



Agenda for **ACTION**

How the sport and physical activity workforce can help the next government drive health, wellbeing and economic value for our nation.



Agenda for action

The Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA) is calling on all political parties to commit to harnessing the potential of physical activity and sport, and in particular the power of the sector workforce, to address key issues that the country is facing.

The next government can reduce demands on and the cost of NHS services, improve the economic potential of individuals and communities and build greater social cohesion by developing policies which enable collaboration between government and the sport and physical activity sector.

We ask the next government to:

- 1.** Formally embed our sector within its health policy planning to relieve pressure on the NHS and improve the health of the nation.
- 2.** Support flexible skills development in our sector to bolster economic growth and generate career and learning opportunities for our workforce.
- 3.** Continue with a place-based approach to local skills delivery so that the significant impact being achieved by the sport and physical activity sector can sustain and grow.
- 4.** Make a commitment to supporting the sport and physical activity sector's planning for a future workforce registration scheme.
- 5.** Implement practical measures to support the success and resilience of the small businesses that keep our communities active.

1

Enable greater collaboration with the sport and physical activity sector on health policy and planning



We ask the next government to formally embed our sector within its health policy planning to relieve pressure on the NHS and improve the health of the nation.

With high demands on the NHS, there is a need for a national policy to harness the unique ability of the sport and physical activity sector. This will deliver better health and wellbeing through our sector's work to support prevention and management of chronic conditions, rehabilitation and recovery, mental health, and community engagement.

There are great examples of where our sector's workforce is already helping to address the challenges faced by the NHS. Sport and physical activity already generates £9.5bn¹ in savings by preventing serious physical and mental health conditions and our proven value here now needs to be scaled.

The evidence base shows our sector's impact in the prevention of long-term health conditions: reducing avoidable GP visits, appointments and treatment waiting time.

Real-world partnerships between our sector and the NHS demonstrate how health sector professionals value the positive contribution that sport and physical activity professionals make to local health outcomes through the unique skillset and expertise that our workforce delivers.

We ask the next government to formally embed our sector within its health policy planning to relieve pressure on the NHS and improve the health of the nation.

2

Break down barriers to opportunity by driving skills in sport and physical activity



We ask the next government to support flexible skills development in our sector to bolster economic growth and generate career and learning opportunities for our workforce.

The development of highly skilled professionals across sport and physical activity is integral to our contribution to the UK economy.

Our sector employs almost 600,000² people in businesses that generate a turnover of £53bn³. These enterprises rely on a workforce trained and developed with a service-orientated skillset that both delivers to local and diverse customer needs and drives bottom-line success.

Our workforce, with its ability to engage broad communities and participant groups in physical activity, also makes a significant contribution in enabling people to be economically active.

Through their work to promote physical activity and wellbeing, including in communities where there are high levels of economic inactivity, sport and physical activity professionals already support individuals who may not be working due to ill health to improve their wellbeing with the potential of gaining greater financial independence.

It is flexibility in skills development that enables our sector to respond to changing needs that is key to unlocking the true potential of the sport and physical activity workforce.

Existing funding routes, such as the apprenticeship levy, can be restrictive to many employers who need to strike a people development balance between staff technical training and micro-credentials, versus longer programmes and qualifications.

We ask the next government to support flexible skills development in our sector to bolster economic growth and generate career and learning opportunities for our workforce.

3

Empower sport and physical activity to deliver on local community needs



We ask the next government to continue with a place-based approach to local skills delivery so that the significant impact being achieved by the sport and physical activity sector can be sustained and grow.

The place-based approach to skills development enables our sector to both engage local communities and positively impact local health and economic development priorities by aligning learning in local colleges to employer and public sector needs.

This is most important in areas of the country facing the greatest health inequalities. A focus on meeting local sport and physical activity needs, best delivered by a workforce that reflects its community, helps drive greater engagement and stronger outcomes, particularly in communities with a history of low participation in physical activity.

