

The fight for volunteers in sport and recreation will continue

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Although Julian Brazier MP's Private Member's Bill to 'Promote Volunteering' was talked out during its third reading in the House of Commons, the CCPR has pledged to continue its battle to address the significant difficulties currently facing volunteers in the sport and recreation sector.

Howard Wells, Chair of CCPR, stated, "Time and time again during the debates on the Bill, MPs have cited cases of gross injustice or where activities have been abandoned due to a fear of litigation. New problems are highlighted to us everyday by our members and unless something significant is done to help the sector there will be a marked decline in volunteering over the coming years."

Referring to the example of the primary school that cancelled its sports day due to concerns that the school could face litigation if a child slipped and hurt themselves on wet grass, Mr Wells argued "at a time when addressing the obesity problems of under 11s is a Government priority, it is ludicrous that a school is so scared that it cancels its key annual sporting event."

"Very few cases of frivolous litigation ever get as far as court; however, the stigma and worry faced by the volunteer and the financial costs, often including a rise in insurance, to the organisation are causing activities to be abandoned rather than accept the risks involved."

The CCPR was an active supporter of the Bill during its early stages and has continued to lobby the Government to address the problems of excessive insurance increases, the administrative and cost burdens surrounding Criminal Record Bureau checks, and the lack of funding for training volunteers.

CCPR are very grateful to Mr Brazier for all he has done to promote this important issue. The CCPR has been delighted by the support for the sector shown by all MPs involved and hopes that the Government will listen carefully to the suggestions made during the course of the Bill, including extending the remit of the Russell Commission to examine all threats to volunteering, so that the appropriate solutions to this important issue can be found.

ENDS.

Notes for Editors.

1. CCPR is the voice for voluntary sector sport and recreation in the UK. It represents 270 national organisations, including 170 UK and English national governing bodies.

2. For more information, please contact, Judith Wood, Policy Officer, CCPR. Tel: 020 7854 8532 or email: jwood@ccpr.org.uk.