

Vanguard Focus Group and Dinner Follow Up Notes

Introduction

This paper provides a summary of the recent Vanguard Focus Group and Dinner on children's activity and school sport. The Focus Group was part of a series of educational events that bring experts from outside the sector to inform members on the latest policy developments. Each Focus Group is themed around one of ukactive's key strategic objectives.

In previous Focus Groups, the Public Health lead of the RCGP outlined the best means to approach Clinical Commissioning Groups; the Deputy Director of Policy at the NHS Confederations provided insight into the formation and structure of the newly formed Health and Wellbeing Boards; and leading corporate employers GSK, Morrisons, BP and Unilever recently counselled members on their Workplace Health Programmes.

The subsequent Vanguard Dinner was attended by over 80 guests representing commercial brands, leading charities and academy school networks, as well as Vanguard members.

Focus Group

The Focus Group was chaired by David Stalker and included presentations from the Association for Physical Education, ARK Schools, Danone and Vivo Miles.

John I'Anson from the Association for Physical Education started by providing context and summarising the current professional standards, the national curriculum, the latest Ofsted report and the recent funding announcements.

- He outlined the findings of the latest physical education report which stated that one third of primary schools and one quarter of all secondary schools currently require improvement in the delivery of PE and that subject knowledge and confidence was a recurring issue. One fifth of pupils cannot swim by the end of primary school.
- The challenge remains driving higher participation rates and higher standards, defining the role of PE in tackling sedentary lifestyles and growing levels of obesity, improving the quality of teaching and CPD and developing clear and well-used pathways to participation outside school.
- The positives drawn from the national curriculum were that PE remains a statutory requirement across all key stages with attainment targets attached. There is a clear commitment to breadth, balance and physical literacy, with strong statements for OAA, dance and swimming.

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- However, John identified issues around progression, an absence of leadership and distortions between physical education, activity and sport. He also stressed that PE teachers should have greater access to high quality professional learning to improve their subject knowledge and as a result their confidence to deliver higher quality physical education, which can be supplemented by working alongside specialist providers.

Sarah Gregory from ARK schools explained the aim and structure of its network of soon-to-be 27 academy schools. Following the education reforms, academy schools have grown rapidly and now represent over 3,000 primary and secondary schools and reach 2 million children.

- The mission of ARK is to create a network of outstanding schools that provide every pupil the opportunity to go to university or pursue the career of their choice.
- She said that the provision of physical education, activity and sport was taken very seriously at ARK and that even though schools operate in a very particular way it was important that they were open to partnerships and aligned themselves with commercial brands and external providers.
- Sarah acknowledged the significant role that the sector must play in this area and advised that proposals were tailored around the specific needs of each school (based on demographics, requirements, priorities etc.) and that they were underpinned by a strong evidence-base and relevant impact evaluations.

Michael Nelson from the Children's Food Trust spoke about its evaluation of Danone's Eat Like A Champ nutrition programme which is being delivered in primary schools.

- He was not able to provide the official findings (as they are due to be released in a few weeks) but emphasised the positive role and impact that brands such as Danone can have on influencing the behaviour of children.
- He also underlined the importance of evidence-based research and credited Danone for deciding to evaluate their programme.

Finally, Adrian Burt from Vivo Miles presented its digital solution to driving behaviour, rewarding improvement and incentivising increased activity and wellbeing.

- The product has been designed for primary and secondary school users, as well as further education and adult populations. It has over 1.3 million users in every local authority and has raised almost £100,000 for charity.

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- It links with fitness devices to reward activity, performance, progression, continuation and provides points, prizes and charitable donations as an incentive. This digital product has improved behaviour (94%), motivation (94%) and achievement (93%).

Following the presentations the discussion was opened up to all attendees. It was agreed that there needs to be a clearer distinction between physical education, activity and sport and that the provision of all three remains patchy and outdated. It was concluded that the sector has an important role to play in this area and that effective partnerships were the only way to raise standards and achieve better results. The Vanguard Group will be at the forefront of this drive.

