

# WOMEN IN SPORT

IMPACT REPORT 2024/25

## OUR 40th YEAR



WOMEN  
IN  
SPORT

“If the last four decades have taught me anything it is that nothing is guaranteed. That is why the work of Women in Sport is so vital. Every setback we overcome, every time we stay in the fight, is a victory in itself.”

*Tessa Sanderson CBE, Women in Sport President and Olympic javelin gold medalist*



## SPORT GIVES WOMEN AND GIRLS **RESILIENCE, COURAGE SELF-BELIEF AND A SENSE OF BELONGING**

But all too often, they're missing out...

**OUR VISION** is that no-one is excluded from the **joy, fulfilment and lifelong benefits** of sport.

**OUR PURPOSE** is to create **lasting positive change** for women and girls in sport and society.



# FROM OUR CHAIR

With all the recent media exposure for women's sport, you would be forgiven for thinking that all the battles for equality, opportunity and reward have been fought. And won.

Not so. If 2024-25 tells us anything it is that the fight is just beginning. The media exposure our charity has seen provides a welcome and necessary spotlight on the reality that sport and leisure remain far from equal, and there is still much to do.

Women in Sport continues to punch well above its weight as a small charity. Our evidence and insight increasingly shape national conversations and inform policymaking across Westminster and the home nations. While recognition is welcome, it is not our goal — lasting societal change is, and with our data now part of the national consciousness, we know we are fulfilling our purpose.

We remain deeply committed to understanding and representing the full diversity of women and girls. While all women face the constraints of gender stereotyping and the realities of female physiology, some face compounded barriers — from economic hardship and disability to racial or cultural discrimination.

Our work this year has reflected this nuanced approach: shining a light on the positive and negative experiences of Black girls in sport,

exploring the experiences of disabled teenage girls and tracking the dreams and ambitions of girls post-Olympics and post-Paralympics through our *Dream Deficit* research.

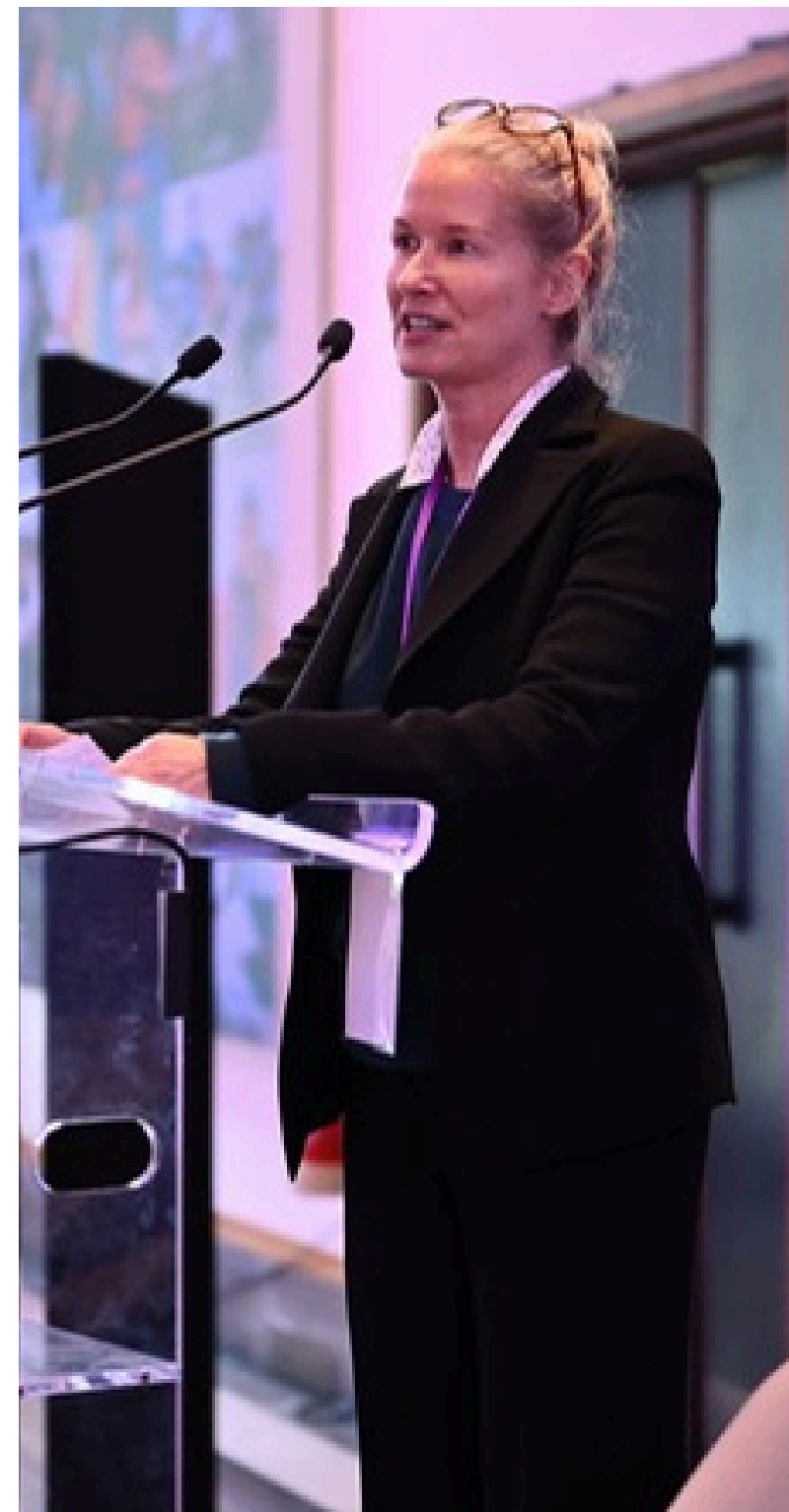
In 2024, we also answered a long-standing question: are men part of the solution? The resounding answer is yes. Amid rising polarisation and global challenges, it has never been more important to work with men who genuinely support equality. Our 40th anniversary conference, *Joining Forces for the Future*, brought men and women together to take the next critical steps in building a fairer sporting culture.

