



## We're joining call for sports recovery fund

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Table Tennis England is supporting a campaign calling for emergency funding to support the sports and physical activity sector through the pandemic, or risk a “lost generation of sport and activity”.

Leaders of more than 100 sports and physical activity organisations have written to Prime Minister Boris Johnson to urge him to provide emergency funding to support the sector.

The letter, co-ordinated by ukactive and sent to co-incide with Great British Week of Sport, highlights the contribution of the sector to society and calls for a Sports Recovery Fund to be set up. The fund would help protect existing jobs and facilities so that the sector can:

- Support programmes and facilities that address the health inequalities highlighted by COVID-19, particularly inactivity among women, lower socio-economic groups, BAME communities and people with disabilities.
- Expand the innovations across the sector that we have seen during COVID-19 – making opportunities digital and increasing accessibility across the country.

The letter quotes a report published by Sport England and Sheffield Hallam University this month which showed that every £1 spent on community sport and physical activity generates nearly £4 for the English economy, providing an annual contribution of more than £85bn a year, with a social value of more than £72bn a year, measured by physical and mental health and wellbeing, individual and community development. The sector has a combined workforce of 600,000 jobs.

The letter says: “Grassroots sport, fitness, and wider recreational activity is proven to improve physical, mental, and social wellbeing. This makes our sector an essential service as our nation recovers from the damage caused by Covid-19.

“However, we are united in our concern that at a time when our role should be central to the nation’s recovery, the future of the sector is perilous. Covid-19 has exposed the fragility of vital services and assets, with sports clubs and fitness facilities facing permanent closure, depriving local communities of facilities and programmes

on which they depend.

“Covid-19 has undermined our commercial revenue streams with both stadia and leisure facilities closed or greatly reduced in capacity. The impact of this will potentially lead to a lost generation of sport and activity. We are particularly concerned about the impact on those whose participation has been limited during the pandemic. Physical activity levels, especially in the most vulnerable groups, are significantly below where they were tracking pre-Covid-19. This is at a time when the Government has committed to levelling up outcomes and opportunities across the country.

“In order to play our fullest role, we must survive and stabilise. To do this, we require a comprehensive support package for the sport and physical sector to aid its recovery.”

[Click here to read the letter in full.](#)

Table Tennis England last month [helped to lead a campaign to put pressure on the Government](#) to ensure sports halls are used for indoor sports, with many venues prioritising gyms and group exercise at the expense of organised sports.

Our Chief Executive, Sara Sutcliffe, said: “The sports sector is calling for help now, before there is irreparable damage not just to our sector but to the health and wellbeing of the nation as a whole.

“Volunteers across all sports, including table tennis, have worked tirelessly and responsibly to help to restart grassroots sport in a way that is safe for participants. But it is clear that more help is needed from the Government if we are to get the sporting sector back on its feet and having the huge and lasting positive impact on the nation’s health.”

The campaign was featured on the BBC News last night – you can watch the report here:

My [@BBCNews](#) at 10 report as 100+ sport & fitness bodies ask the PM for emergency funding, warning the future for the sector is “perilous”.

But it comes with government set to scrap plans for a phased return of fans from next month, deepening an unprecedented crisis for sports. [pic.twitter.com/HrvCbPy3oU](https://pic.twitter.com/HrvCbPy3oU)

– Dan Roan (@danroan) [September 22, 2020](#)

Huw Edwards, CEO of ukactive said: “Our sector is united in its call to the Prime Minister to back grassroots sport and physical activity so that our clubs, gyms and leisure facilities can throw their full weight behind fighting this pandemic.

“This is a health crisis and our sector can play a vital role in supporting our NHS by restoring the nation’s physical and mental resilience in the face of this terrible virus.

“We call on the Government to deliver the urgent fiscal, taxation and regulatory support required to save sports and activity providers across the UK from disappearing from our communities at the time they are needed most.”

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