

Press release: UK House Price Index for December 2018

The December data shows:

- on average, house prices have risen by 0.2% since November 2018
- there has been an annual price rise of 2.5%, which makes the average property in the UK valued at £230,776

England

In England, the December data shows, on average, house prices have risen by 0.3% since November 2018. The annual price rise of 2.3% takes the average property value to £247,886.

The regional data for England indicates that:

- the West Midlands and Yorkshire and the Humber both experienced the greatest monthly price rise, up by 2.0%
- the East of England saw the most significant monthly price fall, down by 1.1%
- the West Midlands experienced the greatest annual price rise, up by 5.2%
- the North East saw the largest annual price fall, down by 1.0%

Price change by region for England

Region	Average price December 2018	Monthly change % since November 2018
East Midlands	£192,748	-0.2
East of England	£289,602	-1.1
London	£473,822	0.1
North East	£128,756	-0.4
North West	£164,352	0.4
South East	£324,729	0.1
South West	£256,427	-0.3
West Midlands	£200,388	2.0
Yorkshire and the Humber	£165,119	2.0

Repossession sales by volume for England

The lowest number of repossession sales in October 2018 was in the East of England.

The highest number of repossession sales in October 2018 was in the North West.

Repossession sales October 2018

East Midlands	44
East of England	14
London	44
North East	84
North West	138
South East	56
South West	32
West Midlands	52
Yorkshire and the Humber	75
England	539

Average price by property type for England

Property type	December 2018	December 2017	Difference %
Detached	£376,076	£364,892	3.1
Semi-detached	£232,619	£225,102	3.3
Terraced	£200,569	£195,761	2.5
Flat/maisonette	£226,247	£227,130	-0.4
All	£247,886	£242,378	2.3

Funding and buyer status for England

Transaction type	Average price December 2018	Annual price change % since December 2017	Monthly price change % since November 2018
Cash	£233,523	2.2	0.3
Mortgage	£255,124	2.3	0.3
First-time buyer	£207,526	1.7	0.3
Former owner occupier	£281,914	2.8	0.3

Building status for England

Building status	Average price October 2018	Annual price change % since October 2017	Monthly price change % since September 2018
New build	£311,953	5.2	2.3
Existing resold property	£243,997	2.4	-0.4

*Figures for the two most recent months are not being published because there are not enough new build transactions to give a meaningful result.

London

London shows, on average, house prices have risen by 0.1% since November 2018. An annual price fall of 0.6% takes the average property value to £473,822.

Average price by property type for London

Property type	December 2018	December 2017	Difference %
Detached	£912,343	£899,100	1.5
Semi-detached	£588,078	£573,194	2.6
Terraced	£496,244	£489,692	1.3
Flat/maisonette	£411,950	£421,917	-2.4
All	£473,822	£476,848	-0.6

Funding and buyer status for London

Transaction type	Average price December 2018	Annual price change % since December 2017	Monthly price change % since November 2018
Cash	£496,483	-1.4	-0.4
Mortgage	£466,885	-0.4	0.2
First-time buyer	£412,679	-1.3	0.0
Former owner occupier	£537,813	0.2	0.3

Building status for London

Building status	Average price October 2018	Annual price change % since October 2017	Monthly price change % since September 2018
New build	£502,915	1.0	3.1
Existing resold property	£478,869	-0.3	0.5

*Figures for the two most recent months are not being published because there are not enough new build transactions to give a meaningful result.

Wales

Wales shows, on average, house prices have risen by 0.8% since November 2018. An annual price rise of 5.2% takes the average property value to £161,845.

There were 56 repossession sales for Wales in October 2018.

Average price by property type for Wales

Property type	December 2018	December 2017	Difference %
Detached	£245,785	£231,705	6.1
Semi-detached	£156,068	£148,069	5.4
Terraced	£124,968	£118,993	5.0
Flat/maisonette	£113,926	£111,120	2.5
All	£161,845	£153,791	5.2

Funding and buyer status for Wales

Transaction type	Average price December 2018	Annual price change % since December 2017	Monthly price change % since November 2018
Cash	£157,825	5.2	1.1
Mortgage	£164,228	5.3	0.6
First-time buyer	£139,487	4.8	0.6
Former owner occupier	£188,008	5.7	0.9

Building status for Wales

Building status	Average price October 2018	Annual price change % since October 2017	Monthly price change % since September 2018
New build	£218,225	8.1	2.3
Existing resold property	£157,930	3.8	-0.1

*Figures for the two most recent months are not being published because there are not enough new build transactions to give a meaningful result.

