



THE
IRISH SPORTS
COUNCIL
AN CHOMHAIRLE SPÓIRT



IRISH SPORTS MONITOR 2013 ANNUAL REPORT



Ipsos MRBI

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Foreword

On behalf of the Irish Sports Council I am pleased to welcome the publication of the 2013 annual Irish Sports Monitor (ISM) report on adult sports participation in the Republic of Ireland. This is the fifth annual report in the ISM series which was initiated by the Council in 2007 as a means of accurately monitoring and tracking active and social participation in sport among adults in Ireland.

Since its introduction the ISM has provided valuable insights on all aspects of sports participation at national and local level. As such it has become an important resource in the planning infrastructure throughout sport – from the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, through the Council to the National Governing Bodies and Local Sports Partnerships. The ISM also allows the Council to monitor progress against its long term strategy to increase participation in sport.

The 2013 report is based on the analysis of nearly 9,400 questionnaires from a representative sample of the Irish public aged 16 and over. This large sample size represents one of the strengths of the ISM providing as it does a basis for detailed analysis of participation across all key demographic and socio-economic variables as well as by sport, region, etc.

We have seen an enormous upsurge in recent years in participation in individual sporting activities like running, cycling, triathlon, swimming and exercise all of which has been captured by successive ISM reports. It is pleasing to note that the upward momentum in most facets of participation seen in the 2011 report is reflected in this latest report also.

I am particularly pleased to see the gender gap in sports participation continuing to close due principally to the increase in participation by women. In the context of the positive relationship between participation in sport / physical activity and health it is also encouraging to see that the percentage of adults meeting the National Physical Activity Guidelines is on the rise and at the other end of the activity spectrum that levels of sedentarism continue to decline.

As with any monitoring system, the ISM helps to cast a light on some key challenges for the sports policy system. In particular the resilience of the social gradients around all aspects of sports participation stand out as an ongoing challenge around which there appears to be no easy solution. However, based on the insights from the ISM and other research, the Council will continue to work with key stakeholders and partners in developing and implementing programmes aimed at increasing levels of participation among those most underrepresented in sport and physical activity.

The 2013 report also identifies a decline in participation among younger males from 2011. While they are still the most active sporting group of all, the Council recognises the importance of maintaining levels of participation through these key transition years.

I would like to acknowledge the work of Ipsos MRBI and the Council executives in the preparation of this report. I also acknowledge the members of the ISM Steering Committee for their oversight of the ISM project and the report's preparation.

John Treacy
Chief Executive
Irish Sports Council

1. Executive Summary

Participation in Sport

- Participation in sport has risen from 44.8% to 47.2%. This last figure is equivalent to almost 1.7 million Irish adults participating in sport regularly.
- The trend towards sports participated in on an individual basis continues in the 2013 study with almost four times as many people participating in individual sports (41.5%) than team based activities (10.9%).
- Team sports are often played in combination with one another, with, for example, 29% of those playing Gaelic football also playing soccer.
- The proportions participating in personal exercise, running, cycling, weights and dancing have increased, while the proportion participating in golf has declined.

Differences In Sporting Participation By Key Population Groups

- Personal exercise is now the most popular sporting activity for both genders.
- A higher proportion of females are participating in sport than previously, (increasing by 3.7% to 42.7%) resulting in a narrowing of the gender gap in participation. There has been a notable rise in participation among females aged 25 to 44.
- Participation among males in general remains unchanged; however younger males are less likely to play sport than in 2011.
- Those in employment are more likely to participate in sport than those unemployed – a reverse of the situation in 2011.
- Those with higher levels of education or income are more likely to participate in sport than lower education or income groups.
- Participation levels among those with an illness/disability (33.5%) are considerably lower than those without an illness/disability (50.5%).

Broader Physical Activity

- Recreational walking remains the most popular form of physical activity with 2.3 million people aged 16 or over participating in the last seven days, with the percentage of people walking for recreation increasing marginally since 2011 from 63.9% to 64.6%.
- Walking for transport has remained broadly unchanged since 2011 with 40.2% engaging in this activity, below the levels recorded in 2008 and 2009.
- Cycling for transport has increased by 0.9% since 2011 and remains heavily male dominated.
- Almost 9 in 10 adults take part in some physical activity on a weekly basis with men and women equally likely to be active in this regard.

Meeting the National Physical Activity Guidelines

- The percentage of people who are highly active increased by 2% since 2011 from 29.3% to 31.3%.
- The proportion who are sedentary continues to decline with a 1.2% decrease in 2013 and a 5.6% decline since 2007.
- Over 45% of those playing sport are meeting the National Physical Activity Guidelines.

Social Participation in Sport

- The number of people volunteering for sport (13.3%), being a member of a sports club (36.3%), or attending a sports event (20.3%) is broadly unchanged since 2011 and still well ahead of 2009 levels.
- The number of volunteers involved across multiple sports (25.5%) has increased since 2011. As such, while the overall number of volunteers is unchanged, the extent of voluntary activity has increased.
- There is a clear divide across genders with males more likely to be club members, more likely to volunteer and more likely to take up roles that are directly involved with the running of the sport.
- Over two-thirds consider sports administration to be too male dominated at a national level.

Role of the Club in Sporting Participation

- Lack of interest/time and clubs being associated with competitive participation are the main reasons cited for not being a member of a club.
- A significant proportion participating in sport outside the club environment claims that there is nothing that would motivate those people to join a club (26%).
- The most cited reasons which would encourage joining or re-joining a club were if family or friends got involved (18%) and if it was more convenient time wise (19%).
- Among individuals who claimed nothing would encourage them to join/re-join a club for a sport they were participating in, 59% are highly active. This compares with 48% of those who indicated some interest in joining/re-joining a club being highly active, which indicates that some highly active individuals may not feel that a club would add anything to their sporting experience.

Sport and Health

- In terms of perceptions of health (i.e. how healthy a person believes they are), highly active individuals are significantly more likely than sedentary individuals to report their weight (89%), alcohol consumption (72%) and eating habits (89%) as healthy.
- Fewer highly active individuals report engaging in smoking (17%) than sedentary individuals (25%).
- A higher proportion of sedentary individuals watched more than 5 hours of television in the previous day (9%) compared with highly active individuals (3%).

2. Introduction

In his introduction to “Healthy Ireland”, the new framework for improved health and wellbeing published in 2013, Dr. James Reilly then Minister for Health, comments that the population is being led towards a future that is dangerously unhealthy and very likely unaffordable. This is supported by key health indicators which suggest that, in Ireland, 61% of all adults and three in four people over fifty are either obese or overweight.¹

The most effective solution to this significant challenge lies in promoting healthy lifestyles through a combination of improving consumption behaviours (dietary, alcohol and smoking) and increasing levels of physical activity. The framework published by the Government highlights the importance of taking this form of action in order to develop a healthier society and emphasises its importance in ensuring Ireland’s economic recovery.

Not only does sport and physical activity play a key role in contributing to the physical and mental health of society, but it is also critically important in maximising the social capital that exists within communities; both locally and nationally. It provides an umbrella for uniting communities, and sporting success can enhance the feeling of wellbeing at local and national level. It is claimed that sport is worth almost €2.4 billion to the Irish economy and supports 40,000 jobs.²

The Irish Sports Monitor

The Irish Sports Monitor is a large scale population based survey designed to measure physical and social participation in sport and other forms of exercise in Ireland. Sport is defined in the Irish Sports Council Act as including not only activities participated on a competitive basis, but also on a recreational basis.

“All forms of physical activity which, through casual or regular participation aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental well-being and at forming social relationships.”

As such the definition used in this study is similarly broad and includes not only popular competitive activities, but also those such as walking, running, dancing and gym activities, all of which deliver physical health benefits.

Previous studies were conducted annually between 2007 and 2009 as well as in 2011. The 2013 study involved interviews with 9,390 respondents aged 16+. All interviews are conducted by telephone using a random selection of landline telephone numbers and interviewing quotas to ensure a nationally representative sample of the Irish population. More details about the survey methodology are included in the Appendix at the end of the report along with a copy of the core questionnaire.

¹ Survey of Lifestyle, Attitudes and Nutrition (SLÁN) 2007

² Study on the Contribution of Sport to Economic Growth and Employment in the EU. European Commission. November 2012

The survey asked respondents about their activity over the past seven days in terms of sport, recreational walking and walking or cycling for transport. In addition they were also asked about membership of clubs, attendance at sporting events and any volunteering roles that they may be involved in.

The previous study in 2011 found a considerable rise in sporting participation from 34% to 45%, along with a significant rise from 26% to 30% in the proportion meeting the National Physical Activity Guidelines.³ While most of the popular forms of sporting activity saw an increase in participation levels, the increase was more pronounced for sports played on an individual basis, in line with a trend that had emerged over previous series. Increases in social participation were also identified with increases in voluntary activity, club membership and attendance at sporting events between 2009 and 2011. Many of these increases were likely as a result of individuals having more time and changed priorities due to recessionary factors and increased unemployment.

The 2013 study maintained consistency in the questionnaire and survey methodology as used in 2011. A number of flexible modules were also conducted at the end of the survey to examine current relevant issues in further depth. Three topics relating to physical and social participation in sport were explored through these modules during 2013, analysis of which are included in this report:

- Participation in sport outside the club environment
- Gender roles in sport
- Sport and health

Adjustments Made To 2011 Data

As is standard across most research studies, data weighting is conducted within the Irish Sports Monitor to address imbalances in the data that may arise due to particular groups being under/over-represented in the survey responses. For this study it typically involved a combination of factors including age, gender, region, education and working status which would be interlocked with one another to match the profile of the general population.

For the first three months of interviewing on the 2011 study, no data was collected on highest level of education attained by each respondent. On this basis a decision was taken to proceed with a weighting scheme which omitted this factor, and imbalances in the data were addressed through other factors. As such the data published in the 2011 report does not include highest level of education within the weighting scheme.

³ Participated in 30 minutes or more moderate physical activity at least five times during the previous seven days

Upon reviewing the data since publication, more detailed information on highest level of education was obtained from the CSO and the weighting scheme for 2011 was re-evaluated. Adjustments were then made to include education within the 2011 weighting scheme (alongside other factors), and the data were adjusted as a result.

On this basis, the figures quoted in this report for 2011 are different to those published in the 2011 report. The differences are relatively minor in most cases, and the core themes identified previously remain unchanged.

The Wider Context

Previous ISM reports have indicated that sporting participation (both physical and social) is strongly associated with wider social and economic trends. The deepening recession between the 2009 and 2011 studies led to increased participation in sport and recreational walking, as well as across volunteering, club membership and attendance at events. As such it is important to place the results of this report within the context of wider trends during 2012 and 2013 (i.e. since the previous period of data collection).

The previous reports noted the likely impact that increased unemployment was having on sports participation. A lack of free time is often claimed to be a barrier to increased sports participation, and one of the positive outcomes from increased unemployment (and reduced working hours) was that individuals had more time to dedicate to other activities. Unemployment rose sharply between the 2009 and 2011 studies (from 12.3% in June 2009 to 14.5% in June 2011), and the ISM recorded an increase in active and social sports participation over the same time period. The unemployment rate peaked shortly after the end of fieldwork on the 2011 study and during fieldwork on the 2013 study it stood at 13.3% (June 2013). As such, unemployment (and most likely reduced working hours for many) had fallen slightly between the 2011 and 2013 studies, although it remained very high relative to the earliest ISM reports.

Emigration is another key factor likely to have an impact on participation in sport. In many cases participation in sport, particularly team sport, is strongly skewed towards younger individuals, and younger men in particular. Emigration has a disproportionate impact on younger members of the population who are more vulnerable to the effects of unemployment and are more mobile in terms of availing of opportunities to emigrate (either by choice to seek new experiences or otherwise). There has been some commentary that sports clubs (particularly those in rural areas) have suffered from declining membership levels as individuals moved out of these areas to find work (either overseas or elsewhere within Ireland).⁴ As such emigration can have a strongly negative impact on sport in Ireland.

⁴ "GAA officials in crisis talks as emigration threatens clubs' survival". Irish Examiner January 18, 2013

Figures from the Central Statistics Office (CSO)⁵ show that 89,000 people emigrated from Ireland in the 12 month period up to April 2013 – an increase of 2.2% over the previous 12 month period. While part of this group is accounted for by returning immigrants, the majority (50,900) were Irish citizens leaving the country. Combining the figures collected between 2011 and 2013 shows a net outward migration of 83,600 Irish citizens (although some of these may have returned in the intervening time period). The effect of such population movement on sport and sporting organisations in Ireland is potentially significant.

A further key metric to consider within sporting participation is consumer spending. While many sports have no or minimal direct costs, others may involve the purchase of equipment, membership fees or a payment in order to participate. In addition, social participation in sport through membership fees or charges to attend sporting fixtures may also be affected by changes in consumer spending behaviour. Although 2009 saw the largest adjustment in consumer spending (as measured through retail sales) with the CSO retail sales index declining by 17.9% during that year, each year since then has seen declines (albeit at lower levels). 2013 indicated a reversal in this trend, with five of the six months in the second half of the year recording an increase in consumer spending. Looking at this in conjunction with consumer sentiment indices indicates a greater confidence and cause for optimism in terms of consumer spending.

The report for the 2011 ISM noted the challenges that these factors presented in terms of developing Irish sport. These factors remain significant and present both opportunities and challenges to the very nature of sport in Ireland. However, they are not the only factors that will determine the success of policies and initiatives to increase participation in sport and physical activity. Society, both in Ireland and internationally, faces growing challenges in terms of unhealthy lifestyles, poor dietary behaviour and increased levels of obesity. Sport and other forms of physical activity have the potential to play a major role in contributing to a healthy society (both in the physical and sociological senses), and increasing participation levels remains a key public policy priority.

⁵ Quarterly National Household Survey, April 2013

Participation in Sport

3. Participation in Sport

Introduction

A central objective of this study is to measure physical participation in sporting activity. The ISM defines sport as any physical activity that is undertaken for exercise, recreation or sport (excluding recreational walking).⁶ The study does not impose any threshold on the level of exertion that is required in order for an activity to be considered a sport, and as such it includes a very broad range of activities. Levels of exertion are measured separately and are subject to analysis in a later section.

Key results that emerge are:

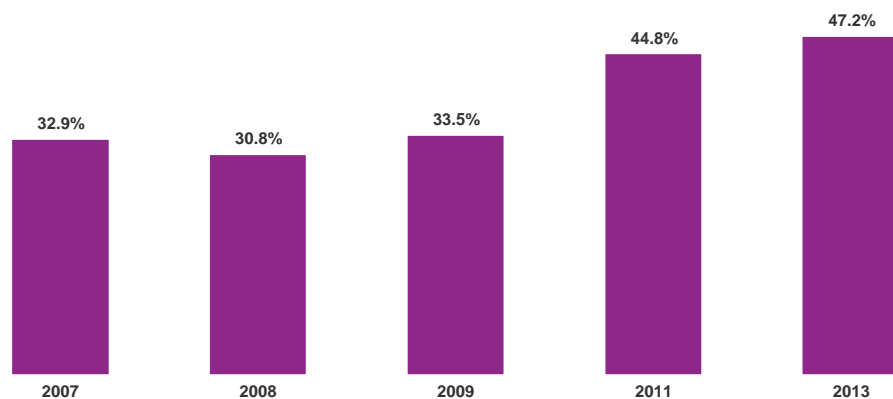
- Participation in sport has risen from 44.8% to 47.2%. This last figure is equivalent to almost 1.7 million Irish adults participating in sport regularly.
- The trend towards sports participated in on an individual basis continues in the 2013 study with almost four times as many people participating in individual sports (41.5%) than team based activities (10.9%).
- Team sports are often played in combination with one another, with, for example, 29% of those playing Gaelic football also playing soccer.
- The proportions participating in personal exercise, running, cycling, weights and dancing have increased, while the proportion participating in golf has declined.

⁶ Recreational walking is considered separately within this research and is examined in section five of this report.

Overview

Both the 2009 and 2011 reports noted significant increases in sports participation. The 2011 ISM report highlighted an unprecedented change in physical activity with participation in sport rising from 33.5% to 44.8% in a two year period. The 2013 research identifies a further increase in sporting participation, with 47.2% of Irish adults now participating in a sporting activity (Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1 – Sports Participation Over Time



While the increase since the previous report is not of the same scale as that identified between 2009 and 2011, it remains a significant increase, equating approximately to an additional 85,000 people participating regularly in sport.

The previous report attributed much of the change in participation to the wider context of recessionary effects, particularly in the context of individuals having more free time due to higher levels of unemployment and reduced working hours. In turn, a wider focus on health and wellbeing (a key driver of sports participation) may have led higher numbers to participate in sport and other physical activity. This supports findings, both from this and other research series, which indicate that the key barrier to becoming more involved in sport is a lack of free time.

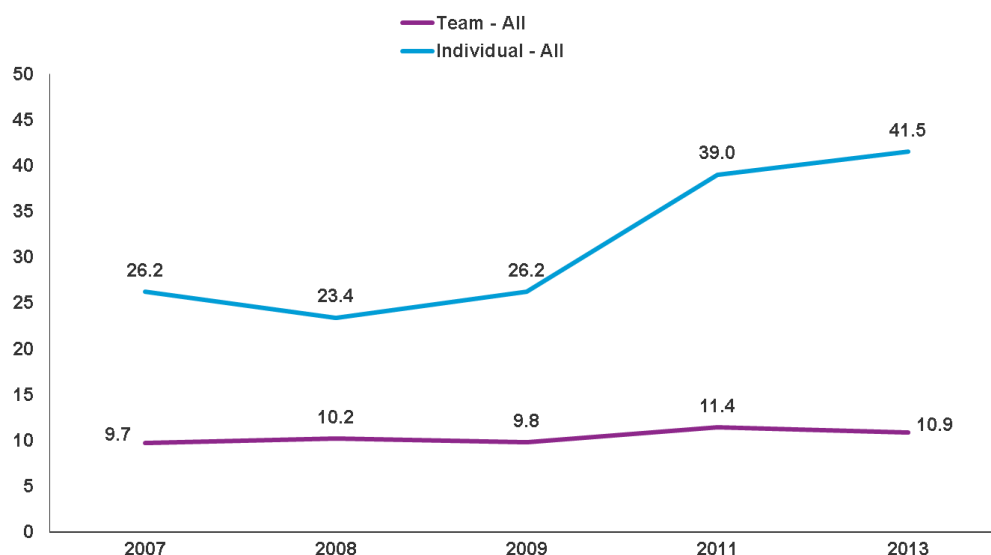
As outlined in the Introduction to this report, this wider context remains largely unchanged, so the same forces may have driven the increased sporting participation seen in 2013.

