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Dear Dominic,

DEBATE ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY: 8 MARCH 2018

Thank you for your valuable insights during the recent International Women's Day debate. I promised to write in order to clarify what government is doing to tackle gender imbalance in sport coaching, at both the elite and grassroots level.

'Sporting Future', published in December 2015, is government's sport and physical activity strategy. It highlighted the need for increased diversity in coaching and recommended that 'UK Sport review what steps can be taken to remove the barriers to women and minority groups progressing into high performance coaching roles, with a view to diversifying the talent pool and ultimately increasing overall performance.'

Since then, UK Sport has held sessions at their World Class Performance conferences to explore the barriers that exist and to explore what could be done to tackle these. Action as a result includes UK Coaching coach development programmes and events, networking opportunities, and advice and guidance to women in the UK high performance system in partnership with Women in Sport, a leading sports charity that empowers women and girls through sport.

UK Sport have also looked to positively profile women in high performance sport through their external work and support the various groups and awards that recognise the role of women in high performance sport (Women in Sport, Sports Women of the Year, Sports Journalist Awards). They have worked with Women in Sport to establish a network programme of support and events to bring the group together, including inviting prominent female guest speakers to talk about the challenges they have faced in high performance roles. UK Sport continues to strongly encourage that National Governing Bodies have at least one female member on the recruitment panel for all high performance recruitments.

Coaching is a vital part of the sport strategies of both government and Sport England, our national sport council. Sport England evaluated the coaching landscape and developed a new coaching plan for England, 'Coaching in an Active Nation', which was published in November 2016. This seeks to ensure that our coaches better reflect the changes in society and lifestyles, and was developed following consultation with coaches, coach educators and national governing bodies of sport.

In line with their strategy Sport England are supporting national governing bodies of sport to increase the diversity of their coaching workforce. For example Sport England is investing £2 million per year into the Football Association to support their work in ensuring the coaching workforce in football is more representative of wider society. This includes providing bursaries to support women and Black and Minority Ethnic coaches to develop their coaching abilities from the grassroots to the elite levels of the game.

UK Coaching, which works to provide the coaching workforce with the skills and knowledge they need, commissioned a YouGov Coach Survey which uses a broad definition of coaching to include 'helpers and activators'. It shows that overall, the coaching workforce is diverse in terms of gender (46% female compared to 54% male), ethnicity (22% BAME compared to 78% white) and physical/mental health (26% with a physical/mental health condition). The report 'UK Coaching: Coaching in the UK, October 2017' can be found at:

https://www.ukcoaching.org/sites/default/files/Yougov_coach%20survey_FINAL.pdf

Sport England's insight team are working with UK Coaching on the next version of this survey which will give an even deeper understanding.

UK Coaching are also supporting Sport England's 'This Girl Can' campaign in order to tackle the gender imbalance in coaching and have launched 'Reach', a campaign to raise awareness and inspire more women to get into coaching. They are also supporting national governing bodies of sport, County Sport Partnerships (CSPs) and other sport and physical activity partners to provide opportunities for women to be active and get into coaching. An example of this is Project 500, run by Kent CSP to address the imbalance in the number of male to female coaches recruited, developed and deployed across seven south east counties.

I hope this information is helpful. I am copying this to all peers who spoke at the debate on Thursday 8th March and a copy will be placed in the House Library.

Yours,

Charlotte

BARONESS VERE OF NORBITON