

## Press Release

UNDER EMBARGO: 07.00 (BST) Thursday 13 June 2024

### **Leading bodies for health, sport, recreation, fitness and leisure urge Party leaders to commit to making UK most active nation in Europe**

A coalition of more than 200 bodies, athletes, businesses and charities across health, sport, recreation, and physical activity has written an open letter to party leaders calling on them to use the General Election to #TakeTheLead and commit to making the UK the most active nation in Europe.

As the main parties announce their manifestos and the men's Euros comes into focus this week, a survey\* of British adults asked where they think the UK ranks in Europe's league table for physical activity. Three-quarters (75%) guessed it would feature in the top 10, but the [reality](#) is the UK is a miserable joint-11th among 15 comparable nations.

The call for change is driven by the Active Partnerships network, the Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity, the Sport and Recreation Alliance, the Sport for Development Coalition, ukactive and the Youth Sport Trust, which together represent thousands of organisations, gyms, swimming pools, leisure centres, sports governing bodies, and professionals across the UK.

The letter kickstarts a new campaign launched by the organisations today (13 June) called #TakeTheLead, which will showcase the importance of creating a more active nation and, crucially, highlight the need for leadership by our national politicians to create the conditions for change.

The 226 signatories to the letter range from major health bodies to sport's national governing bodies, education providers and the nation's biggest fitness and leisure groups, while stars such as Rebecca Adlington, Ugo Monye, Adam Olaore and Darcey Bussell have also added their support.

The letter outlines the urgent need as well as the "unique opportunity" for any new Government to unlock the full potential of the sport, recreation and physical activity sector, in a move that would be "transformative for communities across the UK".

It says: "To overcome our national health crisis and deliver economic growth, we believe you must commit to the ambition of making the UK the most active nation in Europe and work with the industry to deliver this vision."

Collectively, the sector already saves the NHS £9.5bn every year by preventing illness and in total generates £85bn annually in economic and social value. However, the value generated by the sector could be far greater if the UK reaches and exceeds the activity levels of its European peers,

according to [research](#) by the Sport and Recreation Alliance.

If the UK became the most active nation in Europe, the research projects:

- Economic growth – by increasing GDP by £3.6bn every year
- Reduced burden on the NHS – by cutting spending on preventable disease by £1bn every year
- An improvement in people’s life satisfaction – by increasing wellbeing benefits to the value of £71bn every year.

The letter highlights priorities for the party leaders to focus on to reduce growing inequalities across the UK and drive significant change in activity levels, such as ensuring every child is active for at least 60 minutes every day, cutting red tape holding back growth, and embedding physical activity pathways into health and care systems.

Sport, recreation, and physical activity bind communities together across all ages, abilities and backgrounds and make the population healthier, happier, more productive and more prosperous.

Making the UK the most active nation would help to reduce pressure off the NHS, boost productivity and economic growth by helping more people to stay in work, improve physical and mental health from childhood, support the drive to net zero, and create more connected, inclusive communities.

**Rebecca Adlington OBE said:** “It’s time for our political leaders to take the lead and be much bolder in their ambitions for sport and physical activity in the UK.

“It’s going to be a great summer for sport but it’s about more than inspiring the next generation of athletes, it’s about how physical activity can help fix our health crisis and improve so many lives.

“I want us to be top of podium as the most active nation in Europe and that starts with the next Government having a full plan to help us reach millions more people of all ages and backgrounds.”

**Lisa Wainwright MBE, CEO Sport and Recreation Alliance, said:** “By asking our political leaders to commit to making the UK the most active nation in Europe, we aren’t just asking them to commit to the power of physical activity, we are imploring them to reimagine the role of sport and recreation in society and, crucially, to put it at the heart of their policy making.

Already in this election, we are seeing parties focus on the need to grow the economy, fix the NHS, cut crime, tackle climate change and reduce inequalities. We know that sport and recreation does all this and more - through cricket to yoga, and dance to orienteering. Getting more people, more active consistently leads to better social and economic outcomes.

From grassroots to elite, leaders from across sport and recreation are driving transformational change across communities. But so much more could be delivered if the true potential of the sector was unlocked. That requires a renewed sense of ambition and prioritisation from

policymakers. And that's what we're calling for – our national politicians to step up, take the lead and make the UK the most active nation in Europe.”

**National Sector Partners Group:**

Active Partnerships

The Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA)

