

**Football Foundation Response
to the European Commission Green Paper:**

“Promoting healthy diets and physical activity: a European dimension for the prevention of overweight, obesity and chronic diseases”

Introduction

The Football Foundation is a unique partnership funded by the FA Premier League, The FA and the Government. The Football Foundation is the UK’s largest sports charity. Our mission is to improve facilities, create opportunities and build communities. We are:

- Putting in place a new generation of modern facilities in parks, local leagues and schools
- Providing capital/revenue support to increase participation in grass roots football
- Strengthening the links between football and the community, to harness the game’s potential as a force for good in society, promoting health, education and social inclusion

In particular, football can play an important role in promoting improved health outcomes by:

- Encouraging participation in physical activity – working with the Government and stakeholders to generate interest in activity
- Engaging hard to reach people with health services – enabling communication and interaction with excluded groups on health issues
- Fostering positive attitudes to health and wellbeing – encouraging people to look after themselves and seek help when they need it

With grants ranging from £100 to £1m, the Foundation plays a major role in supporting grassroots sport, physical activity and healthy living in some of the most deprived communities in the UK. The attached paper details some key achievements of the Foundation

Football Foundation grants have supported a wide-range of Government policy agendas, improving access to and use of sports facilities, tackling anti-social behaviour, creating educational opportunities, and delivering positive solutions to public health problems.

The Football Foundation supports the objectives and broad themes of the Green Paper and we welcome the opportunity to contribute to this consultation.

The Public Health Action Programme

The Football Foundation welcomes the Public Health Action Programme's support for pan-European projects aimed at promoting healthy nutrition habits and physical activity. Football can engage hard to reach communities and the Football Foundation is involved in a number of existing initiatives which demonstrate an integrated and comprehensive approach towards the promotion of healthy diets and physical activity.

Some examples are:

- **Kidderminster Harriers Football in the Community scheme** – the Foundation has provided a grant of £72,396 to establish a healthy lifestyle football project for local children. The scheme illustrates how football can ensure physical activity is “*built into*” people’s daily routines.

Working in association with the Worcestershire Health Authority, County Council, Local Education Authority and the British Heart Foundation, Kidderminster Harriers coaches visit schools and provide football-coaching sessions, passing on the benefits of regular exercise, healthy living and good diets, involving up to 6,000 local children.

- **Fit Through Football** – the Football Foundation has worked to improve health education in schools. This includes providing a grant of £148,920 to help the Middlesbrough FC Football in the Community Programme to deliver a comprehensive healthy lifestyle programme, embracing positive lifestyle messages, drug awareness information, citizenship classes, physical activities, literacy and numeracy education as well as after school coaching clubs.

By providing positive messages, alongside regular football sessions, the club hope to promote health, as well as encourage and stimulate future football participation. The scheme will offer additional community benefits by addressing such issues as crime reduction and anti social behaviour.

- **Dads Against Drugs (DADs)** – the Foundation provided a grant of £95,000 to a Hull group to fund a project co-ordinator over the next five years to continue their expanding work, which includes running regular annual football and drugs education events.

DADs has proven particularly effective as a means to disseminate health information, targeted at youngsters who are risk and in deprived parts of the community, using innovative approaches to combating drug abuse, such as primary school five a side tournament and drug awareness project and sponsoring a comic to tour primary schools talking to children aged 7-11 to increase drug awareness.

- **Northumberland Primary Care Trust** – the Foundation provided a grant of £3,080 for the PCT to undertake a football project aimed at promoting healthy lifestyles, increasing participation in sports and improving the levels of understanding about the dangers of smoking amongst young people and

encourage them to quit. The project is linked to initiatives such as Positive Futures and the Government's Teenage Pregnancy Strategy.

The Football Foundation will continue to seek opportunities to work with partner organisations such as the National Health Service and voluntary groups, to fund programmes which promote health in the community. We would welcome the opportunity to work with the European Commission to build on our success in reaching "*at risk*" groups, helping to disseminate information on healthy living, and contributing even more opportunities for physical activity for children and adults alike.

Football Foundation
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