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# Diversity and Inclusion Policy & Action Plan

## FOREWORD FROM OUR CHAIR

Our charity exists because we believe it is wrong for girls and women to be denied the joy, fulfilment and lifelong benefits of sport. And yet still so many are, even here in the UK. Gender stereotypes, concerns about body image, discrimination in the workplace and social norms at home mean that at every life stage, women are still less active than men and less likely to play sport, particularly in teams. Too many women and girls are missing out on feeling happy and confident in their bodies, on the companionship, exhilaration and liberation of simply playing and forgetting day-to-day stresses. Women from disadvantaged communities and women of colour are missing out most of all.

Women in Sport is the longest established charity in this space, and it is at an exciting point in its development. At a time of global crisis which is highlighting the scale of inequality in our society, breaking down the barriers to change has never been more possible and more vital. We will aspire to lead through embracing a culture that values and champions the diversity of experiences of all people. We will actively seek to ensure our charitable work is based on informed conversations and feedback from people who have different experiences and frames of references.

As a charity promoting equality we championed and campaigned for the Code of Sports Governance to promote gender diversity at Board level in Sports Organisations. Therefore, we welcome the Government's Code for Sport Governance and the requirement that all sport delivery organisations now produce a diversity plan to communicate publicly the action they will take to ensure their workforce and leadership reflects the community they exist to serve. This updated action plan reflects the commitment led by the Chair and the Board of Trustees that Women in Sport wishes to make in creating an inclusive culture for all people.

We welcome your feedback via our Head of Finance and Operations, Harinie Wijeweera [harinie@womeninsport.org](mailto:harinie@womeninsport.org)

**Jayne Haines Chair Board of Trustees, Women in Sport**

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## About Us

Women in Sport believes that sport transforms lives so our **vision** is that **no-one is excluded** from the joy, fulfilment and lifelong benefits of sport. Since 1984, we have been working to understand the causes of inequality and working to redress the balance to ensure sport is fair, from the boardroom to the field of play.

We **believe** gender stereotypes and institutional bias are holding girls and women back in life and sport; and that it is wrong to deny women and girls equal access to sport. We **believe** that inclusive sport can help tackle social and economic inequalities.

Our **purpose** is to give every woman and girl the opportunity to take part in sport and inspire her to do so. To do this we aim to:

- Deeply understand the needs and aspirations of the full diversity of women and girls at each stage of their life
- Raise the profile of gender inequality in sport and its impact
- Define concepts, policies and solutions
- Campaign, collaborate and influence to inspire change.
- Ensure the charity is highly effective

## Our Policy on Diversity and Inclusion

We want all sport and exercise to reflect and recognise that women and girls have distinct physicality and needs. So we will champion and promote the diversity of women and girls and include their lived experiences at the forefront of our work, whether insights and research or campaigns and influencing to inspire change. Only then can we create a more equal society where everyone can enjoy the joy, fulfilment and lifelong benefits of sport and exercise.

We believe that we must be the change we want to see and will strive to represent the full diversity of the communities we serve. We aspire to a culture of belonging for everyone, where diversity is valued for the richness, it brings to all aspects of our work. Diversity and inclusion makes our organisation more authentic, stronger and more innovative.

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## Our Action Plan - What We Will Do

The following includes some of the key actions that we are taking to promote diversity and inclusion. It is by no means exhaustive and will be reviewed annually by the Board to ensure it remains current and strong. The actions have been themed around key areas that we believe give us most opportunity for improvement.

We are committed to the Equality Act 2010 and will not discriminate based on age, race, sex, gender assignment, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity.

Progress with diversity and inclusion is monitored through surveys, HR statistics, stakeholder data and media metrics which is reviewed by the Nominations and Governance Committee and Board. We are committed to reporting on progress with diversity and inclusion in our Annual Report and Accounts and also expanding our knowledge on how we measure and report on inclusion.

## Diversity of our People

Achieving our charitable purpose requires us to represent all women and girls genuinely and authentically. The best way to do this is to attract people into our staff and volunteers and on to our Board with a diversity of lived experiences. In our recruitment we aim to seek those who can enrich our organisation, because they help us to achieve our vision that no one is excluded from the joy, fulfilment and lifelong benefits of sport.

### Where our Team stands in 2020

**The 2020 Staff Team** - The current staff team of 15 is representative of the UK population at large in terms of ethnicity, having one Caribbean, one Mixed Race and one Asian employee. There is a diversity of nationalities with a U.S. national, a Caribbean national and a Sri Lankan / British dual national in the team. Informally we know there is a mix of economic backgrounds and through our diversity survey a spread of ages from 24 to 55. There is only one male employee. One person has declared they are in a same sex relationship. We have no employees with a declared disability.

**The 2020 Trustee Team** – The Board comprises four men and five women mostly between the ages of 35 and 55. One of the trustees is Asian British, otherwise our Board members are white. There is some diversity of sexual orientation in the Board and diversity of economic background. No one on the Board has declared a disability.

