCS members.

Higher education institutions will:

Provide evidence to BUCS and Sport England as well as to Vice Chancellors and academic departments to demonstrate the impact of higher education sport.

Work with Sport England and BUCS to identify communication and marketing opportunities to promote higher education sport and demonstrate its impact.

Success measures

Increased investment into higher education sport.

Evidence through increased partnership development and resources for higher education sport that the value and contribution of higher education sport is fully recognised, in particular by:

- Government departments, including Business Innovation & Skills (BIS);
- Vice Chancellors;
- NGBs;
- HEFCE and UUK; and
- Other sporting landscape partners.

An increase in positive media coverage for higher education sport.

An increase in partner/member satisfaction with BUCS.

An increase in the number of higher education representatives on community sports development groups (including the boards of CSPs).

An increase in HEIs with either a strategic plan for sport or a university-wide sport-specific aim or objective.

We will seek to quantify these outcomes further as the partnership develops and baselines are established.



Increasing and sustaining participation

The actions in this section are designed to increase and sustain participation through more, and better quality opportunities, whilst also delivering wider higher education outcomes. This will include addressing growth in student participation to help achieve Sport England's target to get 300,000 students (across further and higher education) doing more sport by 2012/13 — a significant contribution to the overall one million target. This must incorporate increasing and sustaining student participation within under-represented groups — including women, people with disabilities, individuals from black and minority ethnic communities and those from deprived backgrounds. Achieving growth in student sports participation will require HEIs and their partners to provide a broad range of activities tailored to the needs and likes of all students.

The section explores common themes for universities that want to ensure their student participation grows and is sustained. Developing talent in sport using a higher education environment will not necessarily be relevant to all NGBs, their sport or HEIs. The partnership created through this plan will help to continue to build and nurture this support as appropriate. Some of the actions identified may relate to talent development and where this is the case, this has been highlighted.



“We need to make sure that the right sporting opportunities are available for all students, whether they're considering taking up a sport for the first time or are looking to take their game to the next level. Sport has to compete with a wide range of activities at university, so high-quality sporting opportunities are essential to sustaining participation. This partnership will strengthen higher education's involvement in community sport and help make sport a rich and fulfilling part of even more students' lives.”

Gerry Sutcliffe MP
Minister for Sport, Department of Culture Media and Sport

There are just over 3.2 million full-time higher and further education students in England. The Active People Survey tells us that almost a million are doing sport three times a week, for at least 30 minutes per session (the Sport England benchmark standard). The survey also shows that a further 328,000 are doing two sessions a week and almost half a million are doing one session a week. Combined that's nearly another one million (some 819,000) doing some sport every week. There are then just over 1.4 million students who do little or no sport. Overall this means nearly 2.3 million full-time further and higher education students are currently not meeting the benchmark standard.

Sport England believes that working together with further and higher education can influence 13% of this 2.3 million group (some 300,000) to do more sport. In particular the focus will be on the 819,000 students who currently do either one or two sessions of sport each week. We need these students to participate at the benchmark standard (three sessions of 30 minutes each week). The above figures are just for full-time students. The target will include both full and part-time students in both further and higher education, making the potential growth group much larger.

To encourage more students to participate in sport and sustain their involvement, there must be available capacity to deliver sport. Higher education sport needs both paid and unpaid coaches and officials as well as volunteers with skills to run, manage and develop sport. Much of this workforce could be students who from this experience gain additional employability skills. Strategic relationships must be developed to make sure that workforce barriers are identified, reduced and an effective pathway is developed so the true benefit of student coaches and volunteers is recognised by sport and higher education.

The higher education consultation event in February 2009 identified that there are many different barriers to participation, ranging from the constraints on some campuses (confined urban sites or isolated rural institutions), to student perceptions of sport and the availability of the sport workforce. Many of these are specific to individual institutions; they need to be addressed through local collaboration.

It is recognised that there will be further actions to undertake to grow and sustain participation. This plan aims to tackle some of the fundamental issues which need to be a priority. The strategic actions outlined in this section will start to alleviate barriers to participation enabling the whole sector to both grow and sustain participation in sport.



Actions

Sport England will:

Provide targeted three year funding to BUCS to help facilitate and coordinate strategic sports development across the higher education sector.

Work with higher education to make the case for, and develop, a HE/FE Sport England lottery themed funding round (c£10m) to support the delivery of the participation target and partnership working.

Will work with HEFCE to develop sport in higher education, and seek to align any future investment in this area.

Work with higher education and NGBs to understand and develop higher education's contribution to the delivery of NGB 2009-13 sports plans. In particular this will be about reaching out to students whose current participation is below the benchmark standard.

Work with 19 universities and 6 sports (athletics, judo, table tennis, volleyball, badminton and squash and racketball) to grow student participation through the social networking pilot, (a partnership between Sport England, BUCS, Channel 4 and the institutions).

Identify collaborative opportunities for higher education to work with partners to influence the development and usage of new or existing facilities for the benefit of student sport.

Establish a strong relationship between BUCS, the wider higher education sector and:

- SkillsActive, sports coach UK, and other relevant partners to develop training and deployment pathways whilst addressing barriers to the higher education sport workforce.
- Equality sport partners to work together to understand possible barriers to participation and identify potential solutions.

Success measures

Sport England funding to BUCS agreed by September 2009, with confirmed actions and outcomes for the investment.

Themed round in place for 2010/11.

A minimum of: 10 NGBs have an agreed way of working with the higher education sector by the end of 2009; 20 sports by the end of 2010; 30 sports by the end of 2011. This will include working on all elements of Sport England's strategic outcomes, as appropriate.