Other Key Points for the Sector

The Government has stated that it will not force schools to spend money on specific sport schemes, such as ensuring that there are PE specialists in primary schools, because it contradicts their belief that head teachers should be free to choose how to spend. **However, they have provided ring-fenced sports premium funding for primary schools and are actively encouraging external providers to play a key role in offering their expertise, training and/or provide coaches to primary schools in order to improve sports provision.**

Swimming remained a compulsory part of the current National Curriculum for PE and will remain a compulsory part of the new curriculum when it is released. Whilst schools must ensure they have sufficient access to suitable facilities for swimming lessons, it is not a requirement that they have pool on site. **There is an opportunity for members to open their infrastructure and facilities during off-peak hours to schools that are required to deliver these swimming classes for their pupils.**

Due to shrinking of budgets and reduction of funding, schools are being encouraged to share facilities and form local partnerships. **This provides an opportunity for members to open their facilities up to schools and deliver activity programs in centers during the school day. It also provides an opportunity for suppliers to make use of 'dead space' in schools and provide equipment to fulfill curriculum requirements and open to local residents.**

State secondary schools are given a limited PE budget of roughly £3,000 which is mainly used for basic equipment but can apply to the centralised capital programmes budget for further funding. Applications to this bid are judged upon their impact on the wider school agenda e.g. the IT department often demonstrates that new IT devices will support the entire school. **This poses a challenge to members that must demonstrate the broader benefits of physical activity such as improvements in concentration, behavior and attainment.**

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It is now the responsibility of local authorities to increase the levels of physical activity in their area, including those of children and young people. The level of activity amongst children traditionally falls during half term and school holidays. **There is a case for members to open their facilities during these times, to use expertise to deliver children's program during school holiday and potentially work with local authorities to develop volunteering programs that engage both children and parents.**

Ofsted has not been mandated to carry out inspections on the provision of PE. **However, Ofsted will be required to provide a tougher assessment and will require schools to publish details of their sporting provision on their websites. Ofsted will also now carry out a survey reporting on the impact of the new funding and holding schools to account on how they have spent their Sport Premium money.**

The latest figures show that one third of children in the UK are either overweight or obese. **The Public Health Minister has highlighted childhood obesity as the Department of Health's Number 1 priority. There will be two major nationwide Change4Life campaigns coming up in which members can align.**

The proliferation of academy schools (now comprising over 2 million pupils) means that more schools will have the freedom to determine their level of investment into PE. This could mean that standards vary and provision depends on the personal passion and commitment of the teachers of each school. **However, academy networks run a number of programmes specifically designed to maximise sport and activity participation amongst pupils such as national competitions, international tours and talent ID, as well as having broad connections with local clubs and being open to partnerships.**

Networking Dinner

The subsequent dinner was attended by over 80 organisations including a range of commercial brands, leading charities and academy school networks:

Coca-Cola	British Heart Foundation	Public Health Nutrition & Research UK Ltd
The Co-operative	Cancer Research UK	Ramblers Cymru
Limelight Sports	Endsleigh	ARK Schools
Mars	Gold Challenge	Association for Physical Education
Nike	Join In	David Ross Education Trust
PricewaterhouseCoopers	Sport and Recreation Alliance	St Mary's CE primary school
PruHealth	Sports Leaders UK	United Learning
Rothschild	Youth Sport Trust	British Military Fitness
Sodexo	BIG Lottery Fund	CFM/MYZONE
Superdrug Stores Plc	Children's Food Trust	COSMED
Arthritis Research UK	English Schools' Football Association	Danone

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David Lloyd Leisure	Leisure Exchange	Skills Active
DC Leisure	Leisure Industry Week	Swimming Nature
Everyone Active	Les Mills	Technogym
Fit For Sport	Life Fitness	The Great Outdoor Gym Company
FitLinxx	Lifetime	Aball1
Fitness First	Mazars	Nuffield Health
LA Fitness	Powerleague	Sodexo
Lawn Tennis Association	Premier Global	Star Trac
Leisure Connection	Premier Sport	Vivo Miles

The Vanguard Group

The Vanguard Group consists of a cross-section of the leading organisations within health, sport and physical activity, as well as a number of commercial brands and charities which have a key interest in this agenda. The Group is at the forefront of all the key policy discussions in this area and works with the ukactive Public Affairs, Policy and Development team to establish the strategic objectives for the sector going forward.

Strategic Objectives

ukactive works around 8 broad strategic objectives:

1. Establish physical activity as a core business of the National Health Service, building the bridges between the medical and activity sectors.
2. Secure the wide ranging support of business and major commercial brands to engage their colleagues and consumers in healthier lifestyle choices.
3. Utilising the latest innovations in technology to support people to become more active, creating a Digital Legacy from the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.
4. **Play an active role in supporting children and young people to establish an active lifestyle from the earliest possible point.**
5. Establish the UK activity sector as a priority sector for investment in education and training.
6. Provide a willing partner to the community sport sector, encouraging volunteering in community sport and a route to grow participation in competitive sport.
7. Support local authorities to deliver on their public health responsibilities.

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ukactive briefing paper

April 2013

Vanguard event



More people
More active
More often

8. Champion the priority that should be attached to promoting physical activity across all relevant Government departments.

All Vanguard members receive a tailored work plan and, as of 2013, the Group now includes the following members:



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