

Summary of Parliamentary Business Relating to the Community Amateur Sports Club (CASC) Scheme: January-March 2007

1. House of Commons – Written Answer

Keeble – Sports Club Subscriptions (Tax Rebate)

Date: Tue, 16 Jan 07

Ms Keeble: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received on the provision of a tax rebate for children's subscriptions to sports clubs. [115153]

Dawn Primarolo: The extension of Gift Aid to junior subscriptions is one of a number of issues sports representative bodies have raised. Representations have been passed on to HM Treasury from DCMS and have been made to HMRC and DCMS officials as part of the Community Amateur Sports Club (CASC) Development Forum. We keep all policy issues under review and discussions between officials and sports club representative bodies are ongoing.

2. House of Commons – Written Ministerial Statement

Woodward – Independent Licensing Fees

Date: Thu, 25 Jan 07

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Culture, Media and Sport - Independent Licensing Fees

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (Mr. Shaun Woodward): I am pleased to inform the House that the Government have today formally published the final report of an independent panel that was set up to consider whether the licensing fees are set at the right level.

The panel's terms of reference were to:

- consider whether the fees cover the full cost to licensing authorities;
- identify the scale, extent and nature of any problem(s) encountered by licensees/licence payers and licensing authorities;
- make recommendations about how the existing fee structure and levels could be developed;
- ensure best practice is being fully realised across all authorities; and
- identify how the regime could be developed to address any other issues, including the impact of the fee scales on community amateur sports clubs, village and community halls.

The panel, which includes representatives from local government, rural communities and industry, has made a number of recommendations about the fees regime and related issues that deal with:

- the model for calculating future fees;
- the excess of costs over income for licensing authorities during the introduction and implementation of the Licensing Act 2003;
- the level of future fees;
- future enforcement and inspection activity;
- future exemptions from licensing fees;

- licensing of village halls and other community facility providers, including sports clubs temporary event notices;
- future fees for large events;
- licensing of public spaces/land; and
- a number of recommendations to simplify and shorten the application form processes.

I am very grateful to the independent panel for their commitment and hard work and pay tribute to them on the approach they have taken in reviewing the fees regime over the last 18 months. We will now consider the implications of the panel's recommendations in detail. Before reaching any final decision about the level of fees and related issues, there will be a full public consultation and an opportunity for stakeholder interests to inform our thinking and future policy.

Copies of the full report are available in the Vote Office and at:

http://www.culture.gov.uk/what_we_do/Alcohol_entertainment/monitoring_and_evaluation/ifeereview.htm

3. House of Commons – Written Answer

Foster – Licensing Laws (Sports)

Date: Thu, 08 Feb 07

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) pursuant to the Report of the Independent Fees Review Panel, whether she plans to introduce a licence fee for community amateur sports clubs based on 20 per cent. of their rateable value; [119603]

(2) what the estimated costs to local authorities would be of setting a licence fee for community amateur sports clubs based on 20 per cent. of their rateable value; [119604]

(3) how many sports clubs she estimates fall outside rate bands A and B; [119605]

(4) what estimate she has made of the total annual cost of licence fees to (a) sports clubs and (b) community amateur sports clubs. [119606]

Mr. Woodward: DCMS has made no detailed estimate of the number of sports clubs falling outside of bands A and B, or the total annual cost of the licensing fees regime to sports clubs and community amateur sports clubs. However, as part of their terms of reference, the Independent Licensing Fees Review Panel was asked to identify how the fees regime could be developed to address the impact of the structure of the fee scales on community amateur sports clubs.

The panel's final report was placed in the Libraries of the House on 25 January. We are currently assessing the implications of all the panel's detailed conclusions and recommendations, including those relating to sports clubs, and will provide a full response shortly. During the panel's review, we understand that the Central Council of Physical Recreation proposed to the panel that fees should be calculated by introducing a system whereby all clubs in the Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASC) scheme could have their licence fee calculated at 20 per cent. of their rateable value. The panel was not inclined to recommend in favour of this proposal. Before reaching a final decision about implementing any changes to the fees regime and related issues, we will undertake a public consultation. Such a

consultation would be informed by a regulatory impact assessment which would include estimates of any cost of any proposal to local authorities and to the sector affected.

4. House of Commons – Debate

Sport (Young People) – Extracts

Date: Thu, 01 Mar 07

Richard Caborn MP:

“The Chancellor's instigation of the community amateur sports clubs-CASCs- tax breaks was a significant move to recognise that grass-roots sport needed that type of fiscal incentive. Mandatory rate relief builds on the back of that. All clubs that apply can access that relief-they do not now have to have charitable status to do so-and that can be done through CASCs. Many millions of pounds are going directly into grass-roots sport, which is at that club level.

”I believe that when we took the mandatory rate relief through Parliament, the Central Council of Physical Recreation said that we had been fighting for it for 30 years. I was pleased that it was on my watch that clubs got not only the tax breaks but the mandatory rate relief.”

Don Foster MP:

“I was hoping that the Minister might say a little more about the CASCs scheme, which is very welcome. He will recall that in January, on the Floor of the House, I asked how many clubs would be eligible for the tax reliefs. I thought that the Treasury, at least, would have the figures available, because it would need to know how much money to set aside. I was told that the Government did not know how many clubs would be eligible; I was given the welcome news that a few thousand had applied, but that far more could be doing so. Will he give us an update on the current figures and on what the Government are doing to encourage more clubs to take up this extremely beneficial subsidy that our CASCs are being given?”

