



Project 51.

Working in partnership to tackle
negative gender stereotypes

In partnership with



2017-2019

51% of the UK population are female, and yet when it comes to physical activity, there are 2.6 million more active men than women. Overall women are 36% more likely to be classified as physically inactive than men.¹

Girls aged 11-18 years old exercise less regularly and for less time than boys. Only 8% of girls meet the Chief Medical Officer's recommendations. The figure for boys is double that.

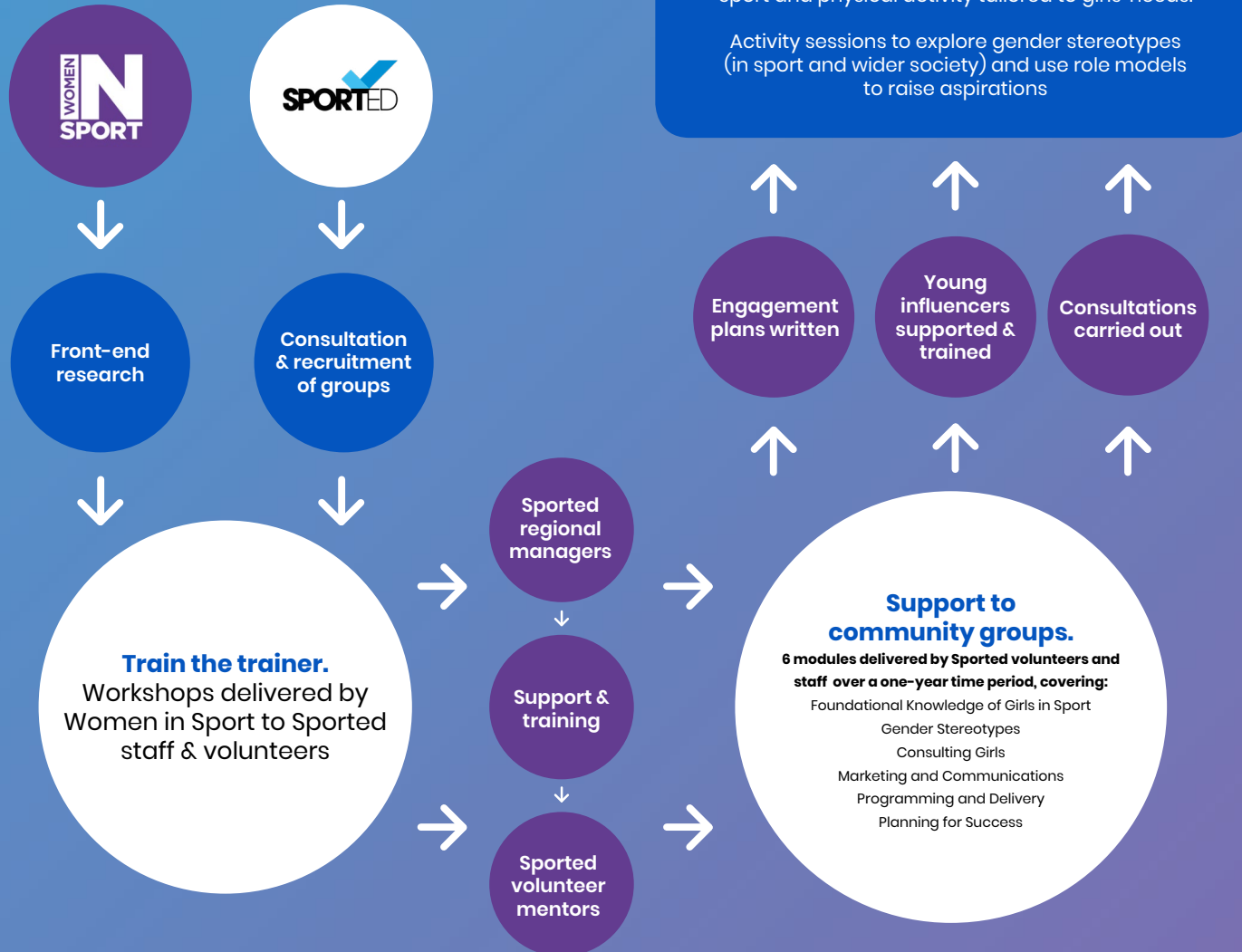
Research conducted by Youth Sport Trust and Women in Sport found that although 78% of 14-16 year old girls understand that physical activity is important, only 28% enjoy taking part.²

Project 51, funded by Comic Relief, and delivered by Sported and Women in Sport, aims to help girls in the most socially deprived areas of the UK fulfil their potential and use sport to overcome the impact of negative gender stereotypes. It aims to tackle these stereotypes at the grassroots by helping community groups to improve their knowledge and understanding of how to engage girls and young women, aged 11-18, in sport and physical activity.



How we did it.