Women in Sport remains bold, dynamic and unflinching in our mission to challenge inequalities, shape policy and deliver solutions that ensure every woman and girl can experience the joy, fulfilment and lifelong benefits of sport.

It is a profound privilege to chair this charity. Together with our executive team, trustees, partners and supporters, we will keep pushing forward. We will not rest until every woman and girl has the opportunity to belong, thrive, and dream without limitation in sport. They deserve nothing less.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to our work this year.

Jules Newton,  
Chair, Women in Sport



## AIM 1

Deeply understand the environment and culture surrounding women and girls in sport

### Black Girls and Sport: A Break-up Story

**Recap:** Our research into Black girls' experiences of sport began with what we already knew — and what we couldn't ignore. In 2021, our [\*Reframing Sport for Teenage Girls\*](#) study revealed that 1.3 million girls who once loved sport disengage after primary school, a terrible loss of self-belief and joy. Although Black girls dream of sporting success at twice the rate of White girls, Sport England's Active Live's data shows that they are among the least active of all groups. Together, these insights exposed a painful disconnect between the high aspirations of Black girls and the reality of their opportunities and experiences in sport.

**What we did:** To understand this gap and the forces behind it, we launched a major research piece, partnering with some brilliant Black researchers from Humankind, with eight National Governing Bodies of sport and with community partners. Through in-depth interviews, creative workshops, and storytelling sessions, we built a picture of the lives of Black girls. The result, our ground-breaking report *Black Girls and Sport: A Break Up Story*, captures the reality of the interface of Black girls and sport with honesty and power.

**Methodology:** Our research also incorporated a nationally representative survey of 2,255 girls and boys aged 13-24, with a sample boost of 500 Black girls and boys. Online ethnography with 32 girls aged 13-24. Online focus groups with all girls from the ethnography.

[READ THE RESEARCH](#)

**“Sport has historically been a space that was not made for me. I love it but I always feel like I have to fit into it rather than it fitting into me.” - Amara, 16**



Seven in ten Black girls see themselves as sporty, and Black girls value sport more highly than any other girls, recognising how it lifts their mood and strengthens their bodies. Despite all their passion, Black girls are the least active group of all. Only one in seven take part in sport outside school, in contrast to their brothers.

**What we found out:** All teenage girls are having to manage female puberty and negative impacts of stereotyping. Black teenage girls carry this too, and they face not only misogyny but the bias of racist stereotypes. They go to sport looking for joy and release but often they don't feel they can bring their full selves. They may be singled out or typecast into certain roles or sports and face the unnecessary pressure of an inflexible culture. Black girls also have unique needs around their cultural and physical reality, demonstrated by the issues of hair coverage, management and protection. In any relationship, ongoing misunderstanding erodes trust.

