



LEVELLING THE PLAYING FIELD

2019 REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS



#SheCanSheWill



Contents

| | |
|----|---|
| 02 | Our Manifesto |
| 03 | Executive Summary |
| 04 | Foreword from the Chair |
| 05 | The Scottish Women and Girls in Sport Advisory Board Members |
| 06 | The Story So Far |
| 07 | Findings |
| 08 | Research |
| 10 | Recommendations |
| 12 | Next Steps |
| 12 | Acknowledgements |
| 13 | End Notes |



OUR MANIFESTO

#GenerationEqual Means Levelling the Playing Field for Women and Girls in Sport.

Generation equal is a society where every person in Scotland is empowered to make genuine choices around their participation in sport and physical activity, where every person has equal access to opportunities within sport and physical activity, and where every person is valued for their contribution to, and achievements in, sport and physical activity.

This is the Scotland that we believe in and want to see, and we want to help design a future that is equitable and fair for all.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Scottish Women and Girls in Sport Advisory Board has made three recommendations which are aligned to, and drive the delivery of, the First Minister's National Advisory Council on Women and Girls (NACWG) 2018 Report and Recommendations.

1. Leadership

Deliver a national approach to identify future leaders and support their development through access to a holistic programme of educational learning, mentoring and experiential opportunities.



2. Accountability

Create a Scottish Sport Media Summit to discuss, review and challenge the nature, content and extent of existing media coverage of Scottish sports, events and athletes and to work with the media to agree an improved and more gender balanced approach moving forward.



3. Creating Conditions

Create a Gender Beacon Collaborative for Sport. Bring together leaders and experts from across a range of industries to design and implement the necessary policy and service delivery change which will positively impact women and girls in sport.

FOREWORD FROM THE CHAIR



The summer of 2019 was a momentous time for women's sport both in Scotland and globally. From the FIFA Women's World Cup in France, to the Solheim Cup at Gleneagles, we witnessed women competing at the highest level in netball, cycling, boxing, cricket and hockey.

Women's sport was covered in the media far more than it has been in the past and we could watch much of it on our screens. New role models were created and the achievements of so many women were celebrated at home and abroad.

When the Scottish Women and Girls in Sport Advisory Board was created, we were given the remit of providing advice to the Scottish Government on how to increase the participation of women and girls in sport and physical activity throughout Scotland. The Board was mindful of the fact that there has been much research on the detail of barriers to increased participation in sport and physical activity by women and girls. We therefore thought it appropriate to focus on how we could impact the position at a macro level, by focussing on the areas of leadership which could influence real and significant change at all levels.

Since that time, we have examined how women and girls are portrayed in the media when they participate in activity and analysed afresh the barriers which prevent more women and girls becoming, staying or reconnecting with levels of physical activity which we know can improve mental health and physical fitness. We were careful to ensure that we not only considered participation in elite sport, although that is obviously important. We wanted to look at how women and girls interacted with sport and physical activity throughout their lives and in particular at key points where research tells us that there is a drop off of engagement levels.

We have liaised closely with the NACWG and the fantastic work that they have been doing in this area.

We passionately believe that measures to increase activity levels of women and girls in Scotland will make our country a better place to live for all. Our recommendations contained in this report are challenging but we commend them to the Scottish Government.



**Partner, Global Women's Advancement
Dentons**

THE SCOTTISH WOMEN AND GIRLS IN SPORT ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

Independently Chaired by Amanda Jones, Partner, Global Women's Advancement at Dentons. The Advisory Board has 11 members made up of key leaders from the world of women's sport, business and media with the voice of young

people represented in their membership. All members are passionate about tackling gender inequality within sport. Board members are set out below. The Board meet face to face and in between meetings work virtually.



