

# **THE *GET WELL,* *STAY WELL* AGREEMENT**

A framework for greater collaboration, health promotion and use of physical activity and sport across the welfare and justice systems.

*#GetWellStayWell*

**ALLIANCE OF SPORT**   
***in Criminal Justice***

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# ABOUT THE ALLIANCE OF SPORT IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE

The Alliance of Sport (AoS) was registered in 2019 as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. We are based in the West of England and operate across the UK and beyond. We envision a fairer society, free from crime, in a more just world.

AoS was set up to help the people and organisations who want to better utilise physical activity and sport as a tool to reduce violence, crime and reoffending.

We galvanise partners in the pursuit of common goals, build the evidence to determine what does and does not work, celebrate and champion good practice and enable better outcomes for the children, young people and adults who are in, and at risk of entering, the Youth and Criminal Justice System.

Some of our initiatives include providing Secretariat for an All-Party Parliamentary Group on Sport and Physical Activity in the Criminal Justice System and working with the Youth Justice Board to deliver Levelling the Playing Field, a national project focused on tackling the overrepresentation of ethnically diverse children in the Criminal Justice System.

Much of our work is underpinned by a sector-wide Theory of Change<sup>1</sup> which, since its launch, has undergone both practitioner and academic scrutiny.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, we thank our sponsor NHS England for their confidence in us, and for their commitment in the use of physical activity and sport as a positive enabler for social change.

We give thanks to all those who have been engaged in the process. We were overwhelmed by their passion, which often came from first-hand experience of how physical activity and sport played a role in their lives, or how it increased support and opportunities for others.

We would also like to extend our thanks to those experts by experience who worked with us and helped by challenging and guiding our work. They include the Youth Justice Board's Youth Ambassador Network and consultants working with Penal Reform Solutions<sup>2</sup>.

To provide strategic guidance and oversight, a Taskforce was established, and special thanks go to its Chair, Baroness Sater. The Taskforce engaged senior leaders from across government and we are incredibly grateful to the following for their support:

- Alan Webster, Ministry of Justice
- Andrew Nicholls-Clarke, NHS England
- Caitlin Thomas, Office for Health Improvement and Disparities
- Charlie Taylor, Chief Inspector of Prisons
- Dr Simon Marshall, HM Prison and Probation Service
- Kate Davies CBE, NHS England
- Katie Aston, Home Office
- Keith Fraser, Youth Justice Board
- Professor Rosie Meek, Royal Holloway University of London
- Simon Mason, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
- Summer Nisar, Race Disparity Unit, Cabinet Office

Finally, as the Chief Executive of the Alliance of Sport in Criminal Justice, and as someone who started their career delivering physical education in a secure setting, it has been a pleasure to lead on this work and I am excited by its potential for driving real change. I must also thank colleagues Jack Davies, Justin Coleman and Mike Dale for their contributions and ongoing support.



**James Mapstone**  
Chief Executive, Alliance of Sport in Criminal Justice

<sup>1</sup> [https://allianceofsport.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/ToC\\_brochureV14hi.pdf](https://allianceofsport.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/ToC_brochureV14hi.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://penalreformsolutions.com/>

## FOREWORD FROM THE CHAIR

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*We know that the children, young people and adults who are in, and at risk of entering, both the Welfare System and the Criminal Justice System suffer disproportionately from poor physical and mental health. We also know the positive benefits that are associated with being more physically active every day.*

*I am pleased to be Chair of the Taskforce on Physical Activity and Sport in the Criminal Justice System which has brought forward this important piece of work. We hope it unites government in a call for action to address these health inequalities through provision of physical activity.*

*Ensuring Ministers get behind this initiative and that Government departments sign up to our proposed 'Get Well Stay Well' Agreement would be an important first step. I hope to see shared priorities agreed upon and a national work plan delivered in the near future.*

*The 'Get Well Stay Well' Agreement has the potential to drive systemic change, tackle health inequalities and create positive outcomes for many people in the welfare and justice systems.*

*Fostering collective action and enhancing coordination across the sector gives us a significant opportunity to build a robust body of evidence. This is key to better understanding how the government can save and spend money more effectively moving forward.*

*The responsibility for getting people active, improving wellbeing, tackling inequalities and reducing the number of people involved with the justice system falls on the whole of society. Therefore, I am grateful to the Ministers, senior officials and government departments who have actively engaged with the Taskforce so far and for their desire to work more collaboratively and drive real change.*

*I thank everyone involved in this work, in particular James Mapstone from the Alliance of Sport and Kate Davies CBE from NHS England. Their vision and drive has given gravitas and credibility to this work. This is a monumental moment for the role of physical activity and sport in the Criminal Justice System and I am confident that it will help lead to better outcomes for some of the most vulnerable people living in England and Wales.*

Baroness Sater

## FOREWORD FROM OUR ADULT EXPERTS BY EXPERIENCE BOARD

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*We would like to thank the Alliance of Sport for the opportunity to be involved in the discussion of how sport and physical activity can be used as a prevention tool for those at risk and how it can help the children, young people and adults involved with the Criminal Justice System.*

*Together, we all share a passion for being active and by drawing on our own lived experiences, I hope we were able to address how beneficial sport and physical activity can be as a coping mechanism and as an enabler for supporting wellbeing and personal development.*

*It was important to highlight what currently exists and is working, whilst also considering the gaps and what further work could be done to increase the incorporation of sport and physical activity and healthy lifestyle choices and the impact this could have on supporting those most vulnerable entering the Criminal Justice System.*

*Collectively, we share a vision to achieve a collaborative working approach in which all of those service users and practitioners benefit from the work being carried out, by promoting wellbeing and growth in order to reduce offending and reoffending and create safer communities for all.*

Coordinated response by Emma Hands, Consultant at Penal Reform Solutions

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In February, the Levelling Up White Paper was published as a moral, social and economic programme for the whole of government<sup>3</sup>. The Paper recognises that the UK is an unparalleled success story, but that not everyone shares equally in its success, and therefore set out a plan for challenging change and unfairness.

