

# Press release: Britain's track and field stars celebrated at Downing Street

To celebrate the success of the World Para Athletics and World Athletics Championships, the Prime Minister welcomed leading British athletes, coaches and administrators to Downing Street today [22 August 2017].

For the first time ever, both championships were staged in the same city in the same year this summer, with the spotlight being thrown on London, just as with the Olympics and Paralympics five years ago.

Both Championships boasted record ticket sales and London welcomed more than 3,000 athletes from over 200 nations competing in 250 events. Great Britain and Northern Ireland finished third in the medal table in the World Para Athletics Championships and sixth in the medal table at the IAAF World Championships.

Among the sporting stars to meet the Prime Minister, were double World Para Athletics gold medallist (200 metres and 100 metres T38) Sophie Hahn, World Para Athletics 400 metres T38 gold medallist Kadeena Cox, World Athletics Championships gold medallists Adam Gemili and Nethaneel Mitchell-Blake (part of 4 x 100 metre winning team) and silver medallists Asha Philip (part of women's 4 x 100 metres team) and Laviai Nielsen (part of 4 x 400 metre team).

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

Everyone involved in staging both the World Para Athletics and World Athletics Championships should be incredibly proud of what they achieved.

But it's not just about the medal successes and the new records set. London 2017 will help to inspire many future generations to write their own place in the history books and to live healthier and more active lives.

When it comes to opportunity, this government is determined to do everything we can to help anybody, whatever your background, to go as far as your talents will take you.

Through UK Sport, the National Lottery and the government are investing over £38 million to support British Athletics in the four years to Tokyo 2020, to give our athletes the best possible chance to fulfil their potential.

Niels de Vos, Championship Director and CEO of UK Athletics, said:

The Summer of World Athletics was a great success and we are honoured to have been invited to Downing Street to celebrate the achievements of everyone involved, from the British athletes winning the medals to the coaches and mentors behind them to the support and organisational staff making the successes and Championships possible.

We witnessed some fine moments during the World Para Athletics Championships and IAAF World Championships and the response has truly shown the impact athletics continues to have on the UK and beyond. I would like to thank the Prime Minister for welcoming us all to Downing Street for what has been another memorable moment of the summer.

More people attended the World Para Athletics Championships this summer than in all previous championships combined. Meanwhile, the World Athletics Championship set a new Guinness World Record for its ticket sales – with over 700,000 sold, far exceeding the previous record of just over 417,000 for the 2009 Championships in Berlin.

Through UK Sport, the National Lottery and the government are investing over £38 million to support British Athletics in the four years to Tokyo 2020. This funding helped athletes prepare for London 2017 and will also give our athletes the best chance of medal success at the next Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The London 2017 Organising Committee delivered the IAAF World Athletics Championships and World Para-Athletics Championships on behalf of UK Athletics, the Greater London Authority and UK Sport, supported by Department for Digital, Culture Media and Sport, after both events were awarded to London in 2011 and 2012.

Polly Maton, silver medallist in the T47 long jump at the World Para Athletics Championships, said:

It is amazing to be invited to Downing Street to celebrate what were a great World Para Athletics Championships not just for myself but for the whole British team.

It is great to take the time to reflect on what we have all achieved during what has been a special summer for everyone involved in another iconic London location.

From racing in front of a passionate home crowd in the London Stadium to coming to Downing Street, it will all live long in the memory.

Martyn Rooney, bronze medallist in the men's 4x400m relay at the World Athletics Championships, said:

The IAAF World Championships in London were such a fantastic experience and to be invited to Downing Street to celebrate the success of the British team is a great way to round off the summer.

Winning a medal in front of that crowd in the London Stadium is something I will never forget. I have a lot of fond memories from the Championships and this is another moment to cherish.