

## How the Council and its partners can increase women and girls access and participation in sports provision and physical activities in the borough

**Recommendation 1**  
**Community engagement**  
 Using the co-design framework, the Council's Sports and Physical Activity Service (CSPAS) will set up a steering group to engage women and girls on their needs for accessing sport provision and physical activities in the borough.

Comments from Service:

Action	Owner(s)	Completion date	Update
1.1 Conduct desk research and engage with key partners to obtain an evidence base for female sports participation and establish the participation baseline for Tower Hamlets	Head of Sport & Physical Activity	Quarter 2 - 2023-24 (September 2023)	PH health intelligence team conducted an analysis from the <a href="#">Active Lives Survey for Tower Hamlets</a> . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women are less likely to be active than men (57,5% vs 65,5%)</li> <li>• Girls are less likely to be active than boys (26,7% vs 37,5%)</li> </ul>
1.2 Establish The Tower Hamlets Women's Sports & Physical Activity Network (WS&PAN) & The Women's Sports Board to include Council officers, schools, Tower Hamlets community stakeholders, sub-regional and regional non-governmental and national governing bodies of sports (NGB's) to undertake a stakeholder mapping exercise as appropriate	Head of Sport & Physical Activity	Quarter 1 - 2023-24 (June 2023)	T.H W&G SPA Collective Network Meetings held quarterly established 14 Dec '23. Second took place 12 March '24.
1.3 Scope and produce a community engagement strategy for women's sport & physical activity, linked with insourcing and youth service workstreams. Conduct consultation and targeted focus groups with female residents / VCS/service users to determine barriers to participation, mechanisms to improve accessibility and	Senior Communication Officer / Head of Sport & Physical Activity	Quarter 2 - 2023-24 (July 2023)	In November 2023 a women and girls engagement session was held at the Town Hall to identify barriers to participation and to inform the development of the new BE WELL offer – 80 women and girls attended. A summary of findings along with other engagement sessions with

<p>co-produce a programme of activity informed by local women and girls.</p>			<p>underrepresented groups can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>Over the summer in 2023, a range of community engagement sessions were conducted across the borough, including ‘Family Fun Days’ at Millwall Park and Victoria Park - Summary of findings can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</p>
<p>1.4 Work in concert with the Leisure insourcing workstreams to support the Women in Sport agenda and establish a SPA programme of women &amp; girl’s sporting activity for 2023-24 financial year informed by the WSN &amp; WSB and consultation with key Stakeholders, residents, and service users with a view to develop a co- designed programme of activity for Q3 2023-24</p>	<p>Head of Sport &amp; Physical Activity / Service Manager (SPA)</p>	<p>Quarter 3 - 2023-24 (July 2023)</p>	<p>The new Youth Service and the urban adventure base offers an extensive programme with dedicated weekly after school girls’ sessions. Total number of attendances in 2023/24 was 6012 of which 54% were female.</p> <p>Various events for international Women &amp; Girls Week were conducted across Tower Hamlets locations with an overall attendance of 1,213.</p> <p>A range of women only sessions have been delivered across the borough in the last year including Our Park (total attendance=428), women basketball league (total attendance=582) etc.</p> <p>Looking ahead, the first year of the new BE WELL service will aim to improve access and inclusivity to W&amp;G with the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strengthening women only programming and women only spaces</li> <li>- Free swimming for W&amp;G</li> <li>- Targeted communications and campaigns (e.g. Find your...)</li> </ul>

			- work with key partners like the Women Inclusive team to implement new initiatives e.g. Creche
1.5 Work in partnership with GLL to increase women-only sports provision in the leisure centres to pre-pandemic levels.	Head of Sport & Physical Activity	Quarter 2 – 2022-23- (July 2022) complete	Working with GLL several new Sessions has been introduced: Badminton, Cricket, Box fit & Self Defence, running
1.6 As part of the leisure insourcing workstream, consult and co-design a programme of leisure centre female only activity, training, voluntary and employment opportunities.	Head of Leisure Operations / Head of Sport & Physical Activity	Quarter 1 - 2023-24 (April 2024)	Please see update from Actions 1.3 and 1.4  The new leisure will also deliver lifeguard courses for W&G leading to employment opportunity.
<b>Recommendation 2</b> Affordability CSPAS should work in partnership with the borough’s sport delivery partners, Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) and grass root sports to ensure that access and participation in sports provision and physical activities is both affordable and is actively encouraged to women and girls.			
Comments from Service:			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner(s)</b>	<b>Completion date</b>	

