

Sport Minister's SRA annual conference speech

Thank you very much for inviting me to speak at today's conference, and for giving me the opportunity to talk about the way COVID has affected sport.

It has been an incredibly difficult year for the entire country – including the whole sports sector. So let me first give my special thanks to Lisa Wainwright and the Sport and Recreation Alliance for organising this virtual conference, and bringing together some of the countless people who have helped the government mitigate the far-reaching effects of Covid.

I want to talk today about what the Government is doing to help support the sector generally. But first I'd like to highlight the cooperation and collaboration that has taken place across sport to get us this far. You've all offered incredible commitment, time, energy and expertise throughout the crisis. We wouldn't have made the progress we have without you.

I've worked particularly closely with the Sport and Recreation Alliance, who have served as a forum for many of our partner organisations on the sport and physical activity side. I know the Alliance will be a unifying voice for the sector going forward, and I'd like to thank them in particular for the role they played in supporting the development of the 'return to play' guidance with my Department. Your contribution has been invaluable.

It's no exaggeration to say that the pandemic has profoundly affected the sporting landscape, and will continue to do so for many months to come.

The irony, of course, is that we need sport now more than ever. Sport is at the heart of our local communities, even in the most challenging of circumstances. And sport and physical activity are crucial to both our physical and mental health – both of which have been tested by this pandemic.

That's why the government has put sport and health at the heart of our coronavirus agenda. We need the country to get match-fit to beat COVID – not just for our physical or mental health, but for the wider socio-economic role that sport can play in leveling up communities across the country.

In fact, for every £1 spent on sport in England, we get £3.28 worth back in terms of societal benefits, according to one Sheffield Hallam study.

That's why we made sure people could exercise even at the height of lockdown. It's why we worked hard to get elite sport back. And it's why sport is broadly exempt under the latest "rule of 6" restrictions.

It's been a huge challenge to get to where we are today. We've taken a detailed, clinician-led approach, working with Public Health England, the Department of Health and you, our sector partners, every step along the way.

We've had dozens of meetings, and published pages of detailed guidance

outlining first how to get elite athletes back into socially-distanced training, and then back into close-contact training.

The elite side was important because getting athletes back for major sporting events, like the Commonwealth Games, can play a huge role in inspiring young people to try sport.

Just take the England Women's football team at the World Cup in France last year. Their heroic performance saw an unprecedented surge in girls wanting to take up football. That was part of a wider and much-needed shift of balance towards women's sport – which will benefit everyone. So it was great to see that momentum.

Throughout all of this, we've put the safety of the athletes, coaches and support staff first and foremost. And by working so closely with the sports themselves, we have made sure this has been a collaborative, consensual effort to create the safest possible environments for everyone involved.

But we're trying to go even further, and get fans back into stadiums safely. We've run a number of pilots and have formed a special Sports Tech Innovation Group to look at technology and other solutions, so that we can get major sporting events running as soon as it is safe to do so.

I know, and I have heard from all of you, that we have to find a way for sports to generate income. It's one of my top priorities.

But we also want to support sport at a community level, through our gyms, pools and leisure centres.

The Government has provided unprecedented financial support to businesses to cope with the pandemic. And from July 25, gyms pools and leisure facilities were able to open their doors to the public once more.

But I know, and my colleague the Communities Secretary has acknowledged in Parliament, that too many facilities have been unable to open since then. We need them to open.

The government has since announced the Income Guarantee Scheme, which aims to support a number of local authorities who have incurred irrecoverable loss of income during coronavirus. We continue to talk across government about further support for the sector, including for those Local Authorities who have outsourced provision of leisure services. And we are working closely with sports to understand any challenges they are facing as a result of the pandemic.

It's so important that exercise facilities remain accessible for everyone, no matter what their background – and gyms and leisure centres play a huge role in that effort.

Of course, Sport England's Community Emergency Fund of £210 million has helped so many community sports clubs and exercise centres remain open during the pandemic. Without this support, they simply would not have survived.