Health inequalities are the preventable, unfair and unjust differences in health status between populations that occur as a result of the unequal distribution of social, environmental and economic conditions within societies, which determine the risk of people getting ill, their ability to prevent sickness, or their chances of being involved with the Youth and Criminal Justice System<sup>4</sup>.

A stark health gap exists between the children, young people and adults in the Criminal Justice System and the general public, with those in custody or on the fringes of the system suffering disproportionately with mental health problems, illness, substance misuse and adverse childhood experiences. Sport and physical activity can help address this gap and act as the hook to draw people into wider support.

This report calls on the Department for Health and Social Care and members of the Taskforce on Physical Activity and Sport in the Criminal Justice System<sup>5</sup> to bring forward and sign up to the Get Well Stay Well Agreement. The Agreement is for the services and agencies responsible for caring for the children, young people and adults who are in, or at-risk of entering, the Welfare, Youth Justice or Criminal Justice Systems.

The Agreement will engage senior representatives across government, increase a shared understanding and commitment to working together to tackle health inequalities and better utilise and increase physical activity levels as a means to helping some of the most vulnerable people in society to 'get well' and 'stay well', regardless of their situation.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/levelling-up-the-united-kingdom>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.england.nhs.uk/about/equality/equality-hub/resources/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://allianceofsport.org/our-work-article/taskforce/>

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To do this, the Agreement focuses on the use of physical activity and sport across the following five areas:

- i. Early Intervention** – Preventing harm, improving mental health and emotional wellbeing and ensuring that children, young people and adults receive the help they need to thrive.
- ii. Prevention and diversion** – Increasing targeted activities and wraparound support to reduce entrants into the youth and adult secure estates.
- iii. Non-custodial sentences** – Prioritising health and wellbeing to prevent further offending and supporting the welfare of children, young people and adults.
- iv. Custody** – Increasing health and wellbeing-related purposeful activity, skills and opportunities that, where possible, can be continued on release into the community.
- v. Continuity of care** – Supporting social inclusion, recovery from substance misuse, improved physical and mental health and desistance from crime.

Addressing health inequalities has wider benefits – a 'community dividend' through ultimately reducing cost for healthcare and law enforcement agencies and improving public safety – making it not only the right thing to do, but also the prudent thing to do<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> <https://ukhsa.blog.gov.uk/2018/01/25/data-pilots-and-evaluation-how-to-rebalance-health-inequalities-in-the-criminal-justice-system/>

# THE GET WELL STAY WELL AGREEMENT: JOINT STATEMENT

The agreement will be actualised by senior level executives signing a joint statement that states:

*'We commit to work together and utilise the role of physical activity and sport as a tool for tackling health inequalities, preventing offending, diverting entrants to the welfare and criminal justice systems and supporting rehabilitation outcomes.*

*By working in partnership, we will strive to increase participation and the physical activity levels of children, young people and adults who are in, and at risk of entering the Criminal Justice System as this will enhance the level of support and opportunities needed to 'get well' and 'stay well'.*

*Jointly, we hold ourselves accountable for building a shared understanding through the collection of data and evidence to prove and communicate what does and does not work. We recognise that learning and insights are key to enabling this commitment to be delivered effectively.'*

## THE CHALLENGE

Following the pandemic, the Government has committed to investing in Levelling Up the country and beating crime. New Integrated Care Systems will deliver joined-up health and care services<sup>7</sup>. The Ministry of Justice are investing £300 million, the biggest funding package in a generation, to cut youth crime and make the streets safer<sup>8</sup>.

Liaison and Diversion services have been rolled out to support people when they first come into contact with the Youth and Criminal Justice System<sup>9</sup>. £200 million will be spent each year by 2025 to further objectives which include reducing reoffending and improving offender health, alongside a £155 million increase in probation funding.

The announcements of the above are all positive, however the role of physical activity and sport is not always recognised and utilised in policy, legislation and commissioning despite its growing recognition for being a cost-effective solution. For example, in 2014, Everybody Active Every Day, the government's framework for physical activity<sup>10</sup> made a clear case for why everybody needs to be active. It stated that increasing physical activity is one of the most effective ways to improve individual and community health and wellbeing.