Richard Caborn MP:

“It is not a subsidy; it is an investment. I give credit to the hon. Gentleman, because I know that he has been pushing this very hard indeed in his area and beyond. We believe that there are about 140,000 to 150,000 sports clubs. The number that would access the CASCs scheme and the mandatory relief is about 50,000. The latest figure that we have is that 4,172 clubs were receiving rate relief as of 31 January 2007. That amounts to an additional £15.2 million going into grass-roots sports today. The estimate is that about 40,000 to 50,000 clubs could be involved, which means that £150 million could go into grass-roots sports if they all applied. I cannot say why they do not all apply. All I can say is that with the support of the Central Council of Physical Recreation and the other governing bodies, we are, little by little, convincing clubs that they should apply.

”As an aside, this situation shows a bit of a disconnect between some of the governing bodies and their clubs' structure. There might be an issue about whether good communication is taking place. If it were, I am sure that governing bodies would have convinced their clubs a long time ago to apply for what is clearly a significant tax break. The beauty of it is that once a club gets the tax break, it is not like a grant or a loan, because it will be in place year in, year out, provided the circumstances do not change. It is an important investment in grass-roots sport.”

Hugh Robertson MP:

“I hope that this proves a helpful intervention. The Minister might be surprised to hear me say that he is absolutely right. The Deloitte and Touche breakdowns that are published every month make it clear that the sport governing bodies that promote this scheme actively, notably the England and Wales Cricket Board and the Rugby Football Union, lead the field by far in respect of the number of clubs that have taken up the scheme. He is right that it is down to governing bodies to promote this scheme actively among their clubs.”

Richard Caborn MP:

“I thank the hon. Gentleman for that useful intervention. I hope that if this debate does anything, it asks governing bodies to revisit this matter and ensure that they communicate it positively to their clubs. He says that the RFU has provided some services to help the clubs apply, and it has acted in an effective and systematic way.”

Don Foster MP:

“We also ought to praise the Central Council for Physical Recreation for its work with those 150,000 voluntary sports clubs and its work to promote the CASCs tax reliefs, as well as the RFU, which has already been mentioned, and the other sports governing bodies.”

Don Foster MP:

“More can be done. We could do more about school playing fields, which are critical, and more to promote the benefits of the CASCs tax reliefs schemes. There could be a fund of £150 million being spent, but in truth the figure is currently less than 10 per cent. of that. We need to encourage more clubs to become involved.”

5. House of Commons – Oral Question

Keeble – Sports clubs (children)

Date: Mon, 05 Mar 07

Summary

In response to a question from Sally Keeble on plans to encourage sports clubs for children, Sport Minister Richard Caborn stated that the national schools sports strategy helped support links between schools and clubs, leading to increased engagement in sport.

In a supplementary, Ms Keeble stated that in order to build on the legacy from the 2012 Olympics needed to be supported by the use of gift aid for sports clubs

Responding, the Minister stated that grants and gift aid could be accessed by clubs. He added that he 4000 clubs, out of between 40,000 and 50,000, were benefiting from gift aid. Mr Caborn added that further fiscal measures would also be looked at.

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Sports Clubs (Children)

1. **Ms Sally Keeble (Northampton, North) (Lab):** What plans she has to encourage sports clubs for children. [124561]

The Minister for Sport (Mr. Richard Caborn): As part of the national school sport strategy, we are supporting the links between schools and clubs. We have exceeded our target to increase the percentage of five to 16-year-olds from school sport partnerships who are members of, or participate in, accredited sports clubs from 14 to 20 per cent. by 2006. The 2005-06 school sport survey shows that 27 per cent. of young people from school sport partnerships are now participating in clubs linked to schools.

Ms Keeble: I very much welcome that response, but does the Minister agree that to build on that excellent record and to provide a fitting legacy for the 2012 games it is important to develop amateur sports clubs that provide services for children? Will he therefore agree to support proposals to extend gift aid, or other financial support, to amateur community sports clubs, specifically for the work that they do for children's sports?

Mr. Caborn: Our work to strengthen sports clubs includes community amateur sports clubs grants, and gift aid can generally be accessed by such clubs. I hope that more amateur sports clubs will apply for CASC grants and the 80 per cent. managing rate relief that goes with that, because currently only about 4,000 have done so out of a potential 40,000 to 50,000 clubs that are entitled to do so, and those 4,000 that have applied for it are now receiving some £15 million. However, I agree with my hon. Friend that there are other areas in which we could bring in fiscal incentives, to incentivise young people in particular. I have no doubt that my colleagues at the Treasury will be taking suggestions on that very seriously indeed.

6. House of Commons – Early Day Motion

EDM 1037 - Gift Aid for Children's Sports Subscriptions (updated)

Date: Tue, 06 Mar 07

Summary

EDM 1037 was first put down on 5th March 2007 by Sally Keeble

That this House congratulates the Community Amateur Sports Club Scheme on its success in registering 4,172 sports clubs; welcomes the Government's commitment to ensure that all children get the opportunity of two hours a week community sports; recognises the role that community sports will have to play in creating a legacy for the 2012 Games; and calls on the Government to provide further backing for children's sports through the extension of the principles of Gift Aid or other financial support to subscription for junior sporting activities provided by community amateur sports clubs.

At 31 March 2007, the EDM had 94 signatories.