

Ymchwiliad i weithgarwch corfforol ymhllith plant a phobl ifanc

Inquiry into physical activity of children and young people

Ymateb gan Cymdeithas Saethu a Chadwraeth Prydain

Response from the British Association for Shooting and Conservation

**Written evidence submitted by the British Association for Shooting and Conservation to the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee inquiry into physical activity of children and young people.**

**Executive summary**

- Shooting is inclusive, promotes personal wellbeing, physical activity, mental health and it saves lives.
- Shooting is an enjoyable, accessible, quality experience and provides opportunities to participate in sport, get active and to spend more time outdoors in the countryside.
- Participation in shooting is growing, with at least 76,000 active participants in Wales.
- BASC would welcome the Welsh Government's support in encouraging state schools to provide shooting opportunities.
- Sport and recreation organisations are the key mechanism to driving up rates of physical activity.
- Public/private partnerships could be used to harness the reach and influence of the sports sector in getting young people in Wales more active and to provide taster sessions for a wide range of sports, including shooting.

**The British Association for Shooting and Conservation**

1. The British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC) is the representative body for sporting shooting in the UK with a membership of over 148,000. It aims to protect and promote sporting shooting and well-being of the countryside throughout the UK. It actively promotes good firearms licencing practice, training, education, scientific research and practical habitat conservation.
2. BASC's headquarters is based in Rossett in North Wales. BASC staff work with the Welsh Government, its agencies and Welsh non-government organisations on a range of topics relating to conservation, land management, shooting and other outdoor pursuits.
3. BASC is an active member of the Sport and Recreation Alliance.
4. BASC co-ordinates the production of educational resources and provides shooting opportunities for members, the general public, schools and colleges.

5. BASC runs Young Shots programmes to encourage the participation of young people in shooting activities.

### **Shooting supports a prosperous Wales**

6. Shooting in Wales supports almost 2,500 full time jobs throughout the supply chain (PACEC, 2014). This equates to £64m spent in Wales by shoot providers and participants annually. However, this does not include the wages of permanent and casual staff.
7. Shooting supports jobs up and down the supply chain. In Wales it has been estimated to provide Gross Value Added of £75 million to the UK economy.
8. Shooting supports tourism and can be a very important source of income outside of traditional tourism periods.

### **Shooting supports a healthier Wales**

9. Shooting promotes personal wellbeing. 95% of shooting participants report that shooting is important to their personal wellbeing and 71% would do less physical activity if they couldn't shoot (BASC, 2016).
10. Shooting promotes physical activity. Across the UK, 88% of participants reported that shooting gives them moderate to high intensity exercise and 92% of shooting participants would spend less time on outdoor recreation if their involvement in shooting stopped (BASC, 2016).
11. Shooting saves lives. Estimates from data in England suggest that the physical activity involved in shooting helps to prevent 106 deaths a year and 10,000 cases of life-limiting disease (BASC, 2016).
12. Shooting promotes good mental health. Shooters report an average of 20 friends made through shooting activities, and 77% said their social lives would suffer without shooting. Furthermore, the participation in outdoor recreation has been shown to lead to a significant decrease in mental health issues (Mind, 2013).

### **Shooting supports a more equal Wales**

13. Shooting is inclusive. There is no urban/rural divide and a great leveller for boys and girls, and men and women, who can compete on an equal basis.
14. Shooting is a versatile activity. It can be moulded to fit people's needs and circumstances.
15. Shooting is accessible. The Disabled Shooting Project said: "Target shooting is the most accessible, inclusive and integrated of all mainstream sports" (See <http://disabledshooting.org.uk/>)

### **Supporting young people to participate in shooting**

16. Increased investment in initial teacher training for primary school teachers would ensure high-quality PE, sport and physical activity from the start of the education journey. Outdoor learning should be embedded across the curriculum and included in training for current and new teachers.
17. Shooting is an enjoyable, accessible, quality experience and provides opportunities to participate in sport, get active and to spend more time outdoors in the countryside.
18. By bringing people together and getting them more active, shooting generates enormous benefits to the community, the economy and to the nation's health and wellbeing.
19. Schools can encourage young people to be active by not closing down opportunities and welcoming all types of sport. BASC has experience of school teachers turning down offers to provide children with shooting opportunities. This is not an issue that is exclusive to shooting sports. Education and support is perhaps a solution.
20. People will regularly take part in sports that best match their natural preferences and abilities. If we provide people with as many sporting opportunities as possible at an early age, the likelihood of people discovering 'their' sport increases and with it a lifelong participation.
21. BASC is open to running introductory days to shooting sports in Welsh state schools. For example, we provide primary school children at West Rise Junior in Eastbourne with an annual opportunity to have a go at clay pigeon shooting, air rifle shooting and learning about the important role that shooting plays in the management and conservation of the British countryside.
22. Many children from private schools get to enjoy shooting as part of their extra curricula activities, however, these opportunities do not seem to be afforded to children at state schools. School children should be given the same opportunities whatever their background or education. It's important to remember that shooting is a socially inclusive sport, which is safe, fun and in which boys and girls can compete on an even keel.
23. Participation in shooting is growing with at least 76,000 active participants in Wales. Shooting is open to all backgrounds, ages and abilities and is an activity that people can take part in throughout their lives. Education is a key part in learning to shoot which will instil good habits and high standards.
24. The success of team GB at the Olympics and Commonwealth Games in target and clay shooting reflects the historical importance of shooting sports and the passion that this country has for it, despite having few modern facilities to train at.
25. Talent development should incorporate other routes, outside of the traditional national governing body/club structure, including schools and higher education.
26. BASC would welcome the Welsh Government's support in encouraging state schools to provide shooting opportunities.

