‘WOMEN AND GIRLS IN SPORT IN IRELAND – LET’S LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD’

Printworks Conference Centre, Dublin Castle
Wednesday, 28th October 2015
09:30 a.m. to 16:00 p.m.

Jointly hosted by the
Department of Justice and Equality and the
Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport

#womeninsport    #genderbalance
THE CONFERENCE – SESSION BY SESSION

Our Conference Moderator is Joanne Cantwell, RTÉ

The Opening Address to the conference will be made by the Minister of State with responsibility for Sport at the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, Mr. Michael Ring, T.D.

Session One – ‘Leading Irish sport – decision-makers, administrators and volunteers’

Session One will highlight the opportunities for women and girls to contribute at the highest levels to the development of sport in Ireland.

We will hear from some of the women who are already leading change in sporting organisations in Ireland, with the Session featuring Sarah Keane, CEO of Swim Ireland and member of the Olympic Council of Ireland, Sinead Heraty, CEO of the Irish Ladies Golf Union and Dr Aoife Lane, founder of the Women’s Gaelic Players Association and a senior lecturer at Waterford IT in exercise and health studies.

Showcasing the influential role of volunteers, male and female in Irish sport we will hear from Kieron Stout, volunteer and Child Safeguarding Manager at Athletics Ireland.

An opportunity for Q&A with the speakers will be facilitated by the moderator at the end of this session.

Session Two – ‘Sport for All – building an inclusive culture around sports participation in Ireland’

Session Two will delve into ways that policy-makers and women’s organisations can play key roles in creating an enabling environment for sports which promotes self confidence and positive body image, particularly for teenage girls.

Dr Úna May of Sport Ireland and Maev Nic Lochlann of the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport will talk about the successful Women in Sport Initiative. Dr. Anne Looney will highlight developments in the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment with a focus on the importance of the school curriculum to engaging girls and young women in sport and physical activity in order to maintain a healthy lifestyle and to promote integration, team building and leadership skills. We will also hear from the Director of the National Women’s Council of Ireland, Orla O’Connor, about its programmes on promoting a positive body image for women and girls.

Featuring members of the Diverse City Girls Soccer Team established under the innovative Hijabs and Hat-tricks Programme, the Session will also explore how sport
can be accessible to women and girls in Ireland in all their diversity, rural and urban, and from different social and cultural backgrounds.

An opportunity for Q&A with the speakers will be facilitated by the moderator at the end of this session.

**Keynote Speaker**

One of the remarkable sportswomen who are inspiring the next generation of girls and young women in Ireland to participate in sport and to consider a career at its highest levels, Fiona Coghlan will reflect on a sporting career which to date has included captaincy of the Irish Women’s Rugby team which won the Grand Slam in 2013.

**Session Three – ‘Increasing the participation of women and girls in sport – the international experience’**

How can sports participation be successfully promoted in an inclusive way, to encourage women of all ages and abilities to take part in sport to improve fitness levels, to promote overall health and wellbeing and, most importantly, to interact and to have fun? This Session will look to the experience of other countries.

Tanya Joseph, Sport England and Vicki Holgate, FCB Inferno will share their knowledge and learning from the successful ‘This Girl Can’ campaign in the UK, which benefited from a very innovative advertising campaign.

From the Council of Europe Gender Equality Commission, we will hear from Isabel Romão about the important work that the Council has undertaken in recent years to promote greater participation of women and girls in sport across the region, and to highlight gender imbalance in senior decision-making roles in sporting organisations.

The session will include an opportunity for Q&A with the speakers, facilitated by the moderator.

**Session Four – ‘The importance of role models and increasing the visibility of women and girls in sport in Ireland’**

How do you balance participation in sport with the demands of studies, work and home life? Session Four will explore the relationship between sports participation and personal and career development. Sports participation fosters the development of key skills including communication, team building, commitment and leadership; all of which are central to career development and advancement and personal growth. Sport is also a key stress management tool and facilitates the development of personal networks.
In this Session, Dr. Rhona Mahony, Master of the National Maternity Hospital, and Niamh O’Donoghue, Secretary General at the Department of Social Protection and Chair of the Women’s Football Association of Ireland, will share their insights on how their lives have been enhanced and their careers have been positively influenced by their participation in sport and sporting organisations.

