



**SPORT
ENGLAND**

UNITING THE MOVEMENT

A 10-year vision to transform
lives and communities through
sport and physical activity

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INTRO- DUCTION

INTRODUCTION

FOREWORD FROM TIM HOLLINGSWORTH



This strategy is published in extraordinary times. Every one of us has seen our lives changed in some way by the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, and community grassroots sport and physical activity is no exception.

In the months and years that lie ahead, all of us, together with the communities we live in, will be adapting and rebuilding. Collectively we need to reimagine how we keep movement, sport and activity central to the lives of everyone. Because if we harness its power, we'll be able to improve people's lives in so many ways.

That's why, despite such an uncertain time, we are publishing a strategy for the next decade.

Even before the pandemic we knew we needed a new way of doing things. For too long, people with the most to gain from being active have been the least able to take part. As a result of the huge disruption 2020 has caused, and the inequalities it's reinforced or even exacerbated – such as those around socio-economic status and ethnicity – our drive to do things differently and confront these inequalities head on is stronger than ever.

Adapting our strategy and upgrading our approach for the times we're in, and the future we want to build, is crucial. We believe sport and physical activity has a big role to play in improving the physical and mental health of the nation, supporting the economy, reconnecting communities and rebuilding a stronger society for all.



We need to reimagine how we keep movement, sport and activity central to the lives of everyone.

This doesn't mean we're starting from square one. We've achieved a great deal and learned a huge amount over the past five years of our previous strategy.

One of the important things we've learned is there's a common misconception about what drives someone to engage: that people are almost solely responsible for their activity levels. It's assumed that deciding to take part in sport or fitness are lifestyle choices people make for themselves, driven by motivation and willpower. In other words, 'if people just understood the benefits, they'd find a way to make it happen'.

But while people's motivations and attitudes are part of the picture, we now understand that what's happening in our lives day to day, and in the places we live and work, are much bigger factors.

This means we can't simply tell people about the huge benefits being active brings and then expect them to do something about it.

We need to respond to people's real lives and circumstances, to make sure that everyone has both options and opportunities that work for them.

That's why our vision is for the next 10 years, rather than the four or five-year investment plans that have been the norm. This strategy is also different because it focuses on how we need to change as a sector and an ecosystem, so that we can give people the opportunities they need, informed not only by what we've learned from the past, but work we've done to look at what trends we can see longer term that will shape the next decade.

More than anything, it seeks to tackle the inequalities we've long seen in sport and physical activity. Providing opportunities to people and communities that have traditionally been left behind, and helping to remove the barriers to activity, has never been more important.

TIM HOLLINGSWORTH OBE
Chief executive, Sport England

INTRODUCTION

FOREWORD FROM NIGEL HUDDLESTON



Sport and physical activity continue to be absolutely essential for our health, mental wellbeing, economic development, and in helping bring communities together – qualities that were demonstrated across the nation in 2020.

All the evidence proves these benefits beyond doubt: Sport England's research on the social and economic value of sport published last year showed that every £1 spent on community sport and physical activity in England generates £3.91 in economic and social return.

This past year has undeniably posed significant challenges though. Whilst our aims have remained the same in getting and keeping people active, it has brought new challenges for how we achieve that. The sector has risen to that challenge magnificently, helping us all to find new and creative ways to play sport and keep fit. We have seen a cast of role models emerge to help inspire and motivate the nation to keep moving – whether that is through 'PE with Joe,' where Joe Wicks has helped to keep millions of children active, or the inspirational Sir Captain Tom Moore walking 100 laps of his garden and raising £32 million for the NHS.

Against that backdrop, I am pleased to welcome Sport England's new strategy which looks far beyond the world of Covid-19. This approach not just reflects on the learnings from the pandemic, but looks to new and innovative ways to increase participation such as by better use of technology and data.



Sport England's approach not just reflects on the learnings from Covid-19, but looks to new and innovative ways to increase participation.

INTRODUCTION

FOREWORD FROM NIGEL HUDDLESTON CONTINUED



Crucially, this strategy provides a strong base to develop the plan needed to invest in sports organisations, facilities and people across the country, and to understand the success of that investment.

It also reflects the real challenges this country faces around levelling up and tackling obesity – ones this government is committed to tackling. And there is also a vital emphasis on providing positive experiences for children and young people in sport and physical activity to help build foundations for active future lives.

Crucially, this strategy provides a strong base to develop the plan needed to invest in sports organisations, facilities and people across the country, and to understand the success of that investment. Every pound of public money must reach the ground and make a tangible and visible difference in communities. The government has made positive steps in spreading social and economic value across the country through the levelling up agenda, and through a continued focus on women and girls' sport. It is encouraging to see these themes running through the strategy and

we will continue to work closely with Sport England to push these themes through their investment plans for sport and physical activity in the coming years.

Whilst Sport England's new strategy is a long-term one, there are some important early milestones and opportunities on the horizon. This year we are lucky to host three world cups in one with the rugby league men's, women's and wheelchair events all in England. Collectively, the tournament will reach new fans, improve grassroots facilities and grow the sport. The 2022 Commonwealth Games will then be held in Birmingham and will be the most significant global sporting and cultural event on UK shores since London 2012. The Games will provide a fantastic opportunity to enthuse and re-engage the nation on the benefits of sport and to test out the types of intervention that will be at the heart of Sport England's approach for the next decade.

The past year has been like no other, but I am determined that the sport sector emerges from the pandemic stronger than ever. The government will also be looking at its strategy for sport to reflect the post-Covid world, and will work closely with Sport England on this.

I know that driving up activity levels in this country is going to be a challenge – but it is one that I am confident the sector will rise to meet.

NIGEL HUDDLESTON MP
Minister for Sport, Tourism
and Heritage

INTRODUCTION

OUR VISION

Imagine a nation of more equal, inclusive and connected communities. A country where people live happier, healthier and more fulfilled lives.

There's no quick fix to make this vision a reality. But we know being active is one of the most effective and sustainable ways to achieve it. This is why Sport England exists.

The evidence is overwhelming that moving our bodies – through community sport, fitness and physical activity – improves our lives, individually and collectively.

From better mental and physical health, to greater career opportunities and social cohesion, movement benefits us from the day we're born through to old age. And if young people are able to have positive experiences of getting active, it can help build the foundations for an active life.

Some will become our Olympic, Paralympic and Commonwealth Games stars of tomorrow, and we'll continue to recognise and support those with sporting potential in the crucial early stages of their development. Their sporting successes will bring us together and make the nation smile.

Every single one will gain the many individual advantages of being active – and contribute to the building of safer, more connected and more resilient communities.

Our role is to champion this life-changing impact, and ensure everyone across the nation can benefit from it.

We won't – and can't – do it alone. Lots of us care about making life better across society, which means ours is a collective purpose: we're part of a much bigger team.

Together, we won't stop until everyone has the opportunity, the inspiration and the freedom to get moving.



WHO WE ARE

Sport England is an arm's length body of government established by Royal Charter in 1996. We're responsible for growing and developing grassroots sport and helping more people get active across England. We use our expertise, insight, campaigns and targeted funding from the government and the National Lottery to do just that.

INTRODUCTION

OUR MISSION

We're here to invest in sport and physical activity to make it a normal part of life for everyone in England, regardless of who you are.

Because it's not always a level playing field.

Right now, the opportunities to get involved in sport and activity – and reap the rewards of being active – depend too much on your background, your gender, your bank balance and your postcode.

We're determined to tackle this and unlock the advantages of sport and physical activity for everyone.

This isn't just about our long-standing purpose of helping more people to enjoy playing sport and being physically active. We believe that by removing existing barriers to sport and activity, we can be part of a bigger picture of work that helps to address many of society's biggest challenges.

Sport and physical activity makes people happier and healthier, and movement is the lens through which we can make that happen. It does the same thing for our communities, with life-changing, sustainable benefits that have huge economic and social value.

That's why we want sport and physical activity to be recognised as essential to help overcome these national challenges.

We recognise the need to invest in sport and physical activity through national governing bodies, other sports bodies and local sports clubs, organisations and community groups to increase engagement for different groups as part of our core purpose. But we need now to go further in promoting movement in general as the means to unlock sport and activity for some people.

Before the Covid-19 pandemic, we were achieving record levels of activity in England¹. Now we're

working tirelessly to get that momentum back, and crucially, to reach people who've traditionally been excluded across the country.

This isn't an individual pursuit. We want to work with other organisations, locally and nationally, who can see the enormous untapped potential of working together – whatever their sector or industry.

Sometimes we'll lead. Sometimes we'll follow. We won't have all the answers, but we'll share valuable knowledge and bring together expert voices.

It will mean doing some things differently, and there will be tough choices to make.

But if we can continue to champion the role of sport and activity – and ensure funding and resources reach those people and organisations who are struggling to access them – we can fulfil the true potential of movement. Together, we can change lives for the better in every home, and in every community, right across the country.

INTRODUCTION

OUR MISSION CONTINUED

TACKLING INEQUALITIES

There are deep-rooted inequalities in sport and physical activity, which mean there are people who feel excluded from being active because the right options and opportunities aren't there:

- Disabled people and people with a long-term health condition are twice as likely to be physically inactive than those without a disability or health condition
- If you're in a lower socio-economic group (NS-SEC 6-8), you're more likely to be inactive than people in higher social groups
- Women are less active than men, and this gender gap starts with girls being less active from a very young age

- People from Asian, Black and Chinese backgrounds are far more likely to be physically inactive than people who are White – a fact reinforced by our 2020 'Sport for All?' report.

