

# AKTIVE

## Women & Girls Facility Guide

Supporting your facility to enable women and girls to be active





# Overview

**This practical guide contains advice, suggestions, hints and tips that can support you to enable more women and girls to get active at your facility. We know that gender influences activity levels and motivations to be active.**

The guide outlines five different sections where a targeted focus on women and girls could result in better participation outcomes and help you grow the number of women and girls who use your facility.

## Contents

- 2 Overview >
- 3 Introduction >
- 4 Who is this guide for? >
- 5 Why focus on women and girls? >
- 7 How to use this guide >
- 8 Facility snapshot >
- 9 Leadership and personnel >
- 10 Facility culture >
- 12 The physical environment >
- 14 Programmes and practices >
- 16 Visibility and communications >
- 18 References and more information >
- 19 Appendix A - Action Plan >
- 20 Appendix B - Taking a co-design approach >
- 21 Appendix C - Sport NZ Gender-Equal Changing Rooms - Design Principles and Legacy Outcomes >
- 21 Appendix D - NZ Rugby Best practice changing room guide >





# Introduction

This guide contains practical advice, suggestions and tools to support facility operators, board members, club committees and coaches to identify opportunities to enable women and girls to be physically active through existing or new activities.

It provides an opportunity for people across your facility to learn and discuss ways you can create environments where everyone can participate equitably. You'll be able to identify the great things your organisation is already doing for women and girls, as well as identifying future opportunities through developing short, medium and long term goals.

It will also provide guidance on ways to ensure that facilities are appropriate for all users through applying universal design principles and good design considerations.





Who is this guide for?

**EVERYONE!**

**This guide focusses on enhancing sport, recreation and play environments for all women and girls. People involved in running clubs and operating facilities such as gyms, leisure centres, studios and aquatic facilities will be able to apply tools from this guide into their own settings.**

**If you're not directly involved in operating sport or recreation facilities, being part of the conversation to help more women and girls get active benefits all parts of society. Even using small sections of this guide will help you support more women and girls in your local area to be more physically active.**

Facilities play a key role in encouraging participation and providing enjoyable experiences. However, for a range of training and competition needs, many facilities and amenities are not always fit for purpose to allow women and girls to enjoy their experience. These facilities present barriers and challenges for women and girls, creating gender inequality in sport and active recreation.

#### **Continue reading if you are...**

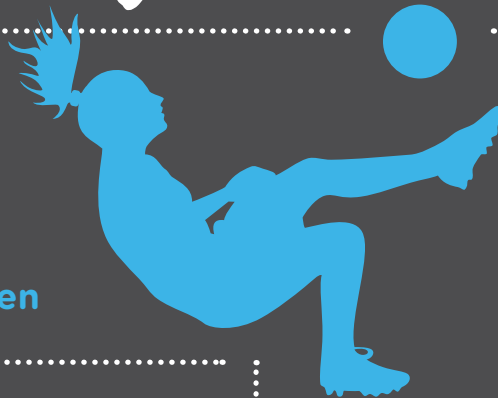
- Committed to meeting the needs, interests and experiences of women and girls
- Committed to supporting the growth of female participation in play, active recreation and sport
- Committed to enhancing environments and experiences for women and girls
- Planning facility renovations or upgrades
- Planning a new facility.

# Why focus on **WOMEN** and **GIRLS?**



Gender has a big influence on activity levels. Based on the insights captured by Sport New Zealand's Young Women Profile 2021 we know that:

Girls and young women (aged 10 - 17 years) spend **less** time in weekly **participation** than boys and young men



**90%** of young women want to be active



**96%** of young women understand why taking part in **physical activity** is good for them

**68%** of young women and girls will **avoid participating** in activities when they do not feel **confident about their bodies**

**75%**

of girls aged 12 want to increase participation. This rises to **83%** by age 17



**69%**

participate for fun, but this decreases from **80%** at age 12, to **51%** by age 17





In order to create an environment where young women and girls feel welcomed and comfortable, it's important to consider what they want from their sport and recreation activities:

- To have fun and socialise
- To feel safe to participate
- They don't want to feel judged
- To keep fit
- To feel confident doing what they're doing
- Activities to fit around other commitments.

