



European Research Report: Gender and Officiating

WINS Project

March 2022



Raising the growth and participation
of female sport officials in Europe

PARTNERSHIP



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Executive Summary

- The survey reached **64 different countries**.
- There were **3264 responses** – a very good level of representation from around the world.
- Female officials are **generally quite happy**, demonstrating a great enthusiasm and passion for officiating.
- Our sample was very educated with 70% of respondents having either a bachelors or postgraduate degree.
- Being part of a support network such as an **officiating community was particularly important** to female officials.
- 78% of female officials strongly agreed or agreed that they are accepted within their sports as normal practice whilst 78% also strongly agreed or **agreed that organisations treat female and male officials the same**.
- **Female specific training opportunities require further thought**. 48% of female officials disagreed or strongly disagreed that training and development is targeted at female officials.
- **More development of female training instructors required** - 36% strongly disagreed or disagreed that training was delivered by female instructors.
- **Support through mentoring requires attention** - the majority of female officials did not have a mentor but wanted a mentor (if they did not have one provided by their sport).
- Female officiating kit is not provided for two thirds of officials.
- **Childcare is not routinely provided** for female officials - 36% of female officials either strongly disagreed or disagreed that childcare is adequately considered.
- **Abuse does not appear to be as common** towards female officials as a group.
- The majority of female officials are not thinking of leaving in the next 12 months. Although if they are thinking of leaving time commitments, and a lack of support from officiating organisations are two of the primary reasons.

Introduction

WINS is an ambitious project that brings together stakeholders from a variety of national and European sport federations combined with universities, the Olympic movement and associations from several EU Member States. The WINS project is a true partnership between education and employment to take forward gender equality in sports officiating.

WINS embraces the Council of Europe definition of Sport as “all forms of physical activity which, through casual or organised participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental wellbeing, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competition at all levels”. Sport and physical activity is recognised as a sector of significance with real potential to address wider European and government agendas such as health, social inclusion, education, employment, and economic growth.

In all sports, the role of officials (referees, umpires, judges, timekeepers, stewards) involves specific demands such as observation, interpretation of events, decision making and communication. This complex process of rule interpretation and judgment must be executed in real time under the critical gaze of players and spectators. Making correct, impartial, and clear judgements is central to sport officiating across every sport. The role of the sport official is therefore vital at all levels of sport, with sport officials ensuring that fair competition within the rules of a sport is possible.

From grassroots participation, involving ordinary EU citizens at weekends, to elite international competitions followed by an audience of millions across the globe, sport would not be possible without sport officials. No sport official effectively means no sport. Skills acquisition and physical health and well-being, especially of children and young people, would suffer; social interaction across communities and age groups would be diminished; the social inclusion of marginalised groups, which sport cherishes, would be at risk, and a major

source of employment in the recreation and entertainment industry would take be severely affected. All of which means that sport and the wider world needs sport officials.

However, we also need sport officials who are representative of the wider population. In terms of gender equality, the world of sport officiating is trailing well behind other occupations and sectors. Some progress has been made over recent years, but the world of the sport official is still predominantly a male preserve, a stubborn problem which defies all EU ambitions to promote gender equality in sport.

Women referees can achieve the appropriate levels of physical fitness; they observe as keenly as men; they are as fair-minded as men; they can make quick, accurate decisions; they can be great communicators and leaders. Despite this, we know that many women's sports are undergoing professionalisation (Bowes & Culvin, 2021), and so it is increasingly important for national governing bodies (NGBs) to select, train and retain women sports officials who play a critical role in the successful delivery of men's and women's sports. Women sports officials are historically and traditionally an underrepresented group who often experience gender discrimination in addition to verbal and physical abuse common amongst sports officials (Webb et al., 2021). For example, a recent Women in Football survey suggested two-thirds of women working in football receive gender-based stigma (Women in Football, 2020).

Given the number of women sports officials across all levels of sports is growing (e.g., in British football numbers have risen 72 per cent in the last four years; FA, 2020) and there have been recent high-profile appointments in professional sports (e.g., Sarah Thomas was the first woman referee to be appointed to the 2021 National Football League Super Bowl), it is timely that a consolidation of knowledge takes place that pinpoints recommendations for NGBs and officiating organisations across all sports.

Research indicates that women sports officials operate in difficult environments. Forbes et al. (2015) argue that deep-rooted sexism in football culture has led to sexist abuse of women officials in addition to general abuse that all referees receive. The authors recommended

anti-sexist policy to be put into place by the NGB to curb the additional burden. Moreover, Guzel (2020) found that karate women officials were evaluated on their physical attractiveness and athleticism ahead of being viewed as integral or role models. In volleyball, Lee et al. (2017) found that women officials' advancement was hindered by gender stereotypes from coaches, players and fans, and managing existing family responsibilities. Some NGBs (e.g., Rugby Football Association's Keep Your Boots On campaign) have begun to recognise these issues and develop strategies to address gender diversity however, many have focused on player and coach development and neglected strategies focused on officiating.

As such, the research phase of the WINS project seeks to uncover and consider vital aspects related to the barriers, cultural differences and sport specific issues around female participation in officiating around Europe. Specifically, the research aims to inform further on the recruitment and retention of sports officials in a variety of sports, suggesting strategies and policy for the development of female participation in officiating. As the first Intellectual Output of the WINS project the IO is identified below. This report is focused on the survey aspect of the research.

IO1. EUROPEAN RESEARCH REPORT ON GENDER AND OFFICIATING

The WINS research study will break new ground by focusing on the current realities and issues with regard to gender and sport officiating.

This IO will be achieved by three main research activities beginning with wide desk research and literature review for collating and analysing existing and available information and data. Partners will be asked to complete a partner research template so they can share their experiences, examples and sources and gather everything they are able to contribute to data collection.

Interviews will be conducted with those responsible for officiating in national sport federations, issues encountered with recruitment and retention of females will be explored.

The final research activity that will be targeted through the WINS project will be design and launch of the first ever online survey of female sport officials to better understand their motivations, challenges etc.

All partners will be actively involved in the design of the survey, as well as the promotion and dispatch through their networks of contacts.

Subject to discussion amongst the partners, the data collection methods will mainly focus on the following components:

- *officiating structures*
- *workforce characteristics*
- *demographics and equity balance*
- *motivations of women to become sport officials*
- *main challenges to female recruitment, retention and progression*
- *policies and procedures in the recruitment and retention of women officials*
- *training, development and mentoring of female sport officials*
- *good practice in attracting women to officiating and managing their work*
- *sport officials' career pathways*

Survey Method

To explore the aims and objectives of the research phase of the WINS project, a mixed-method online survey was adopted in phase 1. This incorporated open and closed questions, along with Likert scale questions. The survey was designed and distributed using online software, “Jisc Online Surveys”, which is widely used across departments and universities in academic research. Collecting large-scale quantitative and qualitative data through online surveys has been an increasingly successful methodological tool in sports literature (Cleland et al., 2018; Hong et al., 2019; Webb et al., 2020a). It provides researchers the advantage and opportunity to receive both large-scale data at the convenience of the participant and for frank and honest accounts to be detailed.

The online survey was accessible through a URL web link, distributed via email, databases held by governing bodies and organisations who are partners in this Erasmus Plus project, social media and personal contacts of the project partners. The survey was designed in English and subsequently translated by the project partners into Spanish, French and Bulgarian. The survey was then disseminated as one URL link with a landing page where respondents then selected the language in which they wanted to complete the survey.

The survey was distributed to female sports officials in sports and countries around Europe. The incorporation of free text format (open) questions and Likert scales in particular, ensured a detailed and rich body of data, enhancing results, with the inclusion of open questions aiding understanding of the participants’ experiences, which quantitative data alone cannot provide.

The quantitative data from the closed questions provided numerical data of totals and averages across the survey responses from the surveys in different languages. Graphical analysis of Likert Scale data provided a visual representation of the response distribution, in addition to the calculation of totals and averages of the responses for each scale question. In addition, descriptive data is presented and further insight is derived from additional analysis on some questions/themes pertinent to the wider project. The use of these analyses was



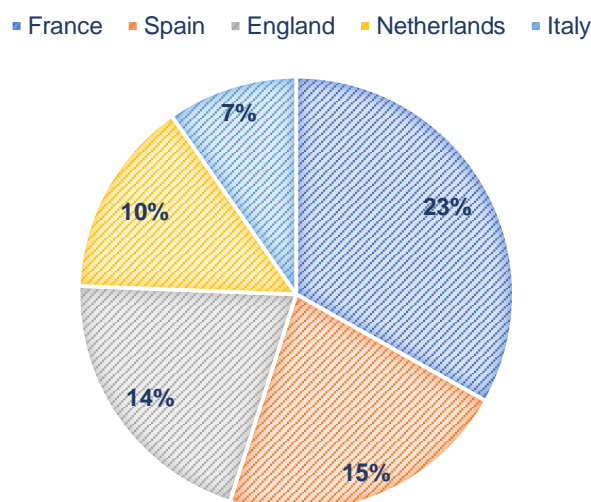
appropriate due to the focus upon the participant's perspective, the project's aims/objectives, and producing findings that are easy to interpret (Braun & Clarke, 2013). This method of analysis has been widely used and is evident in recent literature (Aragão e Pina et al., 2019; Webb et al., 2020b).

Responses are presented in the sections that follow and are grouped depending on the focus of the questions.

Overview of Responses

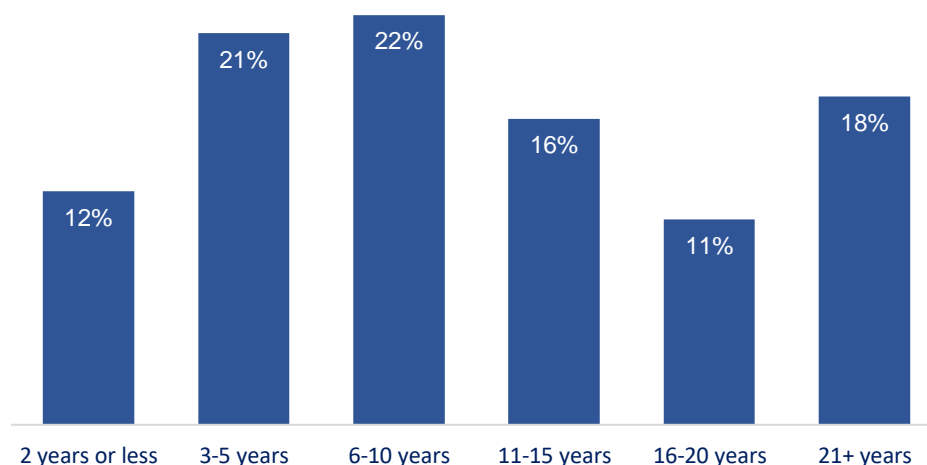
The survey had extensive reach. There were responses from participants representing 64 different countries. The responses from the top five countries are listed below in figure 1. As can be seen from the chart, 23% of the total number of responses came from France, 15% from Spain, 14% from England, 10% from the Netherlands and 7% from Italy.

Figure 1: Top 5 responses by country



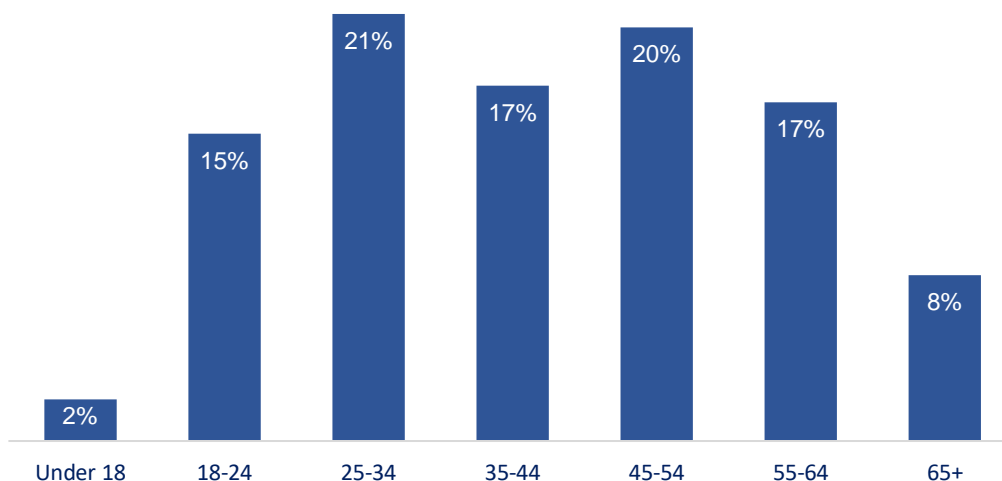
The survey respondents were from a range of backgrounds. For example, the experience of the officials and how long they have been officiating was varied. Those who officiated 6-10 years (22% of the total number of respondents) and 3-5 years (21% of the total number of respondents) were most represented. 21+ years (18%) and 11-15 years (16%) were also well represented, demonstrating a representative sample (figure 2 overleaf).

Figure 2: How many years have you been officiating?



We can also see that the survey elicited a good spread of responses across age brackets. The fewest number of responses came from the under-18 (2%) and 65+ categories (8%) respectively, whilst the 25-34 (21%) and 45-54 (20%) age brackets had the highest number of responses (see figure 3).

