

WOMEN IN SPORT GIRLS STRATEGY

FEB 2016-9

OUR AMBITION



INTRODUCTION

Having completed Women in Sports ground-breaking work for girls 'Changing the Game for Girls' in the summer of 2015, Women in Sports have set out a new strategy for girls this document outlines our ambitions to tackle low participation rates and sporting engagement amongst girls aged 5 to 18.

Only 14% of 8-10 year old girls and 8% 11-12 year old girls met the recommended guidelines for physical activity in 2012. Participation rates continue to be low amongst adult women, with only 31.2% playing sport at least once a week compared with 40.7% of men (APS 9). Women in Sport strongly believe that we need to promote participation amongst girls at an early age to ensure they have a positive relationship with sport and to effectively tackle this entrenched gender gap.

The current government sports strategy, A Sporting Future, was published at the end of 2015. Increasing sport participation and physical activity amongst children is identified as a priority as well as women more generally. We therefore have an opportunity to align our objectives with this new strategy to effectively champion girls in sport:

“Provision for children and young people will rightly sit at the heart of a new strategy for sport in this country. We want to see healthy, happy active children becoming healthy, happy active adults and the talented primary school children of today becoming our sporting stars of the future.”

Edward Timpson, Minister for Children and Families Department for Education

The new government strategy identifies the following key areas for Children and young people:

- **Meeting the needs – tailoring offers for each stage of the ‘Journey’**
This section addresses drop off at key transition points for young people, where previously each stage has been looked at in isolation the strategy encourages addressing the ‘linking’ of each stage via the wider Taking Part strategy.
- **Swimming and cycling proficiency**
Being able to swim and having cycling proficiency are identified as core skills all children should acquire whilst in education. Working groups will be set up to address both of these.
- **Under 5’s**
Only 9% of under 5’s are meeting recommended guidelines for being active the government proposes to address this via active travel, national campaigns and NGB based interventions
- **Ofsted for Primary Premium**
Grant conditions and guidance for this academic will be put in place to highlight that the Primary Premium should enhance not maintain delivery in schools. Senior Leadership Team buy in has been identified as paramount and Ofsted will assess how effectively the Sport Premium is being used.
- **Transition to secondary school**

The strategy states that improvement in provision at Primary school should not be lost through drop off as students move to a secondary environment. Investigation into this particular transition point is set to be carried out with girls as a particular focus,

- **School Games**

The school games will undergo an assessment of effectiveness and the direction of travel for the games in the future.

This Women in Sport strategy for girls addresses directly those strands highlighted and will indirectly impact the others outlined above.

WHAT ARE THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES THAT INFORM WOMEN IN SPORTS STRATEGY FOR GIRLS?

It is important to define Women in Sport's key principles about girl's engagement in sport. These have been developed from speaking to key partners and colleagues (*including SteetGames, Youth Sport Trust, sports coach UK, girls, teachers, Mumsnet, County Sports Partnerships and Association of Colleges Sport*). Thus, the following principles have come out as clear commonalities in the understanding and drivers when working with girls. These should be at the heart of the work that Women in Sport carries out in this space and is key to our strategic messaging and communications.;

- If girls are physically active they will be healthier, happier, have higher self-esteem and body confidence, and achieve more academically.
- Girls should be at the centre of all activity, co-creation is essential
- These opportunities should be available to ALL girls regardless of race, religion, disability or socioeconomic group.
- There are pockets of excellent provision of sport in education, this needs to be the norm for girls not the exception
- Provision can't stop at the school gates
- Influencers are key. These will change culture both on micro and macro scales.
- There is an opportunity to connect partners and projects in this space, Women in Sport are well placed to coordinate and drive that connectivity.

WHAT DOES THE EVIDENCE TELL US ABOUT GIRLS?

Research has demonstrated that:

- Only 14% of 8-10-year-old girls and 8% 11-12-year-old girls met the recommended guidelines for physical activity in 2012 ¹
- Gender gap begins in primary school and widens throughout secondary school²
- Over 50% girls in secondary school girls say that their experiences of school sport put them off sport and physical activity¹
- Teenage girls become more body conscious and don't feel they are the right shape to play "People think it's weird and tease me when I tell them I play sport"
- Between 2011 and 2013 the number of girls unhappy with the way they look increased from 20% - 47% ³
- 74% girls would like to be more active ³
- By age 14 just 10% of girls are doing enough physical activity to meet recommendations for health ⁴
- 21% of boys and 16% of girls aged 5 – 15 meet recommended physical activity levels⁴
- Aged 7 and 8-year-old boys think that they are were better at sport than girls – but girls don't necessarily agree. "Girls are rubbish at football. when they kick the ball it goes like 5cm" and "men can play more sport than women" are comments from boys ²

Women in Sport achievements so far

Women in Sport have worked to champion girl's participation in sport and physical activity for a number of years. In 2012 we undertook a substantial study in an educational setting, *Changing the Game for Girls* (2012). This ground breaking study highlighted that whilst there are broad concerns about the physical activity levels of all the UK's citizens the issues for girls between the ages of 10 and 16 are particularly acute. More recently Women in Sport are working with the Youth Sport Trust on the Girls Active project. Both of these education based interventions have had great success with *Changing the Game for Girls* recently being highlighted as a model of good practice for the Department of Health. This encouraging for Women in Sports approach to engaging girls in sport and makes the case to extend this impact both in and out of an educational setting.

Women in Sport has a wealth of insight into girl's activity for a summary of all Women in Sport research listed below please see page seven.

- *Changing the Game for Girls* (2012) & *Changing the Game for Girls: In Action* (2015)
- *Girls Active* (2015 and ongoing)
- *Teenage Drop Off* (2012)
- *Tipping Point* (2013)
- *The Energy Project* (2008)

¹*Changing the Game for Girls*, Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation, 2012

²*Tipping Point*, Women in sport and Government Equalities Office, 2013

³*Girls Active* <https://www.youthsporttrust.org/content/girls-active>

⁴*Health Survey England*, 2012

⁵*Teenage Drop Out*, Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation, 2012

WOMEN IN SPORT'S AIMS FOR GIRLS

Combining Women in Sports underlying principals and what we know from research there are four clear aims that emerge, these will contribute to **Women in Sport transforming sport for the benefit of every girl in the UK** which should be at the heart of any work carried out in this area.

Our four aims are:

- **Create a coordinated and connected approach to the sporting landscape for girls**

There is a great deal of work going on in this space and Women in Sport is ideally placed to collate learnings and best practice as well as unlock new insights into girl's values and lives. Women in Sport is also able to champion a consistent message across key partners and the wider sector.

Women in Sport will also strive to be sector leaders in this area and the number one choice for advice and guidance with regards to girls and their relationship with sport.

- **Make current 'best practice' for engaging girls 'standard practice' in educational settings**

With a wealth of insight and experience in school sport for girls Women in Sport would look to embed these learnings and principals in sports provision across education. This will enable ALL girls to have a positive experience of physical activity giving them a good foundation for their entire life.

- **Engage and activate key influencers**

From Women in Sport's 'What Sways Women's to Play Sport' research, we understand the importance of influencers both on a national and local scale for girls. To truly affect change in behaviour these networks need to be galvanised to champion a healthy and physically active lifestyle for girls. Sport and physical activity is not part of the conversation for girls in the same way it is for boys which impacts their engagement and lifelong involvement in sport.

- **Reduce drop out at key life stages**

Rates of drop out at key transition points are notably higher for girls than boys, targeting these key life stages is paramount to maintain the healthy lifestyles for girls.

HOW WILL WOMEN IN SPORT ACHIEVE THIS FOR GIRLS 2016-2019?

