Monday 21st September 2020

Dear Prime Minister,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Yours sincerely,

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| Pete Ackerley | British American Football |
| Jane Allen | British Gymnastics |
| Justin Andrews | You Fit |
| Craig Anthony | British Wrestling |
| Joanne Ashton | TSG |
| Simon Bailey | Serco Leisure |
| David Bibby | Everyone Active |
| Mark Braithwaite | 1Life |
| Jason Brautigam | British Dressage |
| Mark Bullingham | Football Association |
| Peter Burt | Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles |
| Bill Bush | Premier League |
| Béatrice Butsana-Sita | Greenhouse Sports |
| Marcus Capel | The Pony Club |
| Joanna Coates | UK Athletics |
| Jon Cockcroft | Bowls England |
| Fran Connolly | England Netball |
| Laura Cordingley | Chance to Shine |
| Mark Coups | England Lacrosse |
| Dave Courteen | Mosaic Spa and Health Clubs |
| Richard Darwin | The Gym Group |
| Andrew Denton | Outdoor Industries Association |
| Tara Dillon | CIMSPA |
| Lisa Dodd-Mayne | University of Warwick |
| Michelle Draper | British Ice Skating |
| Huw Edwards | ukactive |
| David English | AJ Products |
| Mike Evans | EFL Trust |
| Tim Fawke | Snowsport England |
| John Fletcher | Northampton Leisure Trust |
| Peter Gilpin | LED Leisure Management Ltd |
| Kevin Gorman | National Council for Metal Detecting |
| Iain Graham | British Equestrian / British Showjumping |
| Tanni Grey-Thompson | ukactive |
| Peter Guy | Gym Works |
| Glenn Hall | Parkwood Leisure |
| Dean Hardman | AoC Sport |
| Gary Hargraves | Sport:80 |
| Julie Harrington | British Cycling |
| Tom Harrison | England and Wales Cricket Board |
| Sara Heath | Pentathlon GB |
| James Hicks | British Horse Society |
| Stephanie Hilborne | Women in Sport |
| Si Hill | UK Ultimate |
| James Hope-Gill | Skateboard England / Skateboard GB |
| Ivan Horsfall Turner | Freedom Leisure |
| Phil Horton | Miha Bodytec |
| Councillor James Jamieson | LGA |
| Gethin Jenkins | England Boxing |
| Chris Jones | England Athletics |
| David Joy | British Canoeing |
| Natalie Justice-Dearn | Rounders England |
| Arun Kang | Sporting Equals |
| Peter Kay | Fusion Lifestyle |
| Neil King | Energie Fitness |
| Marcus Kingwell | EMD UK |
| Sophie Lawler | Total Fitness |
| James Lawrence | Lifestyle Fitness |
| Mark Lawrie | StreetGames |
| Scott Lloyd | Lawn Tennis Association |
| Stuart Margetts | Our People |
| Lee Mason | Active Partnerships |
| Marg Mayne | Mytime Active |
| Paul McPartlan | Places Leisure |
| Ashley Metcalfe | British Weightlifting |
| Sarah Mortiboys | Dallaglio RugbyWorks |
| Dan Newton | Parkour |
| Jane M Nickerson | Swim England |
| Phil Nunnerley | Endurance GB |
| Tove Okunniwa | London Sport |
| Ali Oliver | Youth Sport Trust |
| John Oxley | Places Leisure |
| Andy Parkinson | British Rowing |
| Rebecca Passmore | Pure Gym |
| Lisa Pearce | British Wheelchair Basketball |
| Matthew Pengelly | Matrix Fitness |
| Nick Pink | England Hockey |
| Joyce Power | Funxtion |
| Brendon Pyle | The Golf Foundation |
| Andy Reed | Sport for Development Coalition |
| Paul Richardson | Gymshark |
| Ralph Rimmer | Rugby Football League |
| Scott Rolfe | Halo Leisure |
| Mark Sesnan | Greenwich Leisure Limited |
| Mike Sharrock | Paralmpics GB |
| Bill Sweeney | Rugby Football Union |
| Chris Symons | BH Live |
| Peter Thompson | English Indoor Bowling Association |
| Jeremy Tomlinson | England Golf |
| John Treharne | The Gym Group |
| Chris Turner | GM Active |
| Mark Tweedie | Community Leisure UK |
| Jean-Claude Vacassin | The International Fitness Business Alliance |
| Colin Wagget | Third Space |
| Lisa Wainwright | Sport and Recreation Alliance |
| Nicola Walker | Sported |
| Ben Wilkins | Good Boost |
| Sue Wilkinson | Association for Physical Education |
| Mark Winder | Goalball UK |
| Tom Withers | Gladstone MRM |
| Keir Worth | England Squash |
| Dave Wright | MYZONE |