[Access the full UK HPI](#)

UK house prices rose by 2.5% in the year to December 2018, down from 2.7% in the year to November 2018.

The [UK Property Transaction Statistics for December 2018](#) showed that on a seasonally adjusted basis, the number of transactions on residential properties with a value of £40,000 or greater was 102,330. This is 3.6% higher compared with a year ago. Between November and December 2018, transactions fell by 0.1%.

House prices grew fastest in Wales and in the West Midlands region, increasing by 5.2% in the year to December 2018. House prices in London fell by 0.6% in the year to December 2018. London house prices have been falling over the year since July 2018.

See the [economic statement](#).

Notes to editors

1. The UK House Price Index (HPI) is published on the second or third Wednesday of each month with Northern Ireland figures updated quarterly. The January 2019 UK HPI will be published at 9.30am on Wednesday 20 March 2019. See [calendar of release dates](#).
2. We have made some changes to improve the accuracy of the UK HPI. We are not publishing average price and percentage change for new builds and existing resold property as done previously because there are not

currently enough new build transactions to provide a reliable result. This means that in this month's UK HPI reports, new builds and existing resold property are reported in line with the sales volumes currently available.

3. The UK HPI revision period has been extended to 13 months, following a review of the revision policy (see [calculating the UK HPI](#) section 4.4). This ensures the data used is more comprehensive.
4. Sales volume data is also available by property status (new build and existing property) and funding status (cash and mortgage) in our [downloadable data tables](#). Transactions involving the creation of a new register, such as new builds, are more complex and require more time to process. Read [revisions to the UK HPI data](#).
5. Revision tables have been introduced for England and Wales within the downloadable data. Tables will be available in csv format. See [about the UK HPI](#) for more information.
6. Data for the UK HPI is provided by HM Land Registry, Registers of Scotland, Land & Property Services/Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency and the Valuation Office Agency.
7. The UK HPI is calculated by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and Land & Property Services/Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. It applies a hedonic regression model that uses the various sources of data on property price, in particular HM Land Registry's Price Paid Dataset, and attributes to produce estimates of the change in house prices each month. Find out more about the methodology used from the [ONS](#) and [Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency](#).
8. The [UK Property Transaction statistics](#) are taken from HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) monthly estimates of the number of residential and non-residential property transactions in the UK and its constituent countries. The number of property transactions in the UK is highly seasonal, with more activity in the summer months and less in the winter. This regular annual pattern can sometimes mask the underlying movements and trends in the data series so HMRC also presents the UK aggregate transaction figures on a seasonally adjusted basis. Adjustments are made for both the time of year and the construction of the calendar, including corrections for the position of Easter and the number of trading days in a particular month.
9. UK HPI seasonally adjusted series are calculated at regional and national levels only. See [data tables](#).

10. The first estimate for new build average price (April 2016 report) was based on a small sample which can cause volatility. A three-month moving average has been applied to the latest estimate to remove some of this volatility.
11. Work has been taking place since 2014 to develop a single, official HPI that reflects the final transaction price for sales of residential property in the UK. Using the geometric mean, it covers purchases at market value for owner-occupation and buy-to-let, excluding those purchases not at market value (such as re-mortgages), where the 'price' represents a valuation.
12. Information on residential property transactions for England and Wales, collected as part of the official registration process, is provided by HM Land Registry for properties that are sold for full market value.
13. The HM Land Registry dataset contains the sale price of the property, the date when the sale was completed, full address details, the type of property (detached, semi-detached, terraced or flat), if it is a newly built property or an established residential building and a variable to indicate if the property has been purchased as a financed transaction (using a mortgage) or as a non-financed transaction (cash purchase).
14. Repossession sales data is based on the number of transactions lodged with HM Land Registry by lenders exercising their power of sale.
15. For England, this is shown as volumes of repossession sales recorded by Government Office Region. For Wales, there is a headline figure for the number of repossession sales recorded in Wales.
16. The data can be downloaded as a .csv file. Repossession sales data prior to April 2016 is not available. Find out more information about [repossession sales](#).
17. Background tables of the raw and cleansed aggregated data, in Excel and CSV formats, are also published monthly although Northern Ireland is on a quarterly basis. They are available for free use and re-use under the Open Government Licence.
18. HM Land Registry's mission is to guarantee and protect property rights in England and Wales.
19. HM Land Registry is a government department created in 1862. It operates as an executive agency and a trading fund and its running costs are covered by the fees paid by the users of its services. Its ambition is

