

Playing To Win

Letter from The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport

4 July 2008

Dear Colleague

We are at the start of a new era for sport. With the 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games now in view, we have a moment in time to make this country a truly world-leading sporting nation. I want to set a new level of ambition for sport, encourage a 'play to win' culture and increase opportunities for all people to participate and compete in high quality sport.

I recently launched 'Playing to win – a new era for sport', which outlines a new vision for sport, with a focus on sport for sport's sake. It is the next step in building an integrated sports development system – with the Youth Sport Trust at the school level; Sport England at the community level; and UK Sport at the elite level working seamlessly together. This document can be found in full at: http://www.culture.gov.uk/reference_library/publications/5178.aspx

To move forward and to underpin this vision, it was necessary to review the direction and structure of Sport England. The resultant new strategy for Sport England (available on their website: http://www.sportengland.org/index/about_sport_england/about_who.htm) focuses on sustaining and increasing participation in sport and widening the talent pool by creating clear talent pathways and encouraging people of all levels to be the best they can.

This is not an elitist agenda – it is about ensuring that Sport England develops a high quality community sport system for everybody, striking a new partnership with national governing bodies and others to provide coaching and competitive sport for all at every level.

Our plans for 2012 stretch beyond sport – we want to get more people active. You will probably be aware of the recent announcement of the new £140 million challenge fund for local authorities to offer free swimming to those over 60, and progressively to the under 16s. This is part of our aspiration to move towards universal free swimming and demonstrates the role the Departments for Health; Work and Pensions; Communities and Local Government; and Children, Schools and Families are all playing to get the nation physically active.

At the local level Sport England will continue to support the network of County Sports Partnerships, who will focus sport funding on sport but will continue to link up with wider physical activity.

I would like to thank you for your on-going hard work and commitment to sport and encourage you to be a part of delivering a new era for sport. If we work together, we have a real opportunity to make a difference for sport, to deliver first rate clubs, coaches, volunteers and facilities and to become a truly world-leading sporting nation.



ANDY BURNHAM