



Press Release

Embargo: 24 February 2017

## **This Girl Can campaign returns to inspire more women across the country to get active**

- *This Girl Can* returns to television today – after encouraging 2.8m women to get more active
- The campaign was the first initiative of its kind to celebrate women of all shapes, sizes and levels of ability getting active in all their sweaty, jiggle glory
- New phase expands target age range from 14-40 to 14-60+
- New ad features real women alongside the voice of iconic poet Maya Angelou and her poem “Phenomenal Woman”
- New insight has added messages, including it’s normal to take a break (just don’t let that stop you for good)

After encouraging 2.8m women to become more active, Sport England’s National Lottery-funded *This Girl Can* campaign returns to television screens today (Friday 24 February).

Staying true to its original formula of showing real women and girls playing sport and getting active, the ambition is still about overcoming judgement – but will also feature new messages to empower women, and a range of new and returning faces. The message is clear: it’s OK to sweat, it’s OK to jiggle, it’s OK not to be brilliant (or to be brilliant!) and it’s normal for life to get in the way sometimes.

This time around, the television advert is set to a new soundtrack blended with a narrative by iconic poet, Maya Angelou. ‘Phenomenal Women’ including 15-year-old trampolinist, Cerys McIntosh, and 69-year-old outdoor swimmer Sue Bairstow showcase their ways of keeping active to the words of the 1978 poem, published in Angelou’s third volume ‘And Still I Rise’.

Other personal stories brought to life include new mum Stephanie Outlaw, student kickboxer Fakhira Mohamad Hassan Mukhtar and blade-runner Debbie Squance from Plymouth, who all show the ways they overcome the worries that can hold women back.

A few familiar faces return too, with Alice (“I’m knackered”) and Grace (“Slow but I’m lapping everyone on the couch”) from the original ads appearing in this next phase.

Artwork from the campaign also includes personal lines from featured women— with phrases such as “Unleash Your Inner Beginner” - or “Take Me as I am or Watch Me As I Go”. The mantras speak directly to fears discovered in research, and surrounding worries such as not being good enough, or overcoming stereotypes about what women should or shouldn’t do.

Powerful content in prime-time TV advertising, billboards and shopping centre screens will once again drive to the fore images of real women exercising on the national stage and use social media to start a debate about attitudes to female sport and activity.

Women from all over can pledge their support and capture their own *This Girl Can* mantra image for social media using the web-based app (only on mobile devices): <http://app.thisgirlcan.co.uk/#home>

**Sport England CEO, Jennie Price, said:** “*This Girl Can* has made a real difference since it launched, with the number of women doing regular physical activity and sport now at an all-time high. But there’s a lot more to do.

“Our research showed the dialogue many of us have in our heads about whether we look OK, whether we are good enough, whether we belong here doesn’t go away - we just learn to manage it. That’s why the reinforcement of seeing women who look like us playing sport and talking honestly about how they feel about it is so powerful.

“A new message this time is something women don’t usually hear: it’s OK to take a break, to have a week off, to walk not run. No-one is saying this to us. Few magazines say it; sports brands don’t say it.

“Many of the women we’ve featured talk about stopping, then starting again. It can feel like the hardest thing in the world to return after a few weeks off, when you fear you’ve lost ground or fitness,

but we want to surface this as a discussion point, to say it's normal to take a break, but that needn't stop you for good."

**Al Young, Chief Creative Officer of FCB Inferno, said:** "We were humbled and immensely proud of the success of the first campaign and of how its legacy lives on. This second brief presented us with a huge challenge, and this time round we have focused on the roller-coaster realities of the relationship with exercise – something that is rarely talked about. We are confident this will help even more girls and women manage their fear of judgement when getting active."

**Sharon Jiggins, Managing Director of FCB Inferno:** "We wanted to move the campaign on to encourage even more women to get active. The Maya Angelou poem 'Phenomenal Women' has the power to do this. It is a celebration of women everywhere, creates a strong sense of belonging and inclusivity, whilst challenging stereotypes."

*This Girl Can* is funded thanks to Lottery Players and Arabella Gilchrist, **Head of Brand for The National Lottery, said:** "We're incredibly proud of our association with the *This Girl Can* and especially the impact it has had on British women over the past 12 months – to be able to say that funds raised by National Lottery players are enabling the next phase fills us with immense pride. Over the last 22 years, The National Lottery has had a transformative effect on people and communities throughout the UK – and in the same way, this fantastic new campaign will have a life-changing effect on women in every walk of life, in every nook and cranny of the nation. The results so far speak volumes and we look forward to seeing the stories unfold over the coming weeks."

For more about *This Girl Can*, go to [thisgirlcan.co.uk](http://thisgirlcan.co.uk) where you can find out about the women in the campaign, get tips on how to get active and join the national debate or follow *This Girl Can* on Facebook or Twitter.

