

# Women in Leadership in Scottish Sport

## **Ryan Brown**

(OSS Research Officer)

## **Dr Paula Murray**

(OSS Research Associate and  
Lecturer at Abertay University)

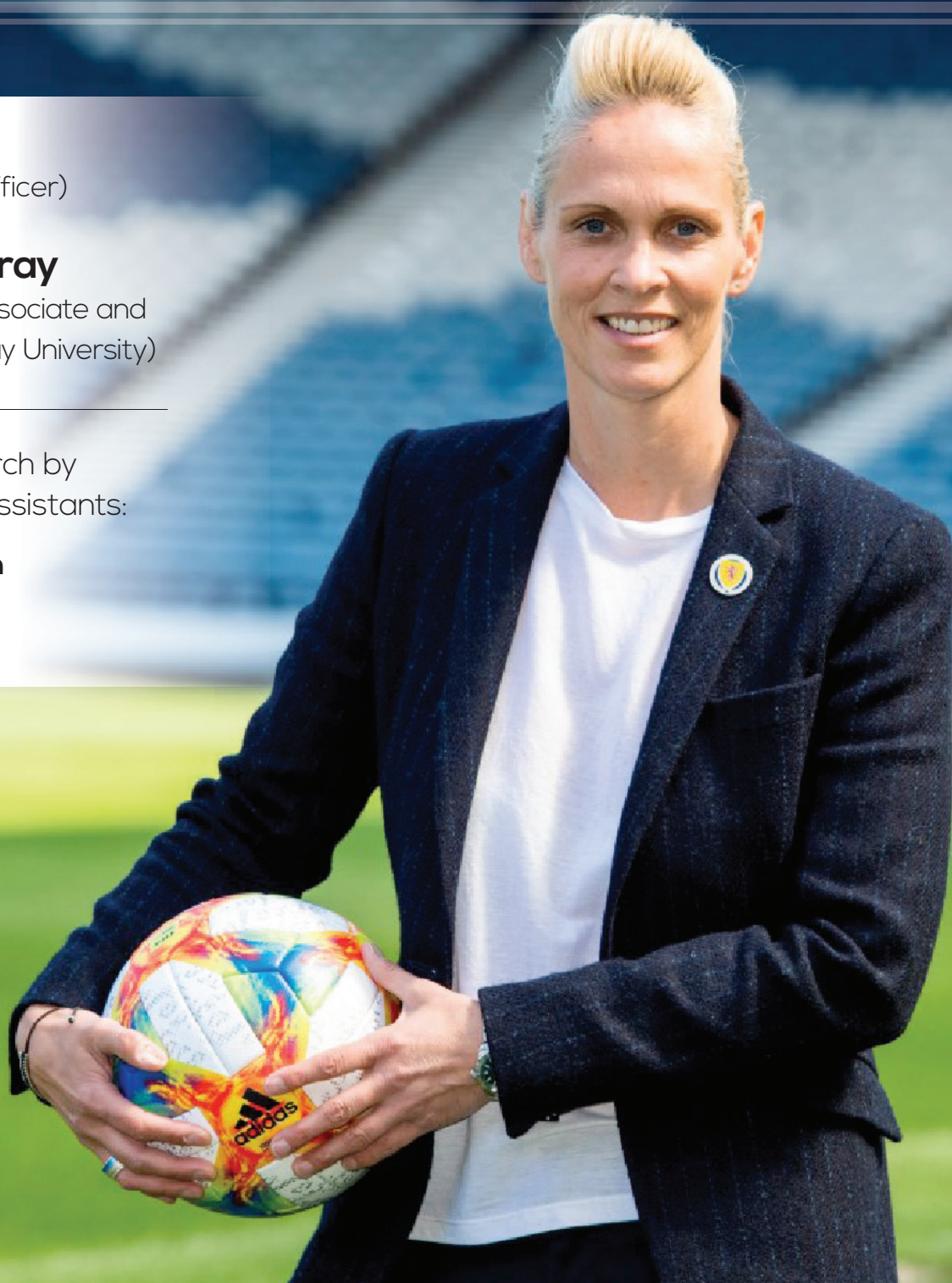
---

Additional research by  
OSS Research Assistants:

**Fiona Beth Doran**

**Jack Templeton**

**Jamie Mack**



# THE OBSERVATORY FOR SPORT IN SCOTLAND

The Observatory for Sport in Scotland (OSS) was formed in 2016. It is an independent think tank that connects research, evidence and analysis to policy and practice in Scotland, and helps stakeholders to use sport activity strategically to improve health and wellbeing, education and the economy.

Steered by a board of 12 people with experience across government, education, health, business, sport and communications, the OSS draws on the expertise of global advisors in research, sport and business.

It works closely with people and organisations from across national and local government, health, education, housing, criminal justice, planning, business, leisure, sport bodies, communities and the third sector, and engages with universities across the world.

This is one of the OSS' series of research reports that seeks to share data and insights, identify knowledge gaps, challenges and trends in community sport and its relationship with wider society, and shape thinking around effective and sustainable solutions.

If you would like to be part of the OSS, either by joining our forums, or sharing or supporting research, contact David Ferguson, OSS Chief Executive, at [david@oss.scot](mailto:david@oss.scot)  
For more information, visit: [www.oss.scot](http://www.oss.scot)



## SCOTTISH WOMEN IN SPORT (SW/S)

This research was commissioned by SW/S as they believe it is vital for furthering the cause of women in sport to fill a knowledge gap around perceptions of women in leadership roles, and understand whether the picture in Scotland was improving or not, and if not, why not.

SW/S has a simple vision - an inclusive Scotland where there is gender equality in all areas. Through the power of sport, SW/S works to impact on the culture of sport in Scotland to ensure that equality and parity are reached in every aspect of sport and that all women and girls have equal opportunity to participate, officiate, coach and lead.

Registered as a Scottish Charity they work to impact on the culture of sport in Scotland and ensure that equality and parity are achieved in every aspect of sport with equal opportunity to participate, officiate, coach and lead. Comprising eleven Trustees who believe that to accelerate equality in sport, change from a 'top down' perspective is required.

You can contact Maureen McGonigle at [scottishwomeninsport@gail.com](mailto:scottishwomeninsport@gail.com) and for more information on our activities, visit [Scottiswomeninsport.co.uk](http://Scottiswomeninsport.co.uk)

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SCOTTISH sport has been on a path of improvement in tackling the gender gap in many areas of governance and delivery, but perceptions of significant change appear not to be matched by the reality; policy commitment not replicated in practice.

The presence of female leaders in sport has been visible in the past decade with the increasing promotion of women in high-profile roles, from tennis coach Judy Murray and football manager Shelley Kerr to Scottish Government sport ministers Aileen Campbell, Mairi Gougeon and Maree Todd; Netball Scotland CEO Claire and Scottish Rugby and Cricket Scotland appointing their first-ever female presidents in Dee Bradbury and Sue Strachan, respectively.

Yet, at the current pace of change it would take almost 25 years to achieve gender equality in leadership roles across Scottish sport. That is a sobering reality to emerge from this research conducted by the Observatory for Sport in Scotland (OSS) in partnership with Scottish Women in Sport (SWiS), with support from **sportscotland**, sport governing bodies, Community Leisure UK and other stakeholders.

This research seeks to inform and deepen understanding of the representation of women in leadership roles across Scottish sport. It is a limited study, conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020-21, which severely restricted face-to-face contact and travel. It focuses specifically on women's roles within Scottish Governing Bodies (SGBs) and leisure trusts, chiefly responsible for the administration of sport and leisure, and includes key national umbrella organisations. Data from a total of 85 organisations was analysed with CEOs or senior management staff from 31 SGBs taking part in the more detailed qualitative interviews. This research did not investigate delivery at a local level in Scotland, due to the complexity and differences that exists across each of the 32 local authority areas, nor the management of local sports clubs across Scotland and private sector facilities. These are areas being considered for future research.



*Maree Todd MSP  
(Minister for Public Health,  
Women's Health and Sport)*



*Sue Strachan  
(Cricket Scotland President)*

The past decade has been a busy time for the development of policies and practices designed to address the gender gap in Scottish sport, and encourage more girls and women to participate in sport throughout their life cycles. The Scottish Government established a Women and Girls Sport Advisory Board in 2018, a Sporting Equality Fund and, more recently, a Women and Girls Fund, and work has been developed by sportscotland, sports governing bodies and various non-sport organisations in this area. As an example, Scottish Rugby recently launched a 'Coach Support Programme' for girls and women's rugby aimed specifically at the development of female coaches.

Of the organisations who took part in the deeper dive qualitative interviews, there was agreement that Scotland had made positive strides in gender equality in leadership positions, and surprise that this was not what the study's quantitative data revealed. Instead, it is clear, that the vast majority of the influencers, role models and key decision-makers in sport, tasked with investing money and resource, and shaping how we tackle the drop-out of girls and women from sport, are men.

Does this matter? Sport has long been dominated by male participants, and this is commonly reflected in the leadership positions, while the research showed that in the female-dominated sport of netball, women significantly outnumber men in leadership roles.

However, Scotland has a problem with fewer girls and women participating in sport compared to boys and men from the age of 11 years old. Up to that point girls are slightly ahead in the participation stakes, but though females make up 51% of the Scottish population, there then emerges a 10% gender gap that steadfastly remains throughout the life cycles. This is in contrast to more active European countries such as in Scandinavia and the Netherlands, where participation shows little difference between genders. Research participants told us that real gender equality in leadership - as opposed to one or two women on a board - was crucial to enabling differing needs, behaviours, barriers and motivations in sport of girls and women to be properly understood and successfully addressed, for the benefit of all engaged in sport.



*The first female SRU President Dee Bradbury with SRU Patron HRH The Princess Royal.*

Photo courtesy of David Gibson (Fotosport UK).

This research revealed that Scottish sport bodies witnessed an overall increase of 30 female board members from 2015-2018, rising by a further five in 2018-2020, but men currently hold 67% of board positions. Female chair representation rose from 10% to 19% from 2015 to 2020.

In 2020, only one in five SGB CEOs in Scotland were female - a decrease of 4% over the past five years - and the number of female coaches in Scottish sport fell by nearly 4% from 2015-2020, to just over 27% of coaches being female compared with 72% male. These numbers fluctuate year on year, but the five-year trend analysis provides an indication of direction of travel and speed of progress. There were similar splits in the 25 leisure trusts who manage the vast majority of Scotland's public facilities, delivering community sport and leisure services, with eight led by female CEOs and five boards by female chairs in 2021.

Interesting themes emerged from the qualitative research with 31 SGBs and other respondents, including perceptions of women leaders, influence of wider society, governance, recruitment processes, equality and inclusion policies, and barriers faced by women.

There was criticism in some quarters of perception versus reality, and how genuine some sports were in their desire to embrace gender diversity beyond 'ticking boxes', with sharing of failures to address inequality and inclusion appropriately. Lack of time and/or staff resource was cited by some as a reason for the inability to turn well-meaning policy into practice and tangible change.

Gendered stereotypes appear still to be evident in some quarters, manifest in a belief that women who lack a sport participation 'pedigree' cannot hold leadership roles, for example. This was not a widespread suggestion but where it existed it was said to present a barrier to leadership opportunities and restrict women's influence within sport organisations. There was a common view that clear visibility of female role models increased leadership aspirations of women within sport, however, particularly when in non-stereotypically female roles.

There was much discussion around governance, recruitment and a perceived conflict between working towards set standards for equality, diversity and inclusion, and equitable recruitment processes that required gender-blind methods and gender-neutral terminology. Participants emphasised their being driven by a desire to recruit the best candidate for the job, irrespective of gender, and avoidance of 'tokenism' - the suggestion that females be appointed to leading roles purely on account of gender, and not ability - and the potential detrimental effect that could have on female aspiration. As a result, several SGBs disagreed with the idea of gender quotas, and some stated that gender-balanced boards were not among their priorities.

Childcare and maternity-related absences were raised as an often under-rated barrier to women taking on leadership roles. Research into Swedish women's football in this report revealed that husband/partner support in childcare, and other areas, was key to the success of one of the country's leading clubs. Here, childcare in Scottish sport was regarded still, generally, as the responsibility of mothers, with a plea made for more guidance for sport organisations, and male leaders, around childcare requirements, flexibility and routes to support.

**sportscotland**, the Scottish Government's national agency for sport, was identified as the chief influencer in directing, shaping and supporting gender diversity in Scottish sport, most visibly through funding requirements, and a difference in guidance emerged here with other UK countries.

In 2016, Sport England and UK Sport launched a new 'Code for Sports Governance', which requires sports organisations meeting a minimum target of 30% of women on boards and in leadership positions to receive accreditation and funding. Sport Ireland has the same target, Sport Wales set their gender target for boards at 40% and Sport Northern Ireland at 25%. Quotas have become common across global sport with Sport New Zealand also working towards a 40% target in 2021, and the value and success or otherwise of quotas are discussed in greater detail in the report.

There is no such target in Scotland. There was close to a 50-50 split in those for and against quotas, though most agreed that if implemented by **sportscotland** they would expect it to lead to more women in leadership roles.

**sportscotland** explained:

*“Our approach in Scotland is different. We use the governance framework and support SGBs to develop diverse boards with the right skills and work towards balance representation rather than targets or requirements.”*

**sportscotland** was praised by many participants for a changing focus in recent years, described as a shift from ‘chasing medals’ to ‘sport for good’, which was said to have helped sport bodies refocus outlooks to more clearly prioritise equality and inclusion.

The overall conclusion is that progress is occurring in female leadership in Scottish sport, but slowly. Women remain significantly under-represented, despite the public policy focus of the past decade promoting gender equity.

As a result of input from participants, and feedback on this research, the OSS and partners SW/S, make seven practical recommendations to help Scottish sport improve gender diversity.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Revisit sportscotland decision to drop a ‘Women and Girls’ role, by appointing a director with experience and expertise to support, develop and monitor gender equality in sport leadership.**
- **Link accreditation schemes and public sports funding to a requirement for all SGBs to review policies and procedures related to gender equity and, potentially, gender targets.**
- **Maintain and extend use of gender-blind recruitment methods and gender-neutral language.**
- **Develop childcare guidance and policies to help parents to return to leadership roles, both paid and voluntary, with flexible working support.**
- **Consult sport sector on implementation of gender quotas across sport leadership positions.**
- **Conduct further research into female participation and leadership in Scottish sport and leisure, with ongoing measuring and monitoring of progress.**
- **Agree standard performance indicators for publication by sportscotland and government.**

## INTRODUCTION

This research, led by OSS Research Officer Ryan Brown and Dr Paula Murray, aided by Research Assistants Fiona Beth Doran, Jack Templeton and Jamie Mack, and overseen by OSS Head of Research Nick Rowe, seeks to update and improve the limited evidence that exists in Scotland on the representation of women in leadership roles across sport.

The OSS worked with Scottish Women in Sport (SW/S), and received funding from OSS Supporter Stephen Lawther from sales of his book *Arrival*, which chronicled the Scotland women's football team's first FIFA World Cup adventure in 2019. It relied on data provided by **sportscotland** to examine the gender of sport leaders and recent trends. The research focuses on key roles predominantly within Scottish Governing Bodies (SGBs) and sport and leisure trusts. In this context numbers do count, but the focus of this research on 'mapping and quantifying the positions and roles of women in key organisations' is only the start of a wider research need reported by people and organisations engaged in delivering sport.

The work and this final report is not intended to answer all questions relating to women in leadership roles in Scottish sport, but it does serve to bring a new level of insight to the number of women leading and influencing various aspects of Scottish sport, and the work of SGBs to promote gender equality. We have analysed data from the 2015-2020 SGB investment applications provided by **sportscotland** featuring 52 SGBs, and from Community Leisure UK, who represent 25 separate organisations providing sport and leisure services, as part of the quantitative study. The OSS research team developed the qualitative research through 31 interviews with representatives across a wide range of Scottish sports.

This research also identified further knowledge gaps, notably around the 'whys' behind the data. These have been and will continue to be discussed across a spectrum of forums, with delegates at the SW/S Conference 2021 among the voices calling for further research to better understand women's views and experiences on levels of influence, and barriers and constraints to leadership positions, and the ways in which women's career pathways could be improved to impact positively on wider engagement and participation in sport.



*Ryan Brown (OSS Research Officer)*



*Dr. Paula Murray (Abertay University)*

## BACKGROUND

Gender inequity has been an institutionalised feature of sport since its inception as a formalised cultural activity in Western societies and has proven resistant to change. These inequities extend to both participation in sport and to wider influence and engagement in the administration of sport and its communication and coverage in the media. In her review commissioned by the OSS, Dennehy (2020) refers to the

*“(unfortunate) practices (that) prevail in society and more specifically in sport which are opaque and continue to reproduce gender inequalities.”*

Research conducted by Rowe (2019) for the OSS identified a ‘gender gap’ in participation in sport in Scotland between men and women. Rowe’s report identified that:

*“The ‘gender gap’ in sports participation starts very young. More girls (79% in 2017) than boys (76%) participate at the age of 8-10 years but girls’ participation drops markedly as they move into their teenage years. The outcome is that by the age of 13-15 years more girls do not participate in sport (55%) than do (45%).”*



*At the age of 8-10 years girls outnumber boys in sport participation in Scotland before the gender gap emerges in teenage years.*

Photo: Adobe Stock

It went on to conclude that:

*“More women than men participate in recreational walking, dance, keep fit/aerobics and swimming, but for all the other sports listed men significantly outnumber women. This is particularly noticeable for more traditional organised sports like golf, football and bowls.”*

Perhaps less well known than the participation gap but of equal concern is the gender gap in leadership roles in sport. In 2004, a report published by **sportscotland** stated that:

*“Women and sport forms an important part of the **sportscotland** equity strategy, which is aimed at helping to achieve a sporting environment that supports and promotes the principles of equity. One part of this strategy is to ensure that women are sufficiently represented in leadership roles in Scotland.”*



The report provides results from a survey of the leadership roles held by women in major sports organisations across Scotland

*“to provide information on the current position of women in sports leadership and to provide baseline information for future reference.”*

The report concluded that:

*“there are significant inequalities between males and females in sport leadership positions although most of the organisations surveyed consider the current position to be satisfactory. This may suggest a degree of complacency among organisations where males tend to dominate leadership positions.”*

In response to the 2004 report, **sportscotland** created a dedicated ‘Women, Girls and Sport National Development Officer’ post. However, due to staffing changes this role ceased in 2009, and its responsibilities were shared across a number of different staff. **sportscotland** explained:

*“We gather information on the board gender balance annually and, over the last 4-5 years, we have implemented a standardised approach collecting equality data across our programmes, including sex and other protected characteristics [shared in this research]. We use this to look at data trends and identify issues, including percentage of women that coach, and girls involved in Young Ambassadors and the Young Peoples Sport Panel. In 2019-20, **sportscotland** managed the Women and Girls Fund on behalf of the Scottish Government, to support women and girls engage in sport and physical activity. The findings from the evaluation of the fund show that it’s important for women to have role models that encourage and inspire women and girls to take part in sport and physical activity.”*

Dennehy in her review commissioned by OSS states that:

*“The gender imbalance in both the coaching level (and the opportunities for development) for women coaches is also replicated in board representation, decision making and administration in Scotland and could be usefully addressed through gender mainstreaming in policy implementation.”*

The Scottish Women and Sport Advisory Board in its report published in 2019 identified the need:

*“To create more gender balance in executive, management, and non-executive (Board) roles across Scottish sport.”*

But this is about more than sport and improving sport. There are clear links between gender equality in society and in sport, and vice versa, with sport used globally as a tool to establish general values such as fair play, non-discrimination and teamwork between genders. Community sport activity can increase opportunities for women and girls to develop new skills, gain support from others and enjoy freedom of expression and movement, and promote education, communication, negotiation skills and leadership, all of which are essential to women’s empowerment.

The links between sport and business leadership success are also interesting. Research by the Peterson Institute for International Economics (2016) found that nearly one third of 21,980 organisations around the world did not have women in board or executive level positions and, according to their current estimates, it will take 170 years to achieve equal representation. Intriguingly, research by EY Women Athletes Business Network and espnW (2015), found that 94% of women in executive positions had played sport at a point during their lives, and 74% of those surveyed believed women’s careers could be accelerated by previous involvement in sport.

Gender equality in sport often follows a country's societal approach. For example, Europe's leader for gender equality in sport leadership is Sweden, with 45% of its National Olympic Sports Organisation in 2019 being female. The Swedes also lead in five of the six performance measures of the 2020 Gender Equality Index - work, money, knowledge, time, health and power. So, where Sweden has a high share of female ministers in national and regional government, in broadcasting and in business, it also has high levels of women working in sport (54%) as well as men taking time off work for childcare and supporting women in sport. To provide perspective, the UK came sixth in the 2020 index, ahead of the European average, and behind only Sweden, Denmark, France, Finland and the Netherlands, with Europe as a whole still said to be 60 years from gender equality.

Change has been slow, however, in global sport leadership. There were no women members of the International Olympic Committee from 1896 to 1981. Venezuelan athlete and journalist Flor Isava-Fonseca and Pirjo Haeggman, a Finn, were the first admitted, in 1981, and there are now 40 women in a total of 146 Members and Honorary Members - which equates to 27%. Less than 20% of Olympic national bodies, such as National Olympic Committees (NOCs) and Associations, are women, and Europe has a lower representation of women than the other continents represented on the IOC - Asia, Africa, America and Oceania.

The Scottish Government has led by example with a 50-50 gender split in recent Cabinets, and set an objective of 50% of women to be represented on public boards in its Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act 2018. How does Scottish sport compare to Scottish society? This research investigates that.

## RESEARCH AIMS

- **To identify current level of representation of women in leadership roles in Scottish sport governing bodies and other organisation, and the extent to which representation has changed in recent years.**
- **To establish the extent to which gender diversity is written into key governance and policy documents and analyse how governing bodies are seeking to achieve gender balance across leadership in sport.**
- **To conduct qualitative research to explore the perceptions of Scottish governing bodies of sport in relation to addressing gender inequalities in sport.**

# RESEARCH METHOD

## OVERVIEW

A mixed-method approach was used to study women in leadership positions. This study analysed data from 52 SGBs ranging from the largest, the Scottish Rugby Union, which employs around 250 people plus 150 players, and the Scottish Football Association, which has a staff of more than 100 people, and who both have sizeable departments and varied levels of governance, to very small organisations with just one or two employees, simple governance structures and heavy reliance on volunteer support.

It also included analysis of the gender balance on boards and in leadership roles in sport and leisure trusts and influential national organisations key to strategic direction, policy and/or delivery of Scottish sport, leisure and recreation - **sportscotland**, Community Leisure UK/Scotland, Commonwealth Games Scotland, Scottish Sports Association, Scottish ClubSport, Scottish Women in Sport and research think tank the Observatory for Sport in Scotland.

The Scottish Government-led groups, the Active Scotland Strategic Delivery Group and Active Scotland Development Group, were also studied, but representatives on these groups can vary from meeting to meeting, and so were discounted in terms of gender make-up.

## QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

The SGB investment applications from 52 sport bodies in 2015-2020 were shared by sportscotland and this data was used to calculate individual and overall SGB percentages of males and females as board members, coaches and officials, and trends across the past five years. The gender of CEOs and equivalents, and board chairs of organisations responsible for the delivery of community sport and leisure, from 2021, were also included and analysed, with support from Community Leisure UK, the membership organisation for the UK's leisure trust and equivalent organisations, along with other key national membership or representative sport organisations. The individual respondents identified as either male or female, with one exception. OSS researchers additionally conducted desk-based research, complemented by responses to interviews to update the quantitative information sourced for SGBs and other organisations.

## QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Invitations to participate in interviews were sent to 52 SGBs and 31 responded and participated, a response rate of 60%. All participants were either of CEO or senior management level with 13 men and 18 women representing their organisations. A full list of SGBs and other organisations involved in the research is provided in the Annex.

Interview questions were provided prior to semi-structured interviews which allowed interviewers to confirm the accuracy of quantitative data and probe for additional information. The interviews were recorded and transcribed before being thematically analysed by the research group.

Participants' quotes are used in this report to add qualitative insight to the findings and, following the OSS ethical policy and confidentiality procedures, no interviewees are identified. The research collected information relating to gender equity in their organisation and their perceptions of gender within their organisation, their sport where applicable and more widely across Scottish sport. Participants were made aware of the data sought, how it would be used and stored securely on a OneDrive account available only to the researchers. The original documents and files stored on other devices were then destroyed. Personal data was anonymised and potential identifiers removed before inclusion in this report.

## WOMEN IN THE BOARDROOM

Board members are individuals who seek to steer an organisation towards a sustainable and successful future. They decide strategic direction, governance and policies to ensure that the organisation can achieve its goals and make and achieve targets, and remain financially viable. Board members have numerous responsibilities to support and guide an organisation, so board membership is an important indicator of influence.

This research focused on Scotland’s sport governing bodies, but also studied the gender make-up of boards of national sport organisations and associations key to the governance, strategic direction, policy and/or delivery of Scottish sport, leisure and recreation, and influence of government (as shown in Figure 1). The organisations were: **sportscotland**, Scottish Sports Association (SSA), Scottish Women in Sport (SWIS), Scottish ClubSport, Community Leisure UK’s Scotland executive, Observatory for Sport in Scotland (OSS) and Commonwealth Games Scotland (CGS).

FIGURE 1. GENDER BALANCE OF NATIONAL SPORT & LEISURE BOARDS/EXECUTIVES IN 2021

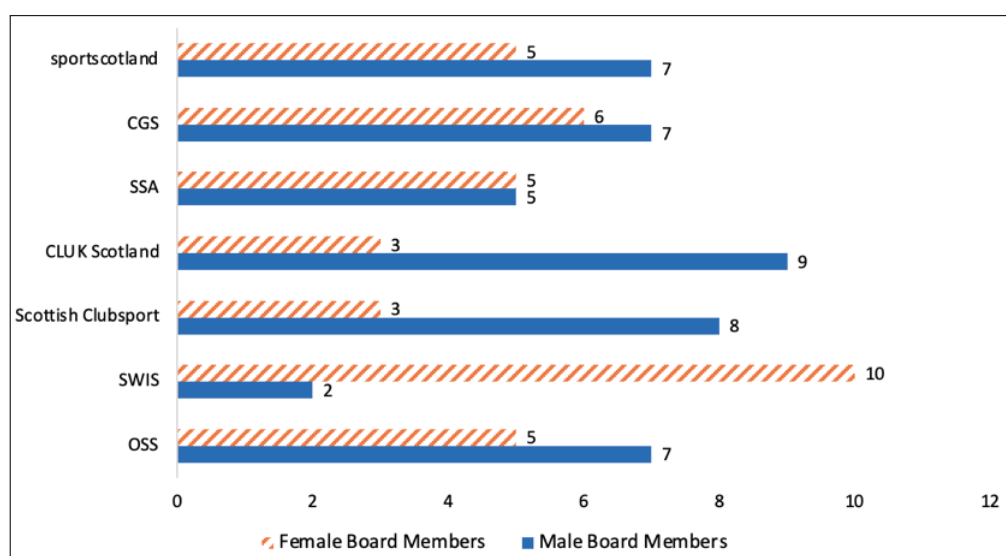


Table 1 shows the organisations’ Chair and CEO (or equivalent) gender. Since its creation in 1972, the national agency for sport in Scotland, **sportscotland** (formerly the Scottish Sports Council), has always had male CEOs; two females have chaired the board. The high performance-focused Scottish Institute of Sport, which sits within **sportscotland**, is led by a male CEO, but does not have a board.

TABLE 1. GENDER OF CHAIR AND CEOs OF KEY NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

NATIONAL SPORT ORGANISATION	CHAIR	CEO
<b>sportscotland</b>	Male	Male
Scottish Institute of Sport	N/A	Male
Commonwealth Games Scotland	Male	Male
SWiS	Female	Female
Scottish Sports Association	Male	Female
Scottish Clubsport	Male	Male
Community Leisure Scotland	Male	Female
Observatory for Sport in Scotland	Male	Male

Figure 2 shows the number of SGBs in each percentile by percentage of women on boards, from the most recent data supplied by the SGBs to **sportscotland** for 2019-20. The majority, 16 SGBs, have between 31% and 40% of women on their boards.