Figure 3: What is your age bracket?



The survey respondents were well educated. For example, 36% of respondents held a postgraduate qualification and 34% of respondents held a bachelor's degree or equivalent, whilst only 12% of respondents held a secondary education as their most advanced educational qualification (figure 4). Moreover, 51% of respondents were employed full time (figure 5), whilst only 10% of officials operated at society or grassroots level and fewer (3%) at junior level (figure 6).

Figure 4: What is your highest level of educational achievement to date?

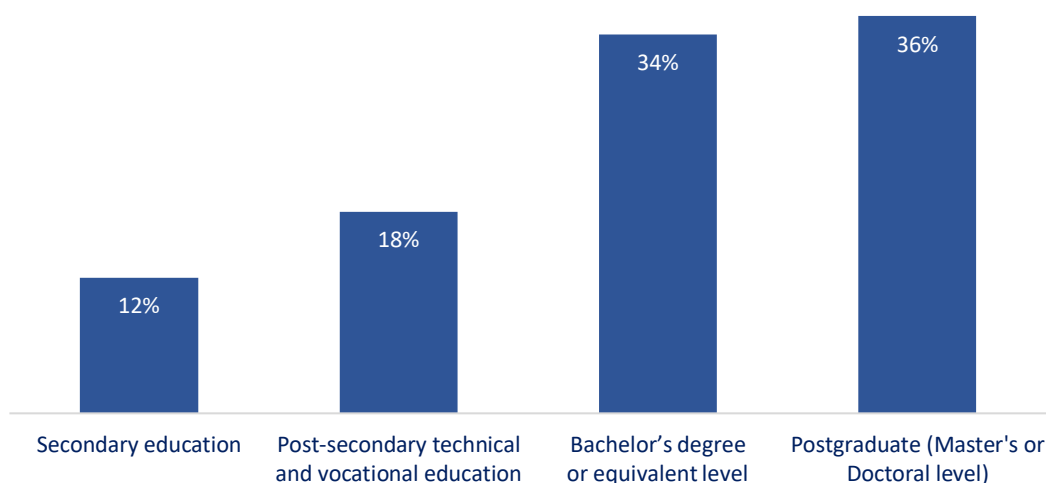
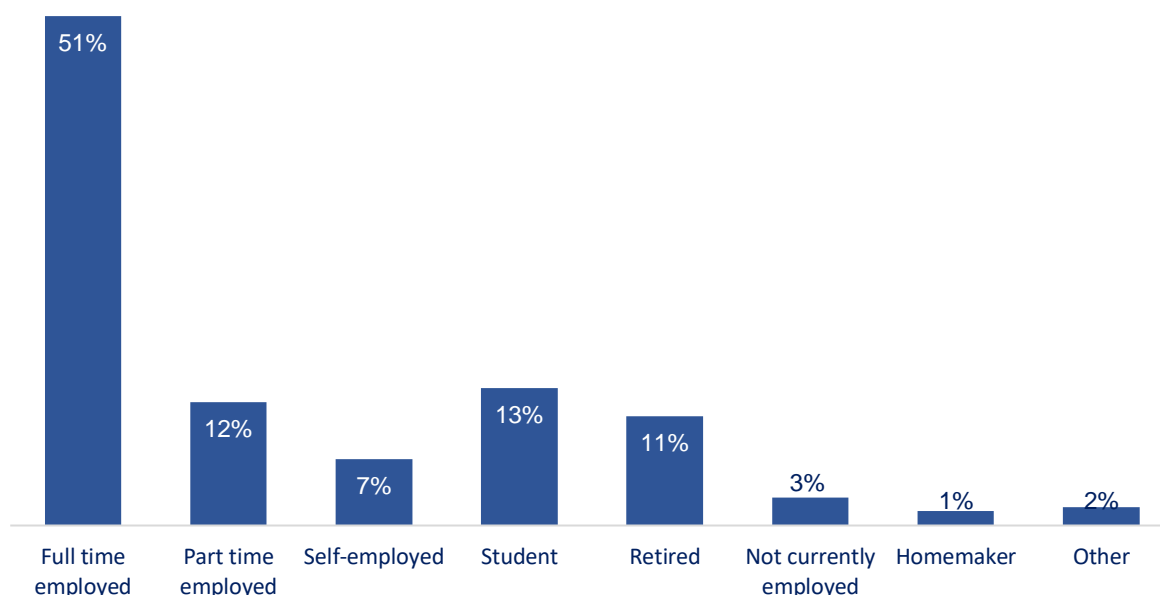


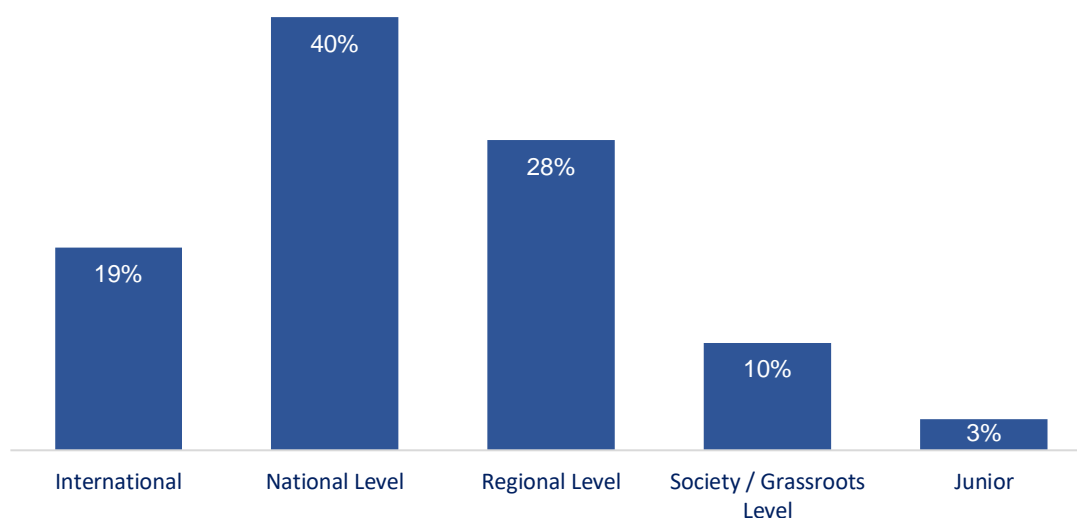
Figure 5: What is your employment status?





The officials that responded to the survey officiated at a variety of levels across all countries. However, 40% of respondents officiated at national level and 28% at regional level, whereas 19% officiated at international level, meaning that the respondents represented a good or very good level of officiating expertise.

Figure 6: What is your current level of officiating?



The officials that responded to the survey almost entirely officiated both male and female sport (96%) with only 3% officiating female sport only and 1% male sport exclusively.

Figure 7: Do you operate only in female sport, male sport or both?

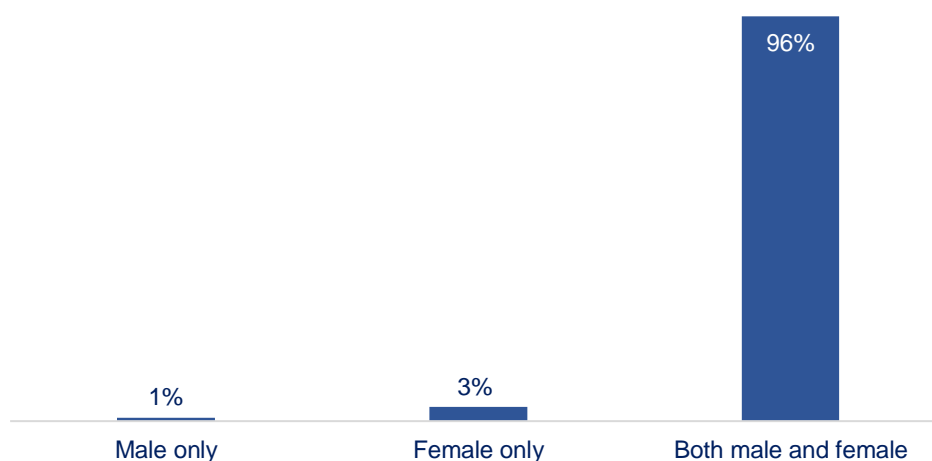
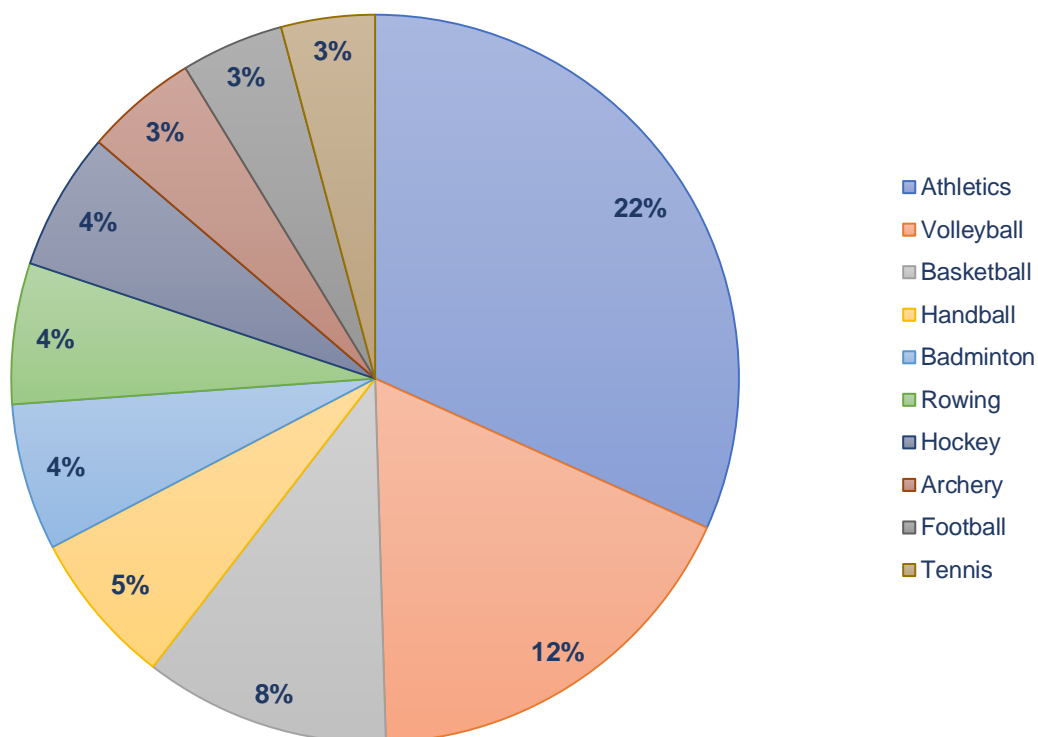


Figure 8: What is the main sport that you officiate?

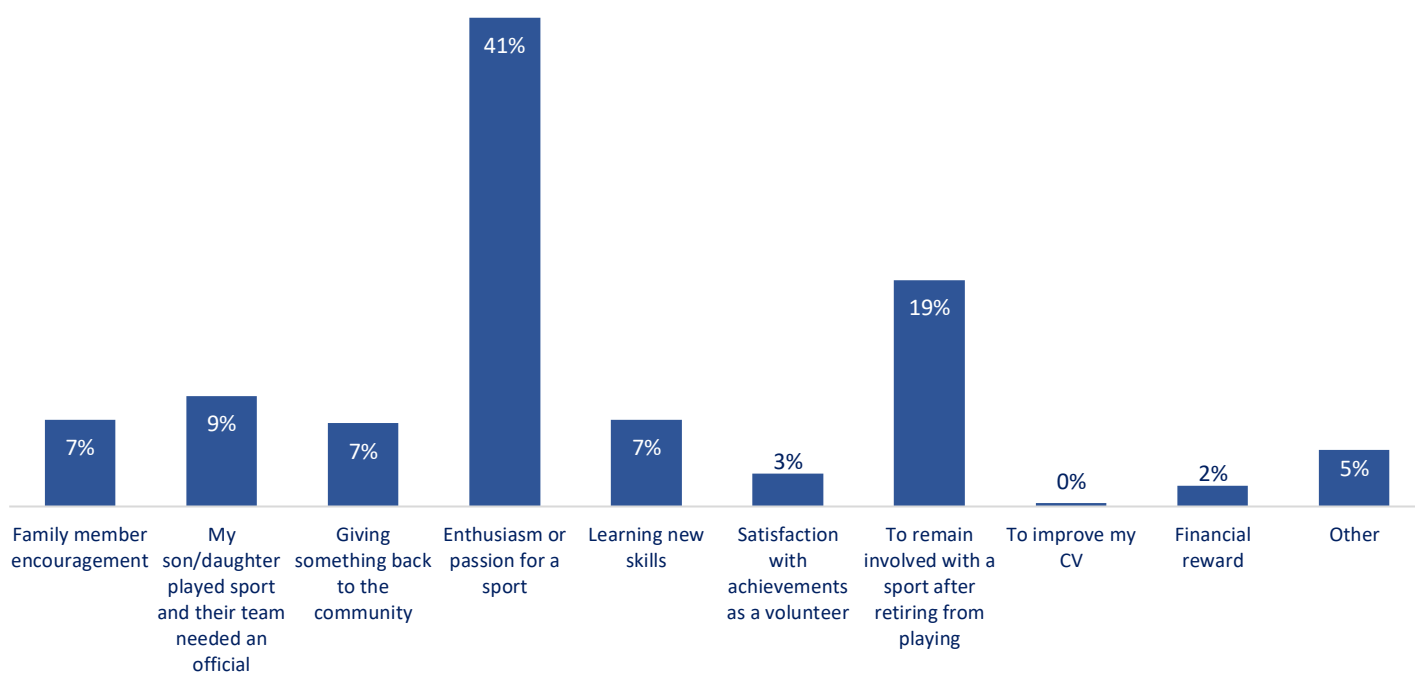


There were 61 sports represented in the survey (including the 'other' category), and therefore to try and give an indication of the spread, the top 10 most cited sports are included in figure 8. Athletics and Volleyball were the most popular sports recorded, followed by basketball and handball.

Motivations to officiate

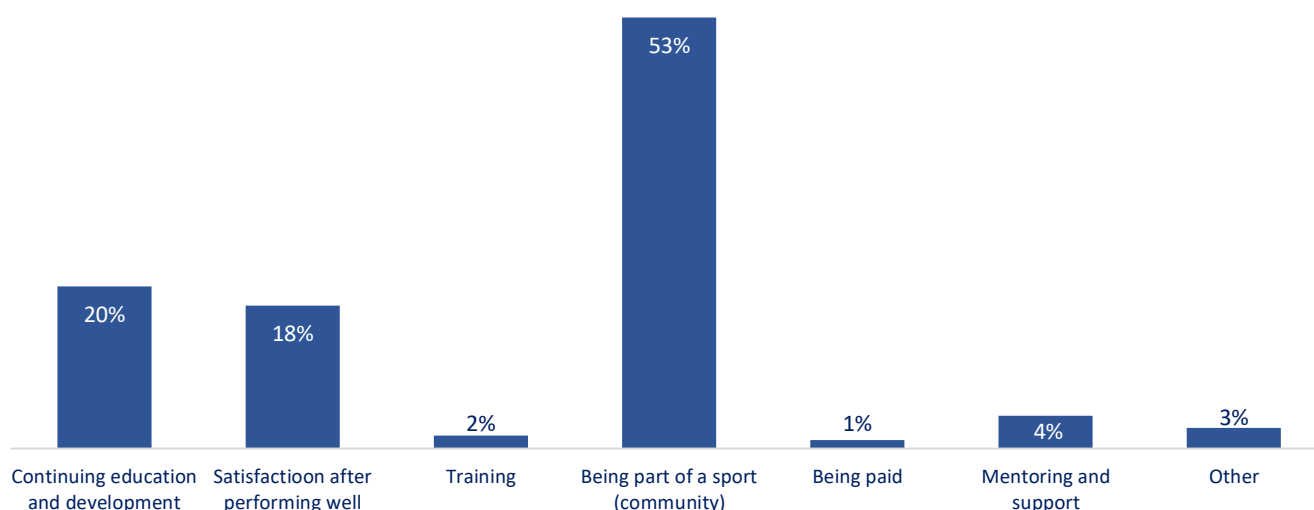
The survey responses show that the reasons why individuals choose to officiate are multifaceted (see figure 9). Nevertheless, the officials reported that the enthusiasm or passion for a sport was a significant driver (41% of respondents). This reason was the most common, although remaining involved with a sport was also a common response (19%). Other responses such as the involvement of a son/daughter in a chosen sport (9%), family member encouragement (7%), Giving something back to the sport (7%) and learning new skills (7%) were also notable. Interestingly, money is not a primary motivation for female sports officials, with only 2% identifying financial rewards as the most important factor which made them decide to officiate.

Figure 9: What was the most important factor that made you decide to become a sports official?



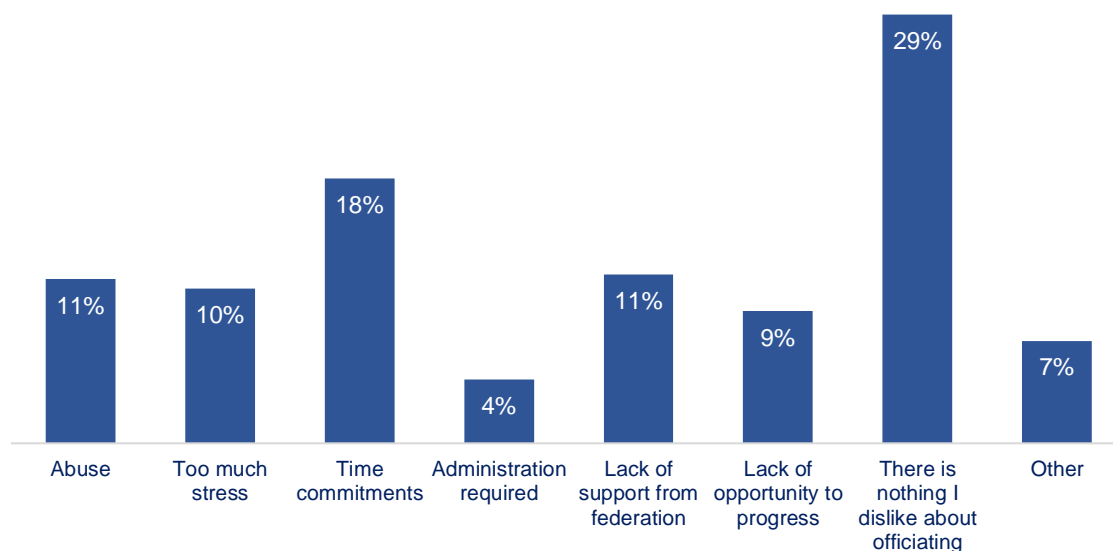
When considering the reasons that female officials most enjoy about officiating (figure 10), the officials reported that being part of a sport (community) was the strongest reason (53%). However, continuing education and development (20%) and a sense of satisfaction after performing well (18%) were also notable reasons for continuing to officiate. Payment for officiating was only responsible for 1% of all responses and suggests that female sports officials are not motivated by financial reward, but rather for more intrinsic, altruistic reasons.

Figure 10: What do you most enjoy about officiating?



There are also reasons that female sports officials gave that might lead to them potentially discontinuing, namely what they most disliked about officiating (see figure 11). However, a significant proportion equating to just under one third of officials who completed the survey stated that there was nothing that they disliked about officiating (29%). Other notable reasons that were given were demands on time (18%), abuse (11%), lack of support from federations (11%) and too much stress (105).

Figure 11: What do you most dislike about officiating?



If we consider some of these responses further, we can see that time commitments are more of an issue in the Spanish, English and French surveys, that stress is more of an issue in Bulgaria than in the other surveys and that abuse is more of an issue in the Spanish, Bulgarian and English responses rather than in the French language survey (see table 1).

Table 1: Reason for leaving by survey language

Totals	Spanish	Bulgarian	English	French
Abuse	14%	16%	13%	4%
Too much stress	12%	18%	10%	11%
Time commitments	20%	1%	19%	16%
Administration required	5%	3%	4%	5%
Lack of support from federation	9%	15%	10%	16%
Lack of opportunity to progress	9%	6%	10%	7%
There is nothing I dislike about officiating	25%	36%	28%	34%
Other	5%	4%	7%	7%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Figure 12 shows the responses related to the reasons for disliking officiating with the 'nothing I dislike about officiating' category removed from the responses. Figure 11 demonstrates that time commitments (23%), abuse (14%), lack of support from the federation (14%) and stress (13%) are the primary reasons for any dislike towards officiating from female officials.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, a large proportion of officials reported that their sport had more male than female officiating representation (72% - see figure 13). 21% of officials reported that they believed the gender representation for officials in their sport was approximately equal, whereas 6% of respondents believed that their sport had more female than male officials, demonstrating that there is a considerable amount of work to be done to improve the parity in these numbers.

Figure 12: Reason for disliking officiating (excluding 'there is nothing I dislike')

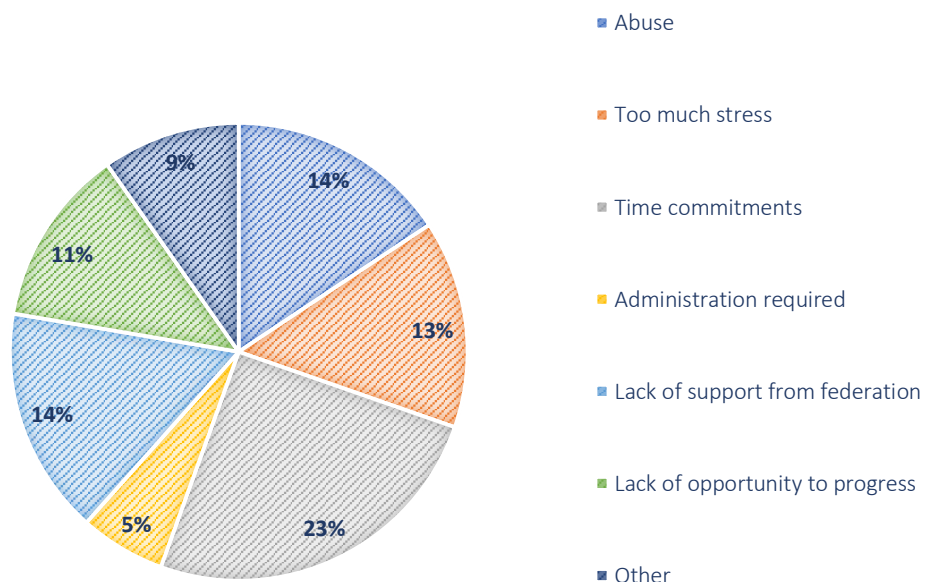
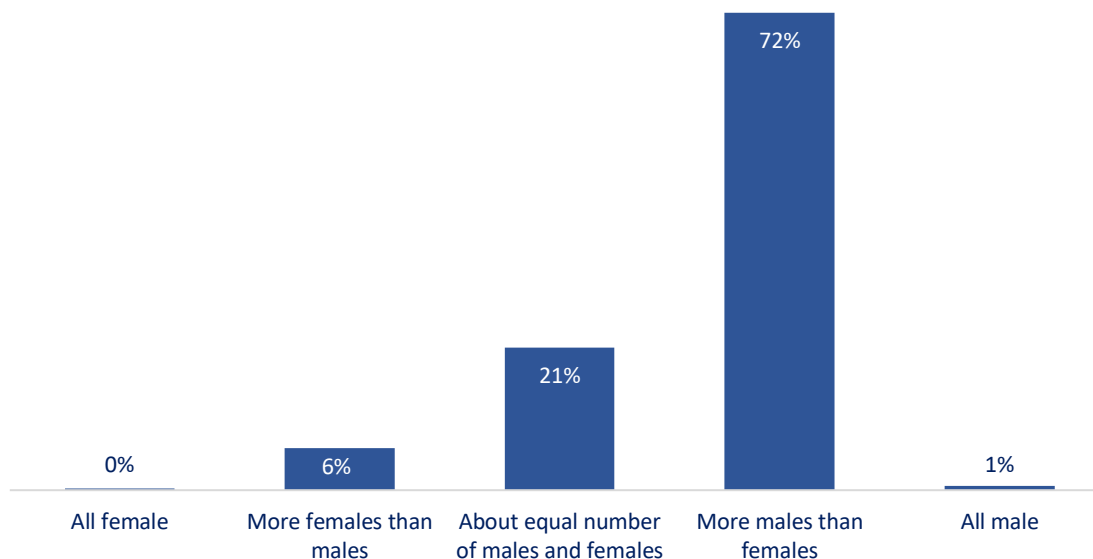


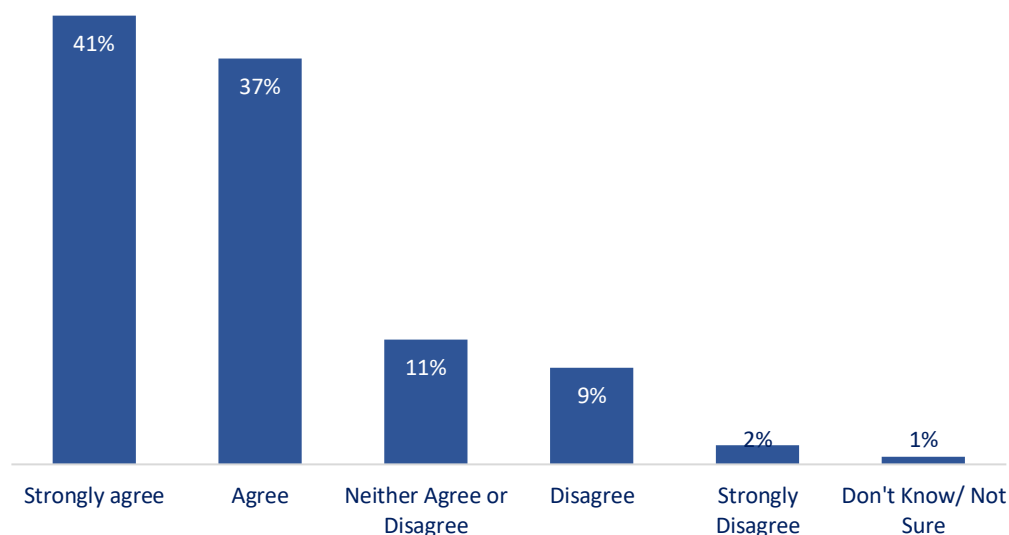
Figure 13: The ratio of female to male officials in your sport



Equality in officiating

The following graphs are reported together because they cover the broader concept of equality in officiating. There is a wider debate to be had around equality versus equity in terms of officiating (this will be explored further in the interview phase of this intellectual output), although in this section the focus is given to the views and perceptions of equality in their sport by female officials.

