

**THIS  
GIRL  
CAN**

**CAMPAIGN  
SUMMARY**

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**Sport England wants to make sport and physical activity a normal part of life for everyone across England, no matter who you are. To do this, we need to reimagine how we keep movement, sport and activity central to the lives of everyone.**

This is a fundamental principle behind Sport England's strategy – Uniting the Movement – and has been the focus of This Girl Can since it was launched in 2015. We knew that if we were to successfully address the gender gap, more of the same would not be enough. We had to see the world through the eyes and experiences of the women and girls who didn't feel that physical activity was for people like them and change the way it was created, organised and promoted.

Together, we've achieved a lot but our work is not yet done – we will continue until no woman is left behind. This document tells the story of what we've achieved – but more importantly – what we've learned as we created a campaign that challenged us as well as our partners. I hope you find it interesting, thought-provoking and determined to join our movement, helping us close the gap once and for all.



Kate Dale,  
Director of Marketing

## PHASE ONE

This Girl Can, Jan - Jul 2015

## PHASE TWO

Phenomenal Women, Feb - Jul 2017

## PHASE THREE

Fit Got Real, Oct 2018 - Jun 2019

## PHASE FOUR

Me Again, Jan 2020 - Jun 2021

## PHASE FIVE

This Girl Can With You,  
Launching Feb 2023

# INTRODUCTION

**At Sport England we are working towards an active nation, transforming people's lives through sport and physical activity.**

We invest National Lottery and Exchequer funding in a wide range of projects so that everyone can experience the benefits of sport and physical activity.

The impact of this investment has helped increase the overall numbers of people being active in England, however our research revealed that despite this, women were persistently less active than men.

We knew that we had to address the gender gap and the reasons behind it, so we created This Girl Can, to celebrate active women who are doing their thing no matter how they do it, how they look or even how sweaty they get.



**1.75 MILLION FEWER  
WOMEN WERE  
EXERCISING REGULARLY  
THAN MEN IN 2014**

Sport England's Active People Survey, October 2013/14

## INSIGHT

**We needed to increase the number of women participating in exercise and sport, to reduce this gender gap and keep them engaged.**

### Objectives

Increase the number of girls and women taking part in sport and exercise

Change how they feel and think about exercising and playing sport

Change the opportunities available to women to become active

We knew that women recognised the benefits of exercise, with 75% saying that they wanted to do more. But something was stopping them.

At any point, a woman might have one barrier or multiple, all constantly shifting with the world around her.

By removing practical barriers, a pattern started to emerge.

### Key insight

Every remaining barrier could be traced back to something truly universal, fresh and emotionally powerful: The fear of judgement.

### **Fear was stopping women from exercising.**

Women were worried about being judged on their appearance during and after exercise; on their ability, whether they were a beginner or 'too good'; or for spending time exercising instead of prioritising their children, family or work.



## FEAR WAS STOPPING WOMEN FROM EXERCISING

### Appearance

- Being sweaty
- Having a red face
- Not looking like I usually do (made up)
- Changing in front of others
- Wearing tight clothing
- Wearing sports clothing
- Wearing the wrong clothing/kit
- Showing my body
- How my body looks during exercise (jiggling)
- Not appearing feminine
- Developing too many muscles

### Ability

- Not being fit enough
- Not being good enough
- Not being competitive/serious enough
- Not knowing the rules
- Not knowing what equipment to bring
- Bringing the wrong equipment
- Holding back the group
- Being too good
- Being seen as too competitive

### Priorities

- Family should be more important
- Time with friends should be more important
- Studying/working should be more important
- Other things I should be doing are more important



## **LIBERATING WOMEN FROM THE JUDGEMENTS THAT HOLD THEM BACK**

## **PHASE ONE** Jan - Jul 2015

### **THIS GIRL CAN**

**Our insight told us that women felt distanced from exercise due to the usual portrayal of women and exercise in society.**

By celebrating a realistic vision of women and exercise in England, we created a campaign to provide women with inspiration and support to liberate them from the judgements that hold them back.

We developed a manifesto based on a real understanding of our audience and designed a 3-phase behaviour change approach.

### **OUR MANIFESTO**

**'Women come in all shapes and sizes and all levels of ability. It doesn't matter if you're rubbish or an expert. The brilliant thing is you're a woman and you're doing something'**



## HELPING WOMEN REALISE THEY WERE NOT ALONE

### 1. Realisation

The first step was to talk about the fear of judgement and help women realise they were not alone in feeling this way.

We soft-launched the campaign in October 2014. The PR agency worked with select media titles to create a series of articles discussing the fear of judgement. We created a series of online films that we shared through chosen publications, each telling the story of one woman (Kelly, Julie, Victoria or Grace) overcoming their individual barrier to exercise.