Only one SGB registered 0% (Scottish Surfing Federation, with three men and no women on its board) and, at the other end of the scale, Netball Scotland, a female-dominated sport, had between 81-90% (seven female and one male board member). Boxing Scotland, Scottish Auto-Cycle Union, shinty’s Camanachd Association, Scottish FA, Scottish Hang-Gliding and Paragliding Federation and Scottish Wrestling all had just one female board member at the time of the study, while a further 14 organisations had two, the percentage varying depending on board sizes.

**FIGURE 2. NUMBER OF SGBs BY PERCENTILE OF WOMEN ON BOARD**

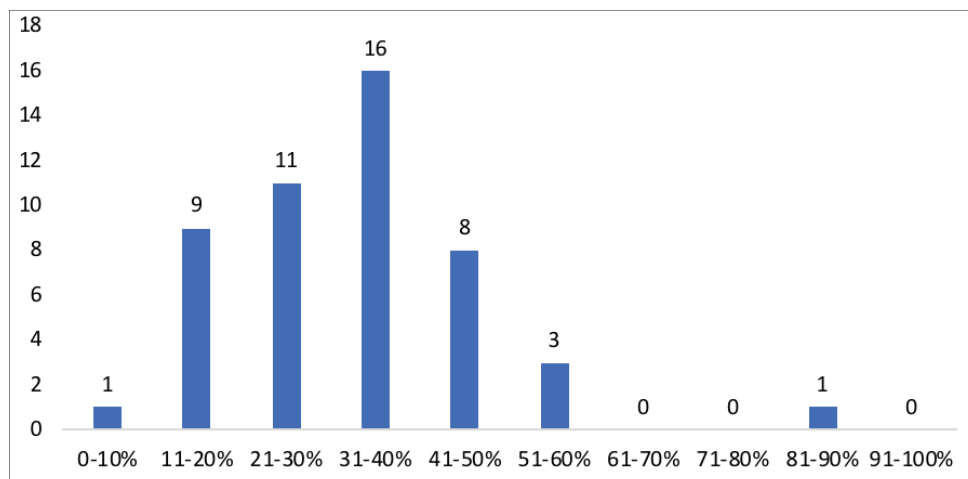
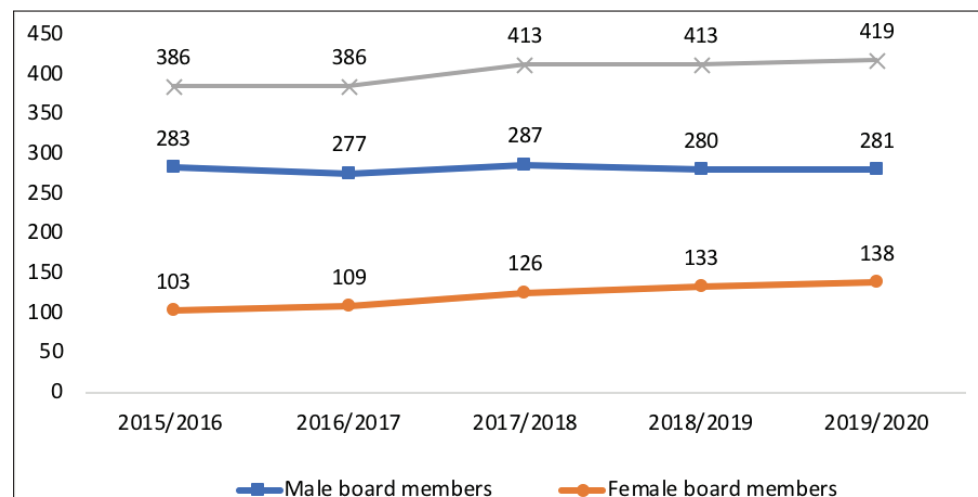


Figure 3 shows further how the number of female and male board members has changed over the past 5 years.

- **An increase of 35 female board members from 2015-2020 from 103 to 138.**
- **A decrease of two male board members from 2015-2020 from 283 to 281.**
- **A total increase of 33 board members from 2015-2020 which coincides with increased female members.**

This may suggest that additional positions have been created to increase female representation on boards. This is consistent with research carried out by Caprais and Delorme (2019) who found that female representation on boards increased due to increased board sizes which maintained unequal representation. We found that the number of board members has increased 8.5% over the past five years, with the average board in 2020 being 8.5 compared to 7.9 in 2015 (See Figure 3).

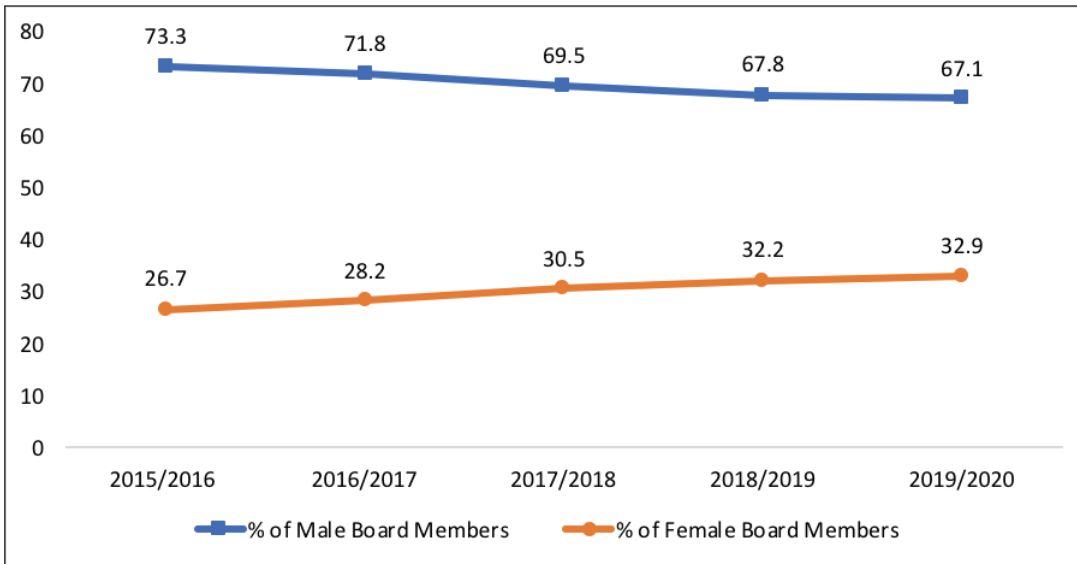
**FIGURE 3. NUMBER OF MALE AND FEMALE BOARD MEMBERS**



## PERCENTAGE OF MALE AND FEMALE BOARD MEMBERS IN SGBs

- An increased representation of female board members from 27% to 33% since 2015, a rise of 6%.
- A 0.7% increase of female board members between 2018/19 and 2019/20 (See Figure 4).
- Based on the five-year trend of growth, with average yearly female increase of 1.24%, it would take 13.8 years to achieve equal representation. Taking the past year's growth, of 0.7%, it would require nearly 25 years to achieve gender equality on boards.

FIGURE 4. PERCENTAGE OF MALE AND FEMALE BOARD MEMBERS IN SGBs



Dee Bradbury pictured at an SRU AGM after becoming the first female President of a leading rugby nation.

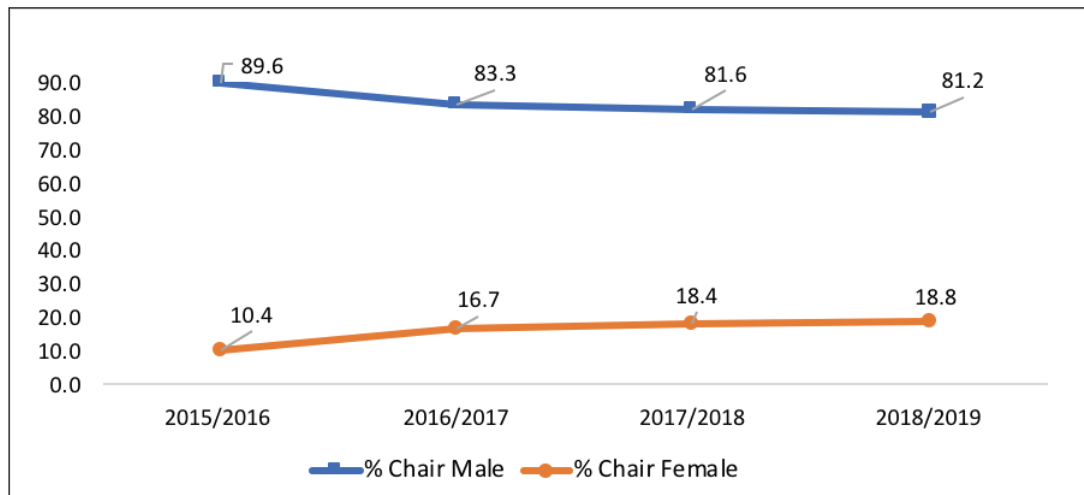
Photo courtesy of David Gibson (Fotosport UK).

## WOMEN AS LEADERS AND INFLUENCERS

Another important indicator of influence is representation as Chairs of Boards and in Chief Executive roles. We found that:

- **Female chair representation has nearly doubled since 2015, albeit from a very low starting point of just 10% to 19% (See Figure 5).**
- **Men still hold more than 81% of chair positions within Scottish Governing Bodies.**

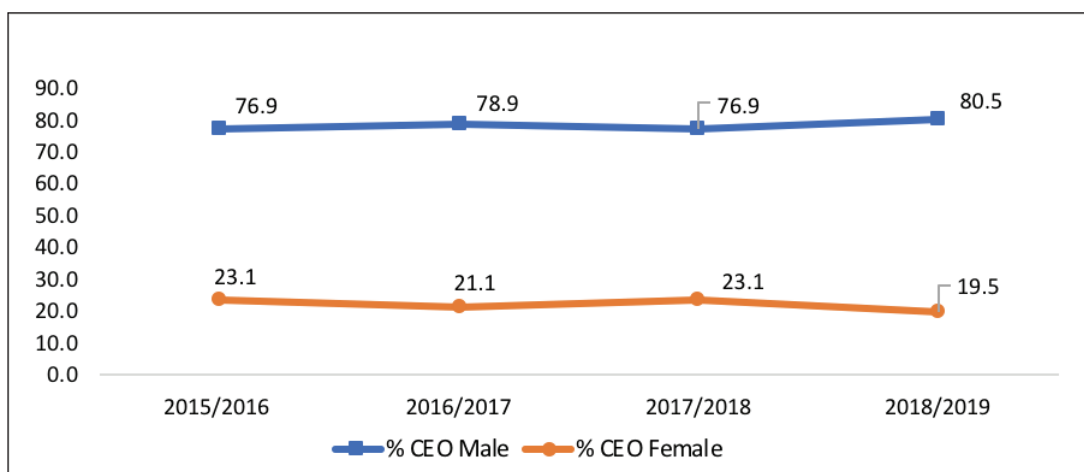
FIGURE 5. PERCENTAGE OF MALE AND FEMALE SGB CHAIRS



### MALE AND FEMALE CEOs

- **One in five CEOs in 2020 were female - representing a 4% decrease since 2015 (see Fig 6).**
- **Men continue to occupy vast majority of senior positions within Scottish Governing Bodies.**

FIGURE 6. PERCENTAGE OF MALE AND FEMALE CEOs



## WOMEN AS COACHES AND OFFICIALS

As part of the research, we included analysis of the gender split of Scotland's coaches, from each SGB, and investigated the different qualification levels which men and women operated.

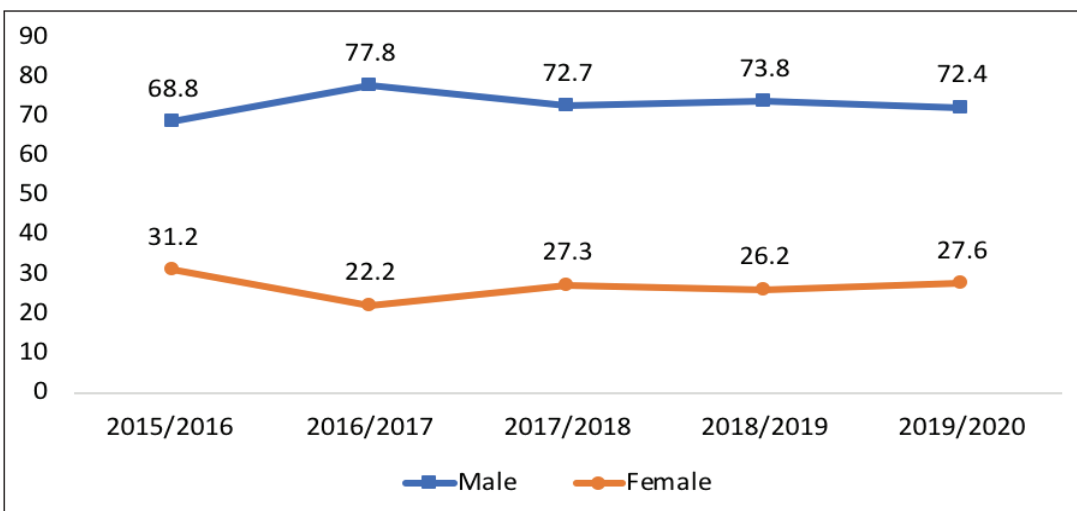
Growth in girls' participation, notably football, in parts of Scotland has been viewed in some quarters as an encouragement for women of all ages to be more involved in sport. The success of the Scotland women's football team in reaching a first European Finals in 2017 and World Cup Finals in 2019 - eclipsing the men's team which, prior to the Euros in 2021, last reached a world final in 1998 - created a buoyancy around women's sport. The high-profile of 2019 head coach Shelley Kerr, the first female coach to manage a senior men's team prior to taking on international roles, was also reported to be a sign of progress in the recognition of women's coaching.

However, the data does not suggest a boost to women's coaching across Scottish sport, either in quantity or quality, but the opposite, with the gender gap between male and female coaches growing over the past five years, and fewer females emerging at the elite level.

