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## **150 inspirational Ambassadors have joined the British Inspiration Trust (BRIT) to support and improve young adult mental health and fitness throughout the UK by championing the annual BRIT Challenge**

The British Inspiration Trust (BRIT) continue to deliver their annual feelgood February fundraiser, the next being an inclusive team 2,022 mile challenge, with three aims;

- Support student mental health, fitness & wellbeing and reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness
- Deliver inspiration to young adults, and destigmatise mental health, with the support of BRIT Ambassadors
- Raise vital funds for local, regional and national charities

Registration is now open for the [BRIT Challenge](#), taking place between **1<sup>st</sup> February** and **3<sup>rd</sup> March 2022** (University Mental Health Day). Every UK university, college, specialist college and Students' Union are urged to embrace the Challenge, enter teams and invite their students and staff to participate.

Many charities have felt the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a collaborative charity, BRIT are inviting every university and college team taking part in the BRIT Challenge to choose a second charity to raise funds for, alongside BRIT, to support local, regional and national charities. Over the past two years, almost 180 university and college teams have taken on BRIT Challenges.

BRIT are striving to unite the education, sport and charity sectors and a wealth of governing bodies are supporting the BRIT Challenge including Universities UK, the Association of Colleges, Colleges Scotland, Colleges Wales and the National Union of Students.

Olympians, Paralympians, Sports Personalities, Adventurers and Explorers continue to join the BRIT Ambassador family and over 150 have joined BRIT this year to support young adult mental health. BRIT Ambassadors promote the BRIT Challenge at a university and/or college of their choice, encourage student participation, share their lived experience to destigmatise mental health and champion equality, diversity and inclusion. The BRIT Ambassador family is being supported by a whole host of inspirational sports personalities including Dame Kelly Holmes and Sir Steve Redgrave.

The BRIT Challenge is inclusive and enables students and staff of all abilities to take part and work as a team to cover the 2,022 mile distance by either hand-cycling, cycling, wheelchair pushing, swimming, walking, jogging, running, rowing or paddling (canoeing, kayaking or paddle-boarding).

University and college teams have the flexibility to decide how they take on the BRIT Challenge; sharing the 2,022 mile distance between campuses, departments, Students' Union sports teams and societies; involving 2,022 students and staff; challenging other universities and colleges; involving their communities and setting £2,022 fundraising targets.

At a time when young adult and student mental health has been further impacted by the pandemic, the BRIT Challenge is fast becoming an inspiring annual UK-wide event supported by the education, sport and charity sectors.

[www.BritishInspirationTrust.org.uk](http://www.BritishInspirationTrust.org.uk)

Media enquiries - [Press@BritishInspirationTrust.org.uk](mailto:Press@BritishInspirationTrust.org.uk)

[Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) @BRIT\_Challenge

## QUOTES OF SUPPORT

*"It has been my pleasure to support BRIT for many years as they have strived to support young adult mental health throughout the UK, raise vital funds and deliver inclusive opportunities for young adults to improve their mental health and fitness.*

*Supporting young adult mental health has never been so important and I applaud BRIT for delivering the annual BRIT Challenge and their visionary approach to collaborate with education and sport governing bodies and organisations.*

*This Call to Action goes out to all current and former Olympic and Paralympic Athletes and Sports Personalities; I urge athletes from every sport to join the BRIT Ambassador family. By uniting, we can ensure that every UK university, college and specialist college has a champion to inspire as many of their students and staff as possible to take part in the BRIT Challenge, destigmatise mental health and promote inclusivity."*

### **Sir Steve Redgrave CBE**

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*"The BRIT ethos is to be a collaborative charity. As many charities have felt the impact of COVID-19 on their fundraising efforts, I hope the BRIT Challenge inspires UK universities, colleges, specialist colleges and Students' Unions to enter teams and choose a second charity to raise funds for, alongside BRIT, to support local, regional and national charities.*

*We have adopted a collectively powerful approach to supporting young adult mental health by forging special relationships and partnerships with charities and national governing bodies in the education and sport sectors. Thank you so much to everyone who has supported BRIT and enabled us to grow as a charity and continue to have a positive impact on the lives of young adults and students throughout the UK.*

*I am also sincerely grateful to the 150 Olympians, Paralympians, Sports Personalities, Adventurers and Explorers, who have joined our BRIT Ambassador family this year. They have united in promoting the BRIT Challenge, supporting universities and colleges of their choice, encouraging students of all abilities to take part, destigmatising mental health and championing equality, diversity and inclusion."*

### **Phil Packer**

Founder and Non-Paid Chief Executive

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*"The delivery of the annual BRIT Challenge is close to my heart having lost my closest friend to suicide and having seen the challenges faced by people of all ages struggling with poor mental health. All of us will be affected by emotional wellbeing challenges at some point in our lives. I encourage athletes from every sport to unite and join the BRIT Ambassador family. By visiting a university or college of their choice during February and sharing their lived experience, BRIT Ambassadors will inspire teams to participate, champion inclusivity, help destigmatise mental health and it is also a super opportunity to share what our sports have to offer with students.*

