



Dear committee members,

We watched with interest the evidence gathering session this morning at Health, Social Care and Sport Committee. Given our in depth involvement in lobbying for change and knowledge of much that is happening, we thought it useful to write to you with reflections on what we heard, and recommendations on what you might do next to ensure meaningful change happens.

Who are we?

Running Out Racism are a campaign group formed entirely of volunteers with a passion for cricket. We were formed following allegations by two former Scotland players, Majid Haq and Qasim Sheikh, in order to lobby for changes and progress in eradicating racism within sport. We seek changes in the way institutions are run, so that racism in sport in all its forms can be eradicated. We want to be part of the solution, and have a meaningful role in what happens next. We were referenced several times within the evidence session, as we have been attempting to work with cricket to make the changes required, as well as holding to account when things are not going well.

Executive summary of today's evidence session

Whilst progress is being made in some areas, today highlighted a lack of ownership of the problem, a lack of urgency, and lack of substantive and meaningful engagement to date with anti-racism experts to take the sport forward. We remain dissatisfied with both the speed of progress, the reasons given for it and the lack of appreciation of the issues that need addressed. The session also highlighted significant concerns in the level of scrutiny and oversight being placed on the action plan and next steps within cricket. SportScotland need to play an active role in enforcing greater pace and meaningful engagement. These issues continue to highlight weaknesses in how sport is governed when failings like this occur. We've highlighted details below to support this summary for the committee's consideration.

Progress made and demonstrated at committee which we commend and support

A number of things were highlighted that we support and commend both Cricket Scotland and SportScotland for. SportScotland moved swiftly back in October 2021 to commission this independent review and report. This was a brave and welcome step. We thank them for that, as without that a full understanding of the issues would not have become clear to all involved.

We also commend Cricket Scotland for publishing the new selection criteria, and for dispensing with the old practice of appointing people to roles with no process (which furthers issues of favouritism and lack of diversity). There are a number of small examples like this which demonstrate progress, and we are thankful to see that a number of issues are being address early in the process, not waiting for a further action plan to be developed. They also listened to our recommendations on

the need to have EDI expertise embedded into the recruitment process for the new chair and trustees, and sought guidance on making the application process as inclusive as possible.

We were pleased to hear the recognition that data to inform what is happening is a key missing component part of measuring success and progress going forward.

However, there were a number of issues within the evidence submitted today that concern us, both in relation to Cricket Scotland and SportScotland. We would like to formally lodge our concerns at this stage with the Health and Sport Committee, with a copy to government officials with responsibility for sport and equalities. It is vital at this stage of the process that we get this right, and on evidence today we are at risk of creating a well intention set of next steps, that involves the wrong people, resulting in an outcome that does not deliver change. The current approach may result in systemic processes and systems being rebuilt in a way which simply re inscribes poor practice in regards to anti-racism. We are at risk of spending huge time and resource to make significant changes, which in themselves will fail to address the very reasons institutional racism is thriving within the sport. We are at a critical juncture and must not get these next few steps wrong.

A lack of ownership of the issue of institutional racism in cricket and sport

Even in spite of the unequivocal report findings, there appears to still be a lack of ownership as to the scale of the problem.

At one point Gordon Arthur referred to 'the perception of unfairness' and 'that it is his job to test that perception', as well as a comment that 'that the barriers, if there are barriers there, are removed'.

Several hundred thousand pounds has been spent on doing exactly that, with an independent review. The findings are clear, it does not need stress testing, and the barriers are absolutely there. As the report has found the unfairness is not a perception, it unequivocally exists through institutionally racist practice and policies.

We do not need at this stage leaders in the process trying to satisfy for themselves whether there is merit to a report that has been so wide ranging in the evidence it's pulled from to reach it's conclusions. What is it we need to do for people to accept that the sport, as an institution, discriminates on the grounds of race? It doesn't need further scrutiny of the problem – it needs action on issues of the past, and much more urgency on making changes to address this in the future, based on the absolute unconditional acceptance of the findings of the report.

It's incredibly disappointing to have gone through all of that and find the new CEO of Cricket Scotland using such qualifying statements, that cast doubt on the process and report. Cricket Scotland committed to engaging with the review and accepting it's findings, and yet here we are, still talking about ifs and perceptions. It's exhausting to listen to, frustrating for those who have had these adverse experiences, and simply not good enough.

Particularly concerning was the example used by Mr Arthur in the reasons why those from a minority ethnic background do not make it through the pathway. The example of a young man who had a great experience through the age groups and then through parental pressures had to give up to concentrate on studies has absolutely nothing to do with race, it's an anecdotal example relevant to that individual family. And it reinforces an age old stereotype that it's a cultural issue specific to

a community, abdicates responsibility for the issue of institutional racism from Cricket Scotland, and passes it back to the minority ethnic community . This reinforces discrimination and stereotyping, and is a clear case study for the problem that exists. It is that belief which is the problem, not the problem in itself. Cricket Scotland can and should focus their efforts on understanding the reasons behind the 448 instances of institutional racism, and the changes it needs to make to it's own systems and behaviours, as opposed to focusing on stereotypes regarding the attitude of parents as a reason for the lack of minority ethnic players within it's pathway and national team.