This Session will also hear from two of the women who are leading a change in the media coverage of sports in Ireland, Máire Treasa Ní Dhubhghaill, TG4 sports presenter and Sharon Hutchinson, founder of the website www.sportswomen.ie.

At the end of this session the moderator will facilitate a further opportunity for Q&A.

The conference **Closing Address** will be given by the Minister of State with responsibility for Equality at the Department of Justice and Equality, Mr. Aodhán Ó Riordáin, T.D.
WOMEN AND GIRLS IN SPORT IN IRELAND –  
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Wednesday, 28th October 2015  
The Printworks Conference Centre in Dublin Castle

PROGRAMME

MODERATOR:  Ms. Joanne Cantwell, RTE

09:30 – 10:00  Registration, tea/coffee upon arrival

10:00 – 10:15  Opening Address from Minister Ring

10:15 – 11:00  
Session 1: ‘Leading Irish sport – decision-makers, administrators and volunteers’

  o  Ms. Sarah Keane – CEO of Swim Ireland and member of the Olympic Council of Ireland
  o  Ms. Sinead Heraty – CEO of the Irish Ladies Golf Union
  o  Mr. Kieron Stout – volunteer and Child Safeguarding Manager at Athletics Ireland
  o  Dr. Aoife Lane – Founder of the Women’s Gaelic Players Association

Followed by Q&A

11:00 – 11.20  Coffee Break

11:20 – 12:30  
Session 2: ‘Sport for All – building an inclusive culture around sports participation in Ireland’

  o  Dr. Úna May – Sport Ireland and Ms. Maev Nic Lochlainn – Head of Sports Policy, Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport on the Women in Sport Initiative
  o  Dr. Anne Looney – CEO National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
  o  Ms. Orla O’Connor – National Women’s Council of Ireland
  o  Ms. Fadhila Hajji and Ms. Amina Mustafa – ‘Hijabs and Hat-trICKS’

Followed by Q&A
12:30 – 13:00  **Keynote Address** –

- Ms. Fiona Coghlan
  former captain, Irish Women’s Rugby team

13:00 – 14:00  **Lunch**

14:00 – 14:40  **Session 3: ‘Increasing the participation of women and girls in sport – the international experience’**

- Ms. Tanya Joseph – Sport England
- Ms. Vicki Holgate – FCB Inferno – ‘This Girl Can’ campaign
- Ms. Isabel Romão – Gender Equality Commission, Council of Europe
  Followed by Q&A

14:40 – 15:45  **Session 4: ‘The importance of role models and increasing the visibility of women and girls in sport in Ireland’**

- Dr. Rhona Mahony – Master, the National Maternity Hospital
- Ms. Máire Treasa Ní Dhubhghaill – TG4 sports presenter
- Ms. Sharon Hutchinson – Founder of [www.sportswomen.ie](http://www.sportswomen.ie)
- Ms. Niamh O’Donoghue – Secretary General at the Department of Social Protection and Chair of the Women’s Football Association of Ireland
  Followed by Q&A

15:45 – 16:00  **Closing Address by Minister Ó Ríordáin**
Michael Ring T.D.
Michael Ring TD is Minister of State at the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport with Special Responsibility for Tourism and Sport. He represents the Mayo constituency, where he was first elected to the Dáil in a bye-election in 1994. Michael has held a number of senior Front Bench positions within Fine Gael and has been acknowledged for his outstanding work as a backbencher and contributor to Dáil debates by a number of media outlets. A former member of Westport Urban District Council and Mayo County Council, he won an All-Ireland Vocational Schools’ football medal with Mayo in 1981.

Aodhán Ó Riordáin T.D.
Aodhán Ó Riordáin is a TD for Dublin Bay North and the Minister of State at the Departments of Justice & Equality and Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht with special responsibility for Equality, New Communities and Culture and Drugs Strategy. First elected to the Dáil in 2011 he previously served on Dublin City Council from 2004 – 2011 and was Deputy Lord Mayor in 2006. Prior to becoming a Minister of State he served as the Vice –Chair of the Education and Social Protection Committee. He is a graduate of University College Dublin (UCD) and the Marino Institute of Education. Before working full-time in politics, he worked as a teacher and Principal in St. Lawrence O’Toole’s Girls School in Sheriff Street in Dublin’s North Inner City.