The Sporting Spectrum

Previous reports noted that the increase in sports participation was being driven primarily by an increase in sports played on an individual basis (for example, running, swimming, personal exercise) rather than team-based sports. While sports being played on an individual basis⁷ have proven more popular than team-based sports throughout this research series, the gap between both types of sport has widened more recently.

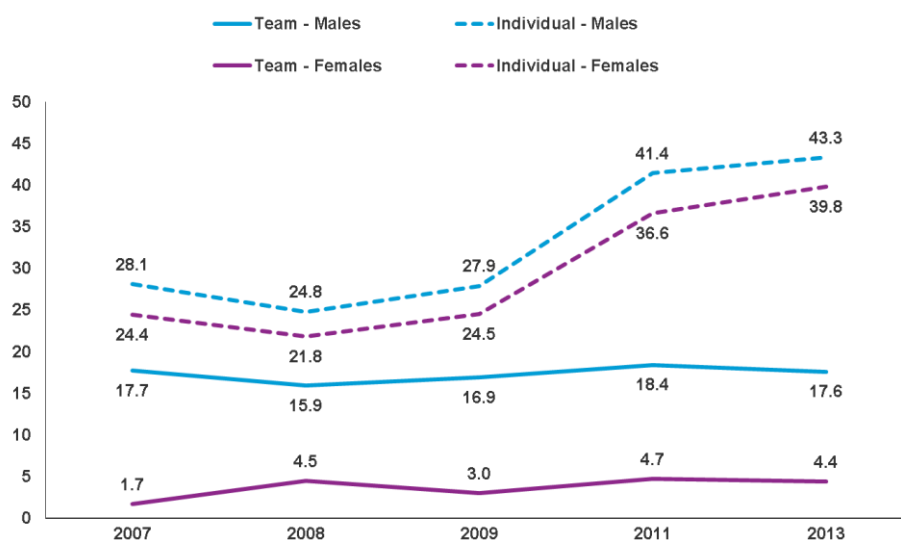
As illustrated in Figure 3.2.1 below, this trend has continued in the 2013 survey, with the proportion participating in sports played on an individual basis increasing by 2.5% to 41.5%, while the proportion participating in team-based sports has remained broadly unchanged at 10.9%.

Figure 3.2.1 – Proportion Participating In Individual And Team Sports – All



⁷ It is important to note that many of these sports could be played in a social setting with other people, but are categorised as being individual due to them not typically being team-based activities.

Figure 3.2.2 – Proportion Participating In Individual And Team Sports – By Gender



As outlined in previous reports, the increase in individual sports is likely to be driven by that type of sport, due to its informal unstructured nature, typically providing easier access for those taking up sport later in life. However, in the context of substantial increases in activity levels, the lack of significant increase in team-based activities is notable. Potential reasons for stagnant participation levels in team-based sports (which are more popular among younger males, and in which participation levels have decreased marginally (Figure 3.2.2) can be explored in more detail when looking at popular types of sport.)

Figure 3.3 below shows the eleven most commonly participated sports played in 2013, with seven of the eleven being sports that are typically played on an individual basis.⁸ The most notable increases in participation come from personal exercise (up by 1.3%), running (up by 2.4%), weights activities (up by 1.4%) and dancing (0.6%).

The proportion playing golf has declined by 1.5%, and the proportion participating in soccer is lower by 0.5% than in 2011 (although the decline in the latter is not statistically significant).

Figure 3.3 – Sports Participated In



Examining each of these sports individually shows that their increases are coming from very different groups in the population (this is explored in more detail in the next section).

The increase in running is particularly interesting. It was the fifth most popular form of sporting activity in 2009 when its participation levels were half those for swimming or soccer and significantly behind those for golf. Since then it has become the third most popular form of activity, ahead of soccer and golf and with a much narrower gap to the most popular activities of personal exercise and swimming.

⁸ For the purposes of this study dancing is considered as a sport participated in on an individual (non-team) basis

Playing Multiple Sports

As the ISM identifies up to three sports played by those active in sports, it is possible to explore the interaction in participation across different sports. Figure 3.4 below shows the proportion of those that play each sport who also play another sport, as well as identifying the actual sport played.

Figure 3.4 – Multiple Sports Played

	Exercise	Swimming	Running	Cycling	Soccer	Dancing	Golf	Weights	GAA Football	Hurling/Camogie	Rugby
% playing that sport	(12)	(9)	(9)	(6)	(6)	(4)	(3)	(3)	(3)	(2)	(1)
% that also play another sport	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Exercise	60	54	60	53	62	39	38	82	79	49	75
Swimming	-	18	21	9	14	12	10	33	14	12	25
Running	14	-	13	15	7	8	6	11	11	5	9
Cycling	14	12	-	14	11	6	4	20	11	8	9
Soccer	5	9	9	-	7	3	5	12	3	7	6
Dancing	7	4	8	7	-	1	5	7	29	22	17
Golf	4	4	3	2	1	-	2	3	-	1	1
Weights	3	2	1	3	3	2	-	1	2	1	4
Gaelic Football	8	3	7	6	4	2	1	-	3	2	7
Hurling/Camogie	3	3	3	1	13	-	1	3	-	38	11
Rugby	2	1	1	2	6	-	1	1	24	-	12
	3	1	1	1	4	-	1	3	6	10	-

Approximately forty per cent of all those participating in sport are actively involved in more than one type of sport (not including multiple variants of the same sport – e.g. 5-a-side and 11-a-side soccer). Due to their popularity, most of the more popular forms of sporting activity have a higher proportion of participants involved in another sport. The exceptions in this regard are dancing and golf, which are more likely to be participated in in isolation, and fewer than 4 in 10 participants in these activities are involved in any other form of activities (these two activities are also those more likely to be participated in by older groups).

With the exception of dancing and golf, the majority of participants across all of the remaining most popular forms of sporting activity are also involved in another form of activity. The sporting activities with the highest levels of involvement in other sports are weights, Gaelic football and rugby with at least three quarters of participants in each case also being involved in another activity. Examining each of these in turn shows two distinct patterns. Firstly, those involved in weights are most likely to be involved in personal exercise activities, which may be explained by both activities taking place in gym environments (however, running and cycling also feature prominently as activities for those lifting weights).

The explanation for Gaelic football and rugby is slightly different and indicates a strong interaction between different types of team sports, with high levels of multiple sports participation across soccer, Gaelic football and rugby (all of which have the strongest appeal among young males). The interaction between Gaelic football and soccer is particularly notable, with 29% of those playing Gaelic football also playing soccer.

Summary

The increase in sports participation since the previous study is undoubtedly encouraging and is likely to be a result of a combination of factors, both in terms of sports policy and activities of Local Sports Partnerships as well as a continued focus on physical activity throughout the population.

The growing trend towards the individualisation of sports is noteworthy – both in terms of the types of sports being played, as well as the context in which they are being played. Many more people are participating in individual based activities than team based ones, and – as shown later in this report – almost 4 in 10 activities that were recorded through the ISM were participated alone. The growing levels of participation provide a significant opportunity for organised sport in Ireland; however unlocking the potential within this may present a major challenge. This is a theme returned to later in the report.

Differences in Sporting Participation By Key Population Groups

4. Differences In Sporting Participation By Key Population Groups

Introduction

The previous section explored the continued rise in sporting participation, mainly driven by the increase in individual sports. However changes in sporting participation do not typically occur uniformly across the population, so it is necessary to explore these changes in participation among socio-demographic groups. Key findings of previous reports have been the gender gap and differences by social gradients that exist, and these issues are the main focus of this section.

Overview

The key change to emerge since the 2011 ISM report is the increased participation in sport among females, and a considerable narrowing of the gender gap from 11.8% to 9.3%. This is a very encouraging development that is closely aligned to the increase in individual sports. However, differences by social gradients remain prominent with higher levels of participation evident among those with higher levels of education and income.

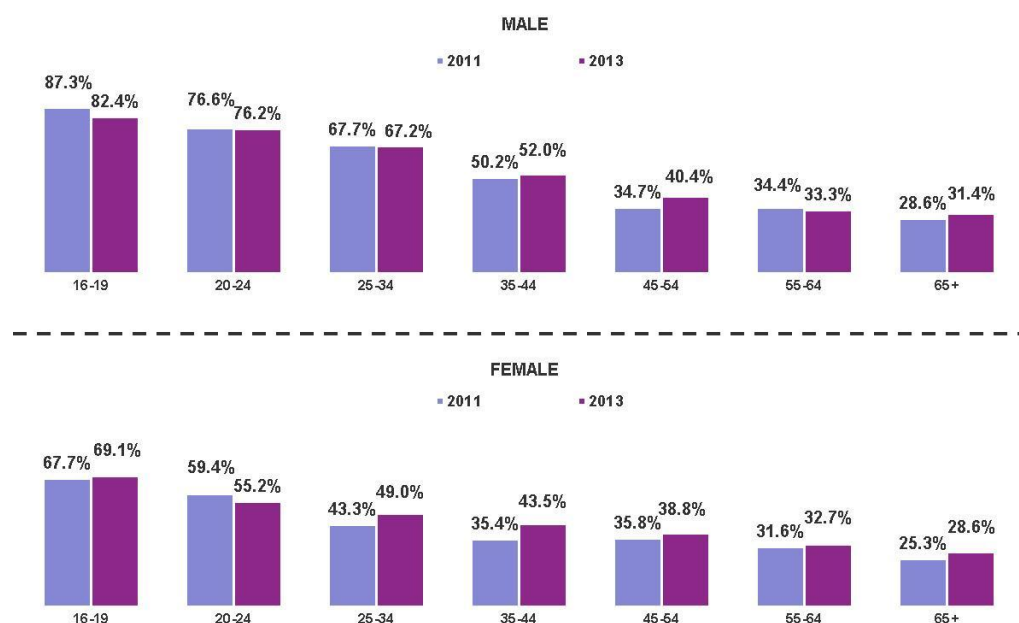
Key results that emerge are:

- Personal exercise is now the most popular sporting activity for both genders.
- A higher proportion of females are participating in sport than previously, (increasing by 3.7% to 42.7%) resulting in a narrowing of the gender gap in participation. There has been a notable rise in participation among females aged 25 to 44.
- Participation among males in general remains unchanged; however younger males are less likely to play sport than in 2011.
- Those in employment are more likely to participate in sport than those unemployed – a reverse of the situation in 2011.
- Those with higher levels of education or income are more likely to participate in sport than lower education or income groups.
- Participation levels among those with an illness/disability (33.5%) are considerably lower than those without an illness/disability (50.5%).

Sport And Gender/Age

Age and gender are two factors closely associated with sports participation, and these have been explored in detail in previous reports. While the dynamics of participation by age and gender are no different in this current report, the gap between the genders has narrowed, with an overall rise in participation levels among females (by 3.7% to 42.7%). The increase amongst males (by 1.1% to 52.0%) is not statistically significant.⁹

Figure 4.1 – Participation In Sport By Gender/Age



The increase in female sports participation is strongest among younger females, with participation levels among those aged between 25 and 44 increasing by 7.0% to 46.5%, although increases are also evident for older age groups. Much of the increase is due to increased participation in running, however participation levels for this group are also higher than in 2011 for many other popular sporting activities. This increase is encouraging as sporting participation among females has previously been shown to decline sharply through their 30s; while the decline remains evident it is less severe than in previous measurements. The comparison with males of the same age is also worth noting; while 25 to 44 year olds of both genders have increased their participation levels a 19.7% gap between these groups that existed in 2011 has now been narrowed to 13.3%.

The dynamic among males is somewhat different to females. The proportion of males aged 45 to 54 participating in sport has increased by 5.7% to 40.4%, and those aged 65 and over have increased their participation from 28.6% to 31.4% although participation levels in most other age groups are broadly unchanged.

⁹ A “statistically significant” difference is one where statistical testing indicates that it is unlikely to have occurred due to chance. As such, where tests shows that it is not statistically significant this means that the difference between two survey results is within the margin of error and could have occurred due to chance.

The proportion of males aged under 20 participating in sport has declined by 4.9% to 82.4%. However despite this decline younger males remain the demographic group most likely to participate in sports activities, with over 4 out of every 5 participating regularly. Furthermore, those who remain active in sport are more likely to participate in more sports, with the average number of sports participated in by males aged under 20 increasing from 1.8 in 2011 to 2.0 in 2013.

Whatever the dynamic that is impacting so strongly on participation levels of young males, it is noteworthy that this same dynamic is not having the same impact on young females.

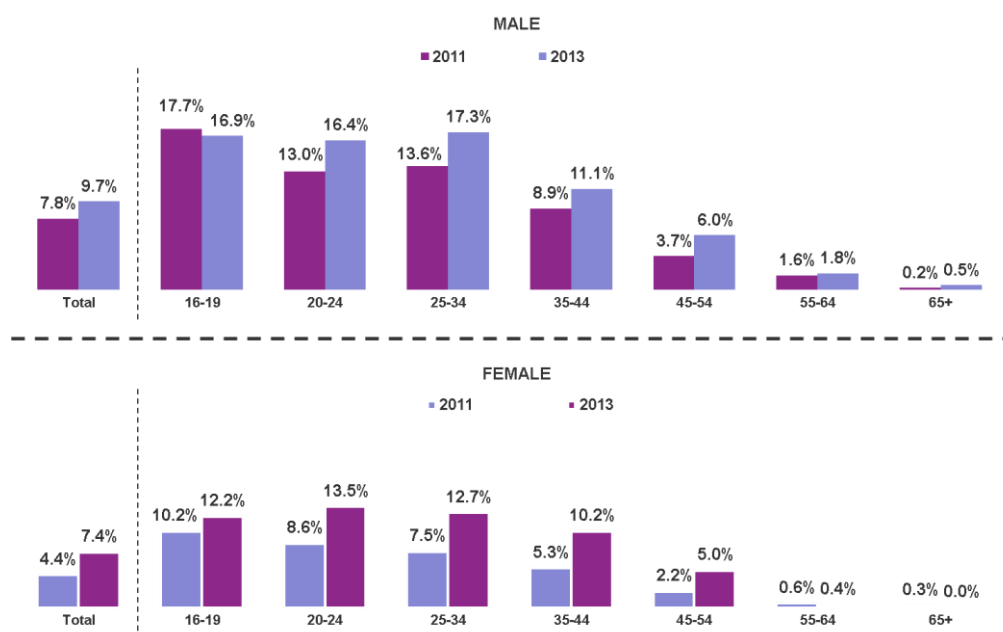
In the context of rising activity levels generally, a decline in activity levels among younger males is of particular concern for a number of reasons. Recent reports suggest increased prevalence of mental health problems among younger males, and sporting and other organisations have launched initiatives to tackle this issue (for example, the GAA have worked with Pieta House on the Mind Our Men initiative). According to statistics from the World Health Organisation, youth suicide in Ireland is the fifth highest among all EU countries.¹⁰ Given the positive association between participation in sport and physical activity and mental health, a decline in sports participation among younger males could be considered a small part of this wider problem, and reversing the trend may also be part of the solution.

Demographic Differences In Participation In Specific Sports

As noted in the previous section, running has seen the largest increase in participation of any sport, and this is reflected across almost all age and gender groups. Examining the increase in running across demographic groups indicates that the most notable increases are among females, in particular those aged 20-44, the proportion of whom participate in running has increased by 5.1% to 11.9%. The increased provision of Fit for Life and other meet and train groups is likely to be a key driver of this, and is supported further by more running races and races reporting higher numbers of participants.

¹⁰ Irish National Strategy for Action on Suicide Prevention 2005-2014

Figure 4.2 – Participation In Running By Demographics

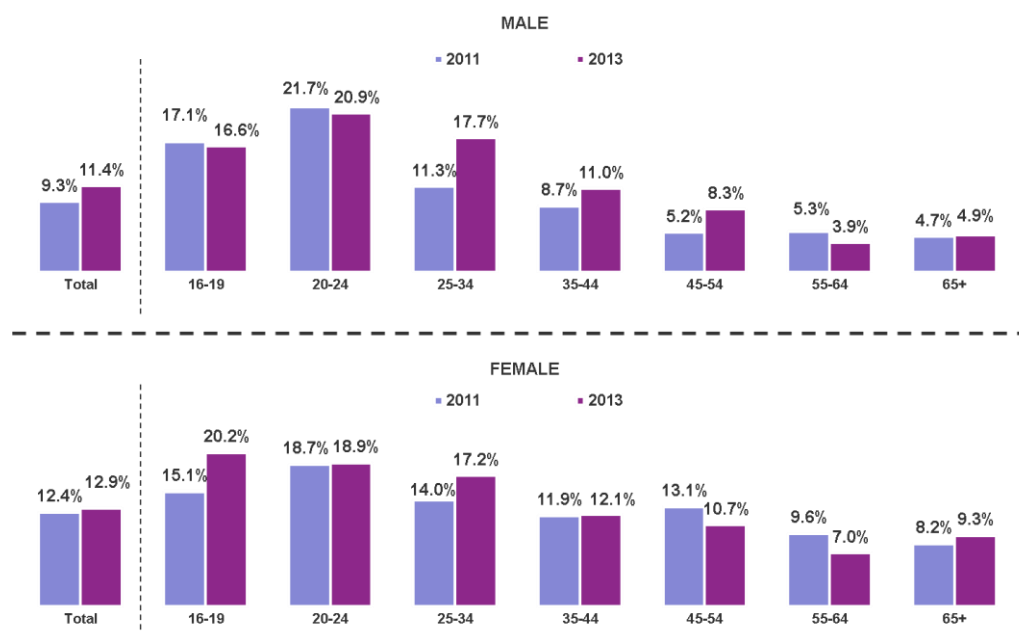


Another interesting dynamic of the increase in running is that it is occurring in areas outside of Dublin, with participation levels in Dublin being consistent with those measured in 2011. As a result, those living in areas outside Dublin are more likely to take part in running than those living in the capital – a reverse of the situation in 2011. Furthermore, those indicating that they live in isolated areas are more likely to have participated in running in the past seven days than those living in towns or cities. An analysis by specific council areas in Dublin indicates that running is less common in the Dublin City Council area (5.9%) than the other three areas (8.7%), although this is compensated with higher levels of participation in other activities (for example, cycling).

The reasons for this increase are more difficult to identify as it is contrary to what might be expected – running perhaps being considered safer in urban areas with lit streets and footpaths. However, a potential explanation may be evident if we consider other forms of running such as on a treadmill in a gym. Those living in urban areas (Dublin in particular) are likely to have easier access to gym facilities than those in rural areas – and participation in gym-based activities is higher in Dublin than in most other regions. This provides an alternative to running outdoors which some may find preferable and may account for at least some of the difference between urban and rural areas in terms of running.

