

SECTION 3:

ATTRACTING WOMEN'S ATTENTION AND ENCOURAGING THEM TO ATTEND

The next step is to create communications that will grab the attention of women and girls and encourage them to attend your sessions. You can have the best session in the world, but if your marketing isn't right, you won't attract the people you want. This is especially important for women and girls, where your communications need to help them overcome their practical and emotional barriers to attending.



HEY, YOU!

WHAT COMMUNICATIONS CHANNELS SHOULD I USE?

All of your communications should aim to target women and girls as they go about their daily lives, across a range of the places they visit and platforms they use. Things to consider include:



MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA AND ONLINE PRESENCE

- Add a page or section to your organisation's website to house information about your activities. Or create a new website for your programme, if resources allow.
- Create an open-access Facebook page for your sports or activities.
- Create Twitter and Instagram accounts and link them to the Facebook page you've created – these are great ways to attract wider audiences and keep people engaged with your activities.
- Ensure you post to and update your social media accounts regularly to make the most of them and keep people following.
- This Local Government Association online guide provides lots of useful information on getting the most out of social media [click here](#).

In addition to your online and social media activity, review which types of advertising are most likely to reach your local women and girls, and that work within your budget. Potential options include:

- Ads or inserted flyers in local free papers.
- Poster placements (including bus shelter posters, bus sides and backs, noticeboards in community settings like libraries and community centres).
- Radio adverts on local commercial stations.
- Google advertising with links to the website or page containing your sport and physical activities.
- Leaflets, flyers and other promotional materials that can be handed out by 'hit squads' in community locations, or via dispensers in places like shopping centre information points or pubs.

Talk to local media to establish links with editors and reporters and explain that your activities will be the source of regular content for them.

- Write and send regular news releases to local media, featuring human interest and facts like those at the front of this guide.
- Keep it positive and inspiring, focus on the benefits.
- Be available for follow-up questions and interviews.
- Invite local media to a community launch event for any new programme of sport or physical activity.

CONSIDER ADVERTISING YOUR ACTIVITIES

WHAT COMMUNICATIONS CHANNELS SHOULD I USE?

Promotions will help motivate women and girls to attend and keep attending. There's lots that you could do here, including:

- Free taster sessions of your current and new activities.
- Loyalty cards for people who attend multiple sessions (for example, attend nine sessions, get the tenth free).
- A reward for attending a certain number of sessions (something small after three sessions, something bigger after ten). This doesn't necessarily need to be related to activity, and could be as simple as a voucher for a coffee. You could partner with local businesses, asking them to provide the reward in exchange for the free publicity, and new people using their business.



EMBRACE THE PEOPLE POWER OF LOCAL WOMEN

The people who come to your sessions are your best advertisements. Word of mouth from them is the most powerful way to reach new people, so ask them to spread the word.

Think about what you can do to help, for example you could:

- Create and promote a 'sport buddy' system, asking existing attendees to bring a friend to sessions. Reward both parties when this happens.
- Encourage get-togethers outside of the sessions themselves, such as 'coffee morning catch-ups'.
- Encourage people to pledge via their social media accounts to get active/fitter/try a new activity. This increases their chances of coming back, and spreads the word to their social circles at the same time. Getting a friendship group to pledge together is even more powerful.
- Give leaflets to your regulars to hand out to friends or colleagues.
- Go the extra mile to ensure people come back:
 - Use their name when greeting them.
 - Make eye contact.
 - Ask how they found the session.
 - Ask them for their contact details so that you can send them further information and remind them about the next session.

Top tip 📌 I saw a flyer which was attached to my windscreen promoting a new yoga class that's in the evenings. It appealed to me as yoga is very relaxing and the photos of the studio looked really picturesque. It made me want to join. 🗨️ **This Girl Can research participant**

Q&A

HOW DO I CHOOSE THE RIGHT COMMUNICATION METHOD FOR MY AUDIENCE?

It depends. If your audience is really active on social media, you would focus your attention there. However, if they spend less time online, then you would use other, offline marketing methods in the community. For example, leaflet door drops near your venue, or posters on community boards in local businesses, supermarkets and public buildings.

To get the best results, you'll probably need to use a mix of methods, some online and some printed. Here are a few top tips from other successful projects:

- Avoid communication channels or locations that feel either 'too public health' or 'too sporty', as these don't work for women who are less active.
- Instead, place messaging in environments where women are going about their daily lives such as mother and baby groups or the school gates – keeping it local really helps.
- Get your messages out there frequently, as it makes it more likely that women will respond to your communications.
- Word of mouth is also really powerful and great value for money. Of course, this relies on you making the experience great so that people will want to talk about it!

