

12 MONTHS OF TACKLING GENDER INEQUITY IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY: LIVERPOOL CITY REGION



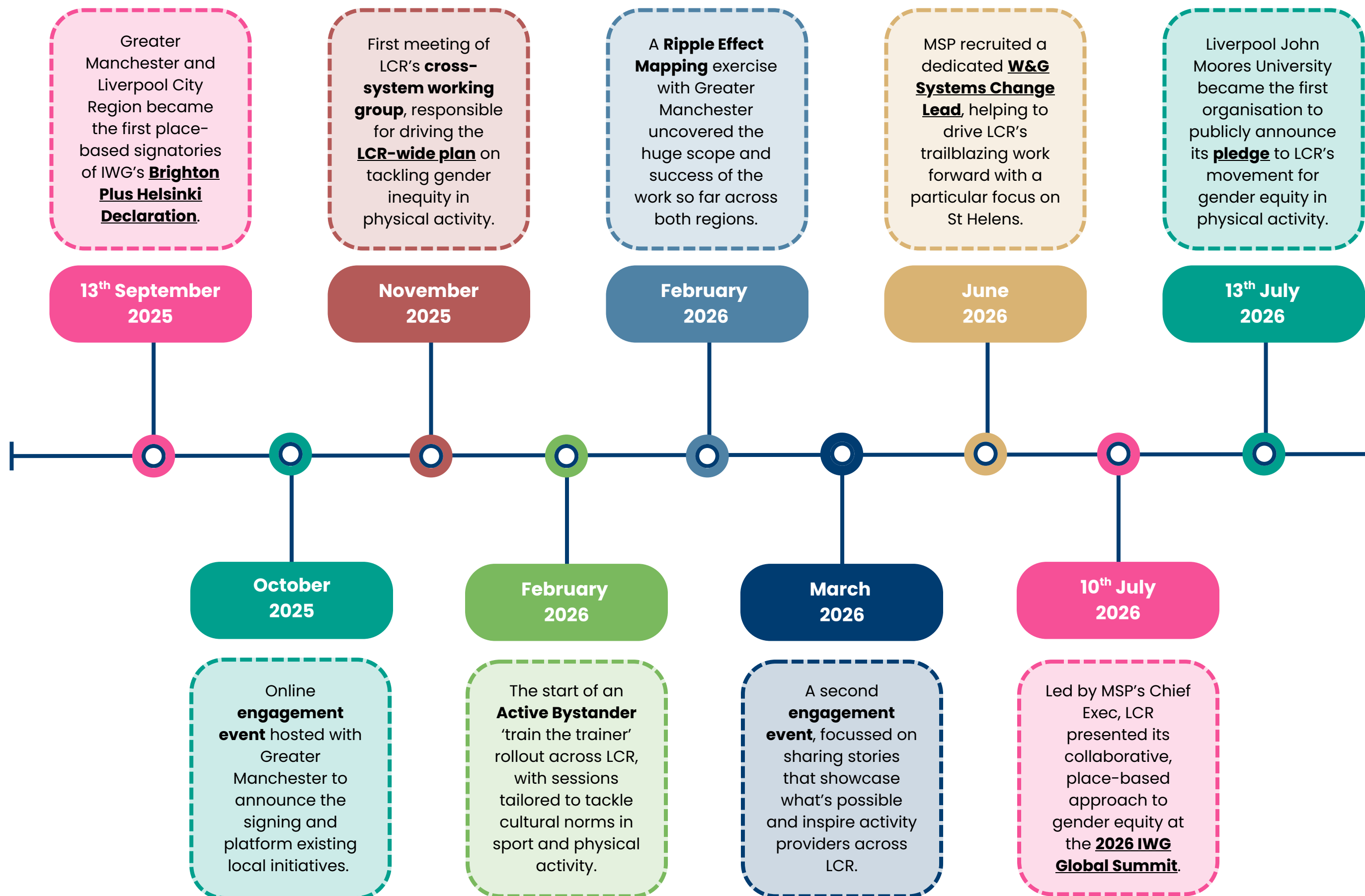
On **September 13, 2025**, Liverpool City Region made history alongside Greater Manchester as the world’s first place-based signatories of the **Brighton Plus Helsinki Declaration**.