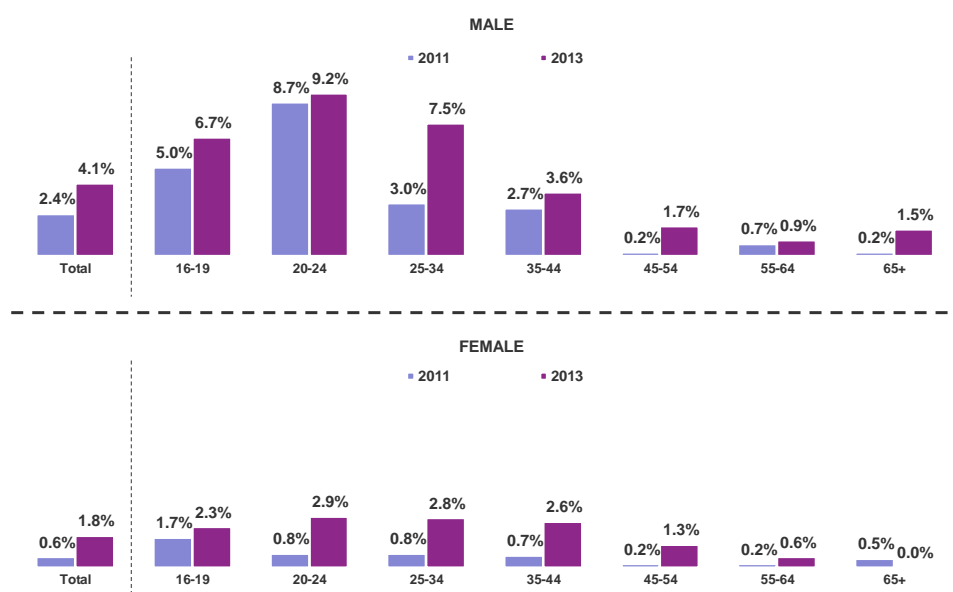
The increase in the proportion participating in personal exercise supports this explanation. This category is based on a combination of specific activities that typically take place in a gym or home environment (for example activities involving the use of exercise machines, fitness DVDs, and mat exercises etc.). An analysis of these individual components shows that much of the increase has centred on the usage of treadmills, exercise bikes and other exercise equipment. No specific pattern exists in terms of differences by demographic groups, although it is the 25 to 34 age group where the strongest increase is evident, increasing by 4.8% to 17.4%. The rise in participation levels within this sport also mean it is now the most popular activity for both genders – more popular than soccer among males (10.6%) and swimming among females (10.0%).

Figure 4.3 – Participation In Personal Exercise By Demographics



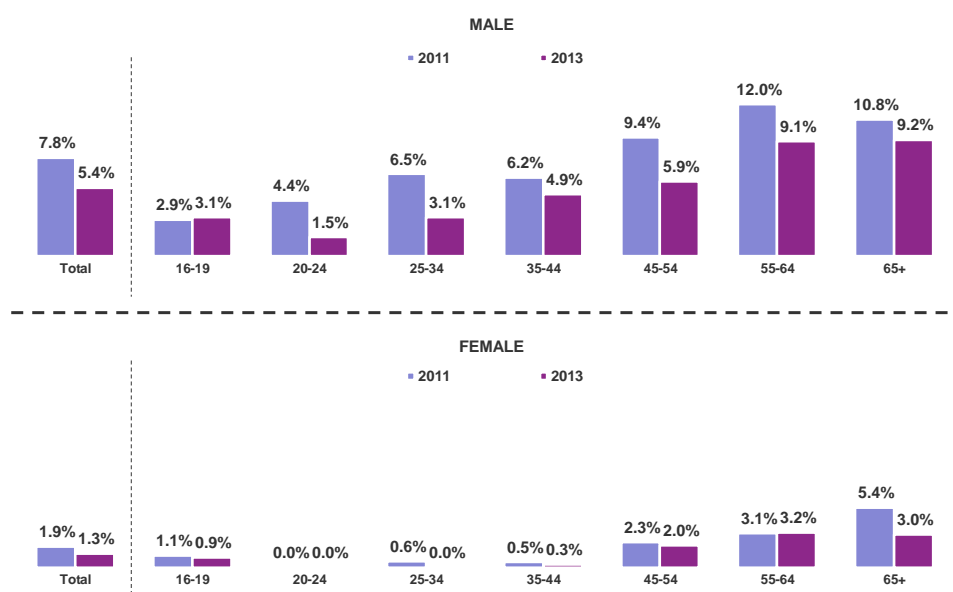
Another activity showing a significant increase in participation levels is weights. This is an activity strongly dominated by younger males, with almost half of all participants being males aged under 35. It is the sixth most popular form of activity (ahead of swimming and golf) for males aged 20 to 24. The increase is being driven by males aged 25 to 34 as can be seen from Figure 4.4 below, while significant increases are also being recorded across other gender/age groups (albeit off low baselines).

Figure 4.4 – Participation In Weights By Demographics



Golf is the other activity that is showing a significant change in participation levels, declining by 1.5% to 3.3%. As a sport that is dominated by males (almost 80% of participants are male) it is this group that is driving the decrease, with participation among males declining by 2.4% to 5.4%. There is a decline across all age groups, although the decline is particularly stark among males aged 20 to 34 where the proportion participating has fallen by more than half from 5.9% to 2.7%.

Figure 4.5 – Participation In Golf By Demographics



Sport And Region

One of the advantages of a large nationally representative study such as the Irish Sports Monitor is that it permits analysis at regional level. While the study collects information about the county that each survey respondent lives in, conducting analysis at that level of geography is not possible in all cases, so for the purposes of this report the analysis focuses on differences in participation at a wider regional level - Dublin, Rest of Leinster, Munster, Connacht, and Ulster¹¹.

Figure 4.6 shows the most popular sports in each region, and in all cases the five most popular sports nationally are also the five most popular in each region. However, some differences exist across regions particularly within Connacht and Ulster. It is noticeable that the five most popular sports have higher levels of participation in Connacht than elsewhere however in only two cases (soccer and cycling) is the difference statistically significant compared to the national figure. Within Ulster on the other hand, four of the five most popular sports have lower levels of participation, with the exception of soccer where participation is higher than in any other region.

¹¹ References to Ulster in the report include the three Ulster counties in the Republic of Ireland (Cavan, Monaghan and Donegal)

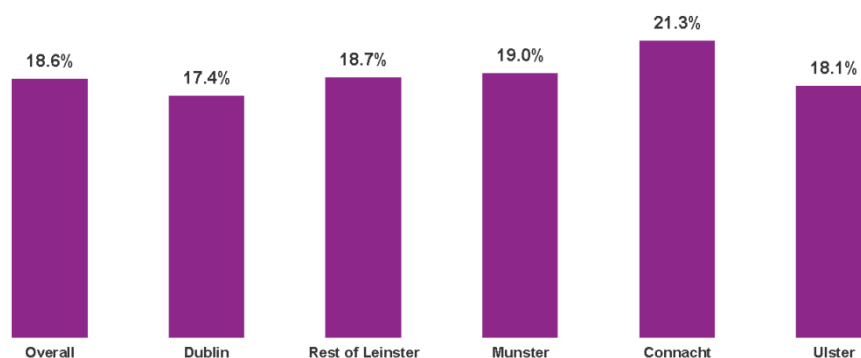
Outside of the five most popular sports, some other activities show notable regional variations particularly Gaelic football where participation is higher in regions outside Dublin and is as high as 5.3% in Ulster; however, much lower participation in Dublin (0.6%) means that the national average is lower than in other sports. Similarly, hurling has a higher popularity within Munster than nationally. Activities that are more popular within Dublin include golf (4.5% versus 3.3% nationally) and weights (3.7% versus 2.9% nationally).

Figure 4.6 – Sports Played By Region

	National	Dublin	Rest of Leinster	Munster	Connacht	Ulster
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Exercise	12.2	13.0	12.3	11.6	13.1	9.2
Swimming	9.4	8.5	8.5	10.9	10.3	9.0
Running	8.5	7.9	9.0	8.4	10.2	7.4
Cycling	5.9	5.8	6.3	5.1	8.5	3.6
Soccer	5.9	4.9	6.2	5.1	7.6	8.6
Dancing	4.3	3.7	3.9	4.3	3.7	8.5
Golf	3.3	4.5	2.8	2.7	3.2	3.5
Weights	2.9	3.7	2.4	3.1	2.5	1.9
Gaelic Football	2.6	0.6	3.2	2.9	3.7	5.3
Hurling/ Camogie	1.7	0.9	1.9	2.9	0.7	0.7
Rugby	1.4	1.2	1.4	1.6	1.9	0.8

In addition to having higher levels of sporting participation at overall and individual sport levels, those living in Connacht are also more active across multiple sports. Figure 4.7 below indicates the proportion playing in more than one type of sport, with 21.3% of those living in Connacht indicating that they were involved in two or more sports within the past week. This compares to 18.6% of the population at a national level.

Figure 4.7 – Proportion Playing Multiple Sports By Region



Sport And Social Factors

The ISM includes a number of measures which provide indicators of social gradients. These include highest level of education achieved, employment status and income, each of which is examined in turn. Previous ISM reports indicated a strong social gradient existing in terms of sports participation, and that continues in the 2013 study.

The previous report showed an increase in sporting participation among the unemployed, and this was linked to increased free time among this group, particularly in terms of the newly unemployed during the 2009 to 2011 period. Updating this analysis with results from the 2013 study shows that participation among this group remains unchanged since 2011 and well ahead of participation rates in 2009. The increase in participation in 2013 is focused on those in paid employment (both employee and self-employed), with the proportion in employment (either as an employee or self-employed) who are participating in sport increasing by 4.0% to 50.5%. An increase in participation among those unable to work due to sickness or disability is also evident. This relationship is explored in further detail later.

These increases coincide with the types of activities that are seeing the strongest increases. Personal exercise and running are the two activities that are showing the largest increase in participation, and those in paid employment who participate in sport are more likely than those not in employment to be involved in these activities.

Figure 4.8 – Participation By Employment Status

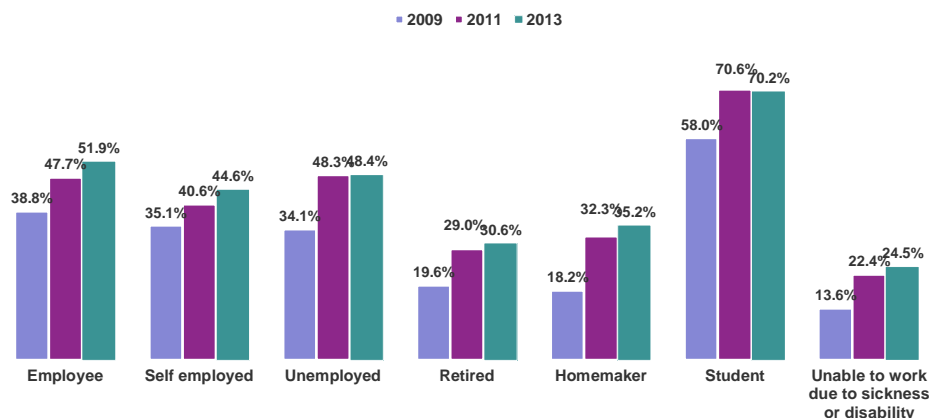


Figure 4.9 – Sports By Employment Status

	Employee	Self-employed	Unemployed	Retired	Homemaker	Student	Unable to work due to sickness or disability
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Personal exercise	13.3	8.7	11.9	6.8	10.2	20.8	6.1
Swimming	10.2	7.0	9.7	6.9	9.5	11.4	7.5
Running	11.1	7.1	9.2	0.4	3.3	16.5	1.4
Cycling	7.0	7.3	6.5	2.9	3.5	7.0	2.6
Soccer	6.4	3.7	10.1	0.2	1.6	14.0	1.3
Dancing	4.0	6.0	1.7	4.1	6.1	4.8	1.0
Golf	3.7	4.7	1.9	7.4	1.6	1.2	1.4
Weights	3.5	2.4	3.8	0.7	0.9	5.4	2.7
Gaelic Football	2.6	1.6	2.4	0	0.3	9.6	0
Rugby	1.3	1.1	1.4	0	0.3	5.2	0

Two factors which have been shown in previous studies to correlate strongly with sporting participation are education and income (both of which are also correlated with one another). Figures 4.10 and Figure 4.11 show that the relationship remains very strong in this regard, with level of sporting participation increasing in both the higher education and higher income groups. While age may also be a factor in this regard (i.e. those with lower education and income are more likely to be older) the relationship has been shown to hold true when controlling for this variable.

In order to improve the education and income measurements, the questions used to identify these were changed between the 2011 and 2013 studies, so trend comparisons between those years are not feasible although it is possible to compare 2009 and 2013. As shown in Figures 4.10 and 4.11 the rise in participation is consistent across all groups with the gap between the higher and lower education/income groups remaining broadly unchanged.

Figure 4.10 – Participation By Education

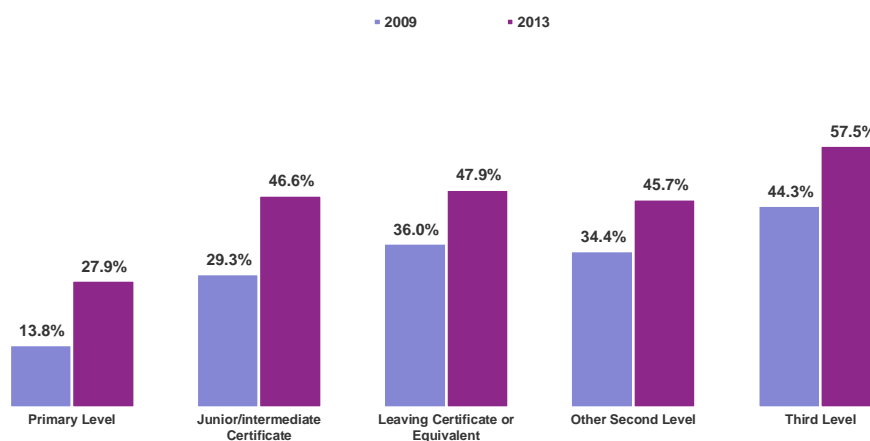
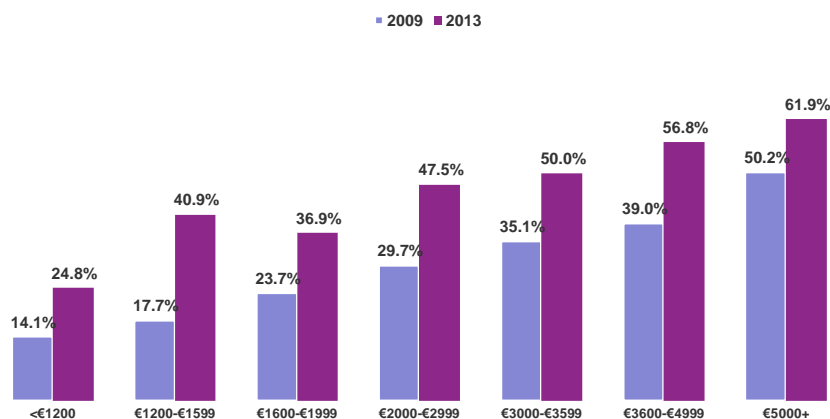


Figure 4.11 – Participation By Income

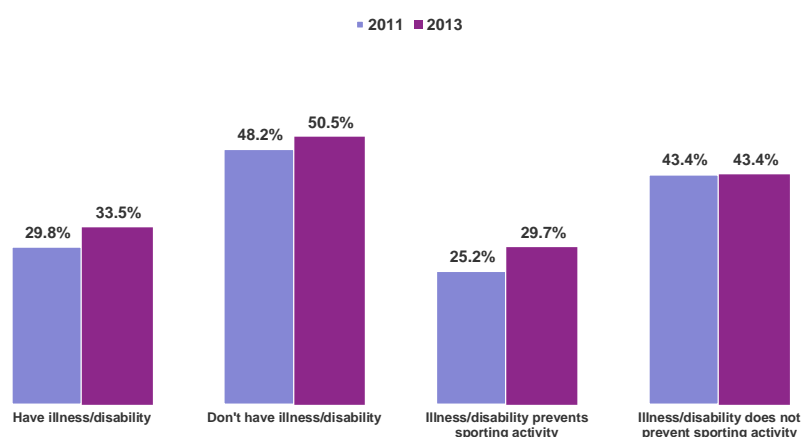


Sport And Disability

The ISM includes two measures for disability – one which records whether the respondent indicates that they have a long-term illness, health problem or disability that limits their daily activities or work, and a follow-up question which records whether or not this prevents their participation in sport. Almost nineteen per cent (18.8%) indicated that they have an illness or disability, with 73% of this group (or 13.7% of the population) indicating that the illness or disability prevented them from taking part in sport or exercise.

Figure 4.12 below shows participation by illness/disability category for 2011 and 2013.

Figure 4.12 – Participation By Illness/Disability



As would be expected, sporting participation is lower among both disability groups than it is within the population as a whole, with a third (33.5%) of those with an illness or disability having participated in a sporting activity within the previous week. However, when looking at those for whom the illness/disability does not prevent sporting activity, participation levels are considerably higher at 43.4%. Interestingly, despite 1 in 7 respondents claiming that their illness/disability prevented their participation in sport, almost a third (29.7%) actually participated in sport. A comparison with 2011 shows that the differences in terms of participation across different levels of disability remain consistent.

Age, education and income factors are also at play here, and those who are older and/or have lower levels of education or income are more likely to have health problems (and similarly these groups are less likely to play sport). However, previous ISM reports have explored the interplay between these factors and found that the correlation between illness/disability and sporting activity remains strong.

Examining the type of sport played by those with health problems (Figure 4.13) indicates that the type of participation is markedly different from the population as a whole. Swimming and personal exercise both feature strongly as sports participated in by those with an illness/disability with participant numbers in swimming in particular being in line with those for the population as a whole. These are activities that are amenable to participation at different intensities. Indeed, an analysis of the intensity levels shows that those with an illness or disability participating in sport are less likely to do so to the extent where they are out of breath (63.4%) compared to those without an illness or disability (71.9%).

Figure 4.13 – Illness/Disability And Sport

	Total	Long term illness/disability	Long term illness/disability that prevents sporting participation
	%	%	%
Exercise	12.2	8.6	6.4
Swimming	9.4	9.6	9.1
Running	8.5	3.0	1.9
Cycling	5.9	4.4	4.5
Soccer	5.9	2.1	1.5
Dancing	4.3	3.4	3.3
Golf	3.3	2.0	1.6
Weights	2.9	2.2	2.2
Gaelic Football	2.6	1.0	0.8
Rugby	1.4	0.5	-

Dancing, golf and weights are the other activities where there is no notable difference in participation levels between those with and without an illness/disability.