Amanda Jones
Chair, Partner, Global Women's Advancement
Dentons



Claire Nelson
CEO Netball Scotland



Gemma Fay
Former International Athlete



Gemma Lumsdaine
Wheelchair Athlete and Coach



Hala Ousta
Former Diversity and Inclusion Manager,
Scottish FA



Kirsty Ewen
Part of the third Young People's Sport Panel Led by **sportscotland**



Emma Mahon
Part of the third Young People's Sport Panel Led by **sportscotland**



Margot McCuaig
Filmmaker and Sport Broadcaster



Maureen McGonigle
CEO and Founder,
Scottish Women in Sport



Vivienne MacLaren
Chair, Scottish Women's Football



Yvonne Greeves
Director of Women in Business,
Royal Bank of Scotland

SCOTTISH WOMEN AND GIRLS IN SPORT ADVISORY BOARD: THE STORY SO FAR

The Women and Girls in Sport Advisory Board was established in October 2017 to provide independent advice to the Minister for Public Health and Sport on female participation and awareness raising in all areas of sport and physical activity.

This Board set out to recommend further improvements to drive participation in sport and physical activity amongst women and girls and discuss how more private and media investment could be attracted into the sector.

The Board outlined in 2018 the four key areas of their works focus:

1. Intervention: what is needed to get more women and girls physically active or into sports



2. Prevention: what measures will ensure women and girls don't drop out of physical activity or sport and have opportunities to continue



3. Reconnection: how women and girls can get back into physical activity or sport when a major change in their life happens



4. Continuation: helping women and girls continue with physical activity or sport throughout their lives



FINDINGS

The 2018 First Report and Findings from the First Minister’s National Advisory Council on Women and Girls (NACWG) stated that:

“Women are significantly less likely than men to meet physical activity guidelines; just 59% of women do the recommended amount of activity per week, compared to 69% of men. Only 14% of CEO positions across Scotland’s national governing bodies are held by women. 99% of sponsorship investment and 95% of media coverage is dedicated to men’s sport.”

The Scottish Women and Girls in Sport Advisory Board was keen to better understand the current landscape of sport in Scotland in respect of culture, leadership, access to opportunities, visibility and investment surrounding sport and physical activity of women and girls. Both anecdotal and empirical evidence suggests that

there is a link between media representation of women and girls in sport and its role in influencing the physical activity levels of women and girls in Scotland, so the Board commissioned a research project to further explore this relationship and the nature of any impact.



RESEARCH

The Scottish Collaboration for Public Health Research & Policy, University of Edinburgh was subsequently commissioned to evaluate participation levels and media representation of girls and women in physical activity in Scotland to support the work of the Board.

The research project aims were to bring together and summarise evidence on the participation levels of girls and women in physical activity in Scotland. They conducted a rapid evidence review and content analysis of online media and social media (Instagram and Twitter) which included a search of five online news outlets (BBC News, the Telegraph, the Daily Mail, The Sun, and The Mirror) on two separate dates. The specific aims were:

- 1) To summarise evidence from different published sources on the physical activity levels of girls and women in Scotland, presenting trends in physical activity across a woman's life span
- 2) To understand how women and girls are represented in sport and physical activity in new and traditional forms of media
- 3) To compare the relationship between physical activity trends at different stages of the life span with how women and girls are represented in physical activity in the media.

Research main issues, implications and next steps

The research which is an appendix to this report sets out the main issues, findings and next steps.

Main Issues:

- Links between media representation/content and physical activity levels were likely;
- Research suggested women and girls feel negatively about themselves when looking at perceived sexualised images of other women or girls; and
- A potential self-perpetuating cycle of media representation, gender norms, and physical activity trends was identified.

Implications and Next Steps:

- It is crucial to address how to impact the media representation of women and girls in physical activity for more positive outcomes.
- Longitudinal research is necessary to fully establish the relationship between media representation and sport and physical activity levels of women and girls in Scotland.
- Campaigns such as 'This Girl Can' could contribute to setting a positive narrative in women and girls in sport and physical activity.
- Co-ordinated efforts across multiple sectors (e.g. health, entertainment, education) may be required to address the representation of women and girls in sport and physical activity in new and traditional forms of media.



Media

The analysis of online news outlets found that women are underrepresented in sport coverage, even following major women's sporting events (including the FIFA Women's World Cup and the French Open women's tennis finals).

It is cause for concern that 22% of the content of the online news articles relating to women's participation in sport could be interpreted as sexualised articles or images. When content is perceived in this way it can trivialise women's contributions to sport and society.



