

## **Building a Workforce for the Future**

**A Strategic Plan of Action  
for London's Physical  
Activity Workforce**



# Introduction

**London has an ambitious vision: to be the most physically active city in the world. It is an ambition that pushes us to set standards for the rest of the world to follow; not just for the sake of being physically active, but to enable all Londoners to live happier, healthier and more prosperous lives.**

**“** London’s *Blueprint for a Physically Active City* sets out a framework for realising this ambition, with a focus on five fundamental areas including championing the development of a bigger and better workforce to support activity. *Building a Workforce for the Future* explores that ambition and points the way towards developing a workforce that can meet the complex, diverse and evolving needs of London’s nine million inhabitants.

*Building a Workforce for the Future* began with a conversation with more than 5,000 Londoners – including some with no relationship with physical activity and sport, some who actively participate, and others who are part of the workforce that works with Londoners every day at the grassroots of physical activity and sport.

Evolving from that initial engagement with Londoners, and subsequent stakeholder consultation, this is an inclusive strategic plan to incorporate the work of any organisation involved in physical activity and sport, and any organisation or group that does, or can, support people’s ability to directly enable Londoners to lead active lives.

Building a workforce to meet the future needs of London requires systemic change; it will be challenging, and it will take concerted effort. Despite these challenges, we are confident that we can, and will, support the development of a workforce that will enrich the lives of all Londoners through physical activity and sport.

**Tove Okunniwa**

Chief Executive Officer, London Sport

**“** London has many strengths: a rich history, a global profile, a world class business environment. But above all it is a city proud of its diversity. Among its nine million people, London is home to individuals from every conceivable background and community with speakers of more than 300 languages. Ours is a truly global city, reflecting every aspect of modern society.

As such, when we talk about supporting and improving the lives of Londoners, it is vital that we are talking about a London that is serious about supporting all of its residents – no matter their background or circumstances.

In developing *Building a Workforce for the Future*, London Sport has demonstrated a deep commitment to ensuring that the physical activity and sport sector is taking steps to be more representative, and more aware of the diverse needs of London’s communities. For those of us who see the positive role that physical activity and sport can play in the London, this plan is welcome. It shows a real commitment to explore the ways that we can support more people to begin to lead more physically active lives. We must take a fresh approach and think clearly about what it is that we want sport to achieve, and what steps are required to help more people benefit from those achievements.

At City Hall, we aim to do more to bring communities across London together and ensure they share positive experiences and become more engaged with one another. This plan reflects that aim. It hopes to encourage and develop the community champions that bring sport to life across the city.

I am pleased to offer our support to this plan and to its commitment to diversify sport’s workforce. Together it will enable us better to understand what a sport sector that represents this city should look like, and how that will benefit the lives of all Londoners.

**Matthew Ryder**

Deputy Mayor for Social Integration,  
Social Mobility and Community Engagement

**“** The ambition shown by London Sport to make the capital the most physically active city in the world is admirable. The Academy of Medical Royal Colleges has described physical activity as a “miracle cure”. Its benefits go far beyond just improving physical fitness or losing weight – indeed, keeping Londoners active could not be more important to protect the health and wellbeing of our city’s population.

To meet this challenge of sustained activity there needs to be a willing and motivated workforce to signpost and support the necessary physical activity and sport programmes that reach people from every community in London. *Building a Workforce for the Future* puts forward a clear plan and commitment to develop this workforce to ensure the aspirational targets can be met.

The Royal Society for Public Health has undertaken extensive work examining the huge untapped potential for a “wider public health workforce”, estimated by The Centre for Workforce Intelligence to encompass around 20 million people, to meet the health demands

our country is facing. It includes anyone who is not a public health specialist or practitioner but has the opportunity or ability to improve the public’s health. If this workforce could be mobilised to increase population level sport and physical activity, it could take a huge burden off our health services.

It is important we redefine and communicate effectively who can be involved in supporting the public’s health and provide this wider workforce with the tools to ensure they are equipped with the requisite skills and confidence to deliver public health, physical activity and sport across a range of settings.

We are therefore delighted to support London Sport’s plan to nurture this hugely important workforce for London. We truly hope that this plan will be a catalyst that can get London moving and improve the health and wellbeing of every resident of our wonderful city.