We identified women tweeting their exercise anxieties and we started conversations to support and encourage them.

### 2. Inspiration

To encourage as many women as possible and create a new societal norm, we needed to ensure our campaign had a

very broad and public reach. To achieve this, we launched with broadcast creative on primetime TV. The TV campaign was supported by a cinema ad, YouTube takeover, digital and social ads and a national poster campaign.

### 3. Self-identification

Behavioural economics suggests that making a public statement improves the likelihood of cementing new attitudes and habits. The third stage focused on encouraging women to 'self-identify' with exercise publicly. If we had managed to empower women with the confidence to exercise, we wanted them to shout about it; whether that be talking about their activity, sharing their exercise photos or simply by using #ThisGirlCan.



## WE DELIVERED OUR MESSAGE IN NEW PLACES

### Our insight told us to go where women are. So we got creative, and delivered our message in new places:

- Premiering our This Girl Can advert during a Monday night Coronation Street advert break (January 2015)
- Using a full-time social media presence on Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Pinterest and Instagram to curate conversation and engage with women online
- Targeting consumer media like Mail Online, Grazia and Stylist
- Utilising billboard, cinema and further TV advertising to reach women during the course of their everyday lives (January – March 2015, and May – June 2015)

Recognising the role that self-identification plays in affecting behaviour change and our growing This Girl Can community, who felt part of a movement, we also created a This Girl Can app.

The app allows women to create their own This Girl Can poster, using the campaign's mantras, such as 'I kick balls. Deal with it' and 'Hot and not bothered'.

In addition, the This Girl Can website provides helpful advice and signposting to women who want to become more active.





**70% OF WOMEN  
AGED 14-40 REPORTED  
BEING MOTIVATED BY  
THE CAMPAIGN**

Kantar's standard AdEval metric - Kantar Public, March 2015

# PHASE ONE RESULTS

## THIS GIRL CAN



Over 95M online views  
of the campaign



733,000 mentions on social media



581,000 fans/followers  
across all platforms



Over 1.2M visits to the website



Talked about over a thousand  
times every day on social media



In over 110 countries



## 2.8 MILLION WOMEN WERE MORE ACTIVE AS A RESULT OF SEEING THE CAMPAIGN

Sport England's This Girl Can survey - Kantar Public, November 2015

## IMPACT

**Our tracking study asked women what influence the campaign had on their activity levels.**

The following figures have been adjusted up to national population levels, telling us: 2.8 million women aged 14-40 were more active (e.g. tried a new type of exercise, or increased the amount of time spent exercising) as a result of seeing the campaign.

Of those, 1.6 million started or re-started exercise (e.g. got back into exercise after a break) as a result of seeing the campaign. (Sport England's This Girl Can Survey - Kantar Public, November 2015)

Looking at overall physical activity levels in England:

- The number of women playing sport and getting active **once a week, every week** increased by 250,000. (Sport England Active People survey results, October 2016)
- The increase in women's participation occurred while men's activity levels remained the same.



## TOTAL GROSS VALUE TO THE ECONOMY = £66M

Sport England's Economic Value of Sport Model, November 2016

## RETURN

**We calculated that the increase in women's participation has a direct economic value to society, through a combination of the money generated by participation itself, combined with the value of the health benefits.**

### Total Gross Value to the economy = £66m

This includes economic activity associated with the provision of and participation in sports facilities requiring subscription fees and activity associated with the manufacture and retail of sports clothing and equipment.

### Total economic value of health benefits = £320m

The reduction in treatment costs that can be attributed to participation in sport, and the value of increased health-related quality of life.

Health cost savings = £49m

Other health benefits = £271m

(quality-adjusted life years, etc)

### Total estimated value = £387m

These figures have been estimated using Sport England's 'Economic Value of Sport Model'. The model was developed and verified independently and reviewed by a number of government departments before being put into use.

[Click here to discover how sport benefits the economy using our Economic Value of Sport Model.](#)



**IT'S NORMAL TO  
HAVE 'WOBBLES'**

## LEARNING

**The first phase of the campaign taught us about how women navigate in and out of activity.**

### **We learnt that the fear of judgement doesn't just go away.**

It's about managing fears and gathering the confidence to get active in spite of them.

We learnt that small changes by providers can make big differences to how women feel, for example: changing a session leader, or the location of an activity can affect women's confidence. Providers should consider this when making changes to staffing or timetables.

Women told us they managed their fears by carefully selecting activities. The things they considered included:

- The atmosphere around the activity e.g. will the other people taking part be friendly?
- Who to take part with e.g. can you take along a

friend or family member for moral support?

- The specific sport or activity e.g. swimming makes some women feel more self-conscious than running.