This data only tells part of the story. In reality, each of us is a mix of these characteristics, and this leads to our diverse identities and communities. We're not defined solely by our gender, our ethnicity, or our income. But for too long there have been clear patterns in the characteristics of people who feel less able to get active.

These inequalities are at the very core of Uniting the Movement – we'll have a laser focus on tackling them in all that we do, because providing opportunities to people and communities that have traditionally been left behind, and helping to remove the barriers to activity is vitally important.

Source: Active Lives Adult Survey May 2019/20

THE CHALLENGE OF TODAY, AND THE PATH TO THE FUTURE

Uniting the Movement is an evolution, rooted in the realities that we're facing now and are likely to face in the years ahead. It'll be a different approach to the past, because we know the way we need to work to deliver has to radically change.

With these challenges in front of us, we need to make the best possible use of what we've learned in the past, and all the incredible relationships that we have, and need, to mount an effective response.

We want to lead from the front, to shout from the rooftops about the power of sport and physical activity and its amazing ability to transform people's lives for the better. We want to help make change happen, not just by being an investor, but by driving the power of collaboration – by advocating for the huge benefits movement has for our society, and especially for the pieces of the puzzle that are really needed to unlock progress.

In having a longer-term framework, and with the consistency that will bring, it will allow not just us, but the partners we work with, to have a longer-term plan, because we believe that's what's really needed to embed change.

But this doesn't mean we'll take our foot off the accelerator and ease our push for change. We'll also be clear about the things we'll do in the short and medium term, how we'll do them, and how we'll know they've worked – from the immediate response to the Covid-19 crisis, to rebuilding and recovering. Throughout the next 10 years, a series of implementation and investment plans will sit alongside this strategy and be developed in real time, detailing the work we'll be doing in that period.



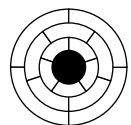
We want to lead from the front, to shout from the rooftops about the power of sport and physical activity.

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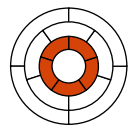
OUR MISSION
CONTINUED

UNITING THE MOVEMENT VISUALISED

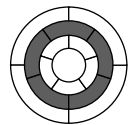
How each part of our strategy fits together to form a 10-year vision



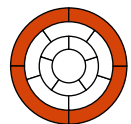
OUR MISSION
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THE BIG ISSUES
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THE CATALYSTS
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OUR VALUES
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INTRODUCTION

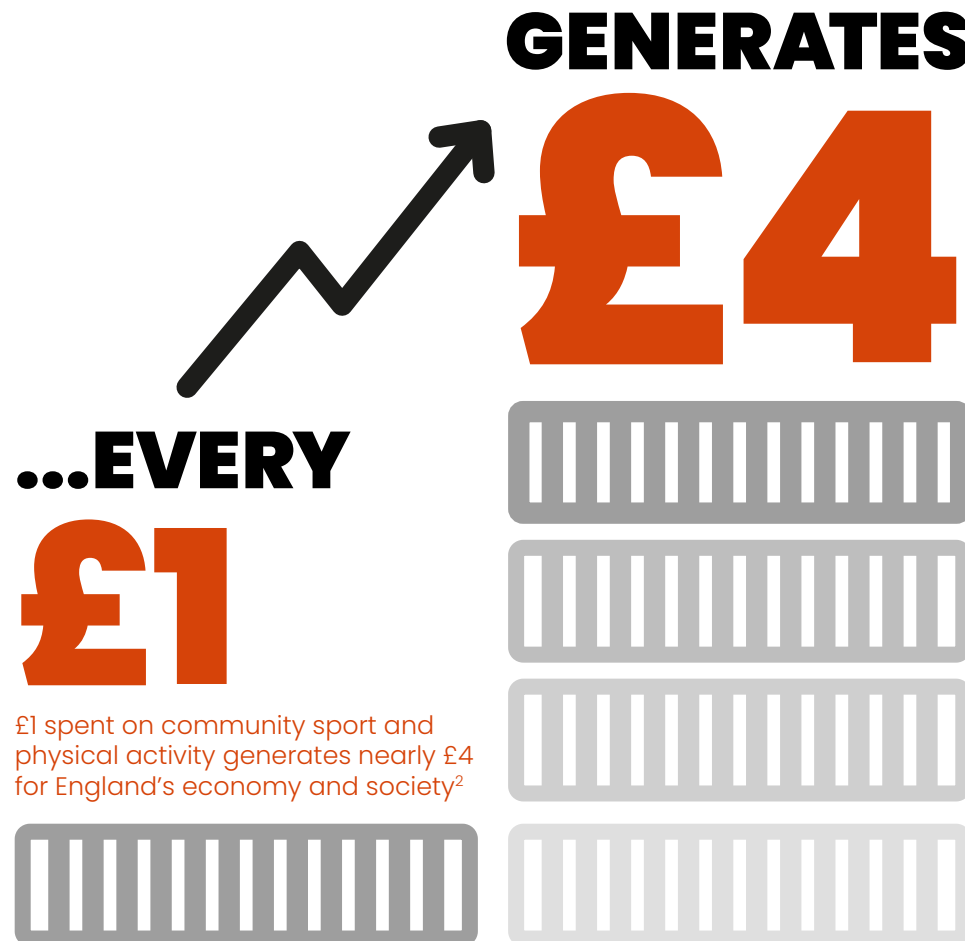
WHY MOVING MATTERS

When we move, we're stronger. That's true for each of us, and it's true for our nation.

There's overwhelming evidence for the life-changing benefits of being active – from childhood through to old age. Every year, these benefits deliver billions of pounds of value to our healthcare systems, society and economy.

If movement were a medicine, we'd call it a miracle cure – and yet we're using only a small part of its potential.

Movement can have profound benefits for our physical health, but it has the power to do so much more. It's good for our mental wellbeing, connects and strengthens communities, and has huge value to the nation's economy: we know that...



MOVEMENT HAS ASTONISHING BENEFITS FOR OUR PHYSICAL HEALTH

When we're young, being active helps our bodies develop properly³, with a strong heart, healthy bones, muscles and brain development.

As we get older, regular exercise reduces our risk of illness – from heart disease, stroke, colon and breast cancer to obesity and osteoporosis, among other conditions⁴. Every year, leading an active lifestyle prevents 900,000 cases of diabetes and 93,000 cases of dementia (the leading cause of death in the UK) – a combined saving of £7.1 billion⁵ to the UK economy.

INTRODUCTION

WHY MOVING MATTERS CONTINUED

MOVING OUR BODIES BENEFITS OUR MINDS TOO

Greater self-esteem. Increased confidence. Reduced anxiety. Movement, sport and physical activity are scientifically proven to make us feel good⁶. As the UK faces a growing mental health crisis, especially among young people, the evidence shows that being active has a hugely positive impact on our minds.

Active lifestyles are credited with 30 million fewer GP visits and 375,000 fewer people being diagnosed with depression every year, which together would cost the NHS over £0.5bn⁷. For individuals, families and communities right across the country, the positive mental health impact of movement is priceless.

MOVEMENT MAKES US HAPPIER

The evidence shows that people who get active have greater levels of happiness, life satisfaction and feeling worthwhile. They're also less likely to feel anxious⁸. For many of us, this is thanks to the social interaction involved in sport and activity – as we meet and make new friends and share uplifting moments together, whether playing a game in a park, or being part of a team in a local league – while for others it's about discovering a greater sense of self-worth and resilience, or a combination of these and other positive factors.

When researchers at Sheffield Hallam University valued the role of sport and physical activity to the nation's wellbeing, they calculated it as £42bn per year⁹ – more than three times the total NHS spending on mental health in England in 2018¹⁰.



INTRODUCTION

WHY MOVING MATTERS CONTINUED

THE BENEFITS OF BEING ACTIVE LAST A LIFETIME

From a young age, being involved in sport equips us with essential life skills, from self-control to teamwork, conflict resolution to leadership¹¹. There's a proven link between taking part in physical activity and improved job opportunities, and this applies to people from all backgrounds, including young people not in education, employment or training¹².

If you're physically active, you're more likely to do better in education, and earn more as an adult¹³. And as you get older, regular physical activity continues to bring benefits: it's seen as critical to healthy ageing, by for example maintaining muscle and bone strength, and reducing the pace of mental decline¹⁴.

MOVEMENT CONNECTS AND STRENGTHENS OUR COMMUNITIES

Movement, sport and physical activity have an incredible ability to reach into the places we live, reduce social isolation, and build a sense of pride and belonging¹⁵.

Local sports clubs and activity groups are community hubs. They're places where people of different ages, cultures and backgrounds, who may otherwise never meet, come together through a shared passion. This creates rising levels of social trust and a greater sense of belonging and community spirit.

It can be hard to quantify these outcomes, but the economic value of this community building and social trust has been estimated at £14.2bn¹⁶. Much of this is only possible thanks to the local people who volunteer their time to make sport and physical activity happen in their neighbourhoods. And these volunteers themselves benefit greatly too, reporting higher levels of mental wellbeing, resilience and social trust¹⁷.

Sport and activity enable people to have fun, make friends, be healthy and build stronger community connections.

Activity also has an especially pivotal role to play in levelling up communities, by bridging the gap between the 'have' and 'have nots'. Today, this value – otherwise known as the combined 'social community development' impact – of sport and physical activity is estimated at £20bn to the UK¹⁸. But that's nowhere near its full potential.



