

**Creating A World Leading Community Sports System in England.
Jim Clarke Regional Director Sport England (SW) Summarises Sport
England's New Strategy and the Implications Arising.**

This has been an extremely busy time for Sport England. The Secretary of State recently launched our new strategy for the period 2008-11 and yesterday we published (internally) our proposals for restructuring in order that we are best placed to deliver on the new strategy. Both matters impact upon the working relationship that we have with many Regional partners and I thought it important to write and let you, and your colleagues, know the main details. A link to the executive summary of our new strategy follows:

The strategy commits us to deliver on a series of demanding targets by 2012/13:

- one million people doing more sport
- a 25% reduction in the number of 16-year-olds who drop out of five key sports
- improved talent development systems in at least 25 sports
- a measurable increase in people's satisfaction with their experience of sport - the first time the organisation has set such a qualitative measure
- a major contribution to the delivery of the five hour sports offer for children and young people.

This has inevitably necessitated changes, both in who we work with, and to our structure. National Governing Bodies of Sport are now our key partners, but we also understand the need to work with and through Local Authorities and other regional partners given their ownership of so many facilities and the level of their investment in sport (£1.2bn a year). Furthermore Sport England is now systematically focussed on sport (although we will work closely with those working on physical activity at the local level)

The proposed structure of Regional offices is smaller and gives the regions a much tighter focus- a change which has enabled strengthening in other key areas which I believe will improve the overall quality of our service. The main points for you to be aware of are at this time are:

- Sport England is retaining its regional offices, each headed by a Regional Director who will lead a smaller team focused on fewer, clearer outcomes. It is possible that people working for nationally focussed centres of excellence may be based in the region
- We plan to create a number of more senior regional posts to manage key relationships such as the interface with local authorities on sport.
- The planning role in our Regions will remain and the Regions will offer advice and deal creation on facilities.
- New centres of excellence at national level will add value to ALL stakeholders in areas such as children and young people, volunteering and coaching but programme delivery will be co-ordinated centrally.
- We have committed core funding to County Sports Partnerships (CSP) so that they can continue to play a key strategic role at sub-regional level. The funding from Sport England will be for sport and regions will no longer look after CSP administration.
- The non-executive element will remain in each Region level through a ministerial appointee, and Regional Sports Boards will cease to exist in their present form from the end of the year
- Sport England will retain a substantial fund which local sports groups will be able to access directly. Details of our proposals on this are set out in our recently published consultation document.

- Regional intelligence will inform our decision making on funding, but the role of our regional offices in managing grants will be phased out.
- 2008-09 will be a transitional year so in the short-term key regional partners should maintain their relationship with their existing contacts at Sport England until the new teams come on stream.
- Sport England's restructure is about creating a stable, efficient organisation to deliver our new strategic goals and we recognise the important role regional partners have to play in achieving those outcomes.

Further details will emerge during the next few months as internal staff consultation processes are completed. However these are the main points relating to the strategy and our restructure of which you should be aware.