



The Future of Further Education Sport



Executive Summary
February 2010

Part 1 Introduction

This is the executive summary for the Prospects4Sport report into the Future of Sport in Further Education. The project was commissioned by Sport England and the Association of Colleges in October 2009. The aims of the study were to:

- collate all the existing research
- identify patterns or relationships in participation
- identify practical ways to help individual colleges
- recommend actions to improve sports delivery at local and strategic level.

The main report covers the following elements:

- the current picture of sport in FE: at strategic level / at local level
- issues and best practice at a strategic level / at local level
- recommendations for the future management framework
- conclusions and a summary of recommendations.

Part 2 Current picture: Strategic level

A range of policy changes and legislation have affected sport in the FE sector over a number of years. Most recently, the 14-19 reform programme, the new funding regime for colleges and the current economic pressures and potential financial cuts will all impact on the provision of sport and physical activity. It will be important during the new phase of restraint on expenditure to emphasise the positive impact that sport and physical activity have on the core objectives of FE institutions. The main report details the current roles of a number of national organisations, summarised in the table below:

Organisation	Description
AoC	Established in 1996, represents and promote the interests of colleges. 9 regions acting as regional champions and support for colleges.
Sport England	Implementation of 2008-11 Strategy, support to NGBs and aims to attract 1 million more people to sport.
YST	Charity established in 1994, aims to improve the quantity and quality of school sport and PE. Programme expanded to FE in 2008.
SFCF	Offers services and lobbying on behalf of Sixth Form Colleges.
Skills Active	Sector Skills Council for Active Leisure and Learning.
BCS	Membership organisation established 1978, provides competitive sport and development programmes in FE.
Podium	The HE / FE Unit for 2012 Games. Supports colleges to create legacy from the 2012 London Games.
NGBs	Create Whole Sport Plans to develop individual sports, govern and develop the sport.
Competition organisations	There are many other competitive leagues and structures outside BCS, including ECFA.
Healthy FE	Sector-led programme aiming to improve health in colleges – tools, guidance, best practice.
CSPs	49 CSPs in England co-ordinating and planning at a sub-regional level.
SSPs	Partnerships of schools to implement the PESSYP strategy and ensure delivery of “5 hour offer”.
LAs, LSPs, LAAs	From April 2010, will fund FE colleges and integrate provision. Many sports development teams also provide support services to FE.

Regional infrastructure

The main report details the infrastructure and organisations that support college sport in the regions, each of which operate slightly differently in terms of structures, capacity and resources. The CSP / Skills Active networks are largely comparable but the capacity and remit of the AoC Regions and the BCS regional committees differ widely. This presents a number of issues for sport and physical activity provision in colleges, and the recommended new framework attempts to introduce some consistency, ensuring that colleges in every area are supported in the same way.

Part 3 Current Picture: Local level

In examining the current picture of sport in FE, it was important to be clear about terminology. A summary of the definitions used in the report are as follows:

- **Curriculum:** Academic and vocational accredited qualifications.
- **Enrichment:** Development of skills, growth and learning not directly linked to main course of study, includes a range of activities, including informal recreation and sport.
- **Extracurricular sport and competition:** Formal sport opportunities: intra and inter-college competition, coaching, teams, volunteering and sports administration.
- **Community sport:** Formal or informal activity in community clubs, NGB programmes, and includes community use of college sites.

Representatives from colleges were asked to describe what they felt about sport in the sector. There was recognition that sport has developed and is improving, but concerns remain about fragmentation, lack of clarity and difficulties resulting from lack of resource, facilities or information.