There's a proven link between taking part in physical activity and improved job opportunities, and this applies to people from all backgrounds.

£20 BILLION

The estimated value of the combined 'social community development' impact of sport and physical activity to the UK

INTRODUCTION

WHY MOVING MATTERS CONTINUED

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IS ALSO HUGELY VALUABLE TO THE NATIONAL ECONOMY

A healthy population is a productive one. Today, the mental and physical health of our workforce has never been more important as we look to build, and rebuild, vital industries and support our national economy through incredibly challenging times.

The economic contribution of the UK sports sector alone has been compared to agriculture, forestry and fishing combined¹⁹. Today, there are more than 285,000 jobs in England within community sport and physical activity, across the private, public and third sector – and the direct contribution to the economy in England is valued at £13.8bn every year²⁰. As the sports industry is very employment heavy, it's seen as an especially effective way to create new jobs and counteract recession²¹.

RIGHT NOW, MOVEMENT MATTERS MORE THAN EVER

Being active already makes a vast contribution to our health, communities and economy. The total social and economic value of being involved in community sport and physical activity in England in 2017/18 was calculated as £85.5bn²².

But this could be so much higher.

At a time when we face a perfect storm of health, social and economic problems, it's essential that any response to these challenges delivers the greatest possible impact.

From improved wellbeing to greater employment opportunities, more resilient communities to multi-billion-pound healthcare savings, there's a proven, effective way to reach people across the country – and create a wealth of overlapping, life-changing benefits.



The mental and physical health of our workforce has never been more important as we look to build, and rebuild, vital industries and support our national economy.

We know too that by working together and forging cross-sector partnerships, sport and activity can make a real contribution in promoting environmental sustainability, helping to confront challenges like climate change.

It's right in front of us. And if we want to take advantage of it, we just have to move.



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WHAT WE'LL DO

OUR THREE KEY OBJECTIVES

We'll focus our time and resources on three key objectives:

- 1. ADVOCATING FOR MOVEMENT, SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**
- 2. JOINING FORCES ON FIVE BIG ISSUES**
- 3. CREATING THE CATALYSTS FOR CHANGE**



WHAT WE'LL DO | OUR THREE KEY OBJECTIVES

ADVOCATING FOR MOVEMENT, SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY



Distributing Exchequer and National Lottery money is an important part of our role, but we're so much more than a funder.

We have a broader responsibility: to advocate for the transformational impact sport and activity can have on the nation's health and wellbeing.

For us, it's more than just being a part of the change that's needed so everyone can benefit from being active – we want to help lead and shape that change.

To do this demands much more from us than our investment. It's why we've forged great partnerships and built a network of relationships that span national and local organisations far beyond what you might describe as our 'traditional' sector, because we know we can make the biggest difference when we share our expertise and experience.

Looking forward, we'll lead on a common purpose and a common agenda, one that every person and every organisation committed to creating change can get behind.

This strategy requires us to shape the conversation and the evidence on the value of movement, sport and physical activity so that it resonates with partners, both within and outside our sector. It's why relationships and influence are key pillars in this strategy, alongside investment.

We know many will share our aims, but not everyone will see how a common agenda for a more active nation can help them achieve those aims. It's our role to do just that.



IN PRACTICE, THIS MEANS WE'LL:

- **Continue to build, establish and grow partnerships and a common purpose** across both the government and our sector to join up policies, strategies and approaches;
- **Continue to develop and deliver behavioural change campaigns**, building on the success of This Girl Can, We Are Undefeatable and Join the Movement, to put movement, sport and physical activity at the forefront of national conversations;
- **Keep building evidence that shows the links between the issues we all care about as a nation** and the value of movement, sport and physical activity as part of the solution;
- **Grow the extent to which we communicate**, both to people and organisations, the power of getting active to help strengthen public consensus around the importance of being physically active.

WHAT WE'LL DO | OUR THREE KEY OBJECTIVES

JOINING FORCES ON FIVE BIG ISSUES

The ambitions at the heart of Uniting the Movement, and all the choices we've made, are the result of a process that's involved thousands of people and hundreds of organisations.

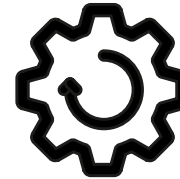
In these many conversations, whether they've happened in the Houses of Parliament, in a community hall or online, the same issues and opportunities have emerged. It's this shared sense of what matters to us all that are our five 'big issues'.

These are the things that will need people to work together to address. They're some of the biggest challenges to an active nation over the next decade and are also the greatest opportunities to make a lasting difference.

Each big issue is where we see the greatest potential for preventing and tackling inequalities in sport and physical activity. Each one is a building block that, on its own, would make a difference, but together, could change things profoundly.

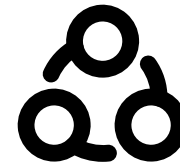
We're not starting from scratch here. But we're now ramping up our momentum and ambition. Building on the work that we, and many others, have already begun, we'll work over the next decade on these big issues:

FIVE BIG ISSUES



RECOVER AND REINVENT

Recovering from the biggest crisis in a generation and reinventing as a vibrant, relevant and sustainable network of organisations providing sport and physical activity opportunities that meet the needs of different people.



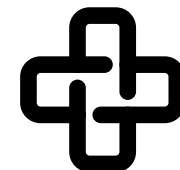
CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

Focusing on sport and physical activity's ability to make better places to live and bring people together.



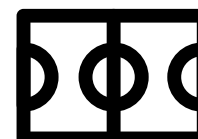
POSITIVE EXPERIENCES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Unrelenting focus on positive experiences for all children and young people as the foundations for a long and healthy life.



CONNECTING WITH HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Strengthening the connections between sport, physical activity, health and wellbeing, so more people can feel the benefits of, and advocate for, an active life.



ACTIVE ENVIRONMENTS

Creating and protecting the places and spaces that make it easier for people to be active.



RECOVER AND REINVENT

All activity matters, but for tens of millions of people, being active depends on organised sport and physical activity.

By organised, we mean arranged by people - it could be anything from an exercise class or a led walking group, through to a parkrun or a Sunday league football game. Offered by a huge network, they're the beating heart of communities, bringing people together and providing a sense of local history, identity and pride.

Traditionally run on small margins, minimal cash reserves and voluntary time²³, Covid-19 has pushed the resilience of this network to the limit.

Some have quickly adapted the activity they offer, but for many more it's meant a fight for survival. If these opportunities to be active disappear, we'll lose much more than the individual sport or activity - we'll lose many of the building blocks of our communities.

This isn't about going back to where we were before. As we recover together, we want to come back more inclusive and more relevant. Despite more than 100,000 organisations nationwide delivering a wide range of sport and physical activity offers, many people and communities still feel excluded, often unconsciously but sometimes not. When this happens at a grassroots level, it also means our talent pathways and national teams don't represent our nation's diversity. We need, together, to call this out and change this inequality.

Alongside the challenge of inequality and perhaps because of it, many sports and activities are in long-term decline.

This is a particular problem for 16-34-year-olds - declining numbers suggest sport and activity hasn't evolved enough to meet their changing expectations and lifestyles. We're competing for people's time and attention with sectors that have responded more effectively than ours - on-demand streaming has changed the way we watch TV, for example.

It's not necessarily that providers don't care or don't want to change. Investing in new people, skills, and methods is challenging for organisations that are already stretched.

For those eager to change, we can work together to find ways to help and adapt. For those unwilling to change, we won't shy away from difficult conversations about what needs to be done differently.



We have an opportunity to reinvent as more agile, inclusive and resilient.



OUR AMBITION

We're ambitious about the role organised sport and physical activity plays in people's lives at every level, and we want millions more people to benefit from it.

We have an opportunity to use the disruption Covid-19 has brought to accelerate progress - to reinvent as more agile, inclusive and resilient and to change the way we do things so we better meet the needs of everyone, in every community.

WHAT WE'LL DO | OUR THREE KEY OBJECTIVES | JOINING FORCES ON FIVE BIG ISSUES


RECOVER AND REINVENT CONTINUED



WE'LL FOCUS ON

- Responding to the short, medium and long-term challenges of Covid-19 and supporting organisations and people to return to activity that's stronger, more relevant and more inclusive than before
- Working with partners to help them design and deliver enjoyable and inclusive experiences for people
- Ensuring the people central to delivering these great experiences better reflect, understand and represent the communities they're working with
- Helping organisations be more agile and resilient by, for example, building their innovation and digital capabilities
- Encouraging and supporting continuous improvement in governance, driving towards more diverse and inclusive practices
- Promoting and sharing insight and knowledge and supporting organisations to use it effectively
- Encouraging partners to work together for their overall benefit rather than competing for the same people
- Making England Talent Pathways accessible and inclusive to everyone with the ability and potential.



FINDING NEW INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS: THE OPEN CALL

A live show broadcast on YouTube, an Alexa skill for older adults and a virtual rehab clinic for Covid-19 survivors are just three ideas we've supported after our first open call for innovative solutions.

Babbasa TV broadcasts fortnightly on YouTube and Instagram and is designed with and by young people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds in Bristol.

The show was created to give their peers a voice and a safe space to talk about topics such as racism, business and healthy lifestyles and we're working with them to reach groups of people who may otherwise struggle to connect with physical activity.

