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Open Call for Innovative Solutions **Insight**

June 2020


**What
is it?**

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● **What** is this open call about?

Among the uncertainty and hardship of recent months, the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic and subsequent lockdown has surfaced a renewed appreciation for being active, for our mental wellbeing as much as our physical health.

However, our research shows there are major inequalities within society, with too many of us not able to access activity in the same way and missing out on the health benefits. These inequalities aren't new, but they are being exacerbated by the pandemic which is why we want to act now to ensure they don't get worse.

Put simply, if we are in one or more of the following groups then we are less likely to be active: women, older adults, from a BAME background, on a lower income, disabled or living with a long-term health condition.

The current climate has led to us identifying three broad challenges that people from these groups are more likely to face. They are:

- **changes in circumstances**
- **mental health problems**
- **digital exclusion.**

● **What** we want to achieve?

We believe that innovation can play a key role in helping people overcome these challenges so they can lead more active lives, and in turn help tackle the inequalities that exist within society.

Our work to support innovation begins with this call out for brilliant solutions that remove barriers for the communities that are least well served currently. We believe that now is the time to act, innovate and do things differently to affect positive change.

We want to help these audiences quickly, therefore we are looking for products or solutions that are already worked up and ready to deliver positive impact within the next 6 months. We will then help you get them over the finish line, whether that's by offering access to our connections, advice, research and insight or a small amount of funding.

Without action, there is a risk that activity levels will decline, especially for audiences already facing greater inequalities.

Through our open call, we are also hoping to learn much more about our role in supporting and stimulating innovation to address inequalities in sport and physical activity.

● **What** are we looking for?

Innovation doesn't have to be complicated. Even small, brilliant ideas can have a big impact on people's habits. Like when Google Maps added a feature that helps users find wheelchair accessible places at the push of a button.

Innovation also doesn't have to always be technology-led. Some of the best ideas are local, simple and start with people at the heart. Like the Library of Things in London, who are on a mission to make borrowing things better than buying them through a network of local volunteers.

We want to hear from individuals and organisations that offer solutions specifically developed to support women, people on low incomes, older adults, people from BAME backgrounds, disabled people or people living with long-term health conditions. We welcome ideas that work at the intersection of these audiences.

We are looking for solutions that address at least one of the three challenges we explain later in this document, because they are most likely to be affecting those typically under-represented in physical activity participation.

We are particularly interested in supporting organisations that are new to us, that may never have heard of Sport England before, and may be in other industries, because we know there is a wealth of talent unknown to us with vital contributions to make.


● **What** is considered innovative?

To help you be successful in obtaining support from Sport England, these are the sort of things we will be looking for. You don't need to have done them all, but if you have done one or more than you might have the sort of solution we are looking for.

- You will have addressed one of our challenge statements below, rather than thinking broadly about how to promote sport and physical activity.
- You will be disrupting the current way of doing things.
- You will have put people's needs at the heart of your innovation. You might have consulted with your communities to find out about the challenges to being active they face, and then designed your product with specific solutions in mind.
- You won't have just thought digital or about apps. Many of our audiences either aren't connected to digital or don't like to use it to receive information, so consider how else you can engage them.
- Innovation comes in all shapes and sizes. You might have a whole new product, a new way of delivering an existing product or a tiny change that has a big effect.

Why
we need
it?

Widening inequalities
The **social & economic** costs
What is **'intersectionality'**?

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● **Widening** inequalities

Prior to the situation resulting from Covid-19, there were some signs of a gradual narrowing of inequalities in sport and physical activity participation.

The latest [Active Lives report](#) (Nov 2018/19) showed that year-on-year; the gender gap had reduced, there was an increase in participation among those with a disability or long term health condition, and strong growth in activity levels amongst the 55-74 and 75+ age groups. However, the gap in participation between higher and lower socioeconomic groups was unchanged; and there was an underlying flat trend of participation across most ethnic backgrounds aside from White British.

But we are now seeing familiar inequalities replicated, even exacerbated in the current situation, across gender, affluence, ethnicity, disability, age.