During the study 56 colleges were consulted directly, data was collected from over 100 colleges, and 188 people attended the workshops. The data gathered produced the following findings:

Area	Findings	Link to recommendation
Types of colleges	Mix of General FE, Sixth Form, Specialist, adult and 16-19, large and small	R2 – Need to understand differences and ensure flexibility
Strategic commitment	Less than 25% have a sports strategy 75% stated that there is Principal/SMT support and commitment to sport	R13 and R14 - Need for value of sport to be recognised; potential use of college sports strategies
Funding and capacity	Capacity of colleges vary; nearly all now have FESCos; potential budget restraints on staffing for sport; average budgets for teams £20,000-£50,000; major pressures in terms of transport, facility hire; some success in leveraging in external funds.	R13 – Need for adequate and proportionate staffing levels
Facilities	23% have no indoor facilities 70% have indoor and outdoor, usually sports hall, gym, pitches, often artificial and floodlit 7% have more extensive or specialist provision, including swimming pools	R9 - Need for appropriate facilities and link to local, sub regional and regional facility strategies
Curriculum	Range from no sports courses to more than 50. Many colleges see sport and leisure as growth area.	R5: Need for curriculum leaders to share practice; need for employer links to ensure quality
Enrichment	40 colleges consulted were actively working on Healthy College initiatives Lots of enrichment activity in all colleges; timetabling issue is the major barrier for	R16 - Whole college approach is vital

Area	Findings	Link to recommendation
	FESCos	
Extracurricular sport and competition	219 members of BCS (61% of colleges) 15,000 participating regularly in BCS competition; 27,000 in all competitions Lots of competitive opportunities, not just BCS	R10 – Need to reduce duplication and fill gaps – fuller audit and rationalisation required – link to NGB competition frameworks
Community links	Links to community sport are extensive: some links in 100% of colleges surveyed, usually with LA and SSP, often with local sports network (CSN) and CSP. Also with larger NGBs who have local paid staff.	R6 and R7: Single point of contact required both ways to ensure understanding between FE sector and external organisations

Part 4 Issues: Strategic level

The main report examines strengths and issues relating to national organisations, particularly the AoC, nationally and in the regions, and BCS. The main issues raised can be summarised as:

- The AoC can provide credibility, authority and substance to sport in FE, and help to raise the profile of sport within colleges.
- An agreed minimum level of service should be provided to colleges from the AoC Regions, particularly in relation to curriculum network groups.
- There are differences between Sixth Form Colleges and general FE Colleges which mean that it is difficult to make consistent recommendations across both types of college.
- BCS has expanded its role and is now taking on much more development and planning work. Membership and operations has grown, and professionalism is increasing. However, operational difficulties remain due to lack of volunteer time, and the organisation struggles with issues relating to capacity, credibility and inconsistency across regions.
- The large range of organisations providing competitive sport results in confusion, duplication and potential gaps in provision.
- Over 50 different sports are being provided in colleges. However, NGB links remain sporadic, with excellent progress being made by some but difficulties being encountered by others. The need to sustain provision and ensure colleges are linked to community clubs is the greatest challenge for NGBs.
- 2012 and other major events being hosted in the UK over the next decade provide a significant opportunity for a lasting legacy within FE sport – not only in sport but in a range of other subjects. Colleges need information and advice to take advantages of the opportunities the Games will provide.

Part 5 Issues: Local Level

The study found that many colleges view sport as a priority, helping with learner engagement, recruitment, retention, attainment, and the profile of the college. There is also a growing bank of evidence to show the positive impact of sport and physical activity on academic achievement. It is now becoming clearer that involvement in sport – particularly when undertaken at least 3 times per week, for example with Academy students - has a positive effect on attendance and achievement.

Despite this, many colleges (around 25% of our sample) do not see sport as one of the key priorities for the college. The lack of statutory requirement, the fact that it is not assessed as

part of the inspection regime, and funding regulations and timetabling difficulties all contribute to reducing the importance of sport in colleges.

The study found that the factors most important in influencing provision in colleges were:

- Principal and SMT support for sport and physical activity, particularly where various elements are brought together to form a strategic approach within college
- dedicated budget for teams and for enrichment
- dedicated sports development or FESCo post
- whole college approach to enrichment activities, Healthy FE and physical activity available for all staff and students.

Although consultees reported that facilities were a major factor, the study showed there is little or no correlation between participation results and whether or not a college had quality on site facilities. It appears that colleges without facilities can still produce good results, through partnerships with others and access to quality off-site facilities.

The FESCo role is very important to colleges and has resulted in some excellent progress being made, particularly amongst those who do not normally participate. However, FESCos are still experiencing problems, particularly in colleges which have not made sport or health a priority.

