



25 February 2016

Dear Colleagues,

An update from across Sport England and the sector:

Online strategy consultation

The online consultation is open until tomorrow. To date we've had over 500 responses from a diverse range of stakeholders. If you have any queries or concerns about completing this please speak to your Relationship Manager.

Talent and performance consultation

We have recently sent an invite to your Talent Lead in relation to our talent and performance strategy consultation sessions on 1 and 2 March. We've had responses now from most partners. I look forward to meeting your colleagues on the day, and hearing and discussing their views.

Changes to the Advanced Apprenticeship of Sporting Excellence (AASE)

Your Talent and Performance colleagues may have made you aware of recent changes to funding eligibility for the AASE programme. There is a specific rule which prevents young people from accessing apprenticeship funding if they are also studying on an Education Funding Agency (EFA) programme, such as A Levels. Until very recently AASE athletes had an exemption to this rule due to the nature of sport and the uncertainties of an individual becoming an elite athlete, however this exemption has now been revoked by the Skills Funding Agency.

We are aware already of the potential negative impact this could have on your athletes and talent pathway. We are working closely with Skills Active to assess the scale of the impact, so thanks to many of you who have responded quickly and provided information outlining concerns. We plan to raise the matter with the DCMS and the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills to explore whether this rule change can be re-considered. If you are considering your own individual action, I would strongly urge you to first contact your Relationship Manager to ensure a unified approach.

Efficiency reviews

The recent Government Sport Strategy 'Sporting Future' recognises the challenges the sector has in terms of its reliance on public funding. It specifically highlights an expectation for us to support you to develop a more sustainable funding model over time, whilst developing options for back office efficiencies, co-location, shared services and so on.

We have been working on some ideas and tools for this area, to help you get ahead of the game and have as much information as possible at your disposal for your strategy planning. To do this we need to:

1. Collect financial data (in partnership with UK Sport, led by Moore Stephens)
2. Conduct efficiency review pilot studies (through our governance support framework)
3. Develop shared service modelling (in partnership with the Sport and Recreation Alliance and CEO Forum)

Sport England, or our partners as above, will be in touch over the next few weeks so we can help you understand where the greatest gains can be made. We know it's a busy time so in advance, thank you for your support – we look forward to completing the research and sharing the support tools with you soon.

#### Dates for your diary

1-2 March – Talent and performance consultations

22 March – Sport England Board meeting including Payment for Results decisions

23 March – Release of Payment for Results decisions

1-15 April – Quarter 4 finance and governance window

8 June – APS pre-release

9 June – APS release day

Best wishes

Phil

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