

Rationale...

There is a 2 million participation gap between males and females, however, 75% of females want to do more. Insight produced by Sport England suggests that the biggest barrier to regular participation by females is fear of judgement.

Aim...

To utilise the national This Girl Can campaign to drive new local delivery programmes and add value to existing ones in an attempt to increase levels of physical activity and tackle the fear of judgement barrier in females.

Objectives...

1. To raise the profile of the 'This Girl Can' Campaign in Berkshire and in turn, the profile of Get Berkshire Active
2. To increase the number of regular opportunities targeting inactive women and girls
3. To link the existing GBA programmes/work areas into the 'This Girl Can' Campaign
4. To increase physical activity in females engaged in the programme themes
5. To reduce fear of judgement in females engaged in the programme themes
6. To upskill local providers, leaders and coaches with the necessary guidance and advice so that they feel more capable of tackling the fear of judgement barrier in their delivery.

What we did...

This Girl Can Festivals...

Festivals, followed by at least 5 sessions delivered by local providers and designed to utilise the insight and engage women of all shapes, sizes, ages and abilities in a range of activities. Activities included; Dance, Basketball, Running, SUPYoga, Snowsports, Squash, Football, Seated Aerobics

Meeting up to go through the insight was really helpful, it provided me with the language and reasons for the project.

Elaine,
4 Motion Dance,
a TGC Festival provider

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Festivals delivered, over 400 women and girls engaged

Featured:
Salsa, Pop,
Zumba,
Caribbean Crush

This Girl Can Danceathon...

'Wiggle and Jiggle with Friends for Charity'
A multi-dance taster event, designed to appeal to the 'sense of achievement' and 'social' motivations, for women of all ages, in a non-sporting venue - a church!

This Girl Can Get Active Bursary...

A £100 bursary for women seeking to kickstart a more active lifestyle. In return for our bursary our recipients were required to blog about their sport and physical activity experiences. Blogs were published to help inspire other women to overcome their fear of judgement too.

Confidence went from 5.1 to 7.9 out of 10. Participation went from 3.4 to 10.4 days in the last 28

The 'This Girl Can' challenge has really helped me to stay motivated and keep moving, whatever the circumstances. I've lost 2 kilos and am feeling much better for it.

Carol, 34, Bursary Recipient

This Girl Can Ambassadors...

Local women recruited to help raise the profile of the campaign, local opportunities and the projects GBA developed.

20 women recruited between Apr-Sept 2015

Ambassadors have volunteered at local events, delivered festivals, helped develop the 'This Girl Can Start' materials and acted as buddies for our bursary recipients

This Girl Can Start...

Promotional material targeting those not currently participating in sport or physical activity. Designed to appeal to key motivations and signpost to the GBA online activity finder.

This Girl Can Participate...

Working in partnership with and linking with high profile mass participation events to recruit females to take part, offering bursaries and support in the lead up to the event. Women were required to blog about their training journeys which were then used to inspire others.

Awesome
Inspiring
Active
Uplifting
Entertaining
Good Experience
Energising
Fun
Exciting
Motivational
Brilliant
Amazing
Exhilarating

Words used to describe the Hampstead Norrey's Festival

I think the fact that I have severe sight problems could show other girls with other disabilities that 'this girl can' and that they can do anything too!

Chloe, 22, a member of the 'Fantastic 5' from GBA's Run a Marathon campaign linked to the London marathon.

The stories behind the photos...

One of our This Girl Can Ambassadors, Nicola works in Windsor as a Business Analyst, and is fairly new to sport and physical activity...



'I wasn't ever sporty as a child and as an adult I never did much more than the obligatory gym membership every January. Then a few years ago I discovered Open Water Swimming, and I was hooked! That led to a team triathlon, which made me want to do a solo one, so I took up cycling (which I also love) and running (which I don't yet, but am working on) and eventually I did a sprint triathlon.

But what I have discovered is so much more than a new sport – I've discovered how good exercise makes me feel; how I can start a swim stressed and grumpy but end it physically exhilarated yet mentally relaxed; how after a tough day at work and a difficult bedtime with my kids, pulling on my trainers and heading out for a run can make me feel on top of the world and how many absolutely lovely people are involved in our local sporting communities. But one of the most important things is a self-respect for achieving my goals and a regret for all the years that I didn't think I liked sport, when actually I just hadn't found the right one for me. I absolutely LOVE the #ThisGirlCan campaign and wanted to become an Ambassador as it encourages any girl or woman, regardless of fitness level, size, lifestyle or preconceived ideas about sport, to be more active and to discover something that works for them.'

Two quotes from Festival participants...



'I just wanted to send you a quick email to say how much I enjoyed Saturday. The whole day was so inspiring and all that motivation was fuelled by women wanting to try new activities and having confidence in themselves to keep fit! When you looked around every person there was beaming with happiness and had so much energy for the day! It was such a success and I am so pleased I could be there. Thank you for a wonderful day.'

'Just wanted to say a massive thank you for today. It was so fun and we all really enjoyed it! We will definitely be doing the activities again! Please let us know if there are any future events as we would love to join in. Hopefully the weather will be as good!'

Hannah, who entered the Henley Mile Swim via our This Girl Can Participate project, blogs about her first open water experience...



'Even a 26 degree swimming pool feels freezing to me so I'm a little surprised I entered an open water swim, let alone one that is a mile long.

Indoor training is going well, I love the me time with no small children and no demands on my time. It's almost meditative, swimming up and down. I leave the pool feeling relaxed which sounds a little odd, considering it's a workout!

My open water swim experience on the other hand didn't quite go to plan! I squeezed myself into a wetsuit (there was no way I would go in a lake without one!) and a swim cap and got in. To my delight I didn't freeze, it actually felt OK. However, as soon as I put my face in the water and started front crawl my chest and throat felt tight and I felt out of breath, as though I'd been swimming flat out for ages, rather than a minute. Definitely panicking! I bobbed in the water for a little bit, calmed down and resorted to breaststroke. Once that had been mastered I started to put my face in as I swam and then, for the final 200m, I managed front crawl. 750m in a lake completed = relieved and so pleased.

I'm hoping that the Henley Mile will be easier – a couple more lake swims beforehand and a straight course (I didn't realise how difficult swimming a loop course could be, I probably did a lot more than 750m!) should help!

Angela, one of our The Girl Can Get Active Bursary recipients reflects on her journey back into exercise in one of her blogs...



'What has this project taught me? I can! The only limitation on you is the ones you put on yourself. There is no one stopping you from making the most of life. I am going to continue my gym membership and also include long walks over the weekend with my husband to enjoy nature. I am not yet at the point where I can sign up for marathons or swimathons but who knows, maybe in a year or two?'

Get Berkshire Active would like to thank all the organisations and individuals that have been involved in our This Girl Can projects in 2015.