Other strategies women told us they used to build confidence included looking the part (e.g. getting new gear), giving themselves pep talks and re-framing exercise (e.g. so it was about raising money for charity rather than competing against other people).

We learnt that developing confidence leads to action and this helps build resilience but it's a constant battle. It's okay to have breaks or 'wobbles'. As much as most women have a fear of judgement in common, they're also not alone in having setbacks and having to pluck up the confidence to go back.



## INCREASING THE RESILIENCE OF WOMEN WHO DROP IN AND OUT

## PHASE TWO Feb - Jul 2017

### PHENOMENAL WOMEN

**Phase two of the campaign built directly on the learning from the first phase.**

This phase prioritised long term, sustainable growth – creating regular habits and increasing the resilience of women who drop in and out of activity.

We also extended the campaign to include women aged 40-60 for the first time, as our insight into this age group showed that the fear of judgement resonated just as strongly with them as it did with younger women.

However, there were slight differences in some of the barriers for this audience e.g. women told us they worried about not being as good as they used to be, about hurting themselves, feeling compelled/pressured to exercise because of poor health, or being too old to start something new.

We adapted the campaign to respond to some of these concerns.

For example, the Phase Two creative featured some older women and slower-paced activities, responding to the concern that the activities shown in the first phase were all very fast-paced and intense and so might feel unachievable for some women.



**RECOGNITION PEAKED  
AT 61% IN JULY 2017,  
WITH THE BIGGEST  
INCREASE IN WOMEN  
AGED 41-60**

Sport England's This Girl Can Survey – Kantar Public, November 2017

## PHASE TWO RESULTS

### PHENOMENAL WOMEN



29M Online views of the campaign



272 Pieces of editorial coverage



Brand awareness grew to 46%  
from 35% at the end of the phase



Social media community  
grew to over 700k



45k posters created by women  
using our TGC mantra app



# 2.9 MILLION WOMEN AGED 14-60 WERE MORE ACTIVE AS A RESULT OF SEEING THE CAMPAIGN

Sport England's This Girl Can Survey - Kantar Public, November 2017

## IMPACT

**Our tracking study asked women what influence the campaign had on their activity levels, it told us that:**

- 2.9 million women aged 14-60 have been more active (e.g. tried a new type of exercise, or increased the amount of time spent exercising) as a result of seeing the campaign.
- Of those, 1.5 million have started or re-started exercise (e.g. got back into exercise after a break) as a result of seeing the campaign. (Sport England's This Girl Can Survey - Kantar Public, November 2017)

We have seen some evidence of changing attitudes and norms among women. The proportion of women aged 14-60 agreeing that 'people like me are doing sport and exercise' grew from 43% before we launched the campaign (Nov 2014) to 49% after Phase One (Nov 2015) and 48% after Phase Two (Nov 2017). (Sport England's This Girl Can Survey - Kantar Public)

Active Lives, Sport England's national population survey, showed that the overall number of women who were active for at least 150 minutes per week was maintained, consolidating the gains we saw following the first phase of the campaign. (Sport England Active Lives survey results, May 17/18)



**WOMEN WITH LOWER INCOMES AND FROM SOME ETHNIC GROUPS WERE LESS ENGAGED WITH THE CAMPAIGN**

## LEARNING

**Phase two built on Phase One, continuing to encourage and support millions of women to be more active.**

The campaign didn't feel as new and noisy to women as it did in Phase One however, when it was very striking and fresh.

Some women told us that without constant reminders the message begins to recede, so they need to keep coming across the campaign for it to make a powerful impact on their journey into activity.

We successfully increased engagement with the campaign by women aged 41-60 and we saw a positive shift in attitudes and activity levels among these women.

However, we also saw the continuation of some existing inequalities. Although overall engagement had increased, women with lower incomes and from some specific ethnic groups remained less engaged with the campaign.

These same groups are also less likely to be active. We were keen to understand why and make appropriate changes to the campaign message.





## OVERCOMING THE SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC BARRIERS

# PHASE THREE Oct 18 - Jun 19

## FIT GOT REAL

**We launched phase three to tackle inequalities in activity levels.**

We wanted to help more women meet the Chief Medical Officer's guidance to do at least 150 minutes of physical activity per week for good health.

To close the physical activity gender gap, Phase Three addressed the stark inequalities in exercise levels between different groups of women.

Almost half of lower income women (for example, those working in 'routine' and 'semi-routine' jobs, like shop assistants, hairdressers and cleaners) are not meeting the recommended physical activity guidelines, compared to a third of higher income women.

Significantly more black and South Asian women are not meeting weekly guidelines compared to white women. (Sport England Active Lives survey, November 16/17)

In order to help address these inequalities, Phase Three of the campaign acknowledged and encouraged women to overcome the social, cultural and economic barriers preventing them from having the confidence and motivation to exercise regularly.