We found that:

- **The number of female coaches in Scottish sport has fallen by nearly 4% since 2015/16 (Fig 7).**
- **Just over 27% of coaches are female compared with 72% male coaches.**

FIGURE 7. PERCENTAGE OF MALE AND FEMALE COACHES



*Shelley Kerr became the first female coach to manage a men's senior club in the UK and steered Scotland women's team to their first World Cup Finals, in 1999.*

Photo courtesy of SFA



## COACHES BY QUALIFICATION

- There has been an increase in Level 1 and 2 female coaches from 2017 to 2020, which are levels that tend to operate in children’s, youth and amateur sport, compared to a drop in male coaches (See Figure 8).
- There has been a decrease in Levels 3 and 4 female coaches, typically the elite end of coaching in semi-professional and professional sport, from 2017, while male numbers have risen during the same period.
- The ratio of female to male coaches is approximately 3:10 across all coaching qualifications.
- When looking at the total number of coaches at each qualification level, male coaches significantly outnumber their female counterparts at each level (See Figures 9 and 10).

FIGURE 8. ACTIVE MALE AND FEMALE COACHES BY QUALIFICATION

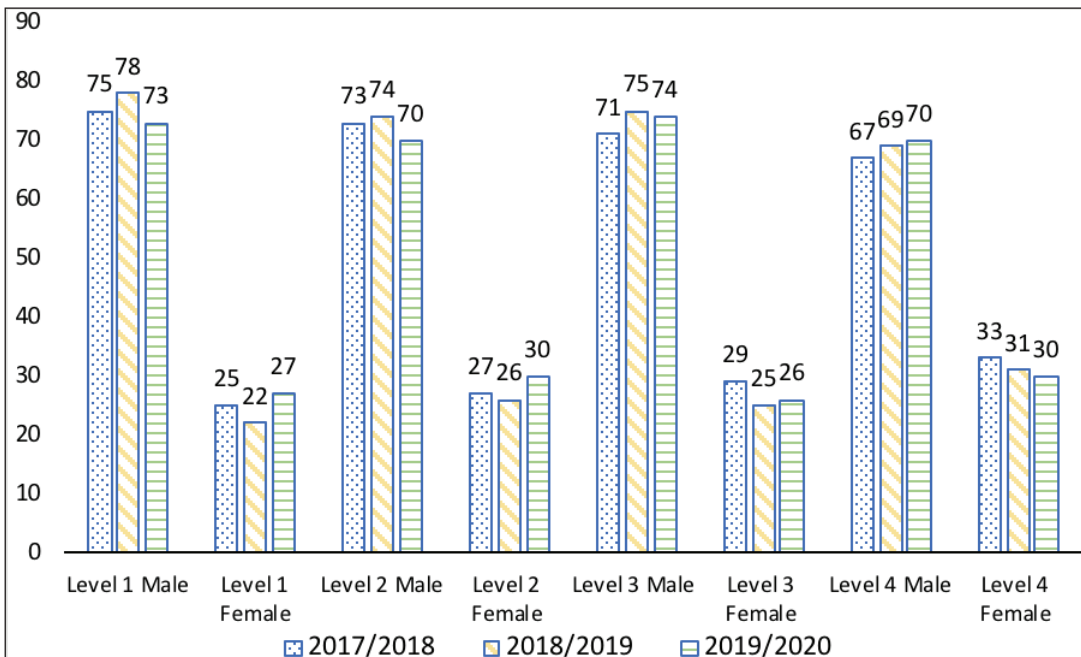


FIGURE 9. TOTAL NUMBER OF LEVEL 1 & 2 MALE AND FEMALE COACHES

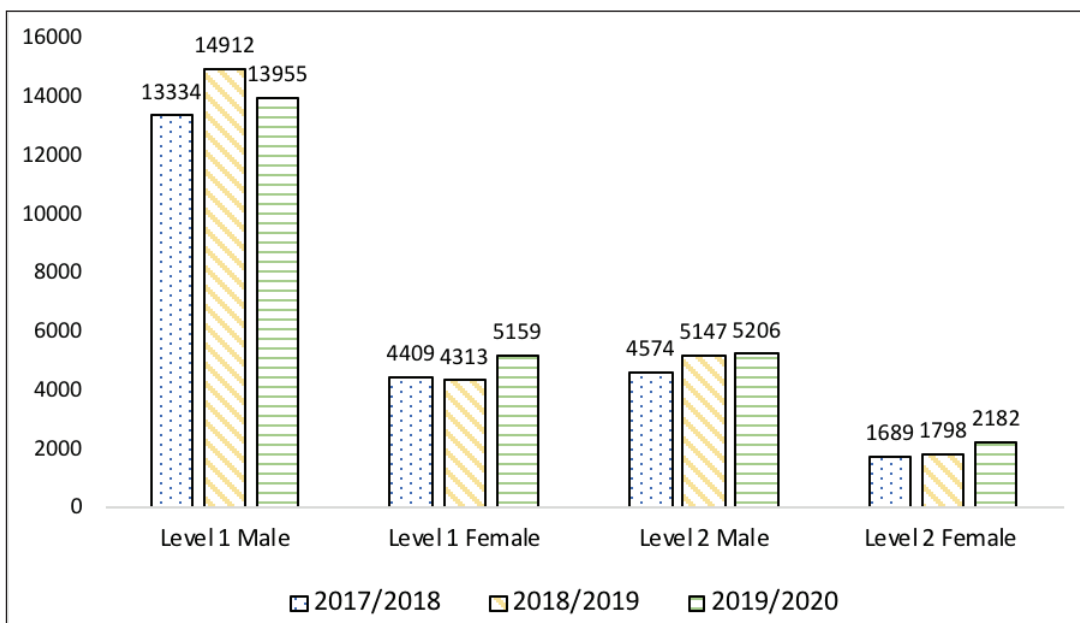
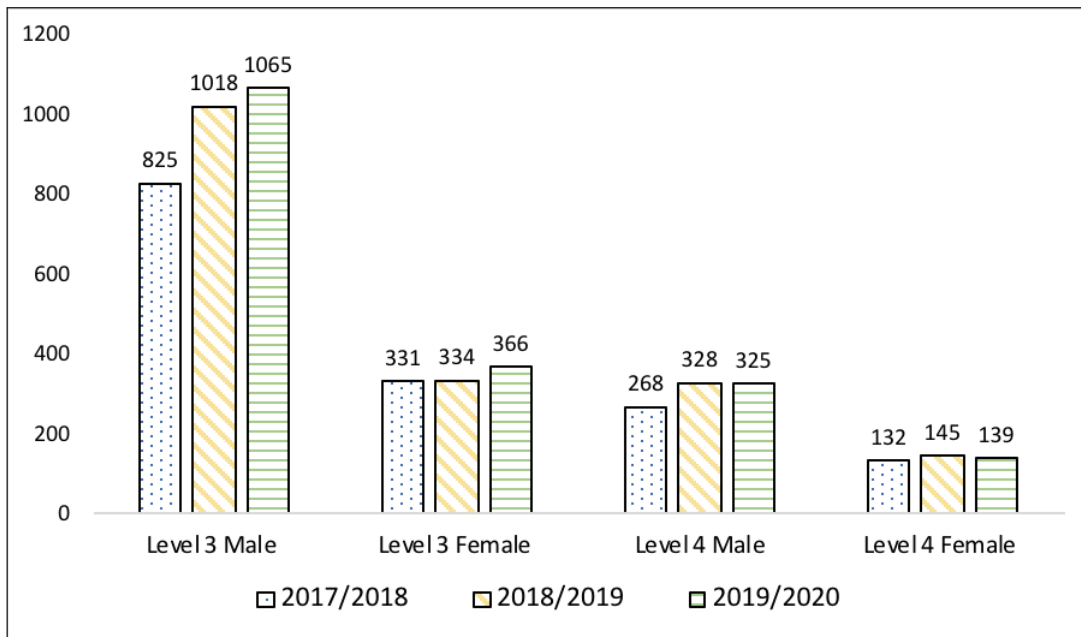


FIGURE 10. TOTAL NUMBER OF LEVEL 3 & 4 MALE AND FEMALE COACHES



## OFFICIALS

- The number of female officials has increased by 895 from 2017, whilst male officials have decreased by 280 in the same period (See Figure 11).
- The percentage of female officials has increased 5% from 2017, with just under 28% of all officials in Scotland female (See Figure 12).
- There has been a total increase of 615 officials from 2017.

FIGURE 11. NUMBER OF OFFICIALS

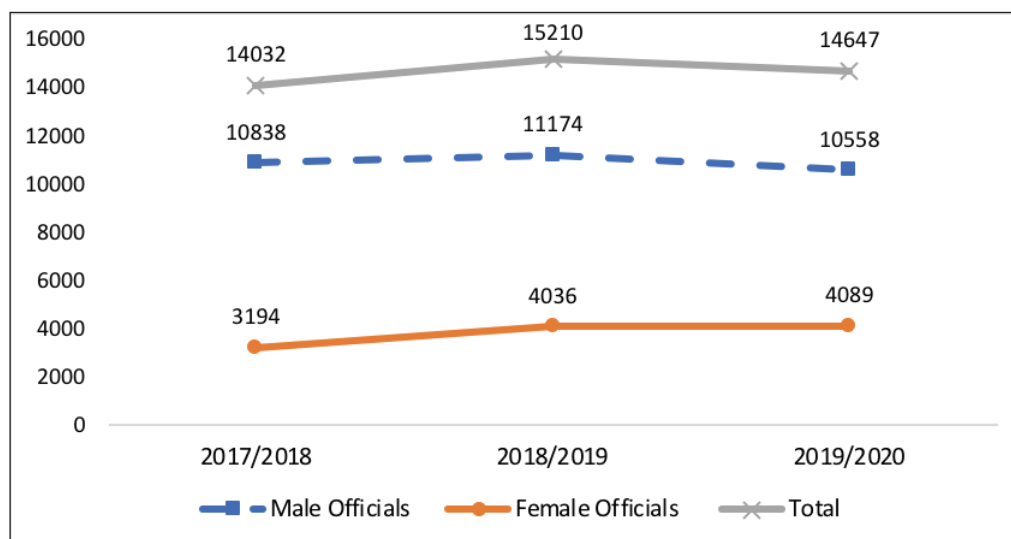
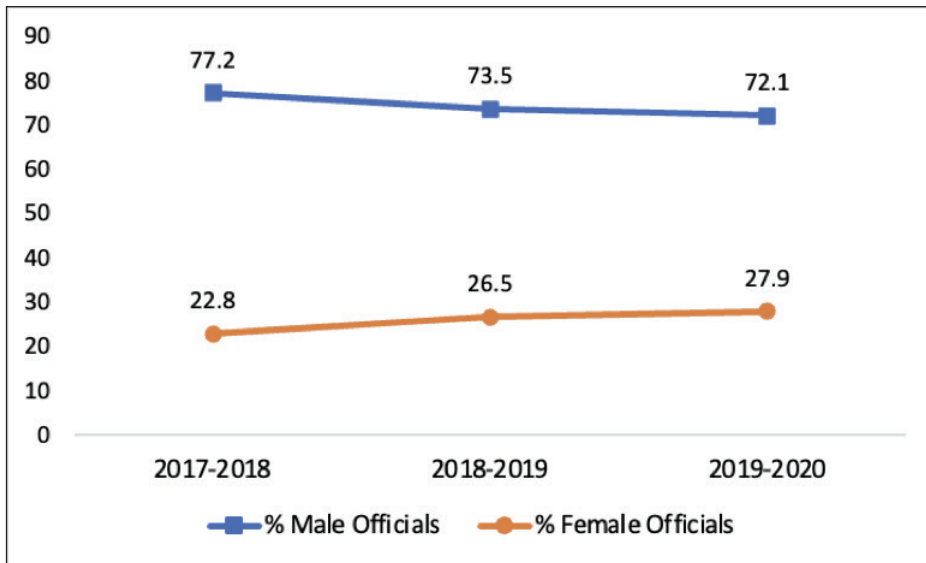


FIGURE 12. PERCENTAGE OF MALE AND FEMALE OFFICIALS

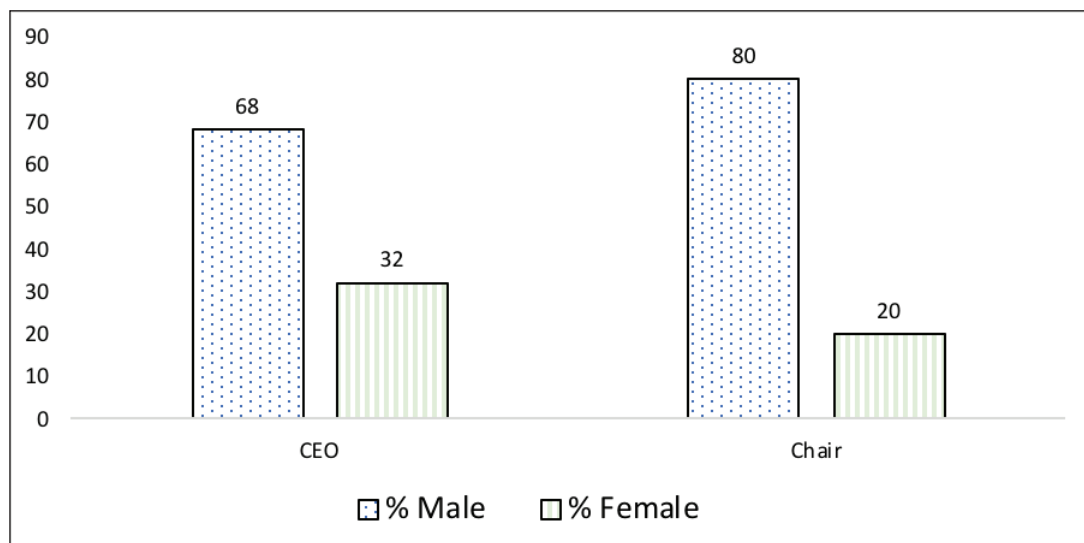


### SCOTTISH SPORT AND LEISURE TRUSTS/COMMUNITY INTEREST COMPANIES AND EQUIVALENT ORGANISATIONS

As part of this research, we also studied the gender difference in leadership roles across the sport and leisure trusts which manage and deliver the vast majority of community sport through public facilities. This was to compare the unique world of sport administration with another key aspect of the sport delivery sector. We did not have access to the same data from previous years, and so analysed the most recent data, from 2021, provided by leisure trusts and Community Leisure UK.

