

KYNISKA ADVOCACY LTD.

ANNUAL REPORT

2022-2023



**YEAR 2 OF
KYNISKA ADVOCACY**

kyniskaadvocacy.com



FOREWARD

A message from our Founders

Year 2 was about prioritising. Adapting. Evolving. It was about failing, hearing hard 'no's, but also about realising that we are capable of doing this.

We are not imposters anymore. We are leaders of an organisation forging, and sometimes forcing, the way for safer sport in the UK.

As the weeks and months went by, we conducted research and launched reports, we led campaigns, we spoke in Parliament, and we met with incredible changemakers who have inspired us to champion on.

Already, the sporting world is a very different place from when we began this journey in 2021. Every week, there is another sport announcing a new policy that will make the lives of female athletes that little easier. There are now very few sports where you will see athletes wearing white kit, for instance.

And even in the world of safeguarding and welfare, we have seen a positive shift in the time and money put towards safe sport. A welfare training course is often no longer viewed as a 'tick-box' anymore, but a crucial part of a coach's education. We were pleased to be asked to consult on World Athletics' new online safeguarding training programme, a big sign that the sport is taking their problem of abuse seriously.

We are spurred on by the prospect of the tide changing on what has been a toxic culture across sport.



We still have a lot of work to do, and no, we do not have all the answers.

But, we know that this is not just a UK problem, not just a US problem. Abuse in sport is a global issue that requires global, collaborative, preventative solutions. We are excited for the global connections and friends we have made this year, with some big things to come in the future.

We are incredibly proud of our survivor support programme which was launched this year. We promise this service will be free of charge to athletes and sportspeople, always. Over the past year, we have supported over 20 athletes from 7 different sports, from assisting in the reporting process, to advocating for athletes within national governing bodies and the press.

As we, again, look to the future of women's sport, we have to decide what we want women's sport to look like for our future generations. We will continue to involve athletes from all levels in our decision making, and endeavour to find new ways to integrate the athlete voice into everything we do.

We owe many thanks to Kyniska's supporters, volunteers, policy makers and leaders who have joined arms with us in our journey.

Yours in Sport

Kate & Mhairi

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WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

**NATIONAL
COACHING
LICENSE
SCHEME
PILOT**

**KYNISKA
TRIP TO
WEST-
MINSTER**

**COUNCIL
OF EUROPE
IWD
ROUND-
TABLE**

**FEMALE
ATHLETE
HEALTH
SURVEY**

**FEMALE
ATHLETE
HEALTH
REPORT**

**SCOTTISH
PARLIAMENT
ROUNDTABLE**

**KYNISKA
SUPPORT
SERVICE
LAUNCH**



PROJECTS

We have three key pillars: Advocate, Educate & Support.

Within these pillars, we have key projects. In year 2, we decided to utilise momentum and continue with our broad themes from year 1 - Stamping Out Sexual Violence in Sport and Female Athlete Health.

FEMALE ATHLETE HEALTH

We still don't know enough about female athlete health. We have been on a mission to change that. Each year, there are more discussions about female athlete health and how we can bridge the knowledge and research gap to ensure our female athletes thrive.

However, there was one voice missing from this plethora of discussions on female athlete health: the athletes themselves.

We decided to do something about it, and launched the Athlete Health Survey to put the athlete voice at the centre of discussions. We teamed up with [Project Red-S](#) to understand what athletes already know about their health, about RED-S, and to uncover gaps in terms of knowledge or support.

The survey received over 1000 responses from sports people of all genders, sports, and abilities.

From this research, we published the [Female Athlete Health Report](#) using the data of 769 British female athletes representing a wide range of abilities and activities.

The shocking results from this report on female athlete health are the symptoms of the historical lack of resources, funding, and scientific study made available to women's sport.

Across the board, athletes and coaches are misinformed on the basics of female athlete health, in turn limiting the performance potential, and most importantly, the health, of female athletes across the UK.

