



BEYOND 30%

Workplace Culture in Sport

JUNE 2018



sportwales
chwaraeon cymru

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Currently women are under-represented in senior leadership roles and on Boards in the sector. There is also evidence of discrimination and negative workplace culture. This needs to change in order to create an environment in which both women and men thrive and to nurture the pipeline of talented female leaders for the future.



HEADLINE FINDINGS

- ▶ There is a clear gap in terms of how women and men feel in the workplace and evidence of discrimination.
- ▶ An emphasis on sporting competence as a measure of professional value, limits opportunities for capable women with the relevant skills, within the sector.
- ▶ Redressing the gender imbalance at the top, is not enough. In addition, it is vital to address the barriers within the culture of sports organisations.
- ▶ Culture change must happen throughout the organisation, from grass roots participation through to the Board, in order to be sustainable.
- ▶ This is not about men versus women, but progress, opportunity and a better working environment for all.
- ▶ Men as well as women need to be part of the solution with positive engagement from the top and clear sight of the benefits to all.
- ▶ The first step, however, is for organisations to identify the cultural issues that exist.

Women in Sport want the number of women leading and influencing in sport to grow, and to develop solutions to the cultural barriers which currently exist.

WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE?

SUCCESS

For the number of women leading and influencing in sport to grow, and for the sports sector to reap the undoubtable benefits of a gender diverse workforce.

THE CHALLENGE

Women are under-represented currently in senior leadership roles and on Boards in the sector. There is a need to redress the gender imbalance, create a strong pipeline of future women leaders and importantly, create an inclusive culture where both women and men thrive.



A selection of the Top 20 Most Influential Women in British Sport featured in The Telegraph in June 2017.

OUR AUDIT SHOWS PROGRESS ON LEADERSHIP HAS STALLED

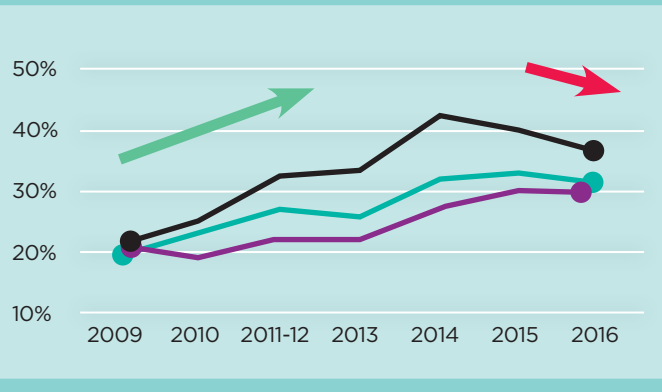
- ▶ In England, just under half of the National Governing Bodies of sport fail to achieve the Governance requirement of ‘at least 30% women on the Board’.
- ▶ There’s evidence that the pipeline of women in senior leadership roles has stalled.
- ▶ It is important to nurture the pipeline of future women leaders and to do this, the workplace culture in sport also needs to be addressed.

“
When I look at the contribution from women – we are a better Board as a result. You get a different dynamic... the challenge is further down the sport – how do we get women coming through the system?
 ”

Badminton England Board - CEO Adrian Christy

WOMEN IN SENIOR LEADERSHIP ROLES IN SPORT ENGLAND ORGANISATIONS 2009-2016

- % of Non-Executive Directors who are women (excluding Chair)
- % of Senior Leadership roles held by women
- Total % of women in all leadership positions