Examining recreational walking supports the finding that those with an illness or disability engage in less intense forms of activity. Over two-thirds (67.3%) of those with a non-limiting illness or disability participate in recreational walking, which is slightly higher than the general population (64.6%). However, part of this may be due to age factors, with a higher incidence of illness/disability among older members of the population who are more likely to engage in recreational walking.

Motivations For Participating In Sport

The ISM has clearly demonstrated significant differences between the genders in terms of sporting activity and has hypothesised that some of these variances are due to motivational and perception differences between the two genders. In order to provide some clarification on this, the 2013 study included a module that examined differences between the genders in terms of their motivations to participate in sport, as well as their perceptions of sports played (or not played) by females and the existence of any gender bias in the administration of sport. These questions were included for two waves of the study (during April and May 2013).

Results from this module show that the key motivator for participating in sport and physical activity is to improve health and fitness, with relaxation and weight control the second and third most prominent motivators. This is a key finding as it aligns with policy in this area which is to promote the benefits of fitness that come from physical activity.

However, key differences exist in terms of what is motivating different groups to be active. Factors relating to health or weight are more important for females than males at almost all ages. Seventy per cent of females participating in a physical activity indicate that improving health and fitness is a very important reason for their participation compared to 58% of males. An even stronger difference exists in terms of using physical activity as a form of weight control, with 54% of active females feeling that this is a very important factor, compared to 36% of active males.

Figure 4.14 – Motivations For Participating In Sport (% indicating factor is very important)¹²

	To improve my health and fitness	To control my weight	To relax	To improve my athletic skills	To compete with others	To spend time with friends & family
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Male						
16-19	44	27	15	26	20	25
20-24	36	23	16	32	24	20
25-34	66	27	29	32	20	32
35-44	63	40	36	13	18	36
45-54	61	42	39	14	8	29
55-64	54	41	39	19	13	38
65+	55	45	39	21	10	44
Female						
16-19	40	34	26	15	1	21
20-24	75	52	36	16	8	38
25-34	66	51	41	15	5	30
35-44	76	60	58	22	12	43
45-54	71	56	53	11	5	34
55-64	80	63	50	19	9	47
65+	68	51	58	28	16	61

¹² Caution is required in interpreting these figures as some sample sizes are below 100.

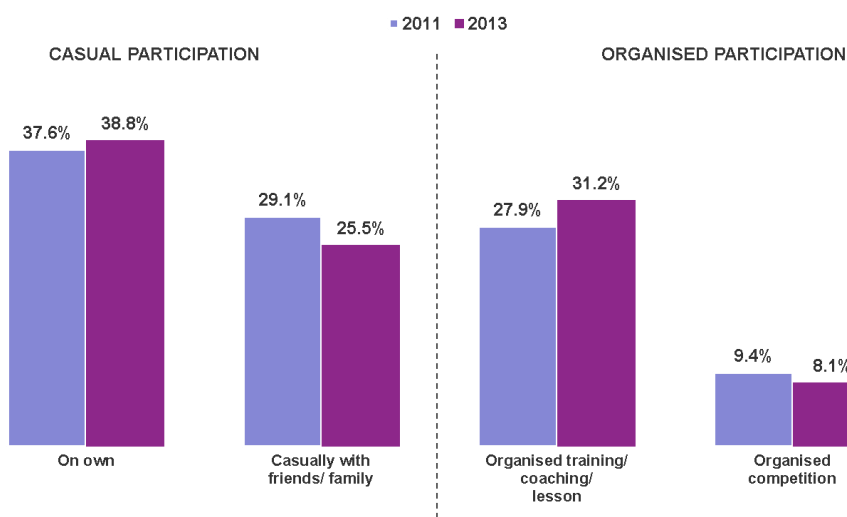
The importance of improving athletic skills and competition as motivators to participate in sports and physical activity is limited to a minority of those participating, with 20% and 12% respectively indicating that these are very important factors driving participation. Males and those in younger age groups are more likely to identify these to be important; however the health benefits of participation are still more important than the competitive aspect of sport for these groups. Among males, competitive factors tend to become less important across older age groups while the opposite is the case for females. This is reflective of the strength of popular team sports among younger males and the higher levels of participation among older females in golf.

This raises some important considerations in terms of increasing participation in sport and other forms of exercise. As would be expected the physical health benefits of physical activity are considered more important than other factors, and this is common across all key socio-demographic groups. However the mental health benefits gained through using sport as a form of relaxation (and as a form of socialising) are very prominent, and notably are considered a more significant motivator than participating for competitive reasons.

Sporting Context

In addition to identifying the type of sport being played, the Irish Sports Monitor also identifies the context in which it was played – for example, in an organised coaching session, on own, with family/friends etc. Figure 4.15 below identifies the overall context for participating in sport based on all occasions on which the sport was played.¹³

Figure 4.15 – Sporting Context – Overall



The most common way of participating in sport is doing so alone (38.8%), followed by in organised coaching (31.2%). Combining the two forms of organised involvement (coaching or competition) means that the proportion participating in sport in this way is broadly similar to participating alone. Participating in sport casually with friends or family is also popular with 25.5%

¹³ In this analysis figures may sum to greater than 100% as respondents may have participated in a sport in multiple contexts (e.g. organised coaching and competition).

of activities taking place in this way. On this basis, almost two-thirds of adult sporting activity is participated on a “casual” basis – reflective of the motivations outlined earlier that are also likely to be increasing the popularity of sports participated in on an individual basis. As such much of this activity is effectively invisible as it is happening outside formal sporting structures and is difficult to target in order to maintain and increase further these activity levels.

These results are broadly comparable with the 2011 results, although minor changes can be explained when considering the context within which particular sports are played. In addition, the increased involvement in “organised training” may be associated with increased female participation, as females (38.1%) are more likely than males (25.9%) to participate in sport in this way.

Some notable differences exist in terms of the contexts in which different sports are played, as can be seen from figure 4.16 overleaf. The four most popular adult forms of participation sport – exercise, swimming, running and cycling – are most likely to be engaged in alone. Participation in these sports within an organised context is low, with the exception of exercise for which 30.5% of activities are categorised as taking place within an organised coaching or training session. Approximately 1 in 6 running activities are carried out within an organised setting, with 1 in 10 swimming or cycling activities being done in similar fashion. The proportions participating in soccer (the most popular team based activity) within organised and informal settings are broadly equal.

Naturally individuals may participate in activities within multiple contexts – for example, in both casual and organised settings (hence why figures sum to greater than 100%). An example of this is hurling/camogie where approximately 1 in 7 indicate that they participated in the activity alone – perhaps reflecting skills practice that is done away from an organised training session.

Gaelic football is the only one of the top ten most popular sports where participating within an organised context is significantly more common than within an informal context, with 83% of those playing Gaelic football participating within organised training and 24.8% participating within a match or organised competition.

This analysis highlights the high levels of sporting activity taking place outside of organised structures, in particular in terms of participating in activities alone. While some of this activity may be supported by activities taking place within organised contexts, it is likely that many of those taking part in sport are rarely or never involved in organised events.

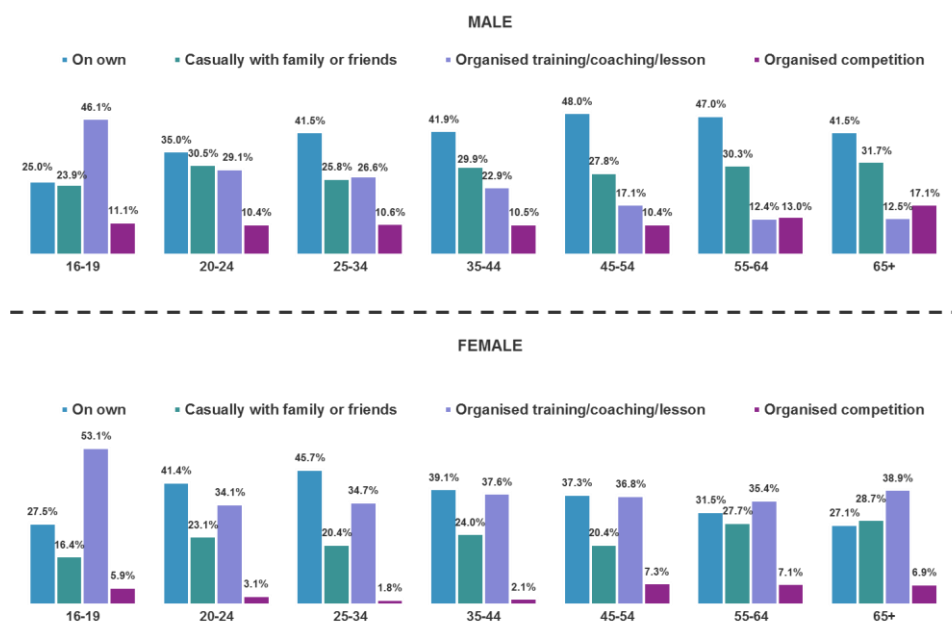
However, the flexibility of being able to participate in these sports away from organised structures is likely to be a key driver of their popularity, and on this basis it is unlikely to be a coincidence that the activities showing the strongest increases in popularity are those most likely to be participated in alone.

Figure 4.16 – Sporting Context – By Sport

	On Own	Casually with family or friends	Organised training/ coaching/ lesson	Organised competition
	%	%	%	%
Exercise	60.0	10.5	30.5	0.1
Swimming	54.1	37.8	9.2	0.4
Running	73.8	13.5	14.6	2.3
Cycling	63.5	26.5	8.9	1.8
Soccer	0.7	51.6	36.4	17.2
Golf	5.7	46.3	1.6	52.8
Dancing	8.9	37.6	51.6	0.6
Weights	68.2	7.3	25.7	-
Gaelic Football	-	4.8	83.0	24.8
Hurling/Camogie	13.7	14.0	65.0	18.3
Rugby	-	11.0	66.5	30.7

An analysis by demographics reflects the analysis by individual sports above. For example, an analysis by age (Figure 4.17) shows that participation in organised sports is more common among younger age groups (where sports like soccer and Gaelic football are more popular) than older age groups which are more likely to participate in sport on an informal basis (sports such as exercise, running and cycling are more popular in these age groups). Interestingly, comparing across age groups, it is those in the oldest age groups among both males and females that are most likely to participate in organised competition, which is explained by the popularity of golf among these age groups.

Figure 4.17 – Sporting Context – By Demographics



Summary

That females have increased their sporting activity is to be welcomed, and it goes some way towards narrowing the long-term gender divide that has existed in sports participation. Females are more likely than males to be motivated to participate in sport for health benefits and weight control and these are factors that may need to be emphasised in order to further reduce the gender gap that remains.

A further positive finding emerges when examining the relationship between sport and disability. The results here suggest that disability (when it does not specifically *prevent* participation in sport) is not excessively limiting sporting activity, but that those with a disability are choosing activities that more easily facilitate their participation, and may be scaling the intensity of the activity accordingly.

However, while many of the findings in this section are positive, there are some developments that are less than welcome, most notably the decline in sporting activity among younger males. Although they remain the group most likely to participate in sport, the decline could be considered concerning if it was replicated in future measurements.

A further concern is the resilience of a social gradient in participation along income, employment and education dimensions. While there is no evidence to suggest that this difference is becoming more severe, it indicates that this needs to remain prominent on the policy agenda and that the approaches to reducing the gap need to be continually evaluated.

Broader Physical Activity

5. Broader Physical Activity

Introduction

As well as measuring participation in sporting activities, the ISM also examines a range of other physical activities in which people may participate; specifically recreational walking, cycling for transport and walking for transport. Including these activities in the ISM ensures that physical activity taking place outside of a sporting context is also measured by the research. These activities make a significant contribution to overall activity levels, both when combined with sport and in isolation, and as such can play an important role in helping people meet physical activity guidelines (which are addressed in the following chapter).

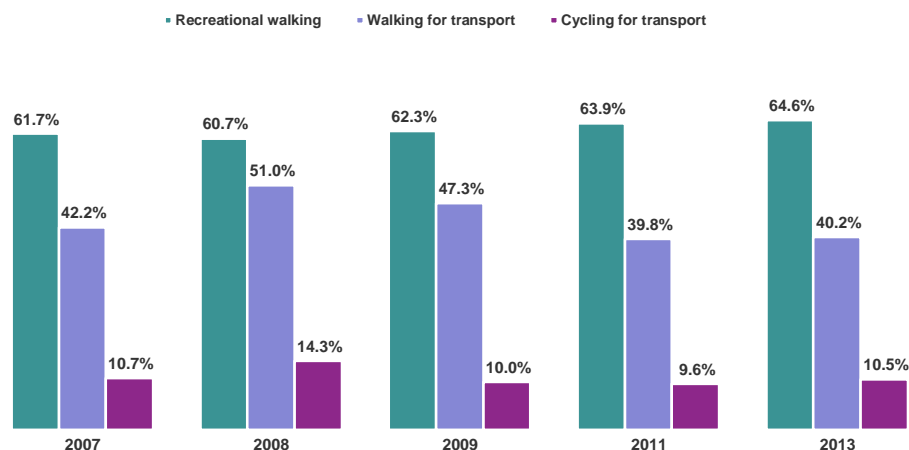
The key results that emerge are:

- Recreational walking remains the most popular form of physical activity with 2.3 million people aged 16 or over participating in the last seven days, with the percentage of people walking for recreation increasing marginally since 2011 from 63.9% to 64.6%.
- Walking for transport has remained broadly unchanged since 2011 with 40.2% engaging in this activity, below the levels recorded in 2008 and 2009.
- Cycling for transport has increased by 0.9% since 2011 and remains heavily male dominated.
- Almost 9 in 10 adults take part in some physical activity on a weekly basis with men and women equally likely to be active in this regard.

Overview

Figure 5.1 below shows the proportion involved in recreational walking, walking for transport and cycling for transport for each year of the ISM since 2007. The proportion walking for recreational purposes has increased from 63.9% to 64.6% over the past two years, while the proportions walking and cycling for transport have also increased slightly to 40.2% and 10.5% respectively (although none of these increases are statistically significant). Combining these activities with sporting participation indicates that 88.9% of the population was actively involved in some form of physical activity in 2013, compared to 88.0% in 2011. When physical activity is broken down by gender 88.7% of males and 89.1% of females are actively involved in some form of physical activity.

Figure 5.1 – Broader Physical Activity Over Time



Recreational Walking

A focus on recreational walking is an important consideration within a measurement of sporting participation. Walking is a low impact aerobic form of sporting exercise which is accessible, free and suitable for all ages of the population. This makes walking the ideal “entry level” activity for increasing activity levels, and for this reason it is the most popular physical activity in Ireland, with five times as many people walking as are involved in personal exercise (the next most popular sporting activity). Continued enthusiasm for walking is being demonstrated by events such as Operation Transformation’s nationwide walks in January 2014 which saw over forty walks being organised around the country with over 13,000 people taking part.

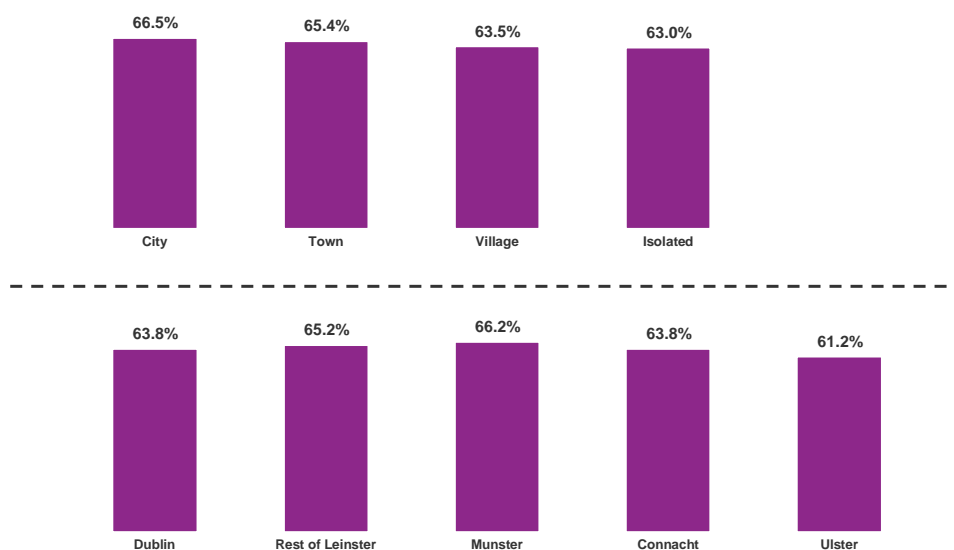
With the exception of notable differences by age/lifestage, the appeal of recreational walking does not differ extensively across a number of socio-demographic dimensions. As shown in figure 5.2 below, there is relatively little difference between the higher social class AB and lower DE groupings in terms of recreational walking (the contrast between these two groups in terms of sporting participation is stark with 58.2% of ABs participating in sport, compared with 35.9% of DEs). Similarly, when looking at other social dimensions such as income and working status, the appeal of walking remains consistent. Some differences exist by education, although the effect is not as strong as within sporting participation.

Figure 5.2 – Recreational Walking By Social Class



An analysis by location (either region or urban/rural factors) also shows no differences in terms of the appeal of walking. It is equally popular in rural areas and cities, and in Dublin and Connacht/Ulster (where, as discussed earlier, significant differences do exist in terms of sporting participation).

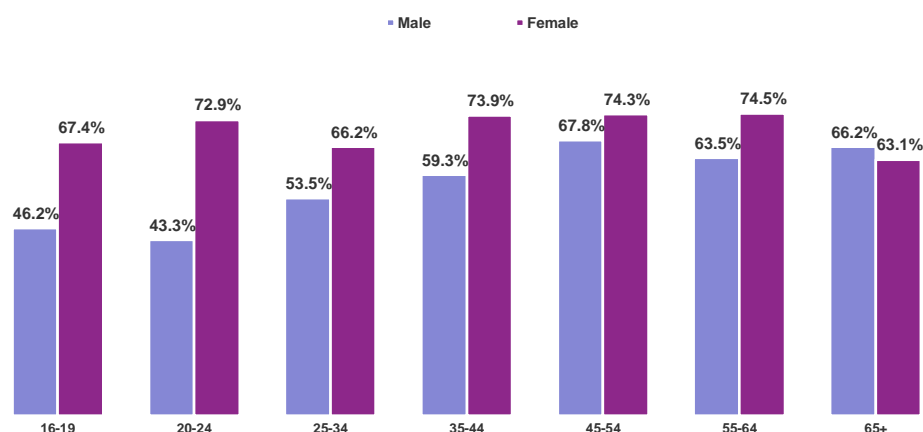
Figure 5.3 – Recreational Walking By Region/Location



However, differences do exist in terms of age and lifestage. As in previous ISM studies, females are more likely to walk than males, although the gap between the genders has narrowed slightly since 2011. In 2013, 58.8% of males participated in walking, compared to 57.0% in 2011 – the respective participation rates for females are 70.2% in 2013 and 70.5% in 2011. There has been a notable decline in participation amongst females aged 25-34, with this group showing a 7.1% decline in recreational walking since 2011. This finding can be somewhat tempered by the fact that the same demographic has shown a significant increase in sports participation – most notably running - as highlighted earlier in the report.