**Shirley Cramer CBE**

Chief Executive, Royal Society for Public Health

Throughout *Building a Workforce for the Future*, a number of terms are used with definitions specific to the context of this plan. The most critical among these are:

● **Workforce**

A collective term for anyone who has the opportunity or ability to directly enable Londoners to lead active lives. This includes coaches and volunteers, and may also incorporate front-line community leaders, health advisors, general practitioners, social workers, transport staff and other individuals engaging with the general public, either through physical activity and sport, or in another capacity.

● **Traditional Workforce**

A narrower group of direct deliverers of both formal and informal physical activity and sport; this includes coaches, front of house staff at leisure facilities; and physical activity and sport volunteers.

● **Levels of Physical Activity**

- Active - people who do at least 150 minutes of physical activity a week.
- Inactive - people who do less than 30 minutes of physical activity a week.
- Insufficiently active - people who do between 30 and 149 minutes of physical activity a week.
- Less active - incorporates both inactive and insufficiently active people.

These definitions are based on Sport England research, and relate to the Chief Medical Officer’s recommendations for physical activity.

● **Soft Skills**

Personal attributes that enable someone to interact effectively and harmoniously with other people. These attributes could include a combination of people skills, social skills, communication skills, social intelligence and emotional intelligence that enable people to effectively work well in their interactions with others.

# The Roadmap

**There is a significant body of evidence that physical activity and sport contributes to positive individual and societal outcomes.**

It can improve our physical and mental wellbeing, it helps us develop as individuals, and it can bring people and communities together. Recent research by London Sport estimates that physical activity and sport generates a social value of £8.75bn<sup>1</sup> to London – yet almost 40% of Londoners are either inactive, or insufficiently active to benefit their health and wellbeing.

**Our research** (see Workforce Review - Page 11)

## 1 Londoners at the moment

Londoners have busy lives, with many activities competing for their limited spare time – physical activity is just one of a number of options available to them

A significant proportion of Londoners have a desire to be more active

But those that aren't currently active, are less confident to be more active

Physical activity as a spare time priority:

Active Londoners  
**2<sup>nd</sup>** highest priority

**70%**  
Londoners that want to do more activity

**82%**  
Londoners that feel confident about doing more activity



Inactive Londoners

**13<sup>th</sup>** highest priority

**59%**  
Londoners that want to do more activity

**24%**  
Londoners that feel confident about doing more activity



## 2 The role of the workforce

The physical activity and sport workforce can **support Londoners to be more active in a variety of ways**. The most important characteristics identified by Londoners for the physical activity and sport workforce are:

Motivation for those that lack self-motivation

Ability to adapt to customer needs

Encouragement in building confidence

## 3 The current workforce picture

**68%**

of Londoners feel that the traditional workforce which delivers physical activity and sport in London meets their current needs – this drops to **52%** for Inactive Londoners

**38%**

of the traditional workforce in London see working with inactive people as their role

**22%**

of the traditional workforce in London feel confident that their approach would work effectively for inactive people

There are an estimated 544,000<sup>2</sup> coaches and over 800,000<sup>3</sup> volunteers in sport in London

There is an estimated workforce of between 2.4 - 3.2<sup>4</sup> million people in London that have the opportunity or ability to directly enable Londoners to lead active lives

1. Sheffield Hallam University / London Sport "Social Return on Investment in Sport and Physical Activity for Greater London" (2017)

2. UK Coaching, Coaching in the UK: The Coaching Workforce Statistical Report, 2017

3. Sport England, Active Lives survey, 2017

4. Centre for Workforce Intelligence, Understanding the wider public health workforce, 2015

# Building a Workforce for the Future

*Building a Workforce for the Future* began with a conversation with Londoners. It gave Londoners the opportunity to start with a clean slate and shape the workforce that they needed to become more active. This approach has taken us in a new direction, with new opportunities that might not have been identified without their input.

