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## **Government releases new Sports Strategy, Get Active: A strategy for the future of sport and physical activity**

### ***Introduction***

The Government has today [published](#) its new Sports Strategy, *Get Active: A strategy for the future of sport and physical activity*. The Strategy has a particular focus on physical activity and ambitious targets for increasing activity levels, mirroring ukactive's own Vision 2030. The strategy sets out how the government will work with the sector to achieve the targets on increasing physical activity levels.

ukactive and the wider National Sector Partners Group have fed into the Strategy, and while this engagement has fallen short of full consultation, ukactive has provided consistent feedback on the need to include the totality of the sector and the importance of focusing on growth.

The language and the intentions in the Strategy are positive and we now need to see these married to strong delivery plans based around data and evidence, investment, tax and regulatory reforms, and the implementation of bold public health plans. The creation of a better economic landscape to operate will drive growth and get millions more people active across the rest of the decade. To this note ukactive will continue to work closely with Government, Sport England and other sector bodies to deliver on these ambitions for our members.

Please see below a breakdown of the key commitments within the strategy and ukactive's analysis.

### ***Increasing activity levels***

The Government has committed to the following targets to achieve by 2030:

- 2.5 million more active adults, of which:
  - o 1.25 million more active women.
  - o 1.5 million more active adults aged 55+.
- 1 million more active children
- activity rates increasing and inactivity levels decreasing in all parts of the country.

'Driving participation and increasing activity' is the key focus of the Strategy, as DCMS seeks to "build a healthier nation by tackling high levels of inactivity, and by making sure that the sport and physical activity sector thrives for future generations".

To achieve this, the Government has committed to the following measures:

- A new cross-government approach for activity for all, with clear metrics and targets for the sector, held to account by a joint government and sector National Physical Activity Taskforce.
- More investment in the sector is targeted at inactive groups, and a more strategic approach to facilities to ensure communities have access to the facilities they need.
- A focus on all children to meet the activity levels recommended by the UK's Chief Medical Officers, supported by a new campaign aimed at children and young people.

If you have any questions or would like any further information, please contact our Policy team at [stephenmcloughlin@ukactive.org.uk](mailto:stephenmcloughlin@ukactive.org.uk)



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There is a recognition of the need to work closely with the wider sector in order to achieve this. This doesn't just include traditional sports clubs, schools and other public sector organisations but also private sector businesses, the outdoor activity sector and organisations with a core objective of getting the nation more active.

In order to accurately measure the impact of the Strategy, the Government has identified the importance of data and metrics from across the sector, as well delivering investment where it is most needed. It has committed £300 million in investment by 2025, although this is inclusive of previously announced funding.

There is a specific acknowledgement of the need for the Government to build stronger intelligence base around the contribution of the private sector to aid future support. As a result, the Government in the strategy commits to working with the sector to build the **evidence base** on potential policy mechanisms and regulatory reforms that could be introduced to unlock further investment and growth of the private sector.

### *Analysis*

It is positive to have recognition of the role the sector must play in achieving these targets and it is essential this continues. However, Government cannot abdicate responsibility for empowering the sector to increase activity.

We now need to see a programme of delivery from Government on how it will utilise the sector to turn these targets into reality. This can begin with the plan to create a joint government and sector National Physical Activity Taskforce. It is essential the sector is an integral part of this group, providing a voice directly to Government. ukactive is already engaged in discussions with the DCMS on the make-up of this group which we will share with members in due course.

The focus on data underlines the importance of the sector's work in ensuring this is accurately captured and provides a clear picture of its contribution to activity levels, as well as the impact of activity on a range of Government priorities, including economic inactivity and NHS waiting lists.

On the specifics around the evidence base for private sector support, ukactive's discussions with the Department regarding this strengthen the importance of progressing the full establishment of Private Sector Benchmarking and the wider ukactive market intelligence plans.

We await what additional investment will be announced, as it is critical this is targeted at those facilities which are able to provide the greatest benefit to increasing activity levels.

### *Facilities*

The role of facilities, inclusive of gyms and leisure centres, in driving participation is recognised, with the Government committing to developing a National Vision for Facilities before the end of 2023. Government notes how high-quality leisure centres are the public's preferred location for exercise, and points to areas of recent investment, such as the National Leisure Recovery Fund and the Swimming Pool Support Fund.

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While recognising the critical importance of public leisure to delivering on the ambitions within the Strategy, it also notes there are “facilities across the country [that] fail to deliver a sustainable and quality offer to the community”. The National Vision for Facilities aims to consider the longer-term questions of sector resilience, particularly with regard to public sector leisure facilities.

There is great ambition within Government that private sector investment is able to contribute significantly to the ambitions of the strategy. It acknowledges this element of the sector has great potential for growth, and to support reaching target groups, and will look to use data to identify policy interventions which can unlock this investment.

### *Analysis*

The full nature of the Government’s plan for facilities will not be known until the end of the year, when the National Vision for Facilities. However, ukactive will work closely with Government to ensure the value of the whole sector is considered.

There is still work to be done to identify the barriers to investment and expansion. Therefore, it is positive to see a commitment to ‘work with the sector to build the evidence base on potential mechanisms...to enable further growth’.

ukactive will engage with Government on the process for development of the Vision, keeping members updated throughout.

### ***Children and young people***

Achieving the target of 1 million more active children by 2030 will be a significant challenge for Government, and one which will require working closely with partners across the sector. ukactive has previously called for more to be done to ensure children in the UK meet the Chief Medical Officer’s guidance on activity, so it is positive to see this commitment reflected within the Strategy.

We welcome the commitment to introduce a new kitemark for measuring the provision of PE in schools, as well as a review of the sport offer in schools outside of curriculum PE. We will work closely across Government to ensure physical activity beyond organised sport is included within this, including the use of children’s activity providers.

ukactive's Open Doors programme to make use of school facilities during the summer holidays for the most vulnerable children is recognised as an example of initiatives which will need to be expanded in order for the Government to deliver on its targets.

### *Analysis*

With the Government’s ambitions on children and young people so closely mirroring those of the sector, this is an area for optimism in the direction of travel. Working closely with our partners in the sector, ukactive will continue to advocate for more focus on wider children’s activity in achieving these targets outside of traditional and grassroots sport, with a particular focus on continuing to open up facilities hidden behind school gates.

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It is also critical we continue to work cross-Government to ensure other policy areas, such as childcare, recognise the contribution of our sector to children's health and wellbeing.

### **Health**

The importance of sport and physical activity on health is recognised by the strategy throughout, noting the potential savings of £7.1 billion to the NHS through prevention as a result of exercise. There is recognition there needs to be further joining up of physical activity provision and community health.

ukactive and partners' work with MSK hubs is included as a case study of the variety of work facilities can do directly with health services to provide positive outcomes.

### *Analysis*

There continues to be good recognition of the value of sport and physical activity on health, yet still little in the way of concrete proposals to realise the full potential our members have not just in preventing ill-health but in supporting directly in treatment.

ukactive's upcoming Health Roundtable will seek to address this directly and provide a blueprint for this partnership in the long-term.

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