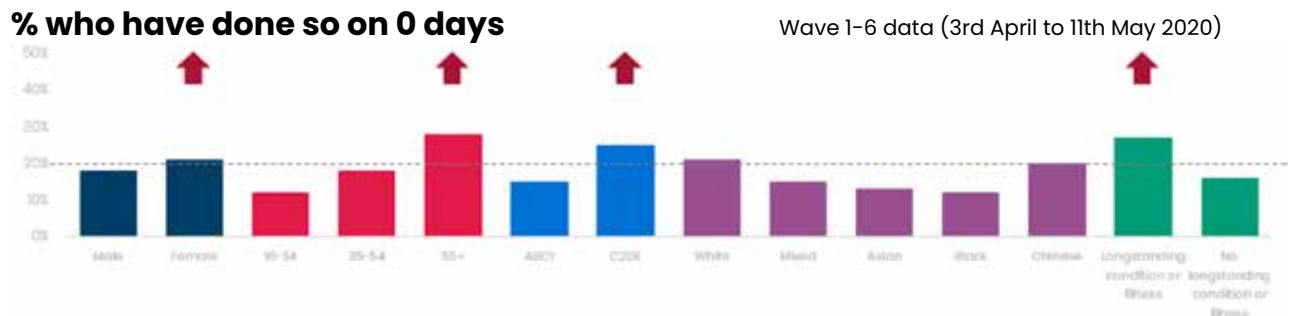
● Widening inequalities

In the past week, on how many days have you done a total of 30 mins or more of physical activity, which was enough to raise your breathing rate?

% who have done so on 5+ days



% who have done so on 0 days



While we are conducting scenario modelling, we are not yet sure what the effects will be on behaviours moving forward.

Everyone deserves to obtain the [benefits of physical activity](#). But demographic groups and audiences we were already focusing on prior to the pandemic are still finding it harder to be active and have recently faced new challenges such as only being able to exercise alone when that might not be as enjoyable.

But it is not enough to think of these groups as discreet, or target people according to a single characteristic. When tailoring solutions, we need to consider 'intersectionality'.

● The **social & economic** costs

There will be a social cost to community sport and physical activity from the coronavirus crisis. We expect to see fewer active people across England, leading to a reduction of physical activity's positive impact on physical health, mental health, individual development, and social & community development.

The knock-on effects, such as a greater strain on the NHS, could be severe. Meanwhile the gross value added of community sport and physical activity in England will likely reduce too, resulting in an economic cost to the country.

We believe that sport and physical activity has an important role to play in restarting the economy, reconnecting communities and rebuilding a stronger society.


● What is **'intersectionality'**?

In the 'challenges to overcome' section we describe how each challenge statement may be more likely to affect some groups of people in certain ways. But we know that ultimately different audiences cannot be neatly defined in such simple terms. It is important to recognise the impact of "intersectionality" – i.e. how a person's characteristics (which include age, gender, ethnicity, geography, education, health, and various other factors) intersect to create individual identities and diverse communities.

Our '[Sport for All](#)' report ("Why ethnicity and culture matters in sport and physical activity") demonstrates this point. Recent Active Lives data shows that 73% of White British adults with high social grade are what we consider 'active'. The inequality is evident when we consider Black adults with high social grade (63% of whom are active), and even more so when we consider Black adults with low social grade (49% of whom are active).

**Challenges
to
overcome?**

The **Challenges** to overcome
Changes in **circumstances**
Mental health
Digital Exclusion

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● The **Challenges** to overcome

Our research has identified three main challenges that we are seeking solutions to:

- **Changes in circumstances**

Certain groups of people are more likely to have faced change due to reduced income, unemployment or additional responsibilities such as caring or home schooling. Faced with these pressures or increased responsibility, some people may no longer feel able to invest time and/or money, or may lack the headspace needed to think about, plan, or invest the effort it takes to be active.

- **Mental health**

Certain groups of people are more likely to be experiencing new, returning or worsening feelings of depression, stress, loneliness or anxiety, reducing likelihood to be physically active.

- **Digital exclusion**

13% of the UK population (6 million people) are digitally excluded. Faced with a continued period of enforced social distancing or isolation, people who are unable to or who do not have access to digital channels, may not have the opportunity to be physically active.