## Behaviour change and the workforce

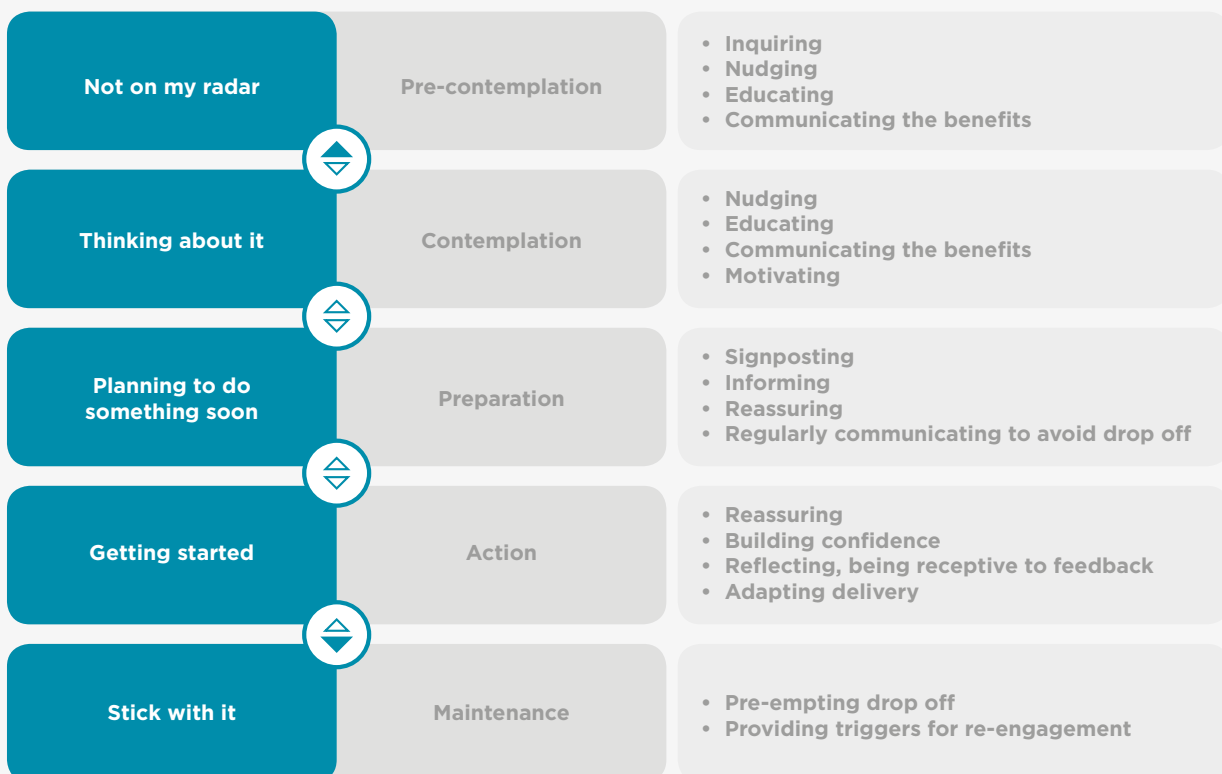
In recent years there has been a positive shift that has brought greater emphasis on meeting the needs of our 'customers'. Historically that has meant the needs of active people, but if we are to achieve the vision of making London the

most active city in the world it is crucial that the needs of less active Londoners are prioritised.

The traditional workforce generally limits its impact to those that have already gone through the behaviour change process to the point that they are about to become active or are seeking to maintain an active life; and those that choose to take part in led or facilitated activities.

**There is a need to broaden the role of the workforce so that more people are supported, both into activity and in keeping them active.**

### Stages of behaviour change



## Engaging Inactive People

The greatest challenge for Londoners, if we are to raise activity levels, and the greatest opportunities for the workforce, lie in the journey to activity. Building the motivation, knowledge and confidence to become more active and go through the journey to activity is a key function for the workforce. For inactive Londoners who are more likely to face a myriad of health inequalities, this new function for the workforce considers who is best placed and equipped to perform that function – acknowledging that this may not be our existing workforce, but that there are people in other sectors with the potential to support more Londoners to lead active lives.



**There is a need for an improved approach to engaging less active people that includes those that interact, or have the potential to interact, with people in the capital.**

## A Better Experience

Equally as important as reaching and supporting more people is ensuring that the workforce provides a great experience. There is a direct correlation between Londoners' perception and experience of the workforce and activity levels – that is to say active people report a better experience and perception of the traditional workforce than those who are less active.