I am sure Tim will want to add more on that when he addresses this conference next. And no doubt he'll also want to mention their excellent online programme, 'Join the Movement,' which helped so many people keep their fitness levels up during lockdown.

In the meantime, I know we are still in a state of flux. We've made great progress, but we face a number of challenges – some of which are still evolving – to get us back on the path to normality.

In the short term, can I first offer my support to the Sport Recreation Alliance in their bid for the secretariat of the International Working Group for Women. You're in a great position to make a tremendous contribution there, so let me wish you the best of luck.

And as Minister for Sport it would be remiss if I didn't mention National Fitness Day, which is in two days' time, and of course the Great British Week of Sport, due to start on 27 September. Let's get behind both of these great initiatives.

In the long-term, though, I know that we can only return to normal with the kind of collaboration that got us through the first stage of the pandemic. Given the incredible commitment, passion and tireless hard work you've shown so far, I'm very confident that we will all pull together as a sector and emerge stronger than ever on the other side. Thank you.

[Emma Howard Boyd, Green Summit speech](#)

I want to start by thanking Andy Burnham for inviting me to speak today. I always enjoy the Green Summit. But, not because I get to tell you all about what my Environment Agency colleagues are doing here in Greater Manchester... although that IS a privilege. I love it because I get to travel to Manchester, meet you, and find out all about the great projects going on in the region. I always leave feeling inspired by your enthusiasm. So, I'm disappointed not to experience that this year.

Instead, I'm speaking to you from my home in Bristol. Another city that shares your passion for the environment. I saw Greta Thunberg when she spoke to a large crowd here earlier in the year. A reminder, if one were needed, that while we seek local solutions to environmental problems in different places, we need them all to add up to something greater than the sum of their parts.

The flood experts at the Environment Agency know all too well that many puddles make a river. The UK had 266 hours of sunshine in May. The previous record for a month was 265 hours in June 1957. Until now, no year has ever had more than 555 hours of sunshine in the spring. This year, we had 626 hours.

This wasn't long after the wettest February on record when highest or second highest river levels on record were reached on 13 rivers. The water levels were higher than the summer floods of 2007 when 55,000 properties flooded.

And while many places did flood and that is a horrible experience for those affected, we estimate that our flood schemes protected over 128,000 properties. Less than 1% of properties at risk in England flooded. And, while the Met Office says there could be more unsettled weather this autumn. We must hope for the best and prepare for the worst.

Beyond our borders, climate extremes and the mass extinction of nature exponentially threatens lives. Whether as Chair of the Environment Agency, as a member of the Global Commission on Adaptation or the UK's Board of Trade, I am hyper conscious that we must galvanise global action to avoid climate shocks that could eclipse the economic effects of the coronavirus crisis. The wildfires in California are just another symptom of a disease we are failing to cure.

But, I don't despair.

Your work here in Greater Manchester – demonstrating the links between economic success, health and well-being, and a healthy environment – is helping Governments on the international stage understand how it's done. Projects like IGNITION, which aims to attract investment for green and blue spaces; should inspire private sector take-up of similar schemes all over the world.

River Irwell

You have just heard from the Youth Combined Authority about the importance of green space. Two weeks ago, the Environment Agency put out our State of the Environment report on Health, People and the Environment, I encourage you to read it, it brings together a lot of evidence about why green spaces reduce the burden on the NHS.

The coronavirus pandemic exposed and amplified green inequality in society. Too many towns and cities in England, especially those with a strong industrial heritage, have too little green space, too few trees, culverted rivers, poor air quality and are at risk of flooding. This holds back economic growth and the building of new homes, but it's also a fundamental moral issue.

Areas of higher deprivation and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic populations have less access to high quality green and blue space and this contributes to differing disease burdens and life expectancy. Creating, and connecting people with, green or blue spaces – as you are doing here in Manchester – will support new local jobs and benefit health & well-being. There is a moment of opportunity right now.