- Out of 25 leisure trusts currently operating in Scotland, eight are led by female CEOs and five boards by female chairs.
- Women hold just over 30% of the CEO or equivalent roles.
- Female chairs represent one in five Scottish leisure trust chairs.

FIGURE 13. PERCENTAGE OF MALE AND FEMALE LEISURE TRUST CEOs AND CHAIRS



## QUALITATIVE RESEARCH: KEY THEMES

Interviews were conducted across 31 SGBs in order to delve deeper into approaches to gender equality, challenges and barriers and perceptions on wider issues related to women’s representation in leadership roles in Scottish sport. Interviewees ranged from CEOs to leading senior management figures, all of whom were identified by their organisation as a lead on gender equality.

Six key themes, each with sub themes, emerged in the analysis of interviews with SGBs (see Table 2). These were: Women in leadership positions; Influence of wider society; Governance; Recruitment; Working towards equality and inclusion; and Barriers faced by women. Comments from interviewees have been included in the report to add insight and depth to the findings.

TABLE 2. TABLE OF THEMES

THEMES	SUB THEMES
<b>Women in leadership positions</b>	Perceived increase in the number of women in leadership positions Perceptions of women in leadership positions Influence of role models
<b>Influence of wider society</b>	Traditional gendered perceptions of sport are changing Increased awareness of equality and diversity COVID-19 and changing work practices
<b>Governance</b>	Organisations approach to equality, diversity and inclusion Influence of sportscotland Actions to promote gender equality in leadership roles
<b>Recruitment</b>	Employing the best Language use in recruitment
<b>Working towards equality and inclusion</b>	Moving towards equality Slow progress Failure to address issues in equality and inclusion Tokenism The role of women’s sport organisations
<b>Barriers faced by women</b>	Motherhood and childcare Perceptions of lacking confidence and self-belief



Photo: Adobe Stock

## WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

### PERCEIVED INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

Research participants generally held a positive belief that the number of women in leadership positions in sport organisations is increasing, but were surprised at the slow rate of change revealed by the data. The majority also spoke of a growing commitment to ongoing work to increase the number of women holding leadership positions within their organisation, insisting that improving gender equality is a priority.

*“ I’m in contact and in various groups and meetings with all the other Scottish governing bodies of sport. So... I’m just seeing all the faces in the last five years... I would have thought that we were getting close to 50/50.*

*That’s my perception, maybe it’s only 60/40,  
but say when I started this job a long time ago,  
it was kind of mainly men in these roles. ”*

*(Participant 8)*

*“ There are female chairs in other clubs so I think it has increased over the last few years, and you see more female captains of teams and... a few more women in leadership roles, but not to the point where we would like to see it. ”*

*(Participant 12)*

*“ Within governing bodies, I think there’s definitely more female CEOs for sure, and more female heads of development. I’m currently in a leadership role. So, we do have a lot of representation. ”*

*(Participant 24)*

Globally, the number of women in leadership positions has progressed, but men still occupy most of these positions (Lapchick, 2016). Women hold only a global average of 19.7% of board positions in national sport organisations (Adriaanse, 2016), which proved similar to the findings in this research.

## PERCEPTIONS OF WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

The perception of women's capabilities to lead in sport was also the subject of some discussion and debate in the interviews.

*“ I think we are still in a position in Scottish sport, especially at board levels across the game, where it is still older generation, white men, so by bringing in a woman, if that woman is not credible, not really productive and not the right person, that then allows them to stick by their stereotype that a woman doesn't have a place, that 'she's not a football person' or 'she's not a rugby person'; she's not this, she's not that, so she shouldn't have a place. ”*

*(Participant 1)*

A view was expressed that gendered stereotypes are still evident in some boards, which can limit women's leadership opportunities and restrict their influence within sport organisations. The acceptance of gendered based stereotypes has been associated with domination by men as well as individuals' abilities and roles being assigned by gender (Grappendorf and Burton, 2017). Our research provided examples of both men and women viewing leadership positions in sport as a role for men.

Leadership has historically been associated with men and stereotypical masculine traits, e.g. confidence, aggression and dominance (Eagly, 2007). Men are more likely to be viewed as a leader than a woman (Koenig et al., 2011), which contributes to an under-representation of women in leadership roles. Women 'of childbearing age' were also perceived by a number of respondents to be less likely to gain a leadership position in sport.

*“ I think there's a perception that only women who are either past childbearing age, or retired, or don't have any children, or are single, are... able to take up a job or leadership roles appropriately. ”*

*(Participant 2)*

The quote suggests that the expected caring role of women does have an influence on perceptions of leadership capabilities. This is not exclusive to sport. Managers in non-profit organisations were found to prefer to hire women who they assumed didn't want to have children due to perceived issues associated with childcare (Knoppers, Claringbould and Dortants, 2015). Similarly, an expectation of women in leadership positions in sports organisations is that they don't have young children (Evans and Pfister, 2021). There is research to suggest that women in leadership positions tend to be older. In America, female sporting directors in athletics departments had an average age of 50.21 years (Grappendorf, Lough and Griffin 2004) whilst 30.7% of intercollegiate athletic administrators had an average age of 45-54 years old (Bower and Hums, 2013) yet the average age for men was 35-44 years old (Bower, Hums and Williams, 2019). Coupled with our interview feedback, this suggests that gendered norms contribute to the exclusion of women from managerial positions within Scottish sport.

## INFLUENCE OF ROLE MODELS

Female role models in and outside of sport were viewed as important for challenging male-dominated perceptions of leadership. This was mentioned by several interviewees.

“ There are massive icons we all know, like Judy Murray, and maybe she broke down barriers for us because she’s so vocal. And maybe her struggles, 20/30 years ago, make our journey a lot easier. ”

(Participant 20)

“ Just look at countries in the UK, two of the countries... are run by women, and two by men. People like Angela Merkel... Jacinda Ardern... are really capable strong women in leadership roles and actually when you look at COVID, they seem to have done better than the countries run by men.

So, I think strong role models are really important and challenge attitudes. ”

(Participant 10)

“ With campaigns like women on boards, there’s more visible advertising for role models. There are much more female role models in senior positions or on boards in sport, so I think it’s being highlighted a lot more, and others have been encouraged to join those boards, to apply and put themselves forward... even [to] the women and girls advisory groups. ”

(Participant 11)

Linking to campaigns with slogans such as ‘You can’t be what you can’t see’, there is evidence that female role models encourage women to pursue leadership positions within sport. Hoyt and Simon (2011) reported that exposure to female role models can help to influence self-perceptions and increase interest in leadership positions. However, caution should be applied as elite level female leaders can also increase negative self-perceptions and feelings of inferiority amongst other women (Hoyt and Simon, 2011). Images of women in non-stereotypical roles have been found to increase interest in leadership positions and decrease negative self-perceptions in women (Simon and Hoyt, 2013). Therefore, increased visibility of female role models has the potential to increase leadership aspirations of women within sport, particularly when in non-stereotypically female roles. This view was promoted and shared by several SGB participants.

## INFLUENCE OF WIDER SOCIETY

### TRADITIONAL GENDERED PERCEPTIONS OF SPORT ARE CHANGING

The interviews revealed a strong belief across male and female interviewees that more women were participating in sport in Scotland now compared to the past.

*“ You know, when I started as a young teacher, women didn't play sport; there were very few women who played sports. And that has changed. ”*

*(Participant 29)*

The participation of women and girls in sport has increased globally helped by interventions aimed at promoting participation (Leberman and Burton, 2017). However, it is important to remember that sport traditionally excluded women (Eitzen, 2009) and, while there have been noticeable increases, sport remains male dominated (Norman, 2011) and that balance continues to influence women and girls' participation in sport.

The SGBs shared a willingness, however, to challenge gendered notions of sport and promote diversity.

*“ I guess the challenge that we have in sport [is] the perception of it being [exclusively] for boys, or for men, and it's not. In fact, probably at national governing body level we have kind of made that switch. Now we have to filter it through all the regions, the clubs, and we are doing that at the moment. ”*

*(Participant 13)*

*“ I think sport in general is on a positive path to diversity both in terms of women in sport and more generally. The challenge is how we speed up that process. ”*

*(Participant 15)*



## INCREASED AWARENESS OF EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

A number of participants also spoke of high-profile events impacting on society and raising the importance of equality and diversity. In particular, participants referred to the tragic deaths of George Floyd and Sarah Everard increasing the focus on the importance of addressing differing experiences of people.

*“ Equality and diversity jumped massively in the last year since the murder of George Floyd. Obviously, that’s an ethnic minority black man, but that’s changed the narrative to ‘we need to listen more’. We need to understand that there are differences in people and that not everybody has the same path. Not everybody has the same challenges, and the situation that’s taken place over the last week with the murder of Sarah [Everard], has again shown that women do have a different experience. ”*

*(Participant 1)*

*“ We didn’t challenge how women didn’t feel safe until we actually looked at what happened to Sarah Everard and people questioned why she was walking. We’re allowed to walk. So we opened up, opened eyes. Black Lives Matter: black people have been oppressed and the system has been killing them and oppressing them for years. But something happens and we go ‘no, we need to change it’. So, it’s not good enough to say I wasn’t aware of it. We now need to wake up and leaders, you’re a chair, a chief exec, MD, wherever you are, you need to look at your team and say ‘is it representative?’ And that is women, that is colour, that is ability, that is sexual orientation or however you present yourself or whatever; whoever you are as a person. ”*

*(Participant 9)*

This research found the majority of SGBs stated they were actively challenging equality and diversity within their organisations.

## COVID-19 AND CHANGING WORK PRACTICES

The COVID-19 pandemic and country-wide lockdown led to changes in the operational practices of sport organisations. In order to reduce contact between individuals and adhere to lockdown measures, meetings switched from face-to-face to online, a positive move according to a number of SGBs. There was a sense that this helped women in leadership roles, or would help women, with suggestions that childcare - only raised as an issue for women - was less of a problem.



Photo: Adobe Stock

*“ I actually think that... the pandemic actually helps, because all our board meetings are now on Zoom. And that makes a big difference. Previously, I would have had to drive to Edinburgh or drive from Stirling or Perth or across the central belt, so, I think the use of virtual technology will absolutely help. ”*

*(Participant 4)*

*“ Why are females not wanting to be on the board? Is it a time issue, is it due to the fact that previously you had to travel to a central location, but now through Covid we've all been embracing technology so will that then mean that it can fit into the lives of females that think 'actually, it's quite a commitment to do that', around also having the kids, to get to school etc. ”*

*(Participant 18)*

A number of SGBs felt online meetings could help contribute towards increasing the number of women on boards by alleviating perceived time pressures associated with travelling and childcare commitments. Interestingly, travel and childcare commitments were not raised as issues associated with men in leadership either by male or female interviewees which highlights stereotypical views being held towards women.

## GOVERNANCE

### ORGANISATIONS' APPROACH TO EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (EDI)

None of the Scottish sports bodies interviewed had a written policy specific to gender diversity. The majority of sports discussed having working groups or standards and targets for equality, diversity and inclusion, but stated that they did not have specific gender targets with some suggesting that this would be contrary to appointing 'the best person for the job'.

“*What we do have is an internal, what used to be inequality working group, but we've actually just kind of revamped it, reformed it, into a diversity and inclusion group. Part of what that group does, part of what we do as an organisation is continually assess things like job descriptions, for staff members and board members, to ensure that they are inclusive and what we try and do I suppose is move the barriers to people being able to access them as opposed to having a written policy.*”

*(Participant 6)*

The majority of sports discussed working towards set standards for equality, diversity and inclusion.

“*Probably the big difference in the last five years, because we've been working through the advanced level of the equality standard, is the board have been so involved and absolutely understand that. We've got an equality champion within the board as well, so it's talked about within board meetings. [Equality] is a standing item on the agenda within board meetings.*”

*(Participant 7)*

“*As an organisation we have an EDI policy embedded across the organisation. We just went through a review on that, so we've over the last year compiled what our strategy looks like and resubmitted it to maintain an intermediate award within EDI.*”

*(Participant 20)*

## INFLUENCE OF SPORTSCOTLAND

Most participants referred to the influence of **sportscotland**, the government agency that oversees sport in Scotland, as being key to shaping and guiding equality and diversity. However, a difference in equality standards between Scotland and the rest of the UK was identified by SGBs and queried.

“ For me, it’s really interesting that UK Sport and Sport England have gender balanced targets for UK sport, and if you don’t hit those targets around gender balance then you are not getting the funding. We are not seeing that stick as much or we are not seeing that as a driver in Scotland. ”

(Participant 15)

In 2016, Sport England and UK Sport launched a new ‘Code for Sports Governance’, which insisted on sports organisations meeting a minimum target of 30% of women on boards and in leadership positions to receive accreditation and funding (*Sport England and UK Sport, 2016*). Sport Ireland has the same target, Sport Wales set their gender target for boards at 40% and Sport Northern Ireland at 25%.

**sportscotland**, by comparison, have not set gender-based targets for Scottish sport organisations, and this was queried by many respondents. Some questioned the legality of quotas, and others stated that they would welcome a similar approach in Scotland, but none seemed clear on reasons for the difference. In response to this, **sportscotland** have clarified that rather than setting specific targets and requirements to receive funding, they have opted for a governance framework to support SGBs to develop diverse boards filled with individuals who have the right skill-sets, whilst working towards a balanced representation.

Quotas can be viewed as a controversial approach to increasing women’s participation in leadership as part of a legislative requirement (*Whelan and Wood, 2012*). There is evidence of their success in increasing the number of women in leadership roles and encouraging organisations to develop women, but they can also discredit the abilities of women if viewed as a tokenistic hire (*Whelan and Wood, 2012*). Adriaanse (2016) supports the use of quotas in conjunction with other initiatives to promote gender equity in leadership.

