

Annex A

No hurdle but an opportunity

29 January 2015

Sport England has a new campaign that's got hundreds of thousands of women talking enthusiastically about exercising as it's gone viral here and around the world. Local authorities can capitalise on this wave of positivity towards sport.

It's called 'This Girl Can' and is designed to break down the psychological barriers that women face when thinking about being active. There's a significant gender gap in sport. Two million fewer women than men exercise regularly, despite 75 per cent of women saying they would like to do more.

Our research showed that time and cost were common factors. But we also identified another unifying theme: the fear of judgment: fear of being the wrong size, not fit enough and not skilled enough.

That's why Sport England launched this campaign and why we're keen for local authorities to get involved.

I know that we share this agenda, but recognise that it can be difficult to prioritise it at a time when local authority budgets are so stretched. But I also know that getting people more active plays a significant role in building stronger, more engaged and healthier communities.

Launching a campaign is just the beginning. To get more women active, we need partners like local authorities to embrace it and take action locally to turn this wave of new interest into regular participation.

Already this month, 500 local authorities, county sports partnerships and schools have signed up. If your council hasn't, I'd urge you to do so. Resources are scarce for everyone so we've created a free marketing toolkit.

Women in your communities are watching the campaign right now and telling us, and each other, how positive they feel about exercising. This is a golden opportunity.

We've created something powerful here and working together, we can make a real and positive impact on women's lives.

Jennie Price is Chief Executive of Sport England.