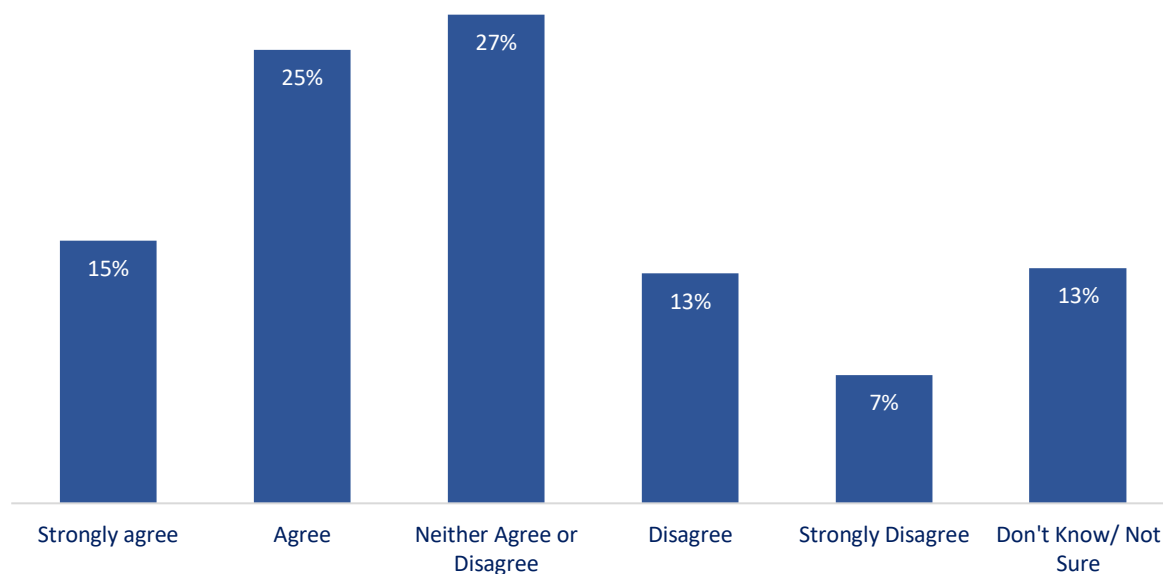
Figure 14: Sport accepts female officials as normal practice





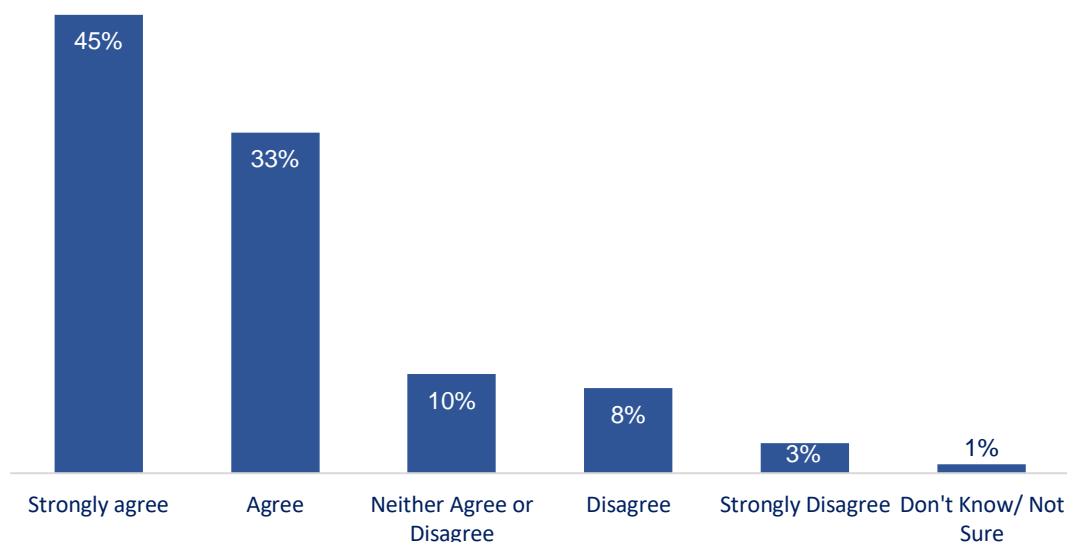
It can be seen that female officials strongly agree or agree that they are accepted within their sports as normal practice (78% in respectively – see figure 14). In terms of addressing any differences in treatment related to gender, female officials also report that sports have shown that they are willing to address these differences (40% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed). However, this only provides some of the information required here. 27% of respondents neither agreed or disagreed that their sport actively addressed gender issues, whilst 13% didn't know or weren't sure and 20% strongly disagreed or agreed (figure 15). There is, therefore, some further work required within sports around the dissemination of policy and information regarding how any gender issues are being addressed, if this is indeed occurring in different sports.

Figure 15: My sport is active in addressing gender differences in officiating



Despite some reservations around sports addressing gender issues and perhaps the clarity around any initiatives, it is clear that female officials feel like they are generally treated the same as male officials. Only 11% of officials disagreed or strongly disagreed that this did not happen in their sport, whilst 78% strongly agreed or agreed that they were treated equally (figure 16).

Figure 16: Organisations treat female and male officials the same



However, although a proportion of female officials believe that promotion opportunities are equal in their sports (64% strongly agree or agree), 18% also strongly disagree or disagree (almost 1 in 5 respondents) and this warrants further investigation (see figure 17).

Furthermore, whilst a similar number of female officials strongly agree or agree that match official appointments are distributed and allocated fairly (64% respectively), 18% also disagree or strongly disagree and 14% neither agreed or disagreed that these appointments are fair (figure 18), suggesting that further consideration of this practice should be considered.



Figure 17: Promotion opportunities are equal for male and female officials

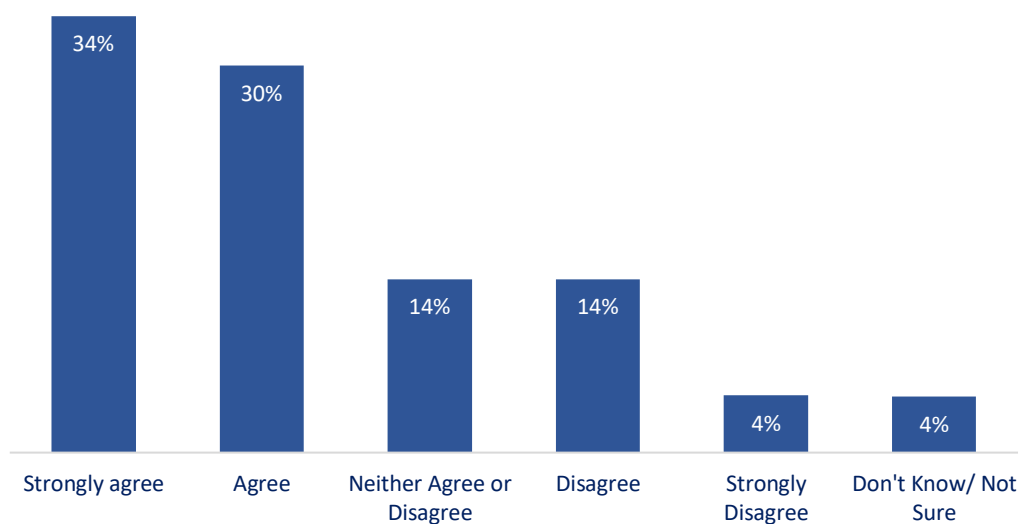
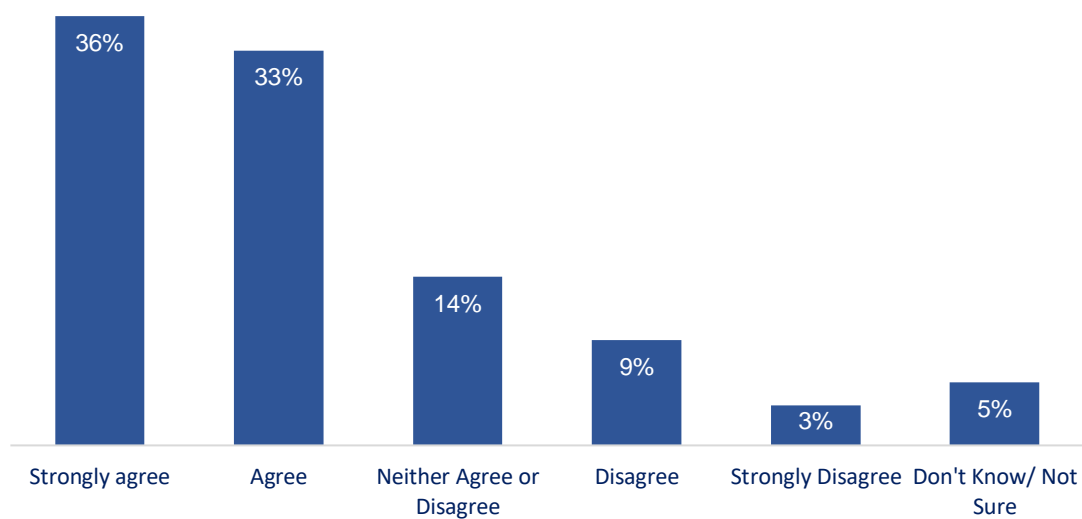


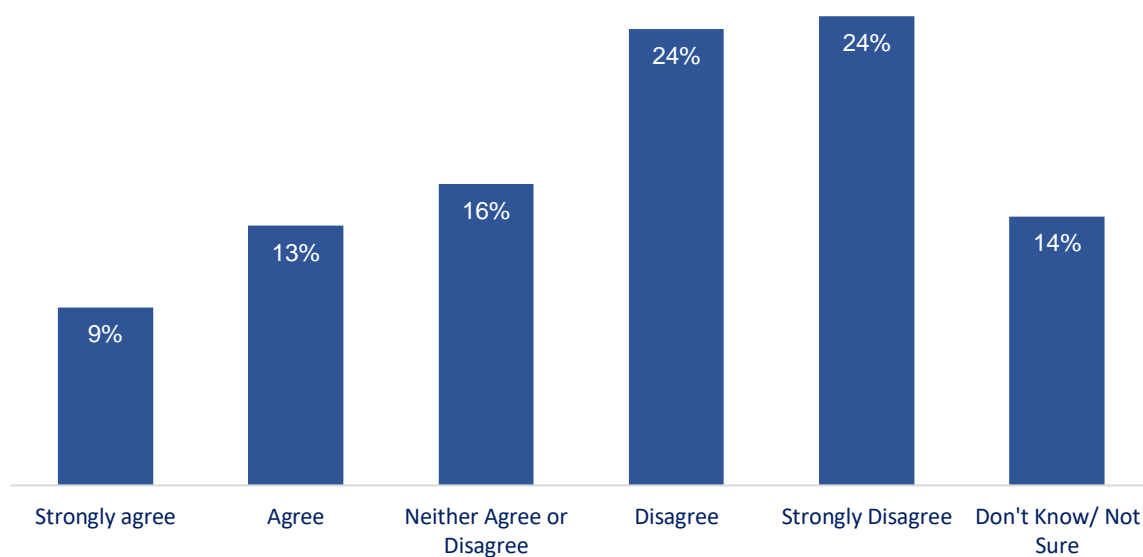
Figure 18: Match official appointments are fair



Training, development and support

Figure 19 outlines the training and development opportunities directed towards female officials. There are clearly some concerns around this training and development with 48% of respondents identifying that they either disagreed or strongly disagreed that training and development is targeted specifically at female officials. This is compared to 22% of respondents who strongly agree or agree. There are also a significant proportion of respondents who neither agreed or disagreed (16%) or who do not know what their sport is doing in this area (14%).

Figure 19: Training and development opportunities are directed at women in sport



The female officials who completed the survey did believe that access to training opportunities was fair and equal for them and for male officials (figure 20), although it appears that this training is often run by male instructors or coaches.