Links with other organisations are widespread amongst colleges, but many find it difficult to understand the full range of organisations and their role. There is clearly a need for one point of contact to help colleges find appropriate advice on various issues.

The report details a range of good practice case studies and key success factors for colleges looking to improve their offer.

Part 6. The Recommended Management Framework

The principles that should drive the new framework are that there should be:

- a general recognition that healthy living, activity, sport and recreation are a basic right and a basic skill, just as valuable as others
- clarity and transparency regarding roles and responsibilities
- a simple, logical, streamlined structure
- a credible and reliable management structure – with a “voice” at a strategic and policy level within colleges
- consistency of quality of delivery
- autonomy and local flexibility
- involvement of all parties, communicating effectively
- external agencies involved, helping them understand the FE sector and vice versa
- a structure which incorporates physical activity, recreation and sport from the grass roots to elite levels, with a clearly defined pathway of opportunity
- a system which is led by the FE sector, for the FE sector, appropriate and capable of meeting the challenges and issues within the FE sector
- recognition of existing good practice rather than creating new
- accountability, transparency, and good governance structures.

The recommended framework consists of the elements in the table below. Detailed roles, responsibilities and structures are included in the full report.

Element of Framework	Summary Description of roles and structure
FE Stakeholder Group	Multi agency group, interpreting policy, identifying where plans relate to FE, identifying external funding for FE Sport, setting policy and targets to the AoC portfolio group
AoC / Sector led Portfolio Group for Sport	Sector-led group combining skills and expertise of FE College, Sixth Form Colleges, work of Healthy FE programme, and representing AOC member colleges. Role to ensure co-ordination across the sector and ensure the FE Stakeholder group is aware of developments within the sector. May decide to establish a separate, related national group looking specifically at skills and links to employers. Will have a direct link to the Healthy FE steering group.
A “new BCS” – Governing Body for FE Sport	Acting as the National Governing Body for FE Sport, bringing together existing good practice in BCS, ECFA and other sporting organisations. Becomes the recognised delivery arm within FE, responsible for sports specific development, competition and pathways. Transition process required from existing BCS to form an independent company limited by guarantee with charitable status. Funded through the FE Stakeholder Group and AoC Portfolio Group for Sport. Full descriptions of board, staffing and regional structures are contained in the main report.
Regional Strategic Partnership Groups	Will have a remit to lead, advocate and provide strategic direction to all colleges in the region, co-ordinating the different agendas of curriculum, volunteering, wider participation, sports specific planning and competition. The groups will manage 9 x new Regional Strategic Partnership posts, who would facilitate change, ensure good working relationships with CSPs, NGBs and LAs, promote sport within FE and support and advise colleges. The AoC in the regions would take a lead in the creation and management of these groups, and the hosting of the Regional Strategic Partnership posts, whilst the “new BCS” becomes established.
AoC Regional Sport and Leisure Curriculum Networks	These exist in many regions, and should continue. Chaired by a member college and facilitated by the AoC regional office, their role would be to lead on curriculum developments, links to Skills Active, and identify issues for consideration by the RSPGs. Consideration to be given to establishing these where they do not currently exist.
Regional Healthy FE Networks	These have now become established and first met in Autumn 2009. Their role is to examine all the issues within the Healthy FE programme, not just sport. The new Regional Strategic Partnership post will ensure there are links between this network and the sports specific work.
“New BCS” Regional Committees	9 x Regional Committees responsible for the delivery of the sports specific planning work being undertaken nationally. Also they are responsible for auditing, rationalising and planning all competitive opportunities within the region, trials for Regional and National competitions and delivery of regional championships. 9 x new part time Regional Competition and Fixtures officers will be required.
Sub – Regional networks as	The Regional Strategic Partnership post would form the link between regional and sub-regional networks, facilitating and supporting FESCo

appropriate	networks or county Head of Sport groups.
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Financial implications

A partial costing exercise has been undertaken, with staffing costs estimated at just over £1m.

