



ANNEX B

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Our ref: AQW 20570/22-27

Date: 4 February 2025

Sian Mulholland MLA
Northern Ireland Assembly
Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw
Belfast
BT4 3XX

Dear Sian

**AQW 20570/22-27 – DETAIL OF FUNDING AND RESOURCES ALLOCATED TO
SUPPORT WOMEN IN UNDER-REPRESENTED ROLES WITHIN SPORTS OR
POSITIONS WITHIN SPORT; AND STEPS BEING TAKEN TO ENSURE GREATER
GENDER EQUALITY IN THESE ROLES**

You recently submitted an Assembly Written Question AQW 20570/22-27, asking that I detail (i) any funding and resources being allocated to support women in under-represented roles within sports or positions within sport; and (ii) any steps being taken to ensure greater gender equality in these roles.

I have arranged for this information to be placed in the Assembly Library.

Yours sincerely

**Gordon Lyons MLA
Minister for Communities**

Detail of funding and resources allocated to support women in under-represented roles within sports or positions within sport; and steps being taken to ensure greater gender equality in these roles as per AQW 20570 22-27

Actions taken by Sport NI

I have sought the requested information from the Chief Executive, who has advised me of the following information:

“Funding and resources being allocated to support women in under-represented roles within sports or positions within sport

Funding has been specifically identified and allocated to address the under-representation of women in sport through the following programmes:

- *Sports System Investment Governing Bodies - £1,606,506.*
These are awards made through National Lottery funding to governing bodies of sports to invest in the sports system. Several national governing bodies are delivering their own programmes (through investment from Sport NI) to support women in leadership roles. See table 1 below for details.

Table 1: SSIGB Female Programmes			
Delivery Partner	Programme	Aim of Programme	Investment (If known)
<i>IFA</i>	<i>Female Leaders in Football</i>	<i>Designed to help address the low levels of women in key decision-making roles within football.</i>	
<i>Ulster Hockey</i>	<i>Women in Leadership Programme</i>	<i>Increase number of female leaders, coaches etc in the sport.</i>	<i>£10,000</i>

Table 1: SSIGB Female Programmes

<i>Delivery Partner</i>	<i>Programme</i>	<i>Aim of Programme</i>	<i>Investment (If known)</i>
<i>Cycling Ireland</i>	<i>Women on Wheels 2024</i>	<i>Designed to engage with new and current female cyclists in clubs in NI - plan for 50/50 split between existing and new female cyclists. Rolls out into Big Day Out for Female Cyclists as a group – Newcastle September 24</i>	<i>£5,000</i>
<i>Tennis Ulster Branch</i>	<i>Court Bosses</i>	<i>Targeting young girls to take on roles within their sport of tennis</i>	
<i>Cricket Ireland</i>	<i>On the Front foot</i>	<i>Programme aims to advance the innovation, creativity and leadership capabilities of future female cricket leaders.</i>	
<i>Table Tennis Ulster (Delivery scheduled Q4 Jan-Mar 25)</i>	<i>Young Female Leadership Schools Programme</i>	<i>Introduction to the sport of Table Tennis and developing leadership skills & competencies. Opportunities to progress into leadership roles in the sport - officiating, coaching, role models, squads etc.</i>	<i>Part of Regional Development Officer Salary £16,500 - delivery time.</i>
<i>Ulster GAA</i>	<i>Female Leadership Programme</i>	<i>Females aged 18+ interested in personal development and potentially leading teams.</i>	<i>Fund Ladies Gaelic Football Development Mgr & Officer</i>
<i>Ulster GAA</i>	<i>Gaelic 4 Girls</i>	<i>G4G is a 12-week programme incorporating coaching sessions with fun non-competitive blitzes aimed at increasing participation in Ladies Gaelic Football. The</i>	<i>Fund Ladies Gaelic Football Development Mgr & Officer</i>

