DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION ACTION PLAN 2024

Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan

Foreword From WiS Chair

Our charity exists because we believe it is wrong for girls and women to be denied the joy, fulfilment and lifelong benefits of sport. And yet still so many are, even here in the UK. Gender stereotypes, concerns about body image, discrimination in the workplace and social norms at home mean that at every life stage, women are still less active than men and less likely to play sport, particularly in teams.

Too many women and girls are missing out on feeling happy and confident in their bodies, on the companionship, exhilaration and liberation of simply playing and forgetting day-to-day stresses. Women from disadvantaged communities, different ethnicities and disabled women and girls are missing out most of all.

As a charity working for the inclusion of women and girls it is in our DNA to integrate action on inclusion in everything we do.

At Women in Sport we will aspire to lead through embracing a culture that values and champions the diversity of experiences of all people. We will actively seek to ensure our charitable work is based on informed conversations and feedback from people that have different experiences and frames of reference. Our commitment to creating lasting change for women and girls comes from the deeply felt belief that inclusive sport can help to tackle social and health inequalities.

To do this myself and the Board of Trustees feel that we must embrace the full diversity of women and girls as well as our male allies. Therefore, the Board takes its responsibility towards the following action plan seriously. We have engaged with the plan, reflecting and feeding back to the executive team and through our governance and nominations committee will review and consider the plan as part of our ongoing agenda, welcoming feedback as we do so.

Julia Newton
Chair Board of Trustees, Women in Sport

1) Introduction

Women in Sport is a research and influencing charity founded in 1984. We employ under twenty staff and do not have a presence on the ground. The team is supplemented occasionally by an office volunteer. We strive to ensure that our small executive team and our trustees are as representative of the UK population as possible, while accepting that due to the nature of our work we will always have a majority of female staff.

We exist to further equality between the sexes. Women make up 51% of the population and yet remain excluded from many opportunities open to men and boys, not least in sport. Still now, in the sports sector, only around 20% of the Chairs, CEOs and performance directors of the principal twenty sports (by participation) are women. Those women who do play and work in sport are frequently subjected to prejudice, malice and contempt – the component parts of misogyny.

We work to address this and to advocate for women and girls from Black, South Asian or other ethnic minority groups, as well as women and girls from deprived backgrounds or with disabilities or other protected characteristics, who suffer additional layers of inequality on top of their sex. The barriers women and girls face at different life stages such as puberty and menopause can also contribute towards their exclusion from participating in sport.

We also know that if we achieve our aim of 50% of decision makers being women, this will contribute to the inclusion of diverse people from all backgrounds. This is because gender equality at the top of an organisation creates the most inclusive culture, one that is more inclusive than gender imbalance in either direction, with predominantly male leadership being the least inclusive. It is our deliberate intention to ensure that our work in all its forms reflects the full diversity and intersectionality of women and girls in the UK.

As well as advocating for diversity in other organisations, we are fully committed to maximizing the diversity of our trustees and executive team. We are aware that this includes diversity of economic background as well as ethnicity or sex or other protected characteristics. There are limited opportunities given the small size of the staff team and trustee board, but where there are moments of change we are fully committed to maintaining and increasing our diversity. This is an integral component of our succession planning and is built into our executive and non-executive recruitment approach to actively search for and support opportunities to bring in diversity of thought and perspectives.

Taken together the people filling roles in our senior management team and Board currently reflect the population with respect to ethnicity with 27% being from ethnic minority communities. There is more detail about this in our People Plan. Our intention is to maintain and build this diversity whenever we recruit. All our staff and trustees are fully up to speed with diversity and inclusion in

its broadest sense through the various opportunities (for training and ongoing conversations). Below we address our approach to achieving diversity and inclusion through each of our aims.

2) Our Strategic Framework and Values

Our Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan is an integral part of our strategic framework which is set out below (Our Aims - Women in Sport). Women in Sport believes sport transforms lives so our vision is that no-one is excluded from the joy, fulfilment and lifelong benefits of sport.