Too many Black girls told us that sport feels like a place they must fit into, rather than a space that fits them. Still, Black girls' love for sport hasn't disappeared. It's there, waiting for spaces that welcome them as they are. When sport gets it right, it gives us something precious: belonging, joy, and freedom. Eighty-five percent of Black girls say sport makes them feel carefree.



**How we shared this:** Our campaign film, 'Dear Sport' carried that message to the nation. It challenged everyone - from policymakers to coaches - to stop, listen, and ask what more we can do to keep Black girls playing. It sparked reflection, empathy, and a call to action: to build a sporting world where every Black girl's joy not only survives but thrives.

'Dear Sport has been watched more than 127,000 times and caught the attention of athletes and broadcasters including Dame Denise Lewis DBE, Dina Asher-Smith MBE and Shaunagh Brown, former GB athlete and England rugby player, who wanted it shown to every sports coach in the country, adding "This topic is my whole heart." A sentiment mirrored by many Black women and girls who told us that every word hit home.

**How we inspired change:** Our research is transforming how sport sees Black girls. Chief executives through to community coaches have told us they now recognise what they had not seen before. Change begins with seeing and understanding – and we are making sure the sector cannot look away.

This ground-breaking work exposes the gaps in sport – and illuminates what's possible — a vision of sport where every Black girl can bring her whole self and know she belongs.

**WHAT'S NEXT?** The research and the film are just the beginning. Through bespoke workshops with the leaders of National Governing Bodies of sport, we're helping sport step up; equipping decision-makers to build environments where every Black girl feels she belongs in whatever sport she chooses.

At Women in Sport, we want to strengthen our understanding and support for women and girls in all their diversity, which is why we'll next extend this work to reach other minority communities, and women in wider life.





GB Para Badminton player Rachel Choong competing at the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games



GB athlete Keely Hodgkinson winning gold at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games

**WHAT'S NEXT?** The next wave of our Dream Deficit research is now in the field, continuing our annual tracking of how visibility and representation shape girls' ability to dream of reaching the top of sport. We repeated this survey after an incredible summer of women's sport in 2025, which saw the Lionesses retain their crown as the champions of Europe and the Red Roses becoming world champions on home soil.

## Closing the Dream Gap

**Recap:** Can you ever truly believe you belong in sport if there aren't people like you being celebrated and succeeding? For the past five years, our Dream Deficit study has tracked and compared the sporting dream rates of young people aged 13-24 and each year asked questions specific to the highest profile sporting moments for women.

**What we did:** In 2024, in the fifth wave of our *Dream Deficit* research, we focused our questions on the Paris Olympics and Paralympics, which we expected would have captured girls' imaginations.

What we found: One thing seems clear: girls' perceptions of their place in sport had changed. 38% of girls in 2024 were dreaming of reaching the top, up from 30% in 2020. That's real progress driven by the 26% of girls who 'love sport and take part lots already'. The significant gender gap (boys continue to outdream girls by 21%) is because far too few girls fall in to this "sporty" category.

Our Paralympics research found that, for disabled girls, versus disabled boys, the gulf is even wider. For disabled girls the limiting stereotypes around them are accentuated, with even fewer accessible routes to play and compete. 44% of disabled girls say there aren't enough local opportunities which is heart-breaking when 62% want to do more sport.

"Honestly, the recent Olympic Games reignited my love for sports. Watching all those incredible athletes push their limits made me want to stay more active and try new things."

- Sonia, 15

**How we shared this:** An exclusive new year news feature brought this Dream Deficit study to a national audience and highlighted how girls' ambitions are shifting, and what shaped them. Visibility matters – when girls see women celebrated, competing and succeeding, it strengthens their belief that they belong in sport too.

**How this inspired change:** Each new wave of the research sparks action in the sporting ecosystem – presenting more evidence to drive change in how sport is structured, how women and girls are represented and how the right opportunities are created to participate - so that girls don't just believe they belong, they see that they do.

