



Press Release

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Sport England invests £4.4 million of National Lottery funds to recruit a new wave of volunteers to make a difference in their local communities

Sport England is investing £4.4 million to recruit a new generation of volunteers who will benefit communities across the country - all thanks to funding from the National Lottery.

The funding will build on the success of the 6.7 million people who already volunteer to support sport and physical activity by reaching groups which are currently under represented - such as people from disadvantaged communities and women - and supporting more young people who want to make a difference.

It is part of an overall investment in volunteering by Sport England of up to £30 million.

The ultimate aim is to make volunteering in sport and physical activity more diverse and to enable more people and communities to experience the benefits of being active. Through getting involved, volunteers also benefit by developing their own skills and confidence, and experience improved wellbeing.

Sport England is funding 32 projects that will use the power of volunteering, sport and activity to transform lives.

They include:

- Test Valley Community Services, which will recruit military veterans as volunteers in sport and physical activity, harnessing the diverse range of skills they learned during their service.
- Play Gloucestershire, will support children from disadvantaged and isolated rural communities by making local green spaces great places for sport and physical activity.
- Leonard Cheshire Disability, will harness the potential sport has to make positive changes for young disabled people and give them the confidence and skills to participate in social action and be a catalyst for change.
- Small Heath Boxing Club, which targets adults suffering from mental health conditions who live in areas of high deprivation in Birmingham.
- Active Communities Network, which will use volunteering in sport to target five London Boroughs to empower young people to break down barriers in areas with a high prevalence of crime and gang affiliation.
- Volunteer It Yourself, which combines volunteering and DIY by challenging young people to learn trade and building skills while fixing youth club and community centre buildings.

A full list of all 32 projects can be requested at media.team@sportengland.org

The projects are part of two new funds launched by Sport England aimed to reach new audiences and test new approaches to volunteering.

The **Opportunity Fund** projects will focus on people, aged 20 and over, from economically disadvantaged communities. There are huge gains to be made by encouraging more volunteering in these areas because of the dual benefit for the individual and the community.

The **Potentials Fund** targets children and young people aged 10 to 20 who want to do something to benefit their community, through social action. Currently 4 in 10 young people get involved in activities that make a positive difference. However, research indicates many more have an appetite to be involved but cite a lack information and opportunities as key barriers.¹ Sport attracts many young people and can provide a springboard to social action. Just over half of young people say they prefer sport to any other volunteering pastimes.

¹ Source: Youth Social Action in the UK – 2015: a face to face survey of 10-20 year-olds in the UK, conducted by Ipsos MORI.

To reach this younger audience, Sport England has teamed up with the #iwill Fund, which creates more opportunities for 10-20 year-olds to get involved in social action as a way to benefit others in their local area. The #iwill fund is jointly funded by the government and Big Lottery Fund using money raised by National Lottery players.

Sport England's funding announcement coincides with #iwill Week, (November 20-24) which celebrates the positive impact of young people leading social action in their communities.

Minister for Sport Tracey Crouch said:

"Volunteers make such a difference to grassroots sport. Without them it would simply not happen. This National Lottery funding will encourage young people to get involved in sports volunteering, having a hugely positive impact on their lives, the lives of others and benefitting their local community."

Sport England's Director of Sport Phil Smith said:

"When people volunteer in sport and physical activity there is a dual benefit – volunteers help others in their communities get active, as well as benefitting themselves. Volunteering and taking part in social action can do wonders for job and career prospects, mental health and making friends.

"That's why volunteering sits at the heart of Sport England's new strategy, Towards an active nation. We're delighted to be helping these 32 projects to enable more volunteers to be the catalysts for change in their neighbourhood.

"These projects will test various different approaches, with the ultimate aim being a larger number and more diverse volunteers. We are focussing on people who are currently less likely to volunteer in sport, such as women, disabled people, people from BAME groups and people on a low income."

The #iwill campaign is run by the charity Step Up To Serve. Its Chief Executive, Dr Rania Marandos, said:

“Young people across the country often start their social action journey through community sport. Sport has the potential to enable even more young people to make a contribution to their communities whilst developing their own skills and wellbeing. It is fantastic to see such a range of projects receive funding through the #iwill campaign’s partnership with Sport England in support of our collective aim of making meaningful social action part of life for more 10 to 20-year-olds.”

ENDS

Notes to Editors

Research that shows that 6.7 million people – 14.9% of the population in England – have volunteered at least twice in the last year to support sport and physical activity). People from lower socio-economic backgrounds make up 31% of the population, but only 10% of the volunteers. Just over half of young people say they prefer sport to any other volunteering pastimes. 4 million (60%) of adult (16+) volunteers are male, and 2.7 million (40%) are female – a gender gap of 1.3 million (20%) [Sport England’s Active Lives Survey]

Contact Sport England at: media.team@sportengland.org

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For more information on Sport England’s volunteering strategy please visit:

<https://www.sportengland.org/media/11323/volunteering-in-an-active-nation-final.pdf>

About the #iwill campaign and the #iwill Fund

The #iwill campaign is a UK-wide movement aiming to make involvement in meaningful social action (e.g. fundraising, volunteering and campaigning) part of life for 10-20 year olds by the year 2020.

The #iwill Fund is independent from the campaign, but supports its aims. It is a joint investment by Big Lottery Fund and the Department of Culture, Media & Sport – each has committed £20 million up to 2020 to support the creation of high quality social action opportunities for young people.

The #iwill campaign is being coordinated by the charity Step Up To Serve. It was launched in 2013 after Government research into how the business, education, public and voluntary sectors could support young people, aged of 10 and 20, to engage in social action (campaigning, fundraising and volunteering).

HRH The Prince of Wales is the Patron of Step Up To Serve, and the #iwill campaign. To date more than 750 organisations from across UK society have pledged to support the campaign goal of enabling young people to get involved in social action, wherever they live and whatever their background.

More information can be found at www.iwill.org.uk and @iwill_campaign.

About Sport England

Sport England is a public body and invests more than £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 Big Lottery Fund

Big Lottery Fund uses money raised by National Lottery players to help communities achieve their ambitions. From small, local projects to UK-wide initiatives, our funding brings people together to make a difference to their health, wellbeing and environment. Since June 2004 we have awarded £8.5 billion to projects that improve the lives of millions of people.