We know that sport can give girls and women resilience, courage, self-belief and a sense of belonging; that girls and women can learn vital life skills such as leadership through sport; and that gender stereotypes and institutional bias are holding girls and women back from sport, and in life. We believe that it is wrong to deny women and girls access to sport; that the distinct physicality of women and girls must be understood and reflected in sport; and that when sport includes women and girls it helps to tackle gendered health inequalities.

Our vision is not something we can achieve on our own, but our charity plays a part in working towards it. Therefore, our purpose is to create lasting positive change for women and girls in sport and society.

To do this we aim to:

1. Deeply understand the environment and culture surrounding women and girls in sport.
2. Challenge the gender inequality in sport by exposing the problem.
3. Develop concepts, policies and solutions policy positions and identify solutions.
4. Inspire change through collaboration and influence.
5. Ensure the charity is highly effective.

In our brand framework we express how we want people that we interact with, to feel. Whoever we're engaging with, we want them to feel genuinely understood and listened to; valued and respected as individuals, actively engaged and courageous to drive change themselves.

Our Values - We are:

- Infectiously Passionate - passionate about the value of sport and exercise for women and girls and looking to celebrate that passion.
- Authentically Us - informal, fun and authentic, bringing our true selves and our wider lived experience.
- Wisely Courageous - Understanding the leadership role we have and not afraid to challenge or have the difficult conversations.
- Natural Connectors - Engaging, empathetic collaborator with the ability to listen with high levels of emotional intelligence.

- Purposefully Curious - Always asking why but with wisdom and purpose.

3) Our Aims for Diversity and Inclusion

As our diversity policy states, Women in Sport aspires for a culture of belonging for everyone to ensure that no-one is excluded from the joy, fulfilment, and lifelong benefits of sport. Ultimately, we aim to achieve gender equality in sport across the UK as a whole.

If we are to achieve our charitable purpose, we must be reflective of the demography of the UK in everything we do. We care about the lives of women and girls in every community across the UK. The intersectionality of sex with age, race, disability, and economic hardship is vital to further our work. The impact of multiple intersectionality is great and while we recognise and understand this it is hard as a small organisation to explore in depth some of the challenges faced by women and girls on intersecting barriers towards engaging in sport and physical activity. So, our approach will always be to explore in depth a topic and try to understand one or two intersecting barriers through our research for example in the current year the focus is on black girls.

One intersectionality is illustrated by the fact that disabled women are more than twice as likely to experience sexual assault Disability and crime, UK - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk). As a charity, we stand for women from all backgrounds. We know that although more privileged women may face fewer barriers to accessing sport and exercise, all women face discrimination and disadvantage due to their sex. Just as being wealthy does not protect a woman from being killed by an ex-partner, nor does it protect her from misogyny, sexual assault and gender discrimination in the workplace and in sport.

And whilst it is quite rightly illegal to be openly racist or homophobic, it is still legal to be openly misogynistic. So, we are nowhere near where we need to be and our work helps women from all backgrounds to be included in sport. We work closely with other diversity partners such as Street Games, Activity Alliance and Sporting Equals.

Our diversity policy reflects that beyond our responsibility to the people of the UK, Women in Sport values diversity for the richness it brings to all aspects of our work, to our quality of thought leadership and to our interactions with all people.

Our five key aims for diversity and inclusion are to ensure that our:

1. insights are representative of the full diversity of the UK population
2. campaigns and communications give visibility to the full diversity of women and girls
3. solutions, concepts and pilots address the needs of diverse communities
4. influencing work is based upon the needs of women and girls from all backgrounds

5. people are diverse and our culture allows everyone to be authentic and true to themselves.

4) Our Action Plan - What We Will Do

This diversity and inclusion action plan (DIAP) has been themed around our strategic framework as referenced above, recognising the importance of diversity and inclusion in all our work. Under each aim we set out our longer-term ambitions for diversity and inclusion and then objectives for 2024-25 towards this, linked directly to our business plan.

a. Our insights are representative of the full diversity of the UK population

Operational responsibility: Head of Insight and Innovation

Our aim is to deeply understand the environment and culture surrounding women and girls in sport to further our understanding of the full diversity of their lived experiences.

We have a long history of conducting in-depth research with women and girls from all walks of life and throughout the life course, from girls in the early primary school years to women in adulthood and later life. Over the past five years we have had a particular focus on building our understanding of diverse groups, including deep dive research with girls and boys as well as women from diverse communities, disabled teenage girls and women, and those living in deprived areas. From this work we build our understanding of the intersectionality of barriers that face women and girls. For example in 2023 we worked with Deaf Sport UK (Supporting deaf girls to stay active in their teenage years and beyond: UK Deaf Sport and Women in Sport - Women in Sport) to better understand how deafness adds an additional barrier to teenage girls and sport.

In all our work we will continue to:

- Listen deeply, challenge preconceptions and increase our understanding of diversity and intersectionality beyond just the numbers.
- Actively seek out women and girls from diverse backgrounds and understand their needs and aspirations as a foundation to inform all our insight work.
- Ensure women and girls from diverse backgrounds are recruited to participate in all forms of research. This includes quantitative survey samples that are nationally representative of the UK.
- Diversify the people we engage and work with to carry out research, so they themselves can inform our work with their lived experiences.

As part of our commitment and priorities for 2024/2025 we have set the following:

We take an insight-led approach to our research activities with the aim to continuously build on and strengthen our understanding. Therefore, these objectives have been informed by previous research and insight gathered, and specifically areas that require greater investigation.

Objective	Action	Time Frame	Measure of Success
Deep dive research to understand the experiences of Black girls in sport and the intersecting barriers this group faces.*	• Scope and commission in-depth qualitative insights into the experiences of Black girls in sport • The use of an external agency for research with consultants with lived experience of working with Black communities. • Embedding and drawing on our staff and trustee who have lived experience. • To engage sector partners and stakeholders within the Black community with the research	By Sept 2024	• Engagement with research as evidenced by number of citations/downloads via website and mass/social media monitoring. • There is support for the research from the Black community who endorse the research and are willing to speak to it on WiS channels such as podcasts. • Greater awareness of the unique experiences of and inequalities faced by Black girls to drive change within the sports sector evidenced by engagement with the research and associated resources produced by WiS.
Research the lack of opportunities for girls aged 5-16 in England to take part in sport. There will be a focus on areas of deprivation in England and Wales, as well as ethnicity and disability where data is available.	• Scope and commission research to establish the patterns of access to sport across England	By March 2025	• Engagement with research as evidenced by number of citations/downloads via website and mass/social media monitoring. • Engagement with the online mapping tool once published to increase awareness of the needs of different community.
Run our Dream Deficit survey working with Activity Alliance to capture girls' and boys' attitudes and aspirations post the 2024 Paris Paralympics.	• Scope and commission a nationally representative survey with a boost of disabled young people to understand the intersection of disability and gender on young people's attitudes to sport.	By March 2025	• Engagement with research as evidenced by number of citations/downloads via website and mass/social media monitoring. • To publish the results of the survey with national media coverage.
Run our Dream Deficit Survey to investigate girls' and boys' attitudes post the 2024 Olympics.	• Scope and commission a nationally representative survey with young people to understand the intersection of ethnicity and gender on young people's attitudes to sport.		• Engagement with research as evidenced by number of citations/downloads via website and mass/social media monitoring.

**** We know from our Dream Deficit surveys (2020-2023) that compared to the general population of teenage girls, Black girls are far more likely to dream of reaching the top in sport. However, their participation levels are among the lowest. We wanted to explore this disparity and deeply understand the wider lives and needs of Black girls in sport to tackle the inequalities they face and drive positive change for this community.***

b. Our campaigns and communications give visibility to the full diversity of women and girls

Operational responsibility: Head of Communication & Engagement

In the last five years we have been very focused on ensuring diversity in our imagery and in our online and published communications. Our imagery is now strong and reflective of the UK population. To fulfill our aims we need to ensure that all aspects of our work draw from the greatest diversity of women and girls and represents their voices in all communications and campaigns. We know we do not have the capacity to manage more than two or three high profile Ambassadors, but we are determined to ensure that we are drawing from diverse backgrounds and aware that in recent years we have only had one formal ambassador beyond our trustees, Rebecca Adlington OBE. As we give visibility to the cruel exclusion of women from the Olympics historically, and the fabulous successes since, we will be working closely with a high-profile black female athlete who we aim to bring on board more widely as an ambassador.