The theme of using developing technologies to reach and influence specific groups is important to us, and we've also teamed up with Screenmedia who've created an Alexa skill for people with long-term health conditions or at risk of isolation.

This allows many older adults to access interactive content from the comfort of their own homes and gives them the opportunity to keep moving despite their situation.

Along similar lines, Sheffield Hallam University has created a virtual rehab clinic for people recovering from Covid-19. They've taken the lessons learnt from elite sport and applied them to those who desperately need the benefits of movement but have few options open to them.



CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

We all want and deserve to live, work or go to school in a place we love.

Our definition of what makes us love where we live may vary, but factors like opportunity, safety, feeling we belong, and that people care for each other are common.

Sport and physical activity isn't necessarily the first thing that comes to mind when people consider what makes a great place, certainly compared to some of the bigger concerns in life, but we believe it can be a huge force for good.

It can develop confidence and self-worth, and help create more resilient, inclusive and connected neighbourhoods. It can grow the local economy, provide jobs and purpose, integrate different groups, help tackle antisocial behaviour, respond to the threat of climate change and save public expenditure.

It can be a big part of loving where you live – or not.

We believe communities across our nation can benefit hugely by using the power of sport and physical activity – that's why we want to support national and local decision-makers to do just that to help people and places thrive.

Crucially, we need to make sure we do that in collaboration with each place: the people within them and the organisations relevant and trusted by them. No lesson has been learned more from our last strategy than this.

It's in communities, and the clubs and organisations within them, where the inequalities specific to that area can be best understood, and where the best prospects of tackling them lie. The 'level playing field' is a term originating in sport, and here it means everyone should be able to feel the benefits of an active life.



We believe communities across our nation can benefit hugely by using the power of sport and physical activity.

WHAT WE'LL DO | OUR THREE KEY OBJECTIVES | JOINING FORCES ON FIVE BIG ISSUES


CONNECTING COMMUNITIES CONTINUED

We know there's a huge network of trusted sports clubs, community organisations and charities out there striving to create better places to live and work. Some are using sport and physical activity as a tool to improve lives and strengthen communities, or because they know how important it is to tackle inactivity. All know they're providing a direct benefit in bringing people together to improve their physical and mental wellbeing. With more support, resources and trust, they can do even more to improve their area and the lives of people in their community.



We know there's a huge network of trusted sports clubs, community organisations and charities out there striving to create better places to live and work.

It's in communities where the jigsaw pieces can best come together. Investment into an approach that builds on assets in an area like its people and their skills, or buildings and facilities, is important, but it's not enough: we need the social and physical environment we live in, the organisations that serve us and local and national policies to join up more if we're to help communities to be active, to thrive and to connect.



OUR AMBITION

We want more communities to enjoy the benefits of what sport and physical activity can do, both for individuals and the place where they live and work.

Those benefits will come from a more bottom-up approach to our work and investment. Working with – not doing things to – communities, and helping those affected to play a role in what happens in their neighbourhood and how it gets done.

Active communities can be such a powerful tool in building great places to live, and we want these benefits to be better understood – more local and national leaders seeing the value of sport and physical activity and investing more in it would have a profound effect.

We'll build on the successes we've seen in the places we've worked most intensively in. Through sport and physical activity, we'll seek to connect other policy agendas in the places we work, with the driving force being what's right for that place and its residents.

We'll pay equal attention to how we work and the true power of collaboration, with lasting change the result.



We'll build on the successes we've seen in the places we've worked most intensively in.



CONNECTING COMMUNITIES CONTINUED



WE'LL FOCUS ON:

- Investing in the people and capacity of community organisations such as clubs and charities, who know their area and its needs best. We'll also work with national partners and coalitions that have relationships with clubs and community organisations and are able to address gaps in support or knowledge, or help in places where the right kinds of organisations don't currently exist – this will be to collaborate on local solutions and not default to top-down national programmes
- Expanding our place-based working by collaborating with more places and their decision-makers on their local priorities and partnership opportunities, helping them use sport and physical activity to deliver the outcomes they want and their communities need. In the places we're working intensely already, we'll do more to join-up our investment and use what we're learning to influence others
- Increasing leadership capacity and capability locally to help grow and sustain change. Leadership that can adapt and is spread across communities will be needed to enable system and social change at scale. We'll expand a system to develop and share what we all learn from place-based working so it can be seen and used by all leaders
- Advocating the value of sport and physical activity as not only an essential tool to improve lives and strengthen communities, tackle inequalities and create great places to live, but as a tool that both national and local leaders can use to confront other issues.



BIRMINGHAM 2022: BUILDING ACTIVE COMMUNITIES

The Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games is an opportunity to use the inspiration of a major Games on home soil to help build more active communities.

We'll work with several places across the West Midlands, focusing on supporting people currently inactive so they can become more active.

We want to take what we've learned from our local delivery pilots and other place-based work to help create a network

of "active communities", with great and relevant opportunities to be active.

Key to this will be listening to communities and responding to their priorities on how local neighbourhoods promote physical activity, be it how open spaces and parks can help encourage activity, how people can be supported to cycle and walk more, or something else. No two communities are the same, and their needs, motivations and aspirations will be different.

Building these active communities, with local people at the heart of decision-making, will be a true legacy for Birmingham 2022.

WHAT WE'LL DO | OUR THREE KEY OBJECTIVES | JOINING FORCES ON FIVE BIG ISSUES



CONNECTING COMMUNITIES CONTINUED



CONNECTING COMMUNITIES: ACTIVE CALDERDALE

Empowering local people who know what their community needs best has been vital in increasing activity levels in Calderdale.

Active Calderdale, the local delivery pilot (LDP), has worked with more than 80 voluntary sector organisations to find practical solutions to the challenges faced by people living in the West Yorkshire borough.

Move the Calderdale Way has prioritised helping people who traditionally face barriers to physical activity, such as those from lower socio-economic groups and people living with long-term health conditions.

The LDP worked with 88 teams that included just under 2,000 residents who were offered regular walking and cycling opportunities.

People who've taken part have felt better, happier and more connected with their local community.

Meanwhile, the Basement Project supports clients dealing with drug and alcohol misuse.

It uses easy-to-access local facilities and sports clubs to help change clients' behaviours through sport and activity.

Investing in activity has changed the culture of the area, with senior leaders building physical activity into local public services in other ways, such as the adult care system.

Those running the service were empowered to redesign the approach, be flexible and put residents at the heart of their thinking. Understanding the richness of a life with physical activity as a part of it has become important for all parts of the social care systems – top to bottom.

This new approach is leading to a change where strong leadership, building the capacity of community organisations and embedding physical activity in services is coming to the fore.



POSITIVE EXPERIENCES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Every child and young person has the right to be active, to benefit from being active in a safe, positive and trusted environment, and to have an equal chance to achieve their potential.

Positive experiences at an early age help build the foundations for an active life. If children and young people have experiences that feel fun, positive and give them a sense of confidence, they're more likely to want to be active in the future.

Sport and physical activity can do so much good for our mental and physical wellbeing, and for children this is even more profound: there's evidence obesity levels are increasing and mental health deteriorating – rates of 5-16-year-olds who may have had problems with aspects of their mental health to such an extent that it impacted their daily lives, has increased from one in nine in 2017, to one in six in 2020²⁴.

Children who are more active are happier, more resilient and more trusting of others, but over half aged 5-16 are not active enough to enjoy these benefits, and activity levels among young adults aged 16-34 have also begun to decline²⁵. This can and must change.

While the current system works for many children, it doesn't work for everyone. Some don't have the same opportunities to be active, so they deserve extra support.

This is particularly true for girls, disabled young people, young people with long-term health conditions, those from less affluent families and youngsters from Black and Asian backgrounds. Current inequalities in sport and activity unfortunately start from a young age and they need to be addressed.

Fewer than one in five children consider themselves to be physically literate, and this declines with age as secondary-aged children feel less confident, competent and gain less enjoyment from sport and activity. This often means they spend their time in other ways and there can be negative consequences for their wellbeing.

What's enjoyable and positive varies for different children and young people, so our aim must be for all to get an experience which meets their rapidly changing needs.

Some will want to go on to fulfil their physical or sporting potential on the international stage, and that must be encouraged. We need to make sure every young person has the same opportunities to succeed, with equal access to the entry points and pathways that underpin the talent system, and have experiences that are positive.

Our starting point is that all children, irrespective of their abilities, should enjoy being active.



PHYSICAL LITERACY

A combination of a person's enjoyment, confidence, competence (how easy they find it), understanding (that it's beneficial) and knowledge (knowing how to get involved and improve). The more elements a child or young person strongly agrees they have, the more active they're likely to be.

36%

Asian (36%) and Black (40%) children are the most likely to be less active

ONLY 43%

of girls are active, compared to 47% of boys²⁶



POSITIVE EXPERIENCES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE CONTINUED



OUR AMBITION

We want every child and young person to experience the enjoyment and benefits that being active can bring. Their needs, expectations and safety should come first in the design and delivery of activity.



