

# Conservative Sports Manifesto

Britain has some of the best athletes and sports teams in the world, so it is no surprise that sport plays such a big role in our national life and that people in our country are such passionate sports participants and supporters.

Sport brings many social benefits to people and communities. It helps people perform better at work or school, and lead happier, healthier lives. And supporting sports teams and athletes bridges social divides, bringing people and communities together, both locally and nationally.

Sport can also make a big contribution to our economy. The 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, secured for Britain by Conservative peer, Sebastian Coe, promise to bring lasting economic benefits for this country, as would the 2018 Football World Cup, which England has bid to host. And televised events hosted in the UK have millions of viewers from around the world.

This is why Conservatives are so ambitious about doing more to support sport. We will help extend the success we are seeing at the elite level and boost sports at its grass roots: helping schools and local communities everywhere produce new generations of sporting talent.

Our comprehensive plan to improve the funding, organisation and participation opportunities in sport will help put British sport on course for the highest levels of success:

**1. Boosting sport in schools.** We will secure the best possible future for sport in this country by improving the sporting opportunities for young people in schools. We will:

- **create an Olympic-style school sports event** to raise the profile of competitive sport in schools: this will be a new national competition open to every school;
- **encourage a culture of school sports competition** by setting up and publishing competitive school sport league tables and emphasising the importance of sport in primary schools;
- **create more time for sport in schools** by slimming the curriculum so that schools can dedicate more of the school day to sporting activities; and,
- **enable new Academies to be created by sports bodies**, allowing for more schools that specialise in sporting excellence to be created with state funding.

**2. Creating the support and infrastructure for sporting excellence.** We will ensure that the funding and governance of sport are geared for continuing excellence. We will:

- **secure more funding for sport** by increasing the proportion of National Lottery good cause funding going to sport, and using the Lottery to create a new Community Sports Fund as part of our Olympic legacy strategy, which will improve grassroots sports facilities and provision;
- **create a world-leading organisational structure for sport** post-2012 by bringing together UK Sport, Sport England and the Youth Sport Trust under one roof, while retaining their separate roles, and setting up a cross departmental ministerial working group on sport; and,
- **enable football fans to get involved in owning their clubs** by reforming the football governance arrangements to allow co-operative ownership models to be established by supporters.

**3. Improving grass roots and community sport.** We will support community sport to help more people to get involved in sports at the grass roots level. We will:

- **support volunteer sports organisers** by sweeping away the unnecessary bureaucracy that is deterring volunteers, and work with Sports Coach UK and the National Governing Bodies to deliver a world class coaching system;
- **enable more local sports fields and facilities to be created** by reforming the planning system so local people can create or protect space for sports facilities, and giving people new rights to take over or buy existing facilities at risk of disappearing; and,
- **fund communities to use sport to promote better health** by devolving the NHS public health budgets down to community level, enabling sport and exercise to be used as a means to promote better physical activity and health.

**4. Supporting the upcoming high-level sporting events.** We will work to secure the best major upcoming sporting events and ensure they deliver lasting benefits for the country as a whole. We will:

- **deliver a safe and successful London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics**, and ensure we benefit from a lasting Olympic legacy;
- **strongly support England's 2018 Football World Cup bid**; and,
- **support more high-level sport** by working with the Scottish government to deliver a top-quality Commonwealth Games in Glasgow in 2014, and ensuring the 2013 Rugby League and 2015 Rugby Union World Cups are successful.

## 1. Boosting sport in schools

If we want to secure the best possible future for sport in this country, we have to ensure young people can get involved early in their lives, with strong support for sport in schools and a positive culture of sports competition within and between schools.

Our problem is that, under Labour, there is not enough time given to sports at school, too little competition in school sport and too few children gaining access to the unique benefits for health and well-being that sport can bring.

The amount of competitive sport in schools is worryingly low, with only 22 per cent of primary school pupils and 18 per cent of secondary school pupils regularly participating in inter-school sport.<sup>i</sup>

But despite assurances from Gordon Brown and the then Culture Secretary Andy Burnham that competition is “no longer a dirty word”, Government statistics show that more than 4.7 million schoolchildren are still not participating in inter-school competitions.<sup>ii</sup> And 2.8 million schoolchildren are still not competing in intra-school sports.<sup>iii</sup>

### 1.1. Creating an Olympic-style school sports competition

There are good national competitions for school children, but these focus on elite young athletes rather than regular school teams. The current UK School Games pits elite school-age athletes from across the country against each other, helping school children already on the way to becoming elite athletes to gain valuable competition experience. But it does not allow regular school teams to compete against each other. So we will:

- **create an annual Olympic-style schools sports competition between schools that will climax with a finals session held in the Olympic Stadium.**

The competition will be open to every school and see individual schools crowned as champions in a variety of different sports and age groups. It will be based on a similar mix of sports as the UK School Games but will involve teams from schools as well as individual elite athletes.

