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Creating sporting opportunities in every community

SPORT AND HEALTH

- **All sport is physical activity.**
- Sport is more than just team sports, takes place in informal settings with activities for groups and individuals. **There is something for everyone**, including adapted versions of traditional sports which reach out and draw in inactive or reluctant participants.
- **We know that regular participation in sport has an important and valued impact on improving health** across the life-course. With 36% of the adult population in England (15m) already playing sport at least once a week, and **22 million adults (c53%) saying that they would like to take part in more sport** the potential is huge.
- People who play sport and meet the Chief Medical Officer guidelines have a **20-30% reduced risk of premature death**, and up to **50% reduced risk of developing major chronic diseases** such as coronary heart disease, stroke, diabetes and cancers.

Is sport a good investment?

In a climate where we need to improve health while delivering more for less, sport is an efficient, as well as an effective, use of investment. With just over half the population not doing any sport at all, the potential cost-savings from boosting sports participation are significant.

- We know that even a small investment in sport delivers demonstrable improvements in health and wellbeing – if we get a million more people across the country doing sport each week this will **save the tax payer £22.5bn in health and associated costs.**
- When comparing an active person to an inactive person our research shows us that a person aged 30-49 years playing football can be expected to experience health outcomes worth about £27,000 over the remainder of their life. Broken down that's about £4,200 in avoided health care costs and £23,400 in improved quality of life.
- Cycling England estimate that a **20% increase in cycling by 2015 would save £107 million** by reducing premature deaths, £52 million from lower NHS costs and £87 million due to fewer absences from work.
- Be Active Birmingham have shown that for **every £1 invested there are £21 generated in benefit** as well as a cost per Quality Life Years (QALY) of £1,164 (well below the NICE threshold of < £20,000)

Sports role in reducing inequalities

In England people living in the poorest neighbourhoods, will, on average, die seven years earlier than people living in the richest neighbourhoods. Even more disturbing, the average difference in disability free life expectancy is 17 years. So people in poorer areas not only die sooner, but they spend more of their lives with a disability. There is strong evidence that high quality sport and physical activity, improves health and reduces inequalities. In particular doing sport at least once a week has the same impact on individual wellbeing as an increase in annual household income of £11,000.

Precedents do exist for the successful delivery of health benefits through sport. As an example, Blackburn with Darwen have increased the number of local people playing sport and active recreation by over 7% in four years with considerable achievements in increasing participation in groups commonly referred to as 'hard to reach'; women increased by 13% to 17%; BME groups more than doubled from 11% to 25%; people with disabilities increased from 18% to 22%. Statistics demonstrate that importantly the majority increase in physical activity has been from *routine and manual occupational groups* (15% to 25%). Increases in these groups are more likely to make a significant contribution to reducing health inequalities in the area.

What do the guidelines say?

The Department of Health's Chief Medical Officer guidelines (*Start Active, Stay Active*) describe the amount and type of activity required to achieve general health benefits. For adults the weekly recommended guideline is to take 150 minutes of physical activity (including sport) through a variety of at least moderate intensity, aerobic physical activities.

Vigorous intensity activity can also bring health benefits over and above that of moderate activity. As many sports combine periods of moderate and vigorous intensity activity, (football, swimming) and other sports and purely vigorous (fast running) these guidelines open up exciting new opportunities for partnership between sport and health.

How can we help you?

Sport has broad appeal. Through the use of our wide range of tools we can help authorities ensure it is delivered efficiently supporting tough choices that have to be made. Our data and tools can help target resources effectively.

Our Active People Survey provides local level data on sporting participation. The large sample size allows detailed analysis on how participation varies from place to place and between different groups in the population.

The attached mini sport profile drawn from our Local Sports Profiles gives not only key sporting data for you LA area, but the costs of inactivity and maps modelled on participation data and obesity data showing any direct correlation. The Active People Survey and Local Sport Profiles are valuable tools when developing or refreshing your Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

The profile also outlines the range of tools and supporting resources we provide to help improve local sporting participation. Our existing work through *Places People Play* will bring the sporting legacy to life, delivering better facilities, more volunteers and greater access to a variety of sports across the whole country. More information on Places, People Play and how you can get involved can be found at www.sportengland.org