We were witness to a number of stories from emotional parents as part of disclosures within the Plan4Sport process of parents going above and beyond to support their children. In one case a parent gave up their own career, and moved their entire family outside of Scotland to get further opportunities, as a result of the lack of support and opportunities afforded to their children via Cricket Scotland.

We hope the committee will challenge any further narratives such as this at future evidence sessions, and ensure Cricket Scotland take full responsibility for the reasons behind the report conclusions, not spend further time scrutinising whether it could really be true, and what other reasons might be beyond their own culture, systemic practices and procedures.

This lack of ownership of the report extended beyond the issues mentioned above. Beyond the report being called a dark day, and an expression of the need for cultural change, there was a complete avoidance through the whole hour of accepting or mentioning the reports findings of institutional racism. It was continually referred to as 'the issue', or 'the perception of unfairness'. If we are to truly address 'the issue', we must first get comfortable in saying what it is, and finding the confidence to own the problem. There were also a lot of references to EDI strategies and plans, but no references to the desire to be anti-racist, which is the inevitable outcome laid out by the report authors. There were numerous references when asked about engaging ethnic minority groups, where the response was 'we need to engage all people and groups'. These vague statements, or broadening out of the issue beyond race, again devalue any ownership of the problem, or what good looks like when the action plan has been achieved.

When you gave Cricket Scotland the opportunity to give reassurances to anyone coming forward that they would be treated differently to those who have been brave to speak up, there were references to wanting people to be confident in the new investigation processes. This was far too passive. With trust broken, we need strong leaders in this, using platforms like this as an opportunity to talk directly to those who have suffered. This was an opportunity to acknowledge the way the likes of Majid Haq and Qasim Sheikh have been treated is not ok, and that it absolutely would be different this time, not to talk about a process being built. This was another missed opportunity to demonstrate directly to a community that lacks trust with the sport that this time, it might be different.

The link between a lack of resource, funding and meaningful engagement.

Expertise was referred to at various points. So far the focus has been on HR, Communications and other roles, but we have been pushing for some time for anti-racist expertise to be commissioned to support the action planning and governance review. This has still not happened. We understand that the plan is to cover this via an advisory panel, and yet contracts are being commissioned to firms to explore governance reviews with no recognisable expertise in anti-racist practice and governance. As things stand, we have very little confidence that the governance review will lead to

a set of structures and systems that result in the tackling of institutional racism, as they simply do not have the right expertise commissioned to do this work. If new systems are designed by people who do not fully understand the issues, the governance review is likely to simply lead to new systems that simply re-inscribe the same discriminatory practices that have led us to this point.

The point shared about needing to create shared goals and a long term vision as a reason why putting an action plan together takes so much time is, we feel, disingenuous. We agree this should be done and co-created with the very people who have been excluded from the sport. But the action plan was not shared with us, or anyone with anti-racism expertise, until the day before the deadline for publication. Whilst we appreciate that the decision was made to delay this as they recognised the need for meaningful engagement, a statement was made at the committee that they intend to publish this in a matter of days. We have not as yet had the opportunity to consult fully with our wider membership, and to our knowledge this has not been shared with the anti-racist expertise we suggested as part of the process. We must not be bounced into this if the engagement is to be meaningful, and therefore think it is unlikely that the timescales of being published within a few days is possible, if this consultation is to be anything other than tokenistic. If it is to be published within a matter of days, it is likely to be without key people having had the opportunity to fully scrutinise and input to it.

Cricket Scotland continues to get wrong the balance between getting on with things that require urgency, and taking the time to consult on the things that will make a lasting impact. We are likely to reply to the action plan early next week, expressing our concerns about lack of meaningful engagement, and suggesting that they publish a short term tactical action plan only at this stage, so momentum can be built whilst a proper, meaningful period of engagement is now taken forward with those who should have been round the table at the start of the process of building an action plan.

The pace of change is too slow

The committee's remarks around lack of progress are frustrations we share. The response so far has been far too slow, and lacked the urgency that is required on this really important topic. There have been a small number of practical actions already taken, but there needs to be more of that.

If you couple the lack of pace with the lack of meaningful engagement, you have to question what has been happening?

If we take the ongoing investigations of referrals. It has taken too long to put the new referrals process together. The building of this process only started in middle of summer, when first referrals received as early as March. Why did it take so many weeks just to start this work? If you were running an organisation which had received multiple complaints of racism against individuals and organisations, would you not want to move on this swiftly? We had to intervene in the creation of the new process, as initially a law firm with limited expertise in racial discrimination were appointed to run the process. As a result, Sporting Equals are now part of that process, but early evidence shows their role is not as meaningful as it should be. It is vital that the organisation appointed with this expertise has a strong and meaningful role in the process and giving of advice to decision makers. At this stage, with trust already at an all time low, we have doubts that the process will deliver on the expectations of the victims of racial discrimination. This is a concerning development, and one which we have written to Cricket Scotland separately on to raise our concerns. We hope

these will be taken seriously and addressed with a greater urgency than much of the work done to date.