Analysis of demographic differences also shows that participation in recreational walking is generally higher among older males, with the highest level recorded among 45-54 year olds. A likely explanation for this is partnership status among these males, as males who are married or living as married are more likely to participate in recreational walking (64.9%) than those who are single (50.4%). This is common across all age groups with married males more likely to have walked recreationally than single males in each age group.

Figure 5.4 – Recreational Walking By Age And Gender

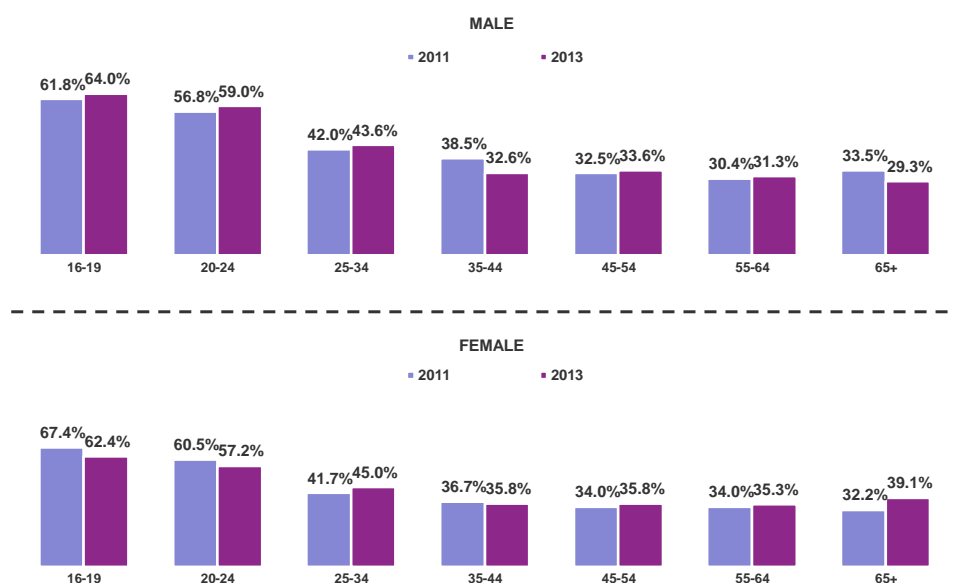


Walking For Transport

Following declines in participation across the previous two ISM reports, the proportion of those walking for transport has remained static at around 40% in both 2011 and 2013. Previous reports correlated the decline in this activity with the economic downturn and the decrease in employment numbers leading to fewer people needing to travel to work. A combination of a slight increase in the numbers of people returning to employment along with increasing transport costs, both in terms of petrol and public transport costs, may have contributed to the stabilisation in participation and it will be interesting to monitor these further over the coming years as both of these factors are likely to remain significant.

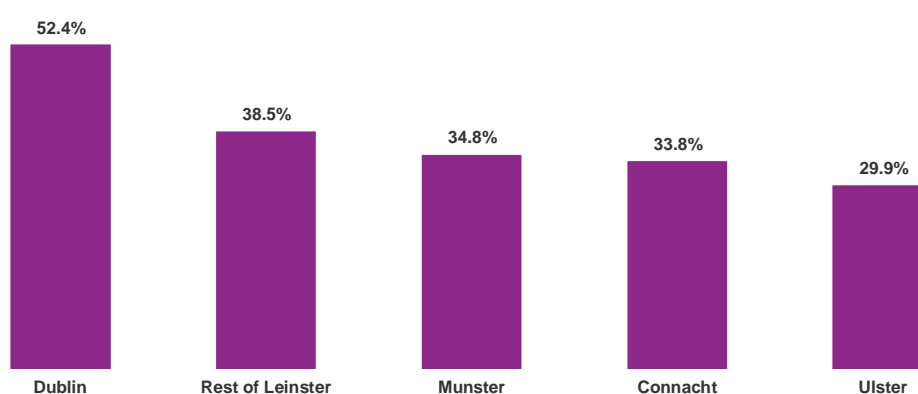
An analysis of participation levels by age and gender show that the pattern in participation remains consistent with 2011, with much higher levels of walking for transport amongst younger age groups than those older. However, the increased level of walking for transport amongst females aged 65 and over is notable in this regard.

Figure 5.5 – Walking For Transport By Age/Gender



As may be expected given its degree of urbanisation, Dublin is the region with the highest proportion walking for transport at 52.4%. This can be seen in Figure 5.6 below.

Figure 5.6 – Walking For Transport By Region

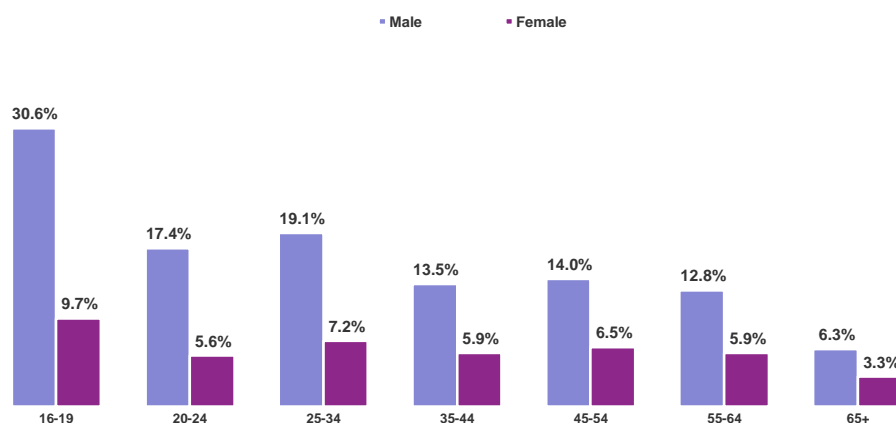


Cycling For Transport

Recent years have seen a considerable investment in the Irish cycling infrastructure, both directly through the provision of cycle lanes/pathways and initiatives such as the Dublin Bikes Scheme, as well as indirectly through the “Cycle To Work Scheme”. This is continuing through expansions in the Dublin Bikes scheme, and the proposed launch of similar schemes in Cork, Limerick and Galway.

Just over 1 in 10 (10.5%) participated in this activity in 2013, and a number of significant challenges exist in encouraging widespread adoption of cycling as a form of transport. One of the key factors limiting the proportion cycling for transport is the extent to which the appeal of this activity is limited among females. As in previous studies, there remains a significant gap between males and females cycling regularly for transport, with 15.1% of males doing so in comparison with only 6.1% of females. While the ISM does not explore this in further detail, other research would point to a number of reasons why females in general are less likely to cycle. For instance, other studies have shown that risk aversion among females may make them less likely to cycle for transport when there are no designated cycling routes separated from motorised traffic.¹⁴ In further development to the cycling infrastructure, it is crucial to ensure that this will have a positive impact on those cycling for transport, especially among females.

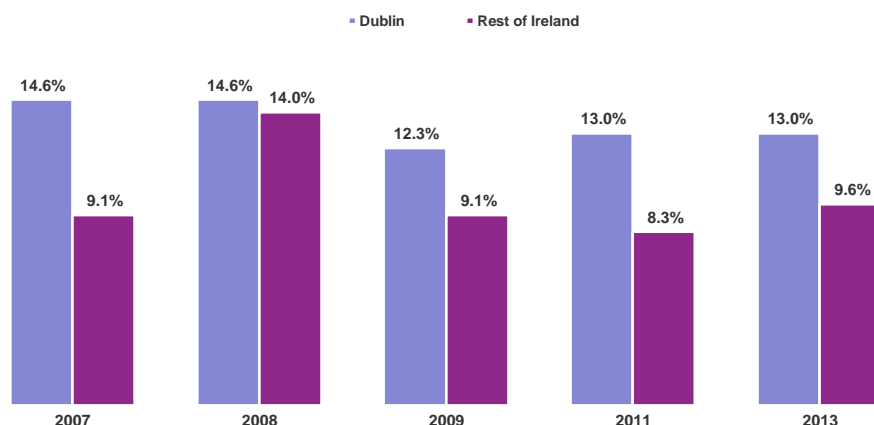
Figure 5.7 – Cycling For Transport By Age/Gender



Analysis by region shows that those living in Dublin remain more likely to cycle than those outside of Dublin, with 13.0% of those living in Dublin cycling regularly for transport compared to 9.6% of those outside the capital. However, this gap is narrowing and the proportion cycling for transport outside of Dublin is at its highest level since 2008.

¹⁴ Garrard, J., Rose, G. and Lo, S. (2008) Promoting transportation cycling for women: the role of bicycle infrastructure, *Preventive Medicine*, 46(1)

Figure 5.8 – Cycling For Transport By Region



Summary

While recreational walking has remained broadly static between 2011 and 2013, there have been changes amongst individual demographic groups with an increase amongst males and a decline amongst younger females. In the case of the latter this may actually be a by-product of a positive development around an increase in sporting activities – females aged 25-34 in particular may be transitioning from low intensity recreational walking to more intense activities such as running.

Dublin remains significantly ahead of the rest of Ireland in both walking and cycling for transport, providing a challenge in terms of raising these levels outside of the capital. The increase in 2013 in walking and cycling for transport may be linked with the rising costs for both petrol and public transport and people's search for savings in tough economic times. As also noted in ISM 2011 males are far more likely to cycle for transport than females. Ensuring effective allocation of resources in developing cycling infrastructure will be crucial in maximising participation levels in this activity.

Meeting the National Physical Activity Guidelines

6. Meeting the National Physical Activity Guidelines

Introduction

As with previous ISM reports, activity levels within the population are analysed against the National Physical Activity Guidelines. The ISM has developed a classification system of activity with four categories from sedentary through to highly active. Those classified as Highly Active are deemed to have achieved the minimum level of activity in order to meet the National Physical Activity Guidelines. The classification of these four levels of activity is outlined below.

Figure 6.1 – Activity Guideline

Highly active	Participate in 30 minutes moderate ¹ physical activity at least five times during the previous seven days (i.e. meet the National Physical Activity Guidelines)
Fairly Active	Participated in 30 minutes physical activity at least twice during the previous seven days
Just active	Participated in a sporting activity or recreational walking for 20 minutes at least once during the previous seven days, or regularly walks or cycles for transport (at least once a week)
Sedentary	Did not participate (20 minutes) in sporting activity or recreational walking during the previous seven days and does not cycle or walk regularly for transport.

This section of the report examines both the levels of activity among the population as well as looking in detail at the profile of those who are highly active or sedentary. In turn this offers a greater understanding of ways in which higher levels of activity can be encouraged among the population in the future.

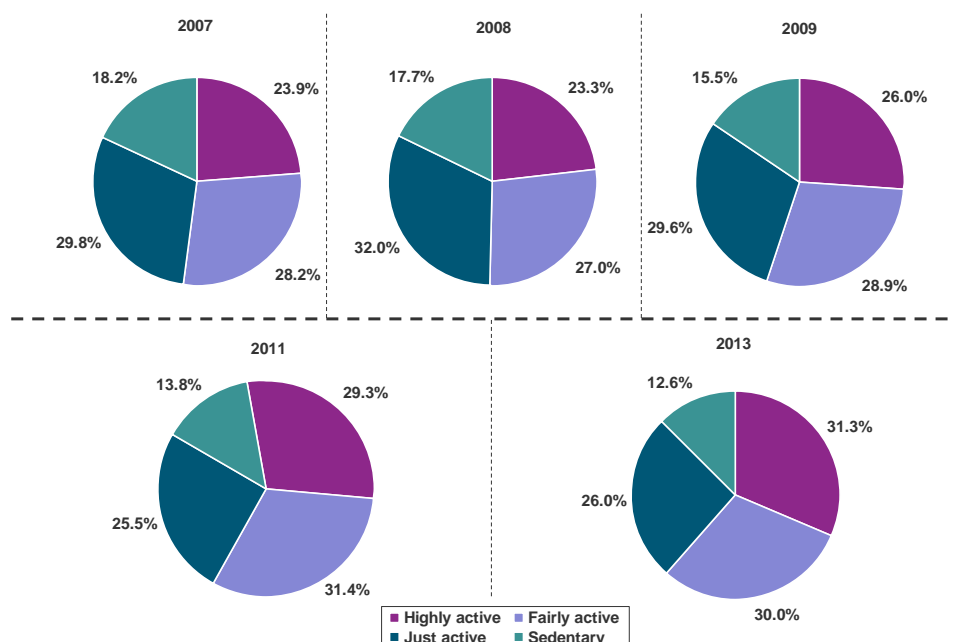
The key results that emerge are:

- The percentage of people who are highly active increased by 2% since 2011 from 29.3% to 31.3%.
- The proportion who are sedentary continues to decline with a 1.2% decrease in 2013 and a 5.6% decline since 2007;
- Over 45% of those playing sport are meeting the National Physical Activity Guidelines.

¹“Moderate” activity is defined as walking that is at least at a steady pace or other physical activity that is sufficient to raise the breathing rate

Current Activity Levels

Figure 6.2 – Hierarchy Of Activity By Year

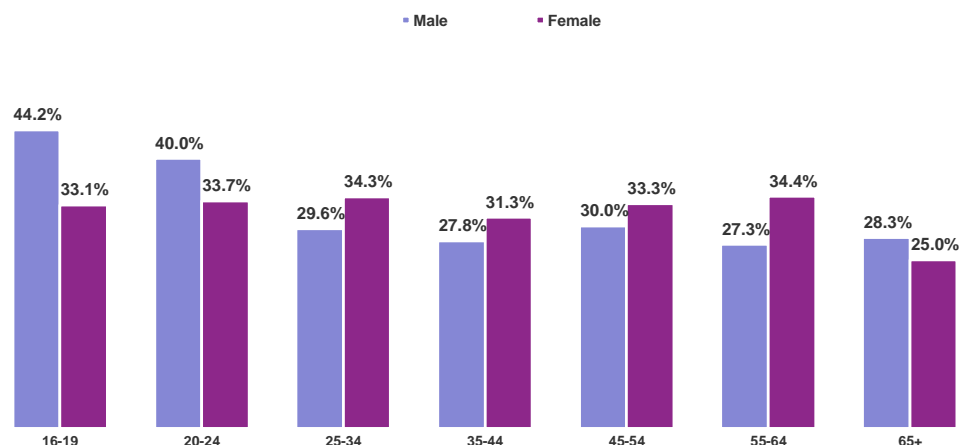


The increase between 2011 and 2013 of 2.0% of the proportion meeting the National Physical Activity Guidelines is evident across most gender and age groups and is broadly aligned with the increase in sporting participation. As such, the groups seeing the largest increases are males aged 45 to 54 (increasing by 5.2% to 30.0%), females aged 25 to 34 (increasing by 4.5% to 34.3%) and females aged 65 and over (increasing by 4.8% to 25.0%).

As noted earlier, males are more likely to participate in sport while overall participation in broader physical activities is almost identical for males and females. Overall, analysis of activity levels shows that females (31.9%) are more likely to be highly active than males (30.7%).

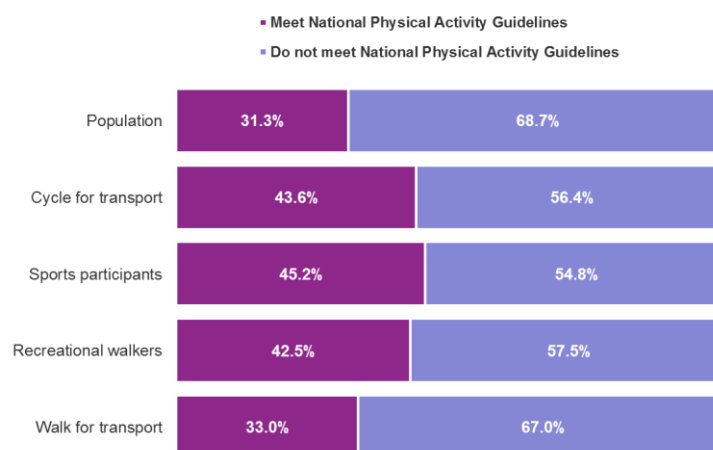
A further encouraging theme is the continued decline in sedentary behaviour which has declined from 13.8% to 12.6%, representing a decline of 2.9% since 2009 and 5.6% since this research series began in 2007.

Figure 6.3 – Highly Active By Age/Gender



As with overall sporting activity, young males aged 16-19 are the most likely to be highly active at 44.2%. However, with the exception of the 65+ age group, older females are more likely to be highly active, due to a sharp decline in numbers of males meeting the Guidelines from the mid-20s onwards, while the proportion of females remains broadly consistent. The decline amongst males from the mid-20s age group coincides with a time when they may be transitioning from playing team sport to playing individual sports or dropping out of sport altogether, which may explain a certain amount of this decrease in activity. The pattern of being highly active is much more consistent among females throughout all age groups until the mid-60s, when a sharp drop in the numbers of highly active women is noted.

Figure 6.4 – Meeting National Physical Activity Guidelines

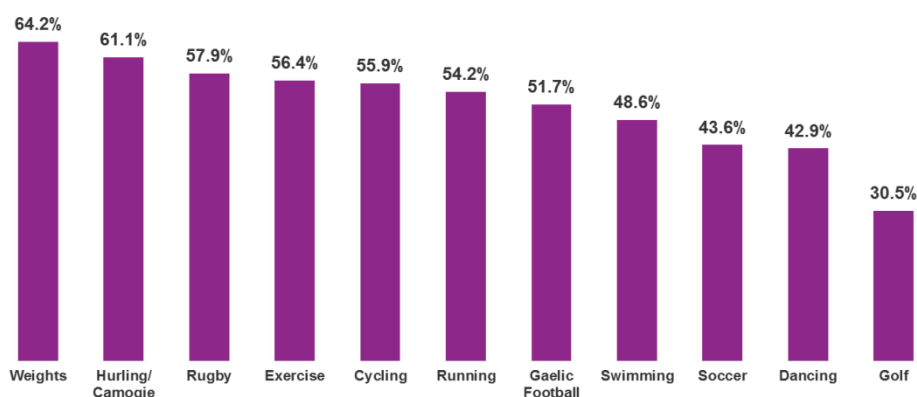


Those who play sport are the most likely to be highly active at 45.2%, followed closely by those who cycle for transport at 43.6% and those who walk recreationally at 42.5%.

