

Appendix 25: Women and Sport (See Article 12)

According to a report by the Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation (WSFF),¹ young women leave school half as active as young men, while over 80% of women are not active enough to stay healthy.² In addition, women hold just one in five of the top jobs in sport,³ investment in women's sport lags far behind men's and as little as 2% of sports media coverage is devoted to female competitors and teams.⁴ (See Article 5) These statistics reveal a bias that is preventing women's sport and women from reaching their potential.

WSFF campaigns to make physical activity an everyday part of life for women and girls but they are currently the only organisation in the UK dedicated to increasing participation rates in sport and physical activity purely amongst women and girls.

In April 2012 WSFF launched an All Party Parliamentary Group⁵ (APPG) on Women's Sport and Fitness. The purpose of the group is to promote all aspects of women's sport and fitness; to raise the profile of women's sport and to promote better coverage of women's sport in the media; and to investigate ways to increase participation of girls and women in sport and reduce barriers to participation. There is also a Commission on the Future of Women's Sport⁶ which brings together leading figures from sport, business and media to drive positive change surrounding the leadership, investment and profile of women's sport.

The coverage of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games included greater recognition of the UK's female athletes⁷ and we hope that this momentum continues with better media coverage and support for female athletes and women's sport to promote these important role models and healthy practices in the UK.

¹ Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation (2012) *Changing the Game, for Girls*.
<http://wsff.org.uk/publications/reports/changing-the-game-for-girls>

² Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation (2012) *It's Time: Future forecasts for women's participation in sport and exercise*
http://www.wsff.org.uk/system/1/assets/files/000/000/249/249/1199520df/original/itstime_final.pdf

³ Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation (2012) *Trophy Women? NGB Leadership Audit 2011/12*
http://www.wsff.org.uk/system/1/assets/files/000/000/289/289/15f4784b7/original/Trophy_Women_2011-12.pdf

⁴ Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation (2011) *Big Deal? 2011: The case for commercial investment in women's sport*
http://www.wsff.org.uk/system/1/assets/files/000/000/287/287/2badaa5f0/original/Big_Deal_report.pdf

⁵ Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation (2012), APPG on Women's Sport and fitness,
<http://www.wsff.org.uk/news-and-views/in-the-news-12> Accessed: 07/05/2013

⁶ Kick it Out, Commission to address women's sport 'inequality' <http://www.kickitout.org/626.php>
Accessed: 07/05/2013

⁷ Scott-Elliot, R. (2012) 'London 2012 Olympics: The women's Games', *The Independent*, 26th July 2012 <http://www.independent.co.uk/sport/olympics/news/london-2012-olympics-the-womens-games-7976835.html>

Sport England⁸ is the Government agency that invests both National Lottery and Treasury money into sporting organisations in order to raise participation levels in sport. Sport England reference that they want to increase participation amongst every community but have no formal targets for how many more women they want get into sport, nor do they require those Governing Bodies of sport to set targets for increasing participation amongst women in return for Government funding. Currently no Government Department or Agency has clear responsibility for increasing physical activity levels amongst women in non-sport settings.

Recommendations:

- **The Department of Health should take clear responsibility for increasing physical activity levels amongst women and invest appropriate resources from the Public Health budget to do so**
- **As part of the legacy from the London 2012 Olympic Games the Government should consider requiring sporting bodies to set female participation targets as a pre-requisite of receiving Government investment**
- **The Government must also continue to work towards increasing women's activity levels, and particularly closing the participation gap between girls and boys of school age**

⁸ Sport England, <http://www.sportengland.org/> Accessed: 07/05/2013