We also noted that at various points, a lack of resource, and the relative size of Cricket Scotland, given as a reason for the lack of progress. We noted also that SportScotland have not committed resources into the governing body at this stage. If not, why not? Has this been refused, or have Cricket Scotland not even asked for additional resource needed to take things forward? Meanwhile time marches on, and opportunities to build trust are being lost. There were lots of conversations about building a plan first, then putting forward the resourcing required to deliver on that. But this is just slow walking progress and is not good enough. In the short term, they need more anti-racist expertise immediately plugged into the team to help develop and deliver a set of actions to get themselves out of special measures, through meaningful changes.

Other sports need to get comfortable with being uncomfortable, and starting making changes, fast

We were concerned with the comment about things happening with sports and not to sports. Without doubt, we want all sport to go on a journey towards dealing with its problems. But this cannot be done at a pace that is comfortable to those who currently govern the sports. That approach is what has led us to this point. We need Scottish Government and SportScotland to show greater urgency, proactivity and leadership on this issue. When we recently met with the Cabinet Secretary, Minister for Sport and Minister for Equalities, one of our key asks was to ensure that measures of success for anti-racist practice was mandated into funding agreements, with associated timescales for achieving this. We do not believe that leaving sports to do this at their own pace is taking the problem seriously enough. We absolutely agree that sports should be supported by SportScotland to do this well, but call on Scottish Government to set a timetable and pace that reflects the seriousness of the issue that has been raised via cricket, which undoubtedly exists to a greater or lesser extent in other sporting bodies.

As part of our asks to Scottish Government, we have suggested that the Equality Division's recently commissioned work to set up an observatory to support the development of meaningful anti-racist practice across Scotland is used to support sport, as a priority and case study for how to do this well.

The buck should not stop with Cricket Scotland

At the end of the evidence session, SportScotland were asked where the buck stopped for this issue. The answer was unequivocally Cricket Scotland. The report concluded the practices of Cricket Scotland to be so bad, that they need to immediately be put into special measures. There is no definition of what this means, but in our eyes that must mean someone has oversight and takes accountability for the big decisions in the sport for a period of time, until they can rebuild trust. That was not the message that came across in the evidence session. It appears we appear to have already shifted accountability fully back to an organisation with no board, no signed off action plan and no sense of ownership as yet of the problem at hand. That cannot be the correct course of action. We call upon Scottish Government and SportScotland to clarify with urgency what special measures means, who will be holding who to account and how things will be scrutinised during this period.

At the recent meeting with Scottish Government, we called for safeguards now to be built into sport. There needs to be some formal oversight of sporting bodies, as there is in other key settings. SportScotland is at the moment a funder with limited powers. Millions of pounds of public money

is put into sport each year, and yet there is no oversight or any powers to ensure that this money is spent in a way that we would expect, and there is nowhere to turn if things go wrong. It cannot simply be left to volunteer led boards of governing bodies for the buck to stop with them permanently. We are talking about public money, in the case of Cricket Scotland used in a way that is used to fund institutionally racist practice.

Simply doing nothing, making no changes and leaving the buck to stop with governing bodies is in itself a decision by Scottish Government. A decision that autonomy of governing bodies with no scrutiny and oversight is a higher priority than eradicating poor governance that leads to racial discrimination within sport. If Scottish Government and SportScotland are serious about Scotland, and Scottish Sport, becoming truly anti-racist, they must now lead by example and put the relevant measures and safeguards in place to ensure this happens.

In Summary, we would ask of the committee to make the following recommendations;

- That Cricket Scotland is much stronger publicly in owning the findings of the report, and give more direct and meaningful assurances to anyone considering coming forward that have not yet felt able to do so to share their concerns.
- That SportScotland clarify what special measures mean, and give assurances as to the level of scrutiny and accountability built into this period of critical change, including who is taking accountability for ensuring Cricket Scotland delivers on these changes, and what measures are available and/or will be considered if this does not happen.
- That SportScotland and Cricket Scotland put in place immediately the resourcing and expertise required to deliver on the changes needed in the short term, including the inclusion of anti-racism expertise to ensure the actions lead to meaningful change.
- That public funding for all sporting bodies be allocated on the conditional basis that they provide evidence of the implementation of anti-racist practice within their own sports.
- That Scottish Government and SportScotland explore safeguards in the sporting system to oversee governing bodies, and ensure there is oversight and, where necessary, measures and actions can be taken against governing bodies that are carrying out practices that perpetuate racism in sport.
- That the committee invite Cricket Scotland and SportScotland back to present in the new year, following the conclusion of their governance review, in order to scrutinise it's findings and what they plan to do next, as well as to check on the progress of referrals and investigations.
- That the committee invite the Cabinet Secretary, Sports Minister and Equalities Minister to future scrutiny meetings, to hear progress on how Scottish Government intends to safeguard against future and further issues in sport, and provide adequate scrutiny on the use of public money in sport.

We would of course be happy to discuss any elements of this submission with the committee, or members of the committee individually.

Paul Reddish,

On behalf of Running Out Racism
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