

Written evidence submitted by LTA (PHS0420)

THE LTA

The LTA is the national governing body for tennis in Britain. As a not-for-profit organisation, our role is to govern and grow tennis in Britain, from grassroots participation through to the professional game.

Millions take part in tennis in Britain every year, as players, coaches, volunteers and officials. Tennis delivers physical and mental health benefits and helps establish important life skills, regardless of age, ability or background. In 2022, adult participation increased by 43% to 4.7 million, participation among lower socioeconomic groups jumped by 53%, and female participation grew 34%, in a sport where 41% of adult tennis players are female.

The LTA's vision is to open up tennis and its benefits to more people across the country by making it more relevant, accessible, and welcoming to anyone, from players of all abilities and backgrounds to its millions of fans.

HEALTH BENEFITS OF SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The benefits of regular physical activity are well established. Sport England-commissioned research by the Sport Industry Research Centre found that every £1 spent on community sport and physical activity brought a return on investment (ROI) of £3.91. Furthermore, the combined economic and social value (SROI) of taking part in community sport and physical activity in England in 2017/2018 was £85.5 billion¹.

The prevention of serious physical and mental health conditions through physical activity alone has a value of £9.5bn, according to the Sport England research. The UK Government itself acknowledges that physical inactivity is associated with 1 in 6 deaths in the UK and regular physical activity reduces individuals risks of a range of long-term conditions².

Independent research commissioned by the LTA found that the wellbeing benefits of playing tennis are ca. £2,000 per person, equating to £780m health and wellbeing value to the population of tennis players. The LTA Open Court programme has ensured there are many opportunities for disabled people to play tennis, and there is also evidence (consistent with other sports) that the health and wellbeing benefits of tennis are greater for those from lower socio-economic groups.

THE ROLE OF SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN PREVENTATIVE HEALTH

It is widely acknowledged that physical activity levels have a material impact on health and social care demands, and sport plays a significant role in increasing these levels. Yet more work needs to be done to promote sport and physical activity within the health and social care system as a preventative measure.

It is important that these issues are addressed as a matter of urgency for two keys reasons:

1. The NHS is under severe strain. Hospitals are overwhelmed with patients in need of care, and those who should be discharged cannot be due to similar pressures on social care. Physical inactivity is estimated to cost the UK £7.4 billion annually, including £0.9 billion to the NHS alone³. Increasing physical activity levels would improve public health and in turn, reduce the demand for NHS treatment.

¹ [Measuring Impact – Sport England](#)

² [Physical activity: applying All Our Health - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

³ [Physical activity: applying All Our Health - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

2. A significant number of the population is classed as inactive. Sport England has found that 27.2% of adults⁴ and 30.1% of children⁵ did less than 30 minutes weekly activity. However, a quarter would be more active if advised by a healthcare professional, so this presents a unique opportunity for you to support people to be more active⁶.

PREVENTION IN HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE INQUIRY

The LTA would like to see the Health and Social Care Committee focus on the role of sport and physical activity within prevention in health and social care. We believe sport has an important role to play in helping drive improved health outcomes, particularly for disabled people, and people from lower socioeconomic groups.

Within this we would like to see further exploration of social prescribing of sport and physical activity. The House of Lords National Plan for Sport Recreation Committee heard that social prescribing suffers from a lack of funding and resources, and the quality of social prescribing varies considerably across the country⁷.

The LTA believes the committee should look at the relationship between inequalities and disparities within physical activity levels and health outcomes. The LTA would particularly welcome a focus on the role of sport and physical activity programmes target communities with statistically higher inactivity levels and poorer health outcomes, including disabled people, people from lower socioeconomic groups and diverse ethnic backgrounds.

February 2023

⁴ [Activity levels see partial recovery from Covid-19 | Sport England](#)

⁵ [Active Lives Children and Young People Survey - Academic year 2021-22 \(sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com\)](#)

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/physical-activity-applying-all-our-health/physical-activity-applying-allphysica-our-health>

⁷ [A national plan for sport, health and wellbeing \(parliament.uk\)](#)