While those playing sport are most likely to be highly active, over half of all regular sports participants are not meeting the National Physical Activity Guidelines. As noted in the 2011 report there may be an issue with perceptions here whereby those playing sport feel they are being active while not actually carrying out the necessary levels of physical exertion during the course of that activity, or on a regular enough basis to meet the National Physical Activity Guidelines. Emphasising the required amount and level of activity required to meet the National Physical Activity Guidelines may be a necessary aspect of achieving an increase in the number of people who are highly active.

Figure 6.5 shows the proportion of participants of the most popular forms of sporting activities that are meeting the National Physical Activity Guidelines. This shows that those who are lifting weights are the most likely to achieve the recommended level of activity with 64.2% doing so (although as shown earlier, those involved in this activity are also most likely to be playing multiple sports). Those participating in three of the most popular forms of sport – exercise, cycling and running – are also very likely to be achieving minimum activity levels. It is unsurprising that those who play golf are least likely to be categorised as highly active since those who play golf are also the least likely to participate in another sport.

Figure 6.5 – Meeting National Physical Activity Guidelines By Sport



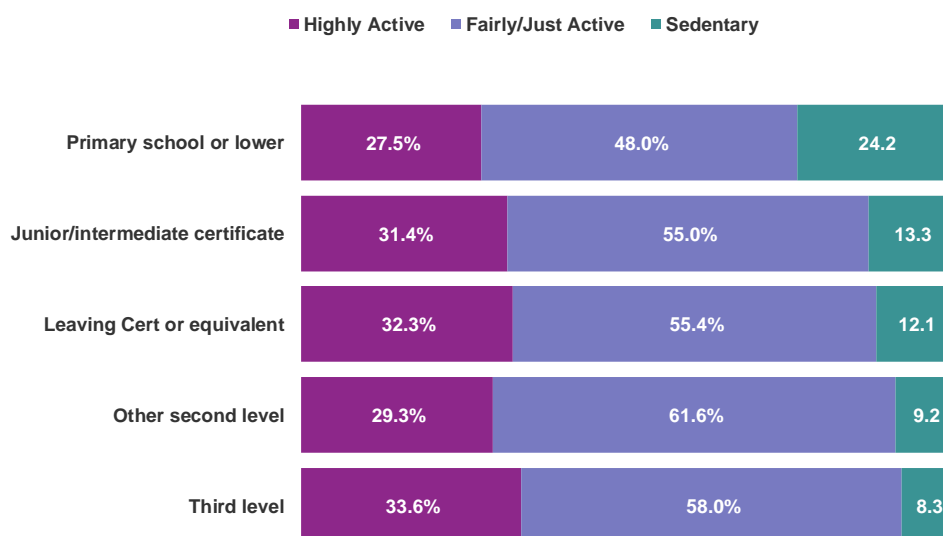
Social Factors Associated with Activity Level

There are many social factors such as education, employment status, disability status and home location that are associated with whether or not an individual is more likely to meet the National Physical Activity Guidelines, or be sedentary.

Sedentarism remains a key issue among particular groups in the population, most notably those in the lowest socio-economic group (DE) with 17.5% being sedentary, in comparison to 7.8% of those in the highest socio-economic group (AB). Between 2011 and 2013 those in the AB socio-economic group who are highly active increased 3.9% to 34.7% while those in the DE group only saw a marginal increase by 1.2% to 29.3%. It would seem from this that the social gap in terms of meeting the National Physical Activity Guidelines is widening. Related to this, when comparing the highest education level to the lowest, those with only a primary school education or lower are more likely to be sedentary (24.2%), than those who have at least a third level qualification (8.3%).

As such it is important to ensure that there is a clear understanding among all groups of the alternative ways of maximising activity levels, for example through recreational walking or active commuting.

Figure 6.6 Activity Level By Education



Those who are unemployed (38.7%) are more likely to be highly active than those who are working (31.0%) or self-employed (23.0%). While earlier analysis in this report showed that those who are unemployed are slightly less likely to participate in sport than those who are employed, the unemployed are also more likely to walk for transport and cycle for transport which explains their higher activity levels. Those who are self-employed also have a high level of sedentarism which may be explained by the fact that 37.7% of those who are self-employed live in isolated locations (possibly those involved in farming) compared to an average of 24.1% of the rest of the population.

Figure 6.7 Activity Level By Employment Status

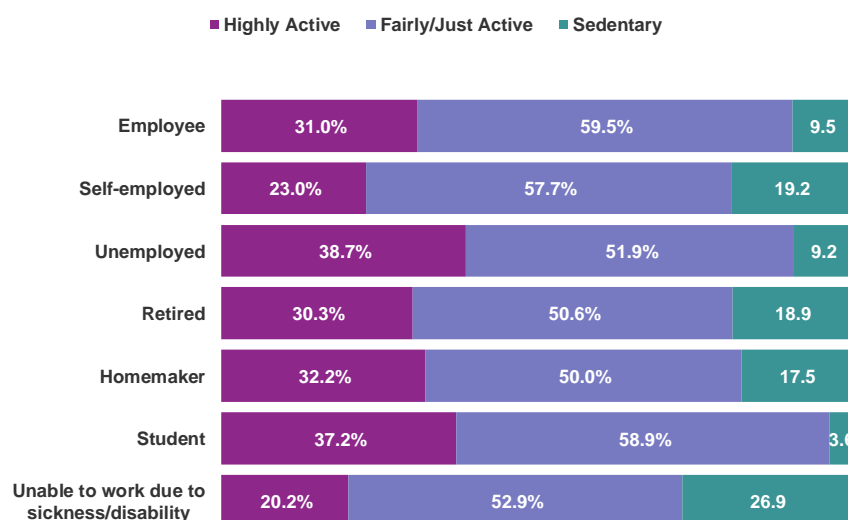
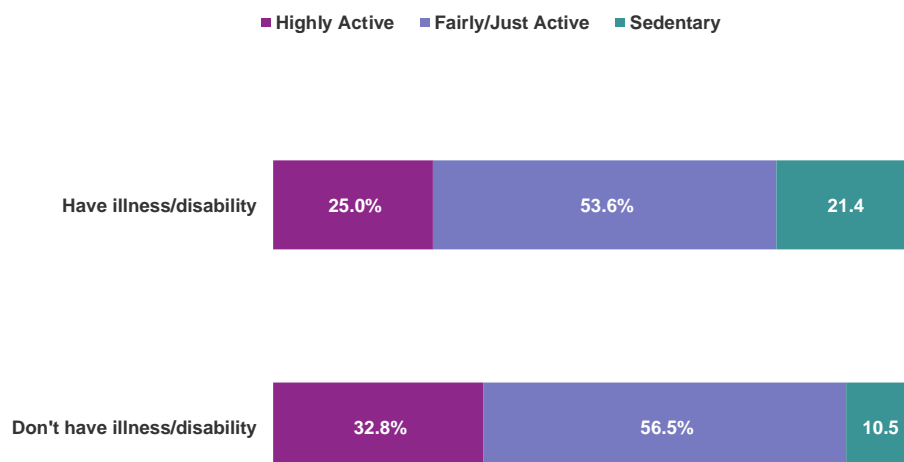


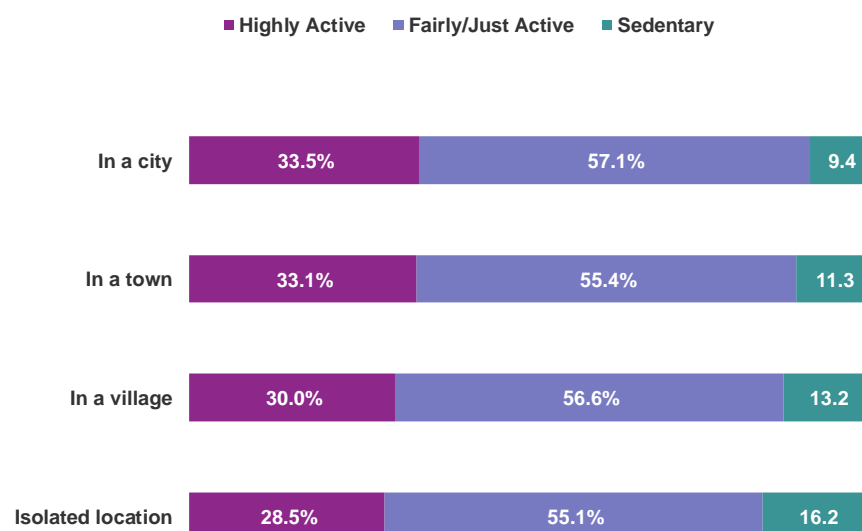
Figure 6.8 shows that having a long-term illness, health problem or disability may serve as a barrier to reaching the National Physical Activity Guidelines, as those without such an illness or disability were found to be more likely to reach National Physical Activity Guidelines (32.8%) than those who had an illness or disability (25.0%). In comparison, respondents with such an illness or disability are more likely to be sedentary (21.4%) than those without one (10.5%).

Figure 6.8 Activity Level By Disability Status



Living in an urban setting also has an impact on activity level when compared with those living in rural locations. Those living in a city (33.5%) or town (33.1%) are more likely to reach the National Physical Activity Guidelines than those living in a village (30.0%) or isolated location (28.5%). Those living in an isolated location are more likely to be sedentary (16.2%) than those living in any other location. This is in part due to those living in isolated locations being less likely to walk and cycle for transport than those living in other locations.

Figure 6.9 Activity Level By Home Location



Taken overall, these results show that various social factors are related to whether an individual is highly active or sedentary. Overall, those within the lowest social categories are more likely to be sedentary and least likely to be highly active, suggesting a particularly important segment of individuals among whom physical activity should be encouraged and facilitated given the various health benefits that can be gained.

Summary

The higher levels of activity in 2013 are a positive outcome in terms of meeting the National Physical Activity Guidelines with those who played sport being the most likely to be highly active. These increases arose across most gender and age groups. Coupled with a decline in sedentary behaviour, the combined increase in activity levels is a very encouraging development.

Over 45% of those participating in sport are meeting the National Physical Activity Guidelines while those who are combining multiple activities are the most likely to achieve the Guidelines. This is a message which should be incorporated into future information campaigns focused on raising activity levels.

Despite the decline in sedentary behaviour, increasing activity among the sedentary population should remain a key target (in particular among less well off groups) as even a small amount of activity could deliver significant health gains. Encouraging recreational walking is likely to be the most suitable route to follow considering it is a low impact form of exercise that is free to avail of and has very few barriers to entry. Initiatives such as the organised Operation Transformation walks have provided a template for success in this regard.

Social Participation In Sport

7. Social Participation in Sport

Introduction

In addition to measuring physical participation in sport and other forms of activity the ISM examines the wider context of sport in Ireland in the form of volunteering, club membership and attendance at sporting events.

These aspects of participation have been monitored since the ISM commenced in 2007; however two additional aspects were included in the 2013 study – firstly, perceptions around gender and the administration of sporting organisations at both the local and national level and secondly the reasons for participating in sport outside of the club environment. The first of these is examined within this section, with a specific section later in the report dedicated to analysis of the second aspect.

Overview

Key results that emerge are:

- The number of people volunteering for sport (13.3%), being a member of a sports club (36.3%), or attending a sports event (20.3%) is broadly unchanged since 2011 and still well ahead of 2009 levels.
- The number of volunteers involved across multiple sports (25.5%) has increased since 2011. As such, while the overall number of volunteers is unchanged, the extent of voluntary activity has increased.
- There is a clear divide across genders with males more likely to be club members, more likely to volunteer and more likely to take up roles that are directly involved with the running of the sport.
- Over two-thirds consider sports administration to be too male dominated at a national level.

The percentage of the population which takes part in at least one form of social participation (club membership, volunteering or attendance at a sporting event) is 48.5% (a decline of 0.5% since 2011). This is very close to the level of active participation in sport (47.2%). It is noteworthy that over 1/3 of those who participated socially in sport did not actively participate in sport in the last 7 days, indicating the significant contribution sport makes to social capital as well to the health of the nation.

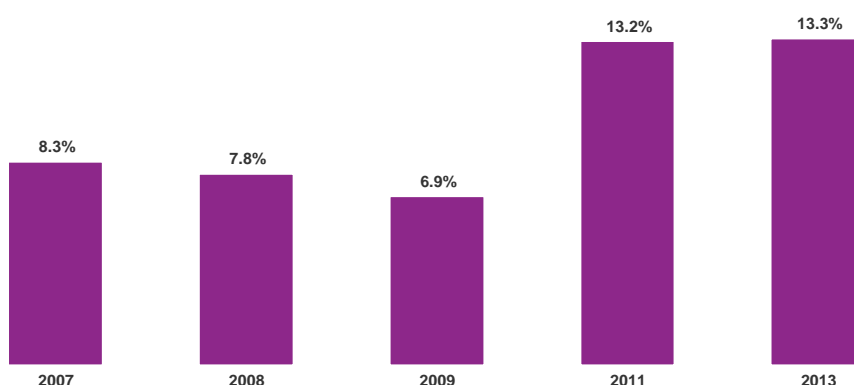
Volunteering

The ISM defines volunteering as any role a person may have fulfilled in support of sport or recreational physical activity, for adults or children. It includes helping to run events, coaching, providing or maintaining transport, food, equipment or kit, or acting in any kind of official capacity in relation to an event, team or organisation that provides opportunities to engage in physical activities for recreation, exercise or sport. While the work of volunteers can sometimes be taken for granted, without people fulfilling these roles it would not be possible for much of sport particularly that involving children and youth to function as it currently does. Monitoring the dynamics of volunteering is therefore an important feature of the ISM.

The 2011 report found that volunteering had increased significantly between 2009 and 2011, with a greater proportion of people getting involved in the provision of transport and coaching roles. It surmised that the increased free time that many people had due to increased unemployment and other recessionary effects may have contributed towards greater social involvement in sporting structures. The proportion volunteering has remained almost unchanged since 2011 with 13.3% volunteering for sport. This study also measures the amount of time spent volunteering, and the average of 4.2 hours per week remains broadly unchanged since 2011.

However, notable within these measurements is an increase in the proportion of volunteers involved across multiple sports from 20.5% in 2011 to 25.5% in 2013. In light of unchanged levels of volunteering recorded in 2013 compared to 2011, this indicates that whilst the level of volunteering remains unchanged, the extent of engagement with voluntary activities has increased for some.

Figure 7.1 – Volunteering For Sport



In the introduction to this report it is noted that sport makes a significant contribution to social capital. In this context it is worthwhile attempting to place an economic value on the time investment that individuals make in terms of voluntary activity. In the 2010 report *“Assessment of Economic Impact of Sport in Ireland”*¹⁵ the value of volunteering in 2008 was estimated to be between a lower bound estimate (based on the minimum wage) of €321 million and a higher bound estimate (based on the average industrial wage) of €582 million. Using the same calculations, Figure 7.2 shows that the higher bound estimate for 2013 is now over €1.3 billion a year. This is undoubtedly a significantly important aspect of sports participation.

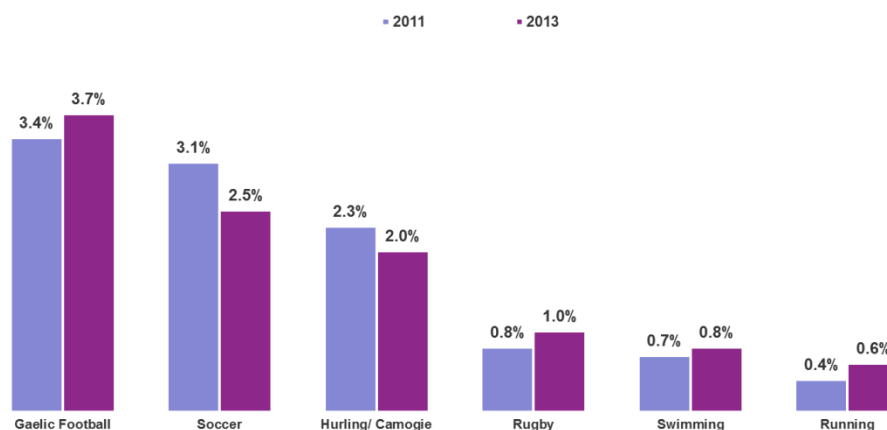
Figure 7.2 – Economic Value Of Volunteering

	2008	2013
Population aged 16 years and over (CSO)	3,453,220	3,551,435
Rate of volunteering	7.80%	13.34%
Average Industrial Wage (CSO) - €/hr	15.66	17.18
Minimum Wage - €/hr	8.65	8.65
Volunteering hours per Person per Week	3.45	4.47
Volunteering Weeks per Person per Year	40	40
Estimated per Week Value of Sport-related Volunteering - High - € Million	14.6	34.2
Estimated per Week Value of Sport-related Volunteering - Low - € Million	8	17.2
Estimated Annual Value of Sport-related Volunteering - High - € Million	582.1	1,367.0
Estimated Annual Value of Sport-related Volunteering - Low - € Million	321.5	688.5

¹⁵ Indecon International Economic Consultants for The Irish Sports Council. (2010) *Assessment of Economic Impact of Sport in Ireland* [Online]. Available from: http://www.irishsportscouncil.ie/Research/Economic_Impact_of_Sport_2010_/

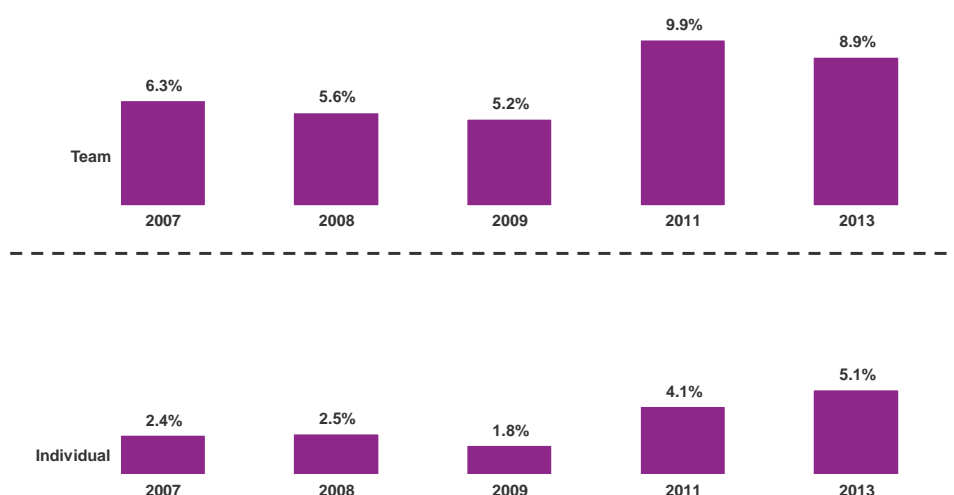
The five most popular sports for which people volunteer remain unchanged since 2011 and are dominated by team sports with Gaelic Football having the highest level of volunteering (3.7%). The only sport seeing a notable change in volunteering levels is soccer, with the level of volunteering declining from 3.1% to 2.5%.