WE'LL FOCUS ON

- Putting an even stronger spotlight on safeguarding, so children and young people feel and are safe when being active, and parents are confident it's a safe choice with the welfare of their children paramount
- Putting children and young people first, involving them and their families in decisions and designing relevant opportunities
- Improving physical literacy, so children and young people have a great experience which builds their understanding and knowledge of how to be active, their confidence and competence, but above all their enjoyment
- Improving the mental wellbeing of children and young people through sport and physical activity, by working with and alongside those who want to do the same
- Transforming the way people, paid or unpaid, who help children and young people get active are developed, recognised and empowered to deliver quality experiences
- Creating and protecting quality and safe places and spaces for children to play and enjoy being active outdoors, and helping create more choice and better access to inclusive opportunities to get active in the community
- Influencing the design and delivery of physical activity in education settings by building on key relationships, including with the Department for Education, so every child and young person has a great experience and a broad choice
- Transforming the experiences of all children and young people and ensuring there's equal access to England's Talent Pathways, so our national teams truly represent the diversity of our nation
- Supporting parents and carers to understand the importance of movement and enjoyment for children and young people, because of their important role as enablers, decision-makers and role models
- Embracing technology and the digital world so being active is easier, more attractive and more relevant to the digitally-savvy, while being mindful of potential negatives.

WHAT WE'LL DO | OUR THREE KEY OBJECTIVES | JOINING FORCES ON FIVE BIG ISSUES

POSITIVE EXPERIENCES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE CONTINUED



DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY: FRINDSBURY TENNIS SATELLITE CLUB

Loud pop music isn't the first thing you think of when you picture people playing tennis.

But that's exactly what you'll find at Brompton Academy, where Frindsbury Tennis Satellite Club offers these fun and innovative weekly sessions to pupils.

By mixing the latest chart hits and sport, the sessions allow young people to try tennis in a more relaxed, less structured way than they'd normally encounter at a specialist club.

As the school is based in one of the most deprived areas of Medway in Kent, this unique approach also takes the sport to those who may otherwise not have the opportunity to take part.

This example, from just one of the satellite clubs we've funded, shows how we can help and inspire children and young people to be physically active by working together and connecting schools with their local sports clubs.

This different approach also aims to improve the physical activity levels, mental health, wellbeing and social development of young people, change their perceptions of sport and physical activity, reduce antisocial behaviour and enhance their local environment to create happier and healthier communities.

Each tennis session embraces a 'just turn up' approach to welcome less active young people into a relaxed and friendly environment that breaks down barriers to activity.

The impact has been significant, with nine out of 10 young people taking part saying they enjoyed doing exercise and sport after three months of the programme.



9/10

young people taking part said they enjoyed doing exercise and sport after three months of the programme

WHAT WE'LL DO | OUR THREE KEY OBJECTIVES | JOINING FORCES ON FIVE BIG ISSUES

CONNECTING WITH HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Our physical and mental health is our biggest asset. Being physically active can be described as a 'wonder drug' – it unlocks so much that's good for our health and wellbeing.

But despite this and amid a backdrop of health inequalities, not everyone's currently able to enjoy the benefits of an active life.

The scale of the challenge is significant. Evidence suggests an increase in depression and anxiety amongst 5-15-year-olds²⁷; that one in three working age adults now live with a long-term health condition, predicted to rise to 40% by 2030²⁸; and despite life expectancy increasing over the last 20 years, people are spending more time in poorer health.²⁹ The complexity and severity of health needs is also increasing for some groups.

This impacts everything from the quality of our lives to the health of our economy.

There are also stark health inequalities among both children and adults. For example, people living in the most deprived parts of the country typically have two or more health conditions a decade earlier in their life than those in the least deprived³⁰.

There's a growing trend for wellbeing and looking after our own health, and a rising interest in people quantifying their health through things like apps.

Changing demographics also present opportunities: 'Baby Boomers', for example, are approaching older age and we anticipate they may want to stay active for longer than previous generations.

We know too that there are many organisations working to improve health and wellbeing, from the NHS to those in the voluntary and community sector, local authorities, employers and the commercial health and wellbeing sector.

By using the power of sport and physical activity alongside the work of all these organisations, there's huge potential to improve existing work and explore new areas to help strengthen people's health and wellbeing, from childhood right through to older age.



NOW → **BY 2030**
33% **40%**

The number of working age adults predicted by 2030 to be living with a long-term health condition which needs managing is 40%

WHAT WE'LL DO | OUR THREE KEY OBJECTIVES | JOINING FORCES ON FIVE BIG ISSUES


CONNECTING WITH HEALTH AND WELLBEING CONTINUED



OUR AMBITION

We want sport and physical activity to be at the heart of how we all think about the nation's – and our own – health and wellbeing. But we can only do this if we effectively respond to changing demographics, trends in health and the things that can make it even harder to be active for people with poorer health – for example, limited inclusive or accessible opportunities to get active.

It shouldn't matter that you're 35 or 65, live with two health conditions or are in perfect health – the right range of opportunities, experiences and support should be available and for everyone.

We must also recognise when people with more challenging health needs may need extra support or new and different ways to take part.

If we do this right, we can stop health problems arising in the first place and help people to age well. We could also then support people to manage problems when they do arise and be active for as long as possible.

We also want to harness the collective power of all the organisations focused on health outcomes. If health is everyone's business, then so is sport and physical activity.

The opportunity and ambition here is big and success could be things like physical activity in care homes becoming a priority, physical activity being embedded in mental health policy and services for children, physical activity advice

being included in the every day conversations of front-line NHS staff, or products that help people monitor their own health becoming more widely available.

We also want to strengthen the connection and collaboration between sport and physical activity and the health system at every level, so more people are recommended or referred into activity. This journey should be easy, personalised and supported, to increase that individual's likelihood of becoming and staying active.

These changes could impact greatly on participation and health and play a role in prevention, tackling inequalities and mitigating the impact of Covid-19.



It shouldn't matter that you're 35 or 65, live with two health conditions or are in perfect health – the right range of opportunities, experiences and support should be available and for everyone.

CONNECTING WITH HEALTH AND WELLBEING CONTINUED



WE'LL FOCUS ON:

- Working collaboratively to continuously improve sport and physical activity messaging, experiences and opportunities, so they're inclusive, irrespective of whether you live with a health condition or what age you are. We'll experiment with different approaches to tackle inequalities in health or participation in communities and share learnings. The sport and physical activity workforce will also be supported to gain confidence and skills to give people a personalised experience, supporting beginners and people with common conditions
- Working with partners who want to improve people's health to use sport and physical activity. We'll focus on those who have trust, credibility and reach among people who are least active, in poorer health or unlikely to have existing relationships with the sport and physical activity sector. We'll play an advocacy, capacity, capability-building and influencing role, so we can build buy-in over a longer period of time
- Sharing the evidence that physical activity can have a profound benefit on people's health in a relevant and compelling way that can win both the hearts and minds of those who could strengthen policies, messaging, delivery or investment in support of sport and physical activity
- Supporting meaningful links between the sport and physical activity sector and health systems at every level. We'll listen to what's getting in the way of making this happen and drive changes that address these barriers, including using our influence and advocacy to enable policy changes. We'll also support local solutions, including developing leaders who can spot and respond to local need and help bridge the gap between sport and physical activity and local health systems in a place.



WHAT WE'LL DO | OUR THREE KEY OBJECTIVES | JOINING FORCES ON FIVE BIG ISSUES

CONNECTING WITH HEALTH AND WELLBEING CONTINUED



PUTTING HEALTH FIRST: ACTIVE DORSET:

These days you can do almost anything with your phone.

You can order a pizza, check your social media and, thanks to the great work of Active Dorset, you can use it to call a public health-funded telephone service that will help you get and stay active.

The support line is just one of the ways they've used investment from our Active Ageing Fund to create a culture where helping people to take part in physical activity has become integrated across the health system and wider public sector.

Encouraging and supporting people to move more, and explaining the benefits of doing so, is integral to our ambition and work like this at a local level builds on and informs what we're doing nationally.

Active Dorset's 'whole-system' approach means advice and support is available across a range of places and services used by people – such as GP surgeries and healthcare pathways – helping support them and reduce demand on the health and social care system. This builds on the We Are Undefeatable campaign, ensuring messages to the public are amplified from a range of trusted organisations.

This also includes training healthcare professionals – through the Moving Healthcare Professionals Programme – so they feel comfortable and motivated to routinely talk to patients about being active in a way that works for them.

It means, as well as prescribing treatments, GPs and nurses can advocate physical activity, which can play a vital role in helping to prevent and manage many long-term conditions.



Active Dorset's 'whole-system' approach means advice and support is available across a range of places and services used by people.

ACTIVE ENVIRONMENTS

There's no such thing as a 'neutral space'. The places and spaces around us can have a positive or negative impact on whether, how, when, and where we move. We think of these spaces in three broad categories:

//
Dedicated sport and leisure facilities need to be co-created, well-designed, supported and maintained to benefit the local community and their users.

1. Dedicated sport and physical activity facilities: i.e. pitches, courts, pools and leisure centres

We've historically focused our efforts on facilities like these. Our relationships with local authority and sports club owners of these facilities remain vital, as does the investment in them from various sources, including our own. We also have a statutory responsibility to protect playing field sites in the planning system.

Dedicated sport and leisure facilities need to be co-created, well-designed, supported and maintained to benefit the local community and their users.

What we've learned about these dedicated spaces – whether indoor or outdoor – is that they can be more inclusive and more environmentally friendly, which will lead to a more sustainable stock of facilities offering better, affordable experiences for local people. This will be a focus of our capital work and investment.

2. Other community spaces: i.e. parks and open spaces, village halls, community centres and schools

A huge amount of sport and physical activity takes place, or could do, at these kinds of community spaces.

