**County collaboration to give major boost to London’s cricket facilities**

London is special. It’s different and those differences are both good and bad for helping Londoners lead physically active lives.

The latest Active Lives figures though show that just 63.6 per cent meet the recommended levels of physical activity and this is a figure we’re desperate to see rise.

One of London’s biggest challenges is around the infrastructure within the capital and the ability of people to access open spaces for physical activity.

With minimal space available to build on, it’s imperative that London looks to other ways to make sites and spaces that encourage more physical activity.

London Sport work hard to encourage the development of the public realm across the city, with the organisations who own the space, the communities in them and the organisations with the skills, resource and drive to develop the space.

According to GiGL (Greenspace information for Greater London CIC) London is 47 per cent green space, with over 3,000 parks and open spaces.

Within the many and varied green space in London approximately 6.7 per cent is dedicated to outdoor sports facilities but this is on the rise because of the newly formed [London Cricket Trust](https://twitter.com/LdnCricketTrust?lang=en).

London Sport always advocates for collaboration of key stakeholders and partners to tackle the issues surrounding inactivity and we’re incredibly excited by the work of London Cricket Trust.

Launched earlier this month, the London Cricket Trust is bringing together London’s four county cricket clubs boards (Essex, Kent, Middlesex and Surrey) to get cricket back into London’s parks.

This ambitious project is an exciting collaboration between four rival first-class county clubs, but will also requires commitment and forward-thinking from the local authorities who own the spaces.

The official launch of London Cricket Trust was held at Seven Kings Park in Ilford earlier this month and was attended by professional players Dawid Malan, Scott Borthwick, Daniel Bell-Drummond and Feroze Kushi.

New nets and non-turf pitch facilities were opened by Jas Athwal, Leader of Redbridge Council, and the launch included a school cricket session and coaching with the players.

With sites already open in Hounslow, Redbridge and Lewisham and facilities in Greenwich, Lambeth and Bexley all opening within the next month, the ambitious target of 50 new facilities across the city is looking like becoming a reality sooner rather than later.

Leshia Hawkins, Head of Participation and Growth in the London Region at the England and Wales Cricket Board, said:

“This is an unprecedented collaborative effort for cricket in London.

“We have representation from four counties and to see them come together with this common purpose has been a pleasure and extremely heartening for the health of our great game.

"It is estimated that the population of London will increase to 12.2 million by 2036.

“This is a major step in readying ourselves as a sport for this and finding ways to ensure cricket is relevant, visible and accessible to future generations."

Sophie Kent, Trustee of the London Cricket Trust and Surrey Cricket Foundation, added:

“Surrey Cricket are proud to be working with the other London counties - Essex, Kent and Middlesex - the ECB, and local councils to make this a reality across the capital.

“We're focusing in areas where there is most demand and where schools and clubs can benefit from facilities that are playable year-round.

“Our model is flexible - we've already installed pitches in parks with large playing areas, and nets where space is more limited, and we'll be providing equipment starter kits too.

“You only need to visit the Kia Oval or Lord's on a match day to see the enthusiasm that exists for the game - now is the time to ensure more of the capital's cricket lovers have the facilities they need."