



Press Release

00.01 Thursday 18 December 2018

Hit Children's Fitness Initiative Receives £1.5 Million Boost in biggest step taken to reach all schools in England

- Today, Sport England have pledged £1.5 million of National Lottery funding to grow The Daily Mile™, an initiative started by former head teacher Elaine Wyllie.
- The new partnership is part of a joint mission to help children get active as new figures show 1/3 of children are 'less active', meaning they do fewer than 30 minutes of activity a day.
- Children from Ladypool Primary School in Birmingham will take part in a Daily Mile, with VIP guests from Sport England and The Daily Mile Foundation joining.
- The new partnership is a huge step forward for The Daily Mile in putting people on the ground to get more schools across England signed up and get more children #FitForLife.

Sport England has today (18 December) committed £1.5 million of National Lottery funding to support The Daily Mile, the ground-breaking fitness initiative that aims to get children fit for life. In what is the biggest ever expansion of the programme since it originated in 2012, the investment will fund the recruitment of National and Local Coordinators to support and encourage more schools in England to sign-up.

Figures from Sport England's Active Lives Children and Young People survey released this month shows the scale of the challenge to help the nation's children be more active. It showed that, despite 3 million children doing an average of 60 or more minutes of physical activity a day, just over

2.3 million children and young people are 'less active' which means they do less than 30 minutes of physical activity a day.¹

Currently, The Daily Mile helps schoolchildren in over 3,500+ English schools reach their daily activity target. Sport England and The Daily Mile Foundation's partnership marks their shared vision to bring daily physical activity to all 20,000 primary schools in England.

Today, children from Ladypool Primary School in Birmingham will take part in a Daily Mile, alongside VIP guests and key stakeholders from The Daily Mile Foundation, Sport Birmingham and Sport England.

The founder of The Daily Mile, Elaine Wyllie; Director of The Daily Mile project at INEOS, John Mayock; Sport England's Executive Director Children of Young People and Tackling Inactivity, Mike Diaper; CEO of Sport Birmingham, Mike Chamberlain; and, Sport England CEO, Tim Hollingsworth will be joining Olympic Athlete and local Radio personality, Katharine Merry, at Ladypool to launch the partnership.

The event will celebrate the partnership and bring together local children to further spread this important message.

Founder of The Daily Mile, Elaine Wyllie said:

"Since starting The Daily Mile six years ago, the progress we have made has been incredible. With Sport England's generous investment of National Lottery funding, The Daily Mile Foundation can continue to move closer towards our goal of every child in the UK being able to participate in The Daily Mile."

Sport England CEO, Tim Hollingsworth said:

"Earlier this month, the landmark Active Lives Children's survey revealed that a third of children in England do less than 30 minutes of activity a day. It's the strongest evidence yet that not enough is being done to support our youngsters, and change is needed if we're to increase activity levels.

"Through getting schoolchildren to walk or run for 15 minutes every day, The Daily Mile has been proven to significantly improve fitness levels. As part of our support of all active mile initiatives,

¹ Sport England's Active Lives Children Survey Academic Year 2017/18

Sport England are delighted to be partnering with The Daily Mile Foundation and investing £1.5 million of National Lottery money into The Daily Mile. We want to take the initiative to even more primary schools across the county to improve the health of thousands more children.”

Sport England’s investment in The Daily Mile is a key part of its work to help children develop positive attitudes to exercise so they are more likely to continue the habit, and benefit as adults.

School Standards Minister, Nick Gibb said:

“The Daily Mile is a hugely successful programme designed to ensure that every pupil in a primary school learns the habit of taking rigorous exercise every day.

“This very welcome funding from Sport England will enable more schools to sign-up for the programme. I believe every primary school in England should be introducing The Daily Mile into their school.”

Minister for Sport and Civil Society, Mims Davies, added:

“The Daily Mile is a great initiative that is fun and helps improve children's fitness and mental health.

“We know that an active child is a happier child and this investment will mean many more young people can take part, enjoy themselves and inspire them to stay active.”

This event in Birmingham on the 17th December 2018 is the most recent in series of events to both raise awareness of the campaign and celebrate the 1.3 million children already running The Daily Mile.

-ENDS-

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The National Lottery funding from Sport England will fund 11 local coordinators and 2 national coordinators, and will be delivered through the County Sports Partnership Network (CSPN).

Notes to Editors

About The Daily Mile

The Daily Mile was first developed by Elaine Wyllie when she was Headteacher of St Ninians Primary School in Stirling in February 2012. It is profoundly simple – but can be transformational to children’s health and wellbeing. It involves classes heading outside to jog or run around the school grounds every day, rain or shine, at whatever pace suits the child best. It gets children active with their friends and teachers and refreshed for further learning. The Daily Mile is free, fun and fits in the school day easily. The initiative is now in over 6,700 schools across 55 countries with over 1.3 million children taking part.

It only takes 15 minutes desk-to-desk, causing minimal disruption to the school day, but has lasting effects: not only do children become fit within 4 weeks, they are also reported to concentrate better in class, eat and sleep better at home, and develop stronger bonds with their classmates and teachers, too. Though named “The Daily Mile” (children tend to average running a mile in this time), the distance isn’t compulsory, and the ethos of the scheme is of inclusivity, enjoyment, and self-improvement over time. The Daily Mile is intended to help all children, no matter their age or personal circumstances, enjoy getting active every day - getting fitter and healthier now, but also developing healthy habits for a lifetime.

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 Katharine Merry

Katharine is a rare Athlete that had outstanding success at both junior and senior level Athletics. Having been the fastest girl in the world aged 14, 12 years later she became the fastest woman in the world over 400m. Aged just 12, she was ranked number one in 7 different events in the UK age group rankings and, when concentrating on sprinting at 14, she ran a stunning 7.35s indoors for the 60m, becoming the fastest girl in the world ever over the distance - a record that she still holds today. In a record 5 junior under 20 Championships she collected 5 medals including gold at the European Junior Championships over 200m in 1993.

The fastest woman in the UK from 18 years old, she flew into the 2000 season in her new event of the 400m with one sole objective - the Sydney Olympics. With a 112,000 capacity crowd Katharine ran a lifetime best to win the Bronze medal behind Australian heroine Cathy Freeman. In 2001, Katharine broke the British women's indoor 400m record, setting a record time of 51.54 at an international indoor meeting in Cardiff.

Since retiring from Athletics, Katharine has become a regular guest on TV and Radio shows which include A Question of Sport, Pointless and Celebrity Mastermind. She is the only female TV lead Commentator in Athletics, which has seen her working at numerous Olympic Games, Commonwealth Games, European Championships, as well as lead Commentator for Channel 4 at the Paralympics and Paralympic World Cup events.