

# Raising the heartbeat of the nation

Step five of a five-step plan for a more active population.



**5** **A dedicated Minister for the Outdoors to deliver a coordinated strategy to maximise the full potential of the natural environment.**

Outdoor recreation is the UK's favourite pastime. When people get active outdoors they generate wealth, create jobs and reduce the burden on the health service. In *Reconomics*, the Alliance highlighted the wide range of benefits arising from this activity throughout the UK, from economic advantages to physical and mental wellbeing.

The natural environment is a prized national asset, the considerable value of which can only be fully realised when individuals have the chance to experience it first-hand.

## Key Recommendation A - The Prime Minister should appoint a dedicated minister to deliver the long-term outdoor strategy that the UK needs

- The Government has the power to maximise this value by dedicating a single minister to be responsible for the outdoors and to co-ordinate this vital area.
- The benefits outdoor recreation brings to individuals, communities, and the economy is vast. However responsibility for different aspects of the outdoors fall between different Government departments, making coordination and long-term strategy difficult. The Government must produce a long-term strategy for outdoor recreation. This should be driven by a cross-department, outdoor activity taskforce.

- The Minister for the Outdoors, in conjunction with the Department of Health, Public Health England and local public health organisations should outline how outdoor activity and green spaces will be at the heart of the strategy to improve health outcomes across the population, while also committing to making outdoor activity a key part of their physical activity planning.

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## Key Recommendation B - The Government and stakeholders should agree a strategy for the long-term preservation and promotion of the nation's paths, trails, waterways and coastline

- Overseen by the Minister for the Outdoors, central Government, local authorities and other stakeholders must work together to develop long-term investment to preserve, enhance and promote the nation's paths, trails, waterways and coastline. It is imperative that we protect and enhance access to open spaces.
- The Government should deliver its commitment to completing the English Coastal Path by 2020.

## Key Recommendation C - The Government should place outdoor activity and green spaces at the heart of a strategy to improve health

Outdoor recreation can make a key contribution towards fostering happier and healthier communities and reducing the burden of both physical and mental conditions on the NHS.

