EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HIGHER EDUCATION AND SPORT IN ENGLAND

HIGHER EDUCATION BRO...
Higher education has always been an important player in providing opportunities for people to start, stay and succeed in sport. Its important contribution has, however, rarely received the recognition it deserves. This first ever national ‘audit’ of the contribution of HE to sport, carried out by Taylor Nelson Sofres on behalf of Sport England, shows that HE institutions play an even bigger role in sport than many may have previously thought.

Higher Education Institutions do not just cater extensively for the needs of their student population, but also for local schools, local sports clubs (both professional and amateur), sports governing bodies, local authorities, sports colleges and other Higher/Further Education Institutions. The extent of these partnerships and the numerous ways in which HE institutions reach out to their local communities provides a strong foundation to build on for the future.

Sport England has recently published the *Framework for Sport in England*, which identifies the importance of utilising education as a driver for increasing participation in physical activity, and raising the prospect of HE institutions playing an even bigger role in community sport provision. Amongst other things, this will involve increasing awareness of the facilities and access to sporting opportunities that already exist, and establishing innovative practice that capitalises on this and brings in new participants and new students.

We talk of the benefits that sport can give to participants, such as fostering teamwork, principles of fair-play, promoting self-confidence, a healthy sense of competition and striving to continually improve performance and better oneself. When you look at these benefits, and how similar many of them are to those that people in Higher Education receive, it is obvious how these two sectors complement each other. The next step is to work together in order to realise these mutually beneficial outcomes, to improve both the educational and sporting prospects of the nation.
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Overview

This research study was commissioned by Sport England to assess the contribution that Higher Education (HE) institutions make to the provision of participation and excellence in sport in England. Through this research and the findings documented in this report it can be seen that this contribution is already both substantial and diverse. Even more positively it suggests that given the right commitment, encouragement and support there is enormous potential for Higher Education to play an even bigger role.

The research was carried out by independent consultants (Taylor Nelson Sofres) and was advised by a steering group of experts in the area of HE and sport including individuals with direct experience of managing and delivering sporting opportunities in Higher Education. A 28-page audit form was sent to all Higher Education institutions in England in September 2002. A total of 81 responses were received by the end of December 2002 (83% of the 98 eligible institutions) - a most impressive response, which reflects the interest being shown by HE institutions in this important area.

In general, the picture that emerged from this research is very encouraging. The findings show that universities are already engaging extensively with their communities in a variety of ways, and that there are pockets of innovation delivering real results for sport in their localities. A key recommendation is that more needs to be done to communicate these messages and to promote the sharing of innovation and best practice to make the most of the good work that is already going on. This is an area in which Sport England and all stakeholders in the Higher Education sector need to be involved.

It was found that the number and range of facilities within HE that are available for the community to use is substantial and that their current contribution to community sport should not be underestimated. The evidence also suggests, however, that in many cases university sports facilities are not used to their maximum potential due to lack of awareness of their availability coupled with the perception where people may think that they would not be welcomed or not be allowed to use the facilities should they want to. If universities can reach out to their local communities through sport they can start to overcome these problems of perception and access. In so doing this can only help to break down some of the wider barriers that prevent disadvantaged young people from applying for university places - thus the potential exists to increase the numbers and the social diversity of the student population.

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In this respect, these research findings point to the impact that sport could have in helping to realise the Government aim of increasing participation in Higher Education towards 50% of those aged 18-30, and raising the proportion of students from lower income families who join Higher Education. There is strong evidence to show that those who participate in Higher Education are more likely to participate in sport, both in student life and in adult life after they leave college. There is therefore a potential win-win scenario for both ‘sport’ and ‘HE’. Sport can provide an impetus to get more people into Higher Education and the increasing number and diversity of the student base can make a significant contribution towards sport’s objective of moving towards 70% of the population being physically active by 2020 (from the current level of 30%). The benefits of utilising Higher Education and sport to improve the prospects and health of the nation are clear.

To date, Sport England has invested in the region of £40m towards the development of sports facilities at 18 Higher Education institutions, and over £50m on English Institute of Sport facilities on university sites. Building on the findings of this research it is our intention that the profile of Higher Education and sport is raised to take full advantage of the potential that is on offer.

The diagram opposite shows a visual representation of the eight key findings in relation to Higher Education institutions and sport, and the remainder of this Executive Summary deals with each of these key findings in turn, with relevant examples from the case study institutions.

Level of investment/funding

The level of investment made by universities in non-academic sports areas is significant, and not reliant on external sources.