*It's great to see that the BRIT Challenge is inclusive so that students and staff of all abilities are able participate in many different ways. I wish every university, college and specialist college team the very best of luck with their distance and fundraising efforts. I hope the BRIT Challenge will also help make conversations about our mental health easier and that young people realise they are not alone."*

### **Helene Raynsford**

Paralympic Gold medallist

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*“Young adults struggling with mental health difficulties are highly likely to be even more vulnerable due to the COVID-19 crisis and the BRIT Challenge is an inspiring opportunity for students at every university, college and specialist college to be part of a UK-wide feelgood February fundraising challenge to both raise vital funds for charities and improve their mental health and fitness.*

*I know there are hundreds of current and retired Olympians, Paralympians, Sporting Personalities, Adventurers and Explorers who understand the challenges of mental health. By joining our BRIT Ambassador family, championing the BRIT Challenge and sharing their lived experience at a university or college of their choice, they will have an extraordinary impact on supporting and improving student mental health and fitness. There are over 450 universities and colleges in the UK, so we need a collectively powerful team effort from athletes from every sport to come forward and ensure every institution has a BRIT Ambassador to help increase participation, promote inclusivity and destigmatise mental health.”*

**Sally Gunnell OBE DL**

Olympic, World, European and Commonwealth Gold Medallist

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*“With a deep understanding of mental health challenges in my own life, and through the work of the Dame Kelly Holmes Trust, I know that there are vast number of young adults and students who are living with mental health challenges. I have known BRIT’s Founder, Phil, for many years now and his vision to support young adult mental health resonates with me both personally and professionally.*

*It has been a pleasure to support BRIT over the past 10 years, as they have strived to help improve young adult mental health and fitness throughout the UK. I am delighted that the annual BRIT Challenge has been designed to be inclusive so that students and staff of all abilities can take part in many different ways. The BRIT Challenge is a great opportunity for universities, colleges, Students’ Unions and students to enter teams, raise vital funds for local, regional and national charities, and embrace an annual feelgood February fundraiser that promotes mental wellbeing and inclusivity.*

**Colonel Dame Kelly Holmes MBE (mil)**

Double Olympic gold medallist

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*“BRIT exists to support and improve young adult mental health, as well as to unite the education, sport and charity sectors. I know Students’ Unions and students have amazing energy, enthusiasm and determination when it comes to raising funds for great causes, and it is infectious which is why I love supporting BRIT year on year.*

*The annual BRIT Challenge is a feel-good February fundraiser that enables students to choose a second charity to raise funds for, alongside BRIT, and take part wherever they are; on campus or at home, in whatever way they choose. It’s a great way to improve mental health and fitness, to raise vital funds and to HAVE FUN!*

*I hope every UK university, college and specialist college will embrace the BRIT Challenge, making it a firm fixture in their annual Calendar of Events. If every institution enters just one team or several teams, the potential impact the BRIT Challenge could have on both improving and destigmatising mental health throughout the UK is mind blowing.”*

**Naomi Riches MBE**

Paralympic Gold Medallist

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## Notes to Editors

- To ensure BRIT remains relevant and understands the impact of mental health difficulties faced by young adults throughout the UK, universities, colleges, schools and charities have hosted over 400 visits to meet their students and staff since 2012.
- BRIT are a collaborative charity and hope that the annual BRIT Challenge will become a firm fixture in the Higher and Further Education Calendar of Events in order to improve student and staff mental health and fitness, all whilst raising vital funds for charities throughout the UK.
- BRIT is supported by leading experts in young adult mental health, chief executives of national charities, education and sport governing bodies and universities and colleges throughout the UK. The Chairs of the British Olympic Association and British Paralympic Association are also championing the annual BRIT Challenge and BRIT's aspiration to grow the BRIT Ambassador family.
- To increase team involvement, destigmatise mental health and champion equality, diversity and disability inclusion, BRIT aims to implement Regional Steering Groups. Representatives from every university and college in each region will be invited to join their respective BRIT Steering Group, hosted by a different university each year, and grow a network to share best practice and use the BRIT Challenge as a catalyst to champion positive mental health and wellbeing throughout the year.
- BRIT is striving to unite the education, sport and charity sectors and continues to partner with a wealth of education and sport governing bodies including The Committee of University Chairs (CUC), Universities UK (UUK), the Association of Colleges (AoC), ColegauCymru/Colleges Wales, Colleges Scotland and the National Union of Students (NUS).
- BRIT has received overwhelming support from universities, colleges and Students' Unions and their collectively powerful approach of forging special relationships with education and sport governing bodies continues in order to ensure over five million Higher Education and Further Education students, and staff, have the opportunity to participate in the annual BRIT Challenge.

**ENDS**