

Girls aged 7-11 are less than half as likely to take part in physical education and sport compared to boys (*British Medical Journal 2001*)

Girls and young women need access to quality coaching and competitive opportunities if they are to fulfil their potential

UK STRATEGY FRAMEWORK  FOR WOMEN AND SPORT



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SUE CAMPBELL CBE FOREWORD

If we are to seriously address the rising concerns for the health of our young people then there must be open and equal opportunity for everyone to participate and progress, regardless of their gender, ability or cultural background.

The UK Strategy sets out the path we need to follow if we are to seriously work to evolve the sporting culture in this country to embrace the role women and girls can play.

Its objectives may be broad, increasing participation, enabling those with ability to achieve excellence and securing more leadership positions within the structure of sport, but I am confident that if we continue to work together utilising the expertise across our partner organisations then real progress can be made.

The Strategy has benefited from the input of the UK Co-ordinating Group for Women's Sport and proves a collaborative approach can pay dividends and act as a catalyst for delivery.

Objectives and targets will provide direction for the Home Country Sports Councils and UK Sport to tackle gender inequality and open up more opportunities for women in sport.

I believe the culture within sport, in recent years, has started to change but it is vital that the Strategy continues to guide our policies, not just for today, but for the benefit of future women athletes, coaches and administrators.

Sue Campbell

Sue Campbell
Interim Chair of UK Sport

Elite female athletes are as likely to receive income from prize money, appearance money and sponsorship, but the money is typically half that is paid to males (BOA Athlete's Commission 2000).

The value of women's sport is still perceived as less by the media, potential sponsors and some event organisers.



DR ANITA WHITE FOREWORD

In November 2001 I was honoured to be invited by UK Sport to Chair a UK Co-ordinating Group for Women and Sport.

The group includes experts in gender equality and sport, representatives from national sports organisations and women's organisations as well as elite athletes. We were tasked with developing a strategy for women and sport that would co-ordinate efforts across the UK, support the sports councils on gender equality issues and to communicate with the international women and sport movement. It was agreed from the outset that the UK Co-ordinating Group would have a lifespan of two years to complete its work and leave a strategy that would be workable and galvanise action from the sport sector.

I am delighted to report that these primary aims have been met and a UK Strategy Framework for Women and Sport has been developed. Sports organisations and agencies will contribute to the achievement of these targets in different ways that are compatible with their own aims and objectives. The UK Strategy Framework for Women and Sport has been developed to ensure women and girls have opportunities to enjoy, excel and lead through sport. With clear objectives and targets, sports councils can drive policy and investment towards equitable provision and in 2005 we will be able to report an increase in women's involvement in sport at every level.

A women and sport seminar held in 2002 gave the wider sports and fitness sectors the chance to add their ideas to the Strategy Framework. Such was the enthusiasm of participants a UK Steering Group for Women and Sport was formed to allow them the opportunity to continue contributing to strategy development until its completion. It also created a whole new network of champions for gender equality in sport across the UK.

The Strategy is to be launched at the International Working Group for Women and Sport meeting in November 2003 at Bisham Abbey National Sports Centre.

As Chair, may I thank all those who have contributed to the work of the group and all those who will be working to ensure we meet the targets we have set ourselves. I look forward to sharing and celebrating your successes in the coming years.

Dr Anita White
Chair of the UK Co-ordinating Group for Women and Sport

Only 1 of the 25 British Olympic team managers in Sydney 2000 was a woman (WSF 2001).

It is recognised that there are insufficient numbers of coaches and women are rarely visible in these roles, particularly at high performance levels. Action is needed to ensure athletes have access to quality coaches who can guide and motivate them to success.



The UK Strategy Framework for Women and Sport

RATIONALE AND BACKGROUND



The GBR team in happy mood during the Great Britain v Switzerland women's curling gold medal match at the Salt Lake City Winter Olympic Games.

BACKGROUND

In 1994 the First World Conference on Women's Sport was held in Brighton, England, organised by the GB Sports Council. One of the main outcomes was the Brighton Declaration – a ten principle commitment to gender equality in sport that now has worldwide recognition. The UK Government is one among many governmental and non-governmental organisations that have formally endorsed the Brighton Declaration thereby making a visible and public commitment to equality for women in sport. It has become clear in the last few years that in order to implement the principles of the Brighton Declaration effectively, work towards gender equality across the UK needs greater cohesion and co-ordination. UK Sport with the Womens Sports Foundation, decided to face this challenge in 2001 by setting up the UK Co-ordinating Group on Women and Sport (UKCGWS). With the support of all five national sports councils as well as strategic sporting and non-sporting agencies and experts from across the UK, the UKCGWS has developed this Strategic Framework for the development of women's sport across the UK.

The UK Strategy Framework sets out high level objectives and targets aimed at those agencies with the greatest responsibility for sport in the UK, the sports councils. The Strategy Framework is flexible in its design so sports organisations can choose to adopt the most appropriate means of achieving the targets.

These agencies are already involved in the development phase of the UK Strategy Framework and will continue to develop their own initiatives and contribute to the objectives and targets.

Working through their network of partnerships, sports councils will actively promote, support and develop initiatives for women in sport. Where appropriate these initiatives will be developed collaboratively to avoid replication of effort and ensure consistency across the UK. The Equality Standard is one such project which has been developed for national governing bodies and sports organisations. The Standard is a tool for sports organisations to develop sport by increasing the involvement of women, disabled people and ethnic minorities. It is due to be launched in 2004.

RATIONALE

Current Perceptions

There is a misconception that women have achieved equality in sport particularly when elite athletes are seen to perform well and there are increasing numbers of female sports broadcasters on our televisions. 'Mainstreaming' of women and sport issues has tended to mask continuing inequalities and there is a great deal of evidence that tells us women still face the same barriers and that sport remains a male bastion. The commitment of sports councils was essential along with the support of the only agency solely committed to

40% of girls drop out of sport and physical recreation by the age of 18 (Youth Sport Trust 2000).

To ensure girls continue their involvement in sport and lead active lifestyles, a positive experience of physical education is crucial.



gender equality, the Womens Sports Foundation. Organisations such as CCPR, Sporting Equals and the Women's National Commission also seek to ensure women's voices are heard and their needs understood.

Women make up over 50% of the UK population yet they continue to remain under-represented in sport and excluded from the myriad of benefits that involvement in sport can bring. Though some progress has been made towards gender equality in sport in the UK in the last nine years, there is still much to be done.

The over-arching aim of the Strategy Framework is 'to change sporting culture in the UK to one that values the diversity of women and enables their full involvement in every aspect of sport': Three key themes have been identified - participation, performance and excellence, and leadership.

Participation

A substantial proportion of women do not participate in sport and physical recreation, and current rates of activity are lower than boys and men. As a consequence they may increase the risk of developing many serious and debilitating conditions associated with a sedentary lifestyle. As well as the research from the sport, health, education and business sectors, evidence from the U.S. also tells us that women who take part in sport report being happier, suffer less stress and feel more confident. Emotional and psychological well-being are just as important as physical health in maintaining a balanced lifestyle.

The General Household Survey (1996) found that women are 32% less likely to take part in sport and physical activity compared with men, whilst 40% of girls drop out from PE and school sport by the time they leave school (Youth Sport Trust 2000). The gender gap appears at the age of 16 and never closes. While this is not unique to the UK, it is not evident in all developed countries. Many countries have successfully reduced or even closed the gender gap so it is important to consider what comparable progress has been made in the UK and why.

Performance and Excellence

High profile elite athletes can have a positive effect on individuals and the entire nation, stimulating others to participate and instilling national pride. However, if these successful athletes are not visible, they cannot inspire others. Lack of media coverage remains a key issue for elite women athletes who train as hard, perform as competitively and strive to win as much as their male

counterparts. The claim that the media likes to report winners does not stand up to scrutiny, as there are many successful elite female athletes who still do not get the recognition they deserve. The lack of visibility of women's sport demonstrates that it is undervalued and underfunded compared with men's sport.

