

## **London Sport to support community efforts to increase women's and girls' physical activity levels in Croydon**

London Sport, Croydon Voluntary Action (CVA) and Croydon Council have today announced plans to support women and girls across the borough to increase their levels of participation in physical activity. The announcement, which comes ahead of a global celebration of female parkrun participation on Saturday 7 March, marks the beginning of a wider effort between the three parties to combat lower levels of female activity in Croydon.

The project, which will include a range of interventions targeted at different local areas within the borough, will focus on identifying new ways to integrate physical activity into every stage of women and girls' lives by bringing together London Sport's expertise in physical activity, CVA's deep understanding of Croydon's communities and its social assets, and Croydon Council's ambitious aims for residents.

Backed by Sport England funding connected to the ground-breaking *This Girl Can* campaign, the collaboration between London Sport, CVA and Croydon Council will see the three parties work in close partnership with a range of community stakeholders to identify and test new ways to incorporate physical activity and sport into women's lives.

The project will begin with a dedicated International Women's Day parkrun at Lloyd parkrun in Croydon where dozens of local women will join others around the globe to celebrate female participation in sport.

### **Discussing the project, London Sport project lead David Gentles, said:**

*"Everyone at London Sport is hugely excited at the opportunity to work closely with partners across Croydon as we look to make a real difference to women's and girls' lives in the coming years. When it launched in 2015, This Girl Can sparked a revolution in female participation; we're excited at the opportunity to use the power of This Girl Can to get more women across Croydon moving and to show how innovative local partnerships can achieve real, positive outcomes in people's lives."*

### **Christine Double, Croydon Voluntary Action, added:**

*"CVA is delighted to be part of the This Girl Can programme in Croydon. We know that being physically active has a positive impact on physical and mental well being, can reduce social isolation and aid personal development. As well as working with community organisations to increase opportunities for women, we will be collecting stories of women who have supported other women to engage in exercise and develop a cohort of This Girl Can Champions who will make being physically active the norm and provide all women with role models who are like them, juggling all of the balls that they have to deal with on a daily basis but still build activity into their daily lives."*

### **Debra Bourne, Lloyd parkrun Event Director, said:**

*"parkrun changes lives. I've watched many women progressing from walking to running at parkrun, enjoying their running, gaining in confidence, reaching their goals and setting new ones, encouraging each other and having a great time parkrunning with their friends."*

For more information and to sign up for event, go to <https://www.parkrun.org.uk/lloyd/> and register. This Girl Can branded, limited edition t-shirts will be given to the first 40 new girls and women who sign up.

Any groups or individuals interested in opportunities to get involved in the wider women and girls project in Croydon should contact David Gentles on [david.gentles@londonsport.org](mailto:david.gentles@londonsport.org) in the first instance.

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