HOW CAN I GET WOMEN TO OWN THE CONVERSATION THEMSELVES THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA?

The aim is that over time your attendees will post items to your Facebook and/or Twitter or Instagram accounts themselves, giving your online presence a life of its own. However, this won't happen overnight, so be prepared to get active on social media yourself.

Initially you'll be posting all the content. Make sure you post things regularly, keep it interesting and mix it up. It doesn't need to all be about sport or sharing information (although this is important) – it could be something as simple as posting photographs or asking questions that require a specific response.

Top tip “Over time people will post content on your Facebook pages or Twitter pages themselves but at least initially you need to make sure that you're regularly saying things and posting engaging content. It doesn't have to all be about sport either – the point is you're trying to get these women to engage with you and with each other. We found that even just posting a picture of a local landmark stimulated conversation.”
Nicola, Partnership & Contracts Coordinator, I Will If You Will (IWIYW), Bury Council

[Click here](#) to view the IWIYW Facebook page and get some ideas that might help with your own social media activity.

Q&A

HOW DO I GET THE MOST OUT OF SOCIAL MEDIA?

Vary the content that you post and make sure you post regularly to keep people engaged.

Top tip 🗨️ We found Facebook was better for generating conversations than Twitter as you're not restricted to the number of characters and it's easier to create a sense of community as people can see and respond to each other's posts easily and do more with it. 🗨️ **Pritesh, Operations Programme Manager, IWIYW, Bury Council**

Check your social media accounts at least once a day – ideally more frequently – and respond to queries or questions promptly.

Your social media accounts are one of the key ways people will keep in touch with you and request information, so set them up on your phone so you can even respond when you're out and about.



HOW DO I CREATE GREAT COMMUNICATIONS MATERIALS?

Great communications include carefully crafted messages that raise awareness of your activity, and provide essential information for attendees. They also reassure women and girls that they won't be judged and that they will be able to participate and have fun whatever their level of ability or experience. To get this right you need to 'start where women are'. This means:

1 MAKE YOUR COMMUNICATIONS GENUINE AND WELCOMING

- Use their language – speak the way local people speak. Keep the tone warm, friendly and professional, just like your sessions will be.
- Keep photography real – use people of all shapes and sizes, backgrounds, non-disabled and disabled, living real lives. They should be people that your participants can identify with.
- Show an understanding of everyday issues (don't be afraid to show women looking sweaty, embracing the pressures of time and juggling full lives).
- Giving your communications the personal touch means that the person is more likely to pay attention – use local language and local women where possible and refer to local places. Remember, your local women will be your local role models, inspiring others.

Top tip 🗨️ People's perceptions are formed from the very first communication they receive, so make sure yours set the right tone, and reflect the nature of the actual activity or session. 🗨️ **Cassie, Insight Manager, England Netball**

Top tip 🗨️ Single images, or images of women in small groups, were more successful than group images, where the visual impact got lost. And people love seeing the names of friends in communications. 🗨️ **Nicola, Partnership & Contracts Coordinator, IWYW, Bury Council**

Top tip 🗨️ Images of normal women in relaxed, non-traditional sporting clothes resonate with women much more than really sporty images. Always try to use non-traditional images, even if it means taking them yourself! 🗨️ **Pritesh, Operations Programme Manager, IWYW, Bury Council**



HOW DO I CREATE GREAT COMMUNICATIONS MATERIALS?

2 SHOW WOMEN WHAT PHYSICAL ACTIVITY CAN DO FOR THEM

- Use role models showing women happy and confident to be themselves – Sport England's This Girl Can campaign is a great example of this ([click here](#) to see 'hot and not bothered' poster).
- Show women that sport is a social thing, and it can be fun exercising with the girls, a partner or with the kids.
- Include the sense of personal achievement women can feel from having completed a session.
- And it's fine to include the health benefits of getting active, though they don't need to be the primary focus of your communications, unless you are targeting a specific audience with health issues.

Top tip “ I've started taking a good friend with me, it's really nice to share the new yoga experience together. I asked her to join me after my first week as I thought she'd like it. It's good to have someone to have a giggle with after too! ” **This Girl Can research participant**

3 MAKE SURE YOU PROVIDE ALL THE IMPORTANT DETAILS AND INFORMATION SO YOUR WOMEN AND GIRLS WILL KNOW EXACTLY WHAT TO DO AND WHAT TO EXPECT

- Where to go
- When to arrive
- What to expect
- What to bring and wear
- How much and how to pay

Top tip “ My ideal exercise setting is in a hall with only a few people who I know would be there. I'd prefer just my friends and my family members to be there. **NO MIRRORS!** I'd like the atmosphere to be relaxed, easy going and enjoyable. ” **This Girl Can research participant**

Top tip “ We made short 30-second videos that we uploaded to our Facebook page, so that people could see what a session actually involved and what it looked like. We just took them on a phone so it wasn't anything fancy but it worked really well to visually convey loads of information in a really simple way. ” **Hannah, Marketing Officer, IWYW, Bury Council**

Q&A

DO SIMPLE COMMUNICATIONS TEMPLATES EXIST THAT I CAN USE?

