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Fairness for Deaf Athletes:

Deaf athletes are not currently able to participate in the Paralympics unless they have another recognised disability. Many Deaf people face obstacles in communicating with teammates, coaches and referees, and the Deaflympics, created in 1924, enables these athletes to compete at an elite level. The next upcoming games will be in Tokyo in 2025.

UK Sport, the body that manages the funding for Team GB, has stated that as the Deaflympics falls outside of Olympic and Paralympic sport it does not fund athletes targeting this event. The Government has argued that Sport England has recently contributed funding towards Deaf sport at a grassroots level and has agreed to explore a series of small-scale talent pilots for Deaf athletes. Please be assured that I will continue to monitor this for any further developments.

I believe that the Government should clarify what steps are being taken to reduce barriers to entry for young Deaf people in sport and other activities, as well as how the Department for Culture, Media and Sport is promoting the inclusion of Deaf people in sport.

Sport and physical activity are essential elements of a modern, healthy, thriving society. Participating in sport is important for physical and mental health and overall wellbeing, while watching sport helps connect communities, tackle loneliness and bring people together, as well as providing entertainment. I believe that sport should be accessible, and everyone should be able to enjoy it, no matter who they are. We need to break down every barrier to people getting active and enjoying sport in all its forms.

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