[READ THE RESEARCH](#)





**GENDER PLAY GAP** Big Sister Project  
Shereen Charles  
skynews.com Leaders have declared "critical



Women in Sport Vice President Jim Carter speaks to Sky Sport at our 40<sup>th</sup> conference



**JULIA GEORGE**  
Women in Sport  
itv NEWS

# theguardian

## Women in Sport's 40 years mark both progress and need to end inequality

Charity founded in 1984 highlights that work still needs to be done to eradicate inequality between the sexes in sport



**BBC NEWS**

## Fitness programme rolled out to get girls into sport



## AIM 2

Challenge gender inequality in sport by exposing the problem

**Recap:** Our growing reputation as thought leaders on women in sport, and on the broader experiences of women and girls, has never been stronger. Our statistic that 1.3 million girls have dropped out of sport has entered the public consciousness, frequently cited by commentators, policymakers and the public alike. This powerful figure has become a rallying cry for change and a testament to Women in Sport's influence in shaping national conversations. From commanding headlines with our Black Girls campaign to shaping debate on international stages, we have become a trusted voice driving progress.

**What we did:** This year, we addressed global policymakers at an OECD event in Paris on the gender play gap, and Sky News featured us in an exclusive on our Dream Deficit report, giving a powerful platform to showcase the success and impact of our Big Sister project.

WHERE WE'VE  
FEATURED

**Print and Broadcast Media:** We continue to amplify the national conversation on gender equality through national – and international – media. Appearing twice on BBC Radio 4's Woman's Hour, regularly on BBC 5 Live and being featured in the Telegraph, Guardian, Sunday Times and BBC Sport amongst other mainstream platforms.

**Podcasting:** Our podcast took that mission further this year, relaunching with fresh voices from elite and grassroots sport, as well as from law, education and politics. It opened up honest conversations about the systemic and cultural barriers girls face. Recommended by Stylist as one of the top three woman's sport podcasts in the UK, it has become another platform where our influence turns into impact.

**Social media:** Our entire audience continues to grow: 80,000 followers on LinkedIn and 30,000 subscribers to our Beyond the Field newsletter. And this year our Olympic Instagram reel – set to Maya Angelou's 'Phenomenal Woman' – shone a powerful light on the strength and spirit of female athletes. It garnered more than 280,000 views and 50 days of watch time.

[FOLLOW US](#)

**How we've inspired change:** Every story we tell, every headline we shape, pushes the movement for gender equality in sport a little further forward. This year, our voice has cut through the noise — landing powerful stories in the national press and being the go-to source when the big moments hit. From Caitlin Clark and the surge of women's basketball to the loss of girls' football teams, from female rugby players fighting stereotypes to the future of netball, weight training and menopause, and the realities of stalking in sport — we've made sure women's experiences are seen, heard, and taken seriously. Our influence isn't just in the coverage we get, but in the conversations we change.

**WHAT'S NEXT?** We're deepening our influence with the BBC, advising on programming across children's, radio and wider content to shine a brighter light on the barriers women and girls face in sport.

We'll continue to push the conversation into new territory, confronting misogyny and sexism and highlighting gendered health inequalities. Because sport could, and should, be an antidote - a place where women's health, wellbeing, and potential are valued and nurtured.

# 13.5m

people reached  
via social media

# 13.9bn

media  
impressions

# 6k

listens to our  
podcast



## AIM 3

### Develop concepts, policies and solutions

**Recap:** Informed by years of insight and lived experience, Women in Sport applied our understanding to drive policy change and test practical solutions with partners.

**What we did:** In our 40th anniversary year, which also coincided with a General Election, Women in Sport set out a clear vision for the next era of change and shaped it into four bold policy asks.

- Gender budgeting to make sure equal investment reaches women and girls;
- Equal leadership so that decisions reflect both sexes' needs;
- A strong anti-misogyny commitment to challenge the power imbalance that still holds women back;
- An independent regulator for sport to confront the misconduct and abuse that disproportionately affect women and girls.

By defining these priorities, we are shaping national debate and inspiring the sport sector to strive for greater equality, safety and respect.

### Turning Equal Access into Political Action

**Championing Change in Parliament:** Women in Sport strengthened our voice at the heart of national decision-making. Our [40th anniversary Parliamentary Reception](#) marked a powerful moment of recognition and resolve. More than 100 guests gathered to celebrate our legacy and the growing movement for gender equality in sport. Over 40 Parliamentarians from both Houses joined senior leaders from organisations including Sport England, the BBC, FA, Vitality, British Gymnastics, UK Active and the LTA.



Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson  
with Alison Griffiths MP



Women in Sport Trustee and former  
England rugby player Brian Moore

"Teams with a gender balanced leadership are more successful, and have a healthier, more inclusive culture at every level. It's time to stop talking about equality and start acting on it."

- Brian Moore, Trustee and ex-England rugby player



Women in Sport ambassadors Becky Adlington OBE and Tessa Sanderson CBE  
with MPs Marsha de Cordova, Dawn Butler and Kim Johnson



Our inspiring ambassadors, Olympians Becky Adlington OBE, Tessa Sanderson CBE and our team member Joanna Rowsell MBE, all Olympic gold medallists, stood alongside policymakers and industry leaders in a united call for change. The event was described as “the best event of its kind in Parliament” and left guests “fired up to create more opportunities for girls and women to play sport.”

Among those championing our cause was Helen Dollimore, MP for Hastings and Rye, one of England’s most deprived constituencies. She praised Women in Sport’s vital role in “breaking down barriers to female participation at every level.” The success of the event was a clear signal that our influence is growing where it matters most: in the decisions and policies that shape the future of women’s sport.



Becky Adlington OBE and Joanna Rowsell MBE

**Turning evidence into action at a round table in Parliament,** we convened leaders from sport, education, and across the political spectrum to improve school PE and sport for girls. It highlighted the need for schools to better understand gender stereotyping and address the sporting skills gap so that girls can sustain self-belief and a lifelong love of sport. This means more single-sex time in PE and sport, and when mixed-sex sport occurs, it requires thoughtful teaching, fair organisation, and a supportive culture. Chaired by former Sports Minister Dame Tracey Crouch, the event brought together expertise and experience to offer real-world solutions. It was one of many events this year that reinforced Women in Sport’s role as a driving force for change.

We were also invited to share our ground-breaking insight with both the Culture, Media and Sport, and Women and Equalities Select Committees. Our evidence informed recommendations to Government on how to transform sport for women and girls. Our robust research also reached the chamber floor. Politicians such as Thangam Debonnaire MP cited our work in debates, highlighting the impact of our insight on shaping policy.

## POLICY POSITIONS



Women in Sport Trustee Brian Moore speaking with Richard Radford (left) Department for Education and Tom Brindle (right) Rugby Football League



Women in Sport CEO Stephanie Hilborne OBE speaking on a Government Select Committee on PE and school sport





## Time Together: Growing Stronger

**Recap:** Now in its fifth year, Time Together continues to grow, inspiring mums and mum figures, daughters, and nieces across the UK to be active side by side, celebrating the unity and relationships this fosters. Born from our insight that teenage girls perceive their mothers and mother figures as a place of safety, and that midlife women are more likely to get active if it helps a teenage relation thrive, the campaign champions that powerful potential.

**"My mother never told me "NO you can't play". That is her biggest gift to me. My life would have been forever changed had I not played sports. At 83 she is my biggest cheerleader to this day!"**

*- Supporter*

**What we did:** In 2024, more than 40 partner organisations joined us to inspire thousands of women and girls to embrace sport without guilt, pressure, or perfection. We saw on-the-ground activations from Parkour, Ninja Warrior, and other activities, and more mums and daughters than ever before shared their own photos and videos of getting active together, reaching 6.8 million people nationwide.

Their stories reveal joy, laughter, and time well spent.

We featured women like **Sukanya**, who missed out on sport as a child, but refused to let history repeat itself:

**"I learned to swim as an adult, I learned to cycle as an adult because I wanted my daughter Annah to be able to do that."**

**How this impacts women and girls:** For too long women and their daughters or nieces have missed out on something that men and their sons or nephews have always had – being active together. Time Together is righting that wrong. It is changing habits and hearts. It's helping midlife women reconnect with activity and it's giving teenage girls safe spaces to belong.

**48% of girls**  
**say their mum is their biggest supporter for being active**

[READ MORE](#)



## Big Sister Goes National

**Recap:** Our landmark Big Sister project began with a grant from DCMS that allowed us to pilot a brilliant initiative to engage teenage girls in activity with Places Leisure in four locations. This involved community outreach, free membership for teenage girls, and skilling up of Centre staff as well as provision of single sex opportunities with female leaders. It was based on our foundational research into teenage girls and their unique needs.

**What we did:** In 2024, with no grant support but with huge commitment from the senior leadership, Places Leisure rolled this out into a nationwide movement. The programme now reaches 6,400 teenage girls across 80 sites and demonstrates the power of our insight to create real change on the ground.

