

## **British Government Rules Out Criminalization Of Doping In Sport**

British sports minister Tracey Crouch has said drug cheats in British sport will not be jailed.

The UK government was prompted to review anti-doping rules after recent scandals. Italy, France, and Australia are among some of the countries that have already criminalized doping. A big majority of anti-doping agencies worldwide do not want doping to be criminalized as they are of the view that getting convictions will be difficult and sporting sanctions are more relevant.

Crouch said an extensive review found that criminalizing doping could make it tougher to investigate. The British sports minister added we looked into this very carefully, and conducted an extensive review into the issue around criminalization and we actually genuinely believe that the system we have here in the United Kingdom is one of the most robust systems in the world. Crouch also commented that we feel that the idea of criminalization would change the burden of proof, would make it actually harder to investigate these incidents and that actually you could end up with a lesser punishment if you went through the criminal procedures. The sports minister also remarked that we genuinely think that the system we have in place is the right one.

The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), UK Anti-Doping (UKAD), and others have warned against criminalization. It has been argued that countries that have made it an offence have struggled to prosecute under the 'beyond reasonable doubt' standard of proof as sport uses the 'balance of probabilities' standard in anti-[doping cases](#).

However, Crouch argued that UK Anti-Doping should get more powers to tackle cheats and their enablers. The sports minister was also persuaded by UK Anti-Doping of the need for a review of [therapeutic use exemptions](#) (TUEs). Therapeutic use exemptions have been in the headlines for all the wrong reasons ever since Fancy Bears, the Russian hacking group, stole medical data from WADA and revealed the use of banned substances for "medicinal purposes", unlike others who are not permitted to use these drugs.

The sports minister condemned Greg Clarke, the Football Association Chairman, who recently made comments about gay athletes. Former basketball star [John Amaechi](#), one of Britain's most high-profile gay athletes, recently disclosed that Clarke paid a visit to his office in March to discuss how the FA could persuade gay male players to come out while still in the game.

Amaechi, now a leading psychologist, communicated to Clarke that this was the wrong strategy. The former basketball star also said the Football Association is required to do much more to promote diversity and equality throughout the organization. In reply, Clarke remarked he would

get Amaechi sacked and the British government would never intervene. Crouch agreed to the point of Amaechi about FA inaction on homophobia and remarked she has been asking the Football Association "to do more" for some time. The sports minister said anybody involved in football should feel confident enough to be able to come out. Crouch also commented that she thinks the entire Mark Sampson (who made racist remarks to players Eniola Aluko and Drew Spence) affair and other events have really tarnished what it is the FA was trying to achieve.