

PUBLIC AND PREVENTATIVE HEALTH

PROFESSOR THE LORD DARZI

Author of the NHS report 'High Quality Care For All', former Health Minister and former Chair of the London Health Commission

"The *ukactive Blueprint* echoes the findings from the London Health Commission about the alarming reality of the current state of inactivity in our population. As a cancer surgeon I'm fully aware of the risks linked to unhealthy lifestyle choices and I believe we are facing a public health emergency unless action is taken. We should all take responsibility to do more to help people make healthier choices. Major health benefits come from increasing physical activity and I agree that national and local governments need to work more closely with health services, business and other partners to ensure people take more responsibility for their health and wellbeing."



PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE

To turn the tide of inactivity, getting people moving must be considered a top-tier, standalone health issue.

Fig 3.

PUBLIC HEALTH ENGLAND'S ANNUAL REMIT SHOULD INCLUDE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AS A CORE AREA OF FOCUS.

INTRODUCTION

We are currently faced with the most inactive generation of all time: in England, nearly one in three adults fail to meet the Chief Medical Officer's Guidelines on Physical Activity as of 2014.¹³

As the NHS faces the pressures of an ageing and ailing population, against a backdrop of substantial cost-cutting and efficiency savings, the impetus is now on the public health system to prevent and manage non-communicable diseases. Activity is the most powerful preventative measure at our disposal in this challenge.

With the arrival of Public Health England's *Everybody Active, Every Day*, local deliverers and commissioners now have an improved set of tools, resources and guidance to monitor and improve local activity levels as well as create effective local partnerships. Perhaps more importantly, it set out an evidenced-base framework for action.

But in order to make sure that physical activity is championed across all levels of government and woven into every aspect of the preventative health system, national leadership must be shown to support this existing local action.

Public and preventative health play a pivotal role in the nation's wellbeing and, when we consider the impact of smoking cessation policy in recent decades, significant and meaningful government action, backed by support from the private and third sector, can and will have the ability to get more people moving.

¹³ ukactive, *Steps to Solving Inactivity*, London: November 2014

SHIRLEY CRAMER CBE

Chief Executive of the Royal
Society of Public Health

“Being physically active underpins so much of our health and wellbeing – from tackling obesity to enhancing our mental wellbeing and it is this capacity to make a positive contribution on so many fronts that makes it such a critical component in supporting the public's health. Despite this our society is sedentary on an unprecedented level. Getting people moving is one of the great public health challenges of our time. *ukactive's Blueprint for an Active Britain* provides us with a clear roadmap of how we can achieve this and reap the benefits of a more active society.”



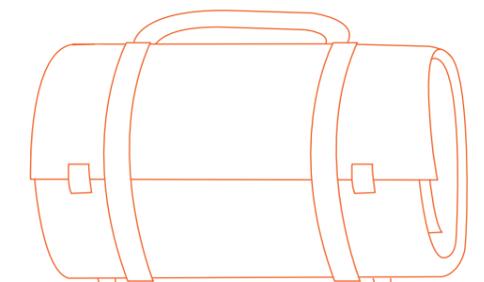
POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1 To turn the tide of inactivity, getting people moving must be considered a top-tier, standalone health issue, and embedding activity into all aspects of daily life must be a priority for government.

- » Government should produce a cross-departmental Physical Activity Strategy led by the Cabinet Office, setting out long-term, ambitious targets and committing significant resources both in funding, focus and research, to drastically reduce levels of inactivity. It should draw together existing work from Public Health England, the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, the academic community, international examples and the Government's own Smoking Kills (1997) white paper, to ensure that this necessary document is backed up with deliverable action.
- » The letter setting out Public Health England's annual remit, sent by the Public Health Minister to the Chief Executive of Public Health England, should include physical activity as a top-tier, standalone public health issue and recognise that a singular and strong focus on inactivity is now required, backed up by specific action at a national and local level.
- » Government should immediately expand the scope of social marketing practices, specifically around physical activity within target populations, scaling up those messages which are proven to have an impact on levels of activity at a local level. Government should commit funding and resources at a national level – along with the support and networks of the physical activity sector and the private sector – to maintain and expand headline campaigns such as *This Girl Can* and *Change4Life* to encourage physical activity and raise awareness of the Chief Medical Officer's guidelines for activity levels. The activity sector should take these national frameworks and align their own marketing budgets and resources to expand their reach.



GOVERNMENT SHOULD
SUPPORT CROSS-SECTOR
PARTNERSHIPS THAT
DELIVER EFFECTIVE
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
OPPORTUNITIES.





2 Government should reaffirm its commitment to public health as a crucial area of health policy.

- >> In line with the *Securing our Future Health* (2002) report to the Treasury, the Prime Minister should commission a fresh independent review of public health policy and practice in the UK, with a specific focus on how government can champion lifestyle and behavioural change to prevent the onset of non-communicable disease, drawing on successful international examples and promising local projects. This review should include an evaluation of the effectiveness of current funding structures, with a particular focus on under-represented groups such as women and girls and disabled people, and create clear recommendations for relevant departments as to how a preventative approach to health can be maximised as well as developing a stronger understanding and benchmarking of the scale of public health issues.
- >> Through whichever department or method government funding structures deem fit, government should champion the maintenance, protection and annual growth of a fund for local authorities to improve the wellbeing and health of local populations in line with priorities set out in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNAs). The fund's crucial role in determining local health outcomes should be recognised within the wider health budget. This should be supported by an increasing role for the NHS via local Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) who must now realise the long held ambition to make physical activity a core business of the NHS.

3 The private sector, with its unique networks and global reach, should be considered a crucial partner in the development of a physical activity strategy and its resources utilised in the promotion of active lifestyles.

- >> Government should support local authorities and the physical activity sector to work with the private sector in cross-sector partnerships that deliver effective physical activity opportunities Partnerships with private enterprise that can have a demonstrable impact on more inactive groups, such as women and girls, should be supported and encouraged to scale up.
- >> The Department of Health should commit to the on-going engagement of business through a refresh of the Physical Activity Network, and oversee the development of a new, independent network to help employers contribute to activity policy and best practice. It should engage with and support this network in a shared vision of getting more people, more active, more often.
- >> To utilise new technology's huge potential to engage people in physical activity, government-backed technology investment funds, delivered through sector-led investment incubators such as the London Co-Investment Fund, should be expanded. The specific goal should be to support the creation and development of start-up companies, including technology platforms, which have the potential to engage inactive groups and support local delivery, and match these start-ups with proven entrepreneurial mentors and support to access the market via bodies such as ukactive.

THE PRIME MINISTER SHOULD COMMISSION AN INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF PUBLIC HEALTH POLICY AND HOW GOVERNMENT CAN CHAMPION LIFESTYLE AND BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE.