

Scottish Parliament Health, Social Care and Sport Committee

Inquiry - Female participation in sport and physical activity
Summary of recommendations

Please find below a summary of recommendations from the Scottish Sports Association, on behalf of our Members.

As we outlined in the evidence session on Tuesday 30th May 2023, some of these recommendations are specific to the opportunities, challenges or barriers faced by women and girls, and some are those which are faced across sport, but are exacerbated when considering women and girl's participation.

- The addition of a new Scottish Government National Outcome, focused specifically on sport and physical activity
 - While the current Health outcome includes the ambition for Scotland to be a healthy and active nation, many of the indicators that underpin the outcome are focused only around the National Health Service and other health services. The addition of an Outcome dedicated to sport and physical activity would help to deliver greater focus on sport as an enabler of physical, mental and community wellbeing and a greater focus of female participation as being everyone's responsibility
- Focusing on a change in culture for spending directed to sport and physical activity to be seen as an investment, not a cost - in terms of social return on investment and with consideration to physical and mental health, investment in sport remains one of the best buys in population health and wellbeing
- Long term, core funding commitments for Scottish Governing Bodies of Sport (SGBs), and therefore sportscotland, in line with aspirations for the wider voluntary sector reiterated in the Scottish Government's 'Equality, opportunity, community: New leadership – A fresh start' prospectus
- An urgent cross-Committee inquiry between the Health, Social Care and Sport Committee, the Local Government, Housing and Planning Committee and the Education, Children and Young People Committee into access to the school estate (to include availability and cost), especially the secondary school estate (indoor and outdoor)
- The importance of physical activity, especially for females, is prioritised within planning and planning guidance - for example, additional consideration being given to active travel routes in terms of lighting and safety

- An expectation of the role of the media is explored in their role as:
 - An educator: helping to inform the population of the benefits of being active, how active an individual needs to be for their own health and for the health of their children
 - A means for sharing and promoting women's sport through a positive narrative
 - A means for promoting positive role models across all areas of sport and physical activity (including leadership, governance, coaching, officiating, volunteering, teaching, participation and elite sport)
- Promoting a breadth of sporting opportunities and coverage to help to showcase the many different sports that women, and anyone, can get involved in
- Guidance is provided to all new parents about the importance and benefits of sport and physical activity, including for their own participation and in helping to inspire their child (e.g. through the Baby Box)
- A review of monitoring/reporting in sport to:
 - Ensure reporting supports the emphasis on equalities rather than numbers
 - Rationalise monitoring and reporting to focus on what is required and what we value to release time for further delivery
- Greater accountability of Local Authorities for their role in delivering community sport and physical activity and for the 90% of investment in sport in Scotland which goes through Local Authorities
- The extension of the minimum two periods of PE in secondary schools mandate to include S5 and S6 to help counter a traditional dropping out point in female participation in sport
- Scottish Government to establish a working group looking at the role of wellbeing employers in a wellbeing economy, including a review of current health at work schemes to ensure the inclusion of protected time to be active and to volunteer. This proposal is especially key for women who face barriers in terms of available time for physical activity.

If any further detail on any of these proposed recommendations would be helpful, or you have any questions at all, please do not hesitate to get in touch.