SOURCE: Women in Sport: Beyond 30% Female Leadership in Sport Audit report

THE ICEBERG EFFECT

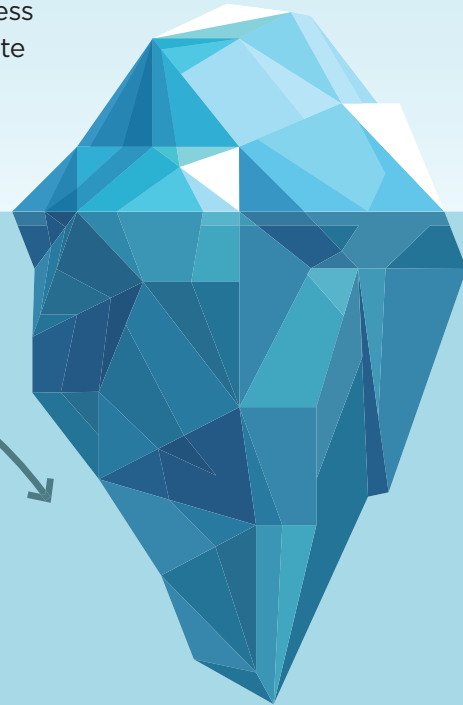
CULTURE TRANSFORMATION

To bring about meaningful and lasting change, redressing the gender imbalance alone, is not enough. It is vital to also address the barriers within the **culture of sports organisations** to create environments in which both women and men truly thrive.

SURFACE CULTURE

DEEP CULTURE

- ▶ Subtle but repeated behaviours
- ▶ Non-verbal reactions
- ▶ Group pressure to conform
- ▶ Affinities & cliques
- ▶ Perceptions & assumptions
- ▶ Resistance to change & challenge
- ▶ Unconscious bias



WHAT WE DID: ASSESSING CULTURE

RESEARCH QUESTION:

- ▶ Is culture impeding women's progression?
- ▶ What can be done to ensure that sports organisations have cultures in which both women and men thrive?

RESEARCH METHOD:

- ▶ In-depth discussions with 42 career-minded women and men in the sports sector
- ▶ Survey of 1152 men and women working in the sector (NGBs, Leisure organisations, CSPs, sports charities etc)

TIMING

- ▶ September 2017 - March 2018

Thank you to Jeni Whittaker at QualiProjects, who moderated the groups and to all our research participants.



THE SPORTS WORKPLACE CAN FEEL LIKE A MAN'S WORLD

DISCRIMINATION

Sometimes it feels like any mistake is down to you being a woman, rather than an individual mistake anyone could make.

Woman

BANTER AND OLD BOYS CLUB

Sometimes I can't join in the banter and then it makes me look really serious, like I can't take a joke.

Woman

FEELING MARGINALISED

He was prepared to shout louder than I was.

Woman

UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

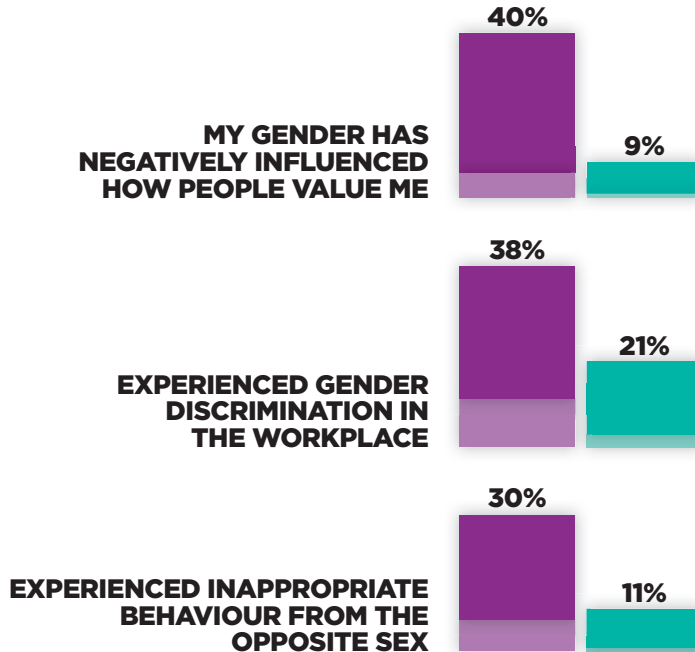
Let Peter go to that match; he'd probably prefer it more than you 'and he was like ...that was so wrong.

