

Mr Bill Laws
Chairman
Association of GB Athletic Clubs
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29 October 2014

Dear Mr Laws,

I am writing to you as Chair of the Association of British Athletics Clubs to respond to the article published on your website titled 'Why is Sport England robbing the poor to reward the rich?'. In particular, to ensure that your members understand the award we have made to the Great North Run Foundation and the reasons for the profile of our funding in UK Athletics (UKA) and England Athletics (EA).

Sport England agreed a total funding package of £22m with UKA and EA for the period 2013-17, covering work on both participation and talent development. This was an increase of £1.6m from the previous four-year period. We worked with UKA and EA to profile this funding over the four years, the collective agreement was that UKA and EA would receive greater levels of support at the start of the period in order to give them time to develop other revenue streams. This is essential to ensure that both organisations become less reliant over time on Government and Lottery funding. It is positive news that the sport has decided to reduce its reliance on public funding and we will support EA and UKA over the next few years to realise this ambition.

We take the responsibility of distributing Exchequer and Lottery funding extremely seriously and do not 'lavish grants on already profitable organisations' as your article suggests. We have very stringent criteria for the type of projects and organisations we support and would only award funding to not-for-profit organisations. In fact, the National Lottery Act prevents the direct distribution of lottery funding to commercial organisations. In August 2014, we awarded £400,000 to the Great North Run Foundation which is a not-for-profit foundation, in order to support their campaign to get one million new runners by 2020. This project aligns directly to our aim of creating sporting habits for life. The Great North Run and Nova group of companies has been extremely successful at attracting people to running, we hope that this funding will leverage this expertise to attract even more individuals to run on a regular basis. I need to be clear that as part of the agreement we have with the Great North Run Foundation, we will regularly monitor and evaluate the work concerned. This will include tracking the way in which our funding is being used to ensure that we receive value for money and all funding is used for the intended purpose.

We do of course respect your right to comment on the performance of both the governing bodies in athletics and indeed Sport England itself, but this particular article is inaccurate and misleading. We therefore please request that you publish this response to ensure that your members receive accurate information about our funding into your sport.

Best wishes,



Phil Smith
Director of Sport