

Birmingham ready to open biggest ever Commonwealth Games which will leave lasting legacy for region

Birmingham 2022 boasts the biggest sporting and para-sport programme and more medals for women than men for first time ever at major multi-sport event

The biggest ever Commonwealth Games and the largest sporting event to be held in the West Midlands will open in Birmingham today on time and on budget.

Backed by £778 million of public funding, including £594 million from central government, Birmingham 2022 is the most significant investment in a major sporting event since the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The Prince of Wales – accompanied by The Duchess of Cornwall – will represent Her Majesty The Queen and officially open the Games at this evening's Opening Ceremony, taking place at the newly-refurbished Alexander Stadium in front of over 30,000 spectators and an estimated global television audience of over one billion people.

Birmingham 2022 will be the quickest delivered Commonwealth Games in history – ready in just four and a half years instead of the usual seven. It also boasts the biggest para-sport programme in Commonwealth Games history and more medals for women than men for the first time at a major multi-sport event.

Birmingham is hosting 6,500 athletes and officials from 72 Commonwealth nations and territories competing in 11 days of sport across the West Midlands. More than one million tickets have been sold for events across the West Midlands from Cannock Chase to Coventry.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

The UK rightly has an outstanding reputation for hosting major sporting events, and the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham will be another fantastic opportunity to showcase the best of Britain on a global stage.

Not only will we be celebrating sporting success, we will also be strengthening the crucial ties between our 72 nations and territories – bringing businesses and governments from across the world together to encourage trade and boost economic growth that will leave a lasting legacy for years to come.

Good luck to all the athletes competing – let the Games begin!

Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries said:

Today the eyes of the world turn to Birmingham. We have an incredible 11 days of sport and I know that fans from across the home nations will get right behind our athletes. Beyond the medals won and records broken, these Games will deliver a fantastic legacy – sporting, cultural and economic – for the people of Birmingham and the West Midlands.

The investment in the Games will create a positive economic and social impact for Birmingham and the West Midlands; including:

- 40,000 new jobs and volunteering opportunities;
- A £38 million investment to kickstart a range of innovative programmes in the West Midlands to help those who need the most support to get physically active;
- A Business and Tourism Programme, supported by £21 million government investment, to attract more visitors and investors to the West Midlands, including a two-week UK House programme drawing global business leaders to Birmingham;
- A brand new aquatics centre in Sandwell, that will be used by the local people as a state-of-the-art sport and leisure facility for decades to come;
- The redevelopment of Alexander Stadium to transform it into a world-class sporting facility that will attract future major events to the region;
- The Birmingham 2022 Festival – the biggest celebration of creativity ever staged in the West Midlands with free events open to the public.

President of the Commonwealth Games Federation, Dame Louise Martin said:

These Games have been four and a half years in the making and Birmingham has done an incredible job, overcoming challenging circumstances, to prepare for the biggest ever Commonwealth Games.

I'm absolutely delighted that over 1 million people will be attending and more than a billion people watching around the world to share in the excitement. I have no doubt that Birmingham 2022 will be a spectacular Games for the host city, and the Commonwealth.

Birmingham 2022 Chief Executive Ian Reid said:

Over the coming days, all eyes will be on Birmingham and the West Midlands, as we host the 22nd Commonwealth Games. After many years of hard work, I am delighted to say that we are ready and are looking forward to welcoming athletes and spectators from around the world to the region.

These Games will play host to the largest sporting programme of any Commonwealth Games and for the first time will see more medals awarded to women than men. Over the coming two weeks, we will be able to showcase the very best that we have to offer. Now is the time to celebrate our city and region. This is our moment.

Notes to Editors

Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games

The Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games will take place from 28 July to 8 August 2022 and will be the biggest sporting and cultural event ever held in the city featuring thousands of world-class athletes and over a million spectators. Home to more than 187 nationalities, Birmingham 2022 will be a home Games for every nation.

Backed by £778 million of public funding, Birmingham 2022 will deliver 11 days of amazing sport. Alongside the sport programme, the Games will be accompanied by a six-month cultural festival and the Queen's Baton Relay will travel around the Commonwealth and the UK before arriving in Birmingham for the Opening Ceremony. A £24 million business and tourism programme will convert the excitement and interest generated by the Games into increased trade, tourism and investment opportunities for the West Midlands, promoting the region and the UK to the world.

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