Not usually designed exclusively for exercise, and certainly not for specific sports, these places are a vital resource for many and the activity they host provides a useful income to the venue. They may never be perfect competition or training spaces, but they attract people who might never go to a sports club, leisure centre or private gym.

The development of community spaces like these is important to people who are regularly or newly active, so we'll spend time and money working with those who own and run them.



ACTIVE ENVIRONMENTS CONTINUED



3. The wider built environment: i.e. streets, housing estates, squares and tow paths

These places and spaces influence how much we move. Good design can help to increase activity levels by encouraging walking and cycling.

We need to work with the public and private sector to influence how neighbourhoods are planned so they create better places to live and work, while making it easy and attractive for people to be active.

The built environment is one of the key factors in the stronger and more connected communities we all want, where local people get a say in how their neighbourhood looks and feels and where their families can live a long and healthy life.



Good design can help to increase activity levels by encouraging walking and cycling.

To truly create active environments, we need to look at the big picture – every space and place that we move through in our daily lives, from our front door to the supermarket or our place of work, and everywhere in between, can have a bearing on if and how we move more.

This means connecting dedicated sport and activity facilities and community spaces, by making it easy for people to walk and cycle, by better design and by using the built and natural environments around us.



OUR AMBITION

We want to make the choice to be active easier and more appealing for everyone, whether that's how we choose to move around our local neighbourhood or a dedicated facility for a sport or activity.

We also have a contribution to make to tackling climate change by influencing how people live and travel, and through the sustainable planning and design of the nation's sport and leisure facilities.



ACTIVE ENVIRONMENTS CONTINUED



WE'LL FOCUS ON:

- Protecting and improving the nation's sport and leisure facilities by using our investment and expertise to revive places to play, and to innovate new designs and operational models which are community-focused, environmentally sound, financially sustainable and contribute to reducing inequalities
- Creating opportunities around community spaces by inspiring local communities to influence owners or increase their own capability to use and sustain these spaces themselves, through advice, training and resources
- Helping to create better places to live by influencing those who develop and manage local environments to encourage both formal and informal activity close to where we live, maximising the potential of green spaces and walking and cycling
- The implications of climate change. The sport and leisure sector must play its part, so we'll adapt our expertise, guidance, tools and support to help our partners rise to the challenge.



BEING INCLUSIVE TO ALL: GREAT SANKEY NEIGHBOURHOOD HUB

There are many things that can encourage people to be physically active, but sometimes all it takes is a smile at a desk.

That's what people with dementia can expect if they walk into Great Sankey Neighbourhood Hub, as all of the staff have been trained as the Alzheimer's Society's Dementia Friends, which means they have a better understanding of the condition and how they can help those affected by it.

It's just one of the ways LiveWire, the largest provider of leisure facilities in the Warrington area, has worked hard to make sure all members of the community have access to local facilities and activities.

They know creating the right environment is crucial in making people feel welcome, and their attention to detail has included redesigning everything from the entrance hall to the changing rooms and toilets to make them dementia friendly.

The site has an accessible mixed-gender changing village, which includes shared cubicles for families and carers, while areas of the changing room can be closed off to manage the flow through it. For example, if a school session is taking place, part of the changing room can be closed to reduce congestion and noise.

The signage is also clear at decision points in the facility so, as an example, when a person exits the lift, the first thing they'll see is clear signage explaining where they can go, which minimises the risk of confusion.

WHAT WE'LL DO | OUR THREE KEY OBJECTIVES

CATALYSTS FOR CHANGE

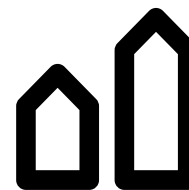
If we work together, we believe the five big issues in this strategy will have the most profound impact on increasing and sustaining activity levels across the nation.



We need to create the right conditions for change: across people, organisations and partnerships.

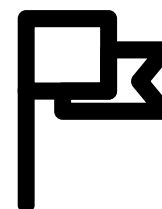
But we can only give them the focus they need if we also acknowledge how we must change and improve what we deliver.

We need to create the right conditions for change: across the people, organisations and partnerships with the potential to contribute and help turn our shared plans and ideas into action. We know there are specific capabilities, information, approaches and relationships that - used in the right way - will make progress possible. These are:



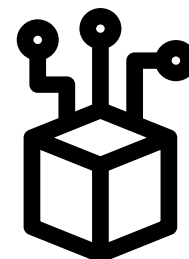
EFFECTIVE INVESTMENT MODELS

The right kinds of investment, timed well and delivered skilfully can stimulate demand, provide opportunities to get active, enable innovation, encourage collaboration, reduce inequalities and enable greater sustainability.



REALISING THE POWER OF PEOPLE AND LEADERSHIP

The people who spend their time helping others to be active are our most precious resource and their potential is limitless. They're the key to adopting and achieving the ambitions in this strategy.



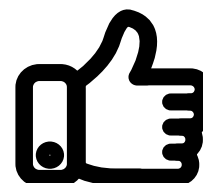
APPLYING INNOVATION AND DIGITAL

Times are changing, and so are people's expectations. In the face of significant opportunity and change, it's critical innovation, including digital, is applied to the big issues that are holding many more people back from being active.



HIGH-QUALITY DATA, INSIGHT AND LEARNING

Key to collaborative action is a shared understanding of the opportunities and the challenges that we face together.



GOOD GOVERNANCE

Good governance, and a commitment to positive, effective, safe delivery of opportunities at every level is how intentions and ambitions are enshrined into ways of working.



EFFECTIVE INVESTMENT MODELS

The right investment can play a vital role in creating new and improved opportunities for people to be active, enable innovation, encourage collaboration and reduce inequalities across sport and physical activity.

Achieving the ambitions of this strategy will be about more than money, and certainly more money than we'll have at our disposal.

As well as using our own funds carefully and creatively, we need to attract other sources of investment into sport and physical activity.

Openly available grant funding plays an important role, and so can increasing access to different forms of finance - from loan schemes to crowdfunding - which can be more relevant to new partners and prove more financially sustainable.

Our local delivery pilots have shown the value of us investing in capacity and partnerships.

New ways of distributing funding, and working with partners with the right connections, can help ensure funding reaches places, organisations and people that have not found our previous programmes easy to access or relevant to their needs.



LOCAL DELIVERY PILOTS

We began working closely with 12 places across England in 2017, learning about the unique barriers and inequalities to activity faced in each place, and addressing them together.

Sound investment decisions need to be underpinned by intelligent programme design and an understanding of the partners, sectors, places and context in which investment is being made.



OUR AMBITION

We want to make it easier for people and organisations with great ideas and significant potential to contribute to the ambitions of this strategy and to access the right forms of investment for them.

We'll make use of the full range of intelligence and insight available to design and deliver collaborative funding approaches that attract new investment, recognising that sometimes our resources are best applied to ensuring the capacity of others to deliver.



WE'LL FOCUS ON:

- Ensuring 'doing business' with us is a positive experience, meaning we're efficient, accessible, connected and proportionate in our processes and expectations, whilst accountable for public funds
- Simplifying access to available funding, including our open funds
- Continuing to diversify and develop our investment approaches beyond our traditional grant programmes, so our offers reflect the realities of the market, the needs of partners, and understand impact
- Enhancing our understanding of the operating environment and local context of the organisations we invest in
- Taking advantage of this 10-year strategy period to invest in capacity and capability that will underpin solutions to the big issues.

REALISING THE POWER OF PEOPLE AND LEADERSHIP

The people who spend their time helping others be active are our most precious resource and their potential is limitless – they're the key to adopting and achieving the ambitions in this strategy. Who they are, where they're from, how they're recognised and how they're supported to do what they do matters.

It's sometimes easy to look past the 'invisible supply chain' of people. But evidence shows activity and experience rely on the capacity, connections and support of the millions of volunteers and professionals in our sector and beyond. The capacity, capability and reach of the workforce needs to be supported across the country and strengthened in the communities that need it most.

That means we need to take on the challenges of now, such as the lack of diversity, falling volunteer numbers, skills shortages, championing enjoyment for children and young people and ensuring safe environments for sport and physical activity.

But we also need to understand and harness the great work and best practice we've seen to meet the possibilities of the next decade, including unleashing the power of diversity, ensuring more people have access to help from those who relate to their experiences, training and qualifications fit for the future, better career choices and clubs and groups contributing more to the social fabric of their communities. To do this, the focus on the people within the workforce must be clearer and more prominent.



OUR AMBITION

Movement, sport and physical activity needs to be delivered, supported and led by a diverse range of people, equipped and supported to meet the demands of their role and changing needs of diverse communities.

Being able to innovate, be inclusive and lead must not be confined to hierarchies or specialisms – these are skills and abilities that exist in people at all levels, from young volunteers to chief executives.



WE'LL FOCUS ON:

- An unrelenting emphasis on diversity, inclusion, skills and behaviours, to open up and increase volunteering and employment opportunities for people from a broader range of backgrounds and experiences
- Working with others to take an honest look at the support and experience for volunteers within our sector, focusing on what's needed to make giving

your time easy, meaningful and supported, now and for the future, and in doing so, reducing drop-out rates

- Supporting the development of people and skills, with a focus on networks of clubs, groups and local leaders to realise their community's ambitions for physical activity
- Working with others to empower children and young people, their families and communities to be part of the changes they want to see for themselves by championing youth social action, creating new youth employment pathways and supporting social entrepreneurship
- Broadening the diversity of leaders within the sector whilst supporting existing and aspiring leaders to develop the skills, relationships and knowledge they need to lead effectively both now and in the future
- Advocating and supporting the professional regulation of the sport and physical activity sector to ensure it's respected both domestically and internationally as a safe, credible and well-governed industry.

