



Department  
for Culture  
Media & Sport

# **Final Report of the Government's Women and Sport Advisory Board**

**March 2015**

# Contents

■ Foreword by Helen Grant MP, Minister for Sport and Tourism	3
■ Women and Sport Advisory Board	4
■ Achievements and Reflections from the Women and Sport Advisory Board	5
■ Increasing women's participation in sport	7
■ Improving the media profile of women's sport	9
■ Increasing commercial investment in women's sport	11
■ Improving women's representation in leadership and workforce	13
■ Encouraging greater recognition for women's sporting achievements	15
■ Conclusions	17

# Foreword

## Helen Grant MP, Minister for Sport and Tourism

---



It has been a huge pleasure to chair the Women and Sport Advisory Board and work with such inspiring and passionate people on a topic I care about deeply. We have seen a huge amount of progress around women's sport since the Advisory Board was formed in September 2013, from the members themselves and from the sport sector more widely.

The Women's Sport Conference has been a real highlight for me as Sports Minister, while the This Girl Can Campaign is truly ground-breaking and has the potential to completely transform attitudes about what sport is and who it's for. My personal and professional view is that there is a sport out there for everyone and it's crucial that we package and market sport in a way that appeals to women.

The Advisory Board's interim report, published in October 2014, set out the five areas of work the Board chose to focus on and provided an overview of progress so far. I'm delighted to welcome this final report from the Advisory Board, which builds on the interim report and looks ahead to suggested further action.

The Board members have a huge range of knowledge and experience between them, spanning many sectors that influence the sporting landscape. The suggested actions put forward in this report by the Advisory Board members are based on their extensive insight and I hope everyone in the sport sector will look at how they can take action on the recommendations relevant to their work.

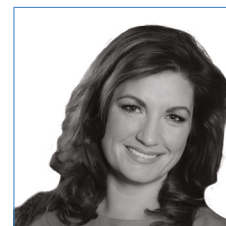
I would also like to thank the former Secretary of State for Sport, Maria Miller MP, who was the driving force behind the Advisory Board originally being set up. It has been a privilege to continue the work she started.

# Women and Sport Advisory Board

In summer 2013, the Government established a 'Women and Sport Advisory Board' in order to engage more strategically with the sectors that influence the sporting landscape. The Board met for the first time in September 2013 and has since been meeting quarterly to share ideas about strategies for furthering the Women and Sport agenda. Each Board member has committed to raising the profile of women's sport within their area of expertise and as a group they have advised and informed the Government's work programme on women and sport.

The Board published its **interim report** on 30 October 2014, to coincide with the Women's Sport Conference held at Lord's Cricket Ground. This final report builds on the interim report, and it is recommended that you read both reports together.

The aim of this final report is to present a final overview of the Board's work and highlight some of the progress that has been made in women's sport since summer 2013. The Board has also provided some suggestions for future action around women's sport, based on their own extensive experience and insights in this area.



**Baroness Brady CBE**  
Vice-Chair of  
West Ham United  
(joined September 2013)



**Andy Cairns**  
Executive Editor,  
Sky Sports News  
(joined October 2014)



**Clare Connor OBE**  
Head of Women's  
Cricket, ECB  
(joined September 2013)



**Tracey Crouch MP**  
Conservative MP for  
Chatham and Aylesford  
(joined September 2013)



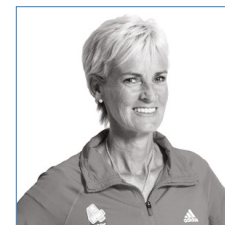
**Karen Earl**  
Chair of European  
Sponsorship Association  
(joined September 2014)



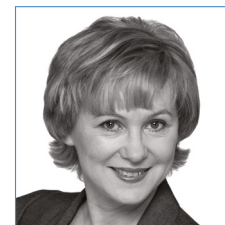
**Simon Green**  
Head of BT Sport  
(joined September 2013)



**Helena Morrissey CBE**  
CEO of Newton  
Investment Management  
(joined September 2013)



**Judy Murray**  
Tennis Coach and GB  
Federation Cup Captain  
(joined September 2013)



**Barbara Slater OBE**  
Head of BBC Sport  
(joined September 2014)

# Achievements and Reflections from the Women and Sport Advisory Board

Since the interim report was published, we have seen many exciting developments in women's sport.