We commit our work towards the following:

- We will amplify the insight drawn from the diversity of experiences of women and girls through our communications channels such as social media platforms, publications, blogs and podcasts.
- Our branding, communications and website will be accessible and carry imagery that represents the diversity of women and girls in the communities we serve.
- Our social media channels will actively engage, target and promote content from diverse women and girls.

More specifically in 2024/25:

Objective	Action	Time Frame	Measure of Success
Recruit influential and inspirational women and men from diverse backgrounds in ambassadorial roles to clearly communicate messages that are aligned to our purpose and foster greater understanding of our cause.	Scope, approach, and recruit at least one Ambassador from a diverse community	By Sept 2024	• Significant profile given to the unique experience of Black girls and women in sport as measured from our media monitoring statistics and Advertising Value Equivalent • Recognition of the power of our new ambassadors through our public profile and engagement with our social media.
Launch an impactful digital campaign during Paris 2024 to shine the spotlight on and confront misogyny in sport. This will include an intersectional lens to expose additional challenges faced by diverse female athletes.	Develop compelling digital content and powerful storytelling through videos, images, quotes and articles to educate and inform our audiences of the various forms of misogyny while addressing how sex-based discrimination intersects with ethnicity and disability.	By March 2025	• Social media reach, engagement and impressions. • Website traffic and open rates. Media coverage within sport-specific publications and mainstream media.

c. Our solutions, concepts and pilots address the needs of diverse communities.

Operational responsibility: Head of Insight & Innovation

This strategic objective draws on our research and insights and our understanding to develop our opinions, policies and to pilot potential solutions. All our activities, whether pilots, round tables, discussion forums, workshops, conferences, launch events, will be accessible and include people with diverse backgrounds and perspectives.

This year we aim to ensure that our website sets out a series of potential actions that individuals can take to further our cause and to ensure that these actions are accessible to the full diversity of people in the UK.

For example, as part of our work on primary aged boys we know that gender stereotyping shapes children's attitudes and behaviours at a very early stage. We also know that parents and teachers are the biggest influence on primary aged children and we want to raise their awareness of the issues stereotyping creates between boys and girls and support them with resources to change language and behaviour that makes young girls feel they don't belong in sport. We will be using actors from diverse backgrounds as part of our unique approach to disseminating our research.

Objective	Action	Time Frame	Measure of Success
Identify how parents and teachers can make a difference to stereotyping that both boys and girls experience from primary age and early years.	• To start shifting negative and limiting stereotyping towards women and girls we will draw up a set of potential actions, guidance and resources using diverse references and imagery.	By Sept 2024	• Published parent and teacher resources. • Engagement with research as evidenced by number of citations/downloads via website and mass/social media monitoring. • Promotion of our work by third parties.
National roll out of Big Sister through our partners Places Leisure Ltd	• To work with Places Leisure to embed Big Sister within diverse local communities nationally.	March 2025	• Big Sister launched at all Places Leisure centers • Number of girls engaged in the program from different communities.

d. Our influencing work is based upon the needs of women and girls from all backgrounds

Operational responsibility: Head of Policy Partnerships and Public Affairs.

This area of our work involves the application of our knowledge and insights to raise the profile of the issues and influence change across, but not limited to, sport, government and education.

- We will continue to work with all our partners, including multiple sports, our stakeholders and supporters to help them consider, as appropriate, their culture, policies, systems and delivery mechanisms to ensure women and girls, in all their diversity are at the heart of strategies and decision making. For example, we are promoting gender budgeting, anti-misogyny policies and training in how to counter gender stereotypes.
- We will continue to learn and partner with organisations that will add to our knowledge and understanding of women and girls in all their diversity. We will in turn share our knowledge with them.

