



Department  
for Culture,  
Media & Sport

Rt Hon Stuart Andrew MP  
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Our Ref: MC2023/08797/JP

Alison Thewliss MP  
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Dear Alison,

Thank you for your correspondence of 18 August to the Prime Minister, the Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP, on behalf of your constituents regarding investment in grassroots chess in Scotland. Your letter has been passed to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport as this issue falls within the department's remit. I am replying as Minister for Sport, Gambling and Civil Society.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) will invest £500,000 in England through the English Chess Federation over 2 years to develop the next generation of world-class talent. The package will support primary school children attending schools in disadvantaged areas across England to learn and play chess, improve the visibility and availability of chess in communities, and fund elite playing as part of a combined package worth almost £1 million. We want to give more young people the opportunity to find the thing they love and realise their potential. So, this package focuses on getting more young people playing chess and supporting them in developing their talent.

There are currently no plans to extend this funding to Scotland but we will share our plans with the devolved Governments to consider how best to support expert coaching, training camps and cutting-edge computer analysis for international events to assist current grandmasters and up-and-coming players.

The Department for Education (DfE) is providing up to £200,000 for primary schools to improve access to chess for young people by providing chess sets, online learning facilities, and helping teachers develop chess lessons to nurture the talent of the future. It will be in the form of small grants of around £2,000 to approximately 100 eligible schools that express an interest and will be targeted to the most disadvantaged schools.

Playing chess is a useful way to develop a number of positive life skills in young people, including things like memory, concentration, patience and critical thinking. Enrichment opportunities like chess are a vital part of a school's toolkit that provides all pupils with the opportunities to access a broad and balanced educational offer. The schools that use this grant will share best practices on how other schools could establish chess provisions to complement the school's offer.

As you are aware, education is a devolved matter, and devolved administrations will each have their own approach to supporting extra-curricular activities, including chess.

In terms of whether Barnett consequential apply to the £200,000 for chess for schools in England, this funding formed part of the DfE's Spending Review 2021 settlement. Therefore, the devolved administrations will have already received equivalent funding through the Barnett



formula in the usual way. It is for the devolved administrations to allocate their funding in devolved areas as they see fit, reflecting their own priorities and local circumstances. Please note that DfE chess funding operates separately from DCMS.

Thank you again for your letter, and I look forward to hearing about the progress of supporting young chess players in Scotland.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stuart Andrew', with a large, stylized initial 'S' and 'A'.

Rt Hon Stuart Andrew MP  
**Minister for Sport, Gambling and Civil Society**