



Press Release

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Sport England announces significant investment in parkrun

Increasing female participation and encouraging more people from low socioeconomic communities to take part in free, weekly, social activity will be the focus of a new collaboration between Sport England and parkrun.

Funding from Sport England over three years will support the creation of 200 new parkrun events in England, building on the successes of parkrun's phenomenal growth over the past 14 years. The project will specifically target new events in communities that have the most to benefit from free, weekly, social activity in open spaces.

The investment will be focused on the key areas of increasing the number of women and girls who take part and increasing participation from lower socioeconomic groups. It will also enable the modernisation of parkrun's digital platform for registration, results and event information in order to allow it to grow indefinitely.

Sport England CEO Tim Hollingsworth said:

"This important partnership with parkrun is part of Sport England's ongoing strategy to help grow new and innovative sporting ideas and broaden their reach into the demographics in society who are least likely to be active.

"The funding – which is only possible thanks to National Lottery players – will enable parkrun to reach females and people on a low income, who are less likely to be active than the general population.

"We know from our research that cost and a lack of local opportunities are real barriers in stopping people being more active, and what parkrun does brilliantly is offer free, community-based events for all abilities.

“We’re looking forward to working with parkrun to help even more people get and stay active.”

parkrun Chief Executive Nick Pearson said:

“Sport England funding, made possible thanks to the National Lottery, is an endorsement of the strides we have taken to create a model that empowers communities to implement a permanent mixed gender, multi-generational health intervention that appeals to a broad cross-section of society, particularly those for whom physical activity and volunteering is not the norm.

“Our growth over the past 14 years has been organic and to a large degree dictated by community demand, not need. If we are to realise our target of increasing the number of parkrun events by one third in socially deprived areas in England over the next three years, we require a level of investment that will allow us to be proactive rather than organic in our approach.

“We are now in a position to build on our message and encourage more people to walk, jog, run and volunteer at our events by growing into new areas and engaging new audiences. We must acknowledge that the market economy has left many people behind because of a lack of traditional sporting facilities or the capacity to participate, and through our insight and pilot interventions we know that proactively engaging with community groups to develop parkrun volunteer teams does stimulate demand. This investment from Sport England will allow us to expand our reach and work even more closely with communities to develop solutions that work at a local level.”

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Notes to Editors

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About parkrun UK

parkrun UK supports more than 800 communities around the country to deliver free, weekly, socially-focussed events every weekend in public areas of open space. 1.8m people in the UK have taken part since the first event in 2004 and 250,000 have volunteered.

584 5k events for all ages are held on Saturdays, with 256 2k junior parkruns for 4-14 year-olds on Sundays.

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.