We will set aside up to £10 million a year for these games, funded by our National Lottery reforms, and will award the contract to run the competition through a competitive bidding process.

### 1.2. Encouraging a competitive sporting culture in schools

The vast majority of parents want their children to have access to competitive sport but schools do not have to publish information about sporting facilities, the competitions they participate in, or the number of hours of sport available to the average pupil.<sup>iv</sup>

So as part of our wider plans to increase the amount and transparency of information available to parents about prospective schools, we will:

- **require schools to publish data about the amount of competitive sport they provide for their pupils, as well as publishing school sports league tables so that parents can track the success of their children’s schools’ sports results.**

### 1.3. Creating more time for sport in schools

Under Labour, more than one in five pupils still do not get the basic two hours of sport promised in Labour’s 2005 Manifesto and required under the government’s own physical

education target.<sup>v</sup> This is in part because of all the organisational and curriculum bureaucracy imposed on schools by government. We will:

- **reform the school curriculum so that schools can allow more time for essential sporting activity.**

#### **1.4. Enabling new sports Academies to be created**

Drawing on the experience of the Swedish school reforms and the charter school movement in the United States, we will break down the barriers so that any good education provider can set up a new Academy school. Our schools revolution will create a new generation of good small schools with smaller class sizes and high standards of discipline.

These reforms will enable a Conservative government to allow new specialist sports-focused Academies to be created. We will:

- **allow sports bodies to come forward and create new schools with state funding.**

## **2. The support and infrastructure for sporting excellence**

The various sports clubs across our country, from the large, professional outfits to the small, community-based teams, do a fantastic job raising funds and getting people of all ages involved in sports at all levels.

Research shows that people who play sport tend to be happier and healthier, are more socially cohesive and perform better in school and work.<sup>vi</sup> We believe that in recognition of the huge social value of sport, government has a role to play in supporting and promoting sport at all levels.

### **2.1. Securing better funding for sport**

The National Lottery is major source of funding for sport. Since it was created by the last Conservative government, the Lottery has provided a vital lifeline for many local clubs, and lottery grants have been crucial for refurbishing community sporting facilities, building new ones and developing programmes that use sport to support community cohesion, improve health and raise education levels.

But under Labour, the money going into sport from the National Lottery has more than halved in real terms, from £472 million in 1997/98 to £210 million in 2008/09 – a drop of 56 per cent.<sup>vii</sup>

We will:

- **increase the proportion of National Lottery funding going to sport by increasing its share of good cause money to 20 per cent;**
- **use the Lottery to create a new Community Sports Fund as part of our Olympic legacy strategy, which will improve grassroots sports facilities and provision; and,**
- **look to switch to a Gross Profits Tax system, enabling the operator to increase both tax receipts to the Treasury and returns to the good causes.**

### **2.2. Creating a world-leading organisational structure for sport**

Under Labour, the three key government bodies for sport – UK Sport, Sport England and the Youth Sport Trust – do not work well enough together.

There is also a lack of coordination over the delivery of sport across government. Departments like the Home Office, the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Department of Health all administer major sport or exercise programmes, with varying and diverging objectives.

We want to create a world leading organisational structure for sport, so we will:

- **bring together UK Sport, Sport England and the Youth Sport Trust under one roof, while retaining their distinct roles and responsibilities; and,**
- **set up a cross-departmental working group of ministers to streamline the delivery of sport programmes across government.**

### **2.3. Enabling football fans to get involved in running their clubs**

We support the moves towards fan ownership that have been made at clubs such as AFC Wimbledon, Brentford and Exeter City and on a more limited scale at countless other clubs.

This model allows fans to invest in ownership stakes in their clubs, giving supporters more influence over clubs' activities, while in turn allowing clubs to attract equity to raise capital rather than relying on debt. This helps to create a more sustainable financial footing and to prevent some of the severe debt problems some clubs have faced.

In recognition of the benefits of this approach, we will:

- **reform the football governance arrangements so co-operative ownership models can be established by supporters, as part of a wider package of reform of football finance and governance.**

### 3. Improving grass roots community sport

The benefits to society of the thousands of community-based sports clubs around the country are clear. For example, sport increases physical activity, health and well-being - and these benefits are needed more today than ever. Levels of obesity are increasing worryingly, especially among children: nearly a third of eleven year olds now qualify as overweight or obese, for example.<sup>viii</sup> The Government's Chief Medical Officer for England, Sir Liam Donaldson, has spoken about his deep concern over our "obesity time-bomb" which he has described as a "national crisis".<sup>ix</sup> And the Government has estimated the cost to the UK economy of physical inactivity to be at least £2 billion a year.<sup>x</sup>

Too few people are able to take part in sports at the grass roots level. The latest *Survey of Sports Clubs* from the Central Council of Physical Recreation showed that in the last year, membership numbers had remained static or fallen in two thirds of sports clubs.<sup>xi</sup>

We need to do more to encourage essential sports club provision and scale back the bureaucracy that is putting off volunteers.