<p>2.1 Produce a community sports plan for Tower Hamlets Leisure Centres prioritising female sports provision and how GLL will engage with key partners to enhance and support community sports provision for women &amp; girls</p>	<p>GLL Partnership Manager &amp; Community Sports Manager</p>	<p>Quarter 1 - 2023-24 (May 2023)</p>	<p>The leisure insourcing team worked in partnership with GLL sport community manager to develop a proposal to improve W&amp;G access and to inform the programming of future activities. The report can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>During 2024/25, a borough sport and physical activity strategy will be developed which will prioritise W&amp;G access and engagement.</p>
<p>2.2 Conduct a benchmarking exercise of neighbouring boroughs to determine costs of female sports activity. Using examples of good practice, collect an evidence base to on the effectiveness inform the insourced leisure service</p>	<p>Leisure Contracts Manager</p>	<p>Quarter 2 - 2023-24 (July 2023)</p>	<p>As new activities and services for W&amp;G develops, the team we will be benchmarking against neighbouring boroughs.</p> <p>The team also plan to collaborate with London Sport to host a London pan networking event to share ideas and learning around W&amp;G sport and exercise.</p> <p>Local insight and research findings from the <a href="#">East London – Women and Physical Activity Report</a> will also be used.</p>
<p>2.3 Conduct a review of leisure centre policies, strategies, and provision with regards to female participation and access to services as part of leisure insourcing project.</p>	<p>Head of Leisure Operations</p>	<p>Quarter 4 -2023-24</p>	<p>Sport Summit event conducted in March 2024 at the Town Hall with local sport clubs and physical activity providers to inform the development of the new council Sport and Physical Activity Strategy within which W&amp;G participation will be a high priority.</p> <p>The insourcing team will plan a review of current W&amp;G sessions that have transferred across from GLL into the new service.</p>
<p>2.4 To work in partnership with grass roots community provision to enable provision to be more accessible</p>	<p>Head of Sport &amp; Physical Activity</p>	<p>Quarter 1 - 2023-24</p>	<p>SPA team continues to work closely with grass roots community provision to provide them with</p>

			<p>support to increase W&amp;G participation. The SPA team will also come under the new leisure service to ensure a more joint-up approach.</p> <p>A new <a href="#">Community Activity Finder</a> will be launched in May 2024 to form a comprehensive directory and improve awareness and accessibility of all the physical activity provision in the borough.</p>
<p>2.5 Explore funding opportunities to support this area of work.</p>	<p>Head of Sport &amp; Physical Activity</p>	<p>Q3 – 2023-24</p>	<p>The team has identified the funding opportunities with the following external partners: football foundation, Sport England changes places, London Cricket trust.</p> <p>The team also works closely with Public Health and Integrated commissioning to identify local commissioning opportunity for the implementation targeted/specialist physical activity interventions.</p> <p>Last year, the Mayor’s Community Grants Programme (MCGP) contributed to funding VCS organisations to support women and girls to be active. Of the 110 projects funded by the MCGP, 18 projects (over 16%) focussed on sport and physical health, with just under 40% of these projects (7) aiming to support women and girls to be active. These seven projects represent a notable investment of £561,151 over the next 3.5 years. The average grant award for these organisations is approximately £24,000 with one organisation being funded the maximum £40,000 per annum.</p>

			Details can be found at the bottom of <a href="#">this report</a> .
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<p><b>Recommendation 3</b>                  Campaigns and publicity                  CSPAS should consult the Council's Corporate Communication Service alongside partners' comms services to positively promote women's sport provisions and physical activities borough wide.</p>			
<p>Comments from Service:</p>			
Action	Owner(s)	Completion date	Update
3.1 Recruit a dedicated communications officer (as part of the leisure insourcing work) to support the women and sport campaign, raising awareness, case studies, promoting opportunity and celebrating success.	Communications Team	Quarter 3 - 2023-24	Completed - communication officer in post.
3.2 Scope and produce a communications & marketing campaign with the Council's Communications Department, outlining the communication channels of the Council and its partners for example RSL, NHS, CVS etc to be used to improve the marketing of women's sport & physical activity opportunities in the borough	Senior Communication Officer / Head of Sport & Physical Activity	Quarter 1 - 2023-24	<p>Completed the local women and girls' campaign "<a href="#">Find Your...</a>" ran in August 2023 for 6 weeks leading to an increase in female membership from 48% in Q1 (Apr-Jun), to 48.6% in Q2 (July-Sept). Case study from the campaign can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>This campaign will be relaunched to inspire women and girls to participate in sports and physical activity, and to promote the range of activities available to them in the borough.</p>