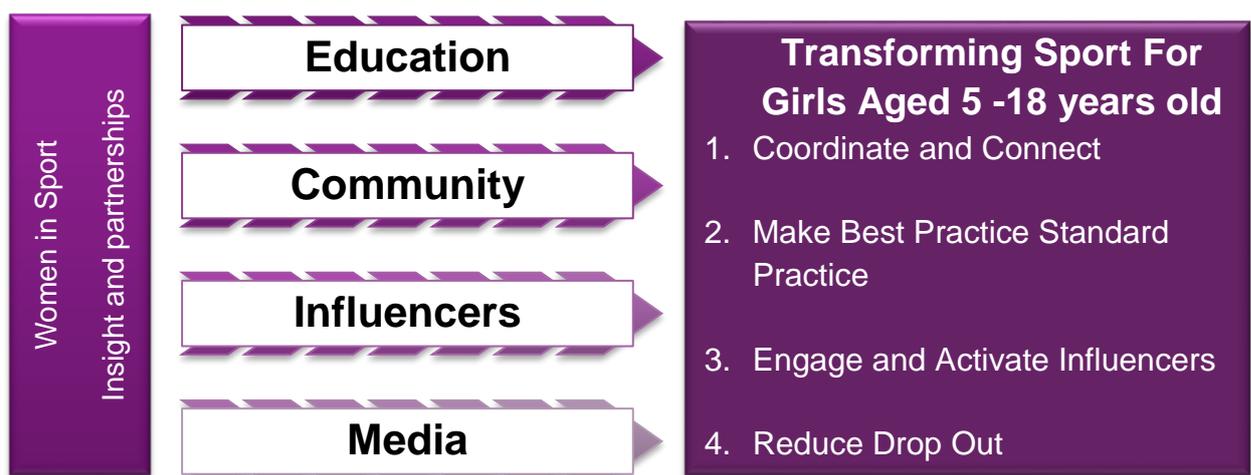
In order to achieve these aims, Women in Sport will need to recruit an additional full-time resource by way of a Girls Partnerships/ Project Manager. This role will involve delivery of core areas below, through building successful relationships with partners and activating insights.

The Girls Partnerships/ Project Manager will work to achieve the four aims by working in the following areas:

1. Education – school, further education and transition into higher education
2. Community – outside the school gates
3. Influencers – the people in a girl’s life
4. Media – communication channels relevant to girls 5 – 18

In line with the new government strategy the age group targeted will have a lower limit of five years of age. The upper age limit of 18 years of age has agreed through consultation with partners.. There is some scope to look at the transition out of further education into higher education which will naturally engage post 18 year olds, however we believe that targeting 5-18s will impact more significantly on participation in later life.

It has also been noted that 5 -18 years is a vast age range and there may need to be further refinement or to focus in on target points in order to achieve impact. The personal and physical development of girls within these age brackets is significant and that should be considered and reflected in insights and intervention planing. The diagram below shows the areas where Women in Sport will work to achieve their four strategic aims.



The table below outlines in more detail how the aims will be achieved across these strands with some suggested deliverable actions. These objectives have been created through conversations with current partners including; StreetGames, sports coach UK, Youth Sport Trust, Association of Colleges Sport,

Mumsnet, some school aged girls and London Sport. The partners identified are suggestions at this stage and it is anticipated that there will be opportunities for others to become involved throughout the delivery of the strategy.