Starting with a timeline of key milestones, this document reflects on our first 12 months translating this global commitment into local, systemic action to tackle the inequalities women and girls face in physical activity.

As Mayor Steve Rotheram said, **"the Liverpool City Region has and always will be a trailblazer,"** and this anniversary review showcases how our growing, cross-system movement is working to make equality a reality.

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THE BRIGHTON PLUS HELSINKI DECLARATION SIGNING



On September 13, 2025, Liverpool City Region (LCR) and Greater Manchester signed the International Working Group (IWG) on Women & Sport's Brighton Plus Helsinki Declaration.

What is the Declaration?

The Brighton Plus Helsinki Declaration is an internationally recognised treaty dedicated to developing a fairer, more equitable sport and physical activity system.

Championed by Mayors Steve Rotheram and Andy Burnham, this joint agreement provided a devolved mandate to tackle gender inequity.

The signing was a catalyst, bridging top-down leadership with grassroots reality and sparking the creation of a participatory LCR-wide action plan.

This mandate has since inspired organisations across the region to officially pledge their support and begin dismantling barriers for women and girls.

THE LIVERPOOL CITY REGION-WIDE MOVEMENT

Translating a global declaration into meaningful local action requires a unified, system-wide approach.

The LCR-Wide Plan

We collaborated with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority to create **Shaping Change**, a unified, region-wide action plan. This has been formally adopted by Mayor Steve Rotherham to provide a devolved mandate for tackling systemic inequalities in physical activity. By connecting top-down political priorities directly with grassroots realities, the plan ensures our region's policies are shaped by lived, local experiences.

MSP's Strategy

To lead by example, MSP developed our own **internal action plan** aligned with the **10 principles** that underpin the IWG's Brighton Plus Helsinki Declaration. By explicitly setting out our strategic focus on workforce, participation, and safety, we are demonstrating our commitment while demonstrating an approach to embedding gender equity into organisational structures.

Public Pledges

We invited partners from across LCR and Greater Manchester to **pledge their commitment** to our shared vision, and the response has been incredible. So far, many diverse organisations – including local authorities, football foundations, universities, and grassroots groups – have signed up. Together, they are helping to grow a participatory movement that turns this global declaration into a local reality. [Join them](#).

Storytelling

To shift the culture, we are working with partners to platform their practical successes. By sharing these **impact stories**, we aim to provide blueprints and show that advancing gender equity doesn't have to require massive budgets or complex new initiatives. Many of the most profound impacts come from simple, person-centred changes. This demonstrates what is possible and offers inspiration for organisations across the city region.

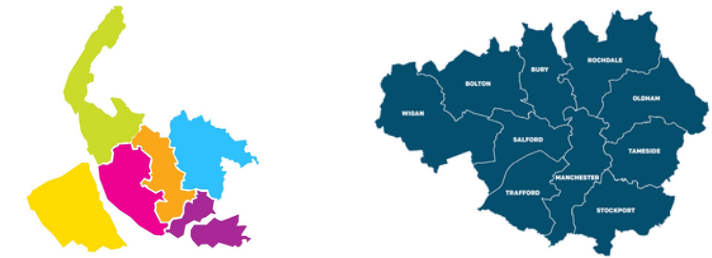
Cross-System Working Group

To drive and deliver the LCR-wide plan, MSP convenes a collaborative, cross-sector working group. This dedicated body brings together key stakeholders from transport and active travel, local authorities, major football foundations, higher education, and public safety networks to champion gender equity across every corner and sector of the region.



SISTER-CITY REGION COLLABORATION

Our partnership with Greater Manchester allows both regions to pool resources, share learnings, and accelerate the speed of system change for women and girls.



Engagement and Shared Learning

MSP and Greater Manchester Moving host regular online engagement events.