Almost 1,000 staff have been trained to run welcoming, female-led sessions, while girls from disadvantaged backgrounds have benefited from free or discounted memberships. The results speak for themselves: 72% of participants made new friends, and 90% rated their Big Sister instructor 5/5 for support. Girls find the sessions empowering and fun.

Reflecting on the impact of the collaboration, Belinda Steward, CEO of Places Leisure, said:

*"Women in Sport's insight into the lives of girls has been central to Big Sister and its extraordinary success. Our people are now trained up to understand girls and to create the right environment for them to feel free and be active. Whether this is about girls-only spaces or about female role models this partnership is making a real difference, to the lives of girls yes, but also to the way we think about sport and community."*

**What this means:** Big Sister exemplifies research in action. Our pilot proved that interventions informed by a deep understanding of the unique needs of girls can challenge the assumption that it's inevitable that teenage girls will drop out.

[LEARN MORE](#)



**WHAT'S NEXT?** By influencing the Department for Education, we will continue to champion genuinely equal access to PE and school sport, and through our links to the leisure industry, we will champion single sex opportunities for girls and women throughout life.

Our leadership of the Women in Coaching Taskforce (backed by Sport England) will help to address the cultural and structural barriers faced by female coaches. By uncovering the lived experiences of coaches across sport, we can press for environments where women coaches, and with them female participants, have the space to thrive.

We are determined to embed TimeTogether and Big Sister as firmly as possible in the national psyche and to keep the nation's attention focused on the stubborn 24% gap in team sport participation between boys and girls.




## AIM 4

### Inspire change through collaboration and influence in our 40th year

**Recap:** After 40 years of research, the charity has a clear understanding of the limiting gender stereotypes that shape girls' and women's experiences of sport, as well as the biological realities of their lives. Over the years we have tackled the issue on many fronts, whether through championing a minimum of 30% female representation on sports boards, talking in the media about periods and sports bras or by campaigning for more visibility for elite sportswomen. The sport sector has been increasingly interested to hear from us and understand more deeply what is happening – how stereotypes limit girls' opportunities, take away their sense of belonging and joy, and lie behind the sporting skills gap that emerges between girls and boys very young.

Over the last few years, Women in Sport has been reinforcing its role as a charity that thinks deeply, acts constructively and leads courageously. We have invested time in refining and articulating our opinions on a range of issues, such as the need for gender budgeting, for anti-misogyny policies, for an independent body to stamp out abuse in sport, and for the female category of sport to be for biological women. Much of our work is as invisible as it is powerful, as we share our thinking and views with leaders from sports and leisure, schools, companies and government. It is increasingly clear to us that girls-only sporting opportunities are essential at every level if girls are to hold on to the confidence and self-belief every child is born with, building skills and a lifelong love of sport. Our goal is a sporting system that supports every girl and woman to take part in ways that reflect her unique needs.



“For many of my early years as a PE teacher, I was ignorant of the challenges faced by women and girls in sport. [I am now] increasingly aware of issues that specifically present themselves to girls, alongside universal factors that all young people are susceptible to.”  
- Simon Scarborough, Deputy Head Teacher

## Using our moment to build a movement

In November 2024, we held our landmark [40th anniversary conference](#), “Joining Forces for the Future”. The event was carefully planned and designed to generate an atmosphere of extraordinary togetherness. It was clear to us that we were at a turning point in our history, ready to stand shoulder to shoulder with the men who truly believe in our cause. And so, almost half of the 150 guests and speakers were men. They were addressed not just by brilliant women but by a man who prosecuted some of the worst cases in recent history of male violence against women, a man who served at the frontline of policing and, when he reached the top, purged his police force of misogynists, and a man who, when he became a primary carer for his children, found himself listening carefully to the voices of mothers and grandmothers and committing his life to male allyship.

“Women in Sport’s story is extraordinary, enraging and inspiring. I am a long-time supporter of the charity and the vital work they have done and will continue to do.”  
- Judy Murray OBE

The conference culminated in a galvanising address by Judy Murray OBE, and the energy in that room didn't end when the lights went down. It's rippling outward, into National Governing bodies of sport, Westminster and communities and conversations across the country. This was more than a moment: it was the spark of a new chapter in our movement, built on allyship and a shared belief that sport can lead the way in gender equality.