Figure 20: Access to training opportunities is equal for male and female officials

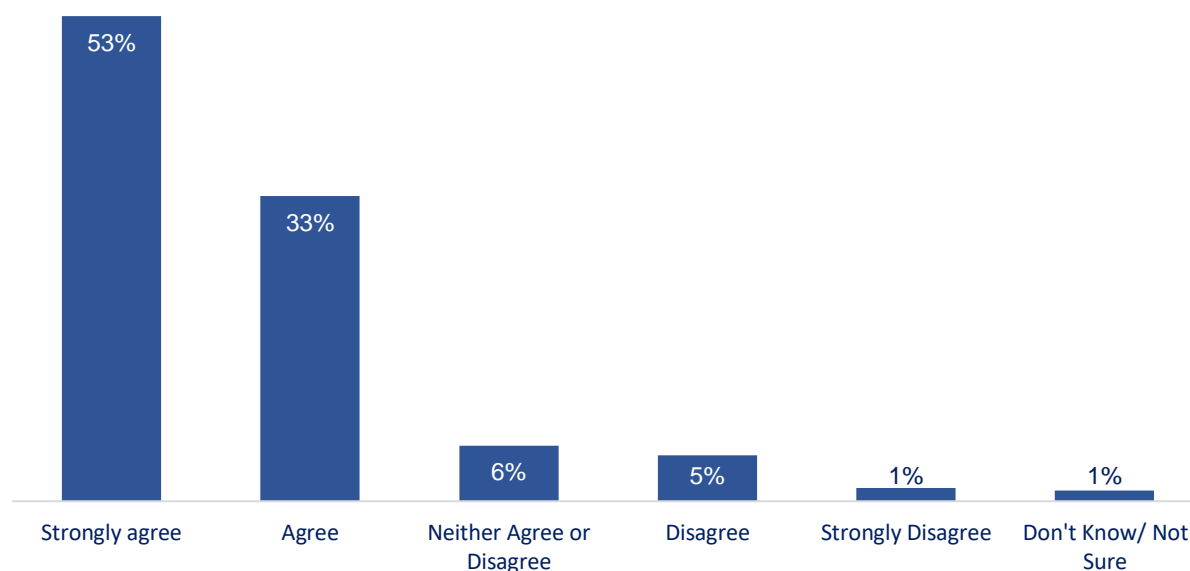
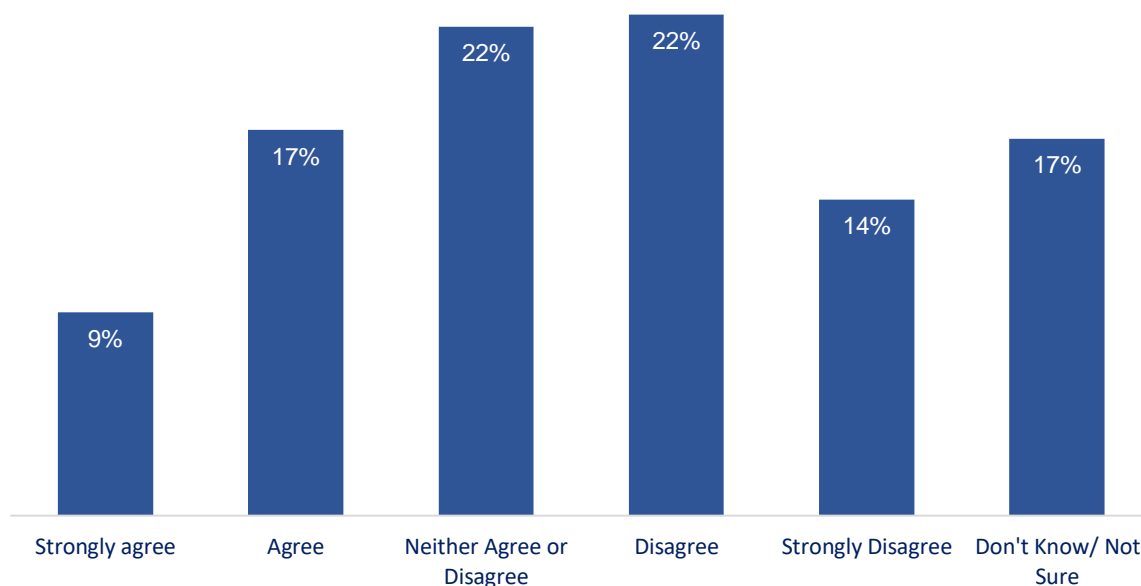


Figure 21 demonstrates that female officials report that they do not believe that the training and development opportunities that they are afforded are often designed or run by female instructors. For example, whilst 26% strongly agree or agree that the courses are delivered by female officials, 36% strongly disagree or disagree that this is the case, whilst 22% neither agree nor disagree and 17% don't know or aren't sure. Whilst it is clearly not necessarily practicable for any training or development to run with female officials in every circumstance, there are arguments to suggest that it might encourage more female officials to engage with these processes and it would also be a good marketing/engagement tool.

Figure 21: Specific training / development opportunities are designed and run by female sports officials or instructors



Nonetheless, the survey data suggests that information about support and, more specifically, adequate support is not considered a particular issue for female officials. Figure 22 shows that 54% of officials strongly agreed or agreed that the support provided is adequate whereas 17% of officials strongly disagree or disagree, although there are also a quarter of officials who neither agreed or disagreed that the support provided is adequate.

Figure 22: Adequate support is provided for me as a female official

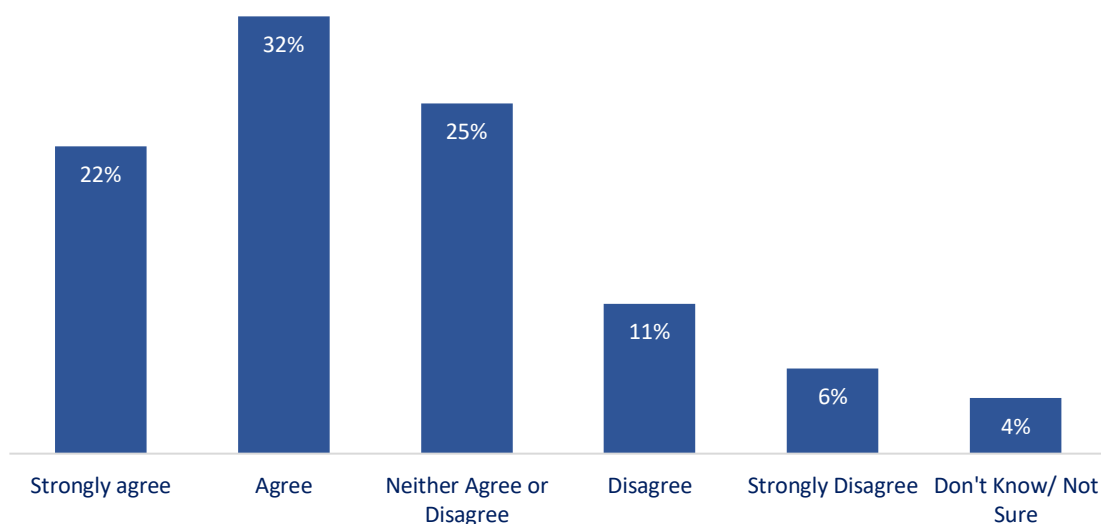
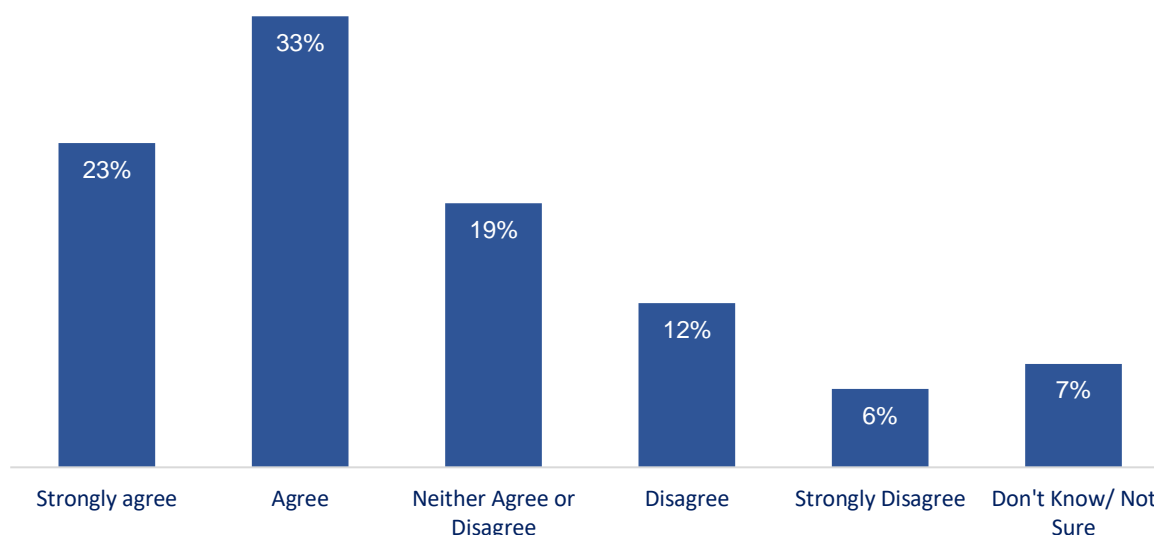


Figure 23 provides further insight. 56% of officials strongly agreed or agreed that they know where they can access support as a female official, with 18% of officials strongly disagreeing or disagreeing and 19% of officials neither agreeing or disagreeing.

Figure 23: I am confident that I know where I can find and access support as a female official



Continuing with the theme of support, female officials were asked whether they had a mentor and if they did not have a mentor whether this was something they would like to see introduced to provide support and guidance (figures 24 & 25). 65% of officials responded that they did not have a mentor and for those officials that responded that they did not have a mentor, 54% suggested that they would like to be allocated a mentor. In line with wider literature related to mentoring and sports officials (Webb et al., 2020b), it appears that there are also concerns around the provision of effective mentoring programmes for female officials.



Figure 24: Do you have a mentor?

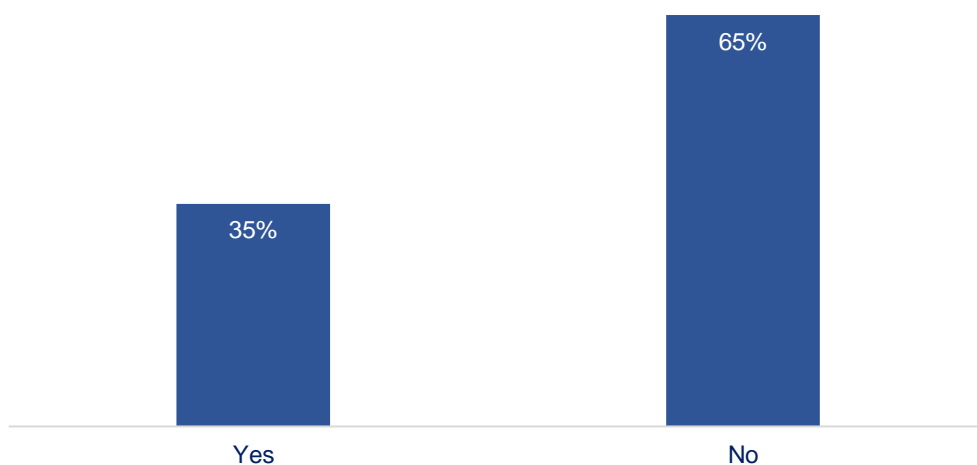
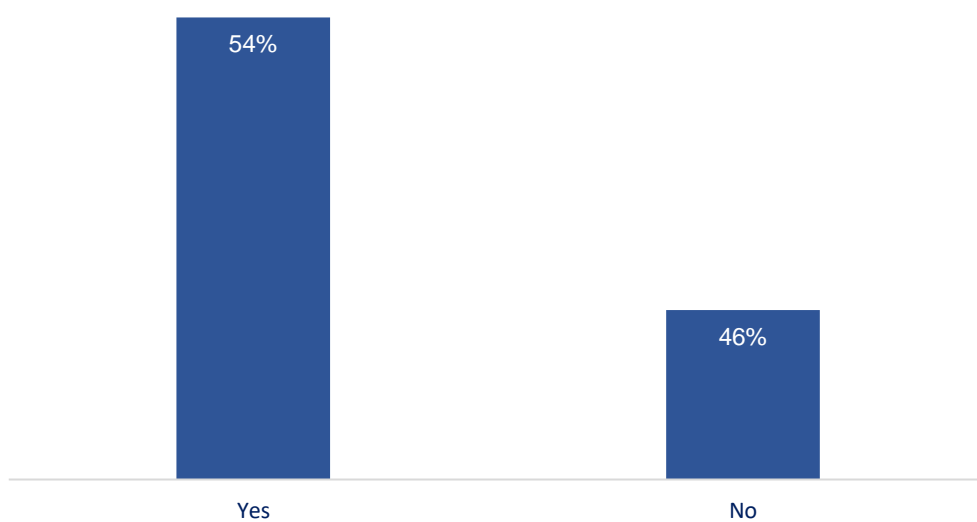


Figure 25: If you do not have a mentor, is this something you would like to see introduced?



Facilities and services

Female officials who completed the survey answered questions around the facilities that are provided for them and the services that they can access as part of their role as an official. The first questions in this area focused on the specific provision of female officiating kit. As can be seen in figure 26 the majority of respondents reported that their sport did not offer specific kit for female officials (66%), with 22% stating that they did have access to female officiating kit.

Figure 26: Does your sport offer female officiating kit?