Social Media

Women had greater representation in social media than men, but predominantly across fitness themes with the most followed influencers focussing largely on weight loss or achieving a specific body image (slim, toned, white, hetero). Many of these influencers posted what could be perceived as sexualised images of themselves and promoted an aspirational lifestyle (relationships, material possessions, travel, success).

Some reporting of women by brands using social media challenged gender norms which is encouraging, whilst other brands perpetuated gender norms.

It will be crucial to work with online news outlets to improve the representation and reporting of women and girls in sport. It was noted in particular that while some media outlets have already made commitments towards this important issue, one such media

outlet featured 0% of women in the sport homepage on the first search date, suggesting that further work to improve equality of sports media representation is needed and that such commitment is patchy at best.

It is accepted that addressing the representation of women and girls in sport and physical activity in social media may be challenging, however if real change is to be achieved it will be necessary to identify potential mechanisms of achieving change and methods of partnership working with those responsible for the representation.



Gender Balance Campaigns

Although not a formal recommendation at this stage we recognise that national role model campaigns could be beneficial to setting a positive narrative on women and girls in physical activity providing a possible wider exposure of the magnitude that could help create behaviour change.

sportscotland manage the Fit for Girls programme¹ in partnership with the Youth Sport Trust and the Scottish Government also run policy behaviour change programmes and marketing campaigns such as walking, active travel, women's health and mental health. The Board feel it could be beneficial that existing programmes are brought together in a holistic way at a national level to show positive female role model narrative in sport and physical activity ensuring that the intention of the four key focus areas can be achieved.

1. The Fit for Girls programme managed by **sportscotland** in partnership with the Youth Sport Trust provides training and tools through a solutions workshop, to support practitioners to help them better understand the needs of girls and young women with the aim of increasing their engagement in physical education, physical activity and sport (PEPAS). The solutions workshops are co-designed with girls and young women to incorporate their real-life experiences and journeys and focus on four themes – consultation, leadership, profile and pathways.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2019 has witnessed an incredible summer of women's sport as a result of major world competitions like the FIFA Women's World Cup and the Vitality Netball World Cup taking place through June and July 2019. With free to air TV audiences reaching coverage in the millions and live spectator numbers in the hundreds of thousands, more people than ever before have watched, enjoyed, experienced and engaged with female sports and athletes. As a result of this increased visibility, participation numbers across these sports have spiked, and commercial investment figures have hit an all-time high with major brands and sponsors wanting to harness the passion and power of this sports movement.

This could be said to be a 'watershed moment', and we now have more role models, spokespeople and industry activists fighting for equality than ever before. However, women's sports still fall a very long way behind their male counterparts, and if we are to truly capitalise on recent achievements and continue this momentum then change must be driven across three critical areas of:

- Leadership
- Accountability
- Creating Conditions

Thus, our recommendations are as follows:

Leadership

Outcome: To create more gender balance in executive, management and non-executive (Board) roles across Scottish sport.

1. Design and deliver a national approach that aims to:
 - a. Identify future leaders and support their development through access to a holistic programme of educational learning, mentoring and experiential opportunities.
 - b. In line with "The Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act 2018" set a target of 50% objective for representation of women on Sports Governing Bodies, Leisure Trusts and the many other bodies involved in delivering sport and physical activity in Scotland by 2022 set alongside the positive action taken to encourage women to apply to become non-executive members of boards.

Through creating increased quality professional and personal development and leadership opportunities, and through empowering our women and girls to seize these opportunities, we create the conditions to shape the leaders who have the passion to drive real meaningful change for the future. The equalisation of women in leadership in sport will ensure that there are agents for change in senior roles with decision making powers on critical matters such as how monies are spent and resources allocated, pathways, opportunities, visibility and policies.

Accountability

Outcome: To significantly improve and increase the visibility of women’s sport, athletes and participants through improved content and increased coverage across all media platforms.