WHAT WE'LL DO | OUR THREE KEY OBJECTIVES | CATALYSTS FOR CHANGE


APPLYING INNOVATION AND DIGITAL

Times are changing, and so are people's expectations. Innovation, including digital, is key to making sport and physical activity accessible and relevant to many more people. We must ensure that in the face of opportunity and change, innovation is applied to the big issues that are holding many more people back from being active.

This means we need to continue to develop inclusive and sustainable digital solutions that prioritise improving the experiences of people taking part, while being ready to learn and adapt as things evolve.

We've already come a long way, with community-developed open data standards and a host of new startups that didn't exist four years ago. The Covid-19 pandemic has also accelerated progress, with sport and physical activity offers rapidly adapting and moving online to support thousands of people to stay active safely.

But no one can say the journey is anywhere near complete. The task for the next decade is to ensure a sport and physical activity sector that's connected to, and at ease with, the modern world.



OUR AMBITION

Building on the foundations of our work, together with the sector we'll accelerate progress and ensure that as we innovate, we don't leave communities and audiences behind.



We need to keep developing inclusive and sustainable digital solutions that prioritise improving the experiences of people taking part.



WE'LL FOCUS ON:

- Stimulating and actively encouraging innovative solutions focused on people who struggle the most to be active. This will include finding ways to encourage a whole range of people and organisations to help us solve the challenges they face
- Helping to tackle digital exclusion through our partnerships and investments
- Continuing to advocate for the importance of digital literacy skills and the adoption and development of data standards by the sector. We'll ensure a commitment to open data is applied as a foundational block of our work with partners to tackle the big issues
- Collaborating with partners to explore digital solutions that can improve the experiences of people getting active, so they remain relevant and engaging.

WHAT WE'LL DO | OUR THREE KEY OBJECTIVES | CATALYSTS FOR CHANGE


HIGH-QUALITY DATA, INSIGHT AND LEARNING

The key to working collaboratively is a shared understanding of the opportunities and challenges we face in getting the nation moving. We all need access to high-quality data, insight and learning, and we need the confidence to apply it, so we can make the most of the opportunities ahead.

We have world-class data, insight and learning, and have begun to apply our understanding of people and what works for them to design and deliver more appropriate and effective ways for people to move more. But there are still significant inequalities in attitude, behaviour and experience of sport and physical activity - not everyone is seen, listened to or served.

Collaboration is essential to unlock the value data, insight and learning can add over the next decade. We need collective access to the most relevant pieces of data and to work together on insight that draws upon different experiences, knowledge and skills. We also need a collective desire, and changes in culture, to embrace the benefits of sharing and applying learning.

This collaboration needs to be with a wide range of diverse organisations who place people's needs at the heart of what they do. We're beginning to make these connections, but we need to make more.

The speed at which we learn and apply knowledge is critical - we need to continue capturing and creating data and insight at pace, keeping up with change, otherwise our understanding and ways of working will become obsolete before they're put into practice.



OUR AMBITION

We want to build a shared understanding of the people and systems where things need to change for the better, with this understanding applied to decision-making. The result will be locally relevant, enjoyable opportunities to move more being created and adapted.

Together, we'll learn more about what is and isn't working, while developing our tools and skills so we can continue to utilise new techniques and ways of applying insight. This will mean we can more effectively track change, measure impact and learn together.



WE'LL FOCUS ON:

- Building the right connections across a diverse set of organisations so we can learn together and understand what's needed and what works. We'll support these communities to build practical skills and the confidence to act on what they learn

- Identifying patterns and issues, addressing gaps in our understanding and focusing on the areas that make the greatest difference to inequalities. We'll further develop our view of the future and what's driving changes in behaviour
- Making it easier for everyone to access and use data, insight and learning by creating data standards, tools and processes. We'll support people to create their own insight, while also improving the guidance and advice we give for evaluation and learning
- Being brave and calling out some big issues, especially why some people or parts of society find it hard to be active. We'll advocate on behalf of those who don't have a voice and continue to make the case for the value of sport and physical activity at an individual, local and national level, placing movement for all at the top of the agenda.

WHAT WE'LL DO | OUR THREE KEY OBJECTIVES | CATALYSTS FOR CHANGE

GOOD GOVERNANCE

To realise the ambitions in this strategy, the sector will need strong, brave, collaborative, empathetic and innovative leadership. But leadership goes beyond those labelled as 'leaders' and their daily working practices – it's also about how ambitions and intentions are enshrined into ways of working.

We'll need a sector that embraces good governance in a way that goes beyond compliance and ensures a safe, well-run and enjoyable environment for everyone involved.

Put simply, good governance means not only having a fit for purpose structure and system in place, but making sure those leading an organisation use it wisely and effectively.

One of the greatest successes of the last few years has been our work, jointly with UK Sport, to develop and implement the Code for Sports Governance, which when launched in 2016 set a new standard in governance for sporting organisations.

Since then, we've seen hundreds of organisations adapt to meet its requirements in order to receive public money, and in the process, transform how they're run. We now have more diverse boards, with greater independence and a broader range of skills that are leading organisations being more transparent about what they do and how they do it.

We're beginning to see more and more organisations taking the Code and applying it, voluntarily, within their own regional, county and local structures. More organisations not formally subject to the Code are deciding it's in their interests to embrace it and meet its requirements. We want to help support that to continue.

Good governance extends beyond the structures of sport. It should also drive and ensure the creation of a safe, well-run and enjoyable environment for sport and physical activity at every level, where the welfare of everyone involved is the paramount concern.

While we've seen considerable improvement and change, we've also witnessed continued examples of where this hasn't been the case. From sports clubs and teams through to informal activity and exercise, everyone has the right to take part safely and be free from harassment, bullying and discrimination.

NEARLY
300

organisations have adapted to meet the requirements in the top two tiers of the Code for Sports Governance (Tiers 2 and 3), while thousands more have met the minimum (Tier 1) level



From sports clubs and teams through to informal activity and exercise, everyone has the right to take part safely and be free from harassment, bullying and discrimination.

WHAT WE'LL DO | OUR THREE KEY OBJECTIVES | CATALYSTS FOR CHANGE


GOOD GOVERNANCE CONTINUED



OUR AMBITION

We want the sector to embrace good governance, moving from compliance with a formal code, to a culture across sporting organisations that embrace good governance and strive to be among the best-run organisations in the world.

This will help build a sector where those taking part do so in a safe and positive environment, whether they're in the paid workforce, volunteering or being active.



WE'LL FOCUS ON:

- Completing the first formal review of the Code for Sports Governance by spring 2021, looking across all aspects of the Code but focusing primarily on changes related to equality, diversity and inclusion. This also means ensuring the Code is accessible and usable by organisations at all levels
- Supporting organisations we don't currently fund or work with, particularly at grassroots community level, to improve governance and help them become more sustainable, collaborating with others to design and implement support packages
- Prioritising an understanding of safeguarding and the delivery of effective welfare policies and actions – ensuring organisations we partner with and invest in demonstrate a duty of care towards everyone involved in their sport or activity, including coaches, support staff and people taking part.

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HOW WE'LL WORK



HOW WE'LL WORK

In an ever-changing world, it's **crucial we're flexible and able to adapt**. Over the course of this strategy period, things will naturally change, **but we also all need some predictability and consistency so we can move forward together**.

This means being consistent and committed to a way of working with our colleagues and our partners.

Our guiding principles and our values are the things that we hold true to, irrespective of circumstances.

HOW WE'LL WORK

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

When we choose where to spend time, energy and money, we'll be guided by three principles built into the way we operate.

They represent the biggest commitments to change for us as an organisation. In many ways, this strategy is an evolution of what we do, but a revolution of how we do it. We'll start applying these principles right away, but in reality we know it'll take time to be expert at these, and we'll need to learn from others:

1. Investing most in those that need it most

We'll follow the established concept of "proportionate universalism" in the work that we do, balancing targeted and universal provision in a way that's proportionate to the level of need.

The right thing to do is ensure we all have what we need to be active, regardless of who we are, how we earn a living or how much we make. For some this needs relatively little from us, but for others far more work, time, energy and investment is needed. We'll no longer say this is too difficult, but instead live up to our values, keeping fairness and equity front and centre.

2. The right blend of national and local action

Top-down, national solutions rarely, if ever, solve local problems and local solutions rarely, if ever, scale up successfully across the whole nation. It's our belief that stewardship of sport and physical activity is a shared responsibility across both local and national systems.

By prioritising the right blend of local and national collaboration, we can draw on the experiences and knowledge of people in places and communities closest to the issues, alongside the influence, views and understanding of national partners.

We view this blending of the strengths of national and local mindsets and approaches as a critical part of our role: ensuring local intelligence and 'on the ground' experience informs the design of national programmes, and in turn informs the best versions of national insight and programmes.

3. Simple as standard

We'll make the things that underpin all our work simpler and easier for our colleagues and partners. Across all our relationships and investments, some of our systems, platforms and processes can cause frustration and delays for us and partners.