to become the world's leading land registry for speed, simplicity and an open approach to data.

20. HM Land Registry safeguards land and property ownership worth in excess of £4 trillion, including around £1 trillion of mortgages. The Land Register contains more than 25 million titles showing evidence of ownership for some 86% of the land mass of England and Wales.

21. For further information about HM Land Registry visit www.gov.uk/land-registry

22. Follow us on [Twitter](#), our [blog](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#)

[Press release: UK to host Gavi pledging conference in 2020](#)

The UK will host a major international conference in 2020 to raise funds for life-saving vaccinations for some of the world's poorest children, International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt announced today.

The conference will bring together political leaders, civil society, public and private donors, vaccine manufacturers and governments to support the global vaccination body Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, which has protected 700 million children in countries like Malawi, Haiti and Cameroon from diseases like measles, whooping cough and pneumonia since 2000.

More recently Gavi has delivered the first ever cholera vaccination campaign in Yemen, which helped protect more than 450,000 people. Last year alone, Senegal became the first Gavi-supported country in West Africa to introduce the HPV vaccine into its routine immunisation programme, protecting 200,000 nine-year-old girls against cervical cancer.

Hosting this conference demonstrates the UK's ongoing commitment to global health security and creating equal access to vaccines for children, wherever they live. UK aid already supports Gavi and our contribution will vaccinate 76 million children, saving 1.4 million lives from vaccine-preventable diseases by 2020.

International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt said:

The UK's commitment to immunise millions of children and save lives is delivered through our partnership with Gavi and I am delighted

the UK will be hosting the Gavi conference in 2020.

Immunisation is a vital part of all our lives and no child should suffer by at the hands of a vaccine-preventable disease. But tragically over half a million children continue to die in Africa every year from vaccine preventable diseases.

By bringing together international donors at this conference we can help create a healthier, safer and more prosperous world which is in all of our interests.

Gavi CEO Dr Seth Berkley said:

The UK helped create Gavi and has been one of our strongest supporters ever since. But for us British support means more than the vital funding and guidance we receive from the UK government. The UK supports Gavi's mission in many other ways, from British innovations like GSK's lifesaving vaccines or Dulas' solar vaccine fridges, to British academics from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine or Imperial College London, to British advocates like Comic Relief or Save the Children.

That's why I'm delighted we are returning to the UK for our third replenishment, where I hope the UK will again help us to continue our work protecting children across the world against some of the world's deadliest diseases.

Gavi Board Chair Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala said:

Vaccines don't just build healthier societies, they build healthier economies. I've seen this for myself during my time as Finance Minister for Nigeria: children that have been protected against severe, debilitating illnesses are more likely to go to school, are more likely to get good jobs and are less likely to have parents and siblings taking time off work to care for them.

That's why I'd like to thank the UK for its offer to host this replenishment and for its wider leadership in global health. Next year's event will help Gavi to build on the \$150 billion worth of economic benefits it has already helped to generate and give many more children a platform on which to build a brighter future.

The UK is Gavi's largest donor and is currently responsible for 25% of Gavi's budget and UK aid is helping to ensure children in the world's poorest countries receive the vaccines they need.

Next year's event builds on previous Gavi replenishment conferences, the first hosted in London in 2011 – which raised US\$ 4.3 billion and was

attended by Bill Gates.