The Government's Women's Sport Conference, hosted in partnership with **Women in Sport**, was a real triumph for women's sport, bringing together the biggest influencers in sport and raising the profile of the debate. Twitter saw #WomensSportConf trending top in the UK, while the event was covered by print media including the Guardian and Glamour Magazine and featured on **5Live** and Sky Sports. Feedback from attendees showed a satisfaction rate of over 90%, and the conference was nominated for a **Women's Sport Trust Award**.

At the Women's Sport Conference, Jennie Price, CEO of Sport England, unveiled the new campaign to increase physical activity levels of women and girls. **This Girl Can** was incredibly well-received at the event itself, and since its launch in January 2015, the campaign has gone viral with over 7 million views on **youtube** alone. The campaign is based on a wealth of insight from Sport England which shows the one unifying factor putting women off exercise is fear of judgement. The campaign aims to challenge these attitudes and empower women everywhere to get active, no matter what they look like or how 'sporty' they think they are (or aren't).



---

We have also seen outstanding elite sportswomen recognised for their success on the field of play. Charlotte Dujardin received both the **Sunday Times Sky Sports Sportswoman of the Year Award** and the **BT Sport Action Woman of the Year Award** for her dominance in dressage, while Jo Pavey came third in the **BBC Sports Personality of the Year Award**, following her inspiring performance at the European Championships, winning gold in the 10,000m.

More recently, the Minister for Sport and the Advisory Board supported the **Inspiring Women in Sport Campaign**, which encouraged women working in the sport sector to go into local schools to talk about their jobs. This support was instrumental in engaging sports partners and making the campaign a success. Additionally, Helen Grant MP attended a careers fair at Maidstone Grammar School for Girls to talk about her experiences as Minister for Sport and inspire the next generation of women to consider sport as a potential career.

We are very encouraged by the progress that has been made in women's sport by the Government and others working in the sport sector. Through our work over the last eighteen months, we have seen earlier initiatives come to fruition and our more recent ideas begin to take hold. However, we believe more can be done to build on this good work and we have outlined some suggested actions under each of our themes which we believe will really help to further the women's sport agenda. These suggested actions are aimed at a range of audiences, including the Government, sports delivery bodies, and the wider public.

**This Girl Can**  
has been viewed over

**23m**

times across different  
media platforms

# Increasing women's participation in sport

Women's participation in sport has generally increased over the last decade. When the first Active People Survey (APS) results were published in 2006, the number of women regularly participating in sport was 6.25 million. The most recent APS results show the figure is now 6.91 million.

While the overall trend is encouraging, we were disappointed to see a slight decline in women's participation in sport over the last year. We agree with the Minister for Sport that if NGBs cannot deliver the increase in participation expected of them, then Sport England should look at transferring funding to those organisations that will deliver this.

We are pleased that Sport England is prioritising women's sport, and projects such as Active Women and I Will if You Will in Bury are yielding some valuable insight. Sport England will be publishing a comprehensive toolkit which will explain how to create, promote and support sports opportunities and activities that resonate more directly with women, especially those who aren't automatically turned on to sport.

We were delighted to be involved in the This Girl Can Campaign from the early stages of conception. Jennie Price, CEO of Sport England, has attended many Advisory Board meetings to discuss the campaign as it developed and we are delighted to lend our support to such a fantastic campaign.

There is a real buzz around women's sport at the moment, and we believe the collective enthusiasm of the sector has the ability to achieve significant change. We would like to see the week 1-7 June used as a 'Women's Sport Week'. Coinciding with the start of the Women's Football World Cup, this is a perfect opportunity to reach out to women and inspire them to get active.



# Suggested Actions

**1** While the overall trend in women's participation in sport is increasing, the gender gap remains persistently concerning. We suggest that NGBs consider setting themselves targets for increasing participation in women's sport, and publish these so people can see if they are being met. The Government and Sport England may also wish to consider whether specific targets to increase women's participation in sport are imposed on NGBs in the next round of Whole Sport Plans if progress is not made quickly enough.

**2** In order to reach women's participation targets, we encourage all sports delivery bodies to download Sport England's Toolkit, once it has been published. The conventional offer from sport is not working for many women, and we hope NGBs will really take the time to reflect on how they engage with women and whether any of their practices are inadvertently putting women off their sport. Creative solutions, which may not be delivered in the way sport traditionally has been in the past, are going to be vital to engage women and attract them to sport.

**3** We would like to see the sport sector use 1-7 June as a Women's Sport Week. The broadcasters on the Advisory Board have committed to put extra focus on women's sport during the week, and we want individuals, teams, clubs, and sports providers to use the opportunity to appeal to new audiences and attract new participants.



**6.91m**  
women

now regularly  
**participate  
in sport,**  
up from 6.63 million  
at the start of this  
Parliament.



# Improving the media profile of women's sport

Media coverage of women's sport continues to increase, and events such as the Women's Rugby World Cup and the England football match against Germany at Wembley Stadium have really helped normalise women's sport on our screens. Outstanding performances from women at the Winter Olympics and Paralympics in Sochi 2014 and the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow 2014 have helped keep them in the spotlight. Increased coverage of women's sport is set to continue in 2015 with events like the Women's Ashes in the summer, which will be broadcast in full on Sky Sports and BBC Radio for the first time ever.

Overall, however, the sports media continues to be dominated by men's sport, and while broadcasters continue to make good progress, other media continue with the status quo. We have undertaken analysis to better understand why this is happening, and believe there are two main areas to target that could help improve women's sport coverage in the media.

Firstly, the upcoming sports fixtures that journalists receive from news agencies and data providers contain very little women's sport. We have worked closely with Opta and the Press Association to start building up a database of women's sport fixtures, which will be

included in the fortnightly newsfeeds that are sent to sports journalists. Our aim is for this to result in more journalists covering women's sport stories, as the information will be more readily available to them.

Secondly, there is more that National Governing Bodies could do to engage with the media and 'sell' their sport. A good example of this is Badminton England, who last year launched the UK's first ever televised National Badminton League with Sky Sports. A shorter form of the game was adopted with eight players competing for each team in two singles and three doubles matches. We would like to see similar innovation from other NGBs.



# Suggested Actions

**1** Overall media coverage of women's sport sits at around 7% with broadcasters overall at 10% and the print press at 2%. Given the emergence of new media platforms, and the different types of sports coverage, we do not believe a blanket target is useful in this context. However, we expect all media (broadcasters, digital and print press) to significantly increase their outputs of women's sport. This should be a consistent increase, not just when major women's sports events take place.

**2** Ensuring that more women are working in sports media is crucial and we would like to see the industry and training providers doing more to encourage and enable this. Figures from the National Council for the Training of Journalists show that while 54% of journalism students are women, just 11% of sports journalism students are women. We would like training providers that offer sports journalism to be more proactive about recruiting women onto their courses, and the overall proportion of women studying sports journalism to be at least 25% by the end of the next Parliament.

**3** Women's sport is much more attractive to the media if there is an audience. The England football match against Germany at Wembley Stadium showed that there is a real appetite for women's sport. We encourage everyone to attend more women's sports events in person; you'll not only be supporting some fantastic women athletes, you'll also be sending a clear message to the media that there is an audience for women's sport.

**4** The work we have started with Opta and the Press Association focuses on ten sports for the initial phase. However, we want to see more women's sport included in the calendar of events that is then sent out to journalists. We would like NGBs to ensure someone in their organisation is responsible for their elite women's sports calendar and they work collaboratively with Opta and the Press Association as this work progresses.

4

5,

6

1

9

people at Wembley  
watched the England  
**Women's Football**  
Team play Germany  
in November 2014

# Increasing commercial investment in women's sport

---

The level of commercial investment going into women's sport remains stubbornly low compared to men's sport. Sports marketing organisation Repucom recently published a **report on Women and Sport** highlighting the increasing value of female fans: women are growing up more interested in sport than previously, while they are also major influencers on purchase decisions. This makes women an under-exploited audience for brands that are looking to invest in sport.

Recognising this commercial opportunity, we are pleased to see increasing numbers of brands investing in women's sport. KIA's sponsorship of women's cricket is the most significant standalone commercial deal for a women's team sport in the country. Newton Investment Management sponsors the women's boat race, and has played a key role in getting it to take place on the same day as the men's race, and broadcast on the BBC. We have also recently seen the launch of the first sport sponsorship agency focused purely on women's sport and mixed sport, **Female Sports Group**, to capitalise on the commercial opportunities that women's sport presents.

As our work developed, we realised that as well as making the business case to brands, we needed to ensure that NGBs were equipped to engage with agencies and brands to discuss sponsorship. We asked Sport England to develop a Commercial Sponsorship Toolkit to help NGBs navigate this area of their business. Alongside the toolkit, Sport England commissioned Portas to research the women's sponsorship market, to enable NGBs to understand and value their women's sport more effectively, at grassroots through to elite level.