Woman



SOURCE: Women in Sport: Workplace culture focus groups/interviews

GENDER DISCRIMINATION IS STILL IN EVIDENCE



“*She was brilliant at her job, but the level of battery that she used to face for being a woman was unreal. That was almost the first thing people would mention before we were even talking about her ability and I find it astonishing.*”

Man

WOMEN
SOMETIMES
FREQUENTLY

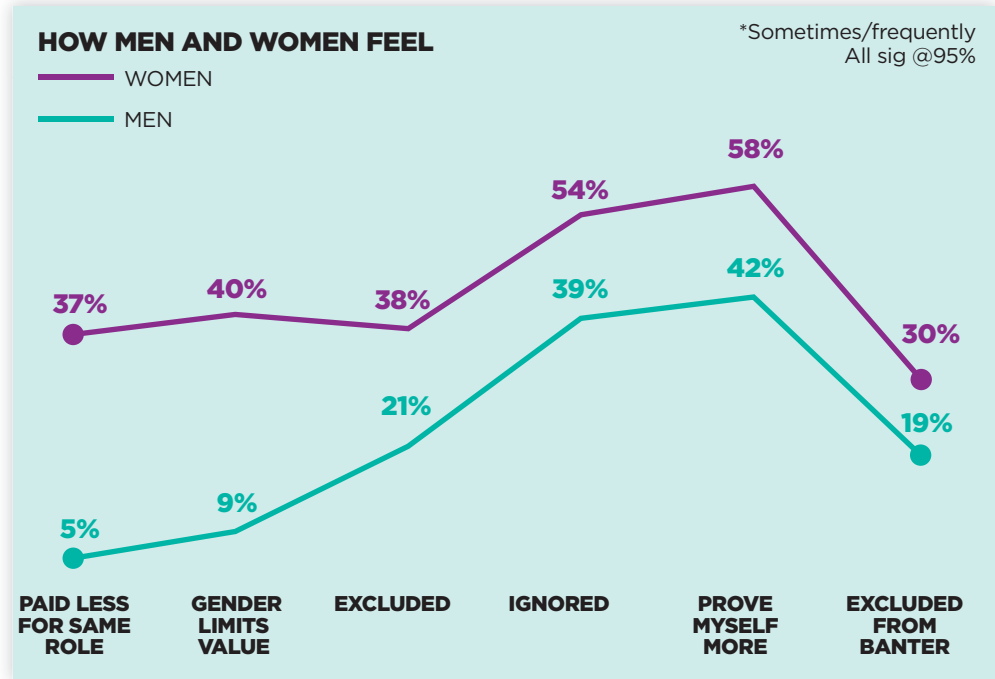
MEN
SOMETIMES
FREQUENTLY

SOURCE: Women in Sport: Workplace culture survey (1152 respondents)

A MISMATCHED EXPERIENCE FOR EACH GENDER - MIND THE GAP!

“I sense that a man can do things at 75% and get away with it, but, as a woman, you have to do it at 110% just to prove you’re as good.”

Woman

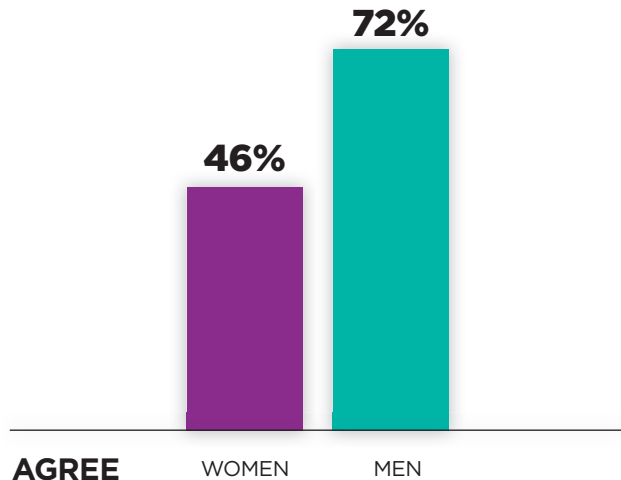


SOURCE: Women in Sport: Workplace culture survey (1152 respondents)

THE SPORTS WORKPLACE CAN FEEL LIKE A MAN'S WORLD

- ▶ An assumption that men are 'more interested' in sport & job
- ▶ Gendered Departments
- ▶ 'Women's tasks' still in evidence
- ▶ Boys club & banter
- ▶ Women have to 'do their time' to be credible
- ▶ Less credibility from external organisations