International sport organisations such as the IOC have shifted towards quotas in the 21st Century, the IOC asking its member countries to seek to achieve 30% of women in sport governing bodies. Quotas are a clear method used to quickly accelerate the number of women in leadership positions (*Hovden, 2015*), and so it may be that Scottish sport governing bodies consider using quotas temporarily to speed up transformational change in leadership positions.

Where a gender quota exists across European organisations, change does appear to have followed. Data collected in 2015 showed that nine of the 28 European Olympic sport federations had a gender quota for their highest decision-making body, and only one failed to meet the quota, while in four federations without a quota, women were absent completely from the decision-making body.

More recently, a 2021 UN Economic and Social Council report (European Commission, 2021) studying political leadership reported that “gender quota legislation is the main policy intervention that has improved women’s participation in national and local decision-making”. It revealed a 5% greater presence of females in countries that adopted gender quotas compared with those that didn’t, rising to 7% on a local government level, with a typical quota between 30% and 40%.

For comparison, in Scotland, the Scottish Government and First Minister Nicola Sturgeon have sought to champion gender equality. She was appointed the inaugural ‘#HeForShe’ Global Advocate by UN Women in

2019, with the Scottish Government becoming signatories to the UN Women's global solidarity movement for gender equality, which engages men and boys as advocates for equality. As a Global Advocate, Scotland's First Minister pledged to make concrete commitments to advancing gender equality around the world and support UN Women in their work to end global gender inequality.

The First Minister has led by example with a succession of equal gender Cabinets, and the government set an objective of 50% of women to be represented on public boards in its Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act 2018. In sport in 2021, **sportscotland's** board is made up of seven men

(58%) and five women (42%), the same as the Observatory for Sport in Scotland, while seven men and six women sit on the Commonwealth Games Scotland board, including medical and legal advisers, the Scottish Sports Association has a five-five split, Scottish Disability Sport has six men and five women, Scottish Women in Sport has 11 women and three men and Scottish ClubSport seven men and three women. Incidentally, the Commonwealth Games Federation is now led by two Scots born females, President Louise Martin and new Chief Executive Officer Katie Sadleir.

There was close to a 50-50 split on the need for, or value of quotas to improve gender diversity in Scottish sport, but a majority belief that they would have that effect, which led to widespread agreement from research participants that it would be beneficial for **sportscotland** to canvass opinions and consider the introduction of quotas or gender targets.

Interviewees described a changing philosophy at **sportscotland** in recent years, from a priority focus on winning medals at major sporting events to a wider 'sport for good' vision, and this was stated as being helpful to promoting diversity and inclusion.

“ I think it [equality] also depends on the sportscotland message. They're starting to talk about this 'Changing Lives' concept, where it's about 'sport for good' instead of 'sport for winning'. That changes the emphasis on sport associations, and progression and things like that, looking really at diversity and inclusion in a serious manner to try and achieve that. ”

(Participant 1)

**sportscotland's** most recent corporate strategy, entitled 'Sport for Life', places strong emphasis on creating an 'Active Scotland', where everyone benefits from sport. Inclusivity is embedded within this approach as a key principle and the majority of SGBs cited sportscotland as the key influence on their development of diversity, equality and inclusion standards, and the need to comply in order to achieve 'Clubmark' accreditation and receive funding. Linking gender equity to funding and accreditation was viewed as another route to improving the pace of change across Scottish sport.



New CGF CEO Katie Sadleir speaking at SW/S 2021 Conference

The 'Equality Standard for Sport' is recognised by the five sports councils (**sportscotland**, Sport NI, Sport England, Sport Wales and UK Sport). It is a framework to enable SGBs to reduce inequalities in sport by developing the organisation and its services. The Equality Standard for Sport is awarded at Foundation, Preliminary, Intermediate and Advanced levels. All SGBs in Scotland have achieved the Foundation level, the majority have achieved the Preliminary, 19 reached Intermediate and three Advanced (*Equality in Sport, 2021*).

Clubmark is a national accreditation scheme promoting high-quality sports clubs and places emphasis on welfare, equity, coaching and management within the club.

The Equality Standard for Sport and Clubmark are examples of schemes which encourage adherence to equality policy. Research suggests organisations will adhere to such schemes primarily for financial gain which results in limited translation of policy into action (*Evans and Pfister, 2021*). Most Scottish sports credited the Equality Standards as having helped to increase their knowledge and awareness of diversity, equality and inclusion. However, some commented that it lacked sufficient detail and that improved support, educational resources and research would help to improve gender diversity standards. The Equality Standards are currently under review.

“ We went through the Equality Standard as per **sportscotland's** requirements and did some further research. ”

(Participant 1)



*sportscotland* have championed diversity through the Equality Standard for Sport and Clubmark accreditation to ensure clubs and organisations ensure opportunities for all.

Photo courtesy of Scottish Disability Sport

## ACTIONS TO PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY

The majority of SGBs interviewed have used independent/non-executive director (NED) positions to address gender balance on boards in recent years.

“What we created a few years ago was independent non-exec directors, which allowed us the opportunity to diversify our board. Clearly, we still went for the best person but it allowed us to have a recruitment process to bring in women.”

(Participant 1)

“The board is eight elected and two independent [members], and one of the things we often do is look at the independents being women, if we don't have enough women on the board. We also have two additional directors that we can bring in to address any issues, and in the ones we've used it is for gender balance.”

(Participant 4)

This approach can help to increase the number of women but fails to address the difficulties associated with women securing executive director roles within sports boards (Barnes et al. 2019). Many SGBs highlighted the Equality Standard for Sport and achieving Clubmark accreditation as being key drivers to seeking diversity.

“I'm being honest, I think that has been driven quite a lot by the work we've been doing around the Equality Standard for Sport, because the senior management team are so involved in that process that is very much in everybody's thinking. The staff throughout the rest of the organisation are not as deeply involved, but are still involved and very much aware of the work that's been done, and even things like completing equality impact assessments, which two or three years ago nobody knew about, are now being completed within their teams.”

(Participant 7)

“ Equality is embedded in the Clubmark accreditation scheme, so all clubs are taken by our development team through that scheme. ”

(Participant 21)

The Equality Standard for Sport and Clubmark are examples of schemes which seek adherence to equality policy. Research suggests organisations will adhere to such schemes primarily for financial gain which can result in limited translation of policy into action (Evans and Pfister, 2021).

“ I know there are organisations which do well in terms of quotas, but maybe having a quota for boards, or possibly having more of a female participation programme at grassroots could lead to [better female] representation. ”

(Participant 16)

A legacy of the first World Conference on Women and Sport in 1994, the Brighton Declaration on Women and Sport identified the need to develop programmes to increase the number of women in leadership positions in sport (Pike et al. 2018). This was developed further with guidance for policies and programmes in the Brighton plus Helsinki Declaration (International Working Group on Women and Sport, 2014). A number of these programmes, run for example by the International Olympic Committee (International Federation (IF) Women in Leadership Forum) and UK Sport (Female Coaches Leadership Programme), focus on providing women with the skills and connections to be leaders (Evans and Pfister, 2021). Leberman and Burton (2017) support the use of leadership programmes for women.

Leadership training and courses were raised as an important resource used by SGBs. However, participants mentioned that it could be further developed in Scotland, with female-only sessions, to increase opportunities.



## RECRUITMENT

### EMPLOYING THE BEST

All SGBs emphasised being driven by a desire to recruit the best candidate for the job, irrespective of gender.

*“ I believe that we should always be saying yes, they [women] should be represented, but can they be represented on the basis of their skills and talent? I really hate it when there is a condescending ‘well, we need to have a percentage of women, so they’re in that post’. That’s not my way. My way is that women deserve it equally with the men, according to the skills that they have. And I hope it will increase in that way, but not as a kind of ‘we must have so many because that would make it PC’. I don’t believe in that. ”*

*(Participant 29)*

*“ Every sport wants what’s best for their sport and you know that they may feel that they shouldn’t be too pressurised into putting a woman on the board just to make up the numbers, so to speak, but they’ve got to see that women have actually got something positive to contribute. ”*

*(Participant 3)*

Several SGBs showed a reluctance to incorporate quotas for females within their organisation and stated that gender-balanced boards were not among their priorities. Evidence suggests that gender-based stereotypes continue to influence recruitment decisions and sport is no exception, as organisations have been found to emphasise the need for stereotypically masculine traits within leadership positions, contributing to the exclusion of women (Evans and Pfister, 2021). It is important, therefore, that SGBs recognise the influence of gendered sports culture and traditional role expectations on recruitment decisions.

## GENDER-BLIND PROCESSES AND GENDER-NEUTRAL LANGUAGE

Steps have been taken in many parts of Scottish sport to tackle concerns around appointment of men through the development of equitable recruitment processes with gender-blind methods and gender-neutral terminology. Women are more likely to be involved within sports leadership positions of sports which are gender neutral or associated with women as opposed to men (*White and Kay, 2006*).

“ We have reviewed how we write things, how we advertise things and where we advertise things, to try and get more female applicants, and we’ve always done the blind short-listing for particular employee roles. ”

(Participant 8)

“ In terms of our recruitment, we’re very sensitive to language that we use. So, for example, we use something called ‘gender decoder’, so if we write an advert, let’s say it’s for a strength and conditioning role, you can think strength conditioning, male, be strong, and all the rest of it. There’s some language and terminology that can be pretty off-putting to females, so we put a lot of adverts through gender [decoding] to make sure it’s very neutral, very impartial and open to everybody. ”

(Participant 27)

The use of gender-blind recruitment methods has been found to increase the number of women shortlisted for interviews and increases the likelihood of women being offered the job (*Aslund and Skans, 2012*). The language used in job adverts is also important as gender-inclusive adverts can help to increase female interest by 50% (*Begeny, 2021*). The use of these strategies by SGBs is, therefore, likely to contribute towards increasing the number of women employed in sport.

## WORKING TOWARDS EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

### MOVING TOWARDS EQUALITY

It was clear in the research that Scottish sports believe improvements have been made in recent years towards equality, and most spoke of a commitment to improving equality at all levels of participation, including leadership, coaching, officiating, playing and supporting.

“ Have we got a lot more to do? Yes. Are we at all complacent? No, in terms of starting off from a bad position and getting slightly better. But we are very mindful of the fact that we do want our staff to be more diverse in every area. ”

(Participant 8)

“ I think realistically we are good where we are, so I anticipate we will stay the same, but there are areas I would like to get stronger on. I think, quite importantly, we make sure things like our leadership programme, designed to get the next volunteers to come through our clubs and districts, is acting as a kind of succession planning to get good talented individuals into our board. ”

(Participant 15)

“ So, in how we look at the players, spectators, leaders, board members, will we ever achieve a 50/50 split in female against male participants? Probably not, but that's our commitment. That allows us to understand where the work needs to continue, the needs, and where the emphasis needs to be. So, if we don't have a 50/50 split on our board then that needs addressed and we will continuously work towards that. ”

(Participant 1)

## SLOW PROGRESS

The pace of change is too slow according to some respondents. It was remarked that while women have been appointed to ambassadorial roles, such as president, to great fanfare in some male-dominated sports, this does not always equate to positions of genuine influence.

“ In leadership positions, there appears to be an increase, but in the most significant leadership positions, the influential roles, is where I think we still need to see change. I think sport is not bad compared to other sectors, but there are some male-dominated, perhaps bigger participant sports, that will take forever to make real change. ”

(Participant 31)

“ The question for the sports sector is ‘how do we speed that up?’ From my viewpoint we are progressing, potentially slower than I might like, and I think there are good opportunities to drive that change. ”

(Participant 15)

Lapchick (2016) contests that gender inequality is more pronounced in senior leadership positions and Scotland is not alone. The under-representation of women in leadership positions in sport internationally has been apparent for years, and the progression towards equality slow (Burton and Leberman, 2017).



Dr Emma Ross (Co-CEO The Well HQ), Cliona O’Leary (Deputy Head of RTE TV Sport) and Katie Sadleir (CGF CEO) debate the pace of change in gender diversity across sport at the SW/S 2021 Conference.

## FAILURE TO ADDRESS ISSUES IN EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

There was criticism of an apparent obvious resistance by some Scottish sports to gender diversity, with participants sharing instances of failure to address inequality and exclusion appropriately. Challenged on this, some sports cited a lack of time and resource as being behind a failure to adopt gender diversity or translate policy into practice.

“ *This isn't meant to be a loaded statement, but there's loads of governing bodies and other partners in sport that have just got the capacity to do what they need to do, and they very quickly run out of capacity to do the stuff they should do after that. I think sometimes in sport that people have only got so much equality currency to spend at once and it becomes difficult then to properly address these structural issues. It's like 'oh well, we don't have time for dealing with female representation because we're working on disability sport or something'. It's just total nonsense, and yet it's grounded in the real-life capacity constraints that most of the partners have.* ”

*(Participant 5)*

It has been perceived by sport organisations that achieving gender equality requires a large investment in time and resources (Evans and Pfister, 2021). The failure of some sport organisations to acknowledge the importance of gender equality may suggest they perceive it to be less important than other forms of inequality. Yet only a small increase in the number of women in leadership positions has been found globally (*International Working Group on Women and Sport, 2016*) and gender inequality in sport is persistent (Evans and Pfister, 2021).

“ *I was in a meeting, sort of biannual meeting, and... their articles stated that there should be at least two women on the board. Because they were having difficulty fulfilling that, they changed the articles to say it just needed to be one. And it was like 'well, no, don't change the articles, just do something about it'. So, it's an attitude and it's not positive discrimination, but what positive action can people take?* ”

*(Participant 19)*

Sport is a recognised site of gender inequality, but change is possible with the implementation of appropriate methods (Evans and Pfister, 2021). Quotas and targets such as setting a minimum number/percentage of women on boards can be successful at increasing women's participation (Hovden, Eilling and Knoppers, 2018). However, reducing the number originally set, as outlined above, suggests a reluctance to work towards increasing the number of women on the board and an unsupportive board culture. A number of respondents suggested that sport organisations who failed to address equality and inclusion appropriately be identified and monitored.

## TOKENISM

The majority of sports spoke of a dislike of 'tokenism', the suggestion that females be appointed to leading roles purely on account of gender, and often with great celebration of diversity values, but with no recognition of ability, potentially to the detrimental impact of those and other females.