### Where Improvement is Needed

We have made great progress with developing the diversity of our people but Women in Sport is determined to continue to improve our diversity to increase our impact. We know we will otherwise lose out on talent and are at risk of missing key perspectives in the pursuit of our agenda. In particular, we need to attract people from ethnic backgrounds into areas of the staff team beyond finance and operations. We would be stronger if the Afro-Caribbean

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community was represented on the Board and potentially more age and gender diversity is required. We also need to do more to attract staff and trustees with disabilities.

## Commitments to Action

# Recruitment

### When recruiting for new roles in the staff or volunteer team we will:

- Ensure that recruitment packs including Job Descriptions prominently promote our commitment to Diversity and Inclusion; and that Person Specifications make it clear that we value a diversity of lived experiences whether this be in relation to ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, religion or beliefs, disability or socio-economic background. We will actively seek input from different people, testing our language, images and channels to make sure that recruitment advertisements do not inadvertently exclude anyone from applying for roles with us. We will also ensure recruitment packs are inclusive and accessible to the best of our ability.
- Take a proactive approach to reaching a diversity of potential applicants with our **advertisements** including by contacting partners with diverse networks.
- When **shortlisting** candidates we will avoid rigid interpretations of requirements and seek diversity, including through longer shortlists if there are a large number of applicants
- **First interviews** are inclusive and accessible to all. Interviews will be conducted by the most diverse panel possible through engaging externals if required., The panel will be reminded of the aims of our Diversity and Inclusion plan before interview, and asked to engage applicants about their commitment to diversity.
- Before agreeing on the choice of candidates for **second interview**, the CEO will question the interviewers as to the rationale for their proposals, testing this rigorously against the diversity action plan.
- We will **review and test** our success with recruiting more diverse people, collecting diversity data on application and sharing statistics for each recruitment with the Governance and Nominations Committee.

### For existing staff and volunteers we will:

- Foster a culture of inclusion that allows all staff to feel they belong and have their voices heard without any detriment.
- Make sure our induction process allows new recruits to feel confident in their role
- Share any updates to the Diversity Action Plan and consult with the full staff team on an annual basis so they feel equally committed to creating an inclusive culture.
- We will provide training and support for staff on unconscious bias, diversity and inclusion.

# Engagement

Our purpose is to give **every** woman and girl the opportunity to take part in sport and inspire her to do so. Therefore, to fulfill our aims we need to ensure that all aspects of our work draws from the greatest diversity of women and girls and represents their voices in all communications,

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campaigns, solutions and policies to inspire and influence change. In order to do so we will commit to taking the following actions:

### **Insights**

- We will expand our foundational knowledge of women and girls from diverse backgrounds, by actively seeking out and deeply understanding their attitudes, needs and aspirations to inform our insights.
- For all our insight projects we will consider carefully how to reflect broad diversity of backgrounds essential to make meaningful decisions and drive change for all women and girls.
- When undertaking research, we will challenge ourselves to listen carefully, challenge preconceptions and deeply understand diversity beyond numbers.
- We will continue to engage researchers and consultants from diverse backgrounds, so they are able to inform our work with their lived experiences and ensure our interpretations are sound.

### **Communications**

- We will amplify the insight drawn from the diversity of experiences of women and girls through our communications channels such as social media channels and publications, blogs and podcasts.
- We will always endeavor to make our branding, communications and website accessible and carry imagery that represents the diversity of women and girls in the communities we serve and is up to date on the current preferences and language.
- We want our communications to be relevant to the audience and communities that we are trying to reach by using interpreters, translators and subtitles to make content relevant.
- Our social media channels will actively engage, target and promote content from diverse women and girls.

### **Advocacy and Partnerships**

- We will utilize and actively discuss with our partners, stakeholders and supporters on how to use their reach to target women and girls from different backgrounds.
- We will seek and work with more organisations that promote diversity to continuously improve our engagement on diversity.
- All our solutions whether pilots, webinars, round tables, discussion forums, conferences, launch events will be accessible and include people with diverse backgrounds and perspectives as a norm in addition we will look at how we can use different locations across the United Kingdom for our work.

## **Culture**

Our culture must genuinely reflect the communities that we serve and be a place where everyone can feel comfortable as themselves. We want anyone coming into the organisation to

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know that we value them and will hear their voices. Our culture is owned by the Chair, Board of Trustees and CEO. They are totally committed to creating a diverse organisation. We will work to make sure that all existing and new staff are also committed towards creating an inclusive workplace.

In order to do so we commit to taking the following actions:

- Ensure that there is support, mentoring and coaching for our staff through their line managers, senior team or through externals, to achieve their potential, and be ambassadors for Women in Sport, as an organization that is representative of **all** women and girls.
- Invest in our learning and development, especially inclusion, working with experts to understand and bring sustainable changes on how we promote and create a culture that is committed to diversity and progressing talent within the organization.
- Reach out to existing networks and build our own network that supports women and girls from diverse backgrounds so they can help us nurture our diverse talent and provide them with inspiration, support and coaching if needed.
- Appreciate the different backgrounds and experiences of the team and enable sharing of these experiences so we can better understand each other's and ensure that **all our** work is representative of diverse perspectives.
- Our "culture club" will be a place where voices are heard, and meaningful dialog takes place. A key role of the culture club will be to share and promote inclusion for all our staff.
- Monitor our culture through the annual staff and diversity survey taking feedback and making constructive changes.