UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL 00.01 TUESDAY 22ND MARCH 2022

**Scarlett Moffatt teams up with This Girl Can Classes to help women re-discover the joy of being active**

* *This Girl Can and EMD UK team up with Scarlett Moffatt to celebrate the joys of getting active - with This Girl Can Classes*
* *Fun and low-intensity classes will tackle the gender ‘exercise enjoyment gap’; 2 million fewer women than men strongly agree that they enjoy exercise or sport.*
* *This Girl Can Classes focus on enjoyment, rather than ability, allowing women to re-discover the joys of getting active*
* *Since launching at the end of last year, over 20 major leisure operators have signed up and 200 instructors have been trained, with women taking part across the UK*
* *“I want all women to choose joy when they’re getting active” says Scarlett Moffatt*

Sport England’s This Girl Can campaign and EMD UK, the National Governing Body for group exercise, has partnered with Scarlett Moffatt to help more women re-discover the joys of being active by attending a This Girl Can Class.

The gender ‘exercise enjoyment gap’ means that 2.3 million fewer women than men strongly agree that they enjoy exercise and sport.[[1]](#footnote-2) And 4 in 10 women aged 25-34 say they exercise for the purpose of losing weight.[[2]](#footnote-3) This reveals that some women may use exercise as a way to conform to body image pressures imposed on them by society and may see getting active as a chore - rather than something they enjoy.

However, group exercise is a very popular option for women, who make up 84% of group exercise visits in leisure centres.[[3]](#footnote-4)

Although over a third (35%) of women say they have recently taken part in group exercise, the ‘exercise enjoyment gap’ - as well as fear of judgement - are two of the big obstacles preventing more women joining in. Sport England’s research shows that, of women who don’t currently participate in group exercise, over a third (35%) of women say not feeling fit enough prevents them from participating. A third (33%) are held back by insecurities around their body image.[[4]](#footnote-5)

Since launching last year, This Girl Can Classes have been on a mission to tackle the ‘enjoyment gap’. Many women who have attended have expressed their delight at finding a fun option that works for them and their fitness and confidence levels. The classes provide a welcomingand pressure-free space to empower those who aren’t currently active on a regular basis - or are intimidated to try group exercise - to get active among likeminded women.

**TV presenter and author Scarlett Moffatt is no stranger to the pressures of body image and the nerves that taking part in exercise can bring:** *“I loved being active when I was younger, I was really into dancing and even took part in ballroom dancing competitions, but as I got older, I started to feel more self-conscious and worried about taking part – was I fit enough? Did I look right? What did other people think?”*

The classes offer the chance to try a range of exercise styles including dance fitness, boxing fitness and yoga-inspired stretch, acting as a stepping stone into mainstream exercise class options. The class instructors have been trained to create a warm and welcoming environment, so less active women can feel confident that they will be able to take it at their own pace in a highly supportive space.

Recently, Scarlett took part in her local This Girl Can Class in Newcastle to inspire other women to overcome their fears of getting active. *“Everyone in the class was so welcoming and the instructor made me instantly feel at home. Looking around the studio it was great to see women from all different backgrounds, with different body shapes, and at similar fitness levels to me, relaxing and enjoying just getting active and moving their bodies!*

*“In the past I’ve often felt daunted by exercise – viewing it as a means to change my body rather than appreciate what my body can do. I now have a very positive attitude to exercise and do it for my mental and physical health and because I’ve found exercise options that are right for me such as gentle swimming: I really want to help more women get to a place where they exercise for the pure joy of it rather than to punish themselves. These classes are a perfect way to learn to enjoy being active again, in a supportive environment and at your own pace with a great playlist.  I’ll definitely be back – and I want all women to choose joy when they’re getting active.”*

**Catherine Muckle, This Girl Can classes instructor at Newburn Activity Centre in Newcastle, said:** “*I love teaching these classes and giving women a chance to find a way to get active in a warm and welcoming space – whether its low impact stretching or an upbeat dance class, what matters most to me is that everyone feels comfortable and finishes the class with a smile on their face.”*

**Frances Drury, This Girl Can Activation Lead, says:** *“We’re delighted Scarlett joined us and experienced the camaraderie and fun that This Girl Can classes can provide. Our research has shown that truly enjoying being active leads to longer-term lifestyle changes - rather than doing it purely for body image reasons. There is a lot of pressure for women to look a certain way – even when they’re exercising – but This Girl Can has always challenged these conventional ideas and used joy to inspire women and prove that getting active should be fun. We want more women to discover the joy that being active can bring.”*

**Shelley Meyern, Head of Operations at EMD UK, says:** *“We created these classes with This Girl Can to bring the joy of exercise to women who previously might have felt that fitness and sport was something they had to do, or who have been too intimidated or worried about their fitness to get involved in the past. We like to tell women at a This Girl Can Class that “getting it wrong is totally alright.””*

To find a class near you, go to: https://thisgirlcanclasses.co.uk

**ENDS**

**NOTES TO EDITORS**

For additional information or to book an interview with any of the below spokespeople and case studies, please email [ThisGirlCan@redconsultancy.com](mailto:ThisGirlCan@redconsultancy.com)

Available for interview to discuss the launch of This Girl Can Classes, we have:

* **Scarlett Moffatt**
* **Kate Dale, This Girl Can Campaign Lead**
* **[insert case study details]**

**About Sport England**

Sport England is a public body and invests up to £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.

**About This Girl Can**

Launched in 2015, This Girl Can is Sport England’s nationwide campaign to build women and girls’ confidence to be active, regardless of shape, size and ability – by celebrating them getting active on their own terms.

It’s based on insight that 75% of women say they want to do more sport or exercise, but research shows they are persistently less active than men. A fear of being judged was one of the top barriers holding them back. And research shows that Covid-19 has made it even harder for women and girls to be active, with women struggling more than men to return to sport or activity. We want to tackle the gender activity gap, challenge conventional ideas of what women exercising look like and connect with women of all backgrounds, abilities and ethnicities who might feel that getting active isn’t for them. So far, This Girl Can has inspired nearly 4 million women to engage with getting active in their own way - no matter how they look, how well they do it or how sweaty they get.

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/ThisGirlCanUK>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/thisgirlcanuk/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ThisGirlCanUK/>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/thisgirlcanuk>

**About EMD UK**

EMD UK is the national governing body for group exercise, dedicated to achieving a vision of healthier communities through group exercise. We work with instructors, operators and organisations across the sector to provide help, support and advice and to ensure that group exercise continues to inspire people of all ages and abilities to take part in physical activity.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ExerciseMoveDanceUK>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/exercisemovedanceuk>

1. Active Lives, May 20-21 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Sport England research, 605 women aged 25-34 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Moving Communities, Jan – Feb 2022 data [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. TGC Wave 22 evaluation report, Walnut, 2021 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)