Challenges for women and girls in sport and recreation extends beyond participation. Women are often underrepresented in decision-making roles within sport and active recreation in the areas of management, coaching and governance.

A key factor to creating an inclusive and welcoming environment for your participants

is ensuring people involved in decision-making at your facility reflect your local community and understand your member needs. Having a diverse range of people in positions of responsibility can lead to better decision making and helps to ensure that your organisation has a strong focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Other considerations come when you are serving a culturally diverse community. For some women, concerns around the lack of cultural understandings in the sport and active recreation sector creates barriers, as do challenges in sporting uniforms and some sport-specific clothing. The importance of dressing modestly may preclude women from some sports and activities. Some women also feel they are being viewed as 'out of place' in a sport and active recreation setting when wearing culturally respectful clothing.

# How to use this guide

This guide outlines five different sections where a targeted focus on women and girls could result in better outcomes – participant satisfaction, player retention etc:

## Leadership and Personnel

## Facility Culture

## Social and Physical Environment

## Programming

## Visibility and Communications

“Facility” is used in this guide to mean your club, gym, aquatic facility, indoor centre, sports hub etc.

You may wish to form a small working group with a range of people across your organisation to work through this guide. Your insights will help develop an action plan for how you intend to maintain or improve aspects of how your facility operates and supports women and girls to be active – ensure women are part of this working group.



*As you work through the sections of this guide, you might consider the following criteria as you respond to each statement:*

Criteria	Meaning
Not applicable	This statement is not applicable to our facility
We can't do this yet	Our facility can't do this / we can't achieve this yet
We don't do this yet	Our facility is not currently doing anything to support this
We need to do more work	Our facility sometimes achieves this, but we could do more
We do this well	Our facility consistently achieves this and has evidence to support this.

This approach is useful to understand where your organisation is doing a great job at encouraging women and girls to be active and also identify areas that might require some further thought and action. It can also enable you to develop a baseline to measure improvements over time.

It may be helpful to develop an action plan with a realistic timeframe within which to achieve these changes. Consider short, medium and long-term actions which you can put into place and monitor effectively. An action plan template is set out in Appendix A.

# Facility snapshot

**As a starting point it is useful for your facility to record the number and gender breakdown of leaders, staff and volunteers in key facility roles. This will be useful information for you to recognise the different roles held across your organisation.**

Sport New Zealand research shows that strong, diverse and gender balanced leadership at all levels of an organisation, brings a breadth of perspective, allows for better decision making and creates stronger better performing organisations. Around the board table, this is linked to one of the core functions of boards - to consider issues from a range of perspectives.

Take a moment to consider the diversity across your facility's staff and leadership team. To improve board diversity Sport New Zealand announced in June 2018 it would be working with its partners to meet a minimum requirement of 40% self-identified females on their boards by December 2021.



*How does your facility compare with this target?*

Area of Facility	People (list names)	Gender (self-identified)
Chair / President		
Board/Committee Members		
Chief Executive/ General Manager		
Senior Leadership Team		
Employees		
Coaches and Trainers		
Volunteers		
Other positions.		

## Areas to consider:

- What do you notice?
- Do you notice any gender stereotypes through these roles?
- Is there a need to increase diversity across different facility roles?
- What role models do you currently have within your club for young women and girls?



# Leadership and personnel

**Sport and active recreation facilities are in a unique position to model respectful relationships to women and girls and promote equal opportunities in your facility. For real sustainable change it is important the whole facility (not just management) understands and supports the value of enabling women and girls to be active.**

Increasing female participation in sport and recreation provides numerous opportunities for underactive sections of the population to become physically active for life.