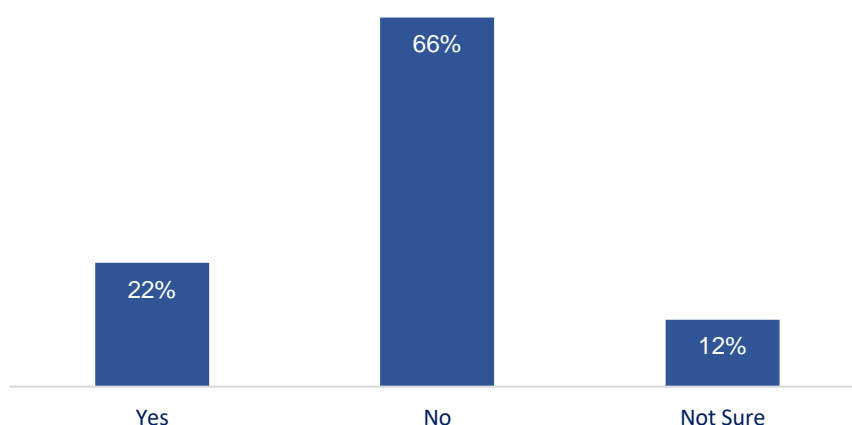
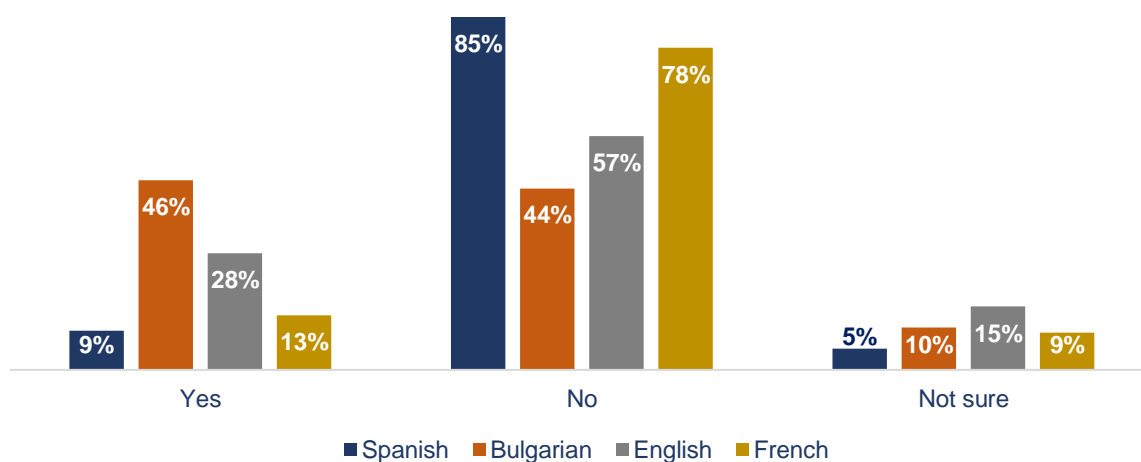


Figure 27: Does your sport offer female officiating kit by survey



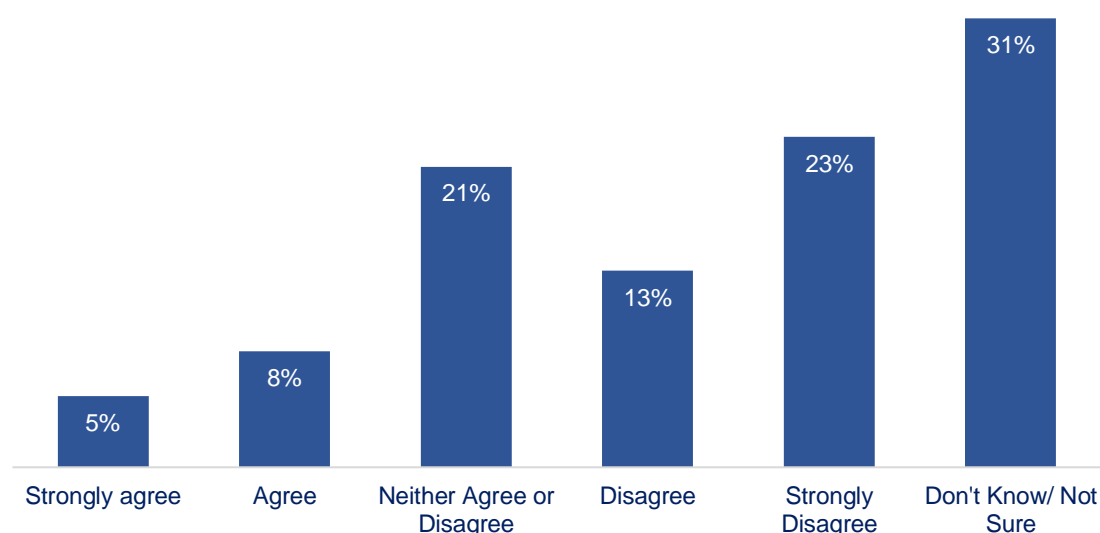
If we look further into this provision of kit, we can deduce that the responses differ depending on the language of the survey being focused upon. For example, figure 27 shows that in Bulgaria more officials report that they are offered specific kit (46%), whereas in Spain and France this figure is considerably lower (9% and 13% respectively). However, if we focus on the English responses broken down by country (table 1), we can see that although in the survey 28% of all respondents reported that they received specific female officiating kit, of the English language survey 51% of officials responding from Scotland reported that they did have female officiating kit, whilst 39% from England also reported this (both higher than the overall figure of 28%). This breakdown also shows that Italy (13%), the Netherlands (20%) and Portugal (21%) were below the overall number of responses from the English language survey.

Table 2: English responses broken down by Country (top 7 highest respondents)

Country	Yes	%	No	%	Not Sure	%	Total
England	182	39%	215	46%	72	15%	469
Netherlands	68	20%	177	53%	88	26%	333
Italy	23	13%	144	80%	12	7%	179
Belgium	26	24%	64	59%	19	17%	109
Scotland	40	51%	29	37%	9	12%	78
France	19	25%	53	69%	5	6%	77
Portugal	14	21%	48	71%	6	9%	68

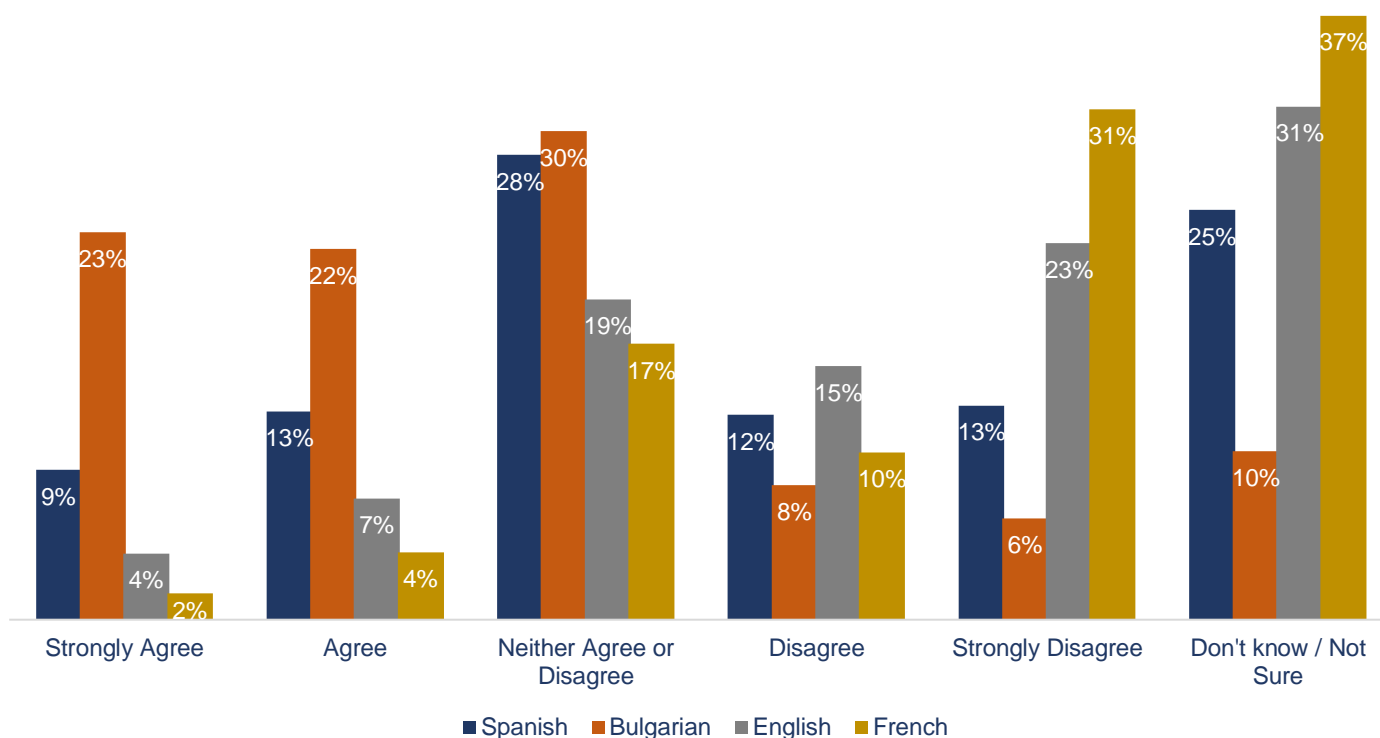
Figure 28 meanwhile focuses on the childcare support available to female officials. 36% of female officials either strongly disagreed or disagreed that childcare is adequately considered for female officials, whilst only 13% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that childcare is adequately considered. Clearly this is an area of provision that requires further consideration by governing bodies and officiating administrators.

Figure 28: Childcare is adequately considered for female officials in my sport



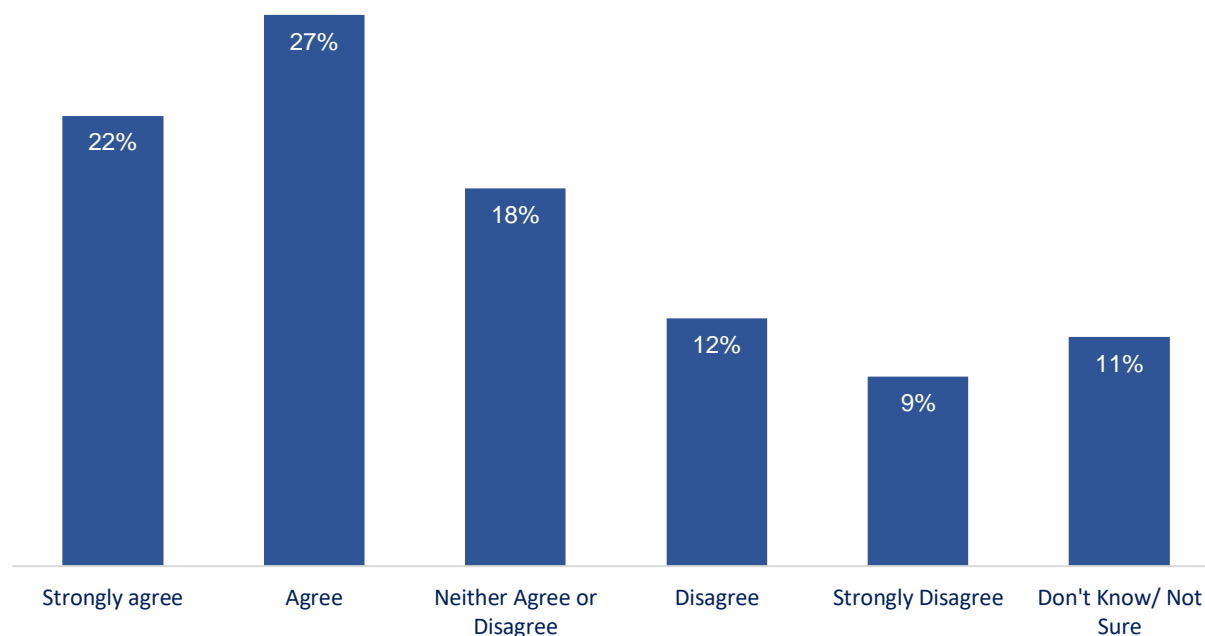
When responses are considered by each survey, we can see that 45% of respondents from Bulgaria believed that childcare was adequately considered, well in excess of the 13% from the cumulative survey results (see figure 29). Spanish results are also in advance of the cumulative total (22% that strongly agree or agree), whereas 41% of French respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed that childcare is adequately considered for female officials.

