



STRATEGY 2024-2025



KYNISKA
ADVOCACY

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FOREWORD

We are a survivor-led and athlete-run organisation, comprising policy specialists and activists working with UK sporting communities to influence welfare and well-being policy change for women athletes. Our team understands sport today because we are sport today. We are founded by two women athletes, Kate Seary and Mhairi Maclennan, who, following their own experiences of the way women are treated in sport, decided to do something about it.

We believe that all athletes should be able to safely practise sports and athlete well-being should be a key measure of success. Currently, the culture and structures within sport do not allow for this. Policy in sport is outdated, out of touch, and fails to serve the athletes it's there to protect. This is why we advocate for progressive policies in women's sport, enacting change one campaign at a time, to instil an equitable sporting culture from grassroots clubs to the Olympic Games.

Change must come about through meaningful engagement with athletes to ensure we meet the needs of current and future athletes. We have committed to being athlete-led to steer our advocacy work so that we know we are getting it right. Building and maintaining Kyniska Advocacy's work is a long-term commitment that happens in several steps. To that end, we also work with policy makers, governing bodies, and public and private sports.



Kate & Mhairi

2024-2025

Our Vision

A sporting community which fosters a safe environment for all athletes and has the protection and welfare of women at its heart.

Our Missions

Advocate: Ensure that sports communities foster a safe environment and their structures serve to protect athletes from harm and prevent abuse.

Support: Fill the current gap in the support system for survivors of abuse in sport

Educate: Ensure every athlete, coach, and parent understands the importance of athlete wellbeing and can spot the signs of abuse.

Our Priorities

In setting our missions, we will be working towards our overarching vision: A sporting community which fosters a safe environment for all athletes and has the protection and welfare of women at its heart.

Our priorities as an organisation are rooted to our three missions: Educate; Advocate; Support. From our experience these are the focused ways in which Kyniska can make the biggest steps to achieving our vision.

We are explicit about our actions and impact while remaining ambitious in our mission statement and targets to bring our vision closer to reality.

We have learned during our first few years that our scope has to stay focused to deliver quality and impactful work while remaining agile and responsive, with our relatively limited resources.

MISSION 1: ADVOCATE

Ensure that sports communities foster a safe environment and their structures serve to protect athletes from harm and prevent abuse.

Kyniska was initially founded solely to **advocate** and lobby for policy change. This remains at the heart of the organisation's strategy. Advocacy, by its nature, is slow-moving and the workload is not always easy to predict. Our long-term ambition is to see policy change around ring fenced funding and independent safe sport regulation. Our strategy in the advocacy space is to cement and grow our position as a respected, leading safe sport organisation with original research and thought-provoking campaigns.

Our direct lobbying work remains important to us, highlighting key issues with those in power. However, our advocacy work has taken on a number of other forms, not least in research reports and public campaigns. We had originally hoped to have an APPG for Safe Sport set up in 2023 following a number of positive conversations about finding a chair and members to join. Unfortunately, our momentum stalled due to other competing priorities for members, including an impending general election. In 2024, we're continuing to push for this APPG as a valuable tool to lead the debate in this space and communicate our work. We will recommence this work after the UK General Election in 2024, when we will attempt to identify and set up meetings with interested Members and create a strong, long-term APPG.

Following the success of the [Female Athlete Health Report](#), including a strong promotional campaign, one of our key priorities in advocacy is to produce an original piece of trauma-informed research into the long-term impact of abuse in sport. There is a paucity of research into the long-term effect abuse has on the lives of survivors, and the loss attributed to abuse in its numerous forms. We believe this will strengthen our position as an organisation by helping us to better understand those we are looking to support. This research will also contribute to strengthening our support and education services, as well as developing our reputation further. To produce the strongest research possible, our number one priority will be that our research is trauma-informed and is of the highest possible ethical research standards.



MISSION 1: ADVOCATE

We will be publishing a 'Kyniska Charter' as an advocacy tool, to encourage organisations and individuals to publicly commit to protecting the welfare and well-being of athletes.

Kyniska will continue to campaign with a regular drumbeat, supporting campaigns, advocating for survivors and athletes and sharing news stories, acting as a responsible, reliable and active source of information and education.

We also aim to own our agenda, running our own campaigns at key points in the year with current priorities for 2024 being to support our research report and run a successful 'Kyniska give week' to raise vital funds for our Support Service and general operating expenses. We have recently onboarded new volunteers for our communications team who will lead on social media campaign planning, design and execution.

We are looking to grow our audience and impact by exploring additional forms of media to share our campaigns and communicate with our audience in 2024. Our primary social platform during 2023 has been Instagram, which has been largely successful so far. However, to expand and reach new audiences we will also look to communicate through an e-newsletter. Kyniska attracts attention from a range of demographics, but one primary group which this will unlock (a demographic which Instagram generally fails to fully reach) is parents of athletes and young people. We have recently brought on a new volunteer who will lead on our newsletter - and we will take a pragmatic approach to putting these out, not doing so for the sake of it but rather, when we have real updates to provide. We will also be introducing a Kyniska Advocacy tiktok page to share engaging and thoughtful content to younger generations.



Advocate

Mission

We will make it our mission to ensure the sporting community fosters a safe environment and has the protection of women at its heart.

Need

Policies created to protect athletes are not fit for purpose and there are gaps in legislation which leave athletes vulnerable to abuse.

Action

A trauma-informed research report into the long-term impact of abuse in sport by September 2024.