In a national opinion poll survey carried out for UK Sport, 74 per cent of the British public said that success at the 2004 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Athens is important. In Sydney 2000 medals were celebrated equally, regardless of their gender. However, the UK invests more resources in men's elite programmes compared to women's. Evidence from the Commonwealth Games in Manchester 2002 demonstrates that equitable investment in women's sport could have a significant impact on Britain's overall position in medal tables at major events.

Positive action can often look more expensive than doing nothing but, with the aim of being one of the world's top five sporting nations by 2012 and topping the Paralympic medal table by 2004, the cost-benefit analysis of investment in UK's potential women champions is compelling.

Leadership

Women are under-represented in all aspects of leadership in sport. If executive boards and committees continue to draw on people with the same experiences, there cannot be a broad spectrum in the decision-making process. The involvement of women will not only ensure a greater degree of democracy, but will bring new skills and experiences to the process as well as providing role models for others.

Only 8% of the British Olympic Team coaches at the Sydney Games in 2000 were women.

This figure has fallen since Atlanta in 1996 when 11% of coaches were female.



The UK Strategy Framework for Women and Sport

RATIONALE AND BACKGROUND

Sport is not the only sector in the UK that needs to address the lack of women at the highest levels of decision-making. Currently only 18% of Members of Parliament are female (Women's National Commission 2001) and women hold only 30% of senior manager and director positions across all sectors. Added to this the pay gap between women and men is currently 24% at these levels (Office of National Statistics 2001). Even though women's share of senior positions has risen in local authorities, it still only represents 12.1% of all chief executive posts and a recent survey of decision making positions across sport revealed that women held only 23% of key posts.

Women continue to face specific barriers to coaching, which leaves many unable to pursue a career in this field. At the Sydney Olympics 2000, women accounted for only 8% of all coaches and 4% of team managers in the British Team.

All coaches need support once deployed in an active coaching role. Women are often less confident in such situations and support is essential to ensure they coach effectively and can continue to develop personally and professionally. Without role models, young women will not be aware of all the opportunities that sport can offer besides participation.

THE FUTURE

Legislative changes and policy commitments by Central and Devolved Governments are now setting minimum standards and guiding the sports sector towards equality.

There are also signs of good progress towards racial equality and the inclusion of people with disabilities. Gender equality is sometimes overlooked and there is much that remains to be done. The UK Strategy Framework for Women and Girls will provide a framework for national agencies so we can clearly state our intention to plan, implement and celebrate progress in gender equality and enable girls and women to participate, lead and succeed in sport.

40% of the British Olympic team at the 2000 Olympic Games were women who went on to win 42% of the medals (WSF 2001).

Other nations have successfully demonstrated that an investment in women as athletes can reap benefits in the medal table.

Having set the ball rolling at the Brighton Conference in 1994, it is now time for the UK to demonstrate continued leadership in its progress towards gender equality in sport

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Having established a Strategy Framework it is important to ensure that progress is measured, reported and celebrated. To this end, UK Sport will work with the Womens Sports Foundation to monitor progress and publish an annual report. Good practice can be identified and the sports councils, with WSF, will disseminate and promote the most innovative and creative initiatives across the UK. Home Country Sports Councils will monitor their own advancements and submit information that can be measured against the targets.

A final report will be prepared for the fourth World Conference on Women and Sport in Kumamoto, 2006. Significant progress in the UK will contribute to the global effort in achieving gender equality for women in sport and this strategic approach will set the platform to widen opportunities and build success.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Significant time, effort and expertise has been required to formulate the UK Strategy Framework for Women and Sport.

Thanks are owed to all the members of the UK Co-ordinating Group for their dedication in developing the Strategy Framework.

Special thanks must go to the **UKCGWS Chair, Dr Anita White, Deborah Potts, Womens Sports Foundation, Rose Challies, sportscotland, Sara Butlin, Sports Council for Wales, and Liz Nicholl, UK Sport, without who's support this process may never have found a beginning.**

One in three girls aged 11 in the UK is overweight and between the ages of 16 and 24 women are twice as likely to be obese (YWCA 2001).

Investment in sport and physical recreation will contribute to healthier lifestyles and reduce the cost of healthcare for obesity and related conditions.