*Use the following table to identify how well your facility supports your employees and volunteers:*

	We do this well	We need to do more work	We don't do this yet	We can't do this yet	N/A
<b>Our facility supports our leaders, employees and volunteers through...</b>					
• A written commitment to have gender balance in our senior leadership positions and board	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Ensuring women and girls are actively involved in planning and decision making at all levels	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• A strategy to recruit, retain and train women for leadership roles such as board member, manager, coach and instructor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Profiling role models and promoting the great work our women and girls (e.g. leaders and members) are doing through local and social media	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Women coaches working with participants of all genders, abilities and ages	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• An aim to increase the gender balance in all facility roles	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Providing equal amounts of training, development and mentoring for both our female and male volunteers and paid employees	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Striving to ensure that the allocation of volunteer/paid positions doesn't reinforce gender stereotypes such as women exclusively in administrative roles.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Areas to consider:

- What do you notice?
- Do you notice any gender stereotypes through these roles?
- Is there a need to increase diversity across different facility roles?
- What role models do you currently have within your club for young women and girls?



# Facility culture

**Sport and active recreation facilities play a key role in the community and can provide a positive culture to create safe and welcoming environments. Facilities also have a unique opportunity to address barriers that lead to negative attitudes and behaviours towards women and provide an environment where women are respected, valued and accepted.**

To turn a casual female member into a long-term attendee, the individual needs to feel safe and secure in attending your facility at all times. Building trust will help create a long-term member.

A facility environment that is not welcoming is a barrier for many women. Once a potential new member has arrived at your facility, it is important to ensure they have a positive first interaction and are reassured they are welcome in your facility.

For many women attending a facility often includes feelings of guilt - an emotional barrier women can have around leaving family commitments to exercise. Not only are they taking time out for themselves but it's also costly, so offering more flexible memberships could help encourage more female customers. Providing flexibility of timing of programmes around important times for women.



*Use the following table to identify how your facility creates a safe and welcoming environment for women and girls:*

	We do this well	We need to do more work	We don't do this yet	We can't do this yet	N/A
<b>Our facility continually looks to improve its culture to be a welcoming place to...</b>					
• Engage with members, listen to their needs and ensure individuals know how we keep in touch	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Understand what women and girls want from the facility and their experiences when attending our facility.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Our facility uses inclusive language and images that reflects our membership in all communications and promotional material, including...</b>					
• Women and girls	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• People living with disabilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Diverse cultures in your local community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



# Facility culture continued

	We do this well	We need to do more work	We don't do this yet	We can't do this yet	N/A
<b>Our facility values our female participants, members, players and teams through...</b>					
• Providing equal allocation to the best facilities, changing areas, prime playing time, instructors and coaches, regardless of gender or ability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Displaying female senior and junior trophies, honours boards and team photos around the facility in equally clear view.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Our facility provides a welcoming experience for new visitors through...</b>					
• Clear signposting towards different areas of the facility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Ensuring staff welcome people to the facility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Offering inductions to the facility and any equipment to reassure users that they know where to go, how to use equipment, how to perform exercises and who to ask for help.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Our facility considers different factors which affect when and how women and girls can participate.</b>					
• We consider the timing of classes, such as avoiding school pick up or evening mealtimes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• We offer flexible membership and payment options: e.g. the ability to pause your membership if you're unwell, travelling or taking a break from exercise and we actively promote this flexibility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• We run different promotions or offers around multiple attendance such as 'join with a friend' or a reward if they introduce someone else to the facility.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Our facility supports our staff to provide enjoyable and safe experiences for women and girls.</b>					
• Regular staff and customer communication highlighting that our facility takes women and girl's safety seriously	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• A champion for women and girls' safety and all staff members are advised so that they can go to them for advice, support and resources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• To enable people to come forward to report incidents, our facility uses a range of reporting methods (e.g. in person, email, telephone or feedback form), as well as options to report an incident to someone of the same sex	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• A clear written policy and processes in place on how our organisation will respond to reports of harassment or assault, with options for how and who to report incidents to, and what people can expect from any processes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Areas to consider:

- What do you notice?
- Does your facility reflect your membership and community?
- What are some simple short-term interventions you may wish to consider?
- Is there a need to support your staff and how might you do this?



# The physical environment

**Sport and active recreation facilities play a key role in encouraging women and girls' involvement. Poor quality, badly maintained or inappropriately designed facilities present challenges and create inequitable disparity between genders engaging in participation opportunities.**

Having well-designed private change cubicles, women-only sessions and discreet workout spaces reinforce feelings of security by women and girls and are particularly important to some communities. Many facilities will not be able to provide optimal outcomes currently, but consideration should be given to the physical environment when significant renewals are proposed, or a new build is planned.