We made 4 recommendations based on the results of our survey:

RECOMMENDATIONS

THE FEMALE ATHLETE HEALTH REPORT



- ✓ **Mandatory, centralised & comprehensive female athlete health education to be embedded within coaching qualifications at all levels**
- ✓ **Creation of an athlete-led female health, body image, eating disorder and RED-S support network**
- ✓ **Widespread distribution of an online female athlete health toolkit for athletes and parents to be used from an athlete's entry into sport**
- ✓ **Creation of a resource for GPs to better understand specific female athlete health concerns, including RED-S**



PROJECTS

FEMALE ATHLETE HEALTH CONT...

Our report was received positively by the sporting world. We gained coverage of the report results in leading news outlets including Marie Claire, the Guardian, and the Independent.

- **Received 300% increase in traffic to our website, with 1659 visits in May to our report.**
- **13,748 accounts reached in our report launch**
- **All of the four Sports Councils shared our report across social media.**
- **We were really pleased to see so many male coaches sharing our report.**

So far, we have had follow up meetings with Sport Scotland, the Scottish Institute of Sport and Sport Wales on actions following our recommendations. We are delighted to report that Sport Wales have developed new free e-modules for athletes, coaches and parents on the menstrual cycle and performance sport.

Due to our social media success, we were approached by Steph Gaudreau and appeared on her 'Fuel Your Strength' podcast which boasts 4 million + views.

In This Episode with Kyniska Advocacy: 2/3



- 1 Kyniska Advocacy's mission to support women athletes in sport.
- 2 Results from the 2023 Female Athlete Health Report
- 3 How to support women athletes around issues like LEA & body image.

@steph_gaudreau

We also delivered a session on female athlete health and welfare to the Sport Wales Coaching Network, reaching the lead coaches in many different sports including rugby, swimming, and hockey.



Finally, we gave evidence to the Women and Equalities Committee Evidence Session at the Palace of Westminster, where we shared insights from the Female Athlete Health Report.



PROJECTS

STAMPING OUT SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN SPORT

A year on from publishing the recommendations in our 'Stamping Out Sexual Violence in Sport' Report, we have continued our work to implement the changes we need to see for a safe sport for all.

STAMPING OUT SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN SPORT



- An independent body for duty of care and safeguarding in sport.
- Mandatory reporting of sexual abuse and misconduct.
- Ringfenced Sports Council funding for safeguarding and athlete welfare.
- A national coaches licensing scheme and register
- Lifetime bans for coaches found guilty of physical, sexual and emotional/psychological abuse.

2022 RECOMMENDATIONS
REPORT

Impact following our report:

UK Athletics upheld their life-time bans for coaches found guilty of abuse this year with the ban applied to Toni Minichiello. Every time this happens, especially in high profile cases, it sets a stronger precedence for future rulings, and goes some way to send the message that abuse will not be tolerated in sport.

British Gymnastics have also announced new provisions for their 'zero tolerance of abuse' plan, including a pledge to be more transparent by publishing coaches found guilty of abuse, and hiring an independent expert to monitor reforms.

In our report, we called for a national coaches licensing scheme and register. In January of this year, UK Sport and Sport England committed to developing a national registration scheme for sports coaches which will detail their coaching qualifications and suitability for sporting roles.

Engagement

Kyniska had a day in Westminster to discuss our campaigns to end sexual violence in sport. We met with Gavin Newlands MP, Hannah Bardell MP, Tracey Crouch MP and Stephen Hammond MP to further plans to implement our report recommendations.



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PROJECTS

STAMPING OUT SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN SPORT CONT.

We consulted on World Athletics' Essential Safeguarding Course, which will be hosted on the World Athletics E-Learning platform.

We spoke at the Council of Europe on two occasions, firstly on 'Athlete's Freedom of Expression and The Commoditisation of Athletes' and again on International Women's Day to explore 'Gender-based Violence in Sport'.



We were also invited to attend UK Sport & IWG's Research Launch on the barriers women face in networking in sports governance.



Supporting Grassroots Campaigns

Over the past year, we've supported 'Miss J', a fellow survivor and campaigner who launched the 'End Sexual Misconduct Campaign' earlier in 2023.



