

# Fitness and leisure sector holds key to getting nation's workforce physically active and saving UK economy up to £17bn a year

4 years ago



ukactive has called on the Government and its partners to work with the fitness and leisure sector to get the nation's workforce physically active, as new research from Deloitte shows it could benefit the UK economy by up to £17bn a year.

The landmark [report](#), published today (23 June), was commissioned by IHRSA (International Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Association) on behalf of the Global Health and Fitness Alliance.

It shows:

- Physical inactivity costs the healthcare system in the UK \$4.3bn (£3.5bn) annually, of which \$3.6bn (£2.9bn) is borne by the public health system.
- Productivity loss due to a lack of sufficient activity was valued at \$16.5bn (£13.5bn) per year.
- Each insufficiently active worker costs the nation's economy approximately \$1,713 (£1,400) in healthcare costs and lost productivity.
- Conversely, investing \$1,700 (£1,389) in successfully helping an inactive person become active results in a payback period of less than one year, on average, in terms of benefit to the overall economy and society.

Together, the costings indicate that the potential economic benefit, in healthcare savings and increased

productivity, of getting physically inactive workers to be active is up to \$20.8bn (£17.0bn). \*

The report aims to quantify the full economic and social impact of the health and fitness industry across the world on a country-by-country basis, to help policy makers make better decisions and improve people's health and productivity across the globe.

The findings quickly follow ukactive's report, [The Active Workforce](#), which found that 44.4% of SMEs do not provide opportunities for employees to be active during working hours, and nearly one-third (32.4%) do not feel their organisation has the support it needs to do so.

SMEs account for 99.9% of UK businesses, but they have less access to, or means to provide, opportunities for physical activity, and most of the research around workplace physical activity centres on solutions for large corporate-based organisations.

ukactive said the report, which was informed by the Federation for Small Businesses, showed the need for a radical rethink of health incentivisation in the workplace – backed by tax reforms – and including expanding the Cycle to Work scheme to cover gym memberships and equipment as more people work from home.

The report underlined the importance of businesses, the fitness and leisure sector, business umbrella groups, the Government and the health sector working together to support employees of SMEs to be more active during work hours.

The Government says improving wellbeing, healthy life expectancy and productivity, and reducing health inequalities by 2030 are major objectives within its 'Levelling Up' agenda. Chancellor Rishi Sunak told business leaders in May: "If we want to raise productivity in this country, we need to do more to support those already in work. Our firm plan is to reduce and reform your taxes to encourage you to do all those things. That is the path to higher productivity, higher living standards, and a more prosperous and secure future."

Huw Edwards, CEO of ukactive, said: "This new report from Deloitte and IHRSA reinforces ukactive's consistent call that simply by supporting our nation's workforce to be physically active, we can generate benefits of up to £17bn a year for our economy.

"These findings prove that physical activity during the working day is paramount for improving health, wellbeing, productivity and, overall, our economy.

"We fully support the Chancellor's belief in the importance of our workforce in achieving the Government's ambitions for the economy, so now is the time to recognise the essential role that physical activity must play in our new workplace culture.

"The Government has a huge opportunity to make the systemic reforms to taxation, regulation, and policy that can allow the fitness and leisure sector to play its fullest role in getting the UK workforce moving more and supporting our national productivity."

To read the full report [click here](#). To read The Active Workforce report from ukactive, [click here](#).

\*Assumes all inactive workers can be made active. Does not consider any differences in demographic



groups.