Joanne Cantwell – RTE Sport
Working for the past sixteen years as a broadcast sports journalist, Joanne Cantwell has been with RTE Sport since 2007, having previously worked with TV3 and FM104. A former senior inter-county footballer with Dublin, Joanne is probably best known for her roles on RTE television’s Sunday Game, Against the Head and Champions League coverage, as well as for the weekly show Saturday Sport on RTE Radio One, which she presents with Des Cahill.

Sarah Keane – Swim Ireland
Sarah is the Chief Executive Officer of Swim Ireland and has held this position for over 10 years. Swim Ireland is the National Governing Body for Swimming, Water Polo, Diving and associated Aquatic Disciplines on the island of Ireland. Its remit ranges from the development of ‘Child Learn to Swim’ programmes right up to preparing elite swimmers to compete in the Olympic Games. Sarah is recognised as a leader in the field of Irish sporting organisations and a champion of best practice corporate governance. She is a widely respected advocate for women’s participation and leadership at the highest level in Irish sport. Earlier this year, she represented Ireland at the European Olympic Council’s ‘Women in Sport & Leadership Talent Event’ in Poland. She was appointed to the Board of the Olympic Council of Ireland in 2014. She also serves as a member of the Board of the Federation of Irish Sport and of Ireland Active.

Sinead Heraty - Irish Ladies Golf Union
ILGU Chief Executive Sinead Heraty joined the ILGU in June 2004. The Union had just completed the development phase of the Strategic Plan with initiatives ready for implementation. With her solid management training and having delivered several successful IT projects, she set about implementing significant change as a direct response to the evolving needs of the Union’s growing membership. She has successfully promoted women’s golf at all levels, increased media coverage and secured sponsorship for all of the Union’s major tournaments. High on the agenda is increasing the success at International level which is being tackled by the ever
improving High Performance Programme. Representing the ILGU, she worked closely with the GUI and PGA Ireland to establish the Confederation of Golf in Ireland in 2014, which responds directly to the current challenges and opportunities confronting golf clubs in Ireland.

**Kieron Stout – Athletics Ireland**

Kieron Stout is a volunteer coach and former chairperson of Celbridge AC. Kieron has been Child Safeguarding Manager with Athletics Ireland since 2013. He is responsible for child welfare and safeguarding in athletics. Kieron supports clubs and tutors sports leaders and young people about safeguarding and wellbeing. Recently Kieron has focused on helping clubs better understand social media and the benefits and risks associated and helping young people protect themselves from harm. He has great experience working with young people in sport. Kieron has been the National Coordinator for Decathlon and Heptathlon since 2011. Prior to joining Athletics Ireland he was an executive director within the market research industry in Ireland.

**Dr Aoife Lane - Women’s Gaelic Players Association**

Dr Aoife Lane, a native of Ballinderreen in Galway, is a member of the Department of Health, Sport and Exercise Science in Waterford Institute of Technology. Aoife lectures and undertakes research in the area of physical activity and wellbeing, with a particular interest in using sport as a setting for health promotion for players, clubs, and communities. Aoife is a member of the GAA National Health and Wellbeing Committee. Aoife completed her PhD on the Women’s Mini Marathon and currently is Chairperson of the Women’s Gaelic Players Association, which was launched in January 2015. The organization was set up to represent, and improve the experience of elite ladies footballers and camogie players.

**Dr. Úna May – Director of Participation and Ethics, Sport Ireland**

Una May commenced working with the Irish Sports Council in 1998. She was Director of Anti-Doping up until 2013 and is now Director of Participation and Ethics, with a responsibility for the development of Participation in Sport through the Local Sports Partnership Network and the National Trails Office. Her Ethics remit includes both Anti-Doping and General Ethics and Best Practice in Sport. She has a PhD in exercise physiology (1996) and a BSc (Hons) in sports science (1991) from John Moores University, Liverpool. She has represented Ireland in both orienteering and mountain running. Una has been an Independent Observer appointed by the World Anti-Doping Agency to monitor the anti-doping programmes at a number of World Championships and Olympic Games. She is a Lay Representative on the Board of the Faculty of Sports and Exercise Medicine in the Royal College of Surgeons.

