

Edinburgh MSP slams Government for record on Childhood Obesity

✘ Edinburgh Central MSP, Sarah Boyack, has slammed the SNP Government after it emerged that the number of staff battling childhood obesity in Edinburgh has been slashed by over a quarter since 2007.

Statistics obtained under FOI legislation reveal that the number of 'Active School Co-ordinators' currently working in Edinburgh has fallen from 40.5 in 2006 to 29 in 2010, a 28% drop.

Launched in 2004, the 'Active Schools' programme aimed to challenge Scotland's high rates of childhood obesity by assigning staff to ensure increased fitness and sporting opportunities for pupils.

The revelation follows statistics published by NHS Scotland revealing that one in five youngsters in Edinburgh are now being classed as overweight.

Sarah Boyack MSP said:- "It's little wonder the SNP has been unable to deliver its promised two hours of PE per week in schools when it has presided over a cull in the number of coordinators.

"The Active Schools programme in Edinburgh, where staff have secured funding for health projects and forged strong relationships between schools and local sports clubs, has made a real difference.

"Moves such as this and the removal of free swimming for school pupils take away opportunities for young people to get active and will only make matters worse in terms of childhood

obesity. One of the reasons I campaigned hard to save the Dalry Swim Centre and the Craggs Sports Centre was the importance of the link between these facilities and local schools.

“If the SNP had ever been serious about tackling childhood obesity and increasing fitness and sporting opportunities for children it would have, at the very least, maintained the number of coordinators it inherited. Instead we see their numbers slashed by over a quarter.

“Childhood obesity is a ticking health timebomb for Scotland and the SNP is simply not doing enough to defuse it.”