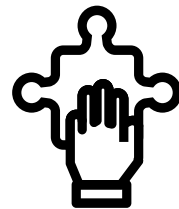
We plan to invest so the basic information, guidance and support feels brilliantly simple to give and receive. It's important our ways of working are easy and accessible to all, and that we're consciously removing the barriers in our processes that could reinforce unequal access to support and funding, while constantly learning about what we can refine.

HOW WE'LL WORK

OUR VALUES AND BEHAVIOURS

Our four values are the ways we'll enshrine our mission in our everyday choices. We're determined to not just say them, but to live them. Our values steer the ways we shape our organisation's skills, capabilities and behaviours.

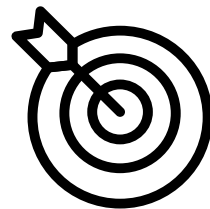
We've applied our values in the creation of this strategy and the way we've consulted and engaged. We'll apply them to choices we make about how to implement it, and we'll apply them every day as we act on our plans.



Collaborative



Inclusive



Ambitious



Innovative



One team, committed to delivering together and working with others to make a difference to people's lives.



WE ARE COLLABORATIVE

We cannot achieve our ambitions alone. There's a growing cohort of people across various sectors exploring the potential of movement, sport and physical activity for social change. We can achieve so much more when we work together - as a single organisation we're constrained, but as a network we're unlimited in our capability.

This strategy defines what we see as our contribution. We believe we can create the conditions for greater collaboration around movement, sport and physical activity. Embedded within that is an understanding that our people, support and resources are best used where they can unlock more people, support and resources.

We believe in building strong, compelling partnerships founded in integrity, honesty and trust. A common misconception is that

good relationships rely on constant agreement. We don't think that's the case. We believe trust is deeper when there are healthy tensions, underpinned by an established shared purpose.

We recognise everybody has strengths, weaknesses, experiences, knowledge and skills, and part of the process is to discover this so that solutions are better. This means having honest two-way conversations, because listening is as important as talking.

Collaboration is also about sharing great ideas and ways of doing things. We can connect people and convene groups to solve problems and share what we're seeing and learning. We can also be ready and willing to be convened by others - brought into a network to add our expertise.

When we're being truly collaborative, we know when to ask for help, offer support and step back, because we trust each other to do the right thing.

HOW WE'LL WORK

OUR VALUES AND BEHAVIOURS CONTINUED



WE ARE INCLUSIVE

We believe deeply that everyone should have the right to benefit from sport and physical activity regardless of age, background or ability. We know that by being more inclusive we'll make better decisions, be better able to meet the needs of the breadth of people we serve and reduce the inequalities in sport and physical activity.

An empathy gap often exists between those making decisions and those most affected by them. This isn't because decision-makers don't care. It's because they often don't have the lived experience to draw upon, and important factors get missed. By the time someone can spot the problems, the rules are normally already in place.

One of the first things we need to do is increase the diversity of our own workforce so there are more

voices around every table. Beyond that, we need to get better at involving people in our work, and hold the principle that if something directly affects someone, they should be part of the conversation. We've been learning how to do this, and this strategy is a commitment to get better.

This often means reframing our language, adapting how we communicate and pushing aside any preconceptions. Change that emerges from within a community is best able to address the needs of local people over the long term. It's our job to support that change, not dictate it. It means valuing diverse perspectives and treating everyone with dignity and respect. It means creating spaces and relationships where people feel able to share ideas and concerns.



Harnessing our collective strength and respecting difference to create the conditions for everyone to engage and excel.

We'll democratise the creation of insight and access to information, and we'll work harder so our collective knowledge can be shared in a way that feels inclusive, accessible and empowering. We seek to unite, through embracing and learning from our diversity and our differences.



HOW WE'LL WORK

OUR VALUES AND BEHAVIOURS CONTINUED



Determined in pursuit of our goals, prioritising work and partnerships that will most advance our mission, help us succeed and make a positive impact on the nation.



WE ARE AMBITIOUS

We have a big ambition to transform lives through sport and physical activity – this requires focus, prioritisation, energy, commitment, consistently high standards and a ‘can do’ attitude from everyone.

We'll be stubborn on our vision, and flexible on what it takes to get there. We know being wedded to plans and the details of something can often hold you back from the bigger purpose. Instead, we'll have

a laser focus on what we're trying to achieve and be willing to look at the best ways to use all the tools in our toolkit.

We'll build on shared ambitions too. Instead of trying to create momentum from scratch, it can often be more useful to find the places where common purpose and enthusiasm exist and start there. In doing so, we'll bring energy and enthusiasm to the pursuit of our goals and strive for new ways of working while keeping our purpose and mission in mind.



HOW WE'LL WORK

OUR VALUES AND BEHAVIOURS CONTINUED



Curious, optimistic and relentless, we question established ways of working and learn from each other and from our experiences.



WE ARE INNOVATIVE

To change the behaviour of the nation we need to think, work and behave differently. Just offering the same thing will lead to the same results – we must be committed to continuously learning from our past, our partners and each other.

The more we learn about what really works, the more we begin to value a spirit of innovation and entrepreneurialism within our work. At the core of innovation is taking a more open-handed approach, where we'll take the role of creating a clarity of purpose and then making space for people to innovate. This will help inspire and encourage others to create and share new ideas.

Being comfortable with the uncomfortable is necessary for innovation to emerge. This is because more risk and experimentation is needed to unearth new ways of doing things. This might mean some things won't work, but the value of learning is vital for the next part of the journey. Creating a culture that embraces things not working, or not going to plan, as part of the road to success is the only way to foster innovation.



HOW WE'LL KNOW IF WE'RE SUCCESSFUL

HOW WE'LL KNOW IF WE'RE SUCCESSFUL



This strategy promises significant changes to how we'll work as an organisation, and the way we'll work alongside others – so it makes sense that the way we understand our success will need to change as well.

During our last strategy, the number of people regularly active before the Covid-19 pandemic hit had grown by over one million. Our own target, agreed with the government, was an increase of half a million.

This increase in activity levels pre-Covid-19 was positive, but it didn't solve the whole problem, nor reflect the complexity of the bigger picture, and as we recognise in this strategy there's still much more to do beyond what the numbers might suggest.

We've traditionally viewed our ultimate success as the overall performance at a national level against targets like this, but we've learned they're a blunt instrument.

They give a simple sense of overall progress, but don't give useful information on the nature of a complex problem.

These population figures are ones over which thousands of organisations and thousands of individual factors have an influence. No single organisation could, for example, be held responsible for the impact of Covid-19 on physical activity levels. So this approach is a poor reflection of the efficacy of any single organisation, even one of the relative size, scale and influence of ours.

Alongside this, if we're to work more collaboratively – at a local level, trusting and empowering our partners more, with fewer top-down national programmes – it's hard to see how a single national target could ever capture the effectiveness of that.

But it's also the case that we have a purpose, a vision and a mission that are about everybody, from every background, in every place having an equal chance to be active and benefit from it. That's a national aspiration, not confined to a specific area, a specific programme or a specific objective, and one we and others will want to see clear progress against.

**+1
MILLION**

During our last strategy, the number of people regularly active before the Covid-19 pandemic hit had grown by over one million, but this figure didn't reflect the bigger picture

HOW WE'LL KNOW IF WE'RE SUCCESSFUL CONTINUED

OUR SPECIFIC IMPACT AND OUR COLLECTIVE MISSION

So we'll now capture both our specific impact, through the programmes we fund, the interventions we make, the partnerships we forge and the influence we bring to bear, but also how our work – alongside that of countless others – could add up to change at a population level.

We'll share an aspiration amongst all those that work within sport and physical activity, from government departments to individual volunteers, to see a positive transformation in the nation's relationship with movement, sport and physical activity.

That means we'll continue to capture, on behalf of the entire ecosystem, the most detailed population-wide picture of sport and physical activity for both adults and children anywhere in the world, through the Active Lives surveys.

This will show whether or not the collective action of all those individuals, organisations and government departments that share our purpose are having the impact we desire: to increase the levels of activity across the whole population, to improve people's experience of sport and physical activity and to tackle some clearly defined inequalities in activity levels.

But change at this level is never the responsibility of a single organisation, so it's crucial we also understand the specific impact of the work we and our partners undertake, and the progress against our own specific objectives.



We'll continue to capture, on behalf of the entire ecosystem, the most detailed population-wide picture of sport and physical activity.

HOW WE'LL KNOW IF WE'RE SUCCESSFUL CONTINUED

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

We know that what gets measured, gets done. But equally, we've heard strongly from partners about the risk of hitting the target, but missing the point. We need measures, therefore, that are thoughtful and proportionate, helpful to others as well as to us, that give us useful information but also encourage the right behaviours and don't bring with them unintended consequences.

So for each specific area of action, we'll also develop a set of key performance indicators that can give assurance to us and those with whom we're working that progress is being made, that the things we expect to change are changing and, crucially, we're learning, adapting and refining as we go.

These indicators will be developed alongside the detail of each area. They'll be outlined more fully in the plans we publish throughout the 10-years of this strategy and adapt and respond to changing circumstances and what we're learning, in the same way our own priorities will.

This hybrid approach to understanding our success will mean we can evidence the overall progress being made by all those involved in supporting sport and physical activity, and also fulfil our role as a public body, spending public money, to evidence the specific impact we're having. That we're making the difference we see is necessary, in the areas that need the greatest attention, for those that need it the most.



JOIN US IN UNITING THE MOVEMENT:

visit [unitingthemovement.org](https://www.unitingthemovement.org)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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