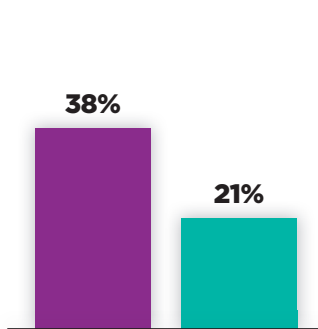
THERE IS FAIR AND EQUAL TREATMENT OF MEN AND WOMEN IN THEIR ORGANISATION



SOURCE: Women in Sport: Workplace culture survey (1152 respondents)

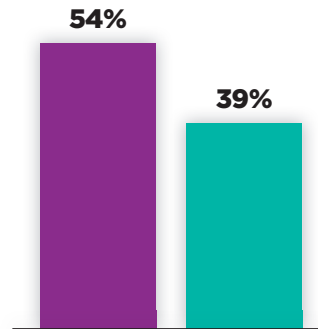
WHERE WOMEN CAN FEEL...

EXCLUDED



“ They treat me differently and I hate it.”
Woman

IGNORED



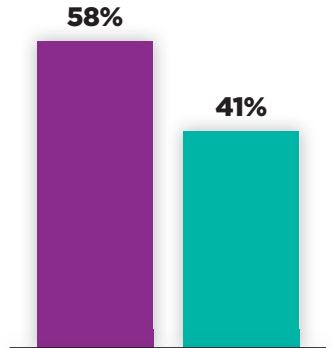
“ ...they didn't look at me once.”
Woman

SOURCE: Women in Sport: Workplace culture survey (1152 respondents)

Frequently/sometimes WOMEN MEN

WHERE WOMEN CAN FEEL...

OVER SCRUTINIZED

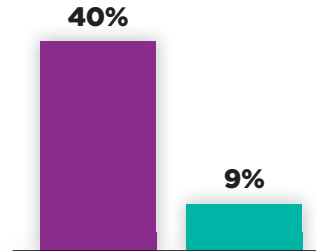


I have had to work harder to prove myself (frequently/sometimes)

“He lost a few £000s & you’re complaining about the spelling mistake in my e-mail.”

Woman

UNDER VALUED



My gender has negatively influenced how others value me

“Being a woman was the first thing people would mention before talking about her ability.”

Man

SOURCE: Women in Sport: Workplace culture survey (1152 respondents)

Frequently/sometimes WOMEN MEN

THESE EXPERIENCES ARE NOT RECOGNISED BY MEN

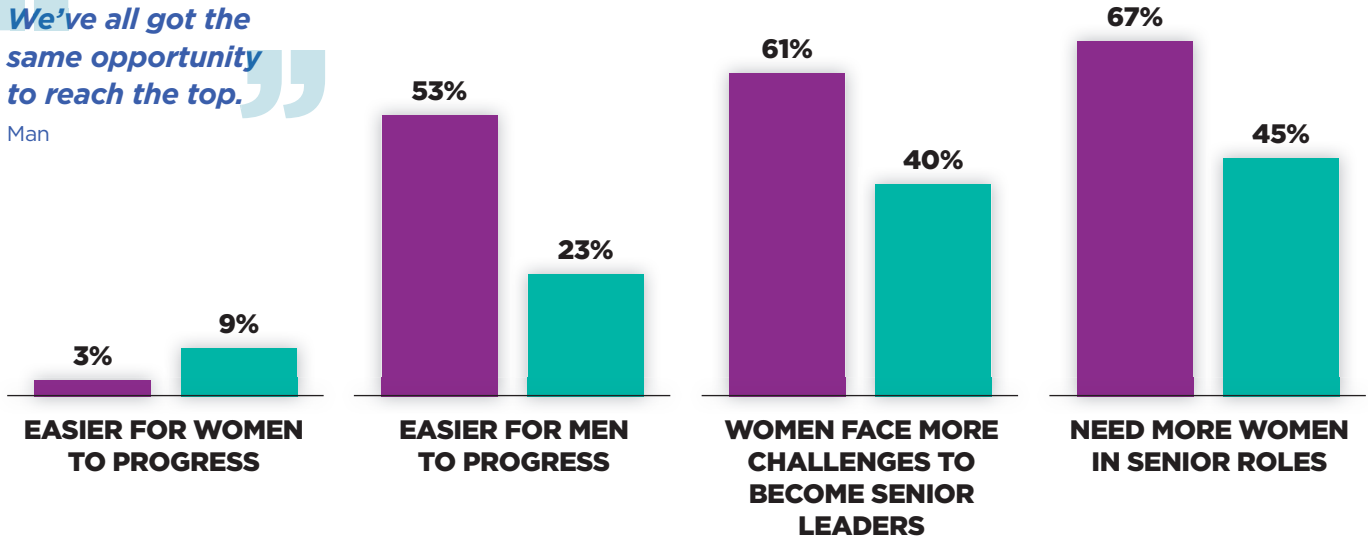
Despite over 95% of men and women believe in **equal opportunities**, each have very different perceptions of how this plays out for women currently.