Everybody Active Every Day (2014) states:

*"If being active was a pill, we would be rushing to prescribe it. A wealth of evidence shows that an active life is essential for health. Activity reduces the risk of many preventable diseases, from cancer to diabetes, and conditions like obesity and depression. Being active increases your chances of staying independent in later life. The benefits don't stop there. Being active is also good for children's educational attainment, it can boost workplace productivity and reduce sickness absence and it can even reduce crime and anti-social behaviour."*

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.england.nhs.uk/integratedcare/what-is-integrated-care/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/300-million-to-cut-youth-crime-and-make-streets-safer>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.england.nhs.uk/commissioning/health-just/liaison-and-diversion/about/>

<sup>10</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/353384/Everybody\\_Active\\_Every\\_Day\\_evidence\\_based\\_approach\\_CONSULTATION\\_VERSION.pdf#:~:text=Everybody%20needs%20to%20become%20more%20active%2C%20every%20day.,to%20diabetes%2C%20and%20conditions%20like%20obesity%20and%20depression.](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/353384/Everybody_Active_Every_Day_evidence_based_approach_CONSULTATION_VERSION.pdf#:~:text=Everybody%20needs%20to%20become%20more%20active%2C%20every%20day.,to%20diabetes%2C%20and%20conditions%20like%20obesity%20and%20depression.)

## THE CHALLENGE

The Framework also states:

*Being active every day needs to be embedded across every community in every aspect of life.*

*The association between physical activity and leading a healthy, happy life means that issues of cost, access or cultural barriers need to be tackled.*

The reality is that reducing crime and reoffending is one of the most complex challenges that exists in society today. It requires the whole of government to drive change, and it cannot be the responsibility of a few departments.

Therefore, our challenge is simple. We must get the key services and agencies across England and Wales to sign up and, where needed, ensure the right support is in place so that more children, young people and adults who are in, and at risk of entering, the welfare and justice systems are more active every day as a means to increase human and social capital and help them to live as positive and prosocial citizens.

Right now, there are over 11 million people in the UK living with a criminal record. A third of men and nine percent of women will have been convicted of an offence by the age of 53<sup>11</sup>. The majority of people do not spend time in a secure setting and grow out of offending. Yet the prison population is set to increase from its current level by 3,200 places by March 2023<sup>12</sup> and the number of children in custody in England and Wales is expected to more than double by September 2024<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> <https://metro.co.uk/2017/10/28/ten-things-you-should-know-if-you-have-a-criminal-record-7029074/>

<sup>12</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/735428/prison-population-projections-2018-2023.PDF#:~:text=An%20increase%20in%20the%20prison%20population%20is%20forecast,growth%20concentrated%20in%20offenders%20sentenced%20to%20longer%20sentences.](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/735428/prison-population-projections-2018-2023.PDF#:~:text=An%20increase%20in%20the%20prison%20population%20is%20forecast,growth%20concentrated%20in%20offenders%20sentenced%20to%20longer%20sentences.)

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.itv.com/news/2022-04-27/numbers-of-children-in-custody-set-to-double-by-2024>

## THE CHALLENGE

In England and Wales, children aged between 10 and 17 can be held criminally responsible for their actions. In February 2022, there were 414 children in custody. Once children are sentenced to custody, the Youth Custody Service determines where to place them in the secure custodial estate based on each child's individual needs, the youth offending team's placement recommendation, and the accommodation available<sup>14</sup>.

Alarming, the rates of racial disparity in the Youth and Criminal Justice Systems continue to grow. Today, minority ethnic people make up 28% of the prison population whilst comprising 13% of the general population in England and Wales. Black, mixed, Asian and other minority ethnic people are now ten times more likely to be stopped and searched than their white counterparts. Remarkably, younger minority ethnic people make up 53% of those remanded in custody and comprise an astounding 51% of all children and young people who are confined in Young Offender Institutions<sup>15</sup>.

Those children, young people and adults who are in, and at more risk of entering, the justice system are often among the most vulnerable in society. They are more likely to have experienced adversity and trauma, and the conditions in which they are born and grow up will have exacerbated their likelihood of being involved with the Welfare, Youth Justice and Criminal Justice Systems, their risk of contracting a disease and ultimately, dying at an earlier age.

The Get Well Stay Well Agreement will provide a central platform for national and local services and agencies. They can then be united in their understanding and commitment to the role of physical activity and sport as a means to helping some of the most vulnerable children, young people and adults in society to **get well** and **stay well**.

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.itv.com/news/2022-04-27/numbers-of-children-in-custody-set-to-double-by-2024>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.nao.org.uk/report/children-in-custody/>

<sup>15</sup> [https://www.clinks.org/sites/default/files/2020-09/clinks\\_EL\\_institutionalised-racism-dr-patrick-williams\\_V4.pdf](https://www.clinks.org/sites/default/files/2020-09/clinks_EL_institutionalised-racism-dr-patrick-williams_V4.pdf)

## BUILDING ON FIRM GROUND

The Get Well Stay Well Agreement provides a common purpose and a national framework to unite the wide range of stakeholders delivering good and emerging practice across the Youth and Criminal Justice System which we know is driven by so many amazing staff, volunteers and organisations.

For example, for the last 15 years, Premier League Kicks has been working in local communities to inspire thousands of children and young people in some of the most high-need areas across England and Wales. More recently, up to 28 professional football clubs have increased their targeted offer through the Kicks Targeted programme and provide mentorship and guidance to children and young people at risk of, or affected by, violence<sup>16</sup>.

A National Police and Crime Commissioner Sport and Youth Crime Prevention Board now exists to learn from and better invest in the use of sport and positive activity to prevent youth crime and serious youth violence<sup>17</sup>. The Secretariat is provided by StreetGames who also work with Police and Crime Commissioners, Violence Reduction Units and their locally trusted partners to build an evidence base and reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.

