**41st Meeting of the APPG on a Fit and Healthy Childhood**

13th March 2019, 6pm

Vicky Randall Speech

Good evening everyone. On behalf of the sponsors, may I take this opportunity to thank you all for being here this evening. Particular thanks to all who have been instrumental in the planning, writing and dissemination of the Primary PE and Sport Premium report and to Helen Clark who has expertly guided us through and all members of the working group who, without their insight and contributions, this report would have not have been possible.

I would like to express personal gratitude to my colleagues Greg Dryer, Kingston University and Sarah Williams, from Sheffield Hallam University, for supporting this venture. We represent a national network of primary physical educators across England who work tirelessly and passionately each day to influence the next generation of teachers going into our primary schools. They do this on very limited time and funding but with huge amounts of knowledge and expertise.

The report we are sharing and celebrating with you this evening came about from discussions within this network and for two reasons. Firstly, as sponsors, we felt that the voice of ITE, and specifically higher education, had been all but lost in decisions relating to primary PE, where in fact as educators of future teachers into the profession we have been well placed for years to project insights on the impact of the Premium though our research, extensive partnership with schools/wider partners and of course our own experience as teachers. Secondly, a level of investment such as the Primary PE and Sport Premium, we feel warrants serious and critical debate at the highest level.

Almost 6 years to the day, on the 12th March 2013, the Prime Minster of the time, David Cameron, announced the launch of the Primary PE and Sport Premium. We know this was not the first time the subject has received funding on this scale (many of you will remember the PESSYP and PESSCL strategies, that my colleague Dr Gerald Griggs coherently explained in our first meeting of this issue last September), but the Premium did bring to the public attention two defining features. One it has set precedence for funding into PE and that has now become entrenched as a feature of policy in PE and schools, across all major political parties, that I wonder what government will be brave enough to break this cycle? And the second, a promise of a legacy from the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games that ensures funding now will impact upon generations for years to come. Since this announcement, almost no independent scrutiny of this money has been publically made available.

So what impact has this the premium had? Without question, the £1.2 billon of investment has shaped and influenced primary PE in our schools, and I would even go so far as to say cultivated what being physical means to young people, how movement is perceived and valued in our schools and who are workforce are. Understandably any investment from government warrants a return at a societal level, therefore an improvement in health and developing a culture of sport are important and noble aims, but as an education profession we in danger of being consumed in this discourse and defined by theses means only. We also need to voice what we know primary physical education to be, champion that the most qualified people educate our children in the curriculum and ensure that educationally, learning how to move is not something that can be achieved solely though sport, competitive activities and daily running. I have to say at this point, that as a performance netball coach, a runner and sports volunteer, I am not suggesting these things are not important. They are all crucially important. I am merely suggesting we need to take this opportunity to look at our rich and diverse workforce and maximize skills and expertise and placing them where they are most needed and most appropriate. I believe a curriculum subject should offer the foundations of inclusive movement experiences and as the national curriculum says ‘the best of what is known’ in the subject. It should set the tone and ambition of what it means to be physically educated throughout the lifecourse.

The report has raised some crucial issues that I would like to highlight.

* The reduction in teachers accessing curriculum physical education over the last few years – and potentially de-skilled teaching workforce and created a privatized model of PE that can only be maintained as long as funding is maintained.
* Concerns over monitoring, accountability an auditing of funding – which we hear the Ofsted plan to step even further away from – where money is being used for what it should be, or plugging holes in other parts of the school budget.
* Despite PE receiving higher levels than any other subject (for example the next funded subject of Maths who receive £40 million over 4 years for Mastery) our status and place in the curriculum I would argue has remain unchanged.

However, our report has also highlighted some wonderful successes too. Schools have used the Premium to ameliorate inequalities in some of the most deprived areas in England, improved resourcing, and created opportunities for children to access physical activity and sport beyond the curriculum. We also have a diverse workforce of talented and skilled people from across the sector who are now placed to enrich all areas of physical learning in the school day. We now need to get the right people in the right place doing what they do best.

I am delighted this report has received so much attention. The scale of media coverage Helen has outlined has been fantastic and a testament to how much this topic means to our varying professions. The focus on play as an important place for movement in our primary schools has been a much needed point of discussion. Many thanks to Neil Coleman at OPAL for championing this and our guest speaker tonight James Opie. Engagement from our esteemed colleagues, including all who are on our panel tonight, has been a very welcome outcome of this work. I know the Minister is disappointed not to be here tonight, but I really valued Mr Brine’s support who has worked hard as as our constituent MP for Winchester and Under Parliamentary Secretary for Health in these matters. Fr example, his work on the sugar tax levy and the doubling of the Premium has been of huge significance to us. I have also been delighted to receive a letter from Minister Nadhim Zahawi only yesterday to recognise this report and the work of the APPG. I would like finish up by sharing his thoughts with you [see attached].

Thank you