12,000 students participating in sport through the social networking project by December 2009.

Evidence of an annual increase in the number of students participating in three times a week for at least 30 minutes a session building to the 300,000 target.

Evidence of progression towards students participating in sport three times a week for 30 minutes by analysing changes in one and two times per week.

Evidence of an increase in student satisfaction with their sporting experience.

An increase in the number of students involved in competitive sport at all levels.

Actions

BUCS will:

Work with Sport England and help them deliver their 300,000 HE/FE target by:

- Engaging positively and openly with NGBs and other community sport partners to identify where new partnerships can be made;
- Understanding which institutions are willing and able to develop partnerships with NGBs and where partnerships already exist;
- Reviewing and developing current competition structures with NGBs as appropriate; and
- Working with institutions who request assistance to develop strategic sports development plans.

Work with Sport England and consult with its membership on the development and deployment of the proposed three year funding to help facilitate and coordinate strategic sports development across the higher education sector.

Higher education institutions will:

Assist Sport England and BUCS in making the case for a HE/FE Sport England lottery themed round in 2010/11.

Where appropriate, work with Sport England, BUCS, NGBs, CSPs and other community sport partners to increase and sustain sport participation by students through interventions that support the delivery of the 300,000 target.

Work with BUCS to highlight best practice for appropriate marketing and signposting material to raise the profile of participating, volunteering and coaching in sport to all students.

Work with Sport England and BUCS to provide a picture of which institutions are willing and able to develop partnerships with NGBs and where partnerships already exist.

Success measures

Evidence of an annual increase in the number of students participating in sport three times a week for at least 30 minutes a session building to the 300,000 target.

An increase in HEIs with a strategic plan for sport (baseline and target will be set by the HEI audit).

Evidence of an increase in student satisfaction with their sporting experience.

Measuring the impact

The actions identified in this section aim to provide a broader and more robust data set to demonstrate the importance and impact of higher education sport within individual institutions, across the sector and into the community. The February consultation event identified this as a key issue for the sector and one where higher education and Sport England could, and should, work together.

This includes collecting good practice and data on student sporting participation and satisfaction with their sporting experience, advocating the inclusion of appropriate sport measures in existing surveys and guides and providing a central place for good practice to be captured and stored.

A great deal of importance is placed on institution rankings in national surveys for student recruitment and retention. It is therefore essential that these surveys are enhanced and improved to include other appropriate, robust and independent measures for higher education sport. The development of a tool which demonstrates the quality of the sporting experience at an individual university is something that could be developed to allow comparisons to be made between universities. This could allow for appropriate benchmarking both across the sector and across the full spectrum of sporting activity.

Throughout the consultation process there have been a number of areas identified for research that can help demonstrate the impact of higher education sport. This will be discussed with the HE Stakeholder Group and the new HE Sport Data Group, to determine priorities for research and available resources to carry out the studies.

Actions

Sport England will:

Undertake research to ascertain whether the sporting habits of students who only have access to mobile phones are different to those who have landlines (e.g. students in halls of residence).

Set up a HE Sport Data Group with BUCS to explore how a broader and more robust data set to demonstrate the impact of higher education sport could be created. This includes investigating the potential of a tool to demonstrate quality sport provision in universities.

Advocate and seek to secure the inclusion of appropriate sport measures within national benchmarking surveys/guides, such as within the Good University Guide and National Student Survey.

Identify additional research that may be required to contribute towards demonstrating the impact of higher education sport and investigate how this could be delivered.

BUCS will:

Promote the case for improved national measurement of the sporting and societal contribution of higher education sport and lead its implementation.

Help facilitate the collection and dissemination of good practice.

Higher education institutions will:

Work with Sport England and BUCS to explore how a broader and more robust data set could be created to demonstrate the impact of higher education sport and provide new sport indicators to use within benchmarking surveys/guides.

Contribute good practice examples that demonstrate impact and overcoming barriers to help create the good practice resource.

Actively participate in any new research designed to demonstrate and measure the impact of higher education sport.

Success measures

The mobile phone research project will be undertaken and a report published during 2009/10. Sport England in partnership with the HE Stakeholder Group will then consider any implications for the Active People Survey.

The Sport Data Group will be established by September 2009 and will have a broad membership representative of higher education sport.

Additional sport measures included within the Good University Guide and National Student Survey by 2011.

The development and launch of a resource to hold and disseminate good practice by 2010.



Conclusion

We are encouraged by the progress which has been made in building a new, and effective partnership between Sport England, BUCS and higher education institutions. We believe the steps proposed in this partnership plan will deliver the relationship we are seeking and more importantly deliver real sporting outcomes – more students doing regular sport together with greater community access – as well as wider benefits for higher education.



“Higher education partners have a crucial role to play in getting more people playing and enjoying regular sport – and helping talented athletes from all backgrounds reach their full potential. Developing the sporting offer for people in higher education is a key part of delivering a lasting grassroots sporting legacy from the 2012 Games.

This partnership provides a timely and exciting opportunity to strengthen the link between sport and universities, and not just those with a strong sporting history. Together, we can create the world-leading community sport system our communities deserve.”

Richard Lewis
Chair, Sport England



This document can be provided in alternative languages, or alternative formats such as large print, Braille, tape and on disc, upon request.

Call the Sport England switchboard on **08458 508 508**

More Information

To get the latest news and information about Sport England's various initiatives and programmes, please go to

www.sportengland.org

Sport England

3rd Floor
Victoria House
Bloomsbury Square
London WC1B 4SE

T 0845 850 8508

Date of publication: July 2009

Designed by: Stereo

Stockcode: SE—0907—01