| Setting | Aim | Objective | Deliverables | Partner(s) |
|-----------|--|--|---|--|
| Education | Make current 'best practice' for engaging girls 'standard practice' in education | Continue to deliver and develop the Girls Active programme | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to deliver monitoring and evaluation of Girls Active Develop into target areas including BAME/ SEN/ transitions | YST |
| | Make current 'best practice' for engaging girls 'standard practice' in education | Influence Education Policy to Embed Girls Active principals as a fundamental way to deliver sport in education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a voice within Government around the delivery of Girls Sport Engage teacher training providers and embed the marketing approach into teacher training Share Girls Active principals and adapt for FE | YST AoC Sport BUCS Department of Education |
| | Reduce drop out at key transition points | Address connectivity for girls between educational settings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate conversations between education partners to increase their understanding of the journey girls are going on | YST AoC Sport BUCS <i>Association of PE</i> |
| Community | Coordinate and Connect approach to engaging girls | Work through CSPs standardise approach to provision and share best practice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create/deliver train the trainer workshop for CSPs to share with all providers working to engage girls based on Women in Sport insight Share coaching/ leadership approach to delivering activity to girls and encourage consistency across sectors. | CSP Network Sport England - Satellite Clubs(11-25)/ Sportivate (14+) Sport Northern Ireland Sport Wales Sport Scotland |
| | Coordinate and Connect approach to engaging girls | Gather insights and learnings from successful projects i.e. US Girls | Linking community based programmes with educationally based programmes i.e. US Girls and Girls Active | StreetGames YST Sported. <i>Girl Guides Youth Services Princess Trust</i> |

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|--------------------|---|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| | Coordinate and Connect approach to engaging girls | Championing best practice with traditional sports provision through NGBs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create/deliver train the trainer workshop for NGBs to share with all clubs working to engage girls based on Women in Sport insight • Share best practice between NGBs | Sport England NGBs |
| Influencers | To engage and activate key influencers in a girls world/reduce drop out at key points | Work with Primary Premium coaches prevent drop out at 7/8 years old | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create development opportunity/ support for sessional coaches delivering in primary schools | Sports coach UK |
| | To engage and activate key influencers in a girls world | Influence national campaigns encouraging healthy lifestyles to embed principals of Girls Active/ CTGFG | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To share Women in Sport learnings and best practice for getting girls active • Showcasing CTGFG as a model of good practice. | Change for life? Department of Health |
| | To engage and activate key influencers in a girls world | Better understand the key Influencers in a girls world | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extending Sway to Play insight for girls • Gain insights into leveraging those influencers • Share learnings and best practice with influencers | Mumsnet |
| Media | To engage and activate key Influencers in a girls world | Make sport part of the conversation for girls | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building on principals of 'What If' crowdfunding campaign develop 'momentum' behind change in the media • Extend media audit for girls/ teen target audience. | TBC |
| | To engage and activate key | Understanding how digital and technology is playing a part in girls lives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research the importance of digital and technology for girls and any opportunity to leverage this | TBC |

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|--|---|---|--|-------------------------|
| | Influencers in a girls world | | | |
| | Coordinate and Connect approach to engaging girls | Become a hub of information and the primary reference point for information on girls in sport | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create webpages and a hub of information including relevant research, case studies and signposting as a one stop shop for those working with girls in sport. | <i>BBC Get Inspired</i> |

SUMMARY OF WOMEN IN SPORT RESEARCH INTO GIRLS

Changing the Game for Girls

In May 2012 Women in Sport published a ground breaking study 'Changing the Game for Girls' (CTGFG) that highlighted that whilst there are broad concerns about the physical activity levels of all the UK's citizens the issues for girls between the ages of 10 and 16 are particularly acute. Significant numbers of girls find their previous experiences of physical activity adversely affected by their experiences at school.

CTGFG: What the pilot work confirmed:

- Every school has a co-hort of girls not engaging in PE lessons / and or physical activity. It is vital to engage them and understand their needs
- Girls value a variety of physical activity opportunities
- Girls value equality in the opportunities provided to them – what profile does girls activity have in school and do they have the same opportunities to participate?
- Opportunities for competition are not an anathema for girls – the approach can be different
- There is a clear need to raise the profile of all forms of physical activity for girls
- Schools need to push girls to participate more – supports their all-round education
- Participation can be focussed on participating with friends and peers
- Students can act as powerful drivers – give them a voice
- Issues around body image remain and are often linked to PE kit and changing room facilities

CTGFG: How schools succeeded in 'Changing the Game':

- Engaging the senior leadership team – not just PE staff
- Having a clear project lead championing the work throughout the school
- Use of a girls voice group – listen and take action and support
- Use all staff to engage new girls
- Create leadership programmes – peer to peer mentoring
- Work with other local schools – primary schools (positive role models)

Girls Active and the Youth Sport Trust

'Girls Active' recognises that girls needs differ and change as they mature and that girls themselves are uniquely positioned to 'sell' PE and sport to other girls. So rather than being 'the problem', teenage girls are the solution to changing attitudes.