Working closely with the Youth Justice Board, the Levelling the Playing Field project aims to tackle the over-representation of ethnically diverse children who are in, and at risk of entering, the Youth Justice System. The project operates in the children and young people's secure estate and in communities across London, the West Midlands, South Yorkshire and Gwent in South Wales<sup>18</sup>.

The DIVERT programme managed by the New Era Foundation works in police custody suites and diverts young adults between 18-25 years old away from crime<sup>19</sup>. The programme operates across London, Lancashire and the Thames Valley.

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.premierleague.com/communities/programmes/community-programmes/pl-kicks?sf210230607=1#!>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.apccs.police.uk/our-work/national-networks/#:~:text=Police%20and%20Crime%20Commissioner%20Sport%20and%20Youth%20Crime,to%20prevent%20youth%20crime%20and%20serious%20youth%20violence.>

<sup>18</sup> <https://levellingtheplayingfield.org/>

<sup>19</sup> <https://newerafoundation.uk/divert/>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.parkrun.org.uk/>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.dofe.org/>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.prisonrowing.co.uk/>

<sup>23</sup> <https://prisonyoga.org/>

## BUILDING ON FIRM GROUND

His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) is in the process of developing its first custody and community sports strategy, underpinned by a Theory of Change. This builds on a number of key innovations and partnerships including:

- The Twinning Project<sup>20</sup> which launched on 31 October 2018 and has since twinned 69 Premier League and English Football League clubs with 81 secure establishments (as of June 2022). The project delivers a range of outcomes and delivers professional coaching qualifications, refereeing and employability skills. In addition a pilot has been launched in May 2021 between West Midlands Probation, Aston Villa FC and Birmingham City FC. Further pilots with probation are planned.
- Parkrun<sup>21</sup> now have 20 events taking place in custody each week. In addition to running or walking 5k every Saturday morning the events allow participants to volunteer as marshals or timekeepers and, critically, provide opportunities to exercise alongside guest 'parkrunners' who are members of the public and who take part in local parkruns in the community.
- The Duke of Edinburgh Award<sup>22</sup> scheme is being extended to a further 20 establishments (holding young adults) over the next 18 months. This presents a powerful opportunity for people in custody to gain new skills, positive experiences and a prestigious award that is recognised and valued by employers and communities on release.
- A National Custodial Indoor Rowing League<sup>23</sup> has 68 establishments signed up and participating online. The league enables staff and prisoners to compete as individuals and nationally against other prisons. A further example of good practice is HMP Stocken who created the Stocken Boat Club and achieved notable success at in the 2021 British Rowing Indoor Championships.
- Trauma-Informed Yoga for Women is being rolled out thanks to an in-person training event delivered in partnership with the Prison Yoga Project<sup>24</sup>. A total of 16 staff from nine different establishments were certified and further cohorts are planned for early 2023. The programme has been featured on National Prison Radio as part of 'This Girl Can' campaign with positive feedback from the women involved.

In addition, HMPPS have established an Effective Practice Sports Panel to drive quality assurance, increase participation and build a portfolio of evidence on the effectiveness of sport and physical activity programmes in custody and for people on probation.

Finally, providing support to thousands of smaller organisations across England and Wales are umbrella organisations and networks such as the Sport for Development Coalition. Working with umbrella bodies and networks can often be an effective way to work across the Criminal Justice System and in communities at scale. Collectively these networks and collaborations help tackle inequalities and make communities safer places to live, work and play.

## GET WELL

**Get Well** refers to the point of engagement with children’s services, adult social care, Youth Justice System and criminal justice services which, as we know, can take place in communities or the adult or children and young people’s secure estates.

Regardless of where this happens, a child, young person or adult is likely to have recently been involved in harmful behaviours. They may have been, and potentially could still be, subject to exploitation, and they will have recently suffered trauma and adversity.

This toxic cocktail of harm reinforces the need to ‘get well’ and is where the role of physical and purposeful activity can be a cost-effective solution alongside other support and professional services.

The UK Chief Medical Officer’s Physical Activity Guidelines, launched in September 2019,<sup>26</sup> reiterated a clear message that, “if physical activity were a drug, we would refer to it as a miracle cure, due to the great many illnesses it can prevent and help treat.”

Regular physical activity is one of the most important things you can do for your health.

Being physically active can improve your brain health, help manage weight, reduce the risk of disease, strengthen bones and muscles and improve your ability to do everyday activities<sup>27</sup>.

A growing body of international literature also makes the case for the primary benefits of physical activity and sport, not just in terms of improved physical health<sup>28</sup> and mental health<sup>29</sup> but also in relation to the wider social and psychological benefits of such schemes: sport can offer an alternative means of excitement and risk-taking to that gained through engaging in offending behaviour<sup>30</sup>, it can also provide access to a pro-social network and positive role models and offer the opportunity to gain new experiences and achievements<sup>31</sup>.