Figure 7.3 – Volunteering By Sport



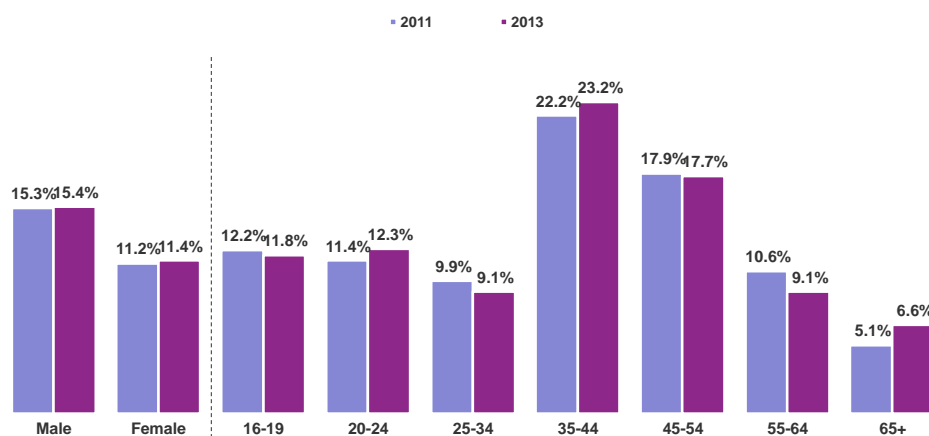
The predominance of volunteering for team sports over individual sports is shown in Figure 7.4. Between 2009 and 2011 there was a large increase in volunteering for both team and individual sports which may be linked with economic factors meaning people had increased leisure time. An analysis of activity across types of sport shows that voluntary activity is higher for team sports than individual ones, with 8.9% volunteering for team sports (a decline of 1.0% since 2011).

Figure 7.4 – Type of Sport Volunteered For



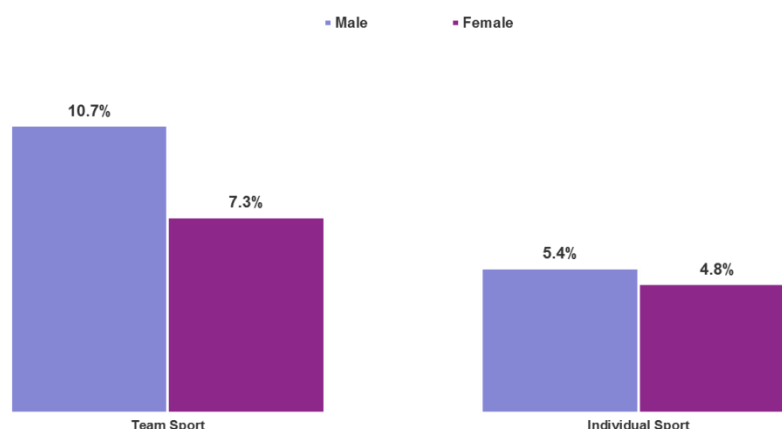
There are a number of key differences that exist between genders in terms of volunteering. As in previous years males are more likely to have volunteered in the last seven days than females, and the age group of 35-44 year olds is the most likely to have volunteered (23.2%). The high levels of volunteering among 35-44 year olds is likely due to this age group having young children participating in sport who would require adult coaching and transport.

Figure 7.5 – Volunteering By Age/Gender



Males being more likely to volunteer may reflect greater male participation in sport at an overall level. Levels of volunteering are similar for males and females for individual sports, 5.4% for males and 4.8% for females. However a gap exists when looking at volunteering for team sports with 10.7% of males volunteering for team sports compared to 7.3% of females. Males are more likely to participate in team sports and this may in part explain their greater level of volunteering for team sports than women.

Figure 7.6 – Volunteering In Team/Individual Sports By Gender



Other research has shown that volunteering is primarily associated with children's sporting activity. However, there may also be a link to adult participation, with those participating in a sport possibly having a greater motivation to volunteer for that sport. In most sports it is the case that those volunteering for the sport are more likely to play that sport than any other sport. For example 21.6% of those who volunteer for soccer also play soccer, 15.8% of those who volunteer for hurling also play hurling and 29.5% of those who volunteer for rugby also play rugby.

Figure 7.7 – Volunteering and Playing Same Sport

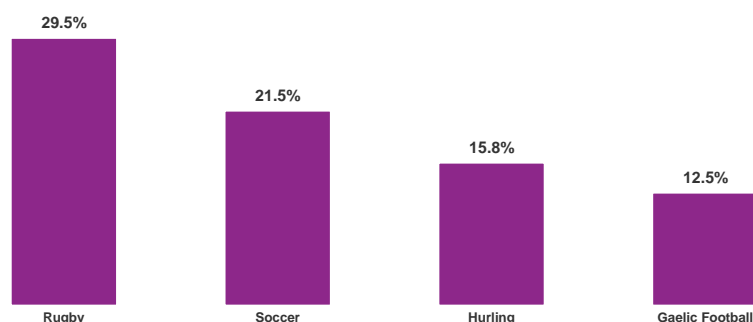


Figure 7.8 shows that there is a widening social gap when it comes to volunteering. Those in the AB social class showed a significant increase in voluntary activity (increasing by 2.4%) whilst there are weaker changes across the other groups, and in the case of the DE group a decline of 1.2%. Similarly, analysis of voluntary activity across employment groups shows increased levels of volunteering amongst those in employment, whilst there has been a decline (from 12.2% to 9.7%) amongst the unemployed who are volunteering. In addition, those who are unable to work due to sickness or disability are also less likely to volunteer than in 2011, declining from 9.8% to 5.6%.

Figure 7.8 – Volunteering By Social Class

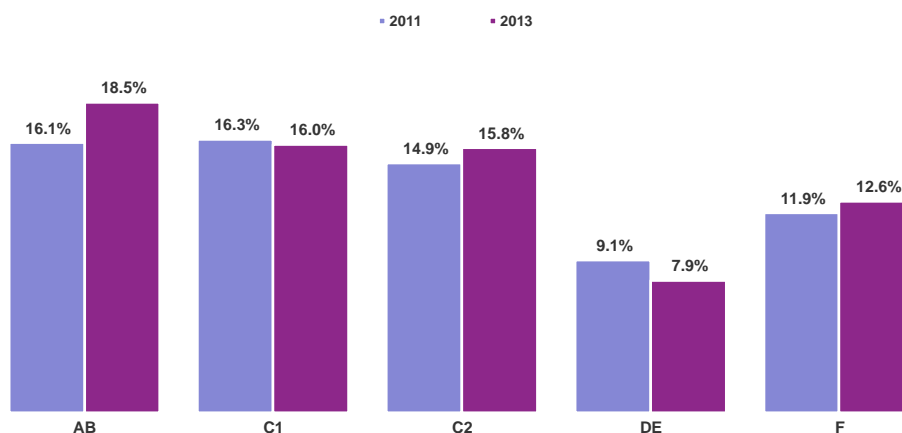
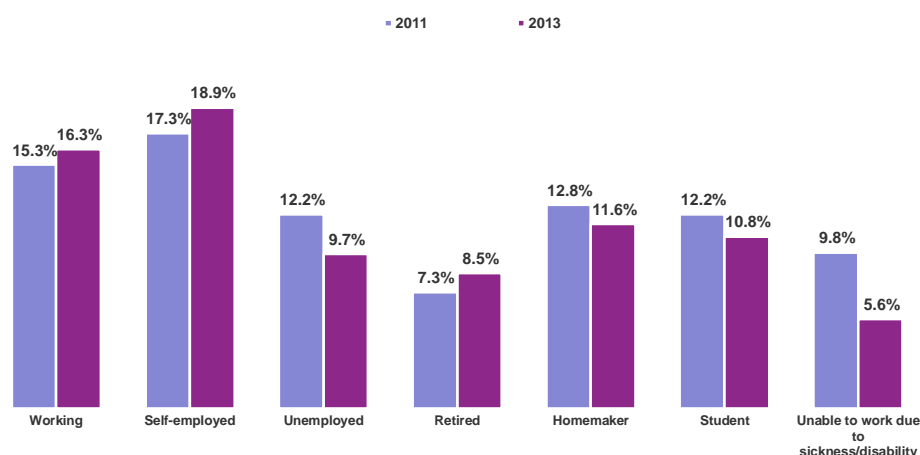
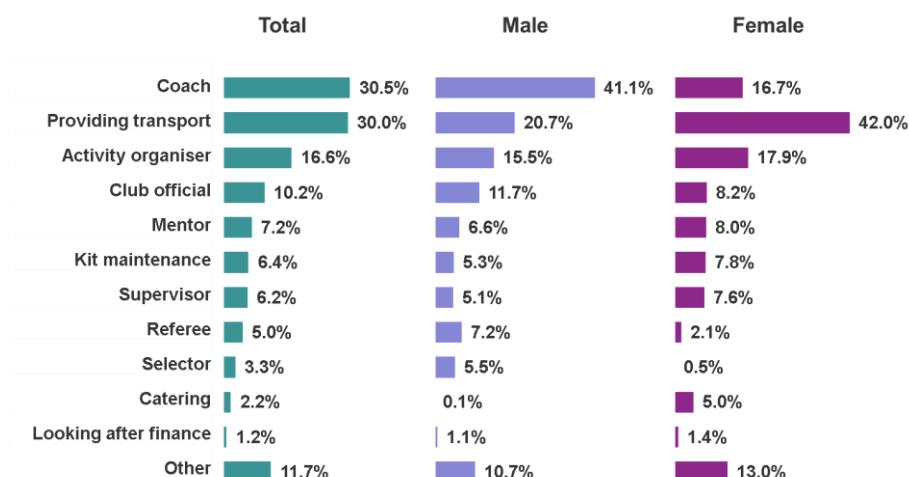


Figure 7.9 – Volunteering By Employment Status



In terms of the types of roles being carried out by those volunteering there is a clear dichotomy between the two genders with males more likely to take direct and higher profile roles while females are more likely to take on what could be perceived as support roles. This is shown in Figure 7.10 which shows that males are more likely to coach, be a club official, selector or referee. The greatest difference between the genders is in coaching where males are over twice as likely to be involved in coaching as females. The differences in the perceptions of gender in the context of administration of clubs and National Governing Bodies are explored further below.

Figure 7.10 – Roles Carried Out By Those Who Volunteered



Perception of Gender in the Management and Administration of Sport

The gender imbalance in volunteering is also reflected in perceptions of gender involvement in sport in Ireland. Several additional questions were included in ISM 2013 to examine the issue of gender in sport in Ireland, both at national and local club levels. When asked about their own club, over a third of clubs (38%) were believed to have management and administration of sport that was too male dominated, with males more likely to hold this view than females. At a national level, the perception of gender imbalance is even greater with over two-thirds of people considering that sports administration is too male dominated (68%).

While both results indicate that there is a perceived gender imbalance in the management and administration of sport, the degree to which this is perceived at national level is particularly stark, and may be due to male figures being more prevalent in the management of national level elite sport that feature heavily in the media.

Figure 7.11 – Perceptions Of Administration Of Club vs. Administration Of Sport In Ireland

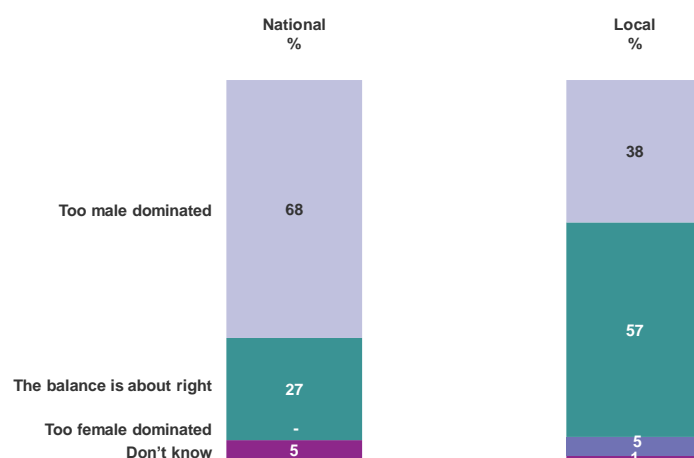


Figure 7.12 – Perceptions Of Club Administration By Gender

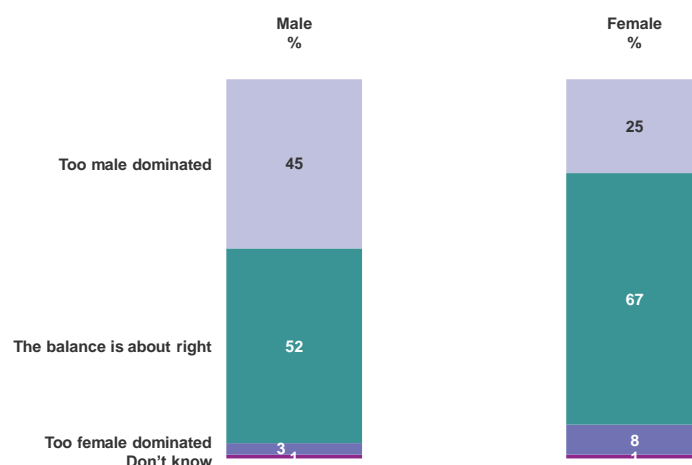
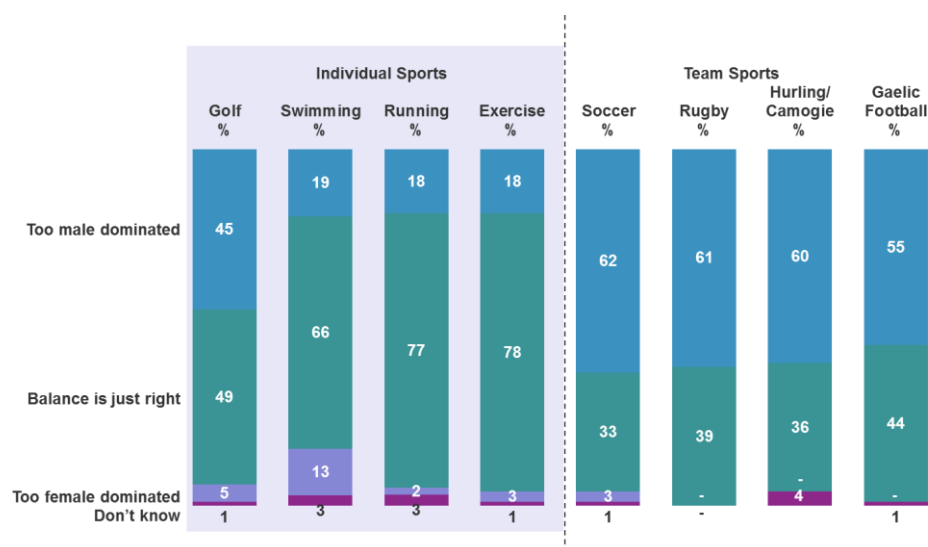


Figure 7.13 shows that clubs for team sports such as soccer, hurling/camogie and rugby (which have over 80% male participants) are those which are most likely to be perceived to be too male dominated in terms of administration. Clubs in which females are more likely to participate in, such as exercise (54.2% of participants are female), swimming (54.0% of participants are female), and running (44.3% of participants are female) are the most likely to be perceived to have the right balance between genders.

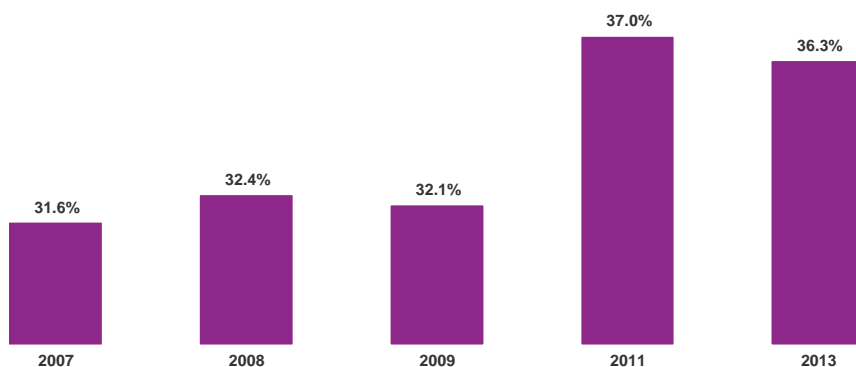
Figure 7.13 – Perceptions Of Administration By Club



Club Membership

Membership of clubs has declined slightly since 2011 to 36.3%, however this decline is not statistically significant.

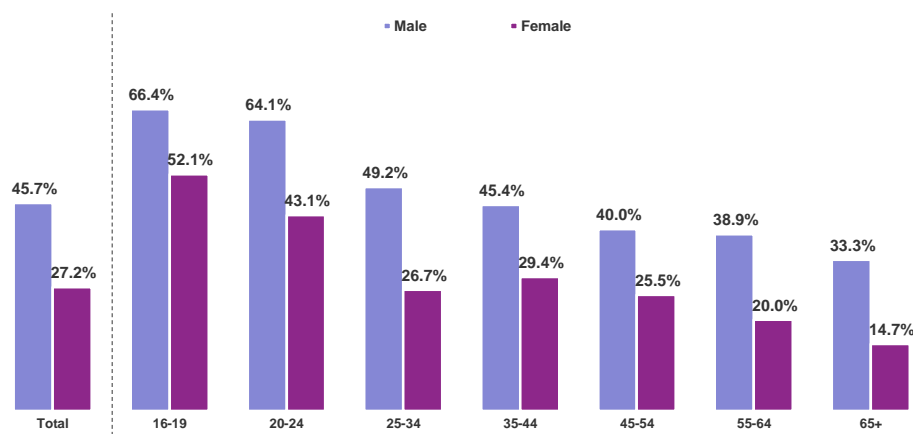
Figure 7.14 – Club Membership



As in previous ISM studies, males remain far more likely to be a member of a sports club than females (45.7% compared to 27.2%). This may be in part due to females participating in sport being more likely to play an individual sport than a team activity, and club membership being higher for the latter type of activity. 33.9% of males taking part in sports participate in team sports, compared to 10.4% of females. Individual sports are less likely to require club membership for participation whereas team sports such as soccer, rugby and Gaelic football which have far more males participating than females, often require club membership in order to be involved in that sport.

