



## Let's #BeActive project

Report on the challenges in the UK during the implementation  
of the project

## **Challenges in the UK**

ukactive took the responsibility to engage the fitness and leisure sector in the UK to activate the Let's #BeActive project. It became apparent very early into discussions that there were going to be some major challenges with selling the concept into the UK market.

The fitness and leisure sector in the UK is relatively mature in comparison to other nations across Europe. Pre-Covid-19 there were more than 7,000 sites across the UK with more than 15% of the nation a member of a gym or leisure facility. Prior to the impacts of the global pandemic, the market was growing with a 3% increase in the number of facilities, 5% increase in the number of members and more than 4% in market value of the sector in the year to the end of March 2019.

Whilst the principles of the Let's #BeActive project were well defined and very clear as to the benefits to society, they were for the most part already in practice through pre-existing programmes in the UK.

The UK has a mature exercise on referral landscape. This is where exercise is referred as part of the treatment to someone with a long-term health condition by their primary care practitioner (e.g. General Practitioner). The provider works with the local public health service offering the exercise on referral programme, in this case a gym or leisure operator, will receive a fee to cover the costs of operating the programme, including any specialist care that needs to be provided by exercise professionals.

There are thousands of these schemes operating across the UK and it provides the gym or leisure operator an opportunity to connect into a vital local public service, support those most vulnerable within their community and receive payment for their work.

The involvement within local exercise on referral programmes was the main barrier behind any UK operator wanting to get involved with the Let's #BeActive project. There was too much overlap with the principles and design of the programme, which was not uniquely tailored to each operator. The Let's #BeActive project also did not enable the operator from being able to develop its own identity and look and feel for its campaign, which again is a major barrier if it does not come with a huge amount of central investment (see This Girl Can example later).

Some examples of exercise referral programmes in the UK can be seen below:

<https://www.placesleisure.org/centres/the-triangle/centre-activities/gym/health-and-wellbeing/>

<https://activenation.org.uk/active-communities/southampton/health-and-wellbeing/exercise-on-referral/>

<https://www.better.org.uk/what-we-offer/activities/healthwise>

<https://www.everyoneactive.com/content-hub/home-workouts/gp-exercise-referral/>

## #BeActive Hour

In order to continue to deliver some of the key aspects of the Let's #BeActive project within the UK, we wanted to offer opportunities for people to be able to get active at no cost. The implications of Covid-19 brought an opportunity to try and connect with audiences virtually and EuropeActive and ukactive worked together to design and deliver the #BeActive Hour, an hour of free online workouts which are delivered by skilled and accredited activity professionals, but offer an inclusive opportunity for anyone to get involved, regardless of physical ability or fitness levels.

On Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> May 2020 at 4pm BST / 5pm CET, the inaugural #BeActive Hour took place. Simultaneous workouts were delivered by a number of partners. In the UK, this was led by leading survivalist and media personality, Bear Grylls and Be Military Fit. However, it also brought together a number of instructors from across Europe to lead parts of the workout, using their own unique style and personality. The following instructors delivered the #BeActive Hour in the UK.

Name	Country
Anna Bogdanova	Denmark
George Xiros	Greece
Rob Francis	UK
Tommy Matthews	UK
Bear Grylls	UK
Petra Weigeltova	Czech Republic
Marko Gersak	Slovenia
Mia Bjorkroos	Sweden



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The workout has received more than 1.6k views on YouTube.

The social reach of this one workout was greater than 100k, with more than 90k generated through a pre-workout video by Bear Grylls shared on his Instagram platform.