The pandemic led to an increased appreciation of nature and more engagement with the water environment. Hilary McGrady, the National Trust's Director

General said the recovery must respond “to what the lockdown has clearly shown: that people want and need access to nature-rich green spaces near where they live”.

At a time when there is such widespread recognition that the physical and mental health of everyone depends on quality green and blue space, we should value work to protect and enhance the natural world more highly.

In June, the Prime Minister said the way back from the economic impacts of the coronavirus pandemic was to “Build, Build, Build”. This initially caused some alarm, but building back “better, Greener, and faster” could be an opportunity to make development healthier.

The Government is right to emphasise ‘levelling up’; we must make the case that access to green and blue spaces for all adults and children is vital to that. Air pollution today remains the single biggest environmental threat to health in the UK, shortening tens of thousands of lives each year. Even during the industrial revolution, the Victorians realised that parks would provide cities with “lungs”.

Today our ambition can be greater: if we are to Build, Build, Build, we must do so in ways that will help people to Breathe, Breathe, Breathe. The Environment Agency works to speed up sustainable development by helping developers meet regulatory requirements efficiently, providing advice so they get it right first time. It is encouraging to see house builders revisiting plans in light of coronavirus with a focus on providing more and better quality green and blue spaces.

The Environment Agency in Greater Manchester has been working collaboratively to deliver sustainable economic growth with a focus on supporting a green and resilient recovery post pandemic. For instance, the leaders of our area team sit on the Greater Manchester Infrastructure Programme Executive Steering Group, and our support will assist the City Region to explore a devolved infrastructure programme that has the environment, and biodiversity net gain at its heart.

We’ve also given direct support for local Housing Infrastructure Fund bids, one of which saw £27 million secured to deliver flood risk mitigation, river re-naturalisation, and land remediation on the Northern Gateway site. We’ve helped the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and the British Geological Society develop and test an innovative brownfield land cost calculator, to understand viability constraints for future development. And, we’ve supported the Greater Manchester Combined Authority to develop its ‘Greater Manchester Environment Fund’, to develop investible packages of environmental projects, with an ambition to provide around £5 million worth of annual environmental project investment opportunities within five years.

In March this year the Urban Pioneer ended after three years. It improved understanding of a natural capital approach; created a safe space for partners to come together and innovate; and supported the development of the Government’s 25 Year Environment Plan.

Along the way we discovered that in Greater Manchester air quality regulation prevents around 60 deaths a year, 44,000 buildings benefit from reduced road traffic noise, and 1 million people receive mental health benefits from access to green space every year.

Steered by the ambition of the 25 Year Environment Plan, the principle of net gain, and the idea of natural capital, we can improve the country's health through the choices Governments, businesses and individuals make. These range from multibillion-pound investments in green infrastructure and procurement, to healthy choices such as walking and cycling to work, or putting in place property level resilience to reduce the disruption caused by flooding, which is known to have significant mental health impacts.

Between 2015 – 2019 risk management authorities, including the Environment Agency and local authorities, reduced risk to over 2,400 residential properties in Greater Manchester, with the project benefits being significantly more than their £22 million cost. The Salford Scheme delivered a new wetland which provides a fantastic recreational resource for the local community. I have visited the scheme on a number of occasions with Paul Dennett, the Mayor of Salford, most recently in February to see how it worked successfully as a flood storage basin during Storm Ciara.

Environment Agency Salford flood improvement scheme wetlands

We are currently working with organisations such as the Woodland Trust and Moors for the Future to create Natural Flood Management (NFM) projects across Greater Manchester at the top of catchments, which will reduce flood risk and enhance the green space on your doorstep.

River Mersey

While the world's attention turned to the coronavirus crisis this year, flood risk and other shocks precipitated by the climate emergency did not go away. Nor did the importance of restoring nature, here in Greater Manchester and around the world. Throughout the coronavirus lockdown, the Environment Agency remained fully operational, with the majority of staff working from home...and, frontline staff remaining active on the ground tackling issues such as pollution incidents. Work continued on 90 per cent of our flood and coastal risk projects. This work is vital to people's health and financial well-being locally, nationally and around the world.

