

Community Health Initiative for Older Black Men Expands to Thurrock and Birmingham with Sport England Support

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

3 March 2026

The Over 50s Black Men Forum (O5BM) has secured support through the Movement Fund from Sport England to expand its Community Table Tennis Centres and strengthen efforts to tackle health inequalities affecting older Black men.

The award will enable O5BM to extend its programme into Thurrock and Birmingham, providing regular weekly physical activity sessions and creating further opportunities for older Black men to stay active, connected and engaged in their health.

The funding will also support the delivery of the **UK Older Black Men Community Table Tennis Competition**, bringing together participants from across O5BM's growing network of community hubs.

Tackling Health Inequalities Through Community Action

Black communities in the UK face significantly higher risks of several chronic health conditions. Research shows that people of Black African and Caribbean heritage are around three times more likely to develop Type 2 diabetes, while Black men are twice as likely to be diagnosed with prostate cancer compared with white men.

O5BM's Community Table Tennis Centres respond to these challenges by creating accessible and culturally safe spaces where older Black men can take part in regular physical activity while building trusted social networks.

While the activity itself is simple and accessible, the centres operate as community-based preventative health hubs, helping participants stay physically active, reduce social isolation, and become more engaged in maintaining their health and wellbeing.

Through weekly engagement, the programme also provides an important entry point for wider conversations about health awareness, wellbeing and healthy ageing within communities that are often underrepresented in mainstream programmes.

Leadership Perspective

Enitan Kane, Chair of O5BM, said:

“This support from Sport England helps us expand opportunities for older Black men to stay active, connected and engaged with their health. Our Community Table Tennis Centres demonstrate how simple, culturally competent interventions can help address serious health inequalities while strengthening community connections.”

Community Participation

New sessions in Thurrock and Birmingham are expected to launch later this year, offering accessible opportunities for men aged 50 and over to participate regardless of previous experience.

Participants will be able to attend weekly sessions, connect with peers and take part in a national community competition celebrating active ageing and community spirit.

O5BM is particularly keen to hear from older Black men in Thurrock and Birmingham who would like to take part in the new sessions and share their experiences of staying active and connected within their communities.

Notes to Editors

About O5BM

Established in 2018, the Over 50s Black Men Forum works to address health inequalities affecting older Black men through community-led programmes that promote physical activity, health awareness and social connection.

Through its growing network of Community Table Tennis Centres and health engagement initiatives, O5BM provides trusted spaces where older Black men can remain active, informed and connected.

About Sport England

Sport England invests National Lottery and government funding to help people across England become more physically active and play sport. Through its **Uniting the Movement strategy**, Sport England works with partners to tackle inequalities in physical activity and support healthier communities.

Media Contact

For further information, interviews or images:

Over 50s Black Men Forum
www.o5bmforum.org.uk
info@o5bmforum.org.uk
07488 352736

Spokespeople and participants are available for interview on request.