*Use the following table to identify how your facility meets the needs of women and girls:*

	We do this well	We need to do more work	We don't do this yet	We can't do this yet	N/A
<b>Our facility provides a safe environment with:</b>					
• Clear wayfinding signage to all accessible facilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Adequate lighting in and around the building, including the carpark and surrounding areas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Appropriately located secure lockers and/or locks are available to participants	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• External spaces are regularly monitored and maintained	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Regularly checking that CCTV and lighting is functioning correctly in all areas of our facility.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Changing rooms and bathrooms:</b>					
• Changing facilities and toilets are available for all genders with equal allocation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Changing rooms have secure lockers or locks are available	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Changing rooms are an appropriate size for large groups	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Female changing room showers have individual cubicles with doors or shower curtains and are located away from the male changing rooms with no access between changing rooms	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Female changing rooms include partitioning that eliminates direct line of sight between changing room and corridors/foyers/spaces external to changing rooms and amenities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



# The physical environment continued

	We do this well	We need to do more work	We don't do this yet	We can't do this yet	N/A
• Accessible bathroom and changing facilities, for example gender-neutral or family accessible options	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Period products and sanitary bins are available	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Shelving above basin with access to power points for personal items and mirror	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Specific facilities for umpires and coaches with gender neutral change/toilet/shower facilities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Clean environments:</b>					
• Our facility has a rigorous cleaning regime that ensures changing rooms, showers and toilets are always clean and tidy and a process to address any issues where this is not achieved	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Toilet paper is always refilled	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Soap dispensers are available	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Sanitary bins are available in every cubicle.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Family friendly facilities:</b>					
• Baby change and feeding areas that both women and men can access are available	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Childcare opportunities or safe monitored play areas and equipment are available	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• We offer a sports gear recycling programme.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Areas to consider:

- What do you notice?
- What are some simple short-term interventions you may wish to consider?
- Can your facility make small improvements?
- Is there a need to support your staff and how might you do this?



# Programmes and practices

It is important for women and girls that sport and active recreation facilities consider barriers that may affect their participation and attendance. The compromise between spending time at a facility or with family can be difficult for women to overcome. Some women worry that spending time with family should be more important than exercise, and childcare and family commitments are a barrier to their attendance.



It is important to enable women to feel activity is worthwhile. For many women the perception that not being fit enough is a major barrier to doing physical activity and they are often concerned that facilities will not offer activities suited to their ability.

One way to address this is to ensure programmes and offerings are mindful of the commitments of women and girls by considering the intended audience when organising your programming schedule. For example, consider

that shorter length sessions or practices may be more suitable for new mums, putting on classes aimed at women at the same time as child-friendly activity sessions, holding practices around family commitments.

*Use the following table to evaluate your facility's programmes and practices:*

	We do this well	We need to do more work	We don't do this yet	We can't do this yet	N/A
<b>Our facility offers a variety of activities that women and girls want to participate in. We do this through:</b>					
• Actively seeking to hear the voices of women and girls in our local community to develop programmes that meet their needs, interests and experiences (e.g. type of activity, scheduling and delivery)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Providing entry-level activities or classes and this information is available and visible to women and girls throughout our centre and promoted online via our website	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Promoting sessions that are explicit in their ability level so women and girls can find what suits them	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Briefing our staff on all the different sessions we offer so that they can inform and advise members what might be appropriate for them	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Ensuring timings and facilities are mindful of the commitments of women and girls	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Seeking feedback from women and girls who no longer attend or leave the facility to understand the reasons why	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Offering and promoting family sessions and/or holiday sessions that women can take part in with their children.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