These collaborative online sessions are vital to growing our movement, serving to:

- Platform lived experiences.
- Spark cross-sector inspiration.
- Drive connections and new pledges.

By uniting people and ideas across both regions, we showcase what works in different contexts, helping organisations and providers see new possibilities and adapt successful approaches from outside their usual silos.

Joint Communications

We maintain momentum year-round through joint communications.

By collaborating on regular email updates, blogs, and shared resources, we keep our growing network of pledgers and partners connected, informed, and continuously engaged in championing gender equity.

Mapping the Impact

To measure the scale of our joint impact, we conducted a Ripple Effect Mapping exercise with Greater Manchester.

It visually demonstrated how sharing learnings and acting as one team accelerates progress, creating wider ripples of impact across both city regions.

WIDER **RIPPLES** ACROSS THE CITY REGION

The momentum generated by the Brighton Plus Helsinki Declaration has created ripples of innovative, region-wide initiatives that tackle the physical, cultural, and systemic barriers women and girls face.

Workforce & Expanding Opportunities

Investing in the women who lead, coach, and participate:

- **Workforce:** Embedding a focus on women and girls within the CIMSPA local skills plan and hosting lived-experience workshops for female sports staff.
- **Major Events:** Maximising the legacy of major events, from hosting women's networking events to driving targeted girls' participation.

Changing Cultures & Allyship

Addressing the cultural norms that exclude women from physical activity:

- **Active Bystander:** Rolling out a 'train the trainer' programme, jointly commissioned with the LCR Combined Authority Active Travel team, to build male allyship and challenge normalised behaviours.
- **Strategic Alignment:** Presenting our plans to the Liverpool VAWG (Violence Against Women and Girls) Forum and supporting the development of a new forum in Halton.

Safer Spaces & Active Environments

Rethinking how physical spaces are designed and managed to prioritise safety:

- **Active Travel:** Integrating 'Right to the Streets' workshops to shape future infrastructure with a female lens.
- **Park Safety:** Wirral installed Emergency Help Points in public parks, featuring two-way audio and CCTV.
- **Leisure Spaces:** Planning for a rollout of the 'Ask for Angela' safety campaign within sport and leisure facilities.

THE 2026 IWG GLOBAL SUMMIT

In July 2026, a united delegation from the Liverpool City Region (LCR) joined 1,000 leaders at the IWG Global Summit in Birmingham to showcase our cross-sector approach to gender equity.

A Unified Front

- **Cross-Sector Presence:** MSP attended alongside Greater Manchester Moving, St Helens Borough Council, and the LCR Combined Authority's Active Travel team.
- **Global Stage:** MSP led a dedicated panel on how to translate a global declaration into local action, featuring the High Sheriff of Merseyside and partners from the Combined Authority and the IWG.

Sharing the LCR Blueprint

- **Reframing the Issue:** The panel summarised our 12-month journey, demonstrating that gender inequity is a safety and access gap requiring a unified, cross-system response.
- **A Proven Methodology:** The panel shared our practical roadmap: securing a Mayoral mandate, building a region-wide plan, elevating lived experiences, and growing a participatory movement.
- **A Global Model:** By showcasing how our 48 pledgers collaborate, we proved that LCR's local action offers a replicable blueprint for the rest of the world.



WHAT NEXT & JOINING THE MOVEMENT

The past 12 months have laid a crucial foundation, but we need your shared energy to turn LCR's commitment into a local reality:

Attend Engagement Events

Follow our **LinkedIn** for info on future engagement sessions to share learnings, connect with partners, and help shape the future direction of the movement.

Follow the Journey

Keep an eye on the **MSP website** and connect with us on **LinkedIn** to stay up to date and tag us in your own work.

Pledge Your Support

Sign our **voluntary pledge** to show your commitment to gender equity in movement. Whether you are taking big steps or small ones, signing up gives you access to a free toolkit to showcase your support and inspire others.

Subscribe to the Mailing List

Sign up for joint updates from MSP and Greater Manchester Moving so you never miss out on news, stories, events, or opportunities happening across our twin-city regions.