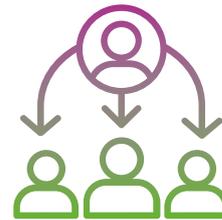
2. Create and deliver a Scottish Sport Media Summit to:
 - a. Discuss, review and challenge existing media coverage and content of Scottish sports, events and athletes to hold the media to account and agree an improved approach and commitment to improve the gender balance moving forward.
 - b. Develop an integrated approach to establish a media body in Scotland on gender equal representation with that envisaged by the NACWG. The Scottish Government should look to work with ‘Gender Equal Media Scotland’ to undertake longer term audit and research activities and challenge gender stereotypes within sport. Look to develop guidance on approach, and embed a culture of responsible reporting, diversity and inclusion across sports media coverage and content.

It is also recommended that media and social media outlets alongside potential commercial partners gather to discuss and commit to taking measurable steps to ensure improvement of gender balance in the Scottish media. Through increasing visibility and awareness of, and promoting positive role models in, women and girls’ sport, a seismic shift in investment, attendance, participation, professionalisation and performance can be achieved.

Creating Conditions

Outcome: Actively drive systemic change for women and girls in sport through a collaborative, aligned, holistic and cross-industry approach.

Create a Gender Beacon Collaborative for Sport. Bring together leaders and experts from Scottish Government, local authorities, public bodies and third sector to take a holistic and systematic approach to gender equality in sport and physical activity and work to embed it across policy design and service delivery.



NEXT STEPS

This report contains the first steps in what the Scottish Women and Girls in Sport Advisory Board believe is needed in Scotland to start to create gender balance within sport to proactively address, on a systematic level, the change that is required to not make mistakes of the past but continue to improve towards a more gender equal Scotland. We ask that the Minister for Public Health, Sport and Wellbeing considers these bold recommendations carefully.

Following this report, the Scottish Women and Girls in Sport Advisory Board will move to concentrate on their next topic of 'policy coherence' to further align and complement this year's theme of the First Minister's National Advisory Council on Women and Girls and look to report on that in October 2020.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to Dr Yvonne Laird, Jillian Manner, Audrey Buelo and Dr Ruth Jepson of the Scottish Collaboration for Public Health Research and Policy, University of Edinburgh for the research they undertook : 'An Evaluation of participation levels and media representation of girls and women in sport and physical activity in Scotland'.

The First Minister's National Advisory Council on Women and Girls community who have contributed and engaged through the sport spotlight sessions. A massive thank you also to those within the wider sports community who continue to highlight the issues and positive

stories from within their own communities of women and girls in sport in Scotland through the annual Scottish and Women and Girls in Sport Week.

Thanks also to original Board Members Maggie Cunningham previously of BBC Alba, Sheila Begbie and Dee Bradbury of Scottish Rugby for their early input to discussions but were no longer able to continue due to taking up new leadership positions. To Active Scotland Division within the Scottish Government and **sportscotland** for supporting the Board from establishment through to report production.

END NOTES

Commissioned Research

The Scottish Collaboration for Public Health Research and Policy, University of Edinburgh : Dr Yvonne Laird, Jillian Manner, Audrey Buelo and Dr Ruth Jepson.

An evaluation of participation levels and media representation of girls and women in sport and physical activity in Scotland.

From the First Minister's National Advisory Council on Women and Girls

#Generation Equal First Minister's National Advisory Council on Women and Girls 2018 First Report and recommendations
First Minister's National Advisory Council on Women and Girls 2018 Report
[Retrieved: <https://onescotland.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/2018-Report.pdf>]

McLean, J., Christie, S., & Gray, L. (2017) Guidelines recommend 150 minutes of moderate activity or 75 minutes of vigorous activity per week. The Scottish Health Survey, 1 (2016 Edition)
[Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.scot/Resource/0052/00525472.pdf>] [accessed 12 September 2018]

Engender (2017) [Retrieved <https://www.engender.org.uk/content/publications/SEX-ANDPOWER-IN-SCOTLAND-2017.pdf>]

Scottish Women in Sport [Retrieved from: <http://www.scottishwomeninsport.co.uk/>]



LEVELLING THE PLAYING FIELD

2019 REPORT AND
RECOMMENDATIONS

© Women and Girls in Sport Advisory Board 2019

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to:

Scottish Women and Girls in Sport Advisory Board,
Area 3J North, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ

Published by Scottish Women and Girls in Sport
Advisory Board, September 2019

ISBN: 978-1-83960-206-1 (WEB ONLY)