There are no ready-made templates, as it's always more effective to shape your communications to suit your local audiences and their needs.

However, you can [click here](#) to register on the This Girl Can partner site to access logos and images you can use.

Top tip 🗨️ The key thing to remember in creating your communications materials is consistency – make sure that if you've got a flyer, a poster, a banner and a press release that they all look part of the same family to maximise the impact that they have and make your product stronger. Also remember that too much text can dilute the impact of your communications – keep things streamlined for clarity. 🗨️ **Hannah, Marketing Officer, IWYW, Bury Council**

[Click here](#) to see some examples of IWYW's communications materials, with a consistent visual style used to target different groups of women and girls.

IS THERE A BANK OF IMAGES I CAN ACCESS?

Yes. Sport England has an image bank. [Click here](#) to download print-ready images for free.

Or you can [click here](#) to register on the This Girl Can partner site to access images you can use.



WHAT DO I HAVE TO THINK ABOUT IF I WANT TO INCLUDE IMAGES OF LOCAL WOMEN?

Don't just grab images from the internet – getting permission to use them can be complicated. For local imagery, you're much better off just taking photos with your phone or digital camera. Using images of you and your colleagues, mates or family will get you started before you have other session attendees to photograph, and it's definitely better than using traditional sporty photos. Photograph people wearing normal clothes, show people of various shapes and sizes who are like those you're looking to reach, and show local places if you can. And make sure you get the written permission of the people in your images before you use them. [Click here](#) for an example permission form. If those photos include children, please ensure you follow the guidance shown on the following page.

Q&A

WHAT DO I HAVE TO THINK ABOUT IF I WANT TO INCLUDE IMAGES OF GIRLS UNDER 18?

If you want to take and use images or video of girls under 18 years of age to promote your activities, then there are a number of essential safeguarding guidelines you must adhere to:

- Always get signed consent from the young person's parent or guardian to both take and use the images. [Click here](#) for an example permission form.
- ['Vulnerable children'](#) require extra safeguarding and consent from social workers.
- Keep your shots general, and avoid close-ups.
- Do not manipulate or amend the images, other than cropping.
- Do not include any information that could lead to the identification of the children – so no names or location details.

[Click here](#) to learn more about child safeguarding and marketing.

HOW DO I CHOOSE THE RIGHT MESSAGE FOR MY AUDIENCE?

It really depends on who you want to attract to your sessions. There's no one-size-fits-all approach. But there are some guidelines:

- Use simple, straightforward language and avoid jargon such as acronyms or technical terms. Also avoid phrases that make women feel unwelcome, such as “don't be a big girl's blouse”.
- Think about who you're talking to, what you want them to do and what they need to know to encourage or enable them to attend.
- Don't try to sell the sport to them – instead tell them how the activity will make them feel (for example, fun, social, feel-good).
- Make sure you provide contact details and where to go for more information.
- Remember that both the image and the words can convey the message that you want. In fact, an image can often be more powerful than words and directly appeal to different audiences. [Click here](#) to see examples of communications from IWIYW in Bury that were tailored for older and younger audiences.
- For advice on creating inclusive communications that will help you reach a wider audience, including more disabled people, [click here](#) for a guide from English Federation of Disability Sport (EFDS).

IS THERE A BANK OF STORIES ABOUT WOMEN'S JOURNEYS THAT I CAN ACCESS?

Yes. There's a few things that may give you some ideas:

- The [This Girl Can](#) website contains a number of real-life stories you could use in your communications.
- Also the IWIYW team has a number of women who have kept 10-week video diaries about their own journeys to getting more active. [Click here](#) to watch them.
- Ideally, you would use your own local stories as they will have the most impact. Think about the people you know whose sport and exercise journeys would inspire others – anyone who runs one of your sessions is likely to know the best candidates. If you don't know anyone, look on Twitter or Facebook to see who is following your social media accounts, then approach them online and ask whether they would be prepared to share their story. [Click here](#) to see a simple permission form that may be useful.

CREATING GREAT COMMUNICATIONS MATERIALS

We've created a handy and print-friendly checklist to help you ensure each of your communications materials provides the information your women and girls need to know in the most appropriate way. Go to page 50 in Section 7 – Appendices to get started.

NEED MORE HELP? EMAIL US AT IWIYW@SPORTENGLAND.ORG