Since its last replenishment in Berlin in 2015, which raised US\$7.5 billion, Gavi has also helped 15 countries to transition out of Gavi support and fund 100% of their own vaccination programmes.

Gavi helps drive down the price of vaccinations by pooling demand from the world's poorest countries which has helped boost vaccine coverage from 60% to 80% in Gavi-supported countries since 2000.

Notes to editors

- This replenishment event follows the successful Gavi pledging conference in Berlin in January 2015, which raised US\$7.5 billion for the 2016-2020 period.
- Next year's event will raise funds to support Gavi's programmes from 2021-2025.
- The investment case, which will set out the amount required, will be published later this year.
- The UK has committed £1.44 billion to Gavi from 2016-2020, including funding to its innovative finance mechanisms.
- 1 in 5 children in Gavi countries (20%) are missing out on the full course of basic diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis (DTP3) vaccine
- Around 1 in 7 children worldwide (15%) are missing out on the full course of basic diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis (DTP3) vaccine
- 1 in 10 children worldwide (9%) don't receive any vaccines whatsoever
- Gavi's work is contributing to 14 of the 17 Global Goals key to creating a better and more sustainable future for all.

About Gavi

About Gavi

- Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance is a public-private partnership committed to saving children's lives and protecting people's health by increasing equitable use of vaccines in lower-income countries.
- The Vaccine Alliance brings together developing country and donor governments, the World Health Organization, UNICEF, the World Bank, the vaccine industry, technical agencies, civil society, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and other private sector partners. Gavi uses innovative finance mechanisms to secure sustainable funding and adequate supply of quality vaccines.
- Since 2000, Gavi has contributed to the immunisation of 700 million children and the prevention of 10 million future deaths.
- Gavi has a unique model – it is a public private partnership that pools demand from the world's poorest countries, helping it to drive down the price of vaccines. Thanks to Gavi's work with manufacturers, supported countries pay less than US\$ 28 for a full course of 11 vaccines compared with the US price of over US\$ 1,100 for comparable vaccines. Gavi needs predictable financing, received through the replenishment process, to allow manufacturers and implementing countries to forecast demand over each five year period, helping to drive value for money and maximise the

impact of every penny invested in the Vaccine Alliance.

- Gavi is responsible for funding the global vaccine stockpiles of cholera, yellow fever and meningitis vaccines. Thanks to a unique agreement between Gavi and Merck there is also a stockpile of 300,000 investigational doses of Ebola vaccine, which are now being used to tackle the outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).
- Even the poorest country must contribute some of their own money towards each vaccine delivered by Gavi. As countries get richer their governments put more of their own money into their vaccine programmes until they are fully funded by the country themselves. Fifteen countries have already successfully 'transitioned' out of Gavi support in this way.

[News story: Second phase of work to transform Worthy Down gathers pace](#)

Thanks to the Skanska, Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO), AECOM (DIO's Project Support Partner) and Defence College of Logistics, Policing and Administration Project teams, tranche two of the building works is well underway as part of the £300 million scheme.

The facilities under construction include: a combined medical, dental, and physical training centre; three Single Living Accommodation (SLA) units; the Officers' and Senior Non-Commissioned Officers' (SNCO) mess; a Band and drill area; Headquarters building; and Navy Catering Services Realistic Working Environment space.

The works, which will see the new buildings completed from late 2019 through to early 2020, have included the demolition of several existing structures with 96 per cent of the materials being recycled, all while keeping the camp fully operational.

The Band Facility and Drill Shed under construction at Worthy Down. Copyright Skanska 2019

In this phase of works almost 500 bed spaces will be created to accommodate personnel from HMS Raleigh, Princess Royal Barracks, and RAF Halton. The SLA is being constructed using a combination of traditional build and modular methodology, which, due to the offsite method of construction, facilitates smoother programme delivery, provides enhanced finished quality, and reduces carbon emissions.

Another key building in tranche two is the combined medical, dental, and physical training centre which will contribute to the health and wellbeing of all personnel, offering leading-edge equipment and expertise and, when operational, will support the planned increase in capacity at the camp.

Paul Weale, Project Director, said:

The buildings we are creating in tranche two combine traditional and modern methods of construction. They will enable the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and DIO to welcome many more people to Worthy Down.