Guest feedback on our 40<sup>th</sup> conference



## Building the Next Generation of Male Allies

As our conference showed, positive change in sport and in society will depend on how we raise our boys, how they learn to see girls, how they value women's sport, and how they define fairness. And right now, we're at a crucial moment.

Following the launch of our [Boys Will Be Boys](#) research last year, our school resources were sent to schools across England by the Department for Education, flagged as best guidance and giving thousands of teachers access to tools that help challenge bias and promote respect through PE lessons and beyond. Alongside teachers, we're also helping parents and coaches challenge outdated attitudes and build respect and understanding from the primary school playground up.

**WHAT'S NEXT?** We are planning further research into men's attitudes towards women and girls in sport, to understand more about women and girls from different South Asian communities, and to keep pressing for greater understanding of misogyny as the retention of a power imbalance between the sexes.

As one headteacher put it, "For many of my early years as a PE teacher, I was ignorant of the challenges faced by women and girls in sport."

That honesty matters — because change starts with awareness. And while some boys are calling for equality...

**"I just hope the gender equality in sports continues and does not just die with the end of the Olympics." – Luca 15**

....others are not on board:

**"It's not important to me. It has been alright for over 100 years. No need to change it." – Kai 15**

These voices capture the tension of our times: progress and resistance side by side. Cultural moments like the landmark TV series *Adolescence* have captured fears around a growth in misogyny and male violence against women and girls. Our work meets this moment — giving the people around our boys the tools to understand equality through sport, to stand with girls, and to help reshape the culture of sport for everyone.



## The Last Bastion: The History of Women in Sport

**What we did:** We commissioned and published a powerful book about the history of our charity.

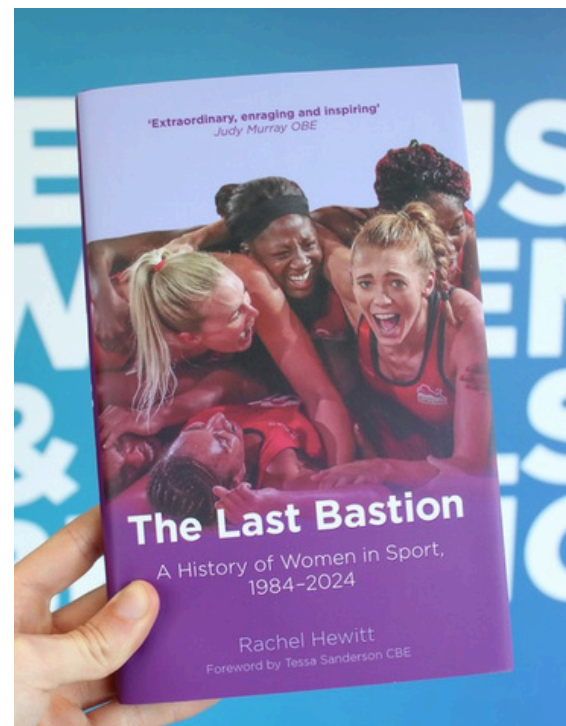
When the women who first fought for a place in sport gathered again at the end of our anniversary year, there were tears, laughter, and fierce pride. The publication of *The Last Bastion* didn't just tell their story — it gave them back their place in it.

Their legacy now lights the way for new generations who must defend the rights once won and win them again if needed.

It is so important for a charity to understand its roots, and we are grateful to award-winning author Rachel Hewitt for her brilliant research, thinking, and writing. After spending months articulating our story and our unparalleled knowledge base, Rachel concluded that...

“Women in Sport is more needed than ever, in advocating for our right to participate in an activity, that in an increasingly hostile world, grants women and girls some of the only opportunities we have to move freely, to love our bodies as strong, active forces, to revel in the company of other women and to be happy.”

*The Last Bastion* stands as both a tribute and a rallying cry. We stand on the shoulders of trailblazers who wouldn't take no for an answer — women who forced the doors open and kept them open. It is a reminder that their fight got us this far, but we must continue to reshape the future for all women and girls in sport.