As simply put by a member of our Experts by Experience Board, **“it’s all about having a healthy body and healthy mind. If you have both you are more likely to succeed.”**

<sup>26</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/832868/uk-chief-medical-officers-physical-activity-guidelines.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/832868/uk-chief-medical-officers-physical-activity-guidelines.pdf)

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/pa-health/index.htm>

<sup>28</sup> Amtmann, J. and Kukay, J. (2016). Fitness changes after an 8-week fitness coaching program at a regional youth detention facility. *Journal of Correctional Health Care*, 22, 1, 75-83

<sup>29</sup> Woods, D., Breslin, G. and Hassan, D. (2017). Positive collateral damage or purposeful design: how sport-based interventions impact the psychological well-being of people in prison. *Mental Health and Physical Activity*, 13, 152-162

<sup>30</sup> Zuckerman, M. (1991). Sensation seeking: the balance between risk and reward. In L. Lipsitt and L. Mitnick (Eds.), *Self Regulatory Behavior and Risk Taking: Causes and Consequences*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex; Morgan, H., Parker, A., Meek, R., & Cryer, J. (2019). Participation in sport as a mechanism to transform the lives of young people within the criminal justice system: an academic exploration of a theory of change. *Sport, Education and Society*, 25(8), 917-930

<sup>31</sup> Morgan, H. and Parker, A. (2017). Generating recognition, acceptance and social inclusion in marginalised youth populations: the potential of sports-based interventions. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 20, 8, 1028-1043

## STAY WELL

**Stay Well** refers to when a person is engaged with professional services and recognises that they will often be in receipt of specialist support from multiple services with a plan based on their needs. The role of physical activity and sport can be to complement these services by increasing positive outcomes and providing continuity of care as a means of preventing and diverting people away from crime and reducing reoffending.

There is evidence to indicate how physical activity and sport may develop i) human capital, and facilitate the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes which may enable access into the workforce; ii) social capital, by broadening an individual’s relational network; and iii) psychological capital, where participation may enable qualities such as self-efficacy, optimism, hope and resilience to be enhanced<sup>32</sup>.

Consequently, when sport-based programmes identify how and where they can contribute to the development of these three forms of capital, the potential for sport to be used as part of crime prevention and rehabilitation strategies becomes more apparent.

It suggests that when a child, young person or adult’s wellbeing has improved, they are more receptive to programmes and interventions that will help build individual development which will enable them to benefit more from education, training and employment opportunities and assist community and social development opportunities aligned with being a pro-social and law-abiding citizen.

A member of our Experts by Experience Board told us that, **“physical activity can provide a new sense of purpose, it gives confidence and builds self-esteem. Through sport you can build trust and then you can find out why someone is in trouble in the first place.”**

We were told that one of the most important factors in any supportive relationship is having someone there who cares. For many people, finding that person who cares often happened by accident, rather than design. They said, **“that someone could have potentially been there all along, but it wasn’t on anyone’s radar”.**

<sup>32</sup> Morgan, H.J. (2018). Enhancing social mobility within marginalised youth: the accumulation of positive psychological capital through engagement with community sports clubs. *Sport in Society*, 22, 11, 1669-1685; Morgan, H., Parker, A., & Marturano, N. (2021). Evoking hope in marginalised youth populations through non-formal education: critical pedagogy in sports-based interventions. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 42, 3, 307-322.

## EARLY INTERVENTION

This Agreement recognises ‘early intervention’ as a term to help children, young people and adults thrive by identifying and preventing problems from happening in the first place, or by tackling them early on. This includes breaking down the barriers between primary and secondary education, mental health and social care and preventing harm for people who are vulnerable to exploitation and the involvement in crime and anti-social behaviour.

Physical activity and sport clubs can be a safe place for children, young people and adults across the nation. The coaches and volunteers are often recognised as trusted and positive role models who provide a lifeline for millions of participants whose support can often extend to their immediate families and/or support groups.

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, inflation and the increased cost of living, many of these clubs are at risk of closure. We also recognise that by increasing the capability and capacity of the physical activity and sport workforce, they would be better placed to understand and engage participants, increase and maintain physical activity levels and prevent harm.

With a greater focus on integrating community health and social care services across the country, the physical activity and sport sector would benefit from a greater understanding and representation within the Integrated Care Boards. This would strengthen referral pathways and the motivation and opportunities to get more children, young people and adults physically active, every day.

### Priority areas:

- Enhance the physical activity and sport workforce by equipping it with the skills and knowledge to better support children, young people and adults who have experienced adversity and trauma. This further extends to the need for greater awareness around neurodiversity.
- Stronger representation of positive activity within each Integrated Care Service and a national commitment from each Integrated Care Board to prioritise the UK Chief Medical Officer's physical activity guidelines, ensuring they are being met for each child, young person and adult in their care<sup>33</sup>.

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-physical-activity-guidelines>

Advantage Mentoring is designed by senior NHS strategists and leading professional football clubs' community organisations (CCOs) to provide free weekly mental health and emotional wellbeing mentoring support for 14-21 year olds that re-establishes aspirations and a sense of connection.

Advantage is a unique partnership between the CCOs of West Ham, Arsenal, Leyton Orient, Crystal Palace, Manchester City and Chelsea and NHS Trusts, increasing access to NHS Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) by reducing health inequalities.

Trained youth worker mentors from CCOs are typically from the local community and thus more trusted and relatable for children and young people. The staff's tracksuit and club badge are also powerful engagement tools.

Children and young people are referred to the programme from other CCO sessions such as Kicks, as well as the CAMHS waiting list, schools, GPs and other local community agencies. Intervention happens at a preventative stage to tackle issues early and help relieve CAMHS's year-long waiting lists.

Over the past year, the Anna Freud Centre evaluated Advantage's impact on 48 young people with a mean age of 16 years. 67% were male, 75% were from minoritised ethnic backgrounds and the majority were from areas with high levels of multiple deprivation. In six months on the programme, mentees reported significant improvements across all areas of mental wellbeing, stress and progress towards individual goals.