# Programmes and practices continued

	We do this well	We need to do more work	We don't do this yet	We can't do this yet	N/A
<b>It's easy for new participants to attend our facility through...</b>					
• "Come and try events" focussed on woman and girls	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• "Buddy systems" to help new participants to feel welcomed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Addressing identified barriers to access for members (e.g. payment plans, flexible membership fees, language, programme delivery oversight, uniforms and equipment)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Offering classes specifically catered towards new mums or retired women during off-peak times or for women with children who may prefer early morning or evening sessions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Our facility welcomes everyone:</b>					
• Our facility has systems in place that permits culturally sensitive/ responsive dress and privacy (e.g. clothing in pools and gender-specific training times)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Our facility considers women and girls' interests and body sizes when acquiring programme equipment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• A range of team uniform options are available so that women and girls do not feel body-conscious when wearing certain items (e.g. shorts or a skirt, singlet or a long sleeved shirt).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Our facility provides a range of programming options that specifically accommodates the following population groups:</b>					
• Young women and girls aged 10-18 years	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Women and girls living with disabilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Women and girls from culturally diverse backgrounds and religious beliefs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Women and girls only options:</b>					
• Our facility offers female-only programmes that provides an opportunity for women and girls who may require or prefer gender-segregated programmes to participate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Our facility provides programming that considers requirements for female-only sessions based on the demographic or cultural needs of our local area.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Areas to consider:

- What do you notice?
- What are some simple short-term interventions you may wish to consider?
- Can your facility make small programming improvements?
- Is there a need to support your staff and how might you do this?



# Visibility and communications

**A number of women and girls say that fitness and leisure sector marketing makes them feel bad about themselves. Ensuring that women and girls feel represented within your facility is a key step to enabling women and girls to be active. Women and girls want to recognise themselves in any promotional or marketing collateral your facility uses.**

This can address concerns that your facility or programming is not for them and to demonstrate accessibility, personal safety and the wider support available. The choice of images across marketing channels can have a huge effect on women and girls' impressions of your facilities – a focus on elite athletes can make some feel unwelcome.

It is important to note that a customer's first experience of your facility may happen via your web page before they even attend in person. Providing practical advice to women and girls before they attend your facility for the first time (such as travel, parking, change facilities, dress code) can also help them to know what to expect in order to reduce potential anxiety.



## How well does your facility communicate with women and girls?

	We do this well	We need to do more work	We don't do this yet	We can't do this yet	N/A
<b>When communicating with our members, we ensure:</b>					
• Our communication channels demonstrate how our facility is inclusive of everyone, so women and girls feel like it is a place they will be welcomed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• We use imagery that showcases a range of different body types, ethnicities and ages that reflects our community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• We use images which shows realistic portrayals of women exercising e.g. not wearing make-up, sweating, laughing and red-faced. We also use images which show our female staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• We use our current members to tell their stories and provide case studies of their personal journeys	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• We offer clear and simple advice showing the appropriate clothing that can be worn in our facility or to a specific activity – acknowledging possible cultural or religious requirements for some women and girls in our community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• All important information is displayed on our website and in our facilities in a way that is easily accessible.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

# Visibility and communications continued

	We do this well	We need to do more work	We don't do this yet	We can't do this yet	N/A
<b>Our website provides practical information such as:</b>					
• Access, transport and parking options	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Changing facilities available	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Locker requirements (e.g. cost, own padlock required, key code etc)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Accessibility information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Membership and options for visiting as a guest	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• How to use the booking system (if booking is required)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• How to find the different areas within your facility.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Connecting our community:</b>					
• We recognise that our facility is part of our diverse community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Our facility promotes childcare options or child/family activity sessions to make it easier for women to use your facility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• We encourage women to meet up either before or after sessions or classes, to promote the social aspects and share their personal journeys	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• We have set up social hubs for like-minded women and girls either online or in person.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Areas to consider:

- What do you notice?
- Are your members and community visible in your communications?
- What are some simple short-term interventions you may wish to consider?
- Is there a need to support your staff and how might you do this?







## References and more information

This guide has been informed by the following resources:

- [Sport England This Girl Can: How to Improve Your Services for Women and Girls: as told by the 51%: Insights to action: a practical guide >](#)

.....

- [Sport England Helping Women and Girls get active: a practical guide >](#)

.....

- [Yarra Ranges Shire Creating a Place for Women in Sport >](#)

.....

- [Sport NZ Young Women Profile 2021 >](#)

.....

