

## DEPARTMENT FOR CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT - BOARD OF WOMEN'S SPORT

Tuesday 26 March 2024, 1430 - 1600, 100 Parliament Street

### Board of Women's Sport Attendees - Meeting 1

#### Government

- The Rt Hon Lucy Frazer KC MP  
Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (co-chair)
- The Rt Hon Stuart Andrew MP, Minister for Sport, Gambling and Civil Society, and Minister for Equalities
- Marian Holliday, Deputy Director of Women's Health, DHSC

#### Arm's Length Bodies

- Hazel McCluskey, Strategic Lead Business Transformation, Sport England
- Stuart Pickering, Head of Performance Partnerships, UK Sport
- Dr Jaideep Gupte, Director of Research, Strategy and Innovation, AHRC UK Research and Innovation

#### Sports Industry Organisations

- Matt Archibald, National Director, UK Sports Institute
- Dr Pippa Bennett Director of Clinical Governance, UK Sports Institute
- Fiona Semple, Athlete Support Manager, British Elite Athletes Association
- Liz Bloor, Chair of the Professional Players Federation (PPF) Women's Sport Committee, PPF
- Tammy Parlour, CEO, Women's Sport Trust

#### Independent Representatives

- Karen Carney MBE, Former professional footballer and Chair of the Women's Football Review
- Barbara Slater, Director of Sport, BBC

#### National Governing Bodies

- Fran Connolly, CEO, England Netball
- Alex Teasdale, Women's Game Director, England Rugby
- Kay Cossington, Women's Technical Director, Football Association
- Tommy Yule, Head of Performance, UK Athletics
- Jon Dutton, CEO, British Cycling

#### Academia Representatives

- Professor Jo Maher, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Sport, Loughborough University

#### Theme experts

- Dr Rob Buckle, Chair of the Concussion Research Forum
- Baz Moffat, The Well HQ
- Emma Sykes, Head of Women's Football Development, UEFA
- Belinda Wilson, Senior Technical Development Manager for Women's Football, FIFA
- Dr Georgie Bruinvels, PHD Research Scientist, University College London

#### Actions

- The Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) to circulate proposed Terms of Reference to all members by the end of May 2024.
- All attendees to share any key documents or links to information on female health in sport with DCMS. DCMS will in turn share these with the wider group by the end of April 2024.
- DCMS to continue engaging with all members to capture feedback and discuss next steps and opportunities.
- Further discussion around the central coordination of minimum standards and non-negotiables that all sports should provide for female athletes. DCMS to convene a working group to conduct a deep dive and generate ideas/proposals before the next Board meeting in June 2024.

- DCMS to drive further conversations about a centralised and certified hub to educate, train and for experts to provide up to date information and guidance about female health - from elite to grassroots.
- DCMS and DHSC to discuss how the DHSC Strategy can be used to help women and girls understand the basics of female health by the end of May 2024.

## **Main points raised**

### **Introductory remarks from Secretary of State and Minister for Sport at DCMS**

- The Secretary of State for DCMS welcomed members to the first meeting of the Board of Women's Sport.
- The Minister for Sport and Equalities for DCMS set out the purpose of the Board, objectives and the importance of the group working collectively to make a real impact going forward.
- All attendees introduced themselves.

### **Importance of physical welfare for female athletes**

Matt Archibald and Dr Pippa Bennett, UK Sport Institute

- Overview of UKSI and key working areas:
- Details shared on how UKSI are helping sports to deliver female health support
- Information about the importance and impact of educational awareness, for example, via roadshows, female athlete clinics and performance lifestyle team support groups
- Addressed the need for continued research and innovation in collaboration with organisations - noted the importance of tracking data and the use of AI systems

### **Deep dive discussions**

#### **ACL injuries, barriers and prevention**

Kay Cossington, The Football Association

- The FA is using data captured to look at historical ACL injuries and identify trends.
- The FA identified a lack of qualified expertise supporting players returning to the game. A residential rehab scheme is available for PFA members.

Emma Sykes, UEFA

- UEFA are identifying what an ACL injury looks like for a female football player and what the journey before and after is for those players. UEFA have research specialists working on a toolkit that can be made available at every level of the game and will launch an ACL campaign in 2025.

#### **Concussion**

Dr Robert Buckle, Chair of the Concussion Research Forum

- The current focus is on understanding the prevalence of concussion in sport by demographic and the impact of environment and lifestyle. The priority remains around improving diagnosis and monitoring, understanding therapy opportunities, and the development of clear and defined prevention guidelines for all sports.

Alex Teasdale, England Rugby

- Concussion remains the most common injury in rugby and player welfare is the RFU's main priority. England Rugby are proactively working, in both the professional and community space, to increase training / education on concussion, manage

protocols in place to protect and support players, as well as developing innovative approaches for player welfare and rehabilitation.

### **Female Life Stages**

Baz Moffat, The Well HQ

- Importance of female health education throughout sport - highlighting the need for everyone who works with women and girls to be educated and aware.
- Raised how it is necessary for a centralised information hub with certified research. This should provide information about female health and training facilities - the hub should be open to access and targeted at females and anyone in a role that works directly with females.

Belinda Wilson, FIFA

- FIFA are currently working on a female health project working globally with experts and practitioners. There are three pillars of work; research, education and awareness.

### **Cross industry collaboration**

- Consensus amongst the group that education is important for female athletes, regardless of the sport they are participating in.
- Discussion around how important and useful a set of minimum standards for female athlete support across all sports is - looking at non-negotiables and working together to coordinate centrally.
- Conversation about education, communication and training about female health - having a certified, open access hub for both females and everyone who works with females in the active space.
- Discussion around examples of good practise within sport and how NGBs can learn from each other.
- Identification of the need for more research into female health and innovative approaches. Further discussion required over data gathering for research and the importance of female specific metric inclusion.

### **AOB and closing remarks**

- It was agreed within the group that there is a lot more work that needs to be done for women in sport and to support female health more generally. A few areas were identified as priority areas in this initial Board of Women's Sport:
  - Education about female health for women in sport.
  - Centralising research and information about female health and physical welfare for women and girls in sport.
  - Data collection for research and the necessary inclusion of metrics specific to female health in elite sport.