AGREE



“We’ve all got the same opportunity to reach the top.”

Man



SOURCE: Women in Sport: Workplace culture survey (1152 respondents)

THE UNIQUE CHALLENGES OF THE SPORTS CULTURE

VALUE PLACED ON SPORT CAPABILITY

“
A girl came in who didn't know the sport and she really struggled.
”
Man

ENTRENCHED OLD FASHIONED VIEWS

“
I think there's no secret that in the sport sector, historically - there's a culture of the old boys' club.
”
Man



SOURCE: Women in Sport: Workplace culture focus groups/interviews

THE 'UNspoken' VALUE PLACED ON SPORTS ABILITY LIMITS OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN

I think there can, at times, be a sort of unwritten language or currency at work, that unless you play professional sport or have at least played it to a certain level, then you can't be as good at your job and are less credible somehow.

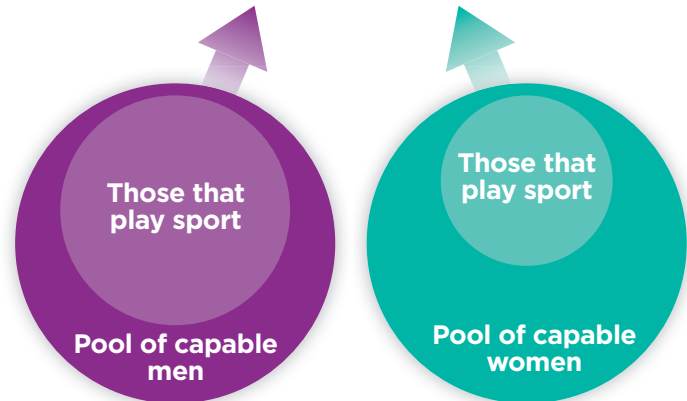
Woman

56% Of women believe participating in sport gives you a professional advantage

34% Of women have seen their professional performance judged by their sports ability

29% Of women believe fewer women in senior roles because lack connections in sport

IMPACT ON CREDIBILITY, IN ROLE, RECRUITMENT & PROGRESSION



- ▶ Magnified in organisations with traditionally male participation sports.
- ▶ Women also reported having fewer relevant networks.

CHARACTERISTICS WHERE THE CULTURE MAY NOT BE AS INCLUSIVE FOR WOMEN

- ▶ Where an sport is transforming from male only (and clearly on a journey) there is more resistance and more obvious challenges for women.
- ▶ External perception of an organisation as 'male-orientated' can reinforce the acceptance and value of women as credible senior managers or leaders.

CHARACTERISTICS WHERE CULTURE IS NOT AS INCLUSIVE

Focus - solo sport

History of excluding women

Lack of participation diversity

Low leadership diversity & turnover

Traditional volunteer structures within the sport

Old/long-standing sport/organisation

OR NO INCENTIVE TO CHANGE

Financially strong

SOURCE: Women in Sport: Workplace culture focus groups/ interviews

OLD-FASHIONED VIEWS ARE SLOW TO CHANGE & IMPEDE PROGRESS FOR WOMEN

The more old-fashioned attitudes & behaviours towards women are particularly pronounced in the older generation, who are often in senior roles, on the Board and who make up a sizeable proportion of the volunteer sector.

Woman

I think there's no secret that in the sport sector, historically, there's a culture of the old boys' club in terms of leadership and decision-making.