Table 1: SSIGB Female Programmes

<i>Delivery Partner</i>	<i>Programme</i>	<i>Aim of Programme</i>	<i>Investment (If known)</i>
		<i>programme targets girls aged between 8-12 years who are not currently registered with a Ladies Gaelic Football club.</i>	
<i>Ulster GAA</i>	<i>Gaelic 4 Mothers and Others</i>	<i>Initiative sees women playing Ladies Gaelic Football in a fun, non-competitive and social environment. Gaelic4Mothers & Others provides an opportunity for women to get their recommended weekly exercise in a fun way while meeting other mothers in the area.</i>	<i>Fund Ladies Gaelic Football Development Mgr & Officer</i>
<i>RYA NI</i>	<i>Women on Water Programme</i>	<i>Opportunity for women and girls to get onto the water and to discover the different opportunities whether it is dinghy sailing, keelboat, paddle board or powerboat.</i>	<i>Fund Active Clubs Coordinator post plus programme investment</i>
<i>IABA</i>	<i>Pilot programme for females in areas of high social need.</i>	<i>IABA to introduce 'taster sessions' to engage interest and then roll out a programme. They plan to run this in three areas targeting 15-20 females per group. IABA to roll out programme in conjunction with WISPA.</i>	<i>Funding through SSIGB retention & growth investment</i>
<i>IABA</i>	<i>Ulster Schools programme</i>	<i>One event will support females only. Had successful impact in 23/24 funding year</i>	<i>Funding through SSIGB retention &</i>

Table 1: SSIGB Female Programmes

<i>Delivery Partner</i>	<i>Programme</i>	<i>Aim of Programme</i>	<i>Investment (If known)</i>
			<i>growth investment</i>
<i>IABA</i>	<i>Female Training sessions</i>	<i>IABA to support female training sessions within Ulster, providing female coaching opportunities and working in partnership with Ulster High Performance – hosting 4-6 sessions across Ulster.</i>	<i>Funding through SSIGB retention & growth investment</i>
<i>IABA</i>	<i>‘Development of Women in the Community Programme’ forum/network</i>	<i>Target 2-3 women’s only groups and organise taster sessions from the network. Presented to the Department of Communities Women’s Programme, currently in planning/development.</i>	<i>Funding through SSIGB retention & growth investment</i>
<i>IABA</i>	<i>Women’s International Day</i>	<i>To host and celebrate Women’s International Day involving schools, charities, and utilise 5 service providers to host workshops in March 25.</i>	<i>Funding through SSIGB retention & growth investment</i>
<i>Ulster Badminton</i>	<i>Women and Girls Programme</i>	<i>Practical Badminton and Workshop hybrid programme targeting women in affiliated clubs. Women in Sport Programme currently being delivered in Belfast. Female Sports Forum agreed to assist in delivering WIS Workshops at Blitz Day</i>	<i>Funding through SSIGB retention & growth investment</i>

Table 1: SSIGB Female Programmes

<i>Delivery Partner</i>	<i>Programme</i>	<i>Aim of Programme</i>	<i>Investment (If known)</i>
<i>Ulster Rugby</i>	<i>Give it a Try programme</i>	<i>introductory programme to encourage women and girls to start playing rugby</i>	<i>Funding through SSIGB retention & growth investment</i>
<i>Ulster Rugby</i>	<i>Multiple Female coaching course</i>	<i>Courses facilitated to increase the number of female coaches in Rugby</i>	<i>Funding through SSIGB retention & growth investment</i>
<i>Ulster Rugby</i>	<i>Multiple School competitions for girls</i>	<i>Increase the number of schools taking part within Girls Schools Rugby by holding regular competitions</i>	<i>Funding through SSIGB retention & growth investment</i>
<i>Ulster Rugby</i>	<i>Girls Let Play Events (U10 – U18)</i>	<i>Events to provide opportunities for female participation</i>	<i>Funding through SSIGB retention & growth investment</i>
<i>Ulster Rugby</i>	<i>XV Summer Programme</i>	<i>Programme designed to increase the number of female Ulster players selected for and contributing significantly to Ireland squads.</i>	<i>Funding through SSIGB retention & growth investment</i>
<i>Ulster Rugby</i>	<i>Facilitate and run Girls' youth competition structures</i>	<i>League and Cup competitions</i>	<i>Funding through SSIGB retention & growth investment</i>

- *Sports System Investment New Governing Bodies - £6,750*

These are awards made through National Lottery funding to governing bodies of sports to invest in the sports system. Typically, these are smaller governing bodies and ‘smaller’ sports, where Sport NI has had limited or no engagement with previously.

Note: these are specifically identifiable programme elements targeting the inclusion of women in sport. Funding targeting inclusion more generally will also include women but is not separately identifiable and so has not been included.

- *NI Sports Forum - £10,000*

This is a business case investment in NI Sports Forum to operate programmes promoting women in sport and providing resources to governing bodies and clubs.

