The insight behind This Girl Can
Why we developed This Girl Can
The stubborn gender gap meant we had to do something **different**.

Source: Sport England’s Active People results for the 12 months to the period shown on the chart.

Once a week participation

**Men**

**Women**

**1.8M**
Women told us they feel a lot of guilt and with that sport and exercise almost immediately becomes a negative thought.

I should be healthier

I shouldn’t be so lazy

I’d like to lose weight

All my friends are exercising

I think I would feel better

I used to like it

Source: Future Thinking Cohort Study for TGC, 2016
75% of women told us they wanted to be more active but something was stopping them.

That’s 7.1 million women that told us they would like to participate more.

4 million women who were already active, but also 3.1 million who were inactive.

Source: Sport England’s Active People results for the 12 months to October 2013 (women aged 14-40)
We discovered a unifying barrier that was stopping women exercising: Fear of judgement.

### Judgement barriers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appearance</th>
<th>Ability</th>
<th>Priorities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Being sweaty</td>
<td>- Not being fit enough</td>
<td>- Spending time exercising when time with the family should be more important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Having a red face</td>
<td>- Not being good enough</td>
<td>- Spending time exercising when time with friends should be more important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Not looking like I usually do (made up)</td>
<td>- Not being competitive/serious enough</td>
<td>- Spending time exercising when time studying/working should be more important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Changing in front of others</td>
<td>- Not knowing the rules</td>
<td>- Spending time exercising when there are other things I should be doing that are more important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Wearing tight clothing</td>
<td>- Not knowing what equipment to bring</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Wearing sports clothing</td>
<td>- Bringing the wrong equipment</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Wearing the wrong clothing/kit</td>
<td>- Holding back the group</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Showing my body</td>
<td>- Being too good</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How my body looks during exercise (jiggling)</td>
<td>- Being seen as too competitive/serious</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Not appearing feminine</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Developing too many muscles</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
This Girl Can was designed to liberate women from the fear of judgement.

If at first you don’t succeed, freestyle.
Our manifesto

Women come in all shapes and sizes and all levels of ability. It doesn't matter if you're rubbish or an expert. The brilliant thing is you’re a woman and you’re doing something.
We stayed true to our insight about the fear of judgement and made sure the campaign was *relatable*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Looks like me</th>
<th>Acts like me</th>
<th>Sounds like me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Red faced</td>
<td>Isn’t an expert</td>
<td>That’s what I worry about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweating</td>
<td>Isn’t the fastest</td>
<td>Talks like one of the girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No air-brushing</td>
<td>Isn’t the strongest</td>
<td>Doesn’t patronise</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Diversity in:
- size
- ethnicity
- faith
- age
- disabilities

Diversity in:
- location/venue
- sport/activity
- alone/friend/group
I swim because I love my body.
Not because I hate it.
I’m slow but I’m lapping everyone on the couch.
The insight also told us to go where women are and not just advertise in the usual ‘sporty’ places.
What we have learnt and built on for Phase two
This Girl Can really resonated with women and girls. They described it as a ‘refreshing change’

Source: Future Thinking Cohort Study for TGC, 2016
And women engaged with the campaign in more than 110 countries!

The campaign has been talked about over a thousand times every day on social media since the campaign was launched on 12 January 2015.
2.8 million women have made the leap.

41% of women aged 14-40 who recognise the campaign say they have done some or more activity as a result - equivalent to 2.8m women across England.

Source: Sport England’s This Girl Can Survey (Kantar Public)
Creating a lifelong sporting habit

1.6 million women have put their trainers back on.

24% of women aged 14-40 who recognise the campaign say they have started or got back into being active.

Source: Sport England’s This Girl Can Survey (Kantar Public)
250,000 women have become regularly active since we launched This Girl Can
The gender gap, which once stood at over 2 million has closed to 1.55m.

Source: Sport England’s Active People results for the 12 months to the period shown on the chart
As a result of getting active the campaign has also had a **positive impact on women’s attitudes to activity**

Confidence and Belonging have increased by +30% and +17% respectively

**Confidence**
- % I don’t worry what others think of me when I’m exercising
- July 2015: 37%
- May 2016: 48%
- November 2014: 47%
- May 2016: 55%

**Belonging**
- % People like me are doing exercise

Source: Sport England’s This Girl Can Survey (Kantar Public), 2016
But barriers don’t just disappear. It’s about managing them and building the confidence to get active in spite of them.

Realising you are not alone & seeing other women exercising with confidence gives women their own confidence to overcome their fears...leading to action.

Action helps build resilience. But confidence is fragile. We need to remind women it is OK to have wobbles and it is OK to have a dip in confidence.

This is why it’s so important that phase two of This Girl Can focuses on building confidence and resilience.

Source: Future Thinking Cohort Study for TGC, 2016
We’re also featuring even more activities...

Showcasing a wider range of possibilities is intended to inspire women to think more broadly about activity and avoid some of the potentially negative connotations associated with a narrower view of ‘sport’ or ‘exercise’.

“Everyone suggests running, but I don't want to do it. This poster made me think about other activities. When my daughter was a bit younger, I used to play badminton with her. So, I thought maybe some games like that could work for me.”

“My field when I think of exercise is quite narrow. I had forgotten about netball, and things like that. I used to love netball. I would collapse if I tried it now, but I did love it. Yes, I felt like I wanted to find out more”.

“There are many ways to exercise – it doesn’t have to be the gym!”

Source: Future Thinking Study for TGC, 2016
And we created new mantras to talk to our new wider audience of women over 40.

The campaign in phase one already resonated with women aged 40-60

- Many of the judgment barriers are the same as those experienced by younger women.
- However activity barriers present in a slightly different way with this audience – those with a previous relationship with sport worry about ‘not being as good as I used to be’; those who are newer to activity worry about being too old to be a beginner.
- Additionally for some, health concerns start to add to the burden of ‘exercise guilt’.

Source: Future Thinking 40-60yrs Study for TGC, 2016
I am acting my age.

I don’t let bumps slow me down.

My alarm clock is set for 6 °C.

Cuter than a dumbbell, but just as heavy.
It’s important to get to grips with the core issues that lie at the heart of women’s decision making:

- Understand what motivates women
- Understand the barriers women face
- Think what this means for what you can do support women

For more insight and guidance on engaging women and girls in activity access our reports:

>> Go Where Women Are

>> Helping Women & Girls Get Active