**REAL WOMEN OF  
DIFFERENT AGES AND  
ETHNICITIES DOING  
EXERCISE THEIR  
OWN WAY**

**Our latest research found that many women did not exercise as much as they would like, due to the practical challenges they faced, in addition to fear and judgement.**

Many of the women we were trying to reach faced additional practical challenges – such as not having enough time, feeling too tired, being too busy or the high costs of sports and gym memberships.

Women were motivated by the first two phases of the campaign, and admired the women that were featured, but thought those women didn't face the same challenges as them. There was a perception that 'real women' like them are rarely shown exercising in marketing, the media or on TV, and if they are, the women are often shown in a negative light or even ridiculed.

Phase Three of the campaign tackles this perception with a new Fit Got Real message showing real women of different ages and ethnicities doing exercise their own way, no

matter how unconventional, including; running around a park pushing their child in a pram, hula hooping at home, jumping into the sea, trampolining with friends and teaching themselves how to swim using YouTube.

The This Girl Can website also showcases women talking about how they fit exercise into their lives, why they like it and the negative perceptions and barriers they overcome to be more active.

It's a celebration of the women who have defied convention and found ways to exercise that fit with their lives.



**RUN IN BURSTS  
USING SOCIAL MEDIA**

# PHASE THREE RESULTS

## FIT GOT REAL



Brand awareness remained stable at 42%



774.8k social media members (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest).



1 in 4 (25%) women believe that TGC is aimed at them which is level with other November benchmarks



7 out of 10 women (69%) feel the ads accurately reflect women who do sport and exercise



Around two-thirds of women (67%) agree the ads made them think that any exercise they can fit into their schedule is worth doing



**53% OF WOMEN AGREE THAT 'PEOPLE LIKE ME ARE DOING SPORT AND EXERCISE'**

Sport England's This Girl Can Survey - Kantar Public, November 2018

## IMPACT

**Our tracking study asked women what influence the campaign had on their activity levels.**

While recognition of the campaign remained highest amongst younger groups, recognition of materials (39%) was lower than Phase 1 (60%) and Phase 2 (53%) after the removal of TV support.

The proportion of women taking part in more physical activity was reported at 32%, a joint high with the end of Phase 2.

Agreement that sport and activity is part of women's routine was higher than in previous waves.

There were promising signs that engagement with the brand was level among different socio-economic groups.

We also saw signs that women's attitudes towards sport and physical activity were changing since we first launched TGC:

- 53% of women agree that 'people like me are doing sport and exercise' (up from 43% in Nov 2014)
- 51% of women agreed that 'I don't worry what others think of me when exercising' (up from 44% in Nov 2014)



**WE NEED LARGE SCALE ACTIVATION, PROVIDING MORE LOCALISED, ON THE GROUND SUPPORT**

## LEARNING

**Phase three continued to encourage and support millions of women to be more active, however it can't tackle existing inequalities alone.**

While affluent women and those under 40 remain more likely to report action as a result of the campaign – we have not seen a shift among women from less affluent and black, asian and minority ethnic communities

We learnt that while lower media spend worked well at keeping our community engaged, it didn't necessarily lead to developing new audiences.

This Girl Can is performing well as a brand, but has proven that marketing alone doesn't work for lower socio-economic and other underrepresented groups.

The answer needs large scale activation, providing more localised, on the ground support and opportunities to encourage women to move more and get active.



**AIMED AT ALL WOMEN,  
BRINGING OUT THE  
OFTEN UNSPOKEN,  
SHARED EXPERIENCES**

## **PHASE FOUR** Jan 20 - Jun 21

### **ME AGAIN**

**This Girl Can returned to TV screens - five years after the campaign first launched.**

This brand new ad mixes footage of five new cast members with some of the iconic images we've seen before to celebrate the progress we've made, while reaching out to women and girls who are still not getting sufficiently active.

It is part of an integrated campaign that mixes campaigning, partnership and opportunities to encourage more women to feel able to get active in the ways that work for them.

As always, we show the unfiltered reality of women getting active - no filters, no airbrushing; but this time we also sought to show the unfiltered reality of women's lives.

So the trailblazing, taboo-busting creative features breastfeeding, the menopause and periods.

While Fit Got Real targeted women on lower incomes and tackled the practical barriers as well as the emotional ones; Me Again is aimed at all of us, bringing out the often unspoken, shared experiences we all have.

First, it became clear that for women on lower incomes there were practical barriers as well as emotional barriers to getting active that a campaign on its own couldn't solve.

There is a need for more localised, on-the-ground support to meet their specific needs.