- The average total combined funding/income for sport in 2000-01 was just under £750,000 per university. This equates to more than £73 million per year across all HE institutions in England.
- Just over half (£38m) of this total amount is raised from income generated through operating facilities and services, a slightly smaller proportion (£34m) comes from internal grants (predominantly directly from the institution and/or the Students’ Union) with just 2% (£1m) of total funding coming from external sources/grants.
- The average expenditure per student by Higher Education institutions on sports provision is £44 per annum. Expenditure per student tends to be higher in institutions with smaller numbers of students, and slightly lower in institutions with very high numbers of students.
- More than four out of every five Higher Education institutions have planned investment programmes for the short to medium term: 62% plan to invest in facilities and/or sports development in the next 12 months.
- Planned budgets for investment in facilities over the next three years range from under £1m to £5 million (53% of institutions with facility development plans) to more than £5 million (26% of those with facility development plans).

Figure 1: Key Findings

An audit of sports provision in Higher Education in Scotland has also recently been conducted. Details are available from: www.sportscotland.org.uk

Copies of the questionnaire are available from Sport England.
Range and extent of partnerships
The vast majority of Higher Education institutions have partnership agreements in place with other organisations.
- Nine out of 10 have developed partnerships with local sports clubs (amateur or professional); three quarters with sports governing bodies; seven out of 10 with local authorities; and two-thirds with other Further/Higher Education institutions.
- Well over half of the institutions have partnership agreements with schools, and two-fifths with Sports Colleges.

The range of partnership agreements shows how universities have been reaching outwards and making contributions to community sport as well as strengthening relationships with national governing bodies (NGBs) and elite sport. It is clear that the sector is realising the benefits of such partnerships (financial as well as strategic), that partnerships with NGBs, for instance, are not the preserve of just a few top sporting institutions and that there is enormous potential to develop and expand these partnerships through sharing of best practice.

Example:
St. Mary’s College has partnership arrangements with UK Athletics and the English Institute of Sport. UK Athletics makes use of sports science and sports rehabilitation equipment and expertise within the college, and supplements this by bringing in additional experts on a part-time basis. The partnership with the EIS brings experts to the College such as doctors, nutritionists and a specialist careers advisor, and was also instrumental in the redevelopment of the weights room.

The college also has ties with London Irish RFC, with the club using some training and sport science facilities, players studying at the college, and a former college lecturer moving on to the coaching staff. The Rugby Academy is also looking to develop strong links with the student rugby team, enabling Academy members to train with the student clubs and play in some matches.

Number and range of facilities
The provision of sports facilities at universities in England is extremely impressive.
As a means of increasing participation in sport and physical activity among students, staff and the wider community, it is clear that universities have a great deal to offer in providing the settings for these activities to take place. An associated benefit is the increased income that would be realised through greater usage of facilities. A recommendation from this study, therefore, is to scope out measures that could be introduced to increase awareness of these facilities and where they are located.

The full range of facilities can be seen in the main report of the findings available from Sport England.
Sport is viewed as an important tool that HE institutions can use to raise aspirations and widen access to the sector as a whole, by making universities more familiar to sections of the community that might otherwise not consider applying for a university course. Some of the ways in which this is done are:

- A number of universities run schemes where they send their students out into schools and community groups to provide qualified coaching.
- Sports mentoring schemes where students visit schools to talk about university life through the medium of sport. These pupils and young people then have the chance to visit the university and play sport there, which helps to break down the perception that universities are intimidating or frightening places.
- Another frequently mentioned way of involving young people in sport and improving their perception of HE institutions is through summer schemes/camps/residentials. Through these schemes, young people become familiar with the university campus in a fun, enjoyable setting. Year round visits from the community also help to reduce negative assumptions about HE Institutions perhaps not being welcoming and inclusive places, so improving their image for many young people.

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Community participation/programmes

- On average, Higher Education sports facilities are available for public use approximately 70% of the time that they are open, and the best estimates are that an average of one visit in three is made by people other than the staff and students of the institution.
- Three quarters of institutions offer some sort of concessionary fees for sports facility usage to the wider community, predominantly to children and older people.
- Two thirds state that they run programmes aiming to increase access to / participation by the wider community, often through targeted taster sessions and children’s summer schemes.

It is clear that HE institutions are already heavily involved in activities that target the local community, and particularly those from disadvantaged groups. The benefit to the institution is in having the facilities utilised during off peak times, but the benefits to the wider community are far greater. Participation in sport and physical activity has a social dimension, people feel included rather than excluded, it can boost confidence and promote teamwork, not to mention the health benefits of a more active lifestyle. Many HE institutions in fact are filling the gap that private operators in health and fitness are not covering by actively helping those on lower incomes or from groups who do not traditionally take part in sport to become involved. These activities need to be acknowledged and promoted throughout the HE sector and into the wider community beyond. The case study section has some interesting examples of current practice that other institutions could adopt or adapt.