● Changes in **circumstances**

Certain groups of people are more likely to have faced changes due to reduced income, unemployment or additional responsibilities such as caring or home schooling. Faced with these pressures or increased responsibility, some people may no longer feel able to invest time and/or money or may lack the headspace needed to think about, plan, or invest the effort it takes to be active.

Market opportunity: *Many people may struggle to justify traditional membership models and other paid-for leisure activities; or even to fit physical activity into new, demanding routines. As people seek value for money, or a return on (time or financial) investment. what would be make an attractive physical activity offer (considering the health and development benefits of being active)?*

Who it affects?

- a. Those from lower socio-economic groups (e.g. low earners are [seven times more likely](#) than high earners to work in sector that has shut down).
- b. Women (e.g. on eve of crisis, [17% of women worked in a sector that has shut](#) down vs 13% of men. And [on average, women are taking on more hours of childcare than men](#)).
- c. BAME (e.g. [46% of people from a BAME background reported their household income had reduced](#), vs 28% of White British households).
- d. Younger people (e.g. [nearly a third of workers under 25 worked in a sector that has shut](#) down; vs one in eight among 25+s).

● Changes in **circumstances**

How it affects them?

As explained further in the 'changing behaviours' section, changed circumstances primarily affects how CAPABLE audiences may feel to be active.

Sport England's [weekly tracker](#) (Waves 1-6) showed that women and adults from lower socio-economic groups were less likely to agree they had ability to be physically active during lockdown:

74% of adults from ABC1 households agreed they had the ability to be active during lockdown, compared to 64% of adults from C2DE households.

Explore more in the COM-B section of our [interactive tool](#).

● Changes in **circumstances**

Meanwhile, a trend worth noting in Active Lives/ [Sport for All](#) report: “Inactive adults from White British and Mixed ethnic backgrounds are more likely to strongly agree they have the ability to be physically active compared to inactive adults from other ethnicities”.

In lockdown, women and younger people (under aged 55) were more likely to agree that the current situation had impacted on their exercise regime, which may have resulted from diminished capability.

Explore more in the Attitudes section of our [interactive tool](#).

A change in capability then has an overall impact on how active someone is (their Behaviour); as we can see in the ‘active’/ ‘inactive’ bar charts shown in the ‘Widening inequalities’ section of this document.

● Changes in **circumstances**

You can explore this data using:

- The Sport England [weekly tracker](#) tables
- The [interactive tool](#) for this weekly tracker data

Explore longer term trends of participation using:

- [Active Lives](#) report and data tables
- The Active Lives [interactive tool](#).

Examples/ Links:

[Here is an example](#) which helps demonstrate how the challenge of financial uncertainty is affecting people's day-to-day lives.

● Mental health

Certain groups of people are more likely to be experiencing new, returning or worsening feelings of depression, stress, loneliness or anxiety, reducing likelihood to be physically active.

Market opportunity: *We know from Active Lives that there is a correlation between greater levels of happiness (also reduced likelihood of loneliness) and being active. How can we harness the power of sport and physical activity in a way that will help people build mental resilience?*

Who it affects?

- a. Women (e.g. recent data suggests women are more likely than men to be worried about the effect that Coronavirus is having on their lives right now; and [more likely to agree that their wellbeing is affected](#)).
- b. Those from lower socio-economic groups (e.g. [continually higher levels of depression, anxiety, stress, and loneliness](#) among those with household income of less than £30,000).
- c. People who are disabled or have a long-term health condition (e.g. from evaluation of the 'We Are Undefeatable Campaign', we know that [worry about Covid-19 is preventing physical activity](#) among this group).
- d. Younger people (e.g. [continually higher levels of depression, anxiety, stress, and loneliness](#) among those aged 18-29).
- e. Older people (e.g. since the start of the pandemic, there has been a [31% increase in demand for 'Silver Line'](#) as many older people have become lonely or anxious).

● Mental health

How it affects them?

In terms of the “COM-B” model (explained in the changing behaviour section), the mental health challenge primarily affects the MOTIVATION element. It’s not always that people lack motivation, but acting on motivation can feel impossible. Restrictions to activities may mean being physically active is less appealing; and there is heightened concern/ anxiety about personal safety in public spaces and around others.