## **Public/private partnerships to encourage participation in shooting**

27. Sport and recreation organisations are the key mechanism to driving up rates of physical activity. The sector contributes to the objective of increased physical activity and improved health and wellbeing outcomes in various ways. These range from being commissioned by various health bodies to run specific projects, to helping to identify needs, or simply bringing people together and getting them more active while they enjoy participating in our sports/activities.
28. Public/private partnerships could be used to harness the reach and influence of the sports sector in getting young people in Wales more active and to provide taster sessions for a wide range of sports, including shooting.
29. Organisations that are not recognised as governing bodies for their sport can play a valuable role in helping to make sure that sport and health delivery bodies work together as effectively as possible. Otherwise, we risk missing opportunities to engage with a much larger network of people.
30. BASC is not a recognised governing body, but it is by far the largest shooting organisation in the UK with over 148,000 members. We have already built public/private sector partnerships to deliver for the future of sporting shooting through our investment in a network of highly qualified airgun and shotgun coaches nationwide.
31. BASC coaches provide tens of thousands of adults, children and young people with shooting opportunities annually, ranging from public places, such as shooting clubs and countryside fairs to schools, Scout jamborees and Cadet camps.
32. BASC's ST-2 Shooting Simulator from Marksman Training Systems is the first shooting simulator for shotgun and rifle shooting designed specifically for demanding users, such as shooting instructors, who give professional shooting advice. Anyone, both new and experienced in shotgun or rifle shooting, can use the simulator to get a first introduction to shooting, or to improve their shooting skills and enjoyment of the sport (See <http://basc.org.uk/sporting-services/shooting-simulator>).
33. In 2015, more than 4,000 people tried shooting sports for the first time using our shooting simulator at various events including game fairs, county shows, courses, schools, political party conferences and a series of national sports roadshows.
34. BASC has worked with the Guides and Scouts in providing taster sessions at their jamborees and other events.
35. In 2016, BASC was commissioned by the Essex International Scouts Jamboree to provide one of the lead activities at its week-long jamboree held near Chelmsford, Essex. A total of 5,817 Scouts and Girl Guides were introduced to clay shooting and were taught basic shooting principles at BASC's largest ever shooting line.

36. This year, BASC has been involved with the Guides and Scouts at five events, including the Suffolk Moot, where we introduced 500 Scouts and Guides to shotgun shooting.
37. BASC coaches provide shotgun shooting training for the Cadet Forces as we are one of only four organisations whose training courses are approved by the Home Office and Ministry of Defence. For example, BASC hosts clay shoots for Cadets at the RAF Shawbury annual camp where we coach young people from across the UK. We also support the International Air Cadet Exchange, coaching Cadets from Canada, USA, Germany, Belgium, Holland, Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong and South Korea.
38. Airgunning is a cost-effective way of providing shooting opportunities. BASC trains volunteers in Wales to be airgun coaches. There are an estimated four million airgun owners in the UK. Schools could consider having an airgun range on their grounds or link up with shooting clubs and coaches in their area.
39. Through our coaching programme, we find that participation in shooting builds life-long skills such as leadership and discipline.
40. BASC believes that increased participation in shooting at taster days will lead to an increased responsibility within young people to firearms and, indeed, people of all ages.
41. Participation in shooting taster sessions can be measured through the number of coaching lessons provided with delivery bodies gathering and reporting on that data. Long term data on the number of certificates issued and the sales of ammunition will give an indication of participant trends.
42. BASC recommends that regional centers of excellence for shooting sports are developed in Wales so that talented shooters can be identified and coached in a consistent way.
43. With more shooting simulators and volunteers we could greatly increase the participation of young people in shooting in Wales.
44. We would be pleased to meet with the Welsh Government's Health, Social Care and Sport Committee to explain in more detail how we could build public/private sector partnerships.

## References

- BASC. (2016) *The Personal Value of Shooting*. <https://basc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2016/10/The-personal-value-of-shooting-LOW-RES.pdf>
- Mind. (2013). *Feel better outside, feel better inside*.
- PACEC. (2014). *The Value of Shooting: The economic, environmental and social benefits of shooting sports to the UK*. Cambridge, UK. <http://www.shootingfacts.co.uk/>