



The
Richmond
Group
of Charities

Monday 24th June 2024

Dear Party Leaders,

The UK's health is in a dire state with physical inactivity at its core. We – a coalition of leading health charities, academic bodies, and providers – are sounding the alarm: your manifestos have missed an important opportunity to leverage the power of physical activity and movement, an intervention that could fundamentally change the trajectory that we are on and transform the nation's economy, health and wellbeing.

Physical inactivity is one of the leading risk factors for ill health. According to data from [Nuffield Health's Healthier Nation Index](#), 3 in 4 people aren't meeting the Chief Medical Officer's recommendation for daily exercise. In addition, we know from data from the NHS that [20 million people in the UK](#) live with long-term health conditions and people on the lowest incomes are four times more likely to have multiple long-term conditions. With record numbers waiting for treatment and 2.8 million people economically inactive due to long-term sickness, the strain on our healthcare system and economy is unprecedented, impacting not only individuals but the health and wellbeing of entire communities.

Movement is a cost-effective and sustainable long-term intervention that can dramatically improve our nation's physical and mental health, and contribute to a happier, more productive, and prosperous country. In 2019, the [UK's Chief Medical Officers explained](#) that "if physical activity were a drug, we would refer to it as a miracle cure, due to the great many illnesses it can prevent and help treat." Nuffield Health's [Joint Pain Programme](#) demonstrates how structured, low impact exercise, can be transformative: supporting people to manage their conditions, live independently, return to work, and lead healthier, happier lives. The Richmond Group of Charities and partners' [We Are Undefeatable campaign](#) is another impactful intervention that has effectively inspired and supported people living with long-term conditions to be active. These are just two examples among many that illustrate the power of movement as an intervention for improving the health and wellbeing of the nation.

Yet movement and physical activity remain underutilised tools for improving the nation's health, and with high levels of inactivity we are storing up further health challenges for the future. Movement must become a key pillar in healthcare and health improvement in the UK alongside other treatments. [We call on you, as](#)

party leaders, to commit to implementing a new, cross-government National Movement Strategy within the next Parliament.

This strategy should go beyond tackling inactivity, it must make movement a go-to option, systematically integrate it into the healthcare system, and maximising its use in the prevention, management, and treatment of those living with, or at risk of developing, long term health conditions.

The health of our nation depends on the actions you take now. We urge you to prioritise movement and physical activity, and work with us together to turn around the nation's deepening health and wellbeing crisis.

Yours sincerely,

Access Sport
Activity Alliance
Age UK
Arthritis and Musculoskeletal Alliance
Asthma and Lung UK
Baroness Watkins of Tavistock
British Association of Sports Rehabilitators
Breast Cancer Now
British Geriatrics Society
Chartered Society for Physiotherapy
College of Paramedics
C3 Health
Diabetes UK
Dr Hussain Al-Zubaidi, RCGP Active Practices
Faculty of Sport and Exercise Medicine
Good Boost
Nuffield Health
Parkinson's UK
Policy Connect
Professor Tim Cable, Manchester Metropolitan University
Prostate Cancer Research
Queens Nursing Institute
Richmond Group of Charities
Sweaty Betty Foundation
The Society of Sports Therapists
The Taskforce for Lung Health
UKactive
Versus Arthritis
Women in Sport