Flow chart of delivery model:



What worked well:

Genuine relationships

- Strong working partnership between Sported and Women in Sport
- Regional Manager's close relationship with the groups on the ground
- Great rapport built between Sported mentors and group leaders
- Strong connections between community groups and their participants

Quality of knowledge

- The knowledge and learning shared in this project draws on the years of expertise and insight generated by Women in Sport, and therefore is authentic and highly relevant

Willingness of groups

- Community groups from across the three regions, Scotland, South West England and the West Midlands, were keen to engage in the project and learn, and have integrated that learning into their strategies. 80% of groups remained engaged throughout the lifetime of the project and many are starting to see female participation increases within their groups

Who the project helped:

Our most significant achievements:

- Our ability to approach big societal challenges, such as gender stereotyping, with community organisations in a way that they were able to engage with and implement interventions as a result
- The Young Influencers' achievements are a clear demonstration of girls overcoming gender stereotyping within and outside of sport
- The positive changes witnessed within the girls themselves particularly in relation to their self-confidence



**639
girls**



**7 female Young
Ambassadors**



30 community sport groups

Case Study:

Sophie Corbett

Sophie was a Project 51 Young Influencer



“I can only speak about Sophie in that it has been an amazing opportunity for her, given her experiences that she would otherwise never had had, pushed her out of her comfort zone, given her new skills” and immeasurably increased her confidence.

She is now changing experiences for the girls in PE at her school and is also working with a teenage mental health charity to show the benefits of fitness in mental health. She will be their ambassador across Secondary schools in the west of Scotland.

A bi-product of all this is that she has broadened her CV immensely from the things she has achieved - only because she was lucky enough to be part of this project. AND she will soon speak at the Scottish parliament!!!

As her parents, Greg and I can't thank you enough for everything you and Sported have done for Sophie. We have always been proud of her but now she is proud of herself.

We are really sad that this project is ending but I know Sophie will be happy to support both of the charities in the future.”

Vicky Corbett, Sophies Mother

The seven Young Influencers on Project 51 have been offered unique experiences over the past 12 months, including;

- Speaking as part of the 'Gen Z' panel hosted by Editor of Women's Sport for the Telegraph at the Women in Sport Empower conference.
- A bespoke event at the University of Edinburgh, with talks from the Physical Activity for Health Research Centre.
- Behind the scenes experience at WTA tennis tournament Birmingham.

Case Study:

AFSCS

African French Speaking Community Sport



AFSCS provides a range of user-led services to the African French speaking community around Smethwick in the Midlands, supporting and empowering local people to integrate and become active citizens. Regular sporting sessions were run for young people, such as; table tennis, football and basketball but this offer wasn't being taken up by most girls.

Following initial training and development sessions with Sported and Women in Sport, AFSCS ran two focus groups with young, local girls to find out what activities they were interested in. A large proportion of the girls who came to the focus groups were from a Muslim background. Overwhelmingly, the girls wanted to play netball.

With support from Sported, AFSCS got agreement from England Netball to run some test sessions with the girls. They provided a professional coach to run the sessions and the girls who turned up were very happy. Due to the initial success, their Sported Business Manager supported them to put in a funding application to Sport England to run regular sessions.

The initial outcomes were very positive, with eight girls turning up to the first session. Over time, that number has increased with between 14 and 28 girls now turning up regularly for a two hour session.

“You can see an increase in confidence in the girls who have now been coming for a while; when they come here they are making new friends, being part of a team, learning new skills and interacting with the other girls and their coach. Their parents are also having more confidence and trust in them too... some of the girls have now started coming on their own, instead of with their parents, so they are becoming more independent. The culture of being isolated is being broken down as girls are spending less time at home and becoming more involved in community activities. This can in turn influence their parents to become less isolated and more active”.

AFSCS have been able to respond to the needs of the girls by identifying and providing a sport which they are interested in. Being successful in securing funding means that they can continue to deliver this activity for the next three years.

Girls' aspirations were less restricted by gender stereotypes

92% said they enjoy sport more

92% said they feel fitter and healthier

Positive attitudinal shifts on whether males or females were best suited to carry out sport-related roles, such as "coaching a sports team"

Positive attitudinal shifts on whether males or females are best associated with certain traits such as "being the boss" or "earning more money"

92% feel they have more opportunities to be successful

82% feel more positive about their future

'Last September time, I was looking at career paths...engineering came up as an option so I applied for a couple of places. Now I'm part of a research company, that does Aerospace Robotics and Engineering. I am one of only five girls / women there out of 100 apprentice's started this year!'

Girls' aspirations were less restricted by gender stereotypes

89%



said they felt they had improved their skills in playing sport

86%



said they felt more confident to try new things

Girls had a more positive perception of themselves, including feeling less of a failure and being happy with who they are

59%



felt they were doing better at school

83%



said they felt happier

'I can now talk openly with people. If people had asked me to sit on a stage before and talk in front of people I'd have said no chance. Now, nothing fazes me'.

Community groups have better knowledge and understanding of how to engage girls in sport and physical activity



of groups said staff/ volunteers have a better understanding of engaging girls from the training and had introduced changes



of groups reported running consultation exercises with girls

‘As an organisation we feel that Project51 has given us the encouragement and drive to have sessions designed by and for girls, in an environment they are happy and comfortable in with minimal barriers to help adherence’.

Less gender stereotyping in community sport groups



80%

of groups said they were more confident in using sports sessions to challenge gender stereotypes and use positive role models.



All groups developed engagement plans focusing on their strategies, recruitment and retention, programming and communications and marketing

'We'd never approached challenging gender stereotypes before, it was totally brand new. We ran a session which really opened the girls' minds'.



Thank you.

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