Based on the YST principles of student engagement, such as student voice and leadership, Girls Active empowers girls through leadership and innovative marketing to want to be active by developing them as positive role models who 'sell' PE and sport to their peers. 'Girls Leadership and Marketing Squads' help their peers see the relevance of PE and sport to their lives and market in a way that is attractive to them.

- In tandem, teachers are trained to make PE and sport more relevant to girls and develop provision underpinned by key principles to ensure sustained engagement
- Insight is integral to the process – understanding values and barriers of their female student population and take informed and consultative action

In 2015 the YST received funding from Sport England Lottery to deliver training to 90 schools in 10 counties.

Tipping point

- By this age 7 and 8 gender stereotypes were already emerging strongly in terms of how children seem to define themselves and what is important to them.
- At Age 7 and 8, girls who took part in the focus groups were already conscious of gender differences in perceptions of girl's physical skills.
 - The girls in the research reported that boys perceive that girls don't have the skills and abilities to play the games they enjoy: *they always think that we're not as good as them/ it's because boys think girls can't do stuff that they're doing.*
 - The 7 and 8 year old boys who participated in the focus groups tend to think that they are were better at sport than girls – but girls don't necessarily agree. *Girls are rubbish at football. when they kick the ball it goes like 5cm./ men can play more sport than women*

Girl Guiding UK report in Body confidence:

In 2013 just 9% girls under 11 years were unhappy with the way their body looked compared to 47% in the 11-16% age group

Teenage dropout

Reasons why teenagers drop out of sport can be very different from the reasons why girls don't play sport in the first place. Our research has highlighted a number of reasons why some girls who played sport regularly decided to stop. It is important to remember that different girls may have very different reasons for playing and for dropping out.

Peer group / societal values

"None of my friends play anymore"

"People think it's weird and tease me when I tell them I play sport"

"It was fun when I played with girls my age but I don't like playing in the adult team with older women"

"My parents don't want me to play anymore as its getting in the way of my school work"

Society has told teenage girls that it isn't feminine to play sport

There isn't enough women's sport in the press or on TV – girls don't see sport as a normal activity for women

Most parents promote sport as a boy's activity, and give boys more recognition after success

Enjoyment / other priorities

“I enjoyed playing last season, but I’ve got other things to do now”

“Sport is too competitive”

“The changing rooms are always dirty, why would I want to go there?”

“They want me to play county, but that’s too much traveling”

Some girls don’t respond well to traditional coaching styles associated with male coaches

For many girls training is too time consuming, boring and repetitive

Other leisure choices take precedence

Confidence

“I don’t like wearing the kit they make us play in”

“I know that I’m not good enough”

Teenage girls become more body conscious and don’t feel they are the right shape to play

“People think its weird and tease me when I tell them I play sport”

The Energy Project: A Creative Journey to Activate and Energise Girls in School, 2008 (WSFF and Helen Storey Foundation)

In 2006 the Women’s Sport and Fitness Foundation (WSFF) joined forces with the Helen Storey Foundation (HSF) and embarked on The Energy Project, a piece of pilot research conducted with 45 girls aged nine to 15 years, and 15 of their teachers in three schools in south London.

A handbook was produced documenting the journey, research findings of The Energy Project, a study aimed to find ways to increase physical activity among schoolgirls, at both primary and secondary level, through the creative use of existing school time.

The project explored the relationship between energy, education and physical wellbeing. The report highlights a number of techniques that worked in the school environment and guidance was offered to teachers to maintain this new way of incorporating sport and physical activity into the school day.