



Press Release

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Leading health and social care charities and Sport England form unique collaboration to help people with long-term health conditions get active

- Sport England is working with a group of leading health charities from The Richmond Group to deliver a series of projects that could improve the health of millions of people.
- It has awarded £1.3 million of National Lottery funding to projects to be delivered by Age UK, Alzheimer's Society, Breast Cancer Now, British Lung Foundation, Diabetes UK, MS Society, Rethink Mental Illness, and Stroke Association – all from The Richmond Group of Charities, a partnership of fourteen leading health and social care charities, who represent more than 15 million people with long-term conditions who could potentially benefit from sport and physical activity.

Sport England and eight charities from The Richmond Group are collaborating to help people with a range of health conditions benefit from getting active.

£1.3 million of National Lottery funding – awarded by Sport England – will fund projects to help prevent and manage long-term health conditions like cancer, diabetes, lung disease and mental illness.

Regular moderate intensity physical activity (such as brisk walking, swimming and cycling) has been shown to help prevent and manage over 20 chronic conditions, including coronary heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, cancer, obesity, mental health problems and musculoskeletal conditions.¹ Even small increases in physical activity can have a positive benefit.² For example, studies have

¹ The UK Chief Medical Officer's physical activity guidelines Start Active Stay Active 2011.

² PHE Everybody Active Every Day 2014.

shown that physical activity can help people with Multiple Sclerosis benefit from improved muscle function, aerobic fitness, mobility and quality of life.³

More than a third of the population (15 million people) in England live with one or more common long-term health conditions⁴ and people with these types of conditions are much less likely to do physical activity.⁵ Studies have shown they experience more barriers to being physically active, from physical symptoms such as pain, tiredness, and breathlessness, to a lack of knowledge about what types of activity would be suitable for them and a fear of hurting themselves.⁶

The funding will allow the charities to address the barriers holding people with long-term health conditions back from being active.

For example, some projects will be focussing on providing better practical support, advice and guidance on how to be active such as a telephone health coaching service, new guides, or offering activity within peer-to-peer support group sessions. Others will conduct more research into what prevents people from being active regularly, so more appropriate support can be given.

The successful approaches will be shared with other leading health charities, and the wider health sector, with the aim of helping potentially millions of people with long-term health conditions get active.

Jennie Price, Sport England CEO said: “Exercising when you have a long-term health condition can be hugely beneficial to your mental and physical wellbeing but it can also be daunting.

“Sport England has chosen to work with the leading health charities to help people get active, because the charities already have the confidence of the people living with long-term health conditions. Together we want to help people answer those questions they might have about which activities are suitable, or how much exercise they should do for example.

³ NICE full guideline CG 186 review.

⁴ In 2013 more than one in three adults (36% or more than 15m) reported having a long-standing illness or disability (LSI) and one in five (20%) reported having a limiting LSI according to the ONS Opinions and Lifestyle Survey 2013.

⁵ Inactivity is classed as doing less than 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity a week. According to Sport England’s latest Active Lives survey, 34% of people with a limiting condition or impairment are inactive compared to 21% of those without a condition or impairment. This number rises again to 51% when people have three or more impairments.

⁶ A Richmond Group-commissioned survey by Britain Thinks found that 59%, 40% and 36% of people with long-term health conditions indicated respectively that pain, tiredness, and breathlessness prevented them from being active. 33% of people with long-term health conditions stated that a barrier was a lack of knowledge about what types of activity would be suitable for them.

“We are committed to sharing what we learn about how to help people get active, and think this has real potential to help people lead happy, healthier lives.”

Chris Askew, Chair of The Richmond Group of Charities said: “We’re delighted to be working in partnership with Sport England to understand more about how best to support people with long term conditions to become and stay physically active.”

Projects Overview:

Age UK will reach out to older people who are not physically active at the moment to understand what would help them to change this. The insights gained will inform our future communications and support. Age UK will also lead in developing ways of measuring the effectiveness of these projects, and of the wider Richmond Group physical activity programme, “Movement for All”.

Alzheimer’s Society will develop a Dementia Friendly Guide that will provide the physical activity (sport and leisure) sector with resources and knowledge to enable their organisations, services and facilities to become more ‘dementia friendly’ and support more people living with dementia to become physically active.

Breast Cancer Now will gather insight by speaking to women who have had a breast cancer diagnosis, who are over 55 years old and who are not physically active, in order to understand their attitudes towards physical activity and what action we can take to support them to become more active.

British Lung Foundation will develop, test and evaluate a telephone health coaching service to support and empower people living with lung conditions to become and stay active.

Diabetes UK will help us to understand the evidence related to physical activity and clinical diabetes outcomes (type 1 and type 2) and prevention of Type 2 diabetes. It will also help us to understand the barriers that prevent people with diabetes from being more active.

MS Society will encourage people with MS to become more physically active and inspire long-term behaviour change by testing motivational telephone coaching and personalised text support.

Rethink Mental Illness seeks to understand if the barriers that prevent people severely affected by mental illness from engaging in physical activity can be overcome by embedding physical activity into peer-to-peer support groups.

Stroke Association seeks to explore the role of peer-to-peer support groups in increasing and maintaining levels of physical activity amongst stroke survivors for the improvement of well-being, better self-management and secondary stroke prevention.

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For further information and interview opportunities please contact: Sport England's press team | media.team@sportengland.org | 020 7273 1593 / 020 7273 1800

NOTES TO EDITORS

Case studies available on request from Alzheimer's Society, Rethink Mental Illness, Breast Cancer Now, Stroke Association and Diabetes UK. The case studies all have long-term health conditions and can talk about how exercise has helped them to successfully manage their condition.

Interviews available with Sarah Ruane, Sport England's Strategic Lead for Health. Requests invited for interviews with spokespeople from charity partners.

About Sport England

Sport England is a public body and invests up to £300 million National Lottery and government money each year in projects and programmes that help people get active and play sport. It wants everyone in England, regardless of age, background, or level of ability, to feel able to engage in sport and physical activity. That's why a lot of its work is specifically focused on helping people who do no, or very little, physical activity and groups who are typically less active - like women, disabled people and people on lower incomes.

About The Richmond Group

The Richmond Group of Charities brings together 14 of the leading health and social care organisations in the voluntary sector, with the aim of improving care and support for the 15 million people living with long-term conditions that we represent. We want to see more people with long term conditions moving more every day.