

## **Sport England sets out Covid-19 financial support**

Sport England has today confirmed that it is making up to £195m of funding available to help the community sport and physical activity sector through the ongoing Covid-19 crisis.

The package is additional to any funding support provided by the Government and is made up of the following:

- A £20 million Community Emergency Fund, which will be opened immediately for local clubs and community organisations to bid into. Grants between £300 and £10,000 are available.
- A £5 million pot for existing partners to bid into if they are facing specific and immediate financial difficulty
- An additional £55 million to support our sectors during an ongoing period of restrictions, to fund new and innovative ways to keep people active and then, when the period of restrictions is over, to help organisations get back to business and adjust to a different environment
- A £115 million rollover of current funding into 2021/22 to give long term certainty to over 100 well established partners who play a vital role in the delivery of sport and physical activity in England.

Alongside this, given the cashflow concerns in the sector, Sport England has also agreed that it will consider requests to release six months of the coming year's funding (50% of awards) to its partners, meaning additional funding will be available sooner.

Sport England is also working closely with Local Authorities and the organisations who run their leisure facilities and has been actively supporting this part of the sector to access the government support now available.

The package follows Sport England's recent decision to offer major flexibilities to those who currently receive funding - including the ability to change timings, KPIs, targets and conditions, and redirect money to new activity in response to Covid-19. It has been drawn up following significant consultation with organisations across the sport and physical activity landscape in England.

**Sport England CEO, Tim Hollingsworth said:**

“As it is for so many others, these are extremely challenging times for the sport and physical activity sector. Sporting events are being cancelled, gyms and leisure centres are closed, clubs and community groups are not operating, and children and young people are all at home. This is impacting the sector financially in a significant way, although it is heartening to see huge amounts of innovation and agility, with many operators getting classes online in a matter of days to enable home workouts for example.

“As the body responsible for the growth of sport and physical activity at a grassroots level, we have an important role to play both in ensuring that we support those with short term cashflow concerns and immediate loss of income, as well as those facing medium and long term survival challenges and financial difficulties.

“We want the sector not just to come through this crisis but to be in a position to thrive again in the future and when added to the funding made available by Government this package will ease the pressure on a huge number of the organisations who are central to that.”

“We know that what this funding provides is a long way still from what the sector as a whole needs, and we will continue as a matter of priority to engage with our partners and with Government so that every opportunity for support is maximised.”

**Further Information:**

**Community Emergency Fund**

This aims to deliver immediate funding to those most in need and builds on the success of similar previous funds such as the Sport England Flood Relief Fund. This fund is specifically targeted at clubs and organisations, including those not currently supported by Sport England, who have a role in supporting the nation to be active but who are experiencing short term financial hardship or the ceasing of operations due to the impact of COVID-19. Organisations can apply for grants between £300 and £10,000.

The types of organisations eligible include local sports clubs forced to close at short notice but who are facing ongoing costs around maintenance and utility bills and voluntary and community sector organisations who deliver or enable sport and physical activity. A specific example might be a grant to support a local boxing club pay costs for their facility when no activity is taking place or a grant to support a league who have paid for equipment to run a competition which has now been cancelled. Further details on eligibility and criteria can be found *HERE*

### **£5 million Sector Partner Fund**

We will work with our sector partners, for example our network of Active Partnerships and national governing bodies, on bespoke measures that may be needed for any instances of immediate financial distress. This might include for example supporting a national governing body where they have had to cancel an event which would have generated vital income for the organisation.

### **£55 million for sector support and stimulation**

We believe that financial support will be needed to support the sector now, during ongoing restrictions - and to stimulate the sector so that when restrictions are being lifted organisations will be able to get back to business and back to delivery.

That is why we are allocating £20m for medium term support to partners to enable them to support their communities more directly. We will work quickly to identify how and where to allocate this funding.

And we also are allocating £35m to make sure that we can quickly adapt to changes in the way society operates and that where good ideas and innovation emerge, we can accelerate them quickly. Support may also be needed to re-engage front line staff, coaches and other volunteers to be ready to respond as activity habits return or change.

Details on how we propose to use this funding to support the sector for issues like this will be set out in the coming weeks.

### **£115 million funding rollover for key partners to 2022**

This will be for identified partners who have funding commitments that end on or before March 2021 and will be administered through a light touch process that does not add extra burden at this challenging time.

This will result in certainty of funding for well over 100 partners for the next two years and will allow these organisations to focus on the longer-term response to the enormous challenge that the sector now faces. The partners likely to be included here are established governing bodies, Active Partnerships and wider sector partners who play a pivotal role in getting and keeping the nation active. Sport England will get in touch directly with relevant partners to confirm next steps in the coming weeks.