## SHARING EXPERIENCES AND THE STRUGGLES OF BEING ACTIVE DURING THE PANDEMIC

### **We broadened our focus back out to all women for a couple of reasons.**

As Sport England moved into the final year of its strategy period - with its eye fixed firmly on the women's target - we wanted to play to the campaigns strengths, reaching and motivating as many women as possible and giving us the best possible chance of getting 250,000 women more active.

However, in March 2020 England went into lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Everything changed. People's routines were ripped up overnight.

Women were disproportionately impacted by the pandemic financially, with a greater burden of care and increased levels of worry & anxiety.

This Girl Can pivoted quickly in response to COVID-19, with it's social community becoming a place for women

to share their experiences and struggles of being active during the pandemic and offer support to each other.

In September an updated version of the 'Me Again' film from January was promoted as part of a two month paid media burst, highlighting the stories of four new women to TGC who had found ways to be active despite the restrictions.

As part of a renewed PR push, 'Sistagram' was launched, partnering the women in the ad with leading female influencers on Instagram to encourage conversations around exercising during lockdown.



## IMPACT

**We know that the campaign caught the attention of and reached our audience.**

Brand recognition during the TV campaign stood at 36% - comparable with Phase 3 (39%), but lower than Phase 1 (60%) and Phase 2 (53%), likely due to a low spend and a tweak to our evaluation question format.

**1 IN 4 WOMEN REPORT THAT COVID 19 IS A BARRIER TO THEM DOING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

Walnut, November 2021

Recognition of the campaign remained higher amongst those who are younger (14-25: 52% and 26-40: 38%), however this was lower than during other phases, again likely due to reduced media spend.

This Phase did initially see a steady increase in recognition of social media assets (the accounts, pages and followers across different social media platforms) for all ages and lower socio-economic groups.

All of this was achieved despite the campaign landing in a challenging environment.

The long-term impacts of the pandemic - increased financial insecurity and a greater burden of care combined to make it feel even harder for many women to get active.

Although Covid-19 restrictions eased in July 2021, some women found it challenging to immediately return to their previous activities for reasons including disrupted

routines, life changes and ongoing concerns about contracting the virus.

This is demonstrated by the significant drop in perceived opportunities to be active. Fears of not feeling fit enough remained high, perhaps exacerbated by longer periods of inactivity.

However, there was a sense that the worst of the pandemic impact may have been over with 30% of women reporting doing more activity in comparison to the same period last year (compared with 18% who said they were doing less.)





## LEARNING

**Since phase three we have been building our knowledge and expertise of working in partnerships with other brands.**

**USING BRANDS THAT WOMEN TRUST TO AMPLIFY THE MESSAGES OF THE CAMPAIGN**

Partnerships, both commercial and non-commercial - enable This Girl Can to reach new women through other brands they love and trust and amplify the messages of the campaign. They allow us to target new and specific audiences, significantly increase our reach and drive credibility and visibility for TGC.

Moving forward TGC will elevate its partnership work by working more closely with organisations that target audiences from under-represented groups. We will test and learn how TGC can better meet these groups needs through working in partnership.

Other benefits include leveraging media spend from our partners, influencing the way they market to women through our insight and creating content, all of which will ultimately drive activity levels.

In this way, we can generate maximum value from the public investment made into creating the campaign, making it more sustainable in the long-term.

TGC responded quickly to the disruption caused by COVID 19. This enabled TGC to remain fresh and relevant by showing the reality of physical activity during lockdowns and restrictions while maintaining that unfiltered reality of women being active.

**For TGC to remain relevant we've learnt that we need to respond quickly to the reality of women's lives.**

**We wanted to challenge norms, start conversations, and change behaviour - and by every measure we've succeeded, but there's more to do.**



**AWARENESS  
REACHED A NEW  
PEAK OF 47%**

# PHASE FOUR RESULTS

## ME AGAIN



Awareness reached a new peak of 47%



One in four (24%) reported starting or doing more activity as a result of TGC



810,000 social media members (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest)



Approaching 1 in 4 (22%) report that TGC is aimed at them, in line with previous waves



Nearly 1 in 5 (17%) say that TGC has helped motivate and inspire them to keep going with exercise



**FUN & ENGAGING FOR FAMILIES TO GET ACTIVE TOGETHER, AT ANY TIME**

Sport England's This Girl Can Survey - Kantar Public, November 2019

## PARTNERSHIPS

### DISNEY

**We partnered with Disney to create 5 dance-a-long videos designed to inspire mums to get active with their kids.**

The films featured real families cast from our TGC community and featured popular Disney songs from the movies.

The content was released in October 2019 during half term and hosted on the Disney & TGC YouTube channels.

The films were promoted through each partners social channels and included social spend of £65k from TGC.

The main objective was to develop content that would be fun & engaging for families to get active together and could be enjoyed at any time.