Tranche two is very important in terms of our plans to help relocate people to Worthy Down and it's great to see the scheme progressing so well.

Matthew Richardson, DIO's Principal Project Manager, said:

DIO supports Service personnel by providing and improving living, working and training facilities: including single living and service family accommodation. As the project continues to deliver and site capacity increases, we look forward to seeing more people experience the fantastic new facilities.

Re-building Worthy Down is one part of a two-part scheme for the DIO Project named Wellesley. The second is the development of a new community called Mindenhurst, in Deepcut, Surrey, where the MOD is vacating Princess Royal Barracks. Combined, the two parts will help the MOD to rationalise its estate and improve its training provision and living quarters.

[Press release: Dstl Announce Swarming Drone Hackathon Challenge](#)

Using a bespoke synthetic environment from AFRL, this hackathon is going to develop new and innovative ways to use unmanned aerial systems (UAS) to assist the emergency services to deal with wildfires.

This pioneering initiative aims to find new ways of using UAS for global search and rescue in defence and the public sector. Scenarios will be run in parallel with the US via a continuous video link with the WBI in Dayton, Ohio who are hosting the same event in the US.

The hackathon will explore innovative ways to plan missions using multiple systems to assist in the identification and prediction of how wildfires will spread and subsequently find preventative solutions, minimise damage and save lives. Teams will use a range of collaboration platforms to explore different

fire scenarios with an increasing level of complexity, working with experts from the Fire Service, Dstl and the wider Ministry of Defence. Dstl and AFRL are using this innovative approach to find the best Artificial Intelligence or Machine Learning algorithms that embody efficiency and resilience.

Defence Minister Stuart Andrew said:

Collaboration in innovative research between the UK and US continues to push the boundaries of advanced technology. This hackathon will bring together the best and brightest from academia, industry and the public to discover new ways to utilise life-saving drone technology.

Tim Wright, Dstl's Aerospace Systems Group Leader, said:

The speed and ferocity of the devastating wildfires in California demonstrated the need to develop new ways of using science and technology to assist the emergency services wherever possible. Small unmanned air systems or 'drones' – in the right hands – could offer a way of reducing the burden on the emergency services by mapping and tracking a wildfire in real time, autonomously, so efforts can be focussed rapidly where they're needed to save more lives.

[Tim Wright, Dstl's Aerospace Systems Group Leader explains](#)

We are reaching out to industry, academia, tech start-ups, coders, anyone with new ideas and an interest in drones, artificial intelligence or autonomy to help us find and develop new concepts of controlling drones in the most efficient and effective ways to give as much assistance to the emergency services as possible. This event will be a fantastic opportunity to spend a weekend with some of the best minds in the business from the UK and US, collaborating simultaneously with the Wright Brothers Institute's hackathon.

Mick Hitchcock from the US Air Force, said:

It is fantastic to be able to work with Dstl on this project. The activity fits right into both countries' desire to approach research differently, and involves non-traditional innovative thinkers as partners and most importantly get results faster. The competition is not between the two countries, but to highlight the ability to rapidly work together on tough problems.

The winning team from the UK hackathon will be offered a unique

opportunity to present their winning ideas and proposal for further exploitation at the British Embassy in Washington DC. Costs for travel and accommodation will be provided where appropriate. The winning teams from both the US and UK hackathons will also be recognised at the AUVSI XPONENTIAL 2019 unmanned and autonomous systems trade show.

The UK and US hackathons take place simultaneously from 29 to 31 March 2019 with the UK event taking place at the 'Spark' Facility at Southampton Solent University.

To register for this unique event, visit [Eventbrite](#) and see all the latest updates [here](#)

Follow #2019firehack on Twitter.

[Speech: Mims Davies speech at UK Sport's future funding strategy launch](#)

It is fantastic to be here today to speak to you all and to set out my priorities as Minister for Sport.

Before I begin, I wanted to express my condolences to the friends and family of Gordon Banks. I am sure we're all very sad to hear about his passing today. His contribution towards the 1966 World Cup victory and THAT save against Brazil in the 1970 World Cup have already cemented his place in history and he will be remembered as one of football's greats.