A Kyniska charter campaign by June 2024;

A fundraising campaign with the aim of raising a minimum of £5,000 (March 2024)

A campaign to support our research report by Autumn 2024

Outcomes

Sports Governing Bodies, Sports Councils, Universities and National Governments frame their welfare and safeguarding policies around the well-being of athletes

Impact

Sport is making progress in athlete safety and the number of athletes suffering abuse is reducing.

The UK is world-leading in their welfare and safeguarding policies in sport.



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MISSION 2: SUPPORT

#MeToo



#MeToo

Fill the current gap in the support system for survivors of abuse in sport.

We deliver **Support** to athletes through our support service. We act as a communication bridge between sports members and their governing bodies, providing athlete advocacy, advice and support. To date, we have supported individuals who have concerns around safeguarding and welfare with emotional support, pro-bono legal advice, and representation in meetings; dealt with on a case-by-case basis. The need for this service is undeniable. We are experts with first-hand experience of reporting processes in sport as athletes. Every week, more athletes contact Kyniska in search of support which they cannot get elsewhere.

We promise that this service will always be free for athletes in need. Currently, this is funded through Kyniska's consultation work and engagements. This service has demonstrated its importance to the sporting community through the amount of support we've provided and the strong feedback received despite little advertisement. We believe that no other UK organisation has the lived experience to be able to deal with casework of this kind.

As well as vital support for a number of athletes, the support service offers us insight into how reporting procedures work in different governing bodies. The Support Service helps us build expertise into our education and training missions as well as informing our advocacy work.

Over the course of this year we plan to explore paid partnerships with organisations to bolster our support service and ensure its sustainability, in turn and ensure its sustainability, in turn allowing us to support more athletes. For example, we have been exploring working with universities and sports governing bodies to create a direct link between athletes who require support and our support service.. We are wary of our vulnerability as a small organisation and the potential of exhausting our resource capacity. If demand were to grow, one of our top priorities for donated funds would be to secure additional resources for this service.

Support

Mission

Fill the current gap in the support system for survivors of abuse in sport.

Need

Athletes who have experienced abuse do not have the support they need.

We are the only athlete, survivor-led support programme for athletes in the UK.

Athletes do not trust their national governing bodies and the support they provide.

Action

Devote quality time to supporting athletes in need.

Sustainably grow our Support service.

Actively explore paid partnerships to bolster the support service financially for the long term.

Outcomes

We have a sustainable support system which meets the needs of athlete survivors.

Sporting Governing Bodies have a pipeline between their athletes who need support and trauma-informed, survivor-led support

Impact

More athletes get the support they need.

Athletes' trust in national governing bodies improves



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MISSION 3: EDUCATE

Ensure every athlete, coach, and parent understands the importance of athlete well-being and can spot the signs of abuse.
Ensure every athlete knows how they can report abuse.

We deliver bespoke **education and training** with sessions and toolkits on a range of topics around safe sport. The contents vary based on the audience but have included presentations to parents and coaches on the signs of abuse; to universities to promote safe sport; and to national investigators on athlete-led reporting procedures and investigations. Until now, we have not actively carried out any business development to secure education and training contracts. Starting with a few more substantial contracts to be delivered by mid-2024, we intend to engage more regularly in paid work in this space to further the expertise we developed in creating our original [athlete welfare toolkit](#).

This mission is underpinned by two key objectives: firstly, delivering high quality products in line with the existing contracts, and secondly, developing a general offer to engage with our existing network and beyond, to secure future business. We see this work with sports clubs, universities, sporting governing bodies and safeguarding institutions.

In the medium term, (3-5 years) our vision is for this workstream to develop into a consultancy service for partner organisations. This is reliant upon building up strong expertise over a number of years with a variety of bodies and then building capability to create, reform and advise on good safeguarding practice and reporting systems. Notwithstanding, of course developing a strong reputation as experts in safeguarding and good reporting practice.

Educate

Mission

Ensure every athlete, coach, and parent understands the importance of athlete well-being and can spot the signs of abuse.

Ensure every athlete knows how they can report abuse

Need

The education of coaches, parents and athletes is not being implemented at the pace and scale needed.

Action

Deliver high quality bespoke training and education across the United Kingdom and globally.

Deliver materials to fulfill existing contracts with partnering organisations - completing by June 2024 and March 2025.

Develop a general training offer to share with our existing network by June 2024.

Outcomes

Sporting Governing Bodies are maximising their contribution to safe sport

Athletes, parents and coaches have a greater understanding of welfare and safeguarding systems in place and how to report.

Athletes, coaches and parents are aware of the signs of abuse.

Impact

The UK Sporting community is informed and instances of abuse are falling.

Everyone involved in sport understands their role in creating safe and sustainable sporting environments.



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BE PART OF THE CHANGE

We can't do it alone

Over the next two years, we will be working tirelessly to change the structures and cultures that prevent athletes being safe doing the sport they love.

But we can't do it alone.

We are calling on the sporting community to get behind our strategy and help us deliver on our missions.

The safety of athletes is everyone's responsibility.

To be part of the change, contact kate.seary@kyniskaadvocacy.com

What can I do to help?

- Be an **active** bystander.
- Read our **toolkit and materials** to educate yourself.
- Put athlete **well-being** first.
- **Share** our resources with friends and colleagues.
- Advocate for **safe sport** in your sports clubs.
- **Volunteer** with Kyniska!
- Donate.



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