Figure 29: Childcare is adequately considered for female officials in my sport – by survey language



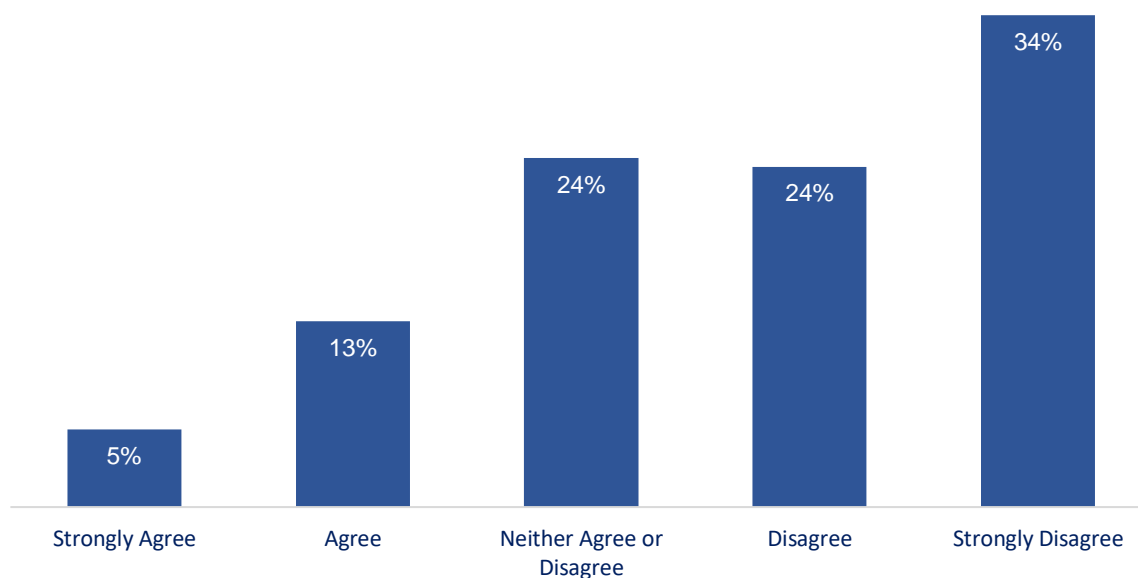
The changing facilities that are provided for female officials, are generally well received by the officials. 49% of the female officials that completed the survey strongly agreed or agreed that there are changing facilities provided for female officials for training, matches and competitions. However just over 1 in 5 female officials (21%) reported that they strongly disagreed or disagreed that changing facilities were provided for them, whilst 11% didn't know and 18% neither agreed nor disagreed (see figure 30).

Figure 30: Changing facilities are provided for female officials for training and matches / competitions



Positively, sports officials reported that gender inequality does not mean that they will necessarily consider whether to continue officiating (figure 31). 58% of female officials strongly disagreed or disagreed that gender inequality would make them consider whether to continue officiating, whereas 18% strongly agreed or agreed with the statement. However, 24% of respondents were not sure whether gender inequality would mean that they considered whether to continue officiating and this proportion of officials require further convincing of sports actively and positively addressing gender inequality.

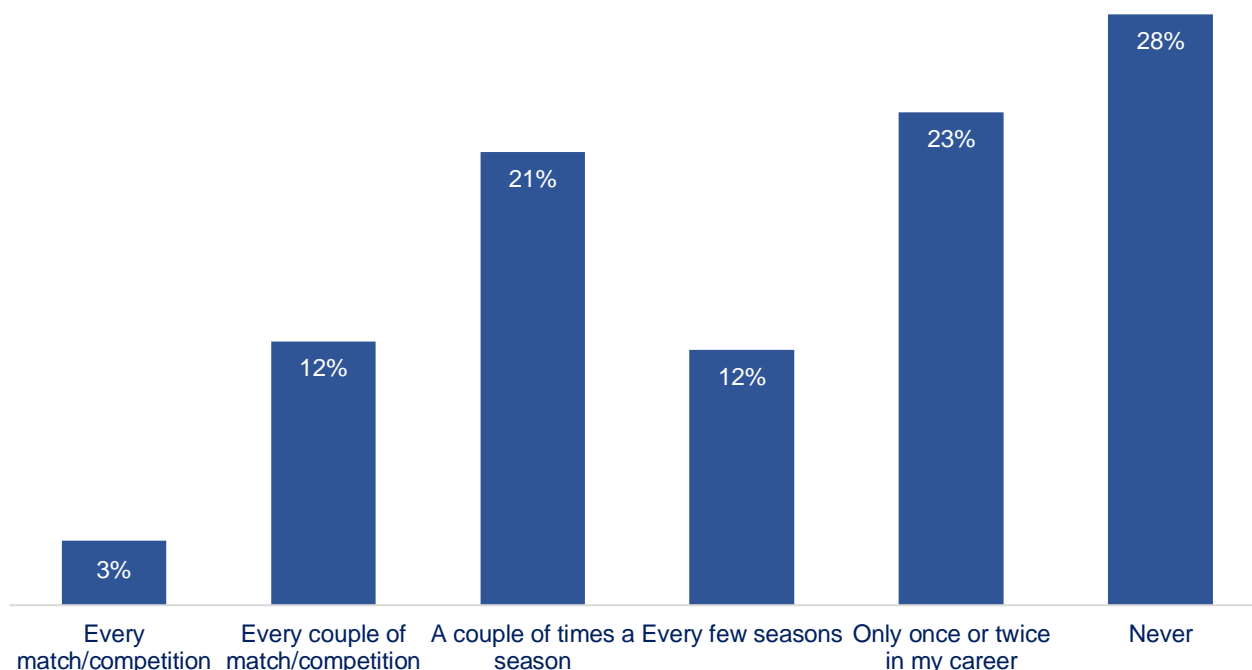
Figure 31: Gender inequality makes you consider whether or not to continue officiating



Female officiating abuse

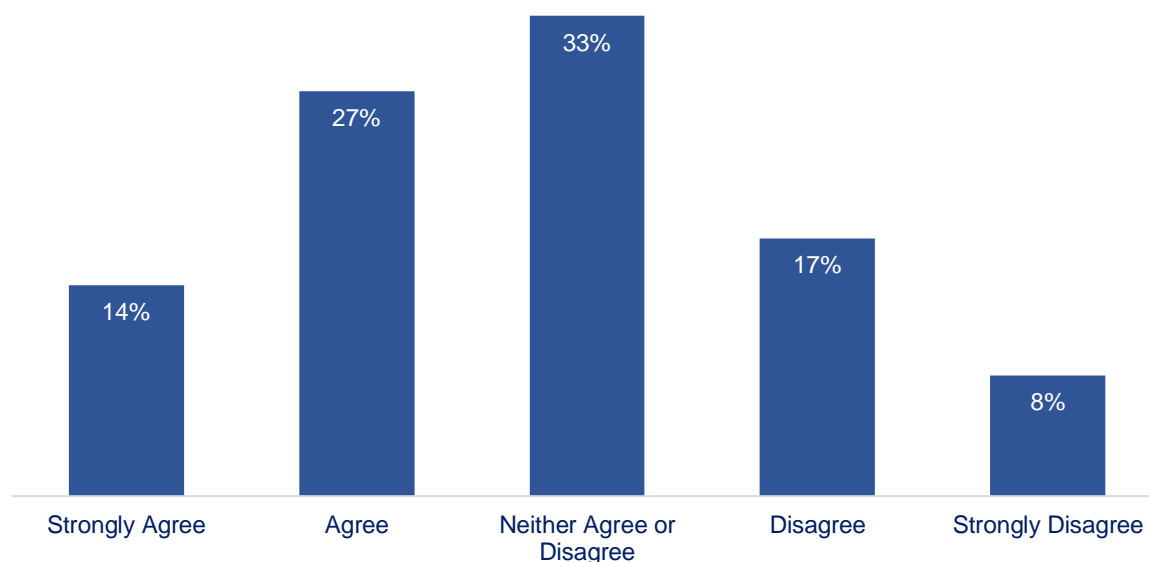
The female officials who responded to the survey reported that abuse was not as much of a concern as it is with other officiating groups and populations (see Webb et al., 2020a; Webb et al., 2020b). Although 15% of the respondents stated they received some form of verbal or physical abuse every match/competition or every couple of matches/competitions, 28% of respondents reported that they never received abuse and 23% stated that they have only had verbal or physical abuse once or twice in their careers to date (see figure 32). This raises some interesting questions around whether female officials are treated any differently to male officials.

Figure 32: How often do you receive what you would consider to be verbal or physical abuse?



41% of female officials believe that abuse is different towards them compared to male officials, with 25% either strongly disagreeing or disagreeing with the statement (see figure 33). This presents some interesting information for governing bodies and those managing sports official training, development and recruitment. Female officials appear to identify a difference between their treatment when comparing themselves to male officials, and this could mean that an increase in the number of female officials would assist in the reduction of abuse towards officials more widely. The wider cultural impact of any such reduction in abuse on officiating workforces should not be underestimated and contemplated further.

Figure 33: Abuse is different towards you as a female official compared to male officials



Female officials reported that they either did not believe that abuse towards them had increased (47%) or that they were not sure whether abuse had increased (41% - see figure 34). Those not sure about whether abuse had increased over the last 5 years could, in part, be due to the number of new officials, who did not feel that they could comment on what officiating was like 5 years ago (33% of officials that responded to the survey had been officiating for 5 years or less). It is encouraging that only 13% of officials believed that abuse towards them had increased, although this still equates to 408 respondents and therefore should still be given further consideration.

Moreover, it is clear that if officials suffer some form of abuse, it can make them consider whether they want to continue officiating (figure 35). 30% of female officials reported that they strongly agreed or agreed that abuse would make them question whether they want to continue officiating, whereas 26% of officials strongly disagreed or disagreed. Therefore, it is important to maintain reduced levels of abuse towards female officials, or there could be a risk that retention levels deteriorate due to an increasing amount of abuse.



Figure 34: In your experience has abuse towards female sports officials increased over the last 5 years?

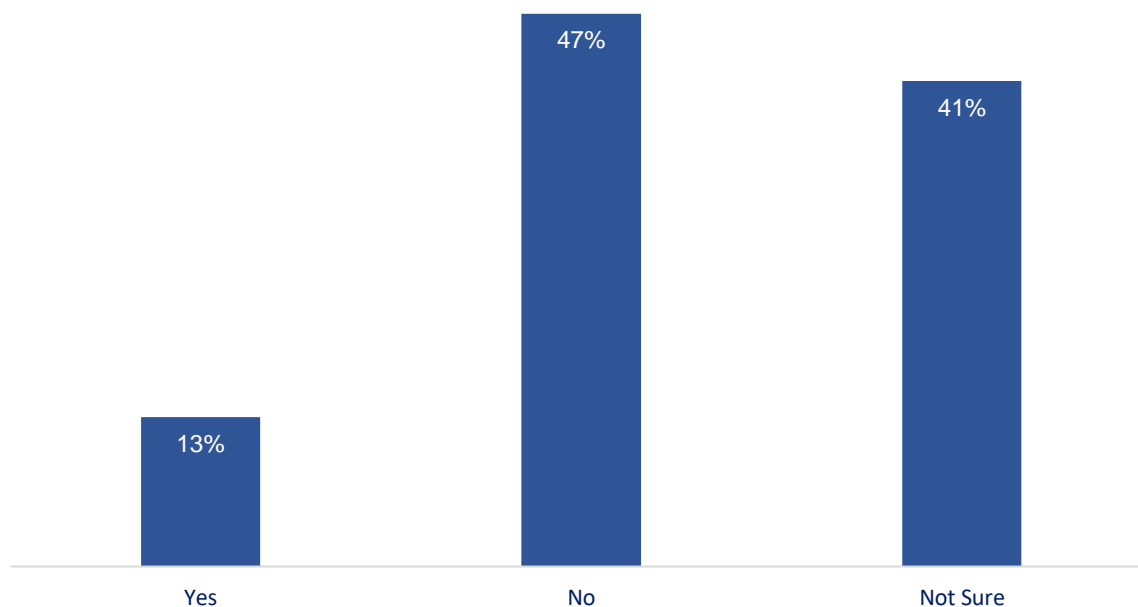
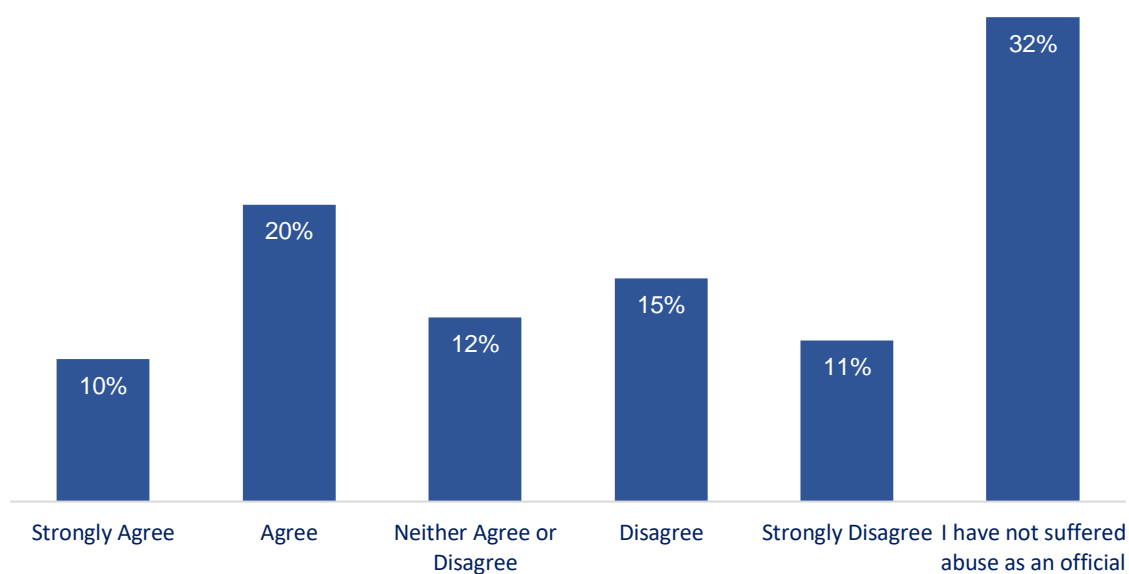


Figure 35: If you have suffered abuse, it makes you question whether or not to continue officiating



Discontinuation

Continuing the theme of officiating drop out or discontinuation, female officials were asked whether they were considering leaving officiating in the next 12 months (figure 36). A significant percentage of female officials are content to stay in officiating for at least the next 12 months (89% stated that they were not considering leaving). However, 11% of officials stated that they were considering leaving officiating in the next 12 months. When this is broken down further by language and each survey, we can see that Bulgarian and English survey respondents are more likely to consider leaving than those in Spain and France (figure 37), although it should be stated that these numbers are still low compared to those officials who are choosing to continue.

