

# How and why sports should gender impact assess their strategies



**In 2007 the All England Lawn Tennis Club examined its policy relating to prize money at Wimbledon. Recognising that the policy discriminated against female players; it made changes.**

Gender impact assessment involves an assessment of policies and practices to see whether they will affect men and women differently, with a view to adapting policies and practices to make sure that any discriminatory effects are eliminated.

## Why are gender impact assessments needed in sport?

Gender inequality is, and always has been a persistent feature of sport. In most sports, male participation enjoys both a higher profile and greater investment than women's and far more of leaders within governing bodies are male.

Gender impact assessment is a tool that helps to ensure that particular policies or programmes don't negatively impact on a group of individuals because of their gender.

The impact assessment process is based on the understanding that gender is one of the most fundamental organising features in society and affects our lives from the moment we are born.<sup>1</sup> Sporting opportunities available to men and women are a perfect example of this. After all, currently a young girl will have more chance of becoming an astronaut than playing a team sport professionally.

It is important to note though that gender impact assessment as a process is not about apportioning blame for the inequalities that exist,

but about understanding why they exist and taking action. The key output from the process is a report that identifies actions and makes recommendations as to how these might be addressed to make sure the policy or programme will be as effective for women as it is for men.

## Compelling arguments for gender impact assessment

There are a several reasons why gender impact assessments are valuable for sports organisations:

1. Efficiency and effectiveness – by gender impact assessing policies and programmes, sport can improve its effectiveness and efficiency by ensuring that the whole population can benefit from investment.
2. Achievement of equality and fairness goals through a more proactive approach to the promotion of equality.
3. Fulfilment of legal obligations. (The Gender Duty and Sex Discrimination Acts)

## How to Carry Out a Gender Impact Assessment

The gender impact assessment process essentially involves answering two key questions:

1. Is there an inequality, or a potential inequality, in the way that women and men will be affected by this policy?

2. What can be done about it?

Before you begin, you should gather together any available statistics, facts and information on the issue being addressed by the policy or programme that you are assessing. Sport England's Active People, Taking Part and Active Places surveys as well as WSFF's *It's time* report may be a useful starting point for this information.

Rather than impact assessing a policy/ programme in its entirety, you will also need to break it down by objective or area in order to ensure that you achieve clear outcomes and actions from the assessment process.

**The impact assessment process is based on the understanding that gender is one of the most fundamental organising features in society.**

<sup>1</sup> Crawley and O'Meara, Gender Impact Assessment Handbook 2004.

**Step 1 - Initial information gathering**

Consider what you know about the different experiences, situations and roles of men and women that might impact on how they get involved in the policy or programme that you are assessing. Use the data you have gathered to inform this analysis.

**Step 2 – Making a judgment**

What are the implications of the information you have on the objective that you are looking at? Given what you know, will women and girls be adversely affected by a specific objective or process?

**Step 3 – Action planning**

Given these implications, what actions do you need to implement when pursuing this aspect of the policy or programme to promote equality of opportunity?

**Step 4 – Review**

Consider how you will measure success in terms of addressing and imbalances to enable you to review the policy or programme.

**Developing your template**

In order to help you with the impact assessment it will be helpful to develop a template that meets the needs of your organization and enables you to carry out the 4 steps already outlined. Over time, all of your organisation's policies, strategies and programmes should be gender impact assessed and this process should be regularly reviewed as the information and data available to you evolves.

Your template needs to include the following information:

1. Define the aims of your policy
2. What do you already know about the diverse needs and experiences of your target audience?
3. What else do you need to know to help you understand the diverse needs and experiences of your target audience?
4. What does the information you have, tell you about how this policy might impact positively or negatively on the different groups within the target audience?
5. Will you be making any changes to your policy?
6. Does your policy provide the opportunity to promote equality of opportunity or good relations?
7. Do you need to carry out a further impact assessment?

8. Please explain how you will monitor and evaluate this policy to measure progress.
9. Sign off and publish impact assessment.

To assist you further in the development of your template, you may wish to look at those produced by other organizations. The NHS, LA's and other publicly funded organisations should be able to provide you with examples.

**Consider what you know about the different experiences, situations and roles of men and women that might impact on how that get involved in the policy or programme that you are assessing.**



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