- 323,000 views (Oct 2019-June 2020)
- 20% of parents were aware of the TGC Disney content
- Three-quarters (77%) of parents aware of the videos agreed that being associated with Disney 'encouraged me to look at' the videos, while
- Four out of five parents (80%) aware of the videos, reported that the videos would motivate and inspire them to dance with their child(ren).



# BEING ACTIVE NOW, IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER

Sport England's This Girl Can Survey – Kantar Public, November 2020

THIS  
GIRL  
CAN

It Won't Let You Down.

## SURE

**We partnered with Sure to launch 'Your World Your Workout' ad campaign on 1st July 2020 on Sky, Channel 4 & ITV.**

The advert was edited to reflect COVID-19 with a clear message - being active now is more important than ever, and targeted Sure's core audience of women aged 18 - 34.

- Around 1 in 5 (22%) women were aware of the Sure partnership or had seen the advert
- The highest recognition was amongst women aged 14-40
- Overall the ads performed strongly with almost nine out of ten women (87%) who recognized the Sure ads feeling they showed a positive and realistic view of women exercising

- Around eight in ten recognisers felt they were aimed at people like them (80%), and/or that they were enjoyable to watch (77%)

Moving forward TGC will become a partnership led campaign providing local support and opportunities for women to be active in a way that works for them.



## RIDES FOR WOMEN, LED BY WOMEN

### BRITISH CYCLING

**This Girl Can partnered with British Cycling in 2019 to support promotion of their BREEZE programme, a friendly group rides for women, led by women.**

A social media campaign was developed with photography and videos which were designed to engage a less active and less confident female audience.

There continued to be an uplift in attendance at rides 3-4 weeks post the campaign ending implying that it took a while to convert contemplation into action.

The campaign achieved:

- highest monthly attendance in July 2019 with 6,694 women attending rides
- 123% rise in women viewing the available rides online versus the equivalent period the previous year
- 9% uplift in attendance during the six week campaign period
- 37% increase in the number of rides offered by the volunteer ride leaders.



## STRAVA

**In May 2022, This Girl Can partnered with the physical activity tracking app Strava to launch the Make Your Comeback campaign to help women get active again after a break.**

Underpinned by the insight that 45% of women say not feeling fit enough is a barrier to getting active, it was created to support women and girls to get moving again after the pandemic by showing them it's completely normal to take a step back from physical activity and movement

The partnership aimed to show women it's never too late to make your comeback and there's no right or wrong way to be active.

The THIS GIRL CAN CLUB on Strava was created to provide a space for women to support one another and shine a light on the moments of joy that come with being active.

Alongside this, the Make Your Comeback challenge – to complete four hours of activity over four weeks – offered an accessible and motivating route back into activity.

Finally, to support those new to using the Strava app, we developed three easy-to-use guides to help them navigate the platform.

The partnership has so far performed positively with the following results:

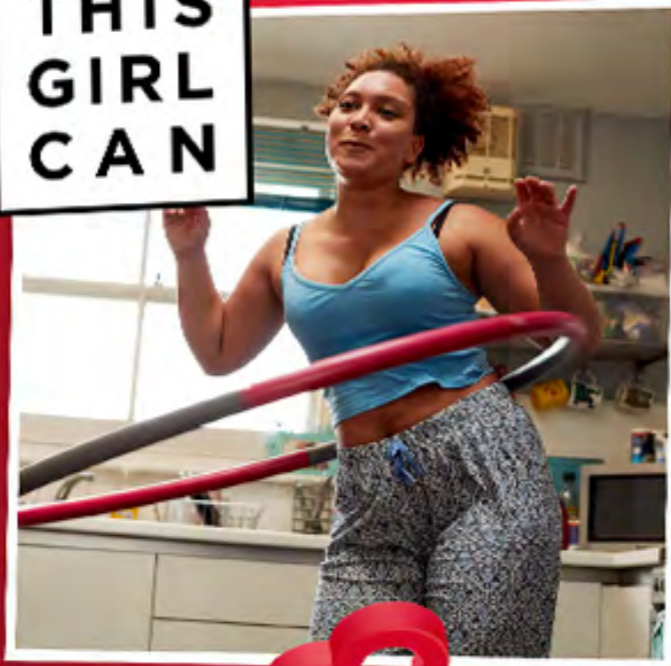
- The This Girl Can Club membership has grown to 21,500 while 39,000 women completed the Make Your Comeback Challenge
- 9% of women and girls aged 14-60 reported awareness of the campaign - in line with our expectations
- 69% of those aware of the partnership reported having done more exercise than they did before the campaign

- 80% of those that recognised the partnership reporting that they felt inspired to do more physical activity
- The campaign drove positive perceptions of Strava making it feel more inclusive

The partnership with Strava is likely to continue in 2023 as we try to encourage and support more women and girls to move in whatever way works for them.

global

THIS  
GIRL  
CAN



Dancing isn't just  
for the dark!