Sport England’s [weekly tracker](#) (Waves 1-6) showed that women, those from lower socio-economic groups (C2DE), people with LTHCs/ disabilities, and older people (55+) were less likely to agree that it is ‘important for me to exercise regularly’.

It also showed that the same groups were less likely to agree that they find ‘exercise enjoyable and satisfying’:

56% of women agreed they find exercise enjoyable and satisfying during lockdown, compared to 63% of men.

Explore more in the COM-B section of our [interactive tool](#).

● **Mental health**

Meanwhile the following key groups were more likely to agree that they worry about leaving home to exercise or be active:

- Women
- People with LTHCs/ disabilities
- Younger people (16-34s)

Explore more in the Attitudes section of our [interactive tool](#).

A change in motivation then has an overall impact on how active someone is (their Behaviour); as we can see in the 'active' / 'inactive' bar charts shown in the 'Widening inequalities' section of this document.

● Mental health

You can explore this data using:

- The Sport England [weekly tracker](#) tables
- The [interactive tool](#) for this weekly tracker data

Explore longer term trends of participation using:

- [Active Lives](#) report and data tables
- The Active Lives [interactive tool](#).

Examples/ Links:

Here are some examples which help demonstrate how the challenge of mental health problems are affecting people's day-to-day lives:

- "Self-isolating and social distancing was a bad habit I worked really hard to get out of. Now I'm being made to do it and being told it's the right thing to do. It's very confusing and I'm scared of falling back in to that cycle" - [Youngminds.org.uk](https://www.youngminds.org.uk)
- [Mind.org.uk](https://www.mind.org.uk)
- [Time-to-change.org.uk](https://www.time-to-change.org.uk)
- [Beatfreaksyouthtrends.com](https://www.beatfreaksyouthtrends.com)
- Example of how DAZL are continuing to support [young peoples' mental wellbeing](#):

● Digital Exclusion

13% of the UK population (6 million people) are digitally excluded. Faced with a continued period of enforced social distancing or isolation, people who are unable to or who do not have access to digital channels, may not have the opportunity to be physically active.

Digital exclusion may go beyond 'not having access' though: if the offer is not accessible (in a functional sense, but also whether 'I can find something reflective of me and my needs'), people will not engage. It also includes having the capabilities to access information online, or to feel confident in applying digital skills or accessing support to gain them.

Market opportunity: *to engage those who lack the means and/or capability to be meaningfully catered for by the booming mainstream pool of digital-led ways to manage your life, which includes staying active.*

● Digital Exclusion

Who it affects?

- a. Older people (e.g. in Dec 2019, only around 5% of 55+s had done at-home fitness with virtual instruction; vs c.43% of 16-34s. More generally: by the end of March 2020, “37% of 18-24 year olds [were using video call tech as a result of coronavirus] compared to 24% of 65+ year olds”).
- b. Those from lower socio-economic groups (e.g. just 51% of households earning between £6000-10,000 had home internet access compared with 99% of households with an income of over £40,001).
- c. People who are disabled or living with a long-term health condition (e.g. in 2019, 78% of disabled adults in the UK were recent internet users, compared to 95% of non-disabled adults).

● Digital Exclusion

How it affects them?

Digital exclusion primarily limits the **OPPORTUNITY** these audiences have to be active.

Sport England's [weekly tracker](#) (Waves 1-6) showed that older people, those from lower socio-economic groups (C2DE), and people who are disabled or living with a long-term health condition were less likely to agree that 'I feel I have the opportunity' to be physically active.

During lockdown, 54% of adults with a longstanding physical or mental condition or illness agreed they had the opportunity to be physically active, compared to 73% of adults without a longstanding condition.

Explore more in the COM-B section of our [interactive tool](#).

● Digital Exclusion

These same groups were also less likely to agree that they have found new ways to be active.

During lockdown, 64% of adults aged 16–34 agreed they had found new ways to be active since the outbreak. This compared to 51% agreement among 35–54s, and 40% among adults aged 55+.

Explore more in the Attitudes section of our [interactive tool](#).

