



Young people see the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup up close in 2019. Photo: Getty Images

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## Sports Chief Executives ask political parties to set out their vision for sport

With the General Election set for July 4, the Chief Executives of the ECB, the FA, the RFU, the LTA and RFL have written an open letter to the UK's political parties asking them to set out their vision for sport.

The letter - published below - sets out two priorities the five sports would like to see addressed: 1) the amount of quality Sport and Physical Education mandated within the National Curriculum and 2) a commitment from political leaders to building on the progress that has been made recently through

Government investment in good quality facilities.

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From:

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### **What's the sporting vision?**

This General Election is taking place against the backdrop of an extraordinary summer of sport.

As chief executives for five of the country's largest governing bodies we know just how much sport is woven into the DNA of our country. Millions play, volunteer, work and watch across a huge range of activities - from the world's leading sporting events to grassroots clubs and organisations at the heart of communities across the nation.

Indeed we expect more people will engage with sport this month than actually vote in the election - which sends an important message to those standing for office.

That is why we are calling on all of the political parties to step up and set out their vision for sport.

The contribution sport makes is often relegated to the political sidelines. In fact it has a huge public policy contribution to make.

Our sector makes a significant contribution to the economy while also delivering benefits such as improved physical and mental health and educational attainment, and engaging young people in positive activities. In 2017 Sport England found that the contribution of community sport was worth £85.5bn to the economy and for every £1 spent on sport and physical activity it generated almost £4 in return.

Amongst many issues, we have two priorities we are keen to see addressed in the Party manifestos.

Firstly, ensuring that school sport is fit for the future.

An obesity timebomb is ticking in young people and the Chief Medical Officer has reiterated that every child should undertake the equivalent of an hour a day of physical activity.

The societal benefits of ensuring children develop a healthy relationship with sport and physical activity are huge, but while we expect children to leave school with numerical, verbal and written literacy, our current approach leaves physical literacy to chance.

Good progress has recently been made towards offering all boys and girls the opportunity to play the sport of their choice, but we now need to see this commitment backed up by the offer of good quality PE sessions.

We hope that the manifestos due to be published next week will include a commitment to put physical literacy at the heart of the school day by having a minimum of two hours of quality Sport and Physical Education mandated within the National Curriculum and every child guaranteed the opportunity to be active for an hour a day inside and outside of the school setting.

Secondly, investment in sports facilities across the country.

Clubs, pitches, courts and local facilities are the lifeblood of all communities. They are a vital part of our nation's wellbeing and national infrastructure. Everyone should have access to good quality sports facilities. Yet many are now in a poor state. Across our sports we have all identified a common need for additional investment to improve grassroots facilities.

We want to see our political leaders commit to building on the progress that has been made recently through Government investment in good quality facilities through models such as the Football Foundation, legacy investment connected to international events such as the recent Rugby League World Cup, the Women's World Cups for Rugby (2025) and Cricket (2026) and the Parks Tennis programme.

We are keen to encourage a sporting debate. We will make sure all commitments and information provided by any of the political parties is shared across our members.

### **Cricket Player Quotes**

**England Men's all-rounder Moeen Ali:** "Keeping our bodies and minds healthy is crucial. I grew up in Birmingham and was state-educated. Playing cricket and football with my friends was a big part of my life. It taught me how to make good friends, support others, and work together as a team.

"Not everyone enjoys sitting in classrooms, but playing sports during breaks or in PE was always the highlight of my school days. I believe every kid in the country should have the chance to enjoy a well-rounded education that includes sports and PE. It helps us develop good habits and a positive attitude.

"I'm asking all political parties in the UK to ensure that every child has access to at least two hours of PE each week. It's also crucial that whoever is in charge of the government invests in local sports facilities, so every area has top-notch pitches and places for kids to play. This should be a top priority for everyone."

**England Women's captain Heather Knight:** "As captain of the England Women's cricket team I wholeheartedly endorse this letter. It's absolutely imperative that young people are given access to sport, the benefits are clear and unquestioned, and it's our responsibility to give them those opportunities - one hour per week is not enough time.

"Equally, access to facilities is something every young person should have, and I hope the next Government takes the chance to ensure our nation's young people can play the sports they love."

**England Men's Deaf cricketer and teacher Josh Price:** "As a teacher and also a member of the England Men's Deaf Cricket team, I know first-hand the power of sport. It's so vital we give young people the chance to play sport.

"Without access and without facilities, we are taking away their opportunity to discover a love of something so valuable. I've seen what sport can do for

young people and I hope the next Government is committed to harnessing that power across the country."

**England Men's bowler Mark Wood:** "Physical and mental well-being are the building blocks that you need for life. I had the best upbringing in Ashington, where all sports played a massive part in my development and still do so today. It fosters strong friendships amongst your peers, solves problems, teaches you about being there for your mates, and stimulates what is right and wrong.

"Not everyone enjoys classroom situations, but getting out in the sports hall, playground, or playing field and enjoying sports are among the best times at school.

"It is not just the responsibility of one political party, but of all, to ensure that at least two hours per week of sport and PE are part of their manifesto and the National Curriculum for every child in this country. We need your support to make this change a reality."



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