Transforming School Health with PE and Sport Premium Funding

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As school leaders, we understand that the physical well-being of our students is more than just a curriculum box to tick—it's foundational to their success, resilience, and overall happiness. The PE and Sport Premium Funding is not just another budget line; it's an opportunity for us to lead, inspire, and create lasting change in the way our schools approach physical education and sport.

In this guide, we'll explore how you can make the most of this funding, moving beyond compliance and reporting to create a **strategic, impactful program** that leaves a lasting legacy on student health and well-being.

This isn't about spending money. It's about **leading a movement**—a movement where every child, regardless of their background, has the chance to be active, healthy, and engaged. Here's how.

The Funding: A Tool for Leadership

Let's be clear—the PE and Sport Premium Funding isn't just a one-time resource. It's a tool. A tool to unlock potential, to build a culture of activity, and to **future-proof** your school's approach to physical education.

With **£320 million allocated annually**, eligible schools receive:

- **£16,000 plus £10 per pupil** for schools with 17 or more students.

- **£1,000 per pupil** for schools with 16 or fewer students.

This funding is aimed at improving five key areas:

1. Increasing engagement in physical activity.
2. Raising the profile of PE across the school.
3. Enhancing staff confidence and skills in delivering PE.
4. Broadening the range of sports available to students.
5. Increasing participation in competitive sports.

But here's the thing: we can't let this money sit in silos. We need to think **beyond the checklist**. The real challenge isn't just spending the money—it's **strategically investing** it in ways that will resonate for years to come.

1. **Think Long-Term: Invest in Your People, Not Just Programs**

If we want sustainable change, we must start with those who deliver the experience—our teachers. Often, schools see immediate solutions like hiring external coaches as the most direct way to boost PE, but what happens when that coach leaves?

The leadership move: Invest in the skills of your staff. Your teachers are the constant force in your school. By enhancing their confidence and knowledge in teaching PE, you create a self-sustaining system that will benefit students for years to come. This isn't about quick fixes—it's about empowering your team.

Action Steps:

- **Professional Development**: Allocate funding for staff training in specific sports or holistic physical education methods. Send teachers on CPD courses or bring in specialists for **peer-led workshops**.
- **Embed Expertise**: Invite coaches to work **alongside** your staff, helping them develop skills they can take forward on their own. Don't just bring in expertise; absorb it into the DNA of your teaching team.

2. **Diversify the Game: Offer More Than Just Traditional Sports**

Football, netball, and athletics are staples of most school PE programs, but not every student finds joy in these activities. We know from research that students who don't connect with the standard PE options often disengage from physical

activity altogether.

The leadership move: Diversify your offerings. The goal should be to expose students to as many different sports as possible, helping each child find something they love—whether that's yoga, rock climbing, or ultimate frisbee.

Action Steps:

- **Survey your students**: Ask your students what sports or physical activities they would like to try. This not only gives you valuable insight into their interests but also fosters ownership and engagement in the process.
- **Partner with local clubs**: Use some of your funding to bring in local sports clubs or organizations that can introduce new activities to your school. Whether it's a **karate club** offering taster sessions or a local **rowing team** introducing water sports, outside expertise can enrich your PE program.

3. **Create Active Schools, Not Just Active PE Lessons**

Physical activity shouldn't be limited to PE lessons. A whole-school approach to movement is essential if we're to meet the government's goal of 60 minutes of daily physical activity, with 30 minutes during school hours.

The leadership move: Design an active school day. Make movement an integral part of every student's experience—not just in PE lessons but throughout their day. This means looking beyond structured sports and integrating physical activity into break times, lunch hours, and even classroom lessons.

Action Steps:

- **Active Playgrounds**: Use your funding to **reimagine break times** by creating active play zones. Invest in equipment that encourages movement—outdoor gym apparatus, obstacle courses, or sports zones where students can practice their skills.
- **The Daily Mile**: Many schools have adopted the **Daily Mile**, where students walk, jog, or run for 15 minutes each day. It's simple, requires no special equipment, and helps students reset and refocus.
- **Active Learning**: Integrate physical activity into classroom learning. This

can be as simple as standing desks, activity breaks, or movement-based learning exercises that tie into core subjects.

4. **Sustainability is Key: Build a Legacy, Not a One-Off**

It's tempting to use PE funding to bring in flashy, short-term programs that create an immediate impact. But as leaders, we need to be thinking about **what happens next year**—or five years from now.

The leadership move: Make decisions that create lasting change. Think about how to invest in structures, relationships, and programs that will sustain themselves long after the current funding period ends.

Action Steps:

- **Sustainable Equipment**: Invest in equipment that will last—whether that's versatile gym apparatus, durable outdoor equipment, or facilities that can serve multiple sports. The goal is to buy once and use for years.
- **Build School-Club Links**: Partner with local sports clubs to create a sustainable network of activity. Whether through after-school clubs or weekend sessions, building these partnerships allows students to continue their sporting journey outside of school.
- **Develop Leadership Programs**: Establish **student sports leaders** who can help run activities, set up competitions, and inspire their peers. By developing student leaders, you build a program that can sustain itself with minimal external input.

5. **Make It Visible: Elevate PE Across the Whole School Community**

It's easy for PE to sit in a corner, disconnected from the broader school ethos. But for PE and sport to truly thrive, they need to be seen as integral parts of school life—just as important as academics, arts, or pastoral care.

The leadership move: Elevate the status of PE and sport. Make it a visible, celebrated part of your school's culture, so that students and staff see physical activity as an essential pillar of well-being and success.

Action Steps:

- **Celebrate Achievements**: Whether it's **sports awards**, **active**

assemblies, or school-wide participation in national initiatives like **School Sports Week**, make sure PE and sport are given the platform they deserve.

- **Parent Engagement**: Involve parents in the journey. Regular updates, celebration of achievements, and even parent-student activity days can help make physical activity a family affair.
- **Promote Well-being**: Use sport and physical activity as key drivers of your school's well-being agenda. Position physical health alongside mental health initiatives, showing students how the two are interconnected.

Reporting and Accountability: A Key Leadership Role

Let's not forget that the PE and Sport Premium comes with clear accountability requirements. Schools are expected to publish how they spend their funding and the impact it has on pupils' engagement and participation.

The leadership move: Use accountability to drive improvement. Reporting shouldn't be seen as a burden—it's a tool to assess, reflect, and refine your strategy year-on-year.

Action Steps:

- **Clear Documentation**: Ensure you're documenting spending with a focus on outcomes. How has the funding improved student participation, broadened access, or enhanced staff skills?
- **Set Measurable Goals**: Before you spend, set clear, measurable goals. Whether it's increasing participation in after-school sports clubs or improving fitness levels across a particular age group, having clear targets makes your impact tangible.
- **Reflect and Adapt**: After each year, assess what worked and what didn't. Use your findings to adapt your strategy for the following year, ensuring continuous improvement.

Leading the Way: Building a Culture of Health and Well-being

The PE and Sport Premium Funding is an incredible opportunity—but it's school leaders who hold the key to turning that opportunity into sustained success. This funding can't just be about more equipment or temporary programs. It's about **building a movement**—a culture where physical health is valued, where every

student feels the joy of movement, and where your school becomes a hub of health and well-being.

As leaders, we have the responsibility to think beyond compliance and create something that will stand the test of time. This is about **legacy, impact, and leadership**.

So, let’s not just use this funding—let’s lead with it. Let’s build healthier, happier, and more active schools, where every child has the chance to thrive.

The funding is here. The impact is up to us.