This girl can move whenever  
she wants, so come join the  
party on Heart!

heart

TO INSPIRE AND  
MOTIVATE WOMEN  
TO TAKE ACTION

## GLOBAL

**We partnered with Global in 2021 to inspire and motivate women to take action and increase their physical activity levels.**

Content included a series of radio adverts, station takeover days and billboards designed to build feelings of freedom and confidence.

- The campaign reached 23.7m people on air and 6.8m people via social channels
- One in five women and girls recognised partnership activity, with social media posts/videos from a radio station most likely to be remembered. Recall of activity and recognition of content peaked among younger women and decreases with age

- The majority, around 7 in 10, felt that the partnership made them feel positive towards TGC, fitted with their image of TGC and enjoyed the content
- Three-quarters feel that the ads showed the obstacles real women face when exercising and it's important that ads like them are shown
- Over half reported that the ads have made exercise feel possible for them

Source: Sport England's This Girl Can Survey- Walnut, July 2021 (bottom left on the page)



## AS TOLD BY THE 51%

**In November 2021 ukactive and Sport England’s This Girl Can (TGC) partnered to publish practical guidance ‘How to improve your services for women and girls: as told by the 51%’**

# CREATING MORE WELCOMING SPACES FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

Developed over nine months using extensive research and insight, it is a tool designed to help close the gender activity gap and create more welcoming spaces for women and girls. The guidance aims to help gyms and leisure facilities reduce barriers experienced by many females who would like to be more active. It contains recommendations on several areas of the gym and leisure facility experience covering visibility and communications, online presence, first visit & sign-up, helping women to find the right activity, and building trust around safety.

The guide has been well received by the sector according to evaluation data from those who have downloaded the guidance:

- Almost all (98%) say most recommendations reflect their understanding of the barriers women and girls face to being active
- Over two thirds (69%) say the guidance has taught them something new about getting more women and girls active
- Half (48%) report that the guidance has told them something they didn’t previously know
- Nine in ten (92%) state they are likely to share the guidance with their contacts

Going forward, This Girl Can will continue to use the partnership led and sector focussed way of working piloted in this project.





**EXERCISE AND SOCIALISE  
WITH OTHER WOMEN IN  
A NON-JUDGEMENTAL  
ENVIRONMENT**

# ACTIVATIONS

## THIS GIRL CAN CLASSES

**At the beginning of 2022 we rolled out This Girl Can Classes - a range of group exercise classes in partnership with EMD UK**

To offer lower intensity, fun and supportive sessions for women who may otherwise not feel comfortable attending group exercise classes.

The classes, that call on women to “Come and do your worst”, are truly beginner friendly, and are a place where women feel comfortable and confident. Where a wiggle the wrong way, or a jiggle in the joggers brings joy not judgement. Where a step out of line is a celebration.

Our initial evaluation findings from March found that an overwhelming majority (86%) of participants were very satisfied with the classes; with many describing them as fun and enjoyable, and praising their varied content.

Participants self-reported some improvement in their fitness and health and said that the classes gave them an opportunity to exercise and socialise with other women in a non-judgemental environment.

Just under 600 instructors have enrolled onto a training course that all TGC class instructors are required to complete in order to teach the classes, suggesting there is significant instructor demand for the programme.

Going forward, we are continuing to work with EMD UK to attract more instructors to enroll in training courses and reach more inactive women through a wider distribution of classes across the country.



## STUDIO YOU

**Launched in September 2021 in partnership with education specialists Hopscotch Consulting, Studio You is designed to engage the least active teenage girls through an innovative approach to PE.**

Developed using insight from both PE teachers and girls within Key-Stage 3 and Key-Stage 4, Studio You is empowering teachers to break the traditional PE mould, so they can inspire even the most uninterested girls to take part.

So many girls disconnect from sport and exercise as they become teenagers, and 55% of girls aged 13-16 aren't hitting the government's daily activity guidelines. We know PE is a chance to mitigate this and inspire positive behaviours and attitudes towards physical activity into adulthood. But right now, girls just aren't enjoying PE as much as boys.

School PE lessons play a vital role in helping teenagers reach their recommended amount

of exercise and building a healthy long-term relationship with physical activity.

That is the reason why Studio You has been created, to provide teachers with a different style of resource to support the delivery of PE lessons to this audience.