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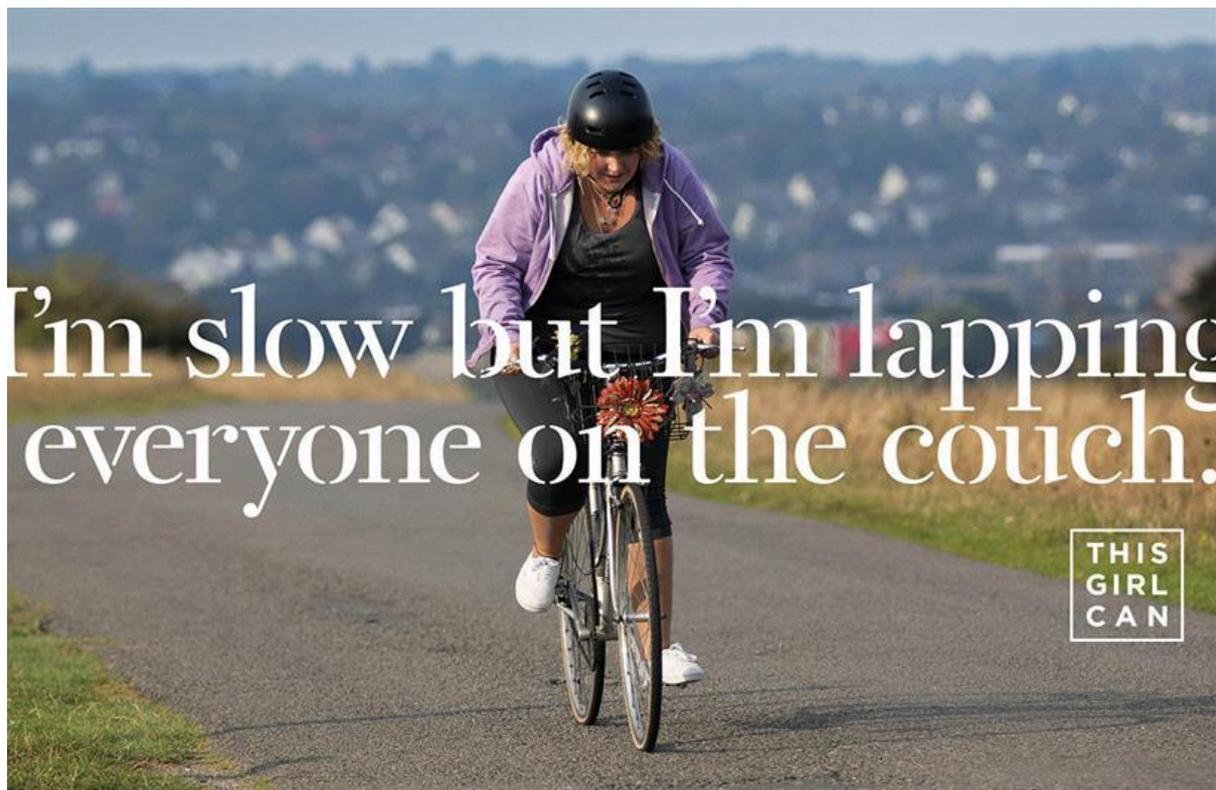
## This Girl Can

This Girl Can is an initiative delivered by Sport England. This Girl Can celebrates active women who are doing their thing no matter how they do it, how they look or even how sweaty they get.

Launched in 2015, it has successfully persuaded nearly three million women to get more active.

Sport England research shows that many women are put off taking part in physical activity due to a fear of judgement – this might be about the way they look when they exercise, that they're not good enough to join in or they should be spending more time on their families, studies or other priorities.

This Girl Can seeks to tell the real stories of women who get active or play sport in the way that's right for them using images that show what activity really looks like in all its sweaty, red-faced, jiggly glory.



ukactive has a strategic partnership with Sport England to get the fitness and leisure sector in England to support the campaign and find ways to activate across their sites. ukactive felt like this could be the perfect strategic lens in which to deliver the Let's #BeActive project. All the challenges that faced the Let's #BeActive project, in terms of it not having a recognisable brand, not providing any benefits over existing exercise on referral programmes, would be able to mitigated through activation of This Girl Can in gyms and leisure centres. This campaign has a very recognisable and identifiable brand, a huge amount has been invested to

date to drive awareness and action to This Girl Can and there is a lot of demand from operators in getting involved.

The plan was for ukactive to be getting gyms and leisure centres to provide free This Girl Can sessions to non-members who are currently not using facilities and not meeting the Chief Medical Officer and WHO's guidelines for physical activity levels. We would then be able to reach a critical mass and deliver the evaluation and reporting to satisfy the requirements of the Let's #BeActive project. This is something which had been discussed with EuropeActive and Let's #BeActive project partners and was agreed would be an effective path forward in the UK. The programme was due to operate from September 2020 and wrap up in December 2020. However, the impacts of Covid-19 and restrictions in terms of movements of individuals (especially non-members) within fitness facilities has meant that this programme has had to be delayed. The provisional delivery date, should restrictions have been further eased, will be early 2021, with the ability to activate across International Women's Day 2021 (8<sup>th</sup> March) and Mother's Day in the UK (14<sup>th</sup> March). Should restrictions not have been further eased by this point then these dates or the mechanics of activation will have to be further reviewed.

This brings the delivery outside of the operational timeframe for the Let's #BeActive project. This Girl Can and ukactive did partner on the #BeActive Night as part of the European Week of Sport on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2020, working with a series of fitness influencers to deliver virtual workouts aimed towards women and girls. Within 48 hours these had been viewed almost 20k times. ukactive will still be keen to report on the outcomes of our partnership with This Girl Can and how we can support less active women and girls deliver positive change to their health and wellbeing through increasing their activity levels.