**It is important to recognise that Londoners aren't typically having bad experiences of physical activity and sport, however there is a need to better understand their diverse needs to develop a workforce that consistently provides a great experience.**

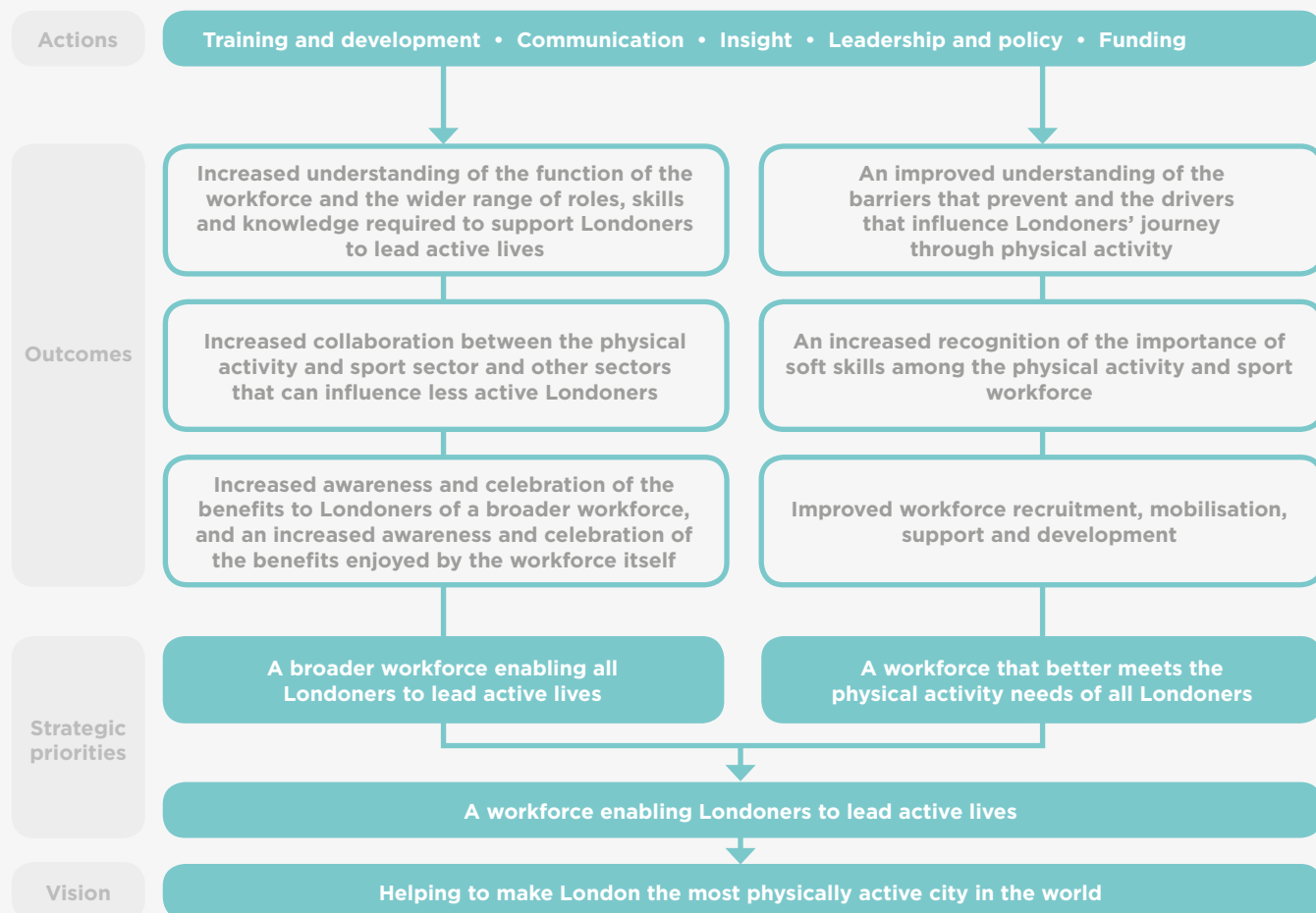
## The Two Strategic Priorities

*Building a Workforce for the Future* is focused on two strategic priorities and underpinned by a range of objectives and outcomes designed to provide greater clarity to all organisations with a role in promoting physical activity to Londoners. These strategic priorities are the goals for all elements of this strategic plan.

- 1 A broader workforce enabling all Londoners to lead active lives**
- 2 A workforce that better meets the physical activity needs of all Londoners**

# Building a Workforce for the Future - the Plan of Action

*Building a Workforce for the Future* will deliver a fundamental shift in who makes up the physical activity and sport workforce, and how that workforce supports Londoners to live active lives.



# A Broader Workforce

To develop a workforce that can encourage all Londoners to live more active lives, there is a need to broaden who we define as the physical activity and sport workforce, and what it is we need it to do.