But today is an exciting day as UK Sport unveils its future strategy beyond Tokyo.

The capacity for long-term planning has been instrumental in ParalympicsGB and Team GB's continued success, so it is right that UK Sport review how their funding is targeted and resources are deployed, as we move towards Paris for 2024.

Now, let's talk about Atlanta 96 saw us place 36 in the medal table. I remember watching some good stuff – including Steve Redgrave and Matthew Pinsent battle their way to what was to be our only gold medal of the games. A not so memorable moment was where we hit the headlines for athletes selling kit on the streets to raise money... and that's not a good thing, so I am glad that times have changed since then!

Fast forward twenty years and we finished second in the medal table at the Rio Olympics. That is absolutely because of the right investment, the right

strategy and unparalleled commitment from talented athletes and coaches. But imagine what further investment and planning would achieve? We want to maintain our status as an Olympic and Paralympic powerhouse.

2015 saw us publish our Sporting Future strategy, which set out a bold new direction for sport.

It reassessed how we value and measure the impact of sport and physical activity on the nation's health and well-being. It prioritised tackling inactivity and engaging people from underrepresented groups.

Crucially, it placed five outcomes at the heart of everything we do – physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing, individual development, social and community development, and economic development.

It is a good moment to pause and look back at the progress we have made. But, far more importantly, it is the time to look ahead, to raise the bar and to set ourselves new challenges and new ambitions.

Now, I had the privilege of addressing the House of Commons to speak on a debate on sport. I was struck again, as I have been many times over the last three months, by the power of sport. It impacts lives in the most varied and positive of ways.

However, there are also some very serious issues in sport that we must tackle.

This is why I took the opportunity to announce that I will be holding a summit on racism in football with key partners. There is absolutely no place for discrimination in sport and I will address this head on. And we saw that today with Joe Root and I promise to tackle this.

Today I want to use my time with you to set out my three big priorities as minister for sport:

- Harnessing the power of our sporting excellence to maximise our international impact and inspire a nation
- Fostering a culture of sport based on the very highest levels of integrity and fairness
- And increasing engagement in sport and physical activity for absolutely everyone.

So, how are we going to do this? Well firstly, I want to thank you, for all the hard work you do to support our athletes to be the best they can be – we are right behind them as they seek again to inspire us all.

When John Major introduced the National Lottery almost 25 years ago, few would have believed that our Olympic and Paralympic heroes would have delivered over 860 inspirational medal moments for the nation and created the term 'super Saturday'; a day few of us will ever forget.

The breadth of success at the Rio Games demonstrates how the elite sport system has evolved. Team GB won more gold medals across more sports than any

other nation – a sure sign that the system is working, that success breeds success and that the UK has truly cemented our place as a nation capable of succeeding on the global stage.

But we should not take the undoubted success of our elite system for granted. Long-term investment from the Government and the National Lottery are the foundations upon which the strength of British elite sport has been built.

And here we should acknowledge the valued contribution of National Lottery players, without whom none of this would be possible.

As we approach 25 years of the Lottery, we must take the opportunity to connect with players and to remind them what is possible. They should know that our athletes hopes and dreams rest on people continuing to play.

We currently offer levels of support to our athletes that are the envy of many competitors – I want this to continue.

UK Sport's future strategy will help our wonderful athletes to deliver further world-class performances beyond Tokyo and to inspire the country once more.

The new three million pound Aspiration Fund, is another extremely positive step in opening up opportunities to all. The Fund will support those sports who do not currently receive full UK Sport funding to help teams and athletes.

Our athletes are representative of society, coming from all walks of life and backgrounds – disability is no bar to medal success. They are part of the fabric of our national identity – a true British success story.

As we look to fund a wider range of sports, over a longer period of time it is important that these sports inspire and represent our diverse society. Let's not be afraid to invest in the potential reach and success of currently unfunded sports too.

I am going to mention it... as we leave the European Union, we continue to work closely with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and the Department for International Trade, to make the most of the incredible contribution sport gives to our international profile and our vision for Global Britain.