The Sport for Development Coalition

The Sport and Recreation Alliance

ukactive

The Youth Sport Trust

**The signatories:**

Abbeycroft Leisure

Access Sport

Action Group PR

Active IQ

Active Luton

Active Pregnancy Foundation

Activity Alliance

Alliance of Sport in Criminal Justice

Advanced Wellbeing Research Centre

Airius

Alliance Leisure

Angling Trust

Anytime Fitness

Archery GB

Arthritis Action

Asian Sports Foundation

Association for Physical Education

Association of Colleges Sport

Asthma + Lung UK

BaseballSoftballUK

Basketball England

BH Live

Bigwave Marketing

Boccia England

Bolton Arena

Bowls Development Alliance

Bowls England  
Brio Leisure - Cheshire West & Chester Leisure CIC  
British American Football  
British Association of Sport Rehabilitators  
British Cycling  
British Equestrian Federation  
British Fencing  
British Gliding Association  
British Gymnastics  
British Horseracing Authority  
British Horse Society  
British Judo  
British Mountaineering Council  
British Nordic Walking  
British Obstacle Sports  
British Orienteering  
British Para Table Tennis  
British Rowing  
British Shooting  
British Society of Lifestyle Medicine  
British Sub-Aqua Club  
British Taekwondo  
British Universities & Colleges Sport  
British Weightlifting  
British Wheelchair Basketball  
British Wrestling  
Bury Leisure  
Business for Health  
Canoe Camping Club  
Club Kingswood  
Coach Core  
Code Fitness  
CSSC Sports and Leisure  
David Lloyd Clubs  
DDMix  
Dyaco  
Edinburgh Leisure  
England Touch  
England and Wales Cricket Board

EGYM  
EMD UK  
Endurance GB  
England and Wales Cricket Board  
England Athletics  
England Hockey  
England Lacrosse  
England Netball  
England Squash  
English Amateur Dancesport Association  
English Indoor Bowling Association  
EuropeActive  
Everybody Health & Leisure  
Everyone Active  
Faculty of Sports & Exercise Medicine  
Fearless Women  
Fit Hire Limited  
Fitmedia  
Fitness First  
Focus Awards  
Foundry  
Freedom Leisure  
FTC Gym  
Future Fit Training  
GB Boxing  
GB Snow Sports  
GB Wheelchair Rugby  
Gladstone  
GLL  
GM Active  
Goalball UK  
Good Boost  
Gravesham Community Leisure  
Greenhouse Sports  
GymBox  
Haringey Sports Development Trust  
Horsescotland  
Hurlingham Polo  
Hutchison Technologies Ltd

Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing  
InBody UK  
Independent Gyms  
IndigoFitness Ltd  
Intelligent Health  
Inverclyde Leisure Trust  
Junior Adventure Group  
Keep Fit Association  
Kew Green Group Limited  
Kickboxing GB  
Laban Guild International  
Lampton Leisure Limited  
Language of Dance Trust  
Later Life Training  
Lawn Tennis Association (LTA)  
Leeds City Council - Sport  
Leisure Energy  
Leisure Labs  
Les Mills Fitness UK Limited  
Life Fitness  
Life Leisure  
Lifestyle Fitness  
London Sport  
Love Recruitment  
Matrix  
MAVERICKS Life Co  
Merrithew  
Miha Bodytec GmbH  
Mind  
Mosaic Group  
Movember  
Move it or Lose it  
Move Technologies  
Muslim Sports Foundation  
Mytime Active  
Myzone  
National Association of Teachers of Dancing  
National Centre for Sports & Exercise Medicine -  
Sheffield

National Indoor Climbing Award Schemes  
National Orthopaedic Alliance  
National Trails  
NextGen EHS  
Northern Counties Dance Teachers Association  
Nuffield Health  
Oldham Active  
Oldham Community Leisure  
On The Mend  
Orbit4  
Orthopaedic Research UK  
Outdoor Industry Association  
Paddle UK  
Parkour UK  
Parkwood Leisure  
Pendle Leisure Trust  
Places Leisure  
Play England  
PlayInnovation  
Plymouth Active Leisure  
Pozzoni Architecture Ltd  
Precor Fitness Limited  
Proinsight  
PureGym  
Quartz Sequoia Events Ltd (Elevate)  
Quikswitch  
Quoxx  
Right Directions (Management) Ltd  
Rounders England  
Royal Society for Public Health  
Royal Yachting Association  
Rugby Football League (RFL)  
Rugby Football Union (RFU)  
Sandwell Leisure  
SCL Education Group  
Sense  
Shapemaster Global (Innerva)  
Skateboard GB  
Special Olympics GB

Sport for Confidence  
Sport 4 Life UK  
Sport in Mind  
Swimming Teachers Association (STA)  
Strategic Leisure  
StreetGames  
Surfing England  
Swim England  
Swimming Teachers Association  
Table Tennis England  
Technogym UK Ltd  
The Adult Cerebral Palsy Movement  
The Grounds Management Association  
The Gym Group  
The Ramblers  
The Taskforce for Lung Health  
Thomas Pocklington Trust  
Total Fitness  
Trafford Leisure  
Trail Riders Fellowship  
Trilogy Leisure  
Versus Arthritis  
Volleyball England  
Amy Williams MBE  
Women in Sport  
Wythenshawe Forum  
Xplor  
Zoom Media  
3 1 5 Fitness  
3D Leisure  
4GLOBAL  
Rebecca Adlington OBE  
Morgan Bolding  
Dame Darcey Bussell DBE  
Jacob Dawson  
Thomas Digby  
Charlie Elwes  
Dr Dale Esliger  
Rory Gibbs



Professor Ben Kelly

Professor Rosie Meek

Dr Hayley Mills

Ugo Monye

Adam Olaore

Professor Greg Whyte OBE

\*The consumer poll was carried out by Savanta in June 2024 and polled 2,732 people.

**ENDS**