This year we will continue our engagement with the education sector and our new research into the experiences of Black girls will inform our conversations to influence key stakeholders. We will use the platform that the Women's Coaching Taskforce provides us with, to challenge the lack of women coaches which fosters a greater culture of inclusion especially as this relates to particular religious backgrounds. This could really change the landscape for women and girls, if we get coaching right we have the potential to make sport much more diverse and welcoming to all women and girls in the future.

Objective	Action	Time Frame	Measure of Success
Advocate for change within PE and school sport, including to recognise the unique situation faced by Black girls and girls from less privileged backgrounds in sport.	• Use our insight to inform sector partners such as YST and Westminster for change in policy and practice in PE and school sport. • Work with sector partners on the curriculum review	By March 2025	• Increased public dialogue about the needs of girls in PE and school sport. • Invitations to speak at external events and to partners. • Our advocacy is recognised by the DfE.
Develop a suite of polices to support positive change for all women and girls in sport.	• Launch policies on Anti Misogyny, 50:50 leadership, gender budgeting and independent regulator for Sport	End Dec 2024	• Launch at parliamentary reception and engagement from Westminster and DCMS.

Delivery of parliamentary event and 40th anniversary conference raising awareness of the exclusion of all women and girls throughout our history and what can be done to embed change.	• We will engage with male allies to ensure that our conference is as close to gender parity as possible. • We will have representations of different ethnicities, ages, genders and disabilities for every panel for the conference. • We will ensure that we have as many people as possible from different communities represented at the invite only event.	By March 2025	• Stats on gender/ethnicity and disability at the conference • 50:50 gender parity in the room
As WiS leads the women's coaching initiative we will ensure that issues of intersectionality are fully imbedded in our work.	• Gather insight from diverse women and men pertaining to the coaching system and their lived experiences within this. • Engage female coaches from diverse backgrounds into the women's coaching network/collective with sector partners.	By March 2025	• Our insight will present and talk to the diverse experiences of women in coaching paying attention to the intersectionality of gender race socioeconomic background. • The coaching network and collective will represent diverse voices. • The governance framework and the steering group for the coaching taskforce will reflect the communities within the UK

e. Our people are diverse, and our culture allows everyone to be authentic and true to themselves.

Operational Responsibility: Head of People Finance and Operations

Our culture must genuinely reflect the communities that we serve and be a place where everyone can feel comfortable as themselves. We want anyone coming into the organisation to know that we value them and will hear their voices. Our culture is owned by the Chair, Board of Trustees and CEO. They are totally committed to creating a diverse and inclusive organisation.

The Board has overall responsibility for ensuring that WiS is making an active and conscious effort to align with our agreed culture and behaviours, increasing the understanding amongst our people and recognising when these are not being adhered to.

The Board and CEO will ensure that recruitment to non-executive and executive positions will include questions and selection procedures that reduce the risk of appointing people with discriminatory attitudes, are not biased against people from underrepresented backgrounds. All our internal panels will seek to be representative. Appropriate questions will be routinely included in staff surveys, with any complaints properly investigated according to WiS's complaints and grievances policy.

The culture of WiS is set by the leaders and management to ensure that both they themselves and all staff and employees involved in WiS activity, are aware of how they contribute to that culture. We all have responsibility for our own wellbeing and the wellbeing of others.
Our trustee board is currently made up of nine people (with the possibility of increasing to twelve). In late 2023 our chair led a recruitment drive for new trustees with four new appointments made to the Board in early 2024. Therefore, we were unable to include the trustees in the diversity survey of our team that is presented below in Table 1. We will include them when we gather data in 2025.

	Female	Ethnically diverse background	Disability	Sexual Orientation
Staff Data	85%	20%	20%	90% Heterosexual 10% LGB+
England and Wales Census 2021[1]	51%	18%	17.8%	89.4% Heterosexual 3.2% LGB+

** Figure represents people who identify as Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual or Other sexual orientation as per Census definition*

Currently our current Board comprises seven women and two men. Among the nine trustees, two trustees are from non-White British backgrounds. One is mixed race.

