

Nominee's Name:

Dr William Bird

Organisation Name:

Intelligent Health

Your Nominee's place of work:

Intelligent Health

Please provide a narrative (600 words max) about your nominee in the space below:

William has dedicated his working life to preventative health and highlighting the importance of physical activity and connection to the outdoors. He believes that a person's health is determined by a social, environmental and economic factors and created Intelligent Health to build active communities. Over the last 30 years he has held a unique position as both a trusted expert in this field and an innovator behind initiatives that have got millions moving.

As a family GP, William recognised the connection between physical activity and health, and the difficulty in getting patients to make lasting changes to their activity levels. This inspired him to set up Health Walks in 1996. These are simple, easy and social walks that take people through green spaces. The initiative proved to be hugely successful and was taken on by the Ramblers who now deliver 1,800 walks to 24,000 people each week.

This led to him creating the very first Green Gym which encourages people to get active through conservation work. Again, this proved to be very successful with more than 1000 Green Gyms now in operation across the UK run by The Conservation Volunteers.

After founding Intelligent Health, William created Beat the Street – a walking and cycling initiative that encourages people to get active by turning their town into a giant game. The initiative has had more than 800,000 participants with strong evidence of sustained change.

The driving force behind all of these initiatives is an understanding of the motivations and barriers for people getting active, and the value of social and environment-based solutions to physical activity. William's knowledge and expertise in these areas have led to him being one of the most sought-after authorities on physical activity. William is a member of: the Get Berkshire Active and AoC Sport Boards, Slimming World Advisory Panel, Royal Horticultural Society Health & Horticultural Forum, College of Medicine Nature Lead and the Reading Cultural Partnership. He has worked for the World Health Organisation to develop a physical activity strategy for the Middle East and was awarded MBE for his contributions towards physical activity and health.

Not only has William's work inspired many people across the world, as CEO of Intelligent Health he leads his team to help create active communities across the world. William's relentless work-ethic and passion for promoting health has helped take the company to over 60 interventions in the past three years inspiring change in communities across the UK and beyond.

Looking to the future, William is continuing to lead on the connectedness between our environment and our health. He has recently published the Oxford Textbook on Nature and Public Health which has contributions from dozens of leading experts around the world on how we can improve our health by connecting with nature. He has also recently launched a new Health Forecasting service which helps hospitals anticipate demand based on changes in weather.

Dr William Bird MBE has been at the forefront of social prescribing for the past 20 years and has recently created a 7-point programme for social prescribing to help grow this important area. This includes working in primary care to help GPs understand their role in reducing the reliance on medicalised support. William created GP training modules which have been used over 80,000 times on the BMJ online portal to help GPs understanding the unique position they have to influence patients and help them build activity into their lives. Dr Bird was awarded 'Innovation Doctor of the Year' and in 2015, he was named by The Independent as one of the top 100 people making Britain a happier place.

