

UNDERSTANDING WOMEN AS VOLUNTEERS IN SPORT

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OUR VISION & MISSION



We are women in sport.

Our vision is a society where gender equality exists in every sphere.

We're advancing gender equality through and within sport: empowering women and girls through sport and transforming the sport sector.

TWO STRATEGIC GOALS

Goal 1

Empowering women and girls through sport:

Every woman and girl in the UK plays sport or is physically active, from early years and throughout her life

Goal 2

Transforming the sport sector: Women and men have equal opportunities in sport, from the field of play to the board room

BACKGROUND

Growing recognition of the importance of volunteers in sport

But, little research into women volunteers in sport



METHODS

- Literature review
- 24 interviews with men and women volunteering in traditional sports
- 11 interviews with women volunteering in parkrun
- 6 interviews with people working in CSPs
- 13 interviews with men and women volunteering in non-sports sector

FINDINGS

NON-SPORT VOLUNTEERING



- 41% men vs 43% of women have volunteered formally
- But, differences in gender with informal volunteering
- 62% of women compared with 56% of men
- Women more likely to do caring roles, men more likely to give advice and represent others

SPORT VOLUNTEERING

- Volunteers reflect the profile of sports participants
- 30% of men volunteer in sport compared with 14% of women
- 73% of volunteers also participate in sport
- Men are more likely to occupy decision making roles and coaching roles than women



MOTIVATIONS

- Intrinsic value the main hook for women to volunteer
- parkrun volunteers motivated by their passion for running and giving back
- Traditional sport volunteers more motivated by child's involvement than their own participation
- Younger women interested in skills and professional development



GENDER DISCRIMINATION AND STEREOTYPING

“People take one look at me and say, ‘Never in a million years is she a boxer or a boxing coach’ I think the whole judging a book by its cover can be a barrier sometimes.”

(Female volunteer in boxing).



FAMILY

- Family can be both a motivator and a barrier
- For traditional sport, volunteers have got involved because of their family, rather than participation
- But, women need to juggle commitments
- Support networks required



FLEXIBILITY AND INCLUSIVITY

- Flexibility in volunteering is valued by women
- This is something which parkrun does really well



SUGGESTIONS FOR THE SECTOR



- Audit your volunteer roles to see if they reflect gender stereotypes
- Increase the visibility of women volunteers
- Consider how to make volunteering family friendly
- Can some volunteer roles be made more flexible or less onerous?
- Understand the motivations of your volunteers



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N
SPORT**

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