

SPORT

Foundation gives women better sporting chance

Campaign Crisis in Women's Fitness
Client Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation
PR Team Vero Communications
Timescale November 2007
Budget c. £8,000

Female fitness levels in the UK are critically low, according to anecdotal and in-house figures from the Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation. In 2007, the Women's Sports Foundation's newly appointed chief executive, Sue Tibballs, broadened the body's role to address key issues underlying poor female participation in sport and exercise.

The rebranded Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation (WSFF) now campaigns to make physical activity an integral part of women's lives and will create the first national strategy to raise participation. Vero was appointed to provide strategic communications.

Objectives

Begin a national debate about the crisis in women's fitness. Position the WSFF as the UK's foremost expert in women's sport and fitness. Establish Sue Tibballs as the leading UK spokesperson.

Strategy and plan

The campaign revolved around capitalising on the issues of obesity, national health and the intended London

2012 Olympics legacy of increased participation in sport.

It commissioned *It's Time*, a study into women's fitness, to detail the crisis and predict activity levels in 2017. Sponsor Scottish Widows was brought in, as was SportBusiness Group. The first national conference about women's sport was held to launch the research, and Prime Minister Gordon Brown addressed the conference.

The key messages were that 80 per cent of women do not do enough exercise to benefit their health, that 2012 legacy targets are unlikely to be met and the core reason is the pressure on women to be thin rather than healthy.

Measurement and evaluation

The story was the lead item on BBC Radio 5 Live, featured on BBC *Breakfast*, BBC News 24, Sky News, Five, Radio 4's *Today* programme, *Woman's Hour* and regional radio. It was covered by *The Guardian*, *The Times*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *Daily Mail*, *The Sun*, *The Evening Standard* and the regional press. It was covered extensively online too.

Results

National debate commenced on women's sport and exercise, led and informed by the WSFF. Sue Tibballs was profiled widely in the national media and WSFF is now working to produce the national strategy.



Health kick: WSFF aimed to create a national debate on women's fitness levels