# Suggested Actions

---

**1** While we are hopeful that the market will start to shift to recognise the true value of women's sport, there is still huge disparity between the levels of investment going into women's sport (0.4%) compared to men's sport (85.5%). We want to see the proportion of investment going into women's sport to be at least 5% by the end of the next Parliament.

**2** We believe there needs to be a better understanding of the women's sport sponsorship landscape, including what the barriers are to achieving more equitable levels of investment. We suggest that a working group is formed to focus on this specific area, which works with Government, NGBs and the sponsorship industry to take action to support the sponsorship market to produce more equitable outcomes.

**3** Sport England's Commercial Sponsorship Toolkit is a valuable tool that will really help NGBs and other sports delivery bodies consider how they position their organisation commercially. We encourage all NGBs to take the time to work through the toolkit and consider what steps they can take to better market their women's sport to sponsorship agencies and brands.



1/4m

are expected to watch the **Women's Boat Race** from the banks of the Thames this year



7m

are also expected to watch live on **television**

# Improving women's representation in leadership and the workforce

Sport has historically been seen as a male domain but this is really starting to change. Not only do we have a female Sports Minister, but the two largest sporting Arms-Length Bodies (Sport England and UK Sport) are both led by women.

We are also seeing progress in the number of women on the Boards of NGBs. The most **recent audit** carried out by Women in Sport, in May 2014, shows that the overall number of women on NGB Boards is 27%. However, almost 50% of NGB Boards have not yet reached the goal of 25% by 2017 and we expect to see the numbers improve when Women in Sport publish the next audit results in August 2015.

We have hosted two events to help increase the number of women on boards. These events brought together Chairs and CEOs of NGB Boards with corporate 'board-ready' women who are interested in Board positions in the sport sector. Attendees commented that the events provided useful insight, information and the opportunity to network with key individuals. We also published some **case studies** of women with corporate backgrounds who have been appointed to sports' boards, which we hope will help women considering applying for upcoming Board positions.

It is not only at Board level that we want to see more women in sport. It's crucial that women are represented at all levels of sports organisations, including coaching. The Government recently announced additional investment in football of £50 million over five years. We are pleased that one-fifth of this funding will go to support new coaches, with specific targets to attract more women into coaching.

We were also pleased to join the Minister for Sport and support the Inspiring Women in Sport Campaign. We believe it's crucial that girls grow up believing that a career in sport is a viable option, and are not put off by perceptions of needing to be really 'sporty' to work in sport or that it's too male-dominated. A huge number of NGBs and other sports bodies got behind this campaign, and we hope that girls all around the country were inspired to consider a career in sport.



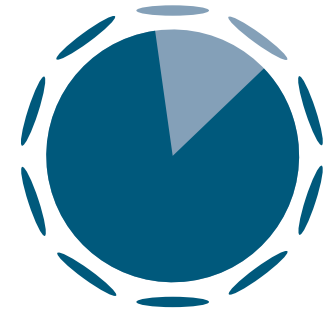
# Suggested Actions

**1** The 30% Club advocates at least 30% of Boards in the private sector to be women, as this is the 'tipping point' for improving Board performance. We believe this target should be applied to the sport sector so that NGBs and other sports bodies aim for 30% women on their Boards by the end of the next Parliament.

**2** The two Women on Sports' Boards events we have held have been over-subscribed on both occasions, illustrating the demand for more opportunities to bring together the sport and business worlds. We hope this event will become a regular fixture and we encourage a sponsor to get behind it to ensure its longevity.

**3** During the Women on Sports' Boards events we hosted, there was a clear finding to come out of the discussions and the case studies. Women generally wait for someone to give them a nudge (or a strong push!) before they will consider applying for a Sports' Board position. UK Sport now has a specific search function on their website for **current Board vacancies**, so we encourage everyone to give a nudge to a woman they know, to apply for these jobs.

**4** While most of the Inspiring Women in Sport Campaign events took place last month, it's not too late for women working in sport to visit a local school and talk about their job to students. Inspiring the Future requests women commit to one hour a year, and we encourage all women working in sport, no matter what their level, to **sign up** and pledge to visit a local school this year. We support the campaign's objective to have 1000 women working in sport going into a local school this year.



74%

of Board Chairs  
attending the Women  
on Sports' Boards event  
said it made it easier to  
connect with potential  
**female Board  
members**



# Greater recognition for women's sporting achievements

Since London 2012, we have started to see women recognised more and more for their sporting achievements both on and off the field. Awards that recognise sportswomen are crucial, but it's also important to recognise those behind the scenes.