Broadening the workforce means that more organisations, groups and networks that

influence Londoners – particularly those that are less active and harder to reach – support and promote active lives. More than simply growing the number of coaches and volunteers in London, broadening the workforce also means recognising functions other than delivery or facilitation of activity, such as engagement, motivation and building confidence.

## A Broader Workforce Enabling All Londoners to Lead Active Lives

### Outcome 1:

**Increased understanding of the function of the workforce and the wider range of roles, skills and knowledge required to support Londoners to lead active lives**

#### Objectives:

- Agree and adopt consistent definition and understanding of the physical activity and sport workforce
- Increase the diversity of the demographic and function of the workforce, and the visibility of that diversity

### Outcome 2:

**Increased collaboration between the physical activity and sport sector and other sectors that can influence less active Londoners**

#### Objectives:

- Develop a shared understanding of how the workforce can engage and positively influence the physical activity behaviours of Londoners

- Increase the number of organisations from outside the physical activity and sport sector supporting active lives
- Embed workforce plans in physical activity and sport strategies
- Refocus financial and non-financial resource towards actions designed to support the development of a broader workforce to support physical activity
- Increase funding available to developing a broader workforce to support active lives

### Outcome 3:

**Increased awareness and celebration of the benefits to Londoners of a broader workforce, and an increased awareness and celebration of the benefits enjoyed by the workforce itself**

#### Objectives:

- Increase exposure of the personal wellbeing benefits gained by members of the physical activity and sport workforce
- Increase recognition of the wider benefits to organisations supporting Londoners to lead active lives through their workforce
- Improve alignment between reward and recognition and the motivations of the workforce

# A Better Workforce

To develop a workforce better adapted to the needs of Londoners requires an improved understanding of the journey from inactivity to activity. This includes the workforce being better adapted to supporting Londoners to remain active.

Better meeting the needs of Londoners will require disciplined action to ensure the workforce is equipped with the right skills and support. This will also require a collaborative approach that increases and reprioritises the support and investment that goes into the physical activity and sport workforce.

## A Workforce that Better Meets the Physical Activity needs of All Londoners

### **Outcome 1:**

**An improved understanding of the barriers that prevent and the drivers that influence, Londoners' journey through physical activity**

#### **Objectives:**

- Increase engagement with less active Londoners and representative organisations to inform the support offered through the physical activity and sport workforce
- Incorporate an understanding of behaviour change principles in workforce training and commissioning across London

### **Outcome 2:**

**An increased recognition of the importance of soft skills among the physical activity and sport workforce**

#### **Objectives:**

- Increase understanding of the breadth of soft skills required by the physical activity and sport workforce
- Improve alignment between workforce standards and policies and the skills required within the physical activity and sport workforce that can support less active Londoners
- Refocus financial and non-financial resource towards solutions that develop the softer skills within the workforce

### **Outcome 3:**

**Improved recruitment, mobilisation, support and development of the physical activity and sport workforce**

#### **Objectives:**

- Embed a culture of regular analysis of current and future workforce need
- Improve pathways into the physical activity and sport workforce to attract a wider range of skills and backgrounds
- Increase collaboration between different organisations that support Londoners to lead more active lives
- Ensure the right training and support is available to existing and new members of the physical activity and sport workforce, and that it is better promoted and more easily accessible



# Implementing the Plan

**Each step of the plan has been developed to reflect the shared priorities of London Sport and its stakeholders, and provides direction so that we can collectively create a workforce that enables all Londoners to lead active lives.**

London Sport will continue to be the strategic lead organisation for the physical activity and sport workforce in London, providing ongoing communication, leadership, coordination and resources. This support will enable stakeholders within and beyond the physical activity and sport sector to deliver their commitment to empowering all Londoners to be more active.

London Sport commits to:

## Broader Workforce

- Investigate and act upon the potential for a London workforce network
- Work with national and regional partners to provide guidance around the roles within the physical activity and sport workforce, and the attributes that make those roles successful
- Develop and increase the sharing of best-practice workforce approaches that positively impact lifestyle behaviours

## Better Workforce

- Develop and increase the sharing of evidence that links workforce soft skills and behaviour change leading to increased levels of participation in physical activity and sport
- Develop and support the implementation of workforce assessment and development tools
- Explore the potential for a London physical activity and sport training and development hub

This not an exhaustive list of commitments and we will continue to seek new opportunities where London Sport can contribute to *Building a Workforce for the Future*.