**Maev Nic Lochlainn - Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport**

Maev is Head of Sports Policy and the National Sports Campus Division at the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport. As such she is one of the key decision makers in framing how the Government relates to sport and will do over the next decade. A former management consultant with PwC, she has held senior public service roles in Communications and Transport as well as with the Dublin Airport Authority.
Dr. Anne Looney - National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

Anne is from Dublin and has been the Chief Executive of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment in the Republic of Ireland since 2001. A former teacher, she completed her doctoral studies in education at the Institute of Education in London and has published on curriculum and assessment, school ethos, civic, moral and religious education and education policy. She has worked with the OECD and with the EU on projects relating to assessment, key competencies and new and emerging technologies. From September 2014-September 2015 she was professorial research fellow at the Learning Sciences Institute Australia at Australian Catholic University.

Orla O’Connor - National Women’s Council of Ireland

Orla O’Connor is Director of the National Women’s Council of Ireland (NWCI), the leading national women’s membership organisation seeking equality between women and men in Ireland. She holds a Masters degree in European Social Policy from NUIM and a degree in Social Science from UCD. Orla has worked in senior management in non-governmental organisations in Ireland for over 15 years. She was previously the Head of Policy of NWCI, and has led campaigns on a wide range of issues on women’s rights, including social welfare reform, pension reform and for the introduction of quality and affordable childcare. Orla has worked in local community based projects developing services for the unemployed, lone parents and young people.

Diverse City Girls Soccer Team

Hijabs & Hat-tricks – SARI (Sport Against Racism Ireland)

Two SARI youth leaders, Abdul-Rahman Hajji and Abdulkadir Abdallah, started a football programme for girls after FIFA lifted the ban on head covering in 2014. The programme is supported by streetfootballworld and Sony Mobile, who have donated €5K towards football equipment and a stipend. Approximately 40 girls are participating and have formed a team Diverse City FC which is open to Muslim and non-Muslim girls. In June of this year, H&H members were invited by the Institute for Strategic Dialogue and the Norwegian Government to present their programme at the ‘Countering Violent Extremism’ conference in Oslo. SARI announced on 7 August 2015 that this project (Hijabs and Hat-tricks) was one of 3 projects worldwide shortlisted in the Best New Project category for the UK Beyond Sport Awards 2015 (www.beyondsport.org), supported by Comic Relief. The initiative was invited to the Beyond Sport Summit and awards ceremony 2015, held in London earlier this month.

Fiona Coghlan - former captain, Irish Women’s Rugby team

Born and raised in Clontarf, Dublin, Fiona Coghlan played numerous sports at underage and schools level. She graduated from University of Limerick in 2005 with a Bachelor of Science in Physical Education and Mathematics. It was during her time in Limerick that she took up rugby. Winning her first cap in 2003 and playing 85 times for Ireland, Fiona captained the Irish women’s rugby team to its first Six Nations Grand Slam in 2013. In 2014 Ireland reached the semi-final of the World Cup, beating world champions New Zealand along the way. As well as winning two interprovincial titles (Leinster), 11 All-Ireland titles (UL Bohemians) and four intervarsity titles (UL), Fiona has received numerous awards, including The Irish Times/Irish Sports Council Sportswoman of the Year Award 2013, University of Limerick Sports Hall of Fame 2015 and the Life Style Sports Special Merit Award 2015. During this time she continued teaching in Lucan Community College. She is now a keen advocate and promoter of participation in Physical Activity and Sport.
Tanya Joseph - Executive Director Business Partnerships, Sport England

Tanya Joseph joined Sport England in January 2012 as director of business partnerships, responsible for corporate affairs and commercial relationships and is responsible for the This Girl Can campaign to get women active. Starting her career as a journalist, she has never lost the potential to spot a good story, working for the government as a press secretary to the Lord Chancellor and Prime Minister. She has also provided consulting for brands including Tesco, Mars and Heinz. Tanya is a Fellow of the RSA, vice-chair of the Fawcett Society (the UK's leading charity promoting gender equality and women's rights) and a Trustee of the Thomson Foundation which works to promote journalistic excellence across the world.