Widening access to HE through sport

Many institutions are keen to strengthen their links with the local community, and through these links enable young people to consider entering Higher Education.

Example:

“The tertiary education market is changing. No longer is it that students pick anywhere in the country that they want to spend three years studying; a much higher proportion of students are staying closer to home because of the economic costs of going away. Therefore if a university can create linkages into the community, the more likely it is to attract students from within the local community, including the opportunity to get more students from deprived areas.”

(Sussex Sports Partnership Manager)

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Example:

The University of Bradford has been running a Junior University Scheme with the LEA since 1996. This scheme involves 13-18 year olds from black and ethnic minority communities, and was set up to develop education provision for minority ethnic communities, increase the number of minority ethnic students, encourage participation and tackle educational under-achievement. It now supports education in the whole community by encouraging links with local schools and familiarising children over 14 with the University campus. Courses include sports activities for school children on campus. The junior University organises weekly Saturday sessions (free lectures and workshops for children) and during the school and bank holidays there are longer courses that children attend for free and they are encouraged to join in with sports activities that are arranged for them.

The scheme is considered very successful, offering young learners the chance to visit the University, feel comfortable with it, and potentially consider going on to Higher Education when they might not otherwise have considered it.

### Figure 4: Community participation / access programmes aimed at specific sections of the local community

| Base: All respondents: 81 |          |
|--------------------------|--|---------------------|
|                         | %  |
| Children                 | 22 |
| Older people (60+)       | 36 |
| Women and girls          | 18 |
| People with disabilities | 18 |
| People who do not participate in sport | 17 |
| Black and ethnic minorities | 20 |
| People on low incomes    | 15 |
| Other                    | 10 |
| None                     | 6  |

### Other

- Example:

At Manchester Metropolitan University’s Alsager campus, a project has been set up aimed at improving and prolonging the lives of older people. Exercise and sports scientists led a 12-week programme of exercise for local 65-80 year olds, to monitor how controlled routines can ward off muscle wasting and help people stay active.

A scheme for the over 50s is run at MMU’s Didsbury Sports Centre, offering badminton, tennis, table tennis and country dancing.

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Staffing/employment levels

In total, close to 4,000 people are employed in the provision of sport in Higher Education in England. Universities invest large amounts of money in the employment of staff, approximately £150m, with an average of 21 full-time equivalent (FTE) sports based employees per institution, and an average of 38 sports people in post. Of these, around a quarter are students, therefore providing valuable work experience and income to over 1,000 students overall.

From sports science, development and coaching, to marketing, administration and facility management, the range of employment opportunities offered by HE institutions for those interested in sport are varied. The challenge for HE institutions is to ensure they are attracting and retaining the best people to apply, which in turn would raise the profile of the sector generally.

Quality assessment/accreditation

Currently two out of every five institutions have some sort of quality accreditation for their sports facilities. The most common accreditation is ‘Investors in People’, a national standard which sets a level of good practice for training and development of people to achieve business goals. The majority of HE sports facilities, however, do not have any quality accreditations.

Three quarters of HE institutions would like to see a national quality assessment scheme for the sector, and 85% would be interested in participating in a national benchmarking of quality schemes. This would provide a tangible opportunity to share best practice.

Elite support/programmes & bursaries

Universities offer a range of programmes to support elite performers, with six out of 10 institutions currently working with National Governing Bodies of Sport to provide such support. The services available to these elite performers include sports medicine, sports science, physiotherapy and lifestyle management.

Three quarters of institutions offer sports bursaries to students. Where bursaries are offered, an average of 20 students can benefit per year, with average bursaries of between £200 and £1,500 per year. However, additional ‘in-kind’ contributions such as staff time, sports science support, and accommodation, are estimated to value around £10,000 per institution.

Example:
The University of Brighton is a base for a number of programmes run by schools, local authorities, NGBs and other organisations, many of which are aimed at local children. These events and programmes all contribute to making the university campus a familiar place, and subsequently raising awareness of the possibilities of entering Higher Education in the minds of local children. The intention is that by making the university environment familiar to young people through sporting activities, that more will choose to enter HE, whether it is to study a sport-related course or one offered by another faculty. Students and staff also do a variety of volunteering and outreach work with schools, community groups, disability groups and sports specific groups.

Example:
The College of St. Mark and St. John (Marjons) has well established links with the NGBs of their four focus sports: Basketball, netball, rugby and football. Through these links the College is supporting talent identification and strategic planning for sport. For example, Marjons is in negotiation with the FA to establish an Academy of Women’s Football, based at the College in partnership with Plymouth Argyle and Plymouth CFE. This would provide seamless transitions for elite players in both their education and their football development.