*“ I think what we need to make sure is that it doesn't just become tokenism, especially on boards, [and] in statements that organisations make, we need to be sure of the action behind it. If we go down the tokenism route, that would take us backwards. ”*

*(Participant 1)*

*“ My perception is that, yeah, although the women who are in leadership positions are celebrated, which I think is great, that celebration hides the fact that I still don't think that there are many more than there were five years ago. ”*

*(Participant 2)*

Concerns centred on a common perception that women without the necessary skills and qualifications would be recruited onto boards in order to achieve targets/quotas. Yet, there is no evidence to support the perception that women recruited using targets/quotas are less qualified or skilled (*Adriaanse, 2017*). Research participants opined that recruiting a less qualified or skilled woman, to satisfy quotas, would be detrimental to women's chances of obtaining these positions in the future. Quotas/targets are controversial for this reason, as they may contribute to women being viewed as tokenistic hires, and be damaging to their perceived ability (*Whelan and Wood, 2012*). The use of quotas/targets can also be viewed as a maximum value for women on boards rather than as a minimal requirement (*Gregoric et al. 2017*).

Sport organisations and women in leadership positions also need to remain aware that a small number of (token) women don't adequately represent women within sport or particular organisations (*Burton and Leberman, 2017*). Whilst these women might act as a role model for women, they can also hinder the progression of other women. For example, 'Queen bee' syndrome is associated with successful women in male dominated environments being unsupportive of other women which ultimately influences their progression (*Ellemers et al., 2012*). SGBs should be aware that small numbers of women in leadership roles is not sufficient representation for true diversity, and avoid assumptions that it is solely a woman's role to help other women gain similar positions.

## THE ROLE OF WOMEN'S SPORT ORGANISATIONS

Many sports have been played by men and women for many decades, separately and without males and females coming together, or with clearly different standards or rules applied depending on gender. A number of participants spoke of gender-based segregation, and its negative impact in sport and exclusion - perpetrated both by males and females.

“ We had hoped that we would address the structural issue of having a separate ladies branch. I have heard some of the members describe it as ‘like building a kitchen beside the main body, and telling the women all to go and stay in the kitchen.’ So, they don’t join the main party and they’re all in that separate ladies’ branch. And we want them to be part of the main body. ”

(Participant 25)

“ For instance, take the Scottish Women in Sport annual dinner. When I first started it was like ‘all right, let’s get all the women and we’ll all go there.’ After year one, I asked ‘why does it have to be a table full of women?’ I said actually would it not be a much stronger message if the table was half male and half female, because if this is ever going to go anywhere, we need the male champions for female sport to jump on board like happened in Australia, who do some amazing work in that field? It’s everybody’s responsibility, not just the females in the organisation. Because if we keep going on, they’ll say ‘nag nag nag, oh here they are again.’ We need the males in the organisation to come on board - that’s just as important. ”

(Participant 13)

The SWiS organisation was also praised as being a beacon for women in sport, highlighting issues and opportunities, and it was commented on that despite being Scotland’s sole national women’s sports organisation it received no government funding support.

It is clearly important for organisations and women and men to work together to promote change in gender equity (Leberman and Burton, 2017). Gender equity cannot be the sole responsibility of women as men hold influence and decision-making power in the majority of sport organisations, and so are key to its achievement. Where men have helped to support and mentor women within sport organisations, there is clear evidence of progress (Messner, 2009; Murray, Lord and Lorimer 2020).

## BARRIERS FACED BY WOMEN

### MOTHERHOOD AND CHILDCARE

A key barrier raised by both male and female participants in the research was motherhood and childcare. Childcare was not raised by any interviewees in relation to a barrier to male participation, or holding of senior roles, with suggestions from male and female contributors that childcare is viewed within sport generally as a responsibility of females. Motherhood and childcare were, however, recognised by men and women as contributing to inequitable career progression in sport.

“ Societal influences that play into it would be beyond the scope of an organisation like us to obviously address.

*Things like childcare, and maternity leave, and all these other kinds of external factors, can have a bearing on career decisions that women make, which men don't have to make, or make in a different way.* ”

(Participant 19)

“ I had a top leadership role and I got pregnant. Now, suddenly, I had to work and children to look after, and holding a voluntary sports job at that sort of level wasn't something I wanted to fit in. ”

(Participant 4)

“ I do still think realistically maternity and stuff does come into it. If you are a women with three children and have to take periods off work in the space of 6-7 years then realistically your opportunities to progress in that time is a bit stunted. I think the reality is that if you are out of work for a year you are probably not applying for new jobs or promotions. ”

(Participant 14)



Traditionally the role of a woman was to stay at home to care for children and maintain the home (*Owen Blakemore, Barenboim and Liben, 2009*). This role to an extent has stayed assigned to women and still shapes expected behaviours (*Eagly, Wood and Diekman, 2000*). Employees in English sport bodies suggested that the adherence to that traditional gendered role was a barrier to women achieving leadership positions, with expectations to work long hours, difficulties balancing work and motherhood, taking career breaks and the expectation to select a career or children (*Piggott and Pike, 2021*).

Research from Bruening and Dixon (2007) found that by having children, women's need for additional support not only from their families but also their employer was emphasised. Their research also found that female coaches who had children and received support from their employer returned to their coaching jobs, whilst those that did not more often left their jobs and a coaching career altogether.

In Sweden women and men are currently entitled to 480 days of paid parental leave (16 months) per child, with three months reserved for each parent and non-transferable. So, in Sweden, a similar percentage of men (27%) and women (29%) care for and educate their children or grandchildren, elderly or people with disabilities. Research into the success of the rural Oxaback Women's Football Club, one of Sweden's top teams from 1966 to 1999, pinpointed support of the local community as key, and noted that husbands of players regularly looked after children and organised the fan club.

Several participants in the research identified the predominant responsibility for childcare resting with women in Scottish sport as a key issue in the lack of gender diversity in leadership. SGBs spoke of how maternity leave was now routinely provided for women in paid positions, but noted that in volunteer roles on boards, or as coaches, it was common for women who took maternity or health leave to receive no support, and for the position to be filled and so not available when they wished to return. This was cited as a barrier to women who wish to progress to leadership roles in sport.



Photo: Adobe Stock

## PERCEPTIONS OF WOMEN LACKING CONFIDENCE AND SELF-BELIEF

Perceptions were an interesting thread through this research with several references made to women 'lacking confidence and self-belief' to fulfil a leading role as effectively as a man.

*“ I think it might have been the case that the board was somewhere that you had to be strong and ready to fight; I'm talking maybe 10-15 years ago. That probably would have attracted more males than females because you've got to be quite confident and really able to take the rough with the smooth to go into that type of environment. ”*

*(Participant 8)*

This, again, brought into play sport's conflation of skills required on the field of play with those required to lead a sports organisation off it, with physical strength, aggression and competitiveness viewed by some as key traits for leading an SGB (Hoyt and Murphy, 2016; Schull et al., 2013). It also emerged that women were less likely than men to apply for a senior role if they felt they failed to match 100% of the criteria advertised.

*“ The evidence that was presented on the session that if there's a female who meets 90% of their criteria they might not apply for the role because they think that they need to meet all of it, whereas, this is probably a slight exaggeration, a male would look at it and think 'oh I can do 30% of that', and be much more gung-ho and positive. ”*

*(Participant 8)*

This perception does have some evidence behind it. An observable gender difference in job applications is apparent with men found to apply for jobs if they meet 60% of criteria when women tend to apply only if they meet 100% (Hewett-Packard, 2014). LaVoi and Becker (2007) reported that in sport positions women are more prone to doubt their suitability for leadership roles. While male coaches were found to apply for sports coaching jobs even if they didn't meet all the recommended criteria female coaches wouldn't apply unless they met all the recommended criteria (Greenhill et al. 2009). This emerged as a potential barrier to women in this research of Scottish sports bodies.

*“ Women traditionally lack the confidence and self-belief to go and put themselves forward for opportunities, and that is a cultural, emotional and psychological piece. That's why a lot of the work that we do here is starting with teenage girls because that is when this is embedded. ”*

*(Participant 9)*

Ely, Ibarra and Kolb (2011) speak of an approach that focuses on altering (fixing) women to enhance their skills rather than tackling the culture which creates inequality, but Matthews (2014) supports the use of programmes to increase the number of women in leadership prior to tackling cultural change. This approach is often criticised as contributing to continuing cultural inequality, but it is likely that both a focus on changing cultures to become more inclusive and female-only leadership support would pay dividends.

# CONCLUSION

## QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

Scottish sport has undoubtedly made progress in the past five years when it comes to gender diversity on sport boards, but that growth has slowed, and in some areas regressed in recent years. There is widespread agreement across Scottish sport that action is required for this growth to be re-started.

Women remain significantly under-represented in leadership positions in sport. The slow pace of progress in appointing women to positions of leadership and influence, and improving the gender balance of key decision-making bodies, is concerning in 2021 because of a strong public policy drive over the past decade promoting increased gender equity. At the recent five-year pace of change it would take a further 13 years to achieve gender equality on boards leading Scottish sport, and at the past two-year pace it would be nearly 25 years to achieve parity. The key conclusion, therefore, is that transformative change requires a cultural shift across sport in Scotland, akin to that led by the First Minister and Scottish Government, which this research suggests requires a carrot and stick approach of guidance and support, and gender diversity becoming a prerequisite for government/sportscotland funding and accreditation.

It was clear in the research that the majority involved in Scottish sport recognise the need for change, but still many CEOs felt their membership, leaders and/or participants lacked an understanding of why gender equality was beneficial to the improvement of their sport. This appears to be at odds with developments in wider Scottish society to embrace gender diversity.

Of particular concern is the evidence of little real change in the percentage of women on SGB boards, with evidence pointing towards boards merely becoming bigger to accommodate women and perhaps 'tick boxes', as opposed to women being preferred to men for key roles and growing the overall female influence on strategic direction and decision-making.

The number of female CEO and chairs in SGBs is currently below 20%, and women in CEO roles has decreased in recent years. This suggests that the message being espoused by the Scottish Government, **sportscotland** and others is not yet translating from policy to practice in Scottish sport, and lack of resource to do so is one reason. Clearer messaging on and understanding of the value of improved diversity is perhaps required, alongside further support to effect a cultural change that welcomes women into leading roles in Scottish sport.

Elsewhere, the decline in female sports coaches, particularly at the elite end, is worth further research to understand reasons. Men outnumber women by approximately 3:10 across the main four coaching levels, with a slight increase in the lower Level 1 and Level 2 categories mitigated by decreases in the more performance-focused Level 3 and Level 4 tiers. This was recognised by a number of SGBs who spoke of designing programmes to support female players to progress in coaching and coaches to develop experience.

The number of female officials increased over the last three years to now sit at 27% of all officials, which is similar percentage to female coaches, but, again, there have been fluctuations here in recent years that are worth further exploration.

The data used in this research was largely from prior to the Covid pandemic, and the past 20 months may change the picture around board membership, and coaching and officials' qualifications, as much activity shifted online. Once sport emerges from Covid restrictions further research would help to understand whether online meetings and courses improved gender diversity and female progress.

It was also clear from the research contributions that a lack of women in leadership roles permeates a sport more generally in terms of participation, growth and diversity, and can be a reason for a lack of growth in participation that is often overlooked. Within the research parameters, we were unable to explore the social class, ethnicity and disability profiles of those in leadership in this study, but it is likely that these inequities intersect and compound each other, making it more challenging for women of different social backgrounds to break through into influential roles.

## QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

Following the qualitative interviews with SGBs, the general feeling across all interviews was that improvements had been made in the past 10 years, although most interviewees were surprised by the slow pace of change and commented that it had not improved far enough in a decade.

The majority of interviewees felt that gender balance in SGBs would continue to improve at a slow rate, which points to either a 13-year wait for equality based on the five-year trend or near 25-year wait on the 2018-20 trend. No SGBs had gender requirements or policies focussed on women's representation, but many felt that these would effect change. 'Tokenism' worried most SGBs, pointing to a conflict in seeking to recruit the best person for each role, however, the majority of SGBs expressed a willingness to embrace change that would improve gender equality.

Funding and accreditation were recognised by most interviewees as a key driver of change in policy and practice, and the lack of quotas or requirements by **sportscotland** of sports bodies or clubs to have a certain percentage of women in leadership roles in order to receive funding, in contrast to the rest of the UK and Ireland sport bodies, was flagged as worthy of further consideration. There was concern that a gender quota might shift sport towards tokenism, and others believing it would remove barriers to female appointments to influential leadership roles.

There was widespread support for specific women-only leadership programmes, and suggestions that female-only coaching courses would result in more women taking up coaching opportunities. A number of SGBs highlighted existing programmes and pathways designed to educate and improve the skills of women who wish to take on leadership roles, and there was general agreement that these should be more widely developed.

However, despite acknowledgement of women reporting male-only or male-dominated cultures and environments as being off-putting, very few SGBs spoke of responding to such concerns by changing cultures or environments. This suggests a continuation of asking women to change to fit traditional sport cultures and environments, instead of changing the culture or environment to be more inclusive, and welcome and champion women.

