

Appendix 2

The post 16 decline

Even with full implementation of this report more changes will be required to improve retention during the teenage years. Competition reform will not be enough to transform our sport with the over 16's. If our sport wants young people to commit to athletics after school ceases to be compulsory in larger numbers than at present, their needs to be a complete re-evaluation of the athletic experience for this age group. This includes competition but also wider aspects of athletic and lifestyle support.

The sport needs an open debate about how to do this. Here are some suggestions to fuel that debate: -

- Introduce the academy concept from other sports at a regional level. Each region would develop its own athletic academy targeted at athletes below the elite level who are currently supported by national level schemes. Athletic academies could work through the region to provide a full range of support services on an individual basis in co-operation with clubs and schools.
- Encourage event specific development by a single scoring system across all athletic competitions. This would permit athletes to compete for the club whilst simultaneously developing their own athletic potential. Clubs could be rewarded for individual athlete performances in event specific competition.
- Introduce minimum standards for some events alongside more clearly graded competition. This will ensure a relevant level of competitive experience for developing athletes.
- Extend the new version of athletics identified previously through the age groups. This would provide the social and team experience many young people seek in a more compelling format than current athletic competition. This would encourage greater numbers to participate in our sport therefore improving the overall physical conditioning of young people.
- Utilise 'Power of 10' as the inspirational framework for the sport. Expand the concept to include events, clubs, coaching events and other broader support structures particularly for this age group.