- [New Zealand Rugby Best Practice Changing Rooms Guide November 2022 >](#)



## Appendix A - Action Plan

Use the table below to identify the actions you can implement at your facility. [Word version here >](#)

Facility Name:		Timeframe:	Person/team leading this:	Resources needed (e.g. finance, people, equipment, technology, facilities):
Date:	6-month review date:			
<b>Leadership and Personnel</b>				
Short-term				
Mid-term				
Long-term				
<b>Programming</b>				
Short-term				
Mid-term				
Long-term				
<b>Facility Culture</b>				
Short-term				
Mid-term				
Long-term				
<b>Social and Physical Environment</b>				
Short-term				
Mid-term				
Long-term				
<b>Visibility and Communications</b>				
Short-term				
Mid-term				
Long-term				

## Appendix B - Taking a co-design approach

### How do we know what women and girls want from our organisation? Where do we start?

You may wish to consider a participant-led or co-design approach. Co-design is a continual loop between asking for feedback and then implementing those ideas. This can be achieved through seeking feedback, guidance and suggestions from your current participants and

their family members, the local community and even former members or participants. Methods include surveys, workshops, interviews and/or focus groups. A co-design approach enables women and girls the opportunity to have ownership over their health and wellbeing and empowers them to become more engaged in physical activity – however they choose!



Access tips and tools on taking a co-design approach >



## Appendix C - Sport NZ Gender-Equal Changing Rooms - Design Principles and Legacy Outcomes

### Gender Neutral Design Principles

Reflecting the following principles through design and development will be key to achieving welcoming, successful and functional facilities that support use and participation by all users and specifically for females. These principles should be considered and used when designing and specifying project scope and developing design solutions for new developments, or when upgrading existing facilities.

**1. Fit for purpose** Whilst promoting a flexible and multi-use approach, ensure female friendly design elements and specific requirements meet the level and type of activities being delivered, as well as occupant, club, or tenant needs.

**2. Multi and shared use** Infrastructure should be efficiently designed to promote equitable and flexible use by a mixture of users, capable of sharing facilities and usage times. In particular, the facility space planning and design of public spaces should adopt a multi-purpose approach.

**3. Compatibility** Identification of compatible sports, teams, activities, clubs or organisations, with similar objectives and requirements for facility design, use and management, should be promoted.

**4. Inclusive design** The principles of inclusive design should be applied to community sport and recreation facilities so that they accommodate users of all ages, gender, ability and cultural backgrounds.

**5. Public safety** Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) takes into consideration the relationship between users and the physical environment in the design of public spaces in crime prevention and assists with public safety.

**6. Health and safety** Security and safety of users should be paramount. Community sport

and active recreation facilities and their surrounds should be designed, built and maintained in accordance with relevant occupational health and safety standards. They should also incorporate child safe and safer design principles into facility design.

**7. Functionality** Facility design and layout should promote safe and optimal functionality to accommodate formal, competitive, social, and recreational forms of usage and participation.

### Gender Neutral Facilities Desired Legacy Outcomes

- Individual, lockable shower cubicles, with change seats and hooks.
- Individual toilet cubicles, rather than urinals, for unisex use, complete with sanitary dispensers.
- Partitioning that eliminates direct line of sight between changing room and corridors, foyers and spaces, external to changing rooms and amenities.
- Adequate levels of lighting internally and externally.
- Accessible toilet, handbasin and shower (in some cases this could double up with a referee room).
- Family friendly attributes (breastfeeding areas + baby change tables).
- Personal space with cubicles and storage for players (with access to power point if possible).
- Direct access between wet and dry areas.
- Facilities for umpires with gender neutral change, toilet and shower facilities.
- Shelving above basin, with access to power points, for personal items, along with a mirror.
- Ice bath space (at match venues).

## Appendix D - Appendix D NZ Rugby Best practice changing room guide

New Zealand Rugby's best practice changing room guide was developed for the hugely successful Rugby World Cup 2021 and **can be found here >**



# NGĀ MIHI

© Aktive, [2023]. All rights reserved. Please ensure Aktive is acknowledged if you use or copy this work.