We were pleased that the Sports Minister got behind the **SportCoachUK Awards** to encourage more nominations for women coaches. The 2014 Awards saw women receive 28% of the nominations. While this is a slight dip from the 2013 figure of 35%, overall the trend is going in the right direction and we hope to see female coaches continue to be recognised at National Awards.

The Women's Sport Trust launched its **Be a Game Changer Awards**, which recognise individuals, organisations and initiatives that help promote women's sport in different ways. The nominations are currently being short-listed and public voting opens on 7 April. We're sure there will be some fierce competition so we encourage everyone to cast their votes and support the Awards.

The Honours system is a valuable way to highlight women that have made a contribution to sport that may not get the chance to be recognised at glitzy awards ceremonies. Honours are awarded to those that have made an achievement in public life or have committed themselves to serving and helping Britain. They'll usually have made life better for other people or be outstanding at what they do. Honours are a valuable way to recognise the outstanding contributions of grassroots volunteers, including many women, who are vital to the success of the sport sector.

We were disappointed to see the proportion of women awarded Honours for Services to Sport decrease in the most recent Honours list. After seeing a continuous rise in the last few years, from 26% in 2012 to 39% in 2014, New Year 2015 saw a drop to 31% of its Sports Honours awarded to women. We are keen to see this recent trend reversed.



# Suggested Actions

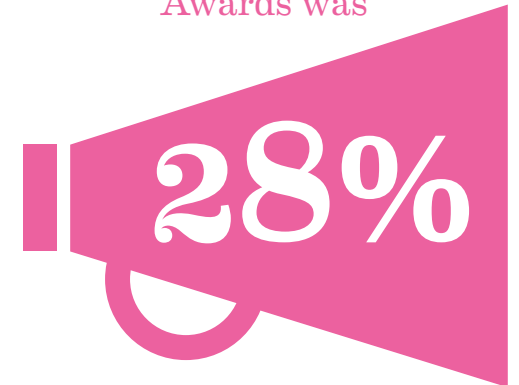
---

**1** The overall trend for Sports Honours awarded to women is rising. We would like to ensure this continues and does not go backwards as it did at the start of 2015. We want to see at least 40% of all Sport Honours awarded to women in each round of Honours.

**2** We urge everyone to consider a colleague or volunteer for an Honours nomination. The nomination process is very robust, as it should be, so think about working with others from your sports team or sports club. There is plenty of **guidance from Government** to help you with your nomination. While the media often covers the high-profile sportswomen, they are also interested in the backstories of those working at the grassroots level, so make sure you publicise these as much as possible.

**3** We are keen that women working in sport are given the recognition they deserve. We encourage people to consider nominating women they work with or volunteer with for different awards. Even if your nominated candidate doesn't win, the act of nominating them is still a great way to recognise their efforts and say thank you.

The number of **women nominated** at the National Coaching Awards was



**up from 23%** at the start of this Parliament in 2010.



# Conclusions

The Government has demonstrated its commitment to women's sport in various ways. The political leadership of Helen Grant, and Maria Miller before her, has been fundamental to raising the profile of women's sport. It has made initiatives such as This Girl Can, a unique campaign that challenges women's fears around sport head-on, and the Women's Sport Conference, which brought together the biggest influencers in women's sport, possible.

As a Board, our work has focused on five areas. We have purposely not tried to tackle every challenge that faces women's sport today but we have used our knowledge and expertise to drive lasting change in the field of women's sport, identifying and taking action to increase women in leadership positions in sport, increase the amount of media coverage and sponsorship going into women's sport and ensure women in sport are recognised and rewarded.

Many of our suggestions for future action build on good work that is already taking place and are intended to ensure momentum is not lost. Others are more ambitious and will require strong leadership to deliver them.

We hope this report helps to keep the debate alive around women's sport and provides inspiration to everyone, from the pitch to the boardroom, to take action in the best way possible.



---

## March 2015

We can also provide documents to meet the specific requirements for people with disabilities.  
Please email [enquiries@culture.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@culture.gsi.gov.uk)

Department for Culture, Media & Sport  
Printed in the UK on recycled paper  
©Crown copyright 2015

You may re-use this information (excluding logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence.

To view this licence, visit <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/>  
or e-mail: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

Any enquiries regarding this document should be sent to us at [\*\*enquiries@culture.gsi.gov.uk\*\*](mailto:enquiries@culture.gsi.gov.uk)

This document is also available from our website at [\*\*www.gov.uk/dcms\*\*](http://www.gov.uk/dcms)