The results of the Netflix style PE resource after its first year are:

- Total registrants: 2,884
- Total schools 1,668 (48% secondary schools in England)
- Estimated reach of teenage girls through Studio You: 128,500

While it is too early to say conclusively, indicative data suggests that the impact of Studio You has been positive so far with some evidence that:

- Less active girls are reporting a greater ability to choose and shape

how they are physically active in PE lessons

- There may be an increase in the number of girls who engage in PE and have a positive attitude towards PE in school as a result of using Studio You resources
- There may be an increase in the physical literacy of users of studio you (e.g. increased motivation, confidence, competence, understanding and knowledge regards PE and physical activity)
- There may be an increase in the general mental wellbeing of girls using Studio You
- There may be a reduction in the number of girls who are less active

The next phase of Studio You will include fresh content, an upgraded UX website, more teacher resources and a refreshed marketing campaign as we look to grow the programme further.



## MORE WOMEN IN 2021 AGREE THAT EXERCISE IS FOR THEM COMPARED TO 2014

Sport England's This Girl Can Survey  
Kantar Public and Sport England's This Girl Can Survey – Walnut

## ENGAGEMENT

**The campaign has emotionally engaged with the target audience, changing behaviour and attitudes towards physical activity. It has captured attention and won awards in England and Internationally.**

It is not just discussed in sport and exercise circles, it regularly features in national media and has influenced how women are talked about and represented in advertising and the media.

- We have built a vibrant online community of over 810,000 women who follow TGC on social media (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter) and encourage and support each other to be more active
- The campaign has captured the attention of partners interested in providing more appealing opportunities for women to be active – over 17,000 individuals and organisations have signed up to be supporters of the campaign, with

many using the TGC branding and assets to help spread its message

There is strong evidence that this has led to a sustained change in women's attitudes and behaviours:

- The proportion of women aged 14-60 agreeing that exercise is for them is higher in November 2021 than it was in November 2014 (Sport England's This Girl Can Survey – Kantar Public and Sport England's This Girl Can Survey – Walnut)

Large numbers of women report taking action as a result of the campaign (Sport England's This Girl Can Survey – Walnut).

This has remained fairly consistent amongst women



who are aware of the campaign, with a third of women reporting they were more active as a result of the campaign (Sport England's This Girl Can Survey – Walnut)

The number of women playing sport and getting active once a week, every week, increased by 250,000 after we launched the first phase of the campaign. The gender gap reduced from 1.79m to 1.55m (Sport England's Active People Survey, Nov 15/16).

Active Lives\* data showed a smaller gender gap due to the broader definition of physical activity. Up until November 2020 we saw the gender gap stabilise and narrow slightly - although this was driven by older women (aged 65+ being active).

Our latest data shows the impact of COVID with women's activity levels reducing to similar levels seen at the start of the This Girl Can campaign. We know that this reduction of activity for women has been driven by a more vulnerable group who had previously just done enough activity to be classed as active.

Therefore, This Girl Can remains very relevant, helping and supporting those women back into regularly activity.

Two key factors help explain why the campaign was so well-received by women:

**1. The insight-driven creative:**

Research and insight heavily informed every stage of the creative work. This enabled the campaign to strike a chord with our target audience and become close to their hearts.

**2. The unconventional approach:**

Allowing the creative to challenge advertising conventions meant that the campaign was standout, fresh and newsworthy. Increasing

the diversity of women and barriers featured in the campaign intensified its relevance and likeability.

We ran an online panel study, alongside our quantitative tracking, to understand in depth the impact of the campaign, and any related change in behaviour and activity.

The respondents were not aware that the panel was being run by This Girl Can so we were able to see the campaign's natural effect on them: 'Almost all who have viewed the campaign talk of a shift in feeling – an increase in motivation to participate in sport and exercise'. (Future Thinking Cohort Study, 2016).

\*The Active Lives Adult Survey replaced the Active People Survey. Active People was a landline telephone survey and, as patterns of telephone and technology use changed, so our data collection methodology needed to too. Added to this, our 2017-21 Towards an Active Nation strategy provided an opportune moment to refresh the wider range of metrics collected through the survey. Data collected through Active Lives is not comparable with Active People due to both methodological differences and a different scope of activities covered in the definition of sport and physical activity.

**Our insight suggests that the campaign worked by increasing the percentage of women who felt confident enough to get active.**

Barriers don't just go away. It's about managing them and about gathering the confidence to get active in spite of them.

The impact of barriers on behaviour is reduced with activity, but it is an ongoing battle. Life stage changes nudge women in and out of activity. Even when a routine is established, small things (as well as big events like a global pandemic) can derail progress and create a setback.

Anything from a change in schedule to family issues or illness can impact motivation to exercise, and judgement

barriers start to take over. But they can also be moments of positive change.

Crucially, we understand that developing confidence leads to action and then helps build resilience – but it's a constant battle. Recognising this cycle as something everyone goes through leads to a sense of belonging. It's ok to have breaks or 'wobbles'.

We know changing how sport is presented to women isn't the whole story. The provision of sport and exercise needs to be right too.

**For more information visit:**

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**or email:**

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