The final issue of motherhood and childcare was viewed by many as an immovable barrier to women securing or retaining a leadership role. Motherhood brings an inevitable period of absence for a mother, but interestingly no interviewee raised childcare as an issue for men with children. With paternity leave, benefits and co-working improvements across society, this would appear to be one area in which Scottish sport in general lags behind. Although it did not emerge as a salient factor from the research interviews, we recognise the broader care-giving responsibilities that can also create barriers to leadership roles, related to young and old adults.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Revisit sportscotland decision to drop a 'Women and Girls' role, by appointing a director with experience and expertise to support, develop and monitor gender equality in sport leadership.**
- **Link accreditation schemes and public sports funding to a requirement for all SGBs to review policies and procedures related to gender equity and, potentially, gender targets.**
- **Maintain and extend use of gender-blind recruitment methods and gender-neutral language.**
- **Develop childcare guidance and policies to help parents to return to leadership roles, both paid and voluntary, with flexible working support.**
- **Consult sport sector on implementation of gender quotas across sport leadership positions.**
- **Conduct further research into female participation and leadership in Scottish sport and leisure, with ongoing measuring and monitoring of progress.**
- **Agree standard performance indicators for publication by sportscotland and Scottish Government.**

## REFERENCES

- Adriaanse, J. A. (2017). Quotas to accelerate gender equity in sport leadership: do they work? In: L. J. Burton & S. Leberman, eds, 2017. *Women in leadership in sport: research and practice for change*. Routledge. pp. 83-97.
- Adriaanse, J., 2016. Gender diversity in the governance of sport associations: the Sydney scoreboard global index of participation. *Journal of Business Ethics*. 137(1). pp.149-160.
- Aslund, O. & Skans, O. N. (2012). Do anonymous job application procedures level the playing field? *ILR Review*, 65. pp.82-107.
- Barnes, C., Lewis, R., Yarker, J. and Arevshatian, L. (2019). Women directors on FTSE company boards: An exploration of the factors influencing their appointment, *Cogent Psychology*, 6:1. DOI: 10.1080/23311908.2019.1691848.
- Begeny, C. (2021). The impact of hidden bias in job adverts on female applicants. Available from: <https://ore.exeter.ac.uk/repository/bitstream/handle/10871/125691/openreachinplainsightreport.pdf?sequence=1>.
- Bordalo, P., Coffman, K., Gennaioli, N. and Shleifer, A. (2019). "Beliefs about Gender." *American Economic Review*, 109 (3). pp.739-73.
- Bower, G.G. and Hums, M.A. (2013) Career paths of women working in leadership positions within intercollegiate athletic administration. *Advancing Women in Leadership* 33. pp.1-14.
- Bower, G.G., Hums, M.A. and Williams, S. (2019). Comparing Career Advice for Women and Men Aspiring to Leadership Positions in Intercollegiate Athletic Administration. North American Society for Sport Management Conference. Available from: [https://www.nassm.com/files/conf\\_abstracts/2019-431.pdf](https://www.nassm.com/files/conf_abstracts/2019-431.pdf).
- Bruening, J.E., Dixon, M.A., 2008. Situating Work-Family Negotiations Within a Life Course Perspective: Insights on the Gendered Experiences of NCAA Division I Head Coaching Mothers. *Sex Roles* 58, 10-23. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-007-9350-x>.
- Burton, J.L., Grappendorf, H., and Henderson, A. (2011). Perceptions of gender in athletic administration: Utilizing role congruity to examine (potential) prejudice against women. *Journal of Sport Management*. 25(1). pp.36-45.
- Burton, J.L., Leberman, S., 2017. *Women in sport leadership: research and practice for change*, Routledge Research in Sport Business and Management. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, London ; New York.
- Caprais, A. and Delorme, N. (2019). Electoral competition and gender quotas in French national sport federations: A lack of female applicants or female resistance? *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*. 12 (3). pp. 349-364.
- Dennehy, J., 2020. Gender diversity in sport in Scotland. *Academic Review Paper*. Edinburgh: OSS.
- Eagly, A. H. (2007). Female leadership advantage and disadvantage: Resolving the contradictions. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 31. pp.1-12.
- Eagly, A. H., Wood, W., & Diekmann, A. B. (2000). Social role theory of sex differences and similarities: A current appraisal. In: T. Eckes & H. M. Trautner, eds, 2000. *The developmental social psychology of gender*. Lawrence Erlbaum. pp. 123-174.
- Eitzen, D. S. 2009. *Fair and foul: beyond myths and paradoxes of sport*. Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.
- Ellemers, N, Rink, F., Derks, B. and Ryan, M. K. (2012). Women in high places: When and why promoting women into top positions can harm them individually or as a group (and how to prevent this). *Research in Organizational Behavior*. 32. pp. 163-187.
- Ely, R., Ibarra, H., & Kolb, D. (2011). Taking gender into account: Theory and design for Women's leadership development programs. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 10 (3). pp.474-493.
- Equality in Sport. (2021). Achievements. Available from: <http://equalityinsport.org/equality-standard-for-sport/achievements/index.html>.
- European Commission's 2021 report on gender equality in the EU [WWW Document], n.d. URL <https://www.esap.online/docs/112/european-commissions-2021-report-on-gender-equality-in-the-eu> (accessed 10.8.21).
- Evans, A. B. and Pfister, G. U. (2021). Women in sports leadership: a systematic narrative review. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*. 56(3). pp.317-342.
- EY Women Athletes Business Network and espnW, (2015). *Where will you find your next leader?*
- Grappendorf, H. and Burton, L.J. (2017). The impact of bias in sport leadership. In: Burton LJ and Leberman S (eds) *Women in Sport Leadership: Research and Practice for Change*. London: Routledge, pp. 47-62.
- Grappendorf, H., Lough, N.L. and Griffin, J. (2004). Examination of the career paths and profiles of NCAA Division I female athletic directors. *Sport Marketing Quarterly* 13(1) pp.35-42.
- Greenhill, J., Auld, C., Cuskelly, G and Hooper, S. (2009). The impact of organisational factors on career pathways for female coaches. *Sport Management Review*. 12: pp.229-240.
- Gregorič, A., Oxelheim, L., Randoy, T. and Thomsen, S. (2017). Resistance to change in the corporate elite: female directors' appointments onto Nordic boards. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 141 (2), 267-287. pp. 267-287.

- Hancock, M.G, Darvin, L. and Walker, N.A. (2018) Beyond the glass ceiling: sport management students' perceptions of the leadership labyrinth. *Sport Management Education Journal*. 12: pp.100–109.
- Hewett Packard. (2014). Internal report. Available from:
- Hindman, L. C. and Walker, N. A. (2020). Sexism in Professional Sports: How Women Managers Experience and Survive Sport Organizational Culture. *Journal of Sport Management*. 34(1). pp. 64-76.
- Hovden, J. (2015). The “fast track” as a future strategy for achieving gender equality and democracy in sport organizations. In: Vanden Auweele Y, Cook E, and Parry J. (eds). *Ethics and Governance in Sport*. London: Routledge, pp. 59–66.
- Hovden, J. Elling, A and Knoppers, A. (2018). Meta-analysis: Policies and strategies. In: Elling, A., Hovden, J. and Knoppers, A. (eds). *Gender Diversity in European Sport Governance*. London: Routledge, pp. 185–198.
- Hoyt, C. L. and Simon, S. (2011) Female Leaders: Injurious or Inspiring Role Models for Women? *Psychology of Women Quarterly*. 35(1) pp. 143-157.
- Hoyt, C. L., and Murphy, S. E. (2016). Managing to clear the air: Stereotype threat, women, and leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly*. 27(3). pp.387-399.
- International Working Group on Women and Sport. (2016c). The Sydney Scoreboard: A global index for women in sport leadership. Available from: [www.sydney scoreboard.com/](http://www.sydney scoreboard.com/).
- Katsarova, I. (2019). European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS). Gender equality in sport: Getting closer every day.
- Knoppers, A., Claringbould, I. and Dortants, M. (2015). Discursive managerial practices of diversity and homogeneity. *Journal of Gender Studies*. 24 (3). pp.259-274.
- Koenig, A.M., Eagly, A. H., Mitchell, A. A., & Ristikari, T. (2011). Are leader stereotypes masculine? A meta-analysis of three research paradigms. *Psychological Bulletin*, 137 (4). pp.616–642.
- Lapchick, R. (2016). Gender Report Card: 2016 International Sports Report Card on Women in Leadership Roles. Orlando: The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport, University of Central Florida. Available from: <http://www.tidesport.org/international>.
- LaVoi, N.M. and Becker, E. 2007. Where have all the post-Title IX mothers gone? Exploring the scarcity of female coaches in youth sport. Poster session presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Applied Sport Psychology, Louisville, KY.
- Leberman, S. and Burton, L. J. (2017). Why this book? Framing the conversation about women in sport leadership. In: Burton L J and Leberman S. (eds). *Women in sport leadership: research and practice for change*. London: Routledge, pp. 1-14.
- Matthews, J. (2014). A critical analysis of the development, outcomes and definition of the Women and Sport Movement (W&SM). Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Chichester.
- Messner, M. A. 2009. *It's all for the kids: Gender, families, and youth sports*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Murray, P., Lord, R. and Lorimer, R. (2020): 'It's just a case of chipping away': A postfeminist analysis of female coaches' gendered experiences in grassroots sport, *Sport, Education and Society*. DOI: 10.1080/13573322.2020.1867527.
- Norman, L. (2011). Gendered homophobia in sport and coaching: understanding the everyday experiences of lesbian coaches. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*. 47(6): pp.705-723.
- Owen Blakemore, J. E., Berenbaum, S. A. and Liben, L. S. (2009). *Gender Development*. Taylor and Francis Group.
- Peterson Institute for International Economics, (2016). Is Gender Diversity Profitable? Evidence from a Global Survey.
- Pfister, G. (2010) Are the women or the organisations to blame? Gender hierarchies in Danish sports organisations. *International Journal of Sport Policy*. 2 pp.1–23.
- Piggott, L.V. and Pike, E. C. J. (2021). 'CEO equals man': gender and informal organisational practices in English sport governance. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*. 55 (7). pp.1009-1025.
- Pike E, White A, Matthews J, Southon, S. and Piggott, L. (2018). Women and sport leadership: a case study of a development programme. In: Mansfield L, Caudwell J, Wheaton B, and Watton, B. (eds). *The Palgrave Handbook of Feminism and Sport, Leisure and Physical Education*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 809–823.
- Robertson, S. (2007). Coaching and motherhood: staying in the profession. *Canadian Journal for Women in Coaching*. 7(2). [online] Available from: [http://www.coach.ca/files/WiC\\_Journal\\_April\\_2007\\_Vol\\_7\\_No\\_2.pdf](http://www.coach.ca/files/WiC_Journal_April_2007_Vol_7_No_2.pdf) [Accessed 12 April 2016].
- Rowe, N. F., (2019). Sports participation in Scotland: trends and future prospects. A report commissioned by the Observatory for Sport in Scotland.
- Schull, V., Shaw, S. and Kihl, L. A. (2013). 'If a woman came in . . . she would have been eaten up alive': Analyzing gendered political processes in the search for an athletic director. *Gender & Society*. 27 pp.56–81.
- Scottish Women and Girls in Sport Advisory Board, Level the Playing Field. (2019). Accessed at: <https://api.actify.org.uk/asset/53e5da02-d9e0-48d7-8601-aeb6ae3f196e>.

Simon, S., and Hoyt, C. L. (2013). Exploring the effect of media images on women's leadership self-perceptions and aspirations. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*. 16. pp.232–245.

Sport England and UK Sport. (2016). *A Code for Sports Governance*. London: Sport England and UK Sport.

Whelan, J., & Wood, R. (2012). *Targets and Quotas for Women in Leadership: A Global Review of Policy, Practice and Psychological Research*. Melbourne: Centre for Ethical Leadership, Melbourne Business School. Available from: [http://about.uq.edu.au/files/6045/targets\\_and\\_quotas\\_report\\_2012.pdf](http://about.uq.edu.au/files/6045/targets_and_quotas_report_2012.pdf).

White, M. and Kay, J. (2006). Who rules sport now? White and Brackenridge revisited. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*. 41. pp.465–473.

Women in Sport Leadership Research Report No. 91. (2004). A research study for sportscotland by George Street Research.

## ANNEX

**All sport organisations whose data was analysed in the quantitative research are included below along with those who took part in surveys and interviews as part of the qualitative research. We would like to thank staff for their insight and enthusiastic contributions.**

Badminton Scotland	Scottish Croquet Association	Scottish Rowing
Basketball Scotland	Scottish Council of Taekwondo	Scottish Rugby
Bowls Scotland	Scottish Curling	Scottish Squash
Boxing Scotland	Scottish Cycling	Scottish Student Sport
Camanachd Association	Scottish Disability Sport	Scottish Sub Aqua Club
Cricket Scotland	Scottish Fencing	Scottish Surfing Federation
Dancesport Scotland	Scottish Football Association	Scottish Swimming
HorseScotland	Scottish Golf	Scottish Target Shooting
Judo Scotland	Scottish Gymnastics	Scottish Tug of War Association
Lacrosse Scotland	Scottish Handball Association	Scottish Volleyball Association
Mountaineering Scotland	Scottish Hang Gliding and Paragliding Federation	Scottish Wrestling Association
Netball Scotland	Scottish Hockey	Snowsport Scotland
Royal Scottish Country Dance Association	Scottish Ju Jitsu Association	Table Tennis Scotland
Royal Yachting Association Scotland	Scottish Karate	Tennis Scotland
Scottish Archery Association	Scottish Korfbal Association	Triathlon Scotland
Scottish Athletics	Scottish Orienteering Association	Waterski and Wakeboard Scotland
Scottish Auto-Cycle Union	Scottish Pentathlon	
Scottish Canoe Association		

### OTHER NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

Community Leisure UK/Scotland

British Universities and Colleges Sport

**sportscotland**

Commonwealth Games Scotland

Scottish Sports Association

Scottish Student Sport

Scottish ClubSport

Scottish Women in Sport

Observatory for Sport in Scotland

## OTHER RESEARCH PUBLISHED BY OSS

Sport participation in Scotland: quantifying the benefits – Dr Larissa Davies (2019)

Sports for the future: decline, growth, opportunity and challenge – Professor Simon Shibli (2019)

Sport participation in Scotland: trends and future prospects – Nicholas F. Rowe (2019)

Sport and social inequality – Professor Tess Kay (2020)

Sports participation and ageing: Influence and impact – Professor Richard Davison & Dr Daryl Cowan (2020)

Assessing the research needs of organisation involved in community sport in Scotland - John Taylor (2020)

Gender diversity in sport and its impact on governance infrastructure, practice and participation in Scotland – Jane Dennehy (2020)

Disability sport research review – Professor Richard Davison & Professor Gayle McPherson (2021)

Rebound, regress or reinvent? The disruptive impact of Covid-19 on sport, exercise and physical activity in Scotland – Nicholas F. Rowe (2021)



For more information on this and other OSS research, please visit our website

**[www.oss.scot](http://www.oss.scot)**

or contact Chief Executive David Ferguson at

**[david@oss.scot](mailto:david@oss.scot)**