Recommendation 4			
Female friendly infrastructure			
CSPAS will collaborate with key partners to develop dedicated female friendly infrastructure and includes location, timetable of facilities, build in competitions and develop scope for employment and training pathways for female to work in the fitness sector.			
Comments from Service:			
Action	Owner(s)	Completion date	Update
4.1 To conduct a mapping exercise of existing female sports provision by the Council and its partners	Head of Sport & Physical Activity	Quarter 1 - 2023-24 (March 2024)	In discussion/ planning through TH W&G SPA Collective Meeting
4.2 To work in partnership with the other Council departments to ensure accessibility and delivery of female activity is a key priority in the allocations of Council resources and commissioning	Head of Sport & Physical Activity	Quarter 3 - 2023-24 (October 2023)	Working with public health who provided resources to run health & wellbeing sessions for staff in the Town Hall including International Womens Day community event. Town Centre Manager provide resources to run Health & Wellbeing sessions in Whitechapel Area (The Mosque, Whitechapel L.C & Townhall) The new leisure service will also work closely with other department in the council including youth justice, looked after children etc.
4.3 Scope and develop a programme of training and the creation of employment pathways to increase female workforce in the borough's leisure centres	Head of Leisure Operations / HR Workstream	Quarter 3 - 2023-24 (October 2023)	The new leisure service will offer the following opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lifeguard training for women and girls</li> <li>• Fitness instructor courses for women and girls</li> <li>• Apprenticeship opportunity</li> </ul>

**Recommendation 5**  
 Quality monitoring, intelligence capture and audit  
 CSPAS will develop robust systems to capture and measure key diversity, equality and usage performance information across all provisions for women and girls. Monitoring should also include, policy reviews, mystery shopping and pulse audits to ensure that the sports provision is relevant, and sustainable.

Comments from Service:

Action	Owner(s)	Completion date	Update
5.1 Although it can encourage and attempt to influence, CSPAS can only control the monitoring and evaluation systems within its service. However, CSPAS will work in partnership with other Council departments and key partners (e.g. CVS, National Governing Bodies, sports clubs etc. to encourage the development of robust data capture mechanisms.	Head of Sport & Physical Activity	Quarter 4 - 2023-24	All SPA W&G data captured on Upshot. Going forward all data will be capture by gladstone LMS system.
5.2 Through the leisure insourcing project and development of the Leisure Management System (LMS) develop a system of monitoring to track participation against targets. In addition, the quality assurance framework for the new service with include mystery shopping, quality audits and the capture customer satisfaction.	Head of Leisure Operations	Quarter 4 - 2023-24	New LMS purchased (Gladstone) which include 4Global Technology which will be used to demonstrate impact and social return on investment.  Audit and mystery shopping was also conducted as part of the insourcing project, and more will be planned during the first year of the new service.

**Recommendation 6**  
 Women and girls safe routes to sports provision and physical activities  
 CSPAS will use the feedback from women and girl (on safe routes to sport venues) and engage and work with key partners such as Transport for London, public realm and regeneration to ensure that any policy or access redesign takes on board and reflects the views women and girls.

Comments from Service:

Action	Owner(s)	Completion date	Update Th
<p>6.1 This recommendation requires a whole system approach and will need support and be resourced by all relevant Council departments and partners. CSPAS will liaise with partners to encourage the use of Sport England Planning guidance for all sport &amp; physical activity spaces in borough, which incorporates safe routes for women and girls as a priority.</p>	<p>Planning / Highways / Parks / Strategy Leisure (TBC)</p>	<p>Quarter 4 - 2023-24</p>	<p>Cross referencing women and girls' activities and services going forward against Sport England Planning guidance. Future consultation with W&amp;G will include a review regarding safety concerns.</p>
<p>6.2 Liaise with Health, Adults &amp; Community Services, Violence Against Women Service to integrate safe leisure routes into existing work programmes such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A series of women's safety virtual walks across the borough, covering every ward in partnership with planning and the Police where women highlight places they don't feel safe (around their home address, routes to work or routes they travel regularly etc).</li> <li>- Develop action plans to help improve areas identified by women as feeling unsafe by making physical improvements (like lighting and CCTV), through to hotspots for misogyny and behaviour change campaigns as appropriate. This information will inform the Local Plan allowing more consideration for landscape design that better protects women going forward.</li> <li>- Community Engagement events (Safety Surgeries and Walkabouts) where local residents have the chance to engage with us and share their concerns.</li> </ul>	<p>Health, Adult &amp; Community Services, VAWS</p>	<p>Quarter 4 - 2023-24</p>	<p>The leisure insourcing team has been working in collaboration with the VAWG Team to try and address concerns affecting women and girls around safety and security. The main suggestions made were around:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessibility and Awareness:</li> <li>• Empowerment and Support:</li> <li>• Safety and Security</li> <li>• Inclusivity and Representation:</li> </ul> <p>Further details can be found on page 16 of this <a href="#">report</a></p>