A change in opportunity then has an overall impact on how active someone is (their Behaviour); as we can see in the 'active' / 'inactive' bar charts shown in the 'Widening inequalities' section of this document.

● Digital Exclusion

You can explore this data using:

- The Sport England [weekly tracker](#) tables
- The [interactive tool](#) for this weekly tracker data

Explore longer term trends of participation using:

- [Active Lives](#) report and data tables
- The Active Lives [interactive tool](#).

Other relevant external data and analysis include:

- [Good Things Foundation analysis of OfCom data \(2017\)](#)
- [Lloyds Bank UK Consumer Digital Index 2020](#)
- [The Tech Partnership's map of likelihood of digital exclusion across the UK at local authority level \(2017\)](#)

Examples/ Links:

Here are some examples which help demonstrate how the challenge of digital exclusion is affecting people's day-to-day lives:

- [The Guardian](#)
- [University of Sheffield](#)
- [Ageing-better.org.uk](#)

**Changing
behaviour?**

What is the **COM-B** model?

Covid specific impacts

How to use the COM-B model?

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● What is the **COM-B** model?

Developed by Michie et al (2011) the 'COM-B model' is used to understand the drivers and context which influence how likely someone is to do something such as become more active.

The 'COM-B model' is a way to understand the drivers and context that influences how likely someone is to do something (e.g. be physically active).

The model is comprised of interacting components:



For behaviour to occur, there must be sufficient levels of each component. In cases where a behaviour does not occur, in this case: inactivity or low activity, the model has been utilised to 'diagnose' the missing elements or barriers.

● Covid specific impacts

We should expect those who entered the Covid-19 period with the: most favourable levels of COM-B are likely to retain their physical activity levels (albeit in different ways); least favourable levels of COM-B are least likely to retain their physical activity levels because their habit is less resilient.

Those with least favourable levels of COM-B are typically groups of people we've been working hardest to:

- persuade that sport and physical activity is a realistic choice for them via our campaigning work
- support by addressing issues around their capability / opportunities to be physically active

● Covid specific impacts

How has each component of COM been affected by the crisis?

OPPORTUNITY

In relation to sport and physical activity has restricted:

- **Where** we are allowed to go
- **Who** we are allowed to spend time with
- **How** we are allowed to behave

However, Covid-19 has also resulted in:

- **Increased** discretionary time for many people
- **Even greater** restrictions on activities that compete with sport and physical activity for people's time

CAPABILITY

Covid-19 is likely to have a greater negative impact on the capability to be physically active. People already facing greater barriers:

- Cultural / social
- Ability
- Time
- Cost

Are less likely to be able to maintain / increase their activity levels

● Covid specific impacts

How has each component of COM been affected by the crisis?

MOTIVATION

Restrictions to activities and behaviour will mean being physically active is less appealing:

- Restrictions to where we are allowed to go
- Restrictions to who we are allowed to spend time with
- Restrictions to how we are allowed to behave in shared spaces

Covid-19 has created a heightened concern / anxiety about personal safety in public spaces and around other people

Amongst all the threats to physical activity created by Covid-19 there are also some mitigating factors and opportunities.

● **How** to use the COM-B model?


In using this model, it is important to:

- stay focused on your audience
- be aware of how behaviours may have changed as a result of Covid-19 and changed circumstances
- be ready to support a desire to change behaviour to a different one as a result of Covid-19
- be aware that people may not wish to return to previous behaviours

**How
we can
help?**

Next steps

Access the open call form

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● **Next steps**

If you have a solution, or could adapt your solution to deliver positive impact within the next 6 months to one of our three challenges, we would love to hear from you.

While the data and insight here may provide a stimulus, we are keen to also hear from you. Please share your own insight as illustrations of the key challenges we have identified as part of your proposal.

Please ensure you've read the guidance available on the Open Call for [Innovative Solutions page](http://www.sportengland.org/innovationopencall) of our website (www.sportengland.org/innovationopencall) before submitting your proposal. This webpage details the kind of information that's needed to complete your proposal.

Please keep checking back throughout the open call period as we may update or change the nature of the call in response to what we receive and the evolving situation.

Access the open call form

If you can't access the proposal form, or to request this information in a different format, please contact: innovation@sportengland.org