Man

- ▶ The first step is for organisations to identify cultural issues. These are often complex, subtle, deep-rooted and repeated behaviours which are easy to miss or dismiss.
- ▶ In order to affect meaningful and sustainable change it is important that culture change happens throughout the organisation, including volunteers, committees and clubs as well as paid employees and the Board.

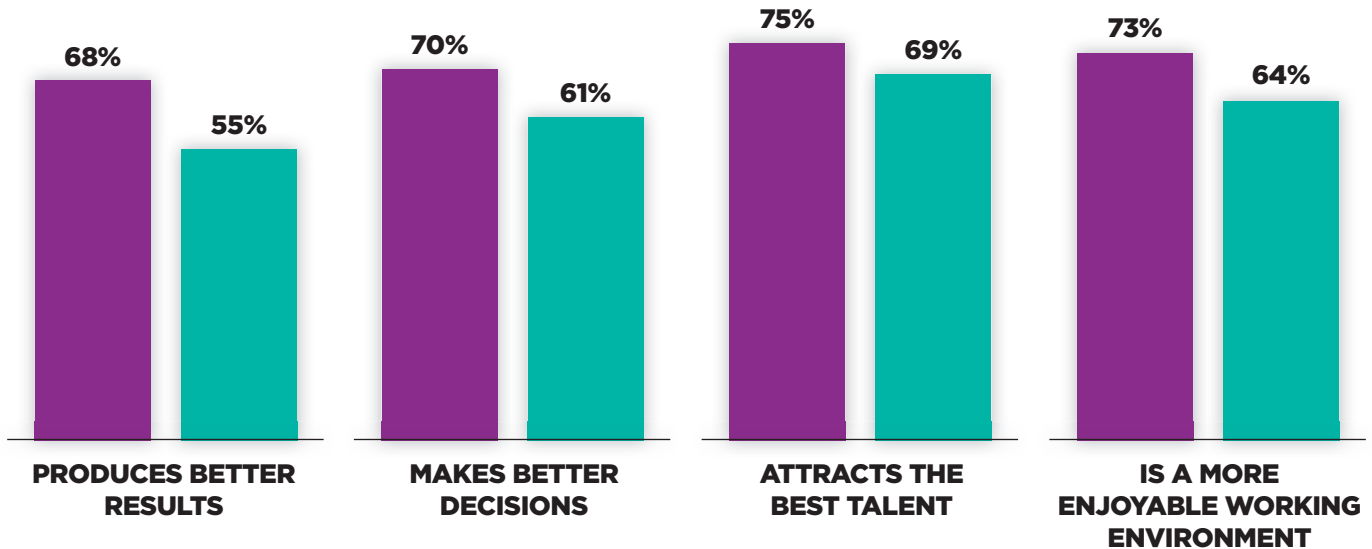
SOURCE: Women in Sport: Workplace culture focus groups/ interviews

A STRONGER LINK WITH THE BENEFITS COULD ENHANCE BUY-IN

Men do agree with benefits but less emphatically than women.

Q. In comparison with an organisation that lacks gender diversity, an organisation with good gender diversity at all levels...

AGREE



SOURCE: Women in Sport: Workplace culture survey (1152 respondents)

A NEED TO ENHANCE ENGAGEMENT THROUGH REFRAMING THE DEBATE



Tick box	Media blow out of proportion
Been here before	Not genuine or authentic
A woman's issue	'Positive' discrimination = unfair

- ✓ Change the language
- ✓ Celebrate the opportunity
- ✓ Talk about the benefits
- ✓ Make all part of the solution
- ✓ Positive & progressive

Fairness	Thrive
Respect the individual	
Better workplace for all	Progress for men & women
More effective organisation	

SOURCE: Women in Sport: Workplace culture focus groups/ interviews

BOTH MEN AND WOMEN AGREE THE GENDER BALANCE WILL NOT HAPPEN WITHOUT INTERVENTION, HOWEVER...

Using the right tone and language, and providing clear sight of the benefits, are all essential in securing buy-in to initiatives.

Female quotas get a polarised response and less rigid targets are seen as more acceptable. A tension between knowing it can shift the balance quickly, but is fundamentally ‘unfair’ to men and women.

