Written response to the recommendations from sportscotland

I refer to your letter of 13 September regarding the Equal Opportunities report, *Removing Barriers and Creating Opportunities*. sportscotland is happy to provide information to the Committee.

sportscotland replied to the letter written by the previous Convenor, Cathy Peattie MSP, on 18 January 2007. In that letter we expressed our support for the report and responded to the specific recommendations by describing some of the work we were already undertaking.

The points outlined in our response are still relevant and reflect sportscotland's position. However, the work we described in that letter to increase opportunities for all is still ongoing. The following provides a brief update to supplement our previous letter of 18 January 2007.

Recommendation 7

In January we wrote that sportscotland had committed to implementing the actions in our Single Equity Scheme - notably equity impact assessment and ongoing monitoring - to ensure that equity is mainstreamed within our functions. Since January 2007, 31 staff from across the organisation have received training in equity impact assessment. We developed an equity impact assessment toolkit which includes a focus on the potential impact of policies and functions upon disabled people and provisions for the involvement of disabled people in the impact assessment process. We have implemented this impact assessment process in the development of new policies and have timetabled existing policies for impact assessment over the next three years.

Furthermore, we are revising our monitoring systems to improve the information we collect about opportunities and participation of disabled people in sport. For example, we recently revised our investment application forms for Scottish governing bodies of sport to require information on the number of members, participants, coaches and volunteers with a disability. We will continue to review our monitoring frameworks to ensure that disability equality is mainstreamed into investment and programme monitoring where appropriate and practical.

Recommendation 82

In 2003, the Scottish Executive granted sportscotland a budget of £24 million (over three years -2004-2007) to rollout the Active Schools Network throughout Scotland, as a result of successful work with the original School Sport Coordinator and Active Primary School Coordinator pilot programmes. This funding was later extended to 2008. In January 2007 Patricia Ferguson, who was Minister for Tourism, Culture and sport, committed to extending the £10.7 million core element of the grant-in-aid for Active Schools for the period of the spending proposals to 2007-08. She also stated that, although it was
not possible to pre-empt the outcome of the 2007 Spending Review, Active Schools would be a priority for continued funding.

**sportscotland** is fully committed to the long term vision of the National Physical Activity Strategy, of which Active Schools is a key component. Active Schools is also clearly identified as a priority area in our new Corporate Plan (2007-2011) which has ministerial approval.

**sportscotland** is committed to sharing of best practice throughout the Active Schools Network. Examples include:

- Active Schools Manager’s Networking Days - quarterly events run by sportscotland and attended by all 32 Active Schools Managers designed to facilitate information sharing and dissemination of good practice.

- Active Schools Network Community - a private, independent online resource for use by all members of the Active Schools Network to help share knowledge, solve problems and facilitate networking.

- Active Schools Network Conference - in 2008 sportscotland will host the second Active Schools Conference where the entire Network will come together to learn about national progress, discuss challenges, share best practice and network with Managers and Coordinators from other areas.

**Recommendation 83**

To support the inclusion of children with a disability, Active Schools Coordinators for Additional Support Needs have been introduced. These posts are either full- or part-time and are responsible for the coordination of activities for children with additional support needs educated in additional support needs schools. Each Local Authority was offered the option to have one of these posts as part of their allocation. Currently there are 13 Local Authorities who have them. Children with disabilities educated in mainstream schools have been the responsibility of the generic Active Schools Coordinator responsible for the cluster their schools fell under, reflecting the mainstreaming approach of the school.

More recently a different type of post, an Active Schools Coordinator for Inclusion was introduced to the network on a pilot basis in Renfrew and Edinburgh. The purpose of this post is to work across the Local Authority, with no remit for a specific school or cluster, supporting the generic coordinators working towards the inclusion of children with a disability educated in both mainstream and additional support needs schools.

These posts have also been responsible for carrying out an audit within the Local Authority to identify all children with a disability to ensure they can be actively Included within Active Schools. These posts were not offered to every Local Authority, but due to the phased implementation of Active Schools, both
Renfrew and Edinburgh had remaining funds in place and decided to pilot this post in place of an Active Schools Coordinator for Additional Support Needs.

The pilot Active Schools Coordinator for Inclusion posts were introduced to support the network in the inclusion of children with a disability. They demonstrate sportscotland's commitment to looking at varying approaches to ensure inclusion is an integral part of Active Schools.

Active Schools staffing in each area is now established, so in order to introduce an ASC for inclusion to each Local Authority, additional funds would be needed.

**Recommendation 84**

The role of identifying children with a disability educated in a mainstream environment lies with the Local Authority. However, sportscotland has provided support in this area.

Each local Active Schools Network was asked to identify one ASC to lead on the area of disability inclusion. These coordinators are brought together twice a year through a networking day. As part of the agenda for these networking days we have promoted case studies from areas that have undertaken the work of identifying children with disabilities. Templates have also been added on the ASN Community site for all ASCs to download and use.

Disability Inclusion Training has been made compulsory to all ASCs, and sportscotland, along with Scottish Disability Sport and the Youth Sport Trust were involved in the development of this training. During these full-day sessions the need to identify children with a disability is highlighted and recommended as an important step to ensure full inclusion can take place.

Many ASCs are still coming up against barriers trying to access the information from their education departments. This is an area which we hope will be included within each Active Schools' Local Plans, which contain a specific objective relating to the inclusion of children and young people with a disability in Active Schools.

**Recommendations 141 and 142**

These recommendations, which are focused on increasing the accessibility of the built environment, are not directed specifically towards sportscotland. However, there is ongoing work in the sport sector to improve accessibility of sport and leisure facilities for people with disabilities, and sportscotland has made significant contributions in this area. In the past year, sportscotland, following a period of broad consultation prepared guidance on Access Statements which is due for publication by early 2008.

sportscotland has also worked closely with the Scottish Disability Equality Forum (SDEF) on pilot projects to involve local Access Panels in sportscotland's decision-making processes.
I hope that the above provides you with useful background information. sportscotland remains strongly committed to ensuring that opportunities to participate are made available to disabled people, and to taking a proactive approach to addressing any barriers to participation.

If I can be of further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.
Yours sincerely

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sportscotland
30 November 2007