It is recommended that membership of AoC is linked to the new structure, with colleges no longer having to pay separate affiliation fees to BCS and other competitive organisations which will be merging to form the “new BCS”. Up to £600k could be raised through AoC memberships, with the shortfall in funding raised through affiliation fees from non-AoC members, fundraising, sponsorships, and contributions from the FE Stakeholder Group.

Part 7. Summary of recommendations

Recommendations for the future of sport in Further Education are:

- R.1. An FE Stakeholders Group should be established
- R.2. The AoC should establish a Portfolio Group for Sport, inviting membership from the sector across the country, different types of colleges, and the Strategic Head of the “new BCS”.
- R.3. Membership of AoC should be directly linked to the “new BCS”, so that AoC members do not have to pay a separate affiliation fee.
- R.4. BCS should be restructured and re-established as a company limited by guarantee, the “new BCS”, to comply with the roles and structure outlined in the full report. It will require a head office and paid staff and 9 new part time Competition / Fixtures Officers. The governance structures should comply with recognised national standards for NGB governance.
- R.5. Those AoC Regions who do not already facilitate Sport and Leisure Curriculum Networks should consider establishing them, with a direct link to the work of Skills Active.
- R.6. Nine Regional Strategic Partnership Groups should be established. The AoC and BCS should identify key people within each region to lead these groups, which will be led by AoC initially, eventually becoming part of the “new BCS” when it has become established and is operating successfully in each region. The timing of this transition may vary from region to region, but during the transition phase the AoC will need to take a lead role in establishing these groups.
- R.7. Funding should be identified for the appointment of 9 Regional Strategic Partnership posts. During the transition phase from BCS to the “new BCS”, AoC will need to take a lead role in establishing these posts. The employment and hosting arrangements for these posts will differ depending on the region, but for maximum credibility they should ideally be part of the AoC regional office structure, with the intention that they become part of the “new BCS” structure when it has become established and credible.
- R.8. The new Regional Strategic Partnership posts will become the point of contact for external agencies working at regional and sub-regional level. Appropriate sub-regional networks, linked to existing CSP structures, will need to be agreed to enable the FE sector to communicate effectively with CSPs, SSPs, NGBs, LAs and others.
- R.9. CSPs should seek to involve FE Colleges within their strategic and developmental work, particularly in relation to facility planning and links to LAA targets. CSPs should work with LAs and NGBs to establish a clear hierarchy of facility provision, with specialist facilities identified using college sites where appropriate
- R.10. As part of its restructure, the “new BCS” should undertake a full audit of current competition opportunities, to discover how many competitions and leagues are available to FE Colleges, and how many different organisations run these. This audit

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- should be undertaken with a view to bringing the full range into the “new BCS” as one umbrella organisation, to minimise duplication and fill gaps.
- R.11. The new management framework for FE sport should be funded through a combination of AoC affiliations, grant aid from the FE Stakeholders Group, affiliations from non AoC members, sponsorship and fundraising.
 - R.12. The FE Stakeholders Group should aim to achieve increases in participation and improved outcomes for students and staff by setting of clear and cohesive targets which are communicated through the management framework. This group would also be responsible for establishing baselines and monitoring and evaluation systems.
 - R.13. Colleges should establish internal Strategic Planning Groups, bringing together lead people for the curriculum, sports enrichment, participation and volunteering initiatives, Healthy FE agenda and competitive sport.
 - R.14. The AoC / Portfolio Group for Sport should ensure that all stakeholders nationally and regionally undertake an advocacy role and the capturing of and promotion of the evidence of the value of sport is shared across the FE and sport sectors.
 - R.15. All colleges should include at least one sports development/FESCo type post. Agencies within the FE Stakeholder Group should seek to continue with the FESCo funding, re-distributing it so that it relates to the size of college and number of sites rather than one FESCo per college.
 - R.16. Learners should have access to sports and physical activity enrichment opportunities, preferably as part of their compulsory course timetable. The “whole college” approach suggested in R 13 should ensure that specific recreational opportunities are available to staff and adult learners as well as those aged 16-19.
 - R.17. The FE Stakeholders Group to give consideration to undertaking national research into the value of sport and physical activity in terms of educational achievement, retention, behaviour and ECM outcomes, as this is currently one the key gaps for colleges.