Our local skills pilot projects have shown the value of aligning further education courses with a data-led understanding of local employer skills gaps and ensuring that students are truly prepared for work and life when they leave education.

A place-based approach also supports the ongoing career development and progression of a locally representative workforce, making an important contribution to tackling community inequalities. At the same time, increasing workforce skills enhances the economic stability of individuals and their communities.

CIMSPA are already bringing together education providers, employers, local authorities, health commissioners and government agencies, such as the Department for Work and Pensions, through our growing network of local skills accountability boards across England, Scotland and Wales.

Our work here is translating skills development investment into great employment and career opportunities for local learners, enabling their contribution to health, wellbeing and social value in their communities. By continuing with this place-based skills approach, the next government will help scale the positive impact this work is having across our nation.

We ask the next government to continue with a place-based approach to local skills delivery so that the significant impact being achieved by the sport and physical activity sector can be sustained and grow.

4

Ensure that everyone can have a positive and safe experience in sport and physical activity



We ask the next government to make a commitment to supporting the sport and physical activity sector's planning for a future workforce registration scheme.

Our current work to research and evaluate a potential sport and physical activity workforce governance and registration scheme is an important sector-wide undertaking.

The objective here is supporting, safeguarding and regulating the workforce to allow everyone taking part in sport and physical activity to enjoy safe and high-quality experiences and to be helped in achieving their goals in a positive environment.

Working together, the sector is developing a solution that uses regulated best practice and showcases the excellent impact of our frontline workforce. This sector-wide approach is addressing the recommendations from the reports and inquiries which have sought to eradicate harm and poor practice within sport and physical activity.

The sector is united in finding a solution and has positively engaged in the discovery stages of this project with a mature approach to maintaining ownership through self-regulation.

We ask the next government to make a commitment to supporting the sport and physical activity sector's planning for a future workforce registration scheme.

5

Unlock the potential of small businesses to power physical activity in their communities



We ask the next government to implement practical measures to support the success and resilience of the small businesses that keep our communities active.

At the heart of sport and physical activity are the independent operators, micro and small businesses that make up 91% of our sector³.

These are driven by professionals committed to getting their communities more physically active and enabling people to live healthy lives. They are agile and able to engage people “on home turf” through their understanding of local diversity and needs.

The entrepreneurial nature of the professionals running these enterprises also helps them move quickly to respond to changing consumer and societal needs.

These businesses have huge potential to enable communities across the country to become more physically active and reap the wider benefits of improved health, sustainable economic activity and stronger community connections.

However, support to sustain and scale these enterprises through business skills development is essential to realising this.

We ask the next government to implement practical measures to support the success and resilience of the small businesses that keep our communities active.

Sources

1. Social and Economic Value of Physical Activity in England – Sheffield Hallam University/Sport England.
2. CIMSPA Workforce Insights Report 2023.
3. Source: Datacity/Lightcast. Data includes: Sector core industries – Exercise and Fitness; Leisure Operations; Community Sport; Health and Wellbeing; Performance Sport; Adventure Sport. Data excludes: Sector bodies and training, development and education organisations.



About CIMSPA

CIMSPA is the professional development body for the UK's sport and physical activity sector, committed to supporting, developing and enabling professionals and organisations to succeed and, as a result, inspire our nation to become more active.

Together we're developing a vibrant, UK-wide sport and physical activity sector, with the highest standards of service delivery.

Releasing the **Power of our Profession**

This agenda for action is driven by our strategy – Releasing the Power of our Profession – which sets out a clear vision of how our workforce can be supported and professionally recognised.

Through the delivery of this strategy, we will:

- Champion equality, diversity and inclusion across the sport and physical activity workforce.
- Lead our sector on workforce policy and regulation.
- Empower individuals to realise their potential by supporting career progression through professional recognition.
- Deliver a localised approach to skills and education that systemises how we enable people and organisations to succeed.
- Enhance public trust and confidence in the value of our workforce and profession.

www.cimspa.co.uk/strategy

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