

Written evidence from ScottishPower, Corporate [BPS0053]

Introduction

1. ScottishPower is a major UK energy company with renewable generation, retail supply and networks businesses; we are a leading developer of wind power in the UK, and part of the Iberdrola Group, the world's leading renewables developer, and a global leader in tackling climate change, with a commitment to reaching carbon neutrality by 2050. We are the UK's first major integrated energy utility to be generating 100% renewable electricity, and we are committed to supporting our 4.2 million gas and electricity retail customers in making greener choices as part of the energy transition.
2. We welcome the opportunity to provide evidence to this inquiry and highlight our approach to encouraging participation and supporting routes for women's and girls' football.
3. ScottishPower has developed the most comprehensive and influential programmes supporting women's and girls' football in Scotland. Over a multi-year period, the company has positioned itself not simply as a sponsor, but as a strategic partner driving growth, access and transformation across the sport.
4. The initiative aligns closely with broader corporate priorities around equality, inclusion, community investment and long-term societal impact, while also delivering strong brand value and engagement.

Context

5. ScottishPower is committed to engaging in activities that have a positive impact on society, contribute to community-based organisations and support initiatives which help to address a range of wider issues in the communities in which we operate. Since the Covid pandemic and the ongoing pressures on the cost of living, the need to support our communities has never been greater and the spotlight on levelling up, equality and inclusion continues to grow. Research shows that during times of financial pressure, children's participation in sport is often viewed as a luxury and this insight became one of the key drivers for ScottishPower to get involved in grassroots football for girls to help break down potential concerns around costs and affordability whilst supporting the

mental health and physical well-being of girls and ensuring fair access to opportunities on and off the field.

Strategic approach and objectives

6. ScottishPower's approach is built around a clear set of objectives:
 - Grow participation across all age groups and levels of the game
 - Improve access and remove barriers, particularly financial and geographic
 - Drive equality and inclusion in sport and wider society
 - Increase visibility and engagement with women's football
 - Inspire future generations, both on and off the pitch with clear opportunities to support ScottishPower's STEM agenda and focus on ensuring a diverse future workforce.
7. The programme is designed to operate as a national platform, using football as a catalyst to support wider social and economic outcomes, including links to education and future career pathways.

System-wide investment and partnerships

8. ScottishPower has taken a whole-system approach, investing across all tiers of the women's football ecosystem. This includes:
 - Leadership-level partnerships with governing and league bodies
 - Sponsorship of competitions spanning:
 - Youth football (multiple age groups)
 - Grassroots and community leagues
 - Regional and national cup competitions
 - Elite-level league football
9. This breadth of involvement ensures that investment reaches every stage of the player pathway, from first participation through to the professional game, while also supporting clubs, competitions and governing structures. Linking both ends of the game and helping

to increase awareness has been critical and this underpins the insight, ‘if you can’t see it, you can’t be it’.

Grassroots development and access

10. A core focus of the programme is improving access to football and strengthening grassroots participation and to date, this has included:

- Provision of equipment, kit and resources to community clubs
- Support for initiatives that reduce cost barriers for players and families
- Investment in local clubs and competitions to enhance sustainability
- Engagement with players and communities to build participation and retention

11. There is also a strong emphasis on geographic inclusion, with targeted efforts to support football development in remote and underserved areas, ensuring that opportunities are available across all regions of Scotland.

Player pathway and progression

12. The programme is structured to create a clear and inclusive development pathway:

- Encouraging entry into the sport at a young age
- Supporting continuous participation through youth levels
- Enabling progression into competitive and elite environments
- Strengthening links between grassroots football and top-tier leagues

13. This end-to-end model helps ensure that talented players have visible and achievable routes to progression, while maintaining broad participation at community level. The link between grassroots and top-tier has been facilitated by ScottishPower’s programme and ways of working with both the Scottish Women’s Premier League and Scottish Women’s Football.

Social impact and equality

14. ScottishPower’s investment goes beyond sport, delivering wider social impact:

- Promoting gender equality and representation
- Supporting opportunities for women and girls to develop confidence and skills

- Creating and delivering initiatives that connect football with education and career pathways, including specific STEM-related engagement
 - Building strong community connections and increasing local pride
15. The programme positions football as a vehicle for social change, helping to address structural inequalities and improve long-term outcomes for participants.

Brand impact and engagement

16. The initiative has also delivered significant communications and brand benefits:
- High levels of media coverage and visibility
 - Strong performance across digital and content channels
 - Growing association between ScottishPower and women's football
 - Engagement with new and broader audiences
17. High-profile activations and campaigns have helped amplify impact, creating widely recognised moments that reinforce both the sport and the brand. Key moments have included iconic launch events with youth and professional players from across the country at Whitelee Windfarm in Glasgow and at Edinburgh Castle, both attracting widespread media attention and a significant boost to awareness. gathering over 100 players from across the country

Recognition and performance

18. The programme has received extensive external recognition, reflecting its effectiveness and innovation:
- Multiple industry awards for sponsorship, activation and social impact
 - Recognition for leadership in corporate responsibility
 - Acknowledgement of community outreach and grassroots support

These accolades reinforce the programme's position as a leading example of best practice in sports partnership and purpose-led investment.

19. The programme has received wide support and recognition from parliamentarians in both the Scottish & UK Parliaments at several debates with parliamentary motions lodged by supportive constituency MSPs and MPs as well as recognition from Ministers, including

the Scottish Sport Minister. We are particularly pleased with the recognition from remote, rural and island communities including Highland and Islands parliamentarians as well as Orkney and Shetland, for example, the recognition of Shetland winning the Highland and Island.

Long-term commitment and outlook

20. ScottishPower has demonstrated a clear commitment to sustaining and expanding its impact through continued investment and programme evolution.

21. The focus going forward will remain on:

- Scaling participation and engagement
- Strengthening pathways and infrastructure
- Deepening community impact
- Maintaining leadership in equality and inclusion
- Leveraging the platform to drive further brand and societal value

Conclusion

22. ScottishPower's women's football initiative has evolved into a flagship strategic programme that successfully combines:

- Comprehensive system-wide investment
- Meaningful grassroots and community impact
- Clear alignment with equality and social purpose
- Strong brand and reputational returns

23. Overall, the programme demonstrates how sustained, targeted investment in sport can deliver both societal benefit and commercial value, positioning ScottishPower as a key contributor to the continued growth and development of women's and girls' football in Scotland.



In June 2023, ScottishPower announced a landmark partnership and investment deal with Scottish Women's Football (SWF) and the Scottish Women's Premier League (SWPL), dedicated to energising women's football at every age and stage across the country.



Edinburgh Castle became a shining tribute to Scotland's female footballers in April 2026, with striking images of players of all ages and stages projected onto the iconic landmark to mark the extension of ScottishPower's support for the women's game for a further three years, to 2029.

June 2026