In June, Dr Maria Neira, Director of Environment, Climate Change and Health at the World Health Organization, said:

The world has gathered around one goal: the race to zero deaths from COVID-19. A healthy recovery from this pandemic means we need to continue and expand this race to zero deaths from climate change and environmental pollution, a race to zero people pushed into

poverty because of health costs, to zero people breathing polluted air.

That may seem like a big ask, but there are projects going on right here in Manchester that could help show the way. Although we are not all in the same room, or even in the same city, those are stories we can tell the whole world, together.

Thank you very much.

[Chilean Chevening scholars meet Ambassador before travelling to the UK](#)

Two scholars from Chile will be travelling to study in the UK. Gabriel Acuña Csillag and Rodrigo Echeopar recently met with Ambassador Ian Duddy.

Gabriel will study Law and Finance (MSc) at Oxford University and Rodrigo will study Innovation, Public Policy and Public Value (MPA) at UCL.

During the meeting they discussed why they want to study in the UK and their career plans after they come back to Chile. They also discussed how can they engage with the Chevening Alumni network during their stay in the UK and after coming back.

The Chevening Alumni network in Chile, currently has over 200 members.

[Chevening Scholarships](#) are awarded to individuals with demonstrable leadership potential who also have strong academic backgrounds. The scholarship offers full financial support for future leaders to study for any eligible master's degree at any UK university whilst also gaining access to a wide range of exclusive academic, professional, and cultural experiences.

Since 1983, over 50,000 outstanding professionals in more than 160 countries have had the opportunity to develop in the UK through Chevening. The UK is committed towards developing the leaders of tomorrow. The deadline for applications is 3 November 2020 at 12:00 GMT (midday), with applications to be submitted via the [Chevening application](#) page.

Chevening Scholarships Officer in Santiago, Marianne Becker, said:

The UK continues to play a leading role globally. Home to some of the world's best universities, brightest students, and most revered academics, the UK's higher education sector promotes the exchange of information and ideas, as well as the building of knowledge and networks. Chevening Scholars find themselves immersed in that

world, and emerge having grown academically, professionally, and personally as a result of their time in the UK.

We are looking for ambitious, professional, forward-thinking leaders from any walk of life. There is no such thing as a 'typical' Chevening Scholar, but one thing that all of our previous scholars have in common is that they were bold enough to step forward and apply.

If you are chosen for Chevening, you will receive a first-rate UK education which can open doors in your career. You will also become part of the global Chevening Alumni network full of dynamic influencers who have shared the same experience as you will, and can offer mentorship, advice, and contacts.

There is a lot to potentially gain from submitting a thoughtful application, so if you or someone you know has what it takes to be a Chevening Scholar, I would encourage you to apply before the 3 November deadline.

More information

Visit the [application guidance](#) for detailed information on the eligibility criteria and scholarship specifications.

About Chevening

Chevening Scholarships are the UK Government's global scholarship programme, funded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and partner organisations. The scholarships support study at UK universities – mostly one year taught master's degrees – for individuals with demonstrable potential to become future leaders, decision-makers, and opinion formers.

The name 'Chevening' comes from Chevening House in Sevenoaks, Kent – currently the joint official residence of the UK's Foreign Secretary.

More information is available at the [Chevening Scholarships](#) website.

Further information

For more information about the activities of the British Embassy in Santiago, follow us on:

National Apprenticeship Week 2021 date announced

- National Apprenticeship Week 2021 will take place from 8 to 14 February 2021
- The annual week-long celebration of apprenticeships will shine a light on the amazing work being done by employers and apprentices across the country
- The Week will also recognise how employers of all sizes have stepped up to the challenge during this unprecedented time.