And we continue to deliver major, world class sporting events. Next week, it will be just 100 days until we host the Cricket World Cup, which will have an expected global audience of around one and a half billion. How exciting!

And it's not just cricket – over the next year there will be absolutely something for everyone – from the World Wheelchair Curling Championships in Stirling that is happening next month, to the Netball World Cup in Liverpool – a trip up there may be on the cards – and Yorkshire hosting the World Road Cycling in September.

Our Sport is Great. Our investment in major events delivers opportunities for everyone, everywhere, to see this first hand.

And of course we're looking forward to hosting the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham which, with an estimated TV audience of 1.5 billion – that number is just rolling off the tongue – will showcase the city, the whole of the West Midlands and the UK to the rest of the world. It will demonstrate our country as a destination for sport, business, leisure, tourism and education.

Having such a huge audience for this kind of event is amazing. It means that we have the opportunity again to inspire people across the world. This is also why it is so important that there is a wide range of sport on TV.

So, we've seen the popularity of women's sport on TV grow since 2012 – England's victory in the 2017 Women's Cricket World Cup Final was seen by over a million people, and more than the number of people that usually tune in for a Premier League match. So congratulations to them!

I recognise the progress that has been made – and a huge thank you to Channel 4's innovative and engaging coverage of para-sport broke new boundaries. But women's sport on television still remains too much of a novelty. Sometimes we are still surprised to see it appear on terrestrial channels and while I recognise that progress has been made – further change is needed.

Equality means visibility. Whoever we are, we have the right to be inspired by diversity in sport that shows the best in all of us. I urge sports bodies, broadcasters, and the wider print media to that bit better. It's 2019 and it's time we had more coverage of women's sport on television and in the wider media.

We all want our children to grow up appreciating great sporting success, regardless of who is playing it and where.

But what's important is not just that we win medal and succeed on a global stage – but that we do it the right way.

Events like the Commonwealth Games are fantastic occasions. 2022 will be an opportunity to showcase the values of our great nation, ten years on from London 2012 – just showing how much we have improved in terms of inclusivity and equality for all.

We must continue to have robust anti-doping and governance regimes, both domestically and internationally – we must continue to lead the way. This is not just a message from me. It's a message from the athletes I've spoken to since I took up this role.

I have had discussions with UK Anti-Doping, UK Sport and the World Anti-Doping Agency after hearing these messages strongly from athletes.

I am clear that we need to see long-term, strategic change to increase transparency in the anti-doping system, and that we all have confidence in WADA's future work and the integrity of sport.

It is so important that our top athletes are treated fairly, with respect. And it goes as well for tackling doping.

I'm delighted to see the steps UK Sport have taken around the mental health of those involved in elite sport for instance. It is absolutely right that they have strengthened and clarified standards and processes around behaviour and resolving disputes. It is important that we support our athletes not just when they are competing, but as they move into retirement and start thinking about the next stage of their lives.

This is vital work, and I give UK Sport my backing as they continue to make our elite sport system stronger.

Now, people also need to feel safe when they take part in sport. Ensuring children and those at risk are protected as much as possible is a top priority for me. I have been talking to my ministerial colleagues in the Ministry of Justice about the positions of sports coaches and "position of trust" to give additional protection to 16 and 17 year olds – this work continues.

We also want people to be safe when they play or watch live sport.

I know there is continued interest in our stadiums, stadium safety and the longstanding commitment to the all-seater policy in football. I am expecting a report which reviews existing evidence on this topic very soon, and will, together with the Secretary of State, consider its findings extremely carefully.

Watching live sport brings communities together and it encourages people to spend quality time with friends and families and unites strangers behind a common goal.

So it is really important that everyone has the chance to watch and to take part – and this takes me onto my final priority – to increase engagement in sport for all.

Any why is this important?

Because absolutely everyone should be able to enjoy the benefits that taking part in sport and physical activity can bring.

It should be fun, inclusive and there should be no barriers to taking part.

We want half a million people to be more regularly active across England by 2020 – yes that's only a year – with at least half of these being women. And we are making good progress.

Over 470,000 more people are already active compared to when we launched the strategy in 2015 – but delivering long term change in habits requires persistence. We must do more to encourage people to get – and above all stay active.