*The Last Bastion* author Rachel Hewitt



Founders and early members of Women in Sport.  
From left to right: Carolyn Carr, Monica Vaughan OBE,  
Eileen Langsley, Anita White CBE, Tina Dyer-Slade

“[I'm proud] that girls in schools now know they've got just the same rights as the boys. They're not like I was in Junior School when my resentment first built up that the boys got to go out and play football and we had to do needlework.” - Eileen Langsley, Women in Sport Co-Founder



## Ensure the charity is highly effective



Women in Sport team, December 2025



Women in Sport staff members Sarah Bellew, Harinie Wijeweera and Shereen Charles at our 40th conference



Zara Lachlan celebrates completing her solo Atlantic row for Women in Sport and Team Forces in February 2025

**People:** Our trustees and staff bring a broad range of perspectives, backgrounds and expertise, reflecting the diversity of the country we serve. The Board combines wisdom and experience from a range of sectors, from female health to homelessness, elite sport to data and the law. Our small staff team of 15-20 includes people with expertise in insights and research, media and communications, fundraising and organisational development. We also have staff with deep knowledge of the workings of government and parliament and of the sport and leisure sector. Critically our newly expanded Board and fast-developing executive team has a strong culture of mutual respect, humility and drive.

A new three-year business plan to start in April 2025 was agreed by the Board, giving the charity a sharp focus to further drive our impact. Alongside this is our Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan and a series of other internal policies, which, combined with our close attention to risk and financial monitoring is part of strong governance.

**Individual Support:** The number of people giving generously to support our work is growing. Ranging from University sports clubs to five incredible runners who raised over £16,000 at the London Marathon. Zara Lachlan raise funds for the charity by completing a historic solo, unsupported row of over 4,100

## PARTNER WITH US

miles from Europe to South America in 97 days, becoming the first woman and youngest person ever to complete this ocean crossing. We are so grateful to these challenge eventers and also to the people who simply decide to donate because they share our beliefs and want to see us keeping up the good work. We have been really touched by donations received in memory of women who loved sport and growing interest in making legacy pledges.

**Corporate Support:** We're thrilled to have the support of our corporate partners: Vitality, Wasserman, and Related Argent, whose generosity made our conference possible. The Sweaty Betty Foundation commissioned strategic consultancy from us and Nike was generous in its support for our 40th year. We're also grateful to Adanola, who for the third-year running have championed International Women's Day with their generous support.

**Sport England:** Our partnership with Sport England has been fundamental to driving change for women and girls in sport for many years. Its continued investment in our mission has allowed us to challenge inequalities head-on, shift outdated narratives and reach more women and girls with the evidence and advocacy that change systems. With Sport England's backing we're reshaping who sport is for - and who gets to belong.



# CEO'S AFTERWORD

This was a landmark year for Women in Sport. Our charity turned 40 - a moment to reflect, celebrate and most importantly, to sharpen our focus on the work that still lies ahead. The sporting world is a far better place for women and girls than it was in 1984, but progress is neither inevitable nor irreversible. Every girl and every woman's right to belong in sport depends on what we do next.

This year, we listened harder, acted smarter and amplified voices that too often go unheard. Our *Black Girls and Sport: A Break-Up Story* research shone a light on the joy, ambition and barriers experienced by Black teenage girls. It challenged coaches, clubs, and policymakers to create environments where every girl feels she belongs.

Our fifth wave of Dream Deficit research revealed the power of visibility: more girls who see women competing and succeeding now dream bigger, yet the gender dream gap remains - a reminder that representation alone is not enough.

We took action where it counts. From growing the nationwide Big Sister programme and the multi-generational Time Together campaign, to launching the Women in Coaching Taskforce, we are not just documenting inequality, we are dismantling it.

Our 40th anniversary conference, Joining Forces for the Future, brought women and men together to drive cultural change in sport, proving that allyship is not optional, it is essential.

Our research, advocacy, campaigns and partnerships are underpinned by a single purpose: to create lasting change for women and girls in sport and society. With the support of Sport England, our corporate partners, and a growing movement of individuals pushing boundaries in every arena, we are stronger, more visible, and more influential than ever.

We stand on the shoulders of trailblazers and their grit, courage and vision guide us as we shape the next chapter. Our 40th year wasn't just a celebration - it was a reminder that progress is fragile and that real change requires courage, strategy and relentless action.

At Women in Sport, we will continue to challenge stereotypes, champion visibility and fight for equality. Because every girl deserves to belong and every woman deserves to thrive.

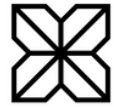
Stephanie Hilborne OBE,  
Chief Executive of Women in Sport



# OUR PARTNERS IN 2024/25



WASSERMAN  
LIVE



Brent  
Cross  
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