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## Press Release

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# 36,000 kids in the North East inspired to play sport by London 2012

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For more information please contact the press office: Andrew St Ledger on 020 7273 1593 or Peter Dickinson on 020 7273 1800.

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36,000 young people in the North East who don't normally play sport outside of school lessons have made a change and completed 10-week sports courses in their own time, new figures released today reveal.

Encouragingly, researchers found that nationally two in five youngsters are continuing to play sport afterwards – in clubs and with their friends.

The courses, part of Sport England's Sport Unlimited programme, have been completed by 36,448 young people in only two years - demonstrating how Sport England is helping youngsters in **County Durham, Northumberland, Tyne & Wear and Tees Valley** to make a positive change in their lives. Across England, half a million youngsters have completed courses.

With London 2012 now just two years away, Sport England is urging more young people not to miss out and to sign up for the next round of courses starting in September. Anyone interested can visit [www.sportengland.org](http://www.sportengland.org) to find their local county sports partnership for more details.

The Minister for Sport and the Olympics, Hugh Robertson MP, said:

“Sport Unlimited is going from strength to strength, encouraging hundreds of thousands of young people to try sport.

“One of my top priorities is to ensure that we deliver a sporting legacy from the Olympic and Paralympic Games. This scheme is part of that, inspiring a new generation of children to get out there and take part, no matter what their age or ability.”

Sport Unlimited is aimed at youngsters who are not yet playing regular sport in the community and is boosting participation by giving them the freedom to choose the sports on offer. The most popular sports for boys include boxing,

midnight basketball and free running. For girls, it's fencing, gymnastics and badminton.

Thanks to this approach being taken by Sport England, the programme is proving a success in tackling the gender divide in sport. Fewer than two in five adults playing sport are women, but with Sport Unlimited in the North East, the split is almost 50/50.

Sport Unlimited is playing a key role in delivering a lasting participation legacy from the Games. The Sport Unlimited programme has been awarded the Inspire Mark by London 2012 – recognising the impact it is having on young people.

Richard Lewis, Sport England's Chair, said:

“Finding your sport and developing a love for it at a young age is an important step towards continuing participation when you're older. Through Sport Unlimited, Sport England is making sport appeal to more youngsters in the North East by giving them the freedom to choose the sports they play. London 2012 is just around the corner so there has never been a better time to get out and get active.”

## **ENDS**

### **Notes to Editors**

#### **Sport Unlimited**

County breakdown of Sport Unlimited figures

<b>North East</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% male</b>	<b>% female</b>
County Durham Sport	11778	41.0	59.0
Northumberland Sport	7194	49.7	50.3
Tees Valley Sport	7111	64.4	35.6
Tyne & Wear Sport	10365	52.0	48.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>36448</b>	<b>50.4</b>	<b>49.6</b>

Sport Unlimited is a programme run by Sport England. Its key aims are:

- Getting 900,000 young people choosing from a vast range of activities including traditional and less well known sports and successfully attending a 10-week course
- Helping 300,000 of them to continue their participation regularly
- Young person driven – they determine which sports are provided

Sport Unlimited is co-ordinated by the 49 county sports partnerships which cover England. Participants complete their Sport Unlimited courses by attending at least six out of the 10 weeks.

## **Research**

Data on the Sport Unlimited participants was independently collated by the Sport Industry Research Centre at Sheffield Hallam University using attendance records from course deliverers. The researchers also conducted follow up research with 229 participants.

60.45% of adults currently playing regular sport are men and 40.55% are women. Within Sport Unlimited in the North East, the split is 50.4% boys and 49.6% girls. Adult participation data from Sport England's Active People Survey.

## **Sport England**

Sport England invests National Lottery and Exchequer funding in organisations and projects that will grow and sustain participation in grassroots sport and create opportunities for people to excel at their chosen sport.

Sport England is committed to creating a world-leading community sport system, and has set specific and measurable targets to achieve by 2012/13:

- One million people doing more sport
- A 25% reduction in the number of 16- to 18-year-olds who drop out of at least five key sports
- Improved talent development systems in at least 25 sports
- A measurable increase in people's satisfaction with their experience of sport
- A major contribution to the delivery of the five hour sports offer for children and young people.