**ENDS**

**Notes to editors:**

For more information about *This Girl Can*, including campaign imagery, video footage, and interview requests with the girls that feature in the campaign, please contact the team at Mischief on behalf of Sport England on 020 3128 6600 or email [TGC@mischiefpr.com](mailto:TGC@mischiefpr.com)

The TV advert appears during Coronation Street 1945 Friday 24 February 2017

**Available Assets:**

- Interview opportunities:
  - Jennie Price, CEO Sport England
  - Kate Dale, Strategic Lead, Brand & Digital, Sport England
  - 20 campaign girls
- Full 90, 60, and 30 second versions of TV Advert
- 30 second content films relating to campaign themes
- Campaign imagery

This Girl Can – examples of women featuring in the latest advertising

### **Lydia Scott, 29, London**

Until she found roller derby, Lydia was not at all active – something that she says stems from hating PE at school. At 4ft 10 she has always found sports – like netball – tough. However, she says she loves roller derby because it's a sport where size and shape doesn't matter. Seven years ago, Lydia went to watch a friend play roller derby and decided she would give it a go. As a complete novice to skating, she bought all the gear expecting to try it once and then give up. She surprised herself by loving the sport and making lots of new friends through the London Rock 'n Rollers club. Outside of roller derby, Lydia works part-time for a charity, and part-time as a pet sitter.

### **Bisi Adewumi, 39, Middlesex**

Freelance financial services worker Bisi enjoyed athletics at school and in her twenties but found, when she started her work life, exercise fell by the wayside. She admits she didn't have time, wasn't interested in being active and couldn't be bothered. In 2014, however she decided she wanted to get fit and gain a bit of muscle so began going to the gym which then turned into regular weight training. She says she loves her training as it makes her feel stronger, look good and feel sexy. However if it's her time of the month or it's really cold weather she'll give herself a break from her gym routine.

### **Alice Walmsley, 18, Manchester**

Hairdressing student Alice took part in the first *This Girl Can* advert and two years on has taken a break from running and picked it back up. Alice says she was always bad at PE at school but took up running four years ago took up running after Google-ing how to lose weight. In the past few years she has been up and down in weight and activity levels. She says when she started running again it was tough and sometimes has to force herself to get out of the house but she knows it makes her feel good. Days when she doesn't go running she'll do some pad work in the garden with her fiancée who is a boxer.

As a student holding down a job, Alice works long hours, often on her feet, but says she enjoys how running gets her out of the house.

### **Sue Bairstow, 69, London**

Sue has been swimming outdoors for most of her life – learning to swim in a river while growing up in Yorkshire. Sue says the cold water gives her a buzz and wakes her up in the morning. Even though Sue has been active all her life, one summer she broke her ankle and missed a month of swimming. She came back to swimming the following month – knowing that if she didn't do it then she never would. Swimming isn't the only sport that Sue takes part in. She regularly takes part in yoga and pilates classes, cycles to commute (and for the joy of it!), and takes part in Zumba after a referral from the NHS for an osteoporosis diagnosis. An important part of her life is also walking, which she uses to socialise and holiday with friends.

Areas of authority: Sue is able to talk about resilience, and maintaining an active lifestyle at an older age.

### **Research and insight behind This Girl Can**

The initiative comes as research, carried out by Sport England as part of its Active Lives Survey of 200,000 people, reveals that fewer women (59% or 13.3m) than men (63% or 13.7 m) are active enough to meet CMO guidelines of 150 minutes or more of moderate intensity activity in a week. Levels of inactivity increase greatly with age – just 15% of those aged 16-24 are inactive (less than 30 mins exercise a week), compared to 54% of those aged 75+.

Significant gender gaps continue when it comes to exercise types, with men 28.6% (6.2m) more likely to be active than women 16.9% (3.8m) within sporting activities\*.

\* The figures listed in this report exclude gardening activity which is not part of Sport England's remit

### **About Sport England & The National Lottery**

Sport England is a public body and invests more than £300 million National Lottery and government money each year in projects and programmes that help people get active and play sport.

It wants everyone in England, regardless of age, background, or level of ability, to feel able to engage in sport and physical activity. That's why a lot of its work is specifically focused on helping people who do no, or very little, physical activity and groups who are typically less active - like women, disabled people and people on lower incomes. Sport England used National Lottery funding to create

the This Girl Can campaign in 2015. So far it has inspired 2.8 million women to do some or more activity. The second phase of the campaign launched in 2017

For more information please contact the press office: Andrew St Ledger on 020 7273 1800 or [andrew.stledger@sportengland.org](mailto:andrew.stledger@sportengland.org);