



DRAFT Press Release

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Leading bodies for health, sport, fitness and leisure urge Prime Minister to intervene as grassroots facilities face ‘final straw’ if energy relief ends

A coalition of more than 200 bodies and individuals* from the worlds of health, sport, recreation, and leisure has written to the Prime Minister with an urgent plea for greater support for grassroots facilities and clubs amid the ongoing energy crisis..

With energy costs relief for the UK’s swimming pools, leisure centres, sport centres, community facilities, and gyms ending on 31 March, thousands of facilities and clubs are at risk of permanent closure or reduced services, as public and private sector organisations of all sizes face unprecedented financial challenges with bills remaining up to 200% higher than normal.

The signatories of the letter range from major health bodies to sport’s national governing bodies, and the nation’s biggest fitness and leisure groups. Athletes such as Rebecca Adlington and celebrities including Davina McCall have also added their support.

The letter warns that, “Failure to identify bespoke support for the sector (and schools operating sports facilities) as part of the Energy Bills Discount Scheme will be the final straw for many facilities and services – especially swimming pools.

“Without national intervention, communities will see the loss of essential local services, including swimming lessons for children which are vital for water safety; multi-sport offerings; mental health services; bespoke programmes for older citizens, ethnically diverse communities, women and girls, and disabled people; and long-term health programmes including cancer rehabilitation and support for those with musculoskeletal conditions and type 2 diabetes.”

Within the letter, the coalition calls for the Government to:

- Reclassify swimming pools as energy intensive as part of the Energy Bills Discount Scheme so they have access to the higher level of discount on energy prices.
- Set out what tangible support it will provide to the wider sector – including gyms, leisure centres, sports facilities, and clubs –to help navigate the energy crisis across 2023 so that service restrictions and facility closures can be minimised.



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- Set out a “plan for the growth” for the sector by aligning the proposed new Sports Strategy with the Spring Budget to unlock the potential of the sector to support the economic, health, educational and social wellbeing of the nation.

The letter was coordinated a group of bodies, including: Active Partnerships, the Association for Public Service Excellence, the Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity, the Chief Cultural & Leisure Officers Association, Community Leisure UK, District Councils' Network, the Local Government Association, Sported, the Sport and Recreation Alliance, the Sport for Development Coalition, Swim England, the Swimming Teachers' Association, the Youth Sport Trust, and ukactive.

Huw Edwards, CEO of ukactive, said: “Over two hundred organisations and prominent individuals are united in urging the Government to safeguard essential community facilities across the country that remain under threat of service restrictions and closure, impacting people of all ages and background.

“Pools, gyms, leisure centres and community facilities form part of our social fabric, and they are vital for our nation’s health and the economy.

“Action must be taken to protect our facilities, and to help them recover and grow so they can support the growth of a healthier, happier, more productive nation.”

Lisa Wainwright MBE, Sport and Recreation Alliance CEO said: “Community clubs, leisure centres, and facilities, which are so vital to sport, recreation, and physical activity in this country, are in serious danger.

“Without Government support, many of these clubs and facilities will be forced to close their doors, impacting the health – both physical and mental – of so many people. We cannot allow these community hubs to be lost, at a time when they are more important than ever.

“The Alliance is proud to have helped co-ordinate this letter, and hope that the voices of our members, alongside others in the sector, will prompt the Government action that is so desperately needed.”

Read the full letter [here](#). To support the sector, [contact your MP](#) with your concerns.

*The signatories:

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Women In Sport

Women's Sport Collective

Zoom Media

Rebecca Adlington OBE

Chemmy Alcott

Claire Cashmore MBE

Ed Clancy OBE

James Cracknell OBE

Ben Cutmore

Sharron Davies MBE

Laura Deas

Mark Foster

Chelsie Giles

Luke Greenbank

Duncan Goodhew MBE

Mike Goody

Charlie Guest

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Matty Lee MBE

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