Apprenticeships and Skills Minister, Gillian Keegan has announced today (Monday 21 September 2020) the 14th annual National Apprenticeship Week will take place from 8 to 14 February 2021.

The annual week-long celebration of apprenticeships, taking place across England, will showcase how apprenticeships have helped employers and people of all ages and backgrounds. Employers are encouraged to promote the great work of their apprentices, whilst highlighting the many benefits apprenticeships bring to their business. Apprentices, at all stages of their learning will also be celebrated over the course of National Apprenticeship Week 2021.

Bringing together apprenticeship ambassadors, MPs, training providers, apprentices, parents and employers, National Apprenticeship Week highlights the work being done across the whole apprenticeship community to promote apprenticeships and their impact.

Announcing the date for the Week in 2021, Apprenticeships and Skills Minister Gillian Keegan said:

“National Apprenticeship Week is a great opportunity to highlight the amazing opportunities that an apprenticeship brings to employers, individuals and the economy.

“It has been fantastic to see how employers of all sizes have gone above and beyond to ensure apprentices can continue their studies during this unprecedented time. The week is also an opportunity to shine a light on how apprentices of all ages and backgrounds are helping to transform businesses across the country.

“As a former apprentice I know what a life changing experience it can be, and I’m looking forward to being part of National Apprenticeship Week 2021 and seeing first-hand the inspiring ways apprentices and their employers continue

to deliver.”

National Apprenticeship Week 2020 was a hugely successful week. Highlights included:

- Over 900 events taking place across England;
- Research commissioned with Mumsnet, revealing outdated views of apprenticeships holding young people back, resulted in over 60 articles in national press and broadcast media;
- Over 1700 articles, features and interviews about apprenticeships appearing during the Week, locally, regionally and nationally;
- NAW2020 and National Apprenticeship Week trended on Twitter on launch day, with #LookBeyond, #AskAnApprentice and #AskAnEmployer all trended UK wide on Twitter over the course of the Week;
- Apprentices, apprentice employers, parents and teachers all supported the Week on social media, with stakeholder toolkits and assets downloaded over 16,000 times.

Peter Mucklow, Further Education Director, Education and Skills Funding Agency concluded:

“I encourage employers, providers, partners and apprentices to start planning for National Apprenticeship Week 2021 now so we can spend the week collectively celebrating the impact of apprenticeships on individuals and our great businesses and public services.

“In the coming months we will release more details for National Apprenticeship Week 2021. By sharing the date in advance I am hopeful that our many partners will start to plan some fresh and inspiring activity that they will run during the Week.”

The theme of National Apprenticeship Week 2021 will be announced later in the Autumn.

More information on National Apprenticeship Week 2021 will be announced on GOV.UK and on social media channels: @Apprenticeships on Twitter and National Apprenticeship Service on LinkedIn.

To find out more about [National Apprenticeship Week 2020](#).

To find out more about apprenticeships visit the [apprenticeships website](#).

[Crime news: contract amends for sending hearing fees rollout](#)

News story

Draft crime contract changes are now online to prepare for new fee payments for work on sending a case to the Crown Court for trial.



New payment fees to cover work completed for sending hearings are being introduced on 19 October 2020 which require crime contract changes.

We've published draft amendments to the 2017 Standard Crime Contract so that you can see the changes now.

The changes will come into effect for representation orders on or after 19 October 2020.

Why is this happening now?

The new fee payment applies to cases sent to the Crown Court for trial. It is part of the package of accelerated measures under the criminal legal aid review (CLAR).

Where can I find out more?

The draft contract we're making available includes a new section in chapter 10 which sets out the contractual rules which will apply to the new fee.

We will also be amending relevant claiming guidance and will publish this before rollout on 19 October.

Further information

[Standard Crime Contract 2017](#) – see new section in chapter 10 for draft amendments

[Criminal Legal Aid \(Remuneration\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2020](#) – to view regulatory changes introducing new fee

[Criminal Legal Aid Review](#) – MOJ consultation hub

Published 21 September 2020