The data for the staff team is above and was compiled in 2023/24. The charity sector in the UK comprises of 3% of the total workforce and is predominantly based in London and the south. Women are more likely than men to work for charities and make up 68% of the charity sector workforce[2]

It is therefore no surprise that our workforce is predominantly female workforce as a charity aiming for female equality. We remain committed to maintaining our ethnic diversity, disability and other protected characteristics such as sexual orientation. We continue to review through our recruitment how we can attract, appoint and retain candidates from diverse backgrounds especially as we look at succession planning for the Board of trustees and senior management team.

[1] In the most recent Census, 82% of people in England and Wales declared themselves as White, 9% as Asian, Asian British and Asian Welsh, 4% as Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean
or African and 3% as being from multiple ethnic groups, with other ethnic groups making up 2%. In Scotland over 95% declare themselves as White. Population of England and Wales - GOV.UK Ethnicity facts and figures (ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk).

We are also fully aware of the substantial proportion of the population reporting long term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses that reduce their ability to carry out day-to-day activities. Disability, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk). When compared to the national population (England and Wales Census, 2021) we are slightly over index for staff from ethnically diverse backgrounds and staff with a disability. We also attract a predominantly younger workforce; 16% of our staff are over 45 years of age.

[2] Policybee.co.uk
UK charity and not for profit statistics 2025

In terms of economic background one indicator is whether people were educated in private school. In our staff team 20% went to independent or fee paying school (with 50% of these receiving a bursary). This compares to 6.4% of the current school age population.

In terms of age, we have an age-balanced staff workforce of people from the following age brackets:
16-24 - 3
25-34 - 4
35-44 - 8
45-54 - 3
55-64 - 1

We are aware that we cannot affect the change we want without male allies and how we draw men to engage, advocate and work for our cause is a strong thread and focus going forward. This will be particularly feasible through our trustee board.

In 2023/2024 we secured funding for an internship program and were successful in recruiting two male project support officers on one-year fixed term contracts. This has helped to enhance gender diversity within the team for the current year.

To achieve having the right people and culture we commit to taking the following actions:

Ensure that there is support, mentoring and coaching for our staff through their line managers, senior team or through externals, to achieve their potential, and be ambassadors for Women in Sport, as an organisation that is representative of **all** women and girls.

- Reach out to existing networks and build our own network that supports women and girls from diverse backgrounds so they can help us nurture our diverse talent and provide them with inspiration, support and coaching if needed.
- Ask our team, especially those from diverse backgrounds to act as champions and to share diverse perspectives so we can appreciate the differences among us, but also to ensure that all our work is representative of diverse perspectives.
- Monitor our culture through the annual staff and diversity survey, taking feedback and making constructive changes.

Having reflected on our aims and priorities for next year, our priorities for 2024-25 are as follows:

Objective	Action	Time Frame	Responsibility	Measure of Success
Our staff and trustees remain reflective of the UK population	• Trustee and Staff recruitment and retention focus on achieving this. • Run staff and trustee diversity survey.	As vacancies arise	CEO and Chair	• Staff & Trustee Diversity Survey maintains that we remain in line with the national census as a minimum. • Onboard at least two male allies to talk to our work either as ambassadors, volunteers or trustees.

	• Create opportunities for engagement with male allies within workstreams, campaigns and social media. • Test the recruitment process from job adverts to onboarding to ensure it is fit for our ambition to be representative of the women and girls in the UK.			• Recruitment statistics demonstrate that we continue to attract applicants in line with the national census on race, age and disability and gender and sexual orientation. • Increase the number male applicant year on year on vacancies and in our shortlisting as appropriate for roles. • Use the data from recruitment and shortlisting to identify gaps in our process so we can learn from and improve our recruitment process. • Positive feedback from candidates on the recruitment and onboarding of staff on the process. • Candidate feedback on our job roles and adverts including unsuccessful appointments.
The WIS team report that they feel included, respected and happy and operate in a collaborative way.	• Management development training programme for senior managers focusing on fostering inclusion so we get the best of all staff. • Weekly staff huddles, in person board meetings and inter-board briefings.	Every Board and Staff meeting Each 121 meeting with line manager	CEO and Chair	• Each person feels part of the team and heard in meetings and by their line manager and colleagues as reflected in My Plans (development plans) • Language is inclusive e.g., avoiding acronyms Staff Survey results, Trustee Reviews, Board Self-Assessment • Positive staff satisfaction survey

