

MAKE THE UK  
THE MOST ACTIVE  
NATION IN EUROPE



# #TakeTheLead



SPORT+  
RECREATION  
ALLIANCE



More people  
More active  
More often



YOUTH  
SPORT  
TRUST



CIMSPA

Active  
Partnerships



SPORT FOR  
DEVELOPMENT  
COALITION





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# PARTICIPATION IN SPORT, RECREATION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY MATTERS. **A LOT.**



It unites our nation, binds our communities together and makes us healthier, happier, more productive and more prosperous.

Week in and week out, we look to our amazing leaders across the sport, recreation and physical activity sector, from the grassroots to the elite – whether they're volunteering to coach a local team, training a newbie in the gym, guiding groups across mountains or on rivers, delivering movement and dance sessions for the community, running a health programme in a leisure centre, funding and providing the facilities and spaces to be active or captaining one of our national teams in a major championships.

But so much more could and should be delivered, for so many more people, with the same level of passion, commitment and prioritisation from our national political leaders.

Relatively speaking, the UK is an inactive nation – when assessed against fifteen comparable European nations, the UK ranks joint eleventh. The result is what we now see around us every day – a creaking NHS and public services, low productivity with people unable to work through ill-health, and a crisis in our children's mental health and wellbeing.

If the UK was more active, we could unlock enormous benefits – help take the pressure off the NHS, boost productivity and economic growth, support the drive for net zero, strengthen our schools and get upstream of physical and mental health issues in childhood and create more connected, inclusive communities.

*We know all this.  
We have done for years.*

But without the right political leadership and support, the sector can't achieve its full potential and the country is worse off for it.

This cannot continue. Sport, recreation and physical activity must be at the heart of the next Government's mission to transform the UK.

**We therefore need our next political leaders to take their inspiration from our leaders across sport, recreation and physical activity – to step up and make it happen.**

**We're calling for a commitment to make the UK the most active nation in Europe.**

**We're calling on the next Government to  
*#TakeTheLead***



*#TakeTheLead*

***TO BECOME  
A HEALTHIER,  
HAPPIER AND MORE  
PROSPEROUS NATION,  
WE MUST BECOME AN  
ACTIVE NATION***





# #TaketheLead

Whatever the outcome of General Election 2024, the incoming Government faces significant challenges on taking office.

The NHS and public services are under immense pressure. The economy is being held back by a rising tide of preventable ill-health. The rising cost of living is impacting the most disadvantaged. Our communities are characterised by deep inequalities. The health and wellbeing of our children is in crisis. And climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss are affecting our everyday lives.

Supporting more people to be active helps tackle all of these problems. It must be at the heart of the next Government's mission to transform the UK.

Sport, recreation and physical activity is a vehicle for good and a vector for change. It is undeniably positive for us as individuals, for communities and for the country as a whole.

## Every year sport, recreation and physical activity delivers:

**£85bn**

in economic and social value – returning £4 in value for every £1 invested.

**586,000**

people employed in delivery and 10m volunteers

**£14bn**

in economic impact

**£72bn**

in social value generated through

**£42bn**

in improved wellbeing

**£20bn**

in value from stronger and safer communities

**£9.5bn**

in healthcare savings from:

**30m**

fewer GP visits worth **£450m**

**33m**

fewer uses of psychotherapy services worth **£670m**

**150,000**

fewer cases of heart disease and stroke worth **£1bn**

**93,000**

fewer cases of dementia worth **£3.5bn**

**375,000**

fewer cases of depression worth **£110m**

**900,000**

fewer cases of diabetes worth **£3.6bn**

But if our political leaders unlock the full potential of the sector – seizing it as an answer to so many of the challenges the country faces – the positive effects could be even greater.

If the UK were to become the most active nation in Europe, we would:

- **Grow the economy – by increasing GDP by £3.6bn every year**
- **Reduce the burden on the NHS – by cutting spending on preventable disease by £1bn every year**
- **Improve people's life satisfaction – by increasing wellbeing by £71bn every year**

### Data sources:

[Sport England/Sheffield Hallam University: Social and economic value of community sport and physical activity in England](#)

[Sport England: Active Lives Adult Survey November 2022-23 Report](#)

[Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity: Workforce Insights Report 2023](#)

[Sport and Recreation Alliance: Making the UK the most active nation in Europe](#)

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***THIS IS THE  
PRIZE IN  
FRONT OF US.***



***BUT IT WON'T  
BE REALISED  
BY RHETORIC.***



# IT NEEDS A CLEAR VISION OF WHAT THE GOAL IS

A commitment to make the UK the most active nation in Europe. Led from the very top of Government. Backed by proper investment. Prioritised in all departments across Whitehall.

And it needs a clear and coherent set of policy measures designed to drive change and help our sector grow and thrive:



#### UNLOCK ACCESS

Remove the barriers which stop people participating in sport, recreation and physical activity; improving access, affordability and usability of our spaces and places.



#### BUILD A HABIT FOR LIFE

Put PE, school sport and physical activity at the heart of children's lives in schools and local communities, with every child getting 60 active minutes a day.



#### RED CARD TO RED TAPE

Reduce tax, regulatory and compliance burdens on the sector so it can focus on what it does best – getting people active and engaged in sport, recreation and physical activity.



#### STRENGTHEN THE SQUAD

Retain and grow the people who make sport, recreation and physical activity happen every day – its paid workforce and volunteers.



#### POWER A PREVENTION-FIRST APPROACH

Embed sport, recreation, physical activity and movement in community health and care systems to improve population health and wellbeing.



#### TACKLE INEQUALITIES

Use a place-based approach to break down barriers and ensure everyone can get active through a relentless focus on making sport, recreation and physical activity more inclusive.



#### ENHANCE OUR PLACES AND SPACES

Protect and improve the quality of the natural environment, and better harness the built and urban environment, to enable more people to be active including through more sustainable forms of travel.



#### BACK OUR WORLD CLASS ATHLETES AND EVENTS

Invest in and leverage the power of elite competitions and events to inspire participation, boost civic pride and enhance soft power.



## #TakeTheLead

Together we believe making the UK the most active nation in Europe would address so many challenges facing the country,

**CREATING A HEALTHIER, HAPPIER, MORE PRODUCTIVE AND MORE PROSPEROUS NATION.**



But genuine, transformational change is only possible if there is the ambition, foresight and courage to deliver it across Whitehall.

This is why we're calling on our next political leaders to step up and

# #TakeTheLead