*Building a Workforce for the Future* is a call to action to all those that are already, or have the potential to create a workforce that enables active lives, to make their own commitments.

# Measuring Success

It is important to understand the impact of *Building a Workforce for the Future*. A measurement framework will be developed that will include key indicators to measure and monitor progress.

## Examples of these indicators are:

- Diversity of the workforce
- Number and type of organisations enabling active lives through their workforce
- Shifts in attitudes, beliefs and knowledge of how the workforce can enable active lives
- Investment into workforce development; both how much is invested and what it is invested in
- Satisfaction of the workforce in relation to the opportunity and quality of support for their personal development

Some of the processes to measure and monitor progress will be new, some will already exist. In addition to this we will identify and showcase examples of where the workforce has been successfully applied to achieve positive physical activity and sport outcomes.

A key reason for monitoring and evaluating the impact of *Building a Workforce for the Future* is identifying new learning; both in terms of what works and what doesn't. We are committed to sharing this learning and encourage our partners to actively contribute to doing likewise.

# Workforce Review

## Purpose and approach

The *Blueprint for a Physically Active City* outlined an objective to create a bigger and better workforce to support activity. Greater clarity was needed to outline how this was to be achieved which is why London Sport commissioned a workforce review. This workforce review was the starting point for *Building a Workforce for the Future*. The purpose of the workforce review was to

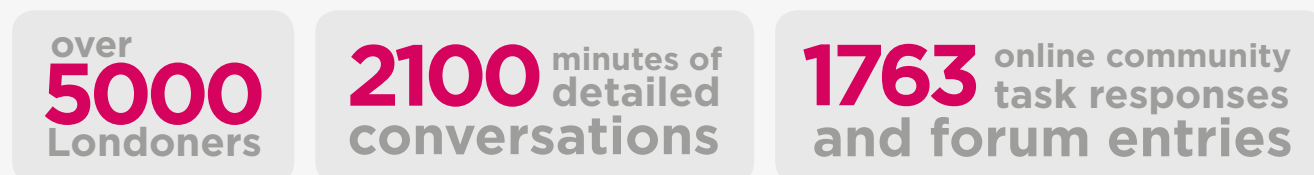
understand if and how the workforce needs to evolve to meet the needs of less active Londoners, and how key stakeholders can contribute to support this workforce.

There were a number of stages to the workforce review with each stage learning from the previous one. The breadth and scale of the review makes it one of the largest physical activity and sport workforce research projects undertaken in the UK.

## Stages of the Workforce Review



## The scale of the research



And contributions from the following organisations:

**Inclusion London**

**GREATER LONDON VOLUNTEERING**

**DISABILITYSPORTSCOACH**

**ROYAL FOUNDATION**  
ROYALFOUNDATION.COM

**UK COACHING**

**OUR PARKS**

**SPORTS LEADERS UK**

**merton**

**STANDARD GAMES**

**sustrans**  
JOIN THE MOVEMENT

**Our Healthier South East London**  
Sustainability and Transformation Plan

**MAYOR OF LONDON**

**HSBC UK BRITISH CYCLING**

**ACC**  
ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES

**SPORT ENGLAND**

**Lambeth**

**HILLINGDON**  
LONDON

**The development and ethos of this strategic plan of action has been significantly influenced by:**

- Research and engagement with over 5,000 Londoners
- Key stakeholders and partners involved in the physical activity and sport, leisure, health, education, transport and voluntary sectors
- Consultation with our staff, board members and funders
- A detailed review of the leading partners' strategies to ensure close alignment with their strategic priorities

**We would like to thank the following organisations for their contribution to the development of *Building a Workforce for the Future*:**

Academy for Health Coaching  
Active Health Associates LTD  
British Blind Sport  
British Universities & Colleges Sport  
Enable Leisure & Culture  
England Handball  
England Netball  
Greater London Authority  
Greenhouse Sports  
Haringey Council  
Inclusion London  
Institute of Swimming  
Lawn Tennis Association  
Lee Valley Regional Park Authority

London Federation of Sport & Recreation  
London Legacy Development Corporation  
London Volleyball Association  
Macmillan Cancer Support  
London Borough of Merton  
Mytime Active  
Programmeasure  
Saracens Sport Foundation  
Sport England  
Team London  
UEL Sports  
UK Coaching  
Watford FC Community Sports & Education Trust  
West Ham United Foundation

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