Marjons also offers scholarships and bursaries to those competing at appropriate levels in their sport. Bursaries are given for the student’s training, equipment and competition travel expenses. The scholarships are helping to attract students to the College, and interest in them is very high within the relevant sports.
Case studies

The following eight institutions were chosen for case studies, to cover a range of different situations. Together they embrace a range of different sizes, both with and without sports-related courses, with different levels of central institutional support for sport, but all demonstrate aspects of innovation in their operational practices, particularly in working in partnership with other organisations. Visits to the case study institutions were made in January and February 2003, to tour the sports facilities and interview staff, students, external partners and external facility users.

- University of Bradford
- University of Brighton
- University of Hertfordshire
- Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU)
- University of Northumbria
- College of St Mark and St John (Marjon)
- St Mary's College
- University of Warwick

Most of the institutions chosen for case study have a Director of Sport, and all but one either have, or are in the process of writing a Strategy for Sport document which will be endorsed by their institution (often ministering or linking into the overall institutional strategy). Five of the case study institutions operated sports facilities on more than one site, in some cases, many miles apart. They demonstrated a determination to deliver the best quality sport provision to all students, regardless of their location, within the constraints of finance or space, which are out of their control.

Some of the case study institutions demonstrated innovative arrangements for student sports clubs. In two cases, student sports clubs reported to the Director of Sport (or his department) rather than to the Student's Union or separate Athletics Union. In five of the institutions, some student sports clubs were open to public membership (primarily excluding membership of teams expressly for students e.g. BUSA competitions), while other clubs had merged with local sports clubs (in some cases the student club structure remaining dominant, and in others, the student club being absorbed into a local open access club). Travel to competitions emerged as a major issue for student sports people, both in terms of financial cost, and time required (sometimes missing tuition).

Two out of the eight case study institutions shared some of their sports facilities with other educational institutions, while almost all allowed (and encouraged) community access to their sports facilities. Facility hire to external users (e.g. professional and amateur clubs) is often an important source of revenue, sometimes also of prestige, but also of opportunities to develop sport further in the local community. All case study institutions were involved in some form of sports development work that reached out into their community beyond their own students and staff, most worked with local schools and voluntary organisations. Several case study institutions hosted sports development posts such as Active Sports Managers and Activators, and NGB development workers. Two institutions were starting to group hosted sports development posts together, to facilitate cross fertilisation of ideas and make a single point of access for a number of different services.

Coach education opportunities for students and other local people were common in the case study institutions, as were schemes encouraging sports volunteering in the local community.

Almost all case study institutions have systems for providing financial and 'in-kind' support for elite student performers; sometimes targeted at 'key' sports. The value of scholarships and bursaries available varied considerably. Several institutions were in the process of reviewing their sports scholarship/bursary schemes and the 'in-kind' support packages available to students. Some had links with professional sports clubs and NGBs that run academies and scholarships, and some institutions provided support to elite sports performers who were not students at the institution.

### Figure 4: Common features within case study institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Bradford</th>
<th>Brighton</th>
<th>Hertfordshire</th>
<th>Manchester Metropolitan</th>
<th>Northumbria</th>
<th>St Mary's</th>
<th>St Mark &amp; St John's</th>
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Conclusion

**Maximising the opportunities HE can bring to sport**

As this research was progressing and the results were being analysed, Sport England was also in the process of leading the development of a new “Framework for Sport in England”. This involved working with The Henley Centre and over 350 stakeholders to assess the key trends and issues which will need to be addressed in order to deliver a more active and successful sporting nation.

Through this process, over 50 ‘drivers’ were identified and through extensive consultation and prioritisation, these were distilled down into seven key ‘drivers’.

Informed by this research and a wider trawl of the evidence base ‘Utilising education’ emerged as one of the seven key drivers. There was a great deal of consensus amongst key stakeholders across the country that to realise our objective of getting 70% of the population regularly active by 2020 we need to maximise the opportunities that HE can bring to sport. These opportunities are both direct in terms of the positive sporting experience gained by those who enter Higher Education and indirect in terms of the important role HE can play in widening access and increasing participation in sport and physical activity in their wider communities.

Within the new ‘Framework for Sport’ Higher and Further Education has been identified as a ‘key setting for change’. The findings from this research will inform the emerging policy and implementation priorities within the National Framework and the nine Regional Plans for Sport due to be published in the early part of 2004. This research has helped to put HE firmly on the sporting map not just as a contributor to elite sporting performance but as a key player in the broader social agenda that seeks to widen and increase participation. It is by utilising the best of what is already available, and building on this with innovation and commitment that we can achieve the goal of a more physically active and successful sporting nation.