We spoke at the End Sexual Misconduct in Sport roundtable at the Scottish Parliament and we took part in STV's Scotland Tonight special on Ending Sexual Misconduct in Sport which was a live, roundtable discussion with fellow experts, on national television, discussing what immediate action needs to be taken to stamp out sexual violence in sport.



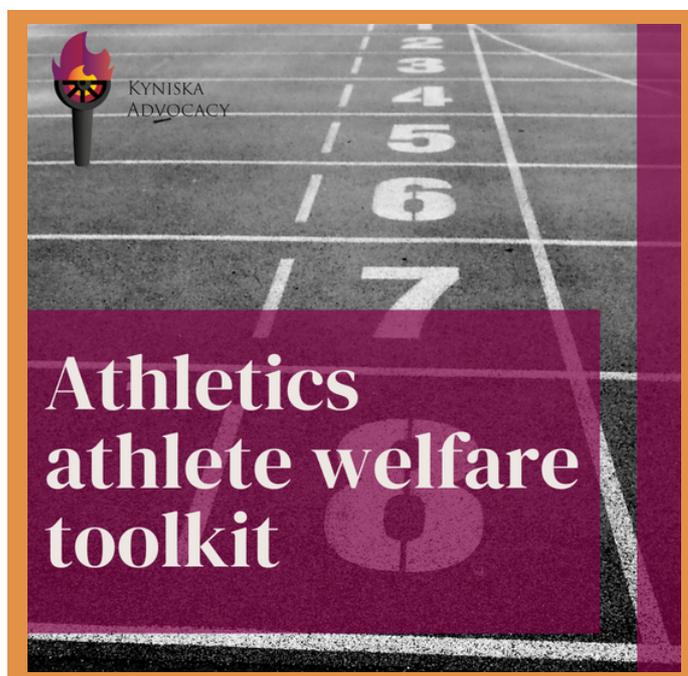
PROJECTS

STAMPING OUT SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN SPORT CONT.

Tools and Education

A huge part in preventing abuse, and stopping it in its tracks, is educating everyone about safeguarding and welfare - from the signs of abuse, to creating safe, trauma informed, spaces. We have dedicated much of our time to education work this year.

We took the opportunity to update our athlete [welfare toolkit](#) - a guide for athletes, parents, coaches, and sporting leaders to understand and spot the signs of abuse.



We conducted our first webinar with the British Milers Club on 'Safeguarding Essentials'. Rich conversations with coaches - a key audience for us in tackling and preventing sexual violence

We presented at the Scottish Student Sport (SSS) Conference about the role University sport can play a leading role in ensuring safe, healthy sporting environments.

As an extension of the work we presented at the SSS conference, we will be presenting at the Edinburgh University Sports Clubs conference in September, showcasing some of the work we've done with the university over the past year to help shape a healthier sporting culture following a LimeCulture review they commissioned.

We've taken our work to the legal experts over the past year, with talks at Leigh Day Solicitors and Littleton Chambers. These were roundtable discussions looking at the role and purpose of independent investigations and assessing the need for a national, independent sports regulator in the UK.

We also spoke at the Scottish Women's Convention panel event on the Scottish Parliament bill on criminalising misogyny. We spoke about needing a holistic approach to tackle the issue and emphasised the need for education first and foremost.

We delivered a webinar for InSport Education on safeguarding as integral to the sustainability of the sports sector, alongside leading experts in the field.

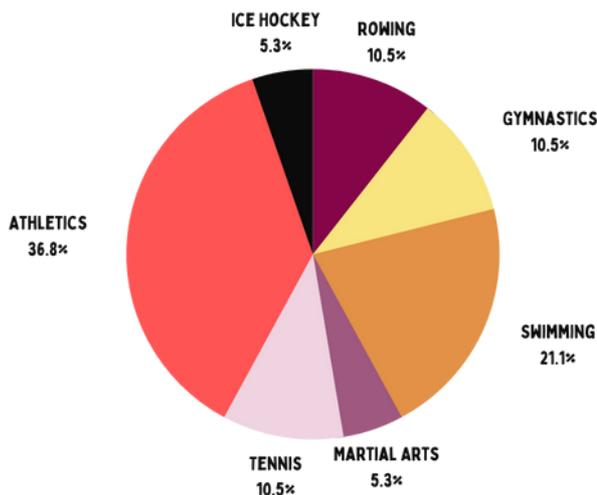


PROJECTS

SURVIVOR SUPPORT PROGRAMME

From the very beginning of our journey, we have received messages from athlete survivors of abuse from across the country and across different sports, seeking advice and support. By being open about our own stories, Kyniska has become a safe space for athletes to talk about their stories, too.