I want to help "harder to reach" groups get active:

- More women.
- More people from BAME backgrounds.

- More disabled people.
- More of the many people who have a hard time finding spare cash for exercise and wellbeing.
- More who struggle to find family activity time.

Let's make sport something everyone can do and something that brings people together. These are often the people who have the biggest hurdles to overcome to be active, and who need our support the most.

We know that physical activity has a massively positive impact on our nation's health and well-being.

Physical activity can reduce the risk of chronic diseases and health conditions, like diabetes and heart disease.

It can help with the ever increasing pressures on our health and social care systems.

Evidence shows that referrals to exercise classes, sports groups or even ballroom dancing can help with their physical and mental wellbeing.

I am keen that future spending decisions should take into account the huge benefits that sport and physical activity and all it can bring.

I will be working closely with my ministerial colleagues in the Department for Health and Social Care on this very important area.

In order for people to get – and stay active – they need to find the right sporting opportunity that appeals to them. It has to be enjoyable. It has to be affordable. It has to fit in with people's busy days.

It sounds simple, but I know many of us will have experienced the frustration of not being able to find and book a swimming lesson or badminton court in the right location, at the right time, can be simply off putting.

This is why we are working with Sport England and the Open Data Institute to make it as easy to book onto a sporting activity as it is to book a holiday or order a take-away.

However, this is not something that we can do alone. Today I am issuing a call to action for ALL organisations, big and small, across the sport and physical activity sector.

Work with us. Consider how you can open up your data to make it easier for people to find the right opportunity to be active. This work is incredibly important and an area I will be focussing on in the coming months.

I want to make sure that all children, and their families, can enjoy sport and physical activity and that they reap the benefits of an active lifestyle.

Late last year, Sport England published the first set of data from the Active Lives Children survey. These results MUST be a wake-up call for the sector. Our children are not active enough and we need to do something about it.

Again, we need your help.

We need all physical activity providers, National Governing Bodies of sport, schools, community clubs, leisure operators and others to play their part. We need to make sure we are maximising use of facilities, including opening up more facilities owned by schools.

We need to build on the learning from the Sport England Families Fund which has committed up to £40 million pounds for families with children to be active together.

As the Secretary of State for Education said in his speech last week, sport is one of five key foundations in building character and resilience.

As a minimum schools must ensure children are physically literate. It is just as important that parents encourage kids to be active, as it is to read them books or do times tables. Children need to learn how to run, jump, throw, catch. All of these things are absolutely fundamental to building a sporting habit for life. And maybe come an elite!

To achieve this we need schools to deliver high quality sport and physical activity before, during and after the school day. We must ensure that all children have a positive first experience of sport at school.

To get more kids active, both in and out of school we will be publishing a new cross-government plan. I particularly want to focus on building children's confidence and enjoyment of sport – and that's something the Department for Education Secretary of State discussed at our recent roundtable. They need to learn the fundamentals of movement but most importantly they need to have fun.

I also want to ensure the after-school period provides the opportunity for children to be active in safe, enjoyable environments after school.

And this means all children – but especially those from under-represented groups; girls, certain BAME groups and those with a disability, or indeed hidden disabilities.

It is time to put sport and physical activity on a par with reading and writing. It is essential in giving our kids the tools and the confidence they need to live healthy and physically active lives.

I want to thank you all for being here today and for the opportunity to set out my vision in my portfolio for sport. Thank you to the clubs, volunteers and mentors for what you're already doing week in and week out to inspire people to get active and enjoy sport.

I am ambitious – because we all should be – where I think the sector needs to be and about striving for excellence at both the grassroots and the elite level.

And I need your continued support to deliver this.

We need you to work with us on opening up data and facilities, on providing the right offers that will get people active, on supporting our athletes and upholding our sporting values.

I want our children to be inspired by sport. I want them to see as many sports as possible, and understand that sport is for everyone. I want them to discover new sporting heroes and be caught up in the excitement of top level sporting action. Together we can achieve all of this.

Thank you. And thank you UK Sport for leading the way – I look forward to working alongside you and everyone in this room.