Our People Plan[3] forms a key part of this section [staff and trustees] outlining how we ensure high quality recruitment, retention and progression within our team as this relates to diversity.

Recruitment Statistics

We know we can only build the staff team if we are able to attract the UK population to want to work with us. To this end we have spent a lot of time over the past few years looking at our recruitment and doing our best to attract more diverse candidates.

Our 2023/24 recruitment statistics show the following:

- Apart from two internship vacancies the majority of applicants were aged between 25 to 39. We also attracted candidates who were 49 and older for all roles.
- We attracted less than 10% of disabled candidates for roles apart from the internship roles. Interestingly 20% of our staff have reported that they have a disability. We will continue to work on how we attract more disabled candidates to ensure that we continue to be diverse.
- 70-80% of all applications overall are from female candidates. This is something that we do need to look at, but we know this is heavily dependent on the type of role that we are looking to recruit into with the majority of male candidates during that year applying for the internship role.

PDF

people plan final.pdf

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- For all vacancies during that year, we received 30% of applications from candidates from diverse backgrounds. This is over indexing against the UK population and we would want to continue to maintain attracting diverse ethnicities in our applications.

Retention development and progression

The Charity has undergone significant changes over the past few years as we sought to build a team around a new strategic focus and a team with a more open and inclusive mindset. Despite significant changes, our staff survey results have been strong over this period.

We continue to learn from our annual staff surveys and exit interviews. The findings of our staff survey is shared with the team and the board of trustees.

We have been consistent with our questions and shared this information without redaction (unless the originator can be identified) with the wider team. Learning and action from the staff survey forms the basis for our retention development and progression with the team.

The following were key findings from our 2023 staff survey and is included for information:

- 100% of staff either strongly agreed (85%) or agreed with the statement “they felt respected by others at Women in Sport”.
- All staff strongly agreed (70%) and agreed with the statement “the team is friendly and inclusive to all”.
- All staff strongly agreed (70%) and agreed with the statement “are you happy you are working at Women in Sport”.

Some of the comments from the staff survey include:

- ***Being able to contribute to purposeful work within a supportive environment and alongside fantastic people. For such a small team the positive impact we make is huge. Total respect!***
- ***Not getting distracted from our purpose but keep holding ourselves true to what we want to do and not being afraid of challenging the status quo. Engaging more men and boys as allies and making them a part of our conversations.***
- ***A great, friendly team who are passionate about the organisation and the cause.***

f. Governance and Review

The Board of trustees is responsible for ensuring Women in Sport has strong policies on diversity and inclusion and that this Action Plan in operationalised. The Board will review the Plan annually. The Governance and Nominations Committee meets twice a year and reviews progress in this area of work. As part of its remit the Committee reviews diversity statistics from recruitment and the annual staff survey results.

The CEO and Senior Management Team are operationally responsible for ensuring delivery of these objectives in alignment with work priorities. Progress against the Business Plan is monitored

against a green, amber and red colour scheme with key learnings captured. The Senior Management Team will review this plan quarterly as an integral part in monitoring ~~progress~~ against priorities.

Our diversity policy is on our website and in each relevant area of the website, our headline ambitions for diversity will be made visible.

APPENDIX

Case Study - Recruitment

We have been on our journey to diversify our recruitment more actively since 2020 in the wake of George Floyd's death. Black Lives Matter made us deeply examine ourselves and our reflections led to us changing how we approach recruitment. Over the past three years we have seen how this approach has helped us to attract very diverse candidates and widen the diversity in the team.