Advantage Mentoring Managing Director Konrad Deckers Dowber said: "Our programme is about helping children and young people re-engage, find a sense of connection, develop a positive outlook and re-ignite passions. For them, it's a safe space where they're not in school or at home.

*"Their local football club is way cooler than a sterile NHS environment, so we use the power of the club badges and the specialist skillset of club staff to achieve positive change."*



## PREVENTION AND DIVERSION

This Agreement recognises ‘prevention’ as a term for targeted provision and focuses on the children, young people and adults who may have had some initial contact with criminal justice services.

‘Diversion’ is where children, young people and adults with an offence will or can receive an alternative outcome that does not result in a criminal record. For many reasons, there are fewer organisations working to divert entrants to the secure estate and provide an alternative to custody.

With a general consensus that ‘prevention is better than cure’, it is no surprise that a huge array of organisations and initiatives provide positive activities and wraparound support for some of the most vulnerable and complex people living in targeted communities across the country. Many of them work closely with the Police, community safety partners, the Youth Justice System and criminal justice services as they recognise the importance of working with and as part of a multi-agency approach.

Sadly, much of the targeted physical activity and sport provision is also at risk of stopping when funding agreements come to an end, which carries a risk of increasing adversity and trauma for beneficiaries.

Whilst the provision focused on the prevention and diversion of crime is an area that arguably has the greatest level of activity and crossover in terms of legislation, it is also an area that has the biggest gap in coordination and evidence at sufficient scale to determine what really does and does not work.

### Priority areas:

- Greater coordination and investment in the organisations delivering physical activity and sport, particularly in communities where health inequalities, disproportionality, violence, crime and anti-social behaviour are higher. Also utilising such opportunities to introduce quality assurance measures and coordinate data collection to build a robust evidence base at scale.
- Greater focus on developing place-based networks and communicative partnerships between criminal justice services and organisations using physical activity and sport as they are a key component for crime prevention and desistance strategies<sup>34</sup>.

<sup>34</sup> <https://allianceofsport.org/news/partnerships-research-haydn-morgan-university-gloucestershire/#:~:text=Dr%20Morgan%20said%3A%20%E2%80%9CThe%20idea%20of%20a%20true,reach%20out%20and%20ensure%20all%20gaps%20are%20filled.>

The community of Burngreave in Sheffield is highly ethnically diverse but also beset by social issues including crime, violence and anti-social behaviour. For children and young people, its streets can be dangerous.

In the heart of Burngreave is an organisation called Reach Up Youth which uses sport and physical activity, delivered by local role models, as a tool to engage participants and improve their life chances through mentoring, volunteering, education and leadership opportunities.

Reach Up Youth is just one specialist partner on a nationwide project called Levelling the Playing Field, a £1.7m project funded by the London Marathon Charitable Trust. Its aim is to increase the number of ethnically diverse children and young people taking part in sport and physical activity, and in doing so, prevent and divert them from becoming involved in the Youth Justice System.

Across South Yorkshire, London, Gwent and the West Midlands, other Levelling the Playing Field partners are also deeply embedded in their local communities and using sport and physical activity to achieve positive change.

Levelling the Playing Field brings them all together to share good practice, provide specialist training, evidence their impact and use it to scale up and advance policy, practice and future investment.



## NON-CUSTODIAL SENTENCES

Non-custodial sentences include discharges, fines and community orders. In the year ending June 2019, 90% of people sentenced in England and Wales were given non-custodial sentences<sup>35</sup>.

Many of the children, young people and adults who receive a non-custodial sentence may already be living an active and healthy lifestyle. However, for those who aren't, an introduction to physical activity and sport may provide meaningful rehabilitation outcomes.

For example, evidence suggests that as well as improving athletic ability and employment opportunities, sport can meet a need for excitement and risk-taking, increases feelings of empowerment and connectedness, improves problem-solving and decision-making skills, teamwork, self-esteem and cognitive competencies, and provides positive role models and mentors<sup>36</sup>.

One such way to increase physical activity levels is through social prescribing and initiatives are currently being developed across the Criminal Justice System.

'Social prescribing schemes can involve a variety of activities which are typically provided by voluntary and community sector organisations. There are many different models for social prescribing, but most involve a link worker or navigator who works with people to access local sources of support.

'Community-centred ways of working can be more effective than more traditional services in improving the health and wellbeing of marginalised groups and vulnerable individuals. For this reason, they are an essential way of reducing health inequalities within a local area or community.<sup>37</sup>

### Priority area:

- Continue to introduce and implement social prescribing provision across the Criminal Justice System. Consider how additional support can be provided for link workers or navigators so that they can build relevant networks and increase opportunities for children, young people and adults involved with, and at risk of entering the Criminal Justice System.

Consideration should also be given to ensuring how any developments remain linked into the wider social prescribing work taking place across the Integrated Care Systems.

<sup>35</sup> <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/POST-PN-0613/POST-PN-0613.pdf>

<sup>36</sup> <https://allianceofsport.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/42541-Rugby-Football-Report-Under10mb.pdf>

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/social-prescribing-applying-all-our-health/social-prescribing-applying-all-our-health#social-prescribing>

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.england.nhs.uk/integratedcare/what-is-integrated-care/>

Mohammed Ali went to court for a series of driving offences committed during a tough time when his son was diagnosed with an extremely rare brittle bone disease at only three weeks old. Mohammed found this news difficult to process and spiralled into a deep depression over a period of six months.