Figure 36: Are you thinking of leaving officiating in the next 12 months?

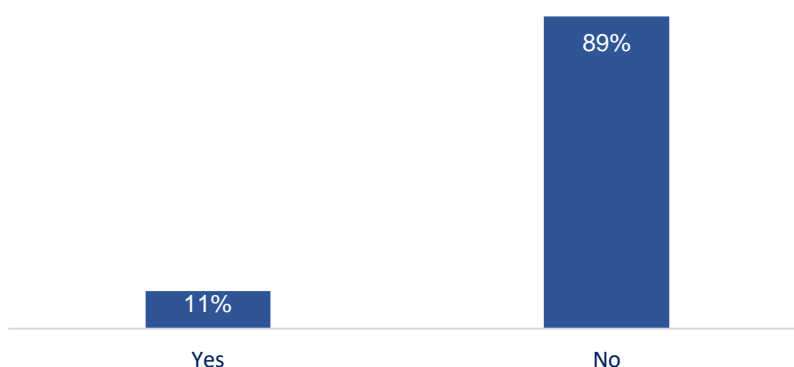


Figure 37: Are you thinking of leaving officiating in the next 12 months (by survey language)?

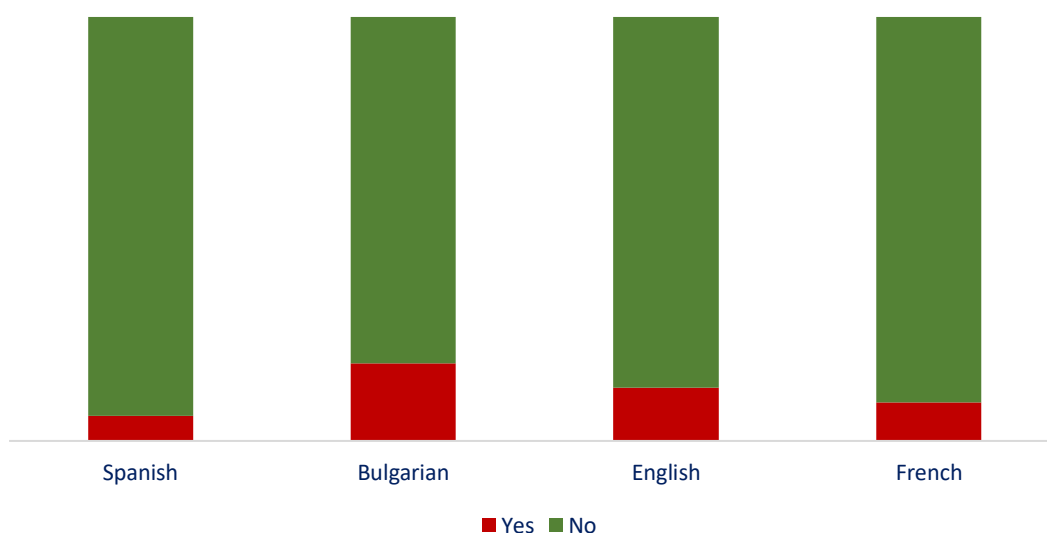
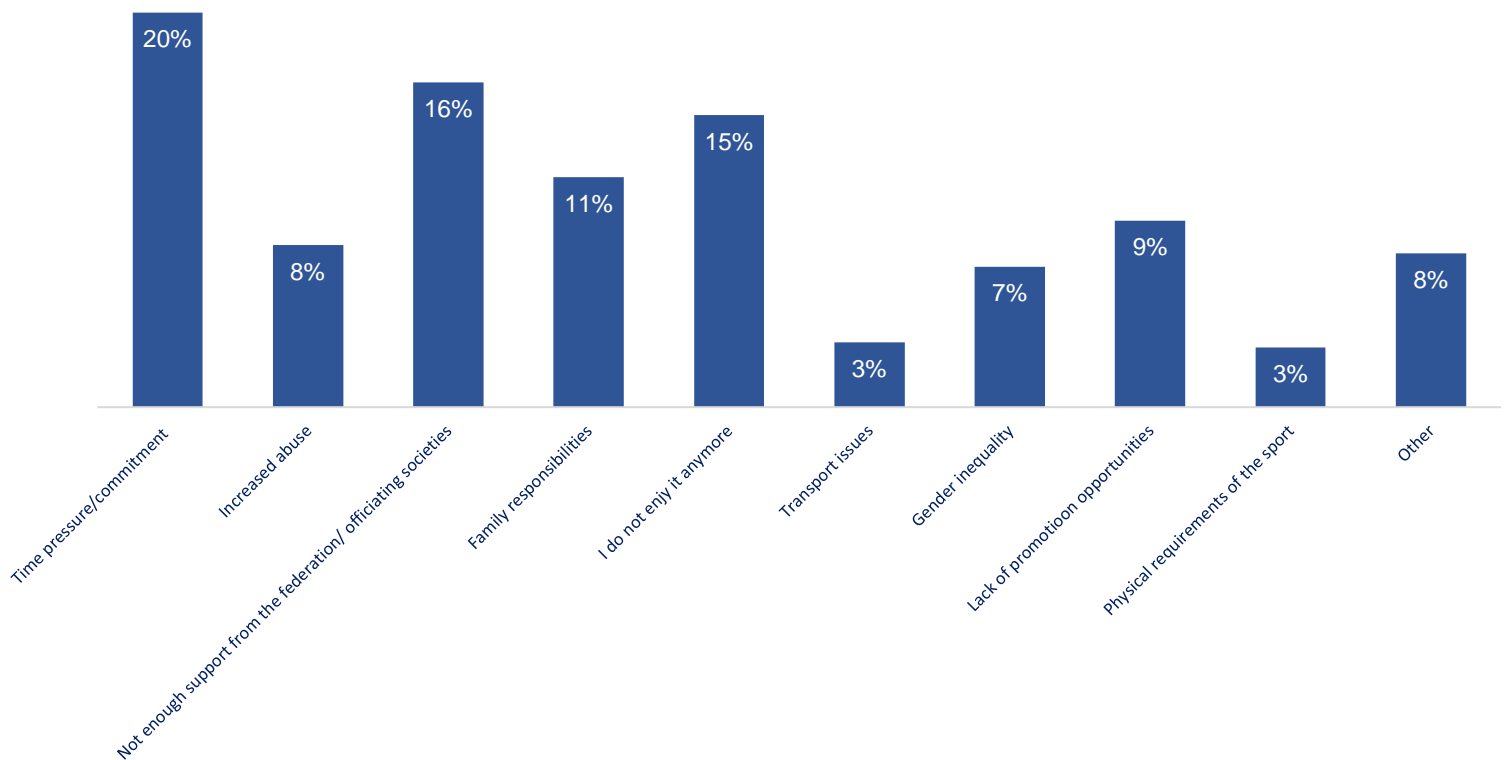




Figure 38 details the reasons concerning why female officials would consider leaving officiating. The main reasons reported were around time pressure/commitment (20%), not enough support from federation/officiating societies (16%), those officials who do not enjoy it anymore (15%) and family responsibilities (11%).

Figure 38: Why are you thinking of leaving?



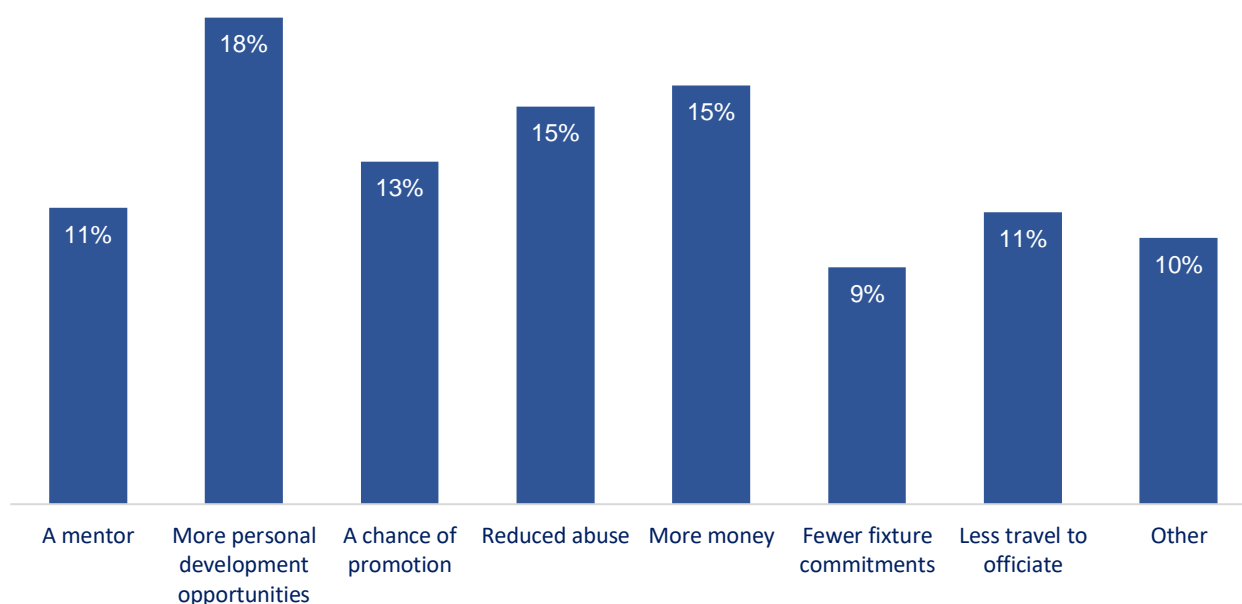
If some of these responses are considered further, such as by survey language for example, we can start to see some differentiation in the responses. Time pressure/commitment, whilst eliciting the highest percentage of responses across all surveys, was higher than the average from the Bulgarian and English surveys (27% and 21% respectively) and lower from the Spanish and French responses (15% and 17% respectively). Moreover, we can see that increased abuse is less of an issue in Bulgaria and a lack of enjoyment is also less of an issue in Bulgaria, but a lack of promotion opportunities appears to be more of a concern in Bulgaria when compared to the other surveys.

Table 3: Reason for leaving by survey language response

Reason for leaving	Spanish	Bulgarian	English	French
Time pressure/commitment	15%	27%	21%	17%
Increased abuse	10%	3%	8%	9%
Not enough support from the federation / officiating societies	18%	15%	15%	21%
Family responsibilities	10%	15%	12%	11%
I do not enjoy it anymore	17%	6%	15%	15%
Transport issues	3%	6%	3%	3%
Gender inequality	10%	6%	7%	6%
Lack of promotion opportunities	8%	15%	9%	9%
Physical requirements of the sport	2%	3%	3%	2%
Other	7%	3%	8%	8%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

In order to keep sports officials within their chosen sport, it is imperative to better understand what would motivate them to stay in their sport. The responses to the survey were varied with more professional development opportunities (18%), reduced abuse (15%), more money (15%) and a chance of promotion (13%) the top responses (figure 39). These findings demonstrate that officials have varied requirements to prevent them from leaving, if they have expressed that it is something that they are considering. These factors should be further considered by governing bodies in order to recruit and retain as many female officials as possible.

Figure 39: If you are thinking of leaving, what changes would persuade you to continue officiating?



Conclusions/Outcomes

There are a number of positive factors that have been reported as a result of the survey responses. Female officials are generally quite positive about their situation and feel that the sports that they operate within are treating them fairly and equitably when compared to male officials. Furthermore, female officials reported that they felt accepted within their sports and that they were not thinking of leaving officiating in the next 12 months. There are areas which require greater attention, such as issues related to childcare and officiating kit which are both areas that require further consideration and action. There were also concerns raised around a lack of mentors, even though a number of female officials reported that they would want a mentor if they were offered the opportunity. Given that we know the importance of support networks for sports officials, this should be investigated further. There was also identification that targeted training for female officials could be improved and that female instructors were not particularly common. This is a barrier that might be preventing female officials from accessing and undertaking training in some situations or circumstances. Finally, abuse towards female officials appears somewhat different to that of other officiating groups (particularly male officials) and it is also not perceived to be as commonplace within our sample. This finding raises some questions around how we might further tackle the prevalence of abuse towards officials more widely, and the role that female officials could play in any such developments.