Any steps being taken to ensure greater gender equality in these roles

Women in Sport Engagement and Delivery Plan

*Sport NI has developed a Women in Sport ‘Engagement and Delivery’ Plan to identify gaps in female involvement in sport and take steps to address this. The plan has identified four pillars to set objectives against – Leadership, Participation, Visibility & Advocacy and Sporting Foundation. One of the Leadership objectives areas is “Support towards female workforce development i.e. coaches, officials and volunteers to broaden the base.” The Delivery Plan includes a campaign - **Be Seen, Be Heard, Belong** – launching on 3 March 2025 and scheduled to run for an initial 3 year period.*

Baselines have been established through an EDI survey of the NI sports sector and the imbalance in women’s participation in sport and physical activity presented at an EDI Sports Development network event in October 2024. Development has commenced on an EDI-specific programme to target the charitable and community sector, using sport as a vehicle for inclusion.

Rise Female Leadership

The Sport NI - Rise Female Leadership programme to 19 women (2 of whom are officials) from 13 sports. They have successfully completed the first phase of the programme, and they are currently receiving personalised mentoring to prepare them to make lasting impacts in the sports sector. Rise is empowering the next generation of female leaders in sport, providing tailored support for female coaches, officials, and administrators across the Derry, Strabane, Causeway Coast, and Mid Ulster areas. Rise aims to close the gap of underrepresentation by enhancing leadership skills, diversity and inclusion.

Participants have gained tools to thrive in leadership roles, drive change, and make a lasting impact in their sports while learning from each other's experiences. Rise has also created a supportive network within the sporting community for these women which will last long after the programme ends.

Through participation in Rise, we will leave behind a community of empowered women equipped to lead and a legacy that promises to inspire future generations. With stronger representation of women in coaching, leadership, and officiating roles.

Creating Opportunities Programme

Sport NI recently launched the Creating Opportunities Crowdfunder small grants programme, which is available to local clubs. Clubs can apply for funding for any new and/or additional participation projects they wish to run within their club. The programme offers up to 50% match-funding support to a maximum of £5,000 from Sport NI through the Crowdfunder platform. Eligible costs include (but are not exclusive to) coaching costs, venue hire, workshops costs, equipment and capital costs required to deliver their participation project. Details of organisations which have sought funding to support women in under-represented roles within sports or positions within sport are detailed in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Creating Opportunities

<i>Delivery Partner</i>	<i>Programme</i>	<i>Aim of Project</i>	<i>Investment (If known)</i>
<i>Carrickmore Handball</i>	<i>Empower Girls Through Handball</i>	<i>Empowering girls & women in rural Carrickmore to get active through handball. Please support us in creating a new inclusive handball program</i>	<i>£5,000.00</i>
<i>University of Ulster Volleyball Club</i>	<i>University of Ulster Volleyball Club</i>	<i>We are a volleyball club that is passionate about introducing people to the sport of volleyball</i>	<i>£1,096.00</i>
<i>St Macartans Ladies GFC</i>	<i>Future Sporting Stars @ St Macartans Ladies GFC</i>	<i>We are launching a new "future sporting stars" programme to inspire, empower, and engage more girls in sport across Clogher Valley</i>	<i>£5,000.00</i>
<i>St Patricks GAA Dromintee</i>	<i>St Patricks Dromintee New Girls in Sport Programme</i>	<i>Creating new opportunities for girls and young people in sport at St Patrick's Dromintee, for future success on and off the field.</i>	<i>£5,000.00</i>
<i>Dorsey Emmets GFC</i>	<i>Dorsey Emmets GFC Girls' Game-Changers Initiative</i>	<i>Help us kickstart Dorsey Emmets GFC's new girls'</i>	<i>£5,000.00</i>

Table 2: Creating Opportunities			
<i>Delivery Partner</i>	<i>Programme</i>	<i>Aim of Project</i>	<i>Investment (If known)</i>
		<i>programme- creating more opportunities for girls n our community. Let's level the field!</i>	
<i>CI Sixers</i>	<i>CI Sixers - Here Come the Girls</i>	<i>To deliver the best girls and ladies cricket coaching and facilities in east Belfast</i>	<i>£5,000.00</i>
<i>North Down Cricket Club</i>	<i>Women and Girls Into Cricket</i>	<i>North Down Cricket want to get your support to facilitate a women and girls "into" cricket programme.</i>	<i>£5,000.00"</i>

For any future queries relating to operational matters, you may wish to contact Sport NI directly. Making direct contact with Sport NI will ensure that you receive the information in the shortest possible timeframe and make best use of public resources.