He was convicted without any consideration made for his family or mental health issues or signposting for the trauma he was enduring. He was ordered to fulfil the community payback order he had received.

By chance, Mohammed's probation worker had heard about Active Seconds Charity Shop/Community Hub which is part of Active Lancashire's Challenge through Sport Initiative. The innovative programme supports and mentors people in recovery from substance misuse and mental health issues and who are in the Criminal Justice System. Mohammed was referred to Active Seconds via social prescription.

He built a rapport with the manager at Active Seconds and started his community payback order there. It was not a smooth journey, but he felt listened to and that somebody cared.

Mohammed said: "Once my son was diagnosed, everything seemed bleak and every time he broke a bone, I couldn't cope. I didn't turn up to work for two months, but even after that all the manager wanted to do was talk to me and help me get through it. Even after my community payback has ended, I want to stay at Active Seconds because they have helped me more than I could have ever imagined.

*"An elderly lady came into the shop and told me she couldn't afford the delivery charge for an item of furniture. I spoke with the manager and managed to knock the price off. The customer was so relieved that she gave me a hug. I've never felt so happy and emotional about helping someone out. It just shows why it's great to work here because you can really make a difference."*



## CUSTODY

Physical activity and sport is delivered in prisons and young offender institutions by specialist Physical Education Instructors and Physical Education Support Officers, supported by Regional Physical Education Managers and led by a Head of Physical Education as policy lead for sport in custody. The responsibility for delivering activity in Secure Training Centres and Secure Children's Homes can vary and is often delivered by a mixture of staff, who often have a passion and interest in particular activities that may appeal to the children in their care.

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a monumental and adverse impact on physical activity levels and the health and wellbeing of people living in the secure estates. Whilst staff are working hard to reinstall programmes of physical activity and sport, Get Well Stay Well provides an opportunity to forge higher expectations in increasing physical activity levels and tackling health inequalities.

Another key stakeholder in the delivery of physical activity and sport in custody are third sector organisations. These organisations can provide additional skills, experiences, relatable role models and when used effectively should be supporting the transition back into the community with a focus on providing support and opportunities that can help reduce reoffending.

### Priority areas:

- Improve the monitoring of physical activity levels in custody and better understand the motivations towards being active. Also, seek to establish any positive correlations between the increase in physical activity levels and the decrease of ill-health and negative behaviours as a potential case for greater investment and allocation of resources.
- Prioritise meeting the Chief Medical Officer's guidelines for the minimum levels of physical activity for children, young people and adults in custody and within their personalised care plans and resettlement plans.
- Improve guidance and support for all third sector organisations who are in a position to provide physical activity and sport services to the youth and adult secure estates. By making it easier to engage with secure settings and publishing guidance on what does and does not work, third sector organisations will be better placed to access additional resources which can in turn increase support for the reduction of reoffending.

Daniel is a trainee chef and loves the variety and creativity in his job but his favourite thing is the sense of achievement, knowing that someone will appreciate the tastes and flavours that he's created. He loves that feeling of working to benefit others, something he learned in Feltham Young Offenders Institute and through his Duke of Edinburgh's Awards (DofE). He says it's one of many lessons he learned in prison.

Daniel was sent there for robbery which was, when he looks back, a desperate cry for help, a bid to escape the life he was leading which was a 'dark place' and filled with a sense of regret and missed opportunities. He now believes that everyone has something to offer in life, it's just about making the right choices.

Daniel is proud of his DofE achievement because for the first time in his life, he felt he was making a difference. He began volunteering for his DofE Award, making snuffle mats for dogs despite a severe dog allergy because he was so committed to his awards and so keen to give back. He was introduced to DofE leaders Michelle and Keith through Parkrun and says they really are 'championing' young men who have often had no love, care and support throughout their lives.

Parkrun was Daniel's favourite memory of his DofE Award, teaching him much about perseverance. Although he'd always struggled with running, he showed up each week and kept going, even when his legs were begging him to stop, because he didn't want to disappoint himself and those who were supporting him and pushing him to succeed. He was surprised at how much unconditional support and love he received on his DofE journey, something that he and many others in Feltham have never known before and that's why, he believes, it's so important for the DofE to reach as many young people as possible because the Awards can bring real change. Daniel says the DofE helped him discover his capabilities, understand how much he had to offer and motivate him to be the person he desperately wanted to be, happy, always learning and always striving to make life better for himself and others.



## CONTINUITY OF CARE

For children, young people and adults leaving the secure estate and transitioning into the community, this time can be particularly challenging. Having good physical and mental health will assist with managing relationships, navigating next steps and dealing with adversity.

From those who participated in the report, and from wider attendance at events across the sector, there appears to be a general lack of awareness and support for justice professionals working across Probation, youth justice and commissioned services on how physical activity and sport can be a cost-effective solution in tackling health inequalities and increasing the desistance from crime.

Third sector organisations can be a key player in providing targeted provision, but they reported struggles in accessing resources (particularly for supporting adults), building relationships with justice professionals and knowing where to go for general support and guidance.

Members from our Experts by Experience group recalled very different experiences post-custody. Those who were encouraged to be active or met a positive role model from the physical activity and sport sector all noted the favourable impact this had on their ability to move forwards. However, they all indicated that this happened by accident and not by design.