#### 3.1. Supporting volunteers

Volunteers are the backbone of community sport but voluntary activity can be discouraged by unnecessary bureaucracy, especially in relation to arranging sports activities for young people.

We believe that people working in positions of trust with children should go through a proper criminal record check. But Labour's new system goes too far. We want to restore a sensible approach to risk to reduce the fear of litigation that can put people off volunteering to organise activities for children. We will:

- **review the criminal records and 'vetting and barring' regime and scale it back to common sense levels; and,**
- **as long as there is parental consent and sensible precautions are taken, sports and activity organisers should only be liable for negligence if they show deliberate intent or reckless behaviour.**

Bringing good volunteer coaches into amateur sport is also crucial, so we will:

- **work with Sports Coach UK and the National Governing Bodies to help deliver a world class coaching system.**

#### 3.2. Enabling more sports fields and facilities to be created

We have set out radical plans to introduce a new 'open source' planning system. This will mean that people in each neighbourhood will be able to specify what kind of development they want to see in their area, as part of a 'neighbourhood plan'.

This will have real benefits for local people who want to do more to create facilities for sports in their areas. We will:

- **allow local people to propose that areas of land can be used for sports fields as part of their neighbourhood plan; and,**
- **amend the 'Use Classes Order' so that people can designate buildings the purposes they want to see in their communities, including the development of local sports facilities.**

We also want to empower local people to use publicly-owned assets, like land and buildings, for community sports use, as well as allowing people to buy facilities outright, including existing sports facilities, if they are under-used and at risk of being sold off. This will provide real opportunities for local people to protect and extend local sports facilities.

We will:

- **give local people a new right of first refusal to buy community assets, including sports facilities, that are being sold off; and,**
- **allow local people to bid to take over the running of publicly-owned community facilities, like swimming pools or leisure centres, if they can show they can manage the facility more efficiently and effectively than the state.**

### **3.3. Funding communities to use sport to promote better health**

We have set out plans to turn the Department of Health into a Department for Public Health so that the promotion of good health and prevention of illness get the attention they need.

As part of our plans, we will provide separate public health funding to local communities, which will be accountable for – and paid according to – how successful they are in improving their residents' health.

Because sport brings proven health benefits, our public health reforms will:

- **allow communities to fund sport initiatives as a means of promoting better physical activity and health.**

## 4. Supporting the best sporting events

We want more elite sporting events, like the Olympics, to be held in this country, with all the benefits they bring. Our plans to reform the structure of sports governance will strengthen our ability to form a co-ordinated approach to attract these events. But we are also committed to ensuring that our major upcoming sporting events are a success.

In only two years, London will be hosting the Olympic and Paralympic Games. But the Starting Gate Review into the Olympic Sports Legacy, commissioned by DCMS, is extremely critical of Labour's lack of achievement on sports legacy so far.

We will:

- **deliver a safe and successful London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics.** And we will ensure that the Games leave a quantifiable and lasting sports legacy for the country. For example, we will use the Lottery to create a Community Sports Fund to improve grassroots sports facilities and provision. This will be funded using some of the extra money made available by our National Lottery reforms;
- **strongly support England's 2018 World Cup bid; and,**
- **support more high-level sport** by working with the Scottish government to deliver a top-quality Commonwealth Games in Glasgow in 2014, and ensuring the 2013 Rugby League and 2015 Rugby Union World Cups are successful.

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<sup>i</sup> TNS, *2008/09 School Sport Survey*, p.22

<sup>ii</sup> TNS, *2008/09 School Sport Survey*, p.20 and *Schools and Pupils in England*, 27 September 2007

<sup>iii</sup> TNS, *2008/09 School Sport Survey*, p.18 and *Schools and Pupils in England*, 27 September 2007

<sup>iv</sup> *Sport and the family* (MORI poll, 25 July 2000)

<sup>v</sup> TNS, *2008/09 School Sport Survey*, October 2009, p.16 and *Labour Party Manifesto 2005*, p.95

<sup>vi</sup> For example, see research such as: Carter, P. *The Carter Report: Review of national sport effort and resource*, 2005; Sturm, R. & Wells, K.B., Does obesity contribute as much to morbidity as poverty or smoking? *Public Health*, 2001, 115: 229-235.

<sup>vii</sup> *Hansard*, 20 October 2009, Col. 1328WA

<sup>viii</sup> *National Child Measurement Programme: 2007/8 school year*, Headline results, Department of Health and Department of Children, Schools and Families, December 2009

<sup>ix</sup> *BBC News online*, 17 December 2008

<sup>x</sup> *Hansard*, col. 1050WA, 18 March 2008

<sup>xi</sup> Central Council of Physical Recreation, *Survey of Sports Clubs*, 3 November 2009