UK Strategy Framework for Women and Sport



The Current Situation for Women in Sport

Using research from each of the home countries, it was established that 38% of women participate in sport and physical activity and, although physical education is compulsory in all primary and secondary schools, 40% of girls drop out by the age of 18.

Women continue to struggle to achieve senior management and leadership position in many spheres and this is replicated within sport. Women currently hold 23% of chief executive, sports council and senior board positions within sports organisations and positive action will be needed to address under representation and involve them in decision making processes.

Career paths to world class sport are less evident for women. There are fewer clubs and women's elite teams can be perceived as having less value or being a stepping stone for coaches to men's elite performers. Sports science support can also be more difficult to access. 476 women are funded through the UK performance programmes including the World Class Performance, Talented Athlete and Elite Cymru Programmes compared with 762 men. Evidence from the European Sporting Success Study undertaken by UK Sport has shown that increased performances by Italy, the Netherlands and France have been driven by women athletes and these countries have closed the gap that existed between men's and women's performance.

The UK Co-ordinating Group on Women and Sport (UKCGWS) was tasked with the development of a UK Strategy Framework that will provide a strategic and cohesive approach to women's sport in the UK. The UKCGWS has produced this strategy in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders who will contribute to, and benefit from, the achievement of the strategic objectives.

The Strategy Framework has three strategic objectives based on the principles of the Brighton Declaration and the aims of the Womens Sports Foundation National Action Plan. Targets have been set which are based on current evidence that underlines women's under representation in sport.



ABOVE: Tricia Heberle of England consoles Lisa King after losing to a golden goal the India v England Women's Final hockey match at the Belle Vue Hockey Centre during the 2002 Commonwealth Games. RIGHT: Barbara Cassani stands before St. Paul's Cathedral after being named as Chairman of London's Olympic Games bid.

Only 1 in 3 England medallists at the Manchester Commonwealth Games 2002 was female compared with 1 in 2 of Canadian and Australian medallists. Indian women can boast more podium places than their male counterparts (WSF 2002).



UK Sport is charged with preparing a report to the International Working Group on Women and Sport for the fourth World Conference on Women and Sport in 2006. Working with partners across the UK, UK Sport will gather data, identify good practice and celebrate an increase in women's involvement in sport. The report will focus on the three strategic objectives and progress will be measured against the targets set out in the UK Framework for Women and Sport.

At the 2002 Commonwealth Games, only 13% of coaches in the England team were female.

Special measures are needed to retain women within coaching and provide a supportive environment in which they can continue to develop and achieve the highest levels of performance.

To challenge this inequality, the UKCGWS has set objectives and specific, measurable and time limited targets to be achieved by **DECEMBER 2005**.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS

- ❑ **PARTICIPATION:** Increase participation by women and girls in a wide variety of sports, physical recreation activities and in physical education.
TARGET – 5% increase from 38% to 43%
- ❑ **PERFORMANCE AND EXCELLENCE:** Enable women and girls with sporting ability to achieve excellence in the sport of their choice.
TARGET – increase in the number of female athletes receiving funding from 476 to 506
- ❑ **LEADERSHIP:** Increase the number of women leaders at all levels and in all capacities in sport and physical recreation.
TARGET – an increase in the number of women on strategic sports boards and committees from 23% to 30%

There is existing proactive work in the following areas and the results of this are being reported:

- > Policy and strategy
- > Publicity and promotion
- > Diversity and inclusion
- > Development pathways and competition
- > Education and training
- > Facilities
- > Research
- > Resources

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1 in 3 women over 50 has osteoporosis and 1 in 12 will die from a hip fracture (National Osteoporosis Society 2002).

Osteoporosis is best prevented through exercise during early life up to the age of 35.

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Women are 32% less likely to participate in sport compared to men (Sports Equity Index 2001, Sport England).

By increasing the number of women participating at every level of sport, this will not only widen the pool of talent available, it will increase sports club membership, positively impact on the health of the nation and generally contribute to the long term aims of social inclusion policy.

42% of sports development officers are female but women represent only 11% of Principals or Directors of Leisure in the UK (ILAM 1999).

Strong leadership is a key factor in community development and women have an important role to play in ensuring all sectors of the community can benefit through sport.