### Priority areas:

- Improve the knowledge of justice professionals working across Probation and Youth Justice Services to help them better understand the value of physical activity and sport and increase referrals to relevant services to enhance levels of physical, mental and emotional health.
- Drive awareness across sport and physical activity services, sporting bodies and clubs etc. to make them more inclusive and better placed to engage and support people who are justice experienced.

Increasing awareness, support for all staff and enabling stronger partnerships and connections will ultimately increase opportunities for children, young people and adults. By engaging more people in positive activity and helping them to be more active every day, it will ultimately have a positive impact on making our communities a safer place to live, work and play.

In2Sport was developed by South Gloucestershire and Stroud College (SGS) to provide sport education opportunities to individuals who have previous experiences of the Criminal Justice System. In2Sport targets individuals who are typically marginalised and excluded from society, and consequently face many barriers to employment.

Since the programme began in October 2021, 21 prison leavers have engaged in the programme which aims to equip them with the skills and qualifications to pursue a career in the fitness industry. In year one, learners gain a Level 2 Gym Instructor qualification and in year two a Level 3 Personal Training qualification.

In2Sport includes a mixture of theory and practical delivery of sport and gym sessions at the college's on-site sport facilities. Learners also have the college's careers provision at their disposal. In2Sport recently partnered with Empire Fighting Chance who offer work experience opportunities. In2Sport also works closely with the Bristol CFO Activity Hub, who refer individuals into the programme.

*"Over the past year, we have watched our learners go on some quite remarkable journeys,"* said Megan Knowelden, Adult Education Learning Area Manager at SGS College. *"From gaining employment in the fitness industry, to speaking at The Boys at the Crossroads conference – we are so proud of what they have achieved."*

Emma Tustin, Adult Education Programme lead at SGS College, added: *"Sport has been that perfect way of capturing their interest. We've got to know all about their lives and what they are doing on a weekly basis. If we don't hear from them, we ring them. We build trust simply by taking an interest in them as an individual and how we can help them to move forward."*



## IMPLEMENTATION

The **Taskforce on Physical Activity and Sport in the Criminal Justice System** will continue meeting quarterly as a vehicle for increasing coordination across government and providing advice to Ministers.

The members of the Taskforce will contribute to developing the shared work plan and supporting the delivery of shared priorities. Baroness Sater will remain the Chair and the Alliance of Sport its Secretariat.

The Taskforce will also remain committed to engaging key stakeholders in activities that will help shape future priorities. In particular, we will prioritise the following areas:

- The development of a robust body of evidence to inform future investment in programmes using physical activity and sport in criminal justice.
- The support of effective partnership working between commissioners and other stakeholders in order to improve outcomes for the health and wellbeing of the children, young people and adults who are in, or at risk of entering, the Criminal Justice System.

The Taskforce will continue to engage with Expert by Experience groups to ensure that Get Well, Stay Well remains co-designed and informed by the voice of the child and people with lived experience.

To communicate the momentum and impact of Get Well, Stay Well, we propose that a new website is created to promote the members, supporting organisations and the shared work plan. The website will be a central hub for celebrating progress and good practice through case studies, news and blogs. It will also be a focal point for associated research publications and reports through the creation of a new Insight Hub for the sector.

Finally, we suggest that an annual Get Well, Stay Well progress report is produced, and an annual celebration event is held to share learning and insights, connect policy makers and practitioners and be a nucleus for the development of partnerships and collaborations.

## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Enhance the physical activity and sport workforce** by equipping it with the skills and knowledge to better support children, young people and adults who have experienced adversity and trauma. This further extends to the need for greater awareness around neurodiversity.
2. **Stronger representation of positive activity within each Integrated Care Service** and a national commitment from each Integrated Care Board to prioritise the UK Chief Medical Officer's physical activity guidelines, ensuring they are being met for each child, young person and adult in their care.
3. **Greater coordination and investment in the organisations delivering physical activity and sport**, particularly in communities where health inequalities, disproportionality, crime and anti-social behaviour are higher. Also utilising such opportunities to introduce quality assurance measures and coordinate data collection to build a robust evidence base at scale.
4. **Greater focus on developing place-based networks and communicative partnerships** between criminal justice services and organisations using physical activity and sport as they are a key component for crime prevention and desistance strategies
5. **Continue to introduce and implement social prescribing provision across the Criminal Justice System.** Consider how additional support can be provided for link workers or navigators so that they can build relevant networks and increase opportunities for children, young people and adults involved with, and at risk of entering the Criminal Justice System.
6. **Improve the monitoring of physical activity levels in custody** and better understand the motivations towards being active whilst also seeking to establish any positive correlations between the increase in physical activity levels and the decrease of ill-health and negative behaviours as a potential case for greater investment and allocation of resources.
7. **Prioritise meeting the Chief Medical Officer's guidelines for the minimum levels of physical activity** for children, young people and adults in custody and within their personalised care plans and resettlement plans.
8. **Improve guidance and support for all third sector organisations** who are in a position to provide physical activity and sport services to the youth and adult secure estates. By making it easier to engage with secure settings and publishing guidance on what does and does not work, third sector organisations will be better placed to access additional resources which can in turn increase support for the reduction of reoffending.
9. **Improve the knowledge of justice professionals** working across Probation and Youth Justice Services to help them better understand the value of physical activity and sport and increase referrals to relevant services to enhance levels of physical, mental and emotional health.
10. **Drive awareness across sport and physical activity services, sporting bodies and clubs** etc. to make them more inclusive and better placed to engage and support people who are justice experienced.