Vicki Holgate - FCB Inferno Head of Planning

Vicki Holgate is Head of Strategy at FCB Inferno. She has worked in advertising for 24 years. During her career she has helped grow brands as diverse as Hovis, Lurpak, Wall’s ice-cream, Nivea, Castrol & Lloyds Pharmacy. More recently she has worked on a number of Government initiatives such as growing the numbers of young people applying for Apprenticeships as well as launching This Girl Can for Sport England. Vicki studied Social & Political Sciences at Cambridge and has a keen interest in behaviour change theory, recently completing a foundation course in Behavioural Economics through Duke University. She has played hockey for her country in the Over 40s age group – standing by their motto that “Age is no barrier”!

Isabel Romão - Gender Equality Commission, Council of Europe

Isabel Romão holds a Master of Arts in Sociology from the University of Montreal, Canada. In the course of her distinguished career at the Portuguese national mechanism for gender equality (1975-2011), her responsibilities have included Head of the Division of Research and Training and Coordinator of the Unit for International Affairs, representing Portugal in many international fora including the UN, Council of Europe, and EU. Author of several publications and articles in this field, she has coordinated and implemented training addressed to civil servants in charge of gender equality and gender mainstreaming. As an independent expert, she has contributed to the work of the European Institute for Gender Equality on gender mainstreaming and on the development of its Gender Equality Index. Since 2012, Ms Romão has also represented Portugal on the Council of Europe Gender Equality Commission (GEC), where she participated on the Council of Europe Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS) working group to draft a Recommendation on gender mainstreaming in sport. Ms Romão elaborated the first draft of this recommendation, which was adopted in January 2015. She is a member of the Portuguese Platform of Women’s NGOs.

Dr Rhona Mahony - Master of National Maternity Hospital Holles St

Dr. Mahony is currently Master of the National Maternity Hospital, Dublin, where she oversees over 9,000 deliveries a year, a busy gynaecological unit and approximately 800 staff. Dr. Mahony is a Consultant Obstetrician/Gynaecologist and Specialist in Foetal and Maternal Medicine. She has a doctorate in anal sphincter injury following childbirth and has researched in such topics as pelvic floor injury, maternal weight gain, foetal macrosomia and has been published in international academic journals. She was awarded an Eisenhower Fellowship in 2014. In terms of switching off and leaving the day-job behind Rhona goes running and believes exercise to be a really important way of ‘leaving the hospital’, getting out of the work environment, and taking control of life and actually organising to do things.
Máire Treasa Ní Dhubhghaill – TG4
Máire-Treasa is the well-known face of “RUGBAÍ BEO” on TG4. As an experienced television presenter, she has been involved in media for the past seven years and loves the variety her job brings. Having previously presented a number of studio-based TV shows, she embarked on a roadtrip this summer along the Wild Atlantic Way for the current series of “FÉILTE: SLÍ ÁN ATLANGTAIGH”. She then immersed herself in Irish Traditional music, taking centre stage at this year’s Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann in Sligo for IFTA nominated “FLEADH TV”. Now as the rugby season is well under-way, she loves nothing more than wrapping up on the sidelines for some thrilling rugby encounters.

Sharon Hutchinson - www.sportswomen.ie
Sharon Hutchinson is creator of sportswomen.ie a website supporting, promoting and reporting women’s sport in Ireland. Based in Kinsale, Sharon was a hockey international goalkeeper in the 90s. Sharon believes that increased coverage of women’s sport in the national media is key to increasing the public's awareness of the importance of sport and exercise for women and girls. She is a graduate of UCC with a Ph.D in Chemistry. Mother of 5, Sharon also teaches piano and enjoys doing the odd triathlon, open-water swimming and cycling.

Niamh O'Donoghue - Secretary General at the Department of Social Protection and Chair of the Women’s Football Association of Ireland
Niamh O'Donoghue was appointed Secretary General of the Department of Social Protection, the largest Government Department in the Civil Service, in July 2010. She is a career civil servant who has served in a number of different civil service Departments and offices over the course of her career. She has a primary degree in Public Administration from the IPA, and also holds an MA (Industrial Relations) (University of Keele) and an MSc (Mgmt) from TCD. In addition, Niamh is currently Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Institute of Public Administration (IPA). Niamh has been involved in football administration since the early 1980’s. She became the chair of the Ladies Football Association of Ireland (now WFAI) in the late 1980’s and became a member of the FAI National Council in 1991 when the LFAI achieved formal recognition. She has served in both capacities since then in addition to serving on various committees, appeal boards and working groups under the aegis of the FAI.