

Monday 21st September 2020

Dear Prime Minister,

Today we are calling on you to commit to positioning sport and physical activity at the heart of our nation's post-Covid renewal.

This appeal comes from a broad range of organisations that include governing bodies and those who represent hundreds of thousands of sports clubs and facilities. Our sports engage millions of children, young people, and adults.

Our sector drives economic prosperity and social change in the UK, contributing over £16bn to the UK economy and employing more than 600,000 people. A report published by Sport England and Sheffield Hallam University this month showed that every £1 spent on community sport and physical activity generates nearly £4 for the English economy, providing an annual contribution of more than £85bn, with a social value – including physical and mental health and wellbeing, individual and community development – of more than £72bn.

Grassroots sport, fitness, and wider recreational activity is proven to improve physical, mental, and social wellbeing. This makes our sector an essential service as our nation recovers from the damage caused by Covid-19.

Prime Minister – you've long been a champion of the benefits of a physically active lifestyle and we were heartened to hear that commitment renewed this summer with the launch of the Government's obesity strategy. Our combined sector is delighted to be showcasing its reach into the heart of communities this week as part of the inaugural Great British Week of Sport.

However, we are united in our concern that at a time when our role should be central to the nation's recovery, the future of the sector is perilous. Covid-19 has exposed the fragility of vital services and assets, with sports clubs and fitness facilities facing permanent closure, depriving local communities of facilities and programmes on which they depend.

Covid-19 has undermined our commercial revenue streams with both stadia and leisure facilities closed or greatly reduced in capacity. The impact of this will potentially lead to a lost generation of sport and activity. We are particularly concerned about the impact on those whose participation has been limited during the pandemic. Physical activity levels, especially in the most vulnerable groups, are significantly below where they were tracking pre-Covid-19. This is at a time when the Government has committed to levelling up outcomes and opportunities across the country.

In order to play our fullest role, we must survive and stabilise. To do this, we require a comprehensive support package for the sport and physical sector to aid its recovery. This package must combine investment, tax incentives, and regulatory reform. This package of support – a "Sports Recovery Fund" - can form part of the Better Health campaign and be directed to focus on protecting existing jobs and facilities in a way that would:

- support programmes and facilities that address the health inequalities highlighted by coronavirus especially in women, lower social economic groups, disability and BAME participation;
- expand the innovations across the sector that we have seen during Covid-19 – making opportunities digital and increasing accessibility across the country.

Our sector will be at the forefront of your Government's plans to improve the health and wellbeing of all communities. It will contribute to solving societal issues the Government faces, including reducing health inequalities, tackling obesity, cutting crime, easing loneliness, and enhancing social cohesion. But to do so effectively, we require your Government's backing.

We ask that this sector's significant contribution to our society is fully recognised in the forthcoming Comprehensive Spending Review. It will mean that, together, the Government and the sports and activity sector will invest in fulfilling the nation's sport and wellbeing potential.

We know your passion for the power of sport. You have set out your belief that sport drives positive change. This is, no doubt, hugely influenced by your role as Mayor of London in delivering the hugely successful London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games and the legacy vision for sport that event created.

By placing sport and physical activity now at the heart of our nation's renewal and using it to drive new ambitions for health and wellbeing, we can create a strong, prosperous, resilient, and healthy nation for generations to come.

Yours sincerely,

Pete Ackerley	British American Football
Jane Allen	British Gymnastics
Justin Andrews	You Fit
Craig Anthony	British Wrestling
Joanne Ashton	TSG
Simon Bailey	Serco Leisure
David Bibby	Everyone Active
Mark Braithwaite	1Life
Jason Brautigam	British Dressage
Mark Bullingham	Football Association
Peter Burt	Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles
Bill Bush	Premier League
Béatrice Butsana-Sita	Greenhouse Sports
Marcus Capel	The Pony Club
Joanna Coates	UK Athletics
Jon Cockcroft	Bowls England
Fran Connolly	England Netball
Laura Cordingley	Chance to Shine
Mark Coups	England Lacrosse
Dave Courteen	Mosaic Spa and Health Clubs
Richard Darwin	The Gym Group
Andrew Denton	Outdoor Industries Association
Tara Dillon	CIMSPA
Lisa Dodd-Mayne	University of Warwick
Michelle Draper	British Ice Skating
Huw Edwards	ukactive
David English	AJ Products
Mike Evans	EFL Trust
Tim Fawke	Snowsport England
John Fletcher	Northampton Leisure Trust
Peter Gilpin	LED Leisure Management Ltd
Kevin Gorman	National Council for Metal Detecting
Iain Graham	British Equestrian / British Showjumping
Tanni Grey-Thompson	ukactive
Peter Guy	Gym Works
Glenn Hall	Parkwood Leisure
Dean Hardman	AoC Sport
Gary Hargraves	Sport:80
Julie Harrington	British Cycling
Tom Harrison	England and Wales Cricket Board

Sara Heath	Pentathlon GB
James Hicks	British Horse Society
Stephanie Hilborne	Women in Sport
Si Hill	UK Ultimate
James Hope-Gill	Skateboard England / Skateboard GB
Ivan Horsfall Turner	Freedom Leisure
Phil Horton	Miha Bodytec
Councillor James Jamieson	LGA
Gethin Jenkins	England Boxing
Chris Jones	England Athletics
David Joy	British Canoeing
Natalie Justice-Dearn	Rounders England
Arun Kang	Sporting Equals
Peter Kay	Fusion Lifestyle
Neil King	Energie Fitness
Marcus Kingwell	EMD UK
Sophie Lawler	Total Fitness
James Lawrence	Lifestyle Fitness
Mark Lawrie	StreetGames
Scott Lloyd	Lawn Tennis Association
Stuart Margetts	Our People
Lee Mason	Active Partnerships
Marg Mayne	Mytime Active
Paul McPartlan	Places Leisure
Ashley Metcalfe	British Weightlifting
Sarah Mortiboys	Dallaglio RugbyWorks
Dan Newton	Parkour
Jane M Nickerson	Swim England
Phil Nunnerley	Endurance GB
Tove Okunniwa	London Sport
Ali Oliver	Youth Sport Trust
John Oxley	Places Leisure
Andy Parkinson	British Rowing
Rebecca Passmore	Pure Gym
Lisa Pearce	British Wheelchair Basketball
Matthew Pengelly	Matrix Fitness
Nick Pink	England Hockey
Joyce Power	Funxtion
Brendon Pyle	The Golf Foundation
Andy Reed	Sport for Development Coalition
Paul Richardson	Gymshark
Ralph Rimmer	Rugby Football League
Scott Rolfe	Halo Leisure
Mark Sesnan	Greenwich Leisure Limited
Mike Sharrock	Paralmpics GB
Bill Sweeney	Rugby Football Union
Chris Symons	BH Live
Peter Thompson	English Indoor Bowling Association
Jeremy Tomlinson	England Golf
John Treharne	The Gym Group
Chris Turner	GM Active
Mark Tweedie	Community Leisure UK

Jean-Claude Vacassin
Colin Wagget
Lisa Wainwright
Nicola Walker
Ben Wilkins
Sue Wilkinson
Mark Winder
Tom Withers
Keir Worth
Dave Wright

The International Fitness Business Alliance
Third Space
Sport and Recreation Alliance
Sported
Good Boost
Association for Physical Education
Goalball UK
Gladstone MRM
England Squash
MYZONE