As the Head of People, Finance and Operations I have been personally involved in over 30 plus recruitment campaigns over the past three years. We routinely attract a high volume of applications, for example 294 for a recent Operations Manager role. Our approach is labour intensive. We have a thoughtful and empathetic process that is person centered and bespoke, our being ambitious to represent the diversity of the UK.

We now have a unique and highly successful recruitment approach and philosophy. We use highly inclusive language in our recruitment materials and then talk to up to 15 long-listed candidates who we always aim to be representative of the wider population of women and girls (in the main). We do this through short informal telephone calls that allow people to simply be themselves unfettered by the pressure of using precise language or reacting to what they feel might be the recruiter's expectations. From this list we then decide on a shortlist usually of between five and seven for more formal interviews.

Throughout this process, and particularly at formal interviews, we focus first on the candidates' motivations, then their behavior in relation to our values.[4] Only if they convince us on these aspects are fully examined. At formal interview stage, we may involve an external partner in the panel and we try to ensure that there is diversity on the panel. We aim to draw people out and find out who they are. We are not testing their skills at doing interviews but trying to find out if they would add value to our team.

Two to three candidates are then offered a second interview with the CEO who, directed by the panel, explores deeper into motivations and values. Even then we may explore further. For example, on several occasions we have suspected nerves were overwhelming introverted characters and have arranged informal coffees to test this, to great effect. Our CEO will, as a minimum for each recruitment, put in over 2 hours of her time by speaking to the final selected candidates and speaking with the recruiting manager and myself. Our CEO puts recruitment at the top of her priorities.

We make sure that we are very responsive in our communications with candidates throughout the process. Candidates are not left waiting too long after the closing date to hear if they have made the long list. Every candidate that applies is told whether they have made it through to the next stage. After longlisting the rejected candidates are emailed in a personal way and after the formal interview we try to let both successful and unsuccessful candidates know within 48 hours, usually within 12 hours.

For rejected candidates we email them to allow the news to settle in but encourage a feedback call. This has yielded fantastic results and many plaudits from rejected candidates who have described this as the best process they have been through etc. We recently secured funding for two interns through the Greater London Authority (GLA) who were subsequently amazed by the quality of our recruitment process [quote]. We have a large number of glowing emails from unsuccessful candidates and at least one of these (at a mature stage in her career) even went on to volunteer for us. We will continue to use this approach to our recruitment.

GLA Feedback - Internship Programme

[1] **The following is from a feedback email from a male Afro Caribbean candidate interviewed 24/01/2024**.

"I hope this message finds you well. I want to express my sincere gratitude for the opportunity to interview for the Solutions and Projects Officer position at Women in Sport. It was a pleasure meeting with each of you and gaining insights into the incredible work that the organization is doing.

I am particularly excited about the potential to contribute to Women in Sport's impactful initiatives, especially during this significant 40-year anniversary. Our conversation reinforced my enthusiasm for the position and the alignment of my skills and experiences with the organization's mission.

I appreciate the time you took to discuss the role in detail and provide additional context about the exciting projects and events planned for the upcoming years. Learning more about the team and the collaborative spirit at Women in Sport further strengthened my interest in becoming a part of the organization.

Please convey my gratitude also to Harinie and Shereen for the thoughtful questions and the warm welcome extended to me during the interview. I am even more eager about the possibility of contributing to the incredible work Women in Sport is doing."

Liona Bravo, Programmes and Policy at the GLA. 'Women in Sport have been an incredible asset as grantees of our VRU Mayor of London Internship programme – the ethos of the organisation as one that champions diversity, equity, and representation in sport is clearly demonstrated in every area of their practice.

Not only have they been extremely proactive and collaborative as grantees ensuring the work aligns with the vision of the VRU and GLA, but they have also shared their expertise and best practice around diverse hiring to the internship programme s a whole. I'm extremely excited to continue to develop our relationship with Women in Sport, working alongside them to enable young people to advocate for equity in sport.'

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