Over the past two years, we have supported 20 athletes from 7 different sports.



If we are honest, when we set up Kyniska, a support programme for survivors was not in our plans. But it has been built out of necessity - there is just nowhere else for athletes to turn, especially with the lack of trust athletes have in national governing body reporting processes.

We are really proud to have launched our official [survivor support programme](#) this year. We provide athlete-led, confidential emotional support for anyone experiencing abuse in sport. We also provide guidance to athletes through the reporting process, and support athletes in their communication with national governing bodies.

And the rest...

We can't help but use our voice and our platform to create change. Outside of our structured projects, we also promise to stand up for what's right, use our skills, expertise & critical thinking in other areas of sport, and always give athletes a space to have their say.

In June 2022, the lives of women were rocked as Roe v Wade was overturned, and conversations about restricting reproductive rights in the UK resurfaced. We couldn't keep quiet on the issue, as so many athlete's lives would be affected by any restrictions to reproductive healthcare. We spoke out in an article with Athletics Weekly.

We were invited to take part in England Cricket's consultation on Transgender Inclusion as a voice for athletes.

We have continued to give athletes a platform to speak unapologetically about the things that inspire, frustrate, or worry them about women's sport on our 'Female Gaze' blog. In the past year, athletes have talked about topics such as mental health, eating disorders, and the experience of being a non-binary person in sport, amongst many more.



PROJECTS

SURVIVOR SUPPORT PROGRAMME FEEDBACK

Comments from some of the people who have used our support service.

“ Kyniska made me feel supported and more confident in my decision to report. ”

“ Made me feel valued, that what I had to say was worthwhile. Without the support I would have felt very intimidated in my situation ”

“ Kyniska made me feel heard and supported. ”

“ Fantastic helping support me to speak to my NGB. When advocating me in a meeting, she was measured and factual with her input. ”

“ Simple kindness and honesty. I am highly impressed and secure in the knowledge that this company has integrity at its core ”

“ It was good to easily be able to speak with more educated individuals on the topic to speak through the decision ”

If you or someone you know needs support, you can get in touch by emailing support@kyniskaadvocacy.com



FORWARD LOOK

TOWARDS YEAR 3

We have spent more time than ever putting together our long-term strategy for Kyniska Advocacy. From just two co-founders, we have grown to become a team, and a community of athletes, parents, and coaches have joined us for the journey to a safer sport.

We still have a dream to be the leading organisation for women athlete voice in the UK, and now we are taking the steps to get there!

To round off this year, we held a strategy day in Edinburgh with Mhairi and Kate, our Chair, Chris, and three experts in the field. We were able to reflect on everything we have done in the past two years, and plan how we can best have impact, whilst being a growing, sustainable organisation with athlete voice at its heart.



We have come away from our strategy day more excited, driven, and inspired than ever before for what comes next. Stay tuned!

A BIG thank you...

We couldn't do all we do without the many inspiring people around us. We are often blown away by people's generosity and willingness to help us on this journey.

so, a big thank you to:

- **Dino Nocivelli and the team at Leigh Day**
- **Janice Gammell, Jonny Gray & Morag Arnot**
- **Ross Cairns & the Inverness Road 5k participants**
- **Henry Goldschmidt & the team at Squire Patton Boggs**
- **our brilliant volunteers, especially Jessica Robson, Heather Scott, Hannah Anderson & Chris McAlister**
- **Gavin Newlands MP, Hannah Bardell MP & Tracey Crouch MP.**

...and to every person who has liked and shared our work, donated, recommended, and introduced us to many brilliant people!



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LIKE WHAT WE'RE
DOING?

HELP US TO DO MORE!

DONATE

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