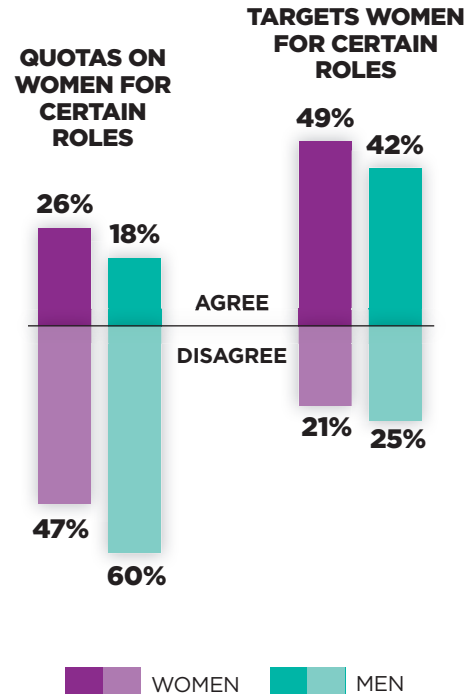
I can't think of anything worse than having somebody promoted into a senior management role, just because they're a woman. That just doesn't feel fair on men or women.

Woman

Undermining the principle that they are the ‘best person for the job’.

It should just be about the best people doing the best work for the best purpose. It is irrelevant whether you are male, female, British or not.

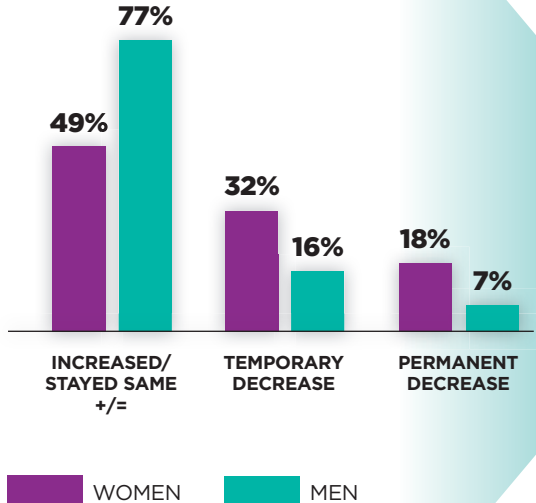
Woman



SOURCE: Women in Sport: Workplace culture survey (1152 respondents)

HAVING CHILDREN MORE LIKELY TO HAVE TEMPORARY IMPACT ON WOMEN'S AMBITION

IMPACT OF CHILDREN ON PROFESSIONAL AMBITION



WHY DECREASED?



SOURCE: Women in Sport: Workplace culture survey (1152 respondents)

HOW TO IMPROVE INCLUSIVITY AND HELP WOMEN PROGRESS WITHIN ORGANISATIONS

TOP 4 TO SUPPORT INCLUSIVITY & CULTURE

- 1 More flexible working for all
- 2 More acceptance of either responsible for childcare
- 3 More inclusive recruitment practices
- 4 Training to recognise how behaviour discriminates

TOP 4 TO SUPPORT WOMEN'S AMBITIONS TO PROGRESS

- 1 Visibility of female role models
- 2 Mentors and coaches to advise women on career progression
- 3 Back to work support (post baby)
- 4 Contacts & connections

INFLUENCING CHANGE – A CONCERTED EFFORT & COMMITMENT



NEXT STEPS – STRONG APPETITE TO MOVE FORWARDS

During follow-up discussions with sports organisations – strong appetite for work to continue in this area with the following identified as important:

- 1. Continued monitoring:** Keep providing the sector with evidence of progress.
- 2. Recognising cultural issues** – able to identify key aspects of a failing culture
- 3. Adopt & adapt best practice:** Recognise what, both from within and outside the sector.
- 4. Generate new ideas:** Identify how to do things differently in the sports sector specifically.
- 5. Suggest new models, ways of working and structures** to improve women’s chances of progression
- 6. Support for individuals and organisations:** Provide links and support networks
- 7. Hold the sector to account where we see bad practice:** Communications.
- 8. Don’t forget to celebrate progress:** Shine a light on leaders in sport sector who are getting gender diversity right in their organisations.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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