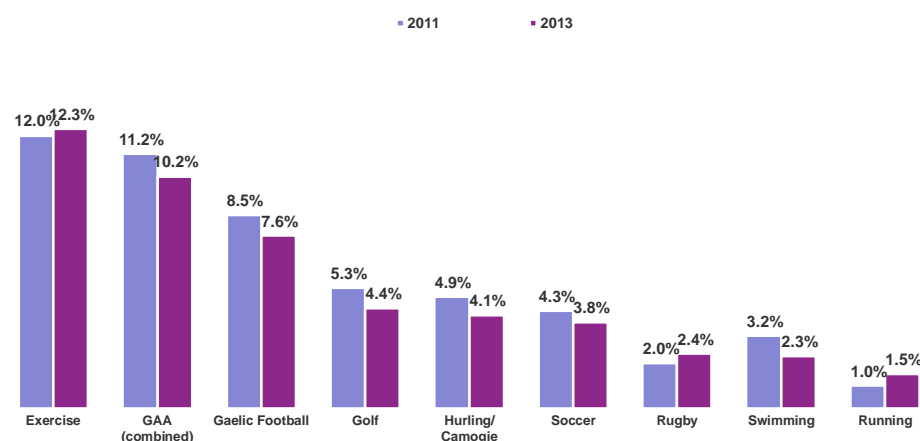
Figure 7.15 shows a notable drop in membership for both genders between the 20-24 and 25-34 age groups. Applying these proportions to the actual population indicates that roughly 94,000 20-24 year olds are club members dropping to roughly 85,000 25-29 year olds – a drop of roughly 9,000 people being club members between these two age groups.

Figure 7.15 – Club Membership By Age/Gender



This decline may need to be examined in further detail to see how this age group can be kept involved in club-based sport. This age period involves a transition from early twenties when people may be living at home and still in education, to their late twenties when they have started working and may have moved out of the family home and away from their childhood clubs. Approaches examined could involve group discounts for this age group for joining a club. This may be a viable option, as results later in this report show that many people cite friends and family being members of a club as a factor that would encourage them to join. Also, having specific activities in clubs aimed at these age groups may also entice club membership among some of those who are more open to joining a club.

Figure 7.16 – Club Membership By Sport



Exercise clubs (mainly gyms) are the most popular type of sporting club, with 12.3% of the adult population being members. In general, membership levels of different types of clubs remain broadly unchanged since 2011, and any changes are relatively minor. There is a notable decline in golf club membership and this reflects the falling participation levels outlined earlier in the report. Participation in golf is more common amongst particular age groups, and these are the ones seeing the largest declines in membership – membership amongst males aged 45 and over has fallen from 11.7% in 2011 to 9.2% in 2013. A slight decline in GAA membership is also noted, although the extent of this decline is not statistically significant.

Analysis of club membership by social class and working status shows the same social gradient that exists in terms of volunteering. However unlike volunteering, this gradient has not widened further since 2011. This is the case both with social class and working status, although some changes do exist in terms of the latter (particularly in terms of the unemployed which has declined from 32.3% to 28.1%). It is unclear why this may be running contrary to the trend in volunteering; however the decline in golf club membership (more prominent amongst the ABC1 social groups) may be a factor in this.

Figure 7.17 – Club Membership By Social Class

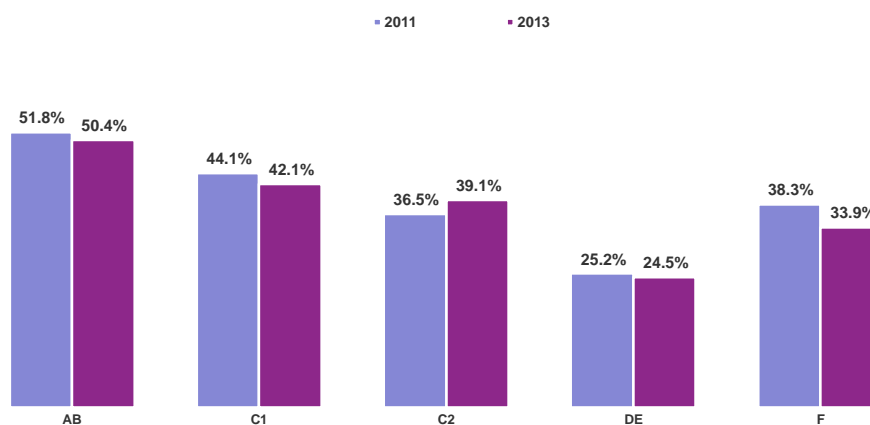
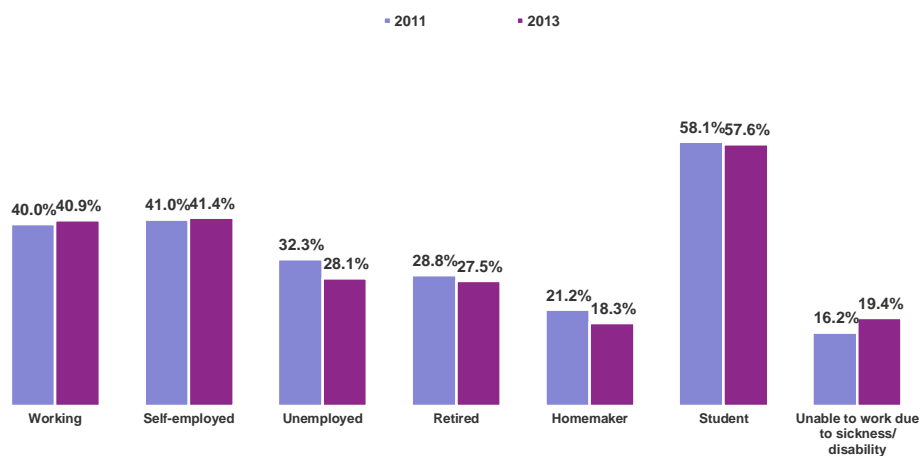


Figure 7.18 – Club Membership By Working Status



Attendance at Events

For the purposes of the ISM, attendance at events includes all levels of sport from children's sport to elite/international sport. In 2013 20.3% of adults reported attending a sporting event of any sort. This is at the same level as measured in 2011.

Figure 7.19 – Attendance At A Sporting Event

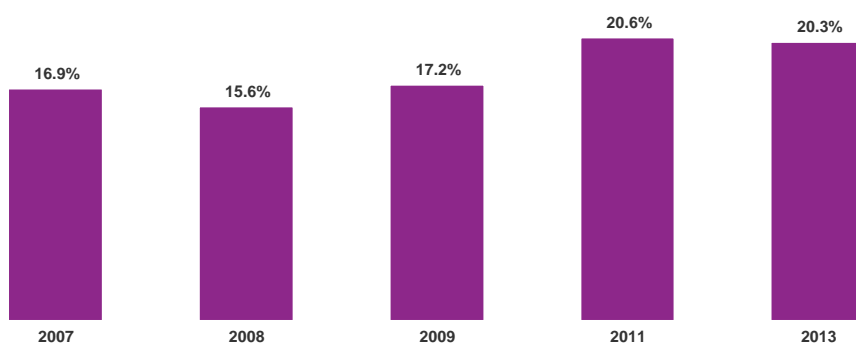
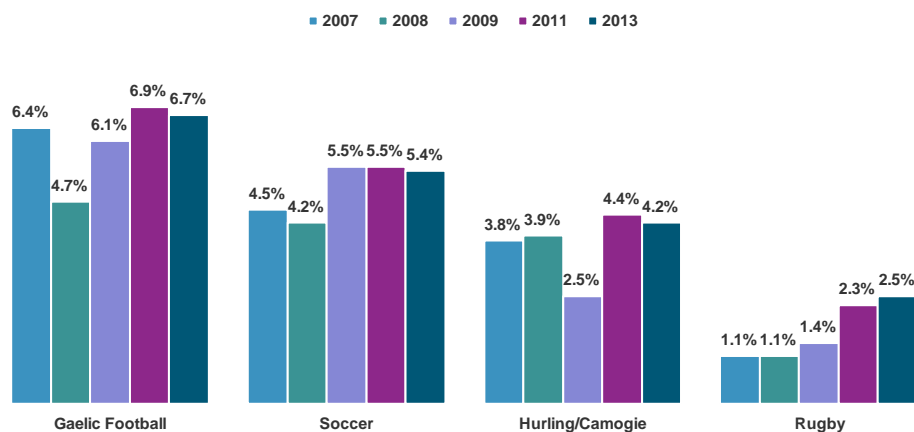


Figure 7.20 – Attendance By Sport



Gaelic Football remains the most commonly attended form of sporting event with 6.7% attending a fixture, followed by soccer (5.4%). The increase in attendance at rugby fixtures since 2009 is also noteworthy, with attendance levels almost twice the level of four years ago.

Summary

While there has been no significant change in social participation over the past two years, this hides a widening social gradient that is particularly evident in terms of volunteering. When considered in the context of increases in active participation being more pronounced among those in paid employment compared to other groups, it is a cause for concern in terms of addressing the social gradient that exists within sport. Further study is needed to identify the factors that may be restricting those in lower social groups becoming more involved in (and dropping out of) volunteering - a vital role in maintaining sporting structures.

Furthermore, the perception of a gender imbalance within the management and administration of sport is largely borne out by the reality where membership, attendance and volunteering are already heavily skewed by gender and where the figures for the national administration of sport suggest a strongly male dominated environment. This presents some unique challenges that will need to be overcome in order to foster a healthy sporting structure. Further work is needed in this area to address the challenges this presents to ensure it does not become a more significant problem for sport.

Role of the Club in Sporting Participation

8. The Role of the Club in Sporting Participation

Introduction

Participation in sport within a club context offers a number of advantages, including access to facilities and organised activities, fostering a sense of community and connection, and nurturing talent that may exist in particular sports. As the earlier part of this report shows, there is a growing trend towards sports being participated in on an individual basis with much of this taking place outside of the club environment. This section explores the issues around club participation including looking at what could be done to encourage higher levels including of club membership. Key results that emerge are:

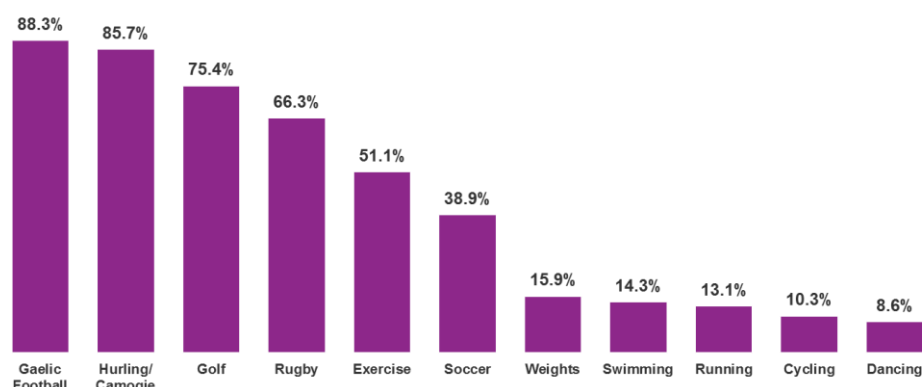
- Lack of interest/time and clubs being associated with competitive participation are the main reasons cited for not being a member of a club.
- A significant proportion participating in sport outside the club environment claims that there is nothing that would motivate those people to join a club (26%).
- The most cited reasons which would encourage joining or re-joining a club were if family or friends got involved (18%) and if it was more convenient time wise (19%).
- Among individuals who claimed nothing would encourage them to join/re-join a club for a sport they were participating in, 59% are highly active. This compares with 48% of those who indicated some interest in joining/re-joining a club being highly active, which indicates that some highly active individuals may not feel that a club would add anything to their sporting experience.

Sports and Club Membership

Figure 8.1 shows the percentage of sports participants who are club members for that sport. Gaelic football and hurling are prominent with over 85% of players being members of a GAA club. Swimming, running, cycling and dancing come in at the other end of the spectrum, with less than 15% of those who took part in each activity being members of a club for that activity.

Despite being sports where participation is more likely within the club context, it is notable that roughly 1 in 10 of those playing hurling/camogie or Gaelic football, and 1 in 3 of those playing rugby, are doing so outside of the club environment. The exact reasons for this are unclear: however some inference can be taken from the context in which these sports can be played. Earlier in the report (figure 4.16) it was shown that some of the participation within these sports was being done outside of organised structures, in particular casually with friends/family (for example, parents playing the sport at home with children, individuals practicing skills etc.). Another factor may also be participation within organised structures outside of the club environment, for example within schools or through tag rugby events.

Figure 8.1 – Proportion of Those Who Participated In Sport In The Last 7 Days Who Are Also A Club Member For That Sport

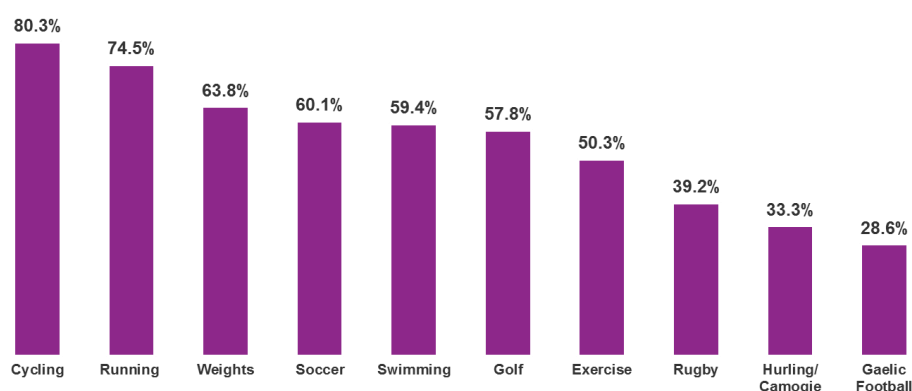


An analysis by key demographics shows that females are more likely to participate in sporting activities outside the club environment, with only 33.0% of female sports participants being members of a club for the sport they are participating in, compared to males at 48.4%. This may be explained by females being more likely to participate in individual sports such as exercise, swimming and dancing which may have a lower necessity for club membership compared to team sports, which have higher male participation. However, given that exercise also has the highest level of club membership of all sports overall, it may simply be the case that males are just more likely to be members of a club for the sport they participate in.

An alternative way to explore the link between sports participation and club membership is to identify the proportion of club members who participated in that sport in the last 7 days. While many of those taking part in a sport may not be members of a club for reasons such as seeking greater flexibility and lower expense, club membership is typically associated with greater participation. This is likely due to those most interested/involved in the sport seeking out a club, as well as the inherent commitment within any form of membership and the organised nature of activities. As shown in figure 8.2 below, members of cycling clubs are the most likely to have taken part in the sport associated with their club – four-fifths of cycling club members cycled in the previous seven days.

However this does not apply universally across all sports. For example in the case of GAA sports only 29.9% of club members had actively participated in an activity associated with that club in the last seven days. This high membership combined with low participation may be explained by GAA clubs being pivotal points within many communities which go well beyond simply providing a location for physical activity and are a source of significant social capital

Figure 8.2 – Participation By Member Of Clubs In The Last 7 Days



Participation in Sport Outside The Club

As shown in figure 8.3 the main reasons for not being a member of a sports club where the person is currently participating in the relevant activity are: not being interested enough (22.5%), not wanting to participate competitively (18.4%), being too busy (16.7%) and the expense of joining a club (14.1%). Analysing these factors by individual activities that are commonly played outside of the club context shows that the barriers differ extensively depending on the nature of the sport.

Figure 8.3 – Reasons For Not Being A Member Of A Club

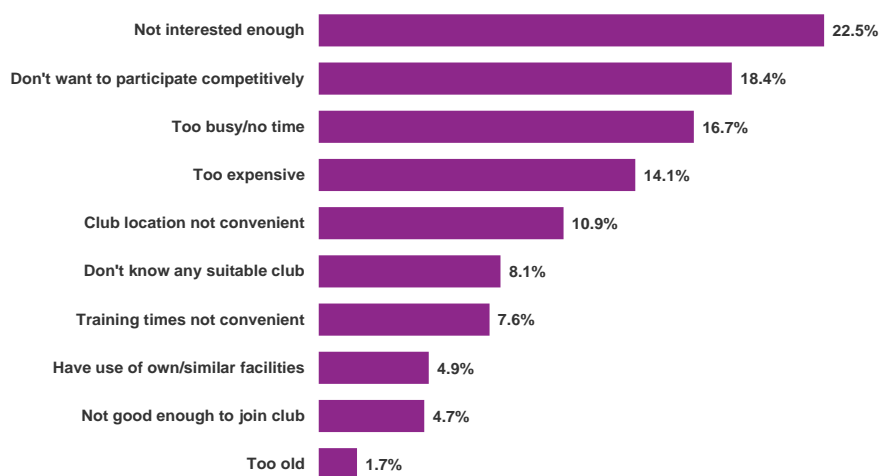
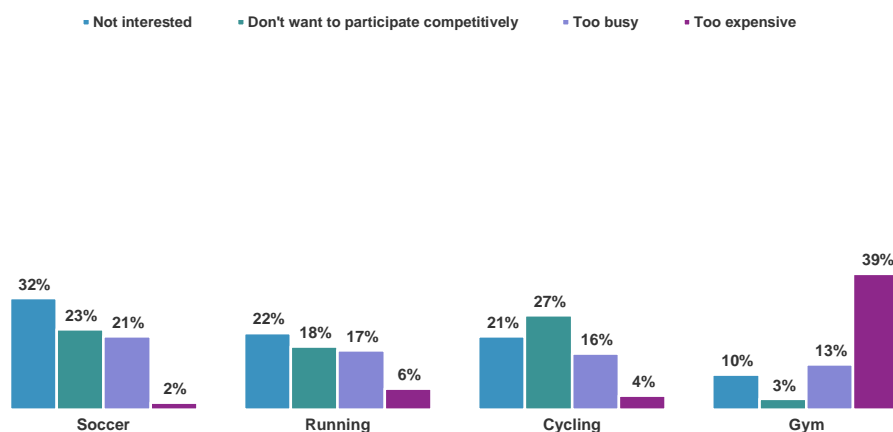


Figure 8.4 – Reasons For Not Being A Member Of A Club – By Sport



In the research, those participating in soccer, running, cycling and exercise activities who were not members of a club for that sport were asked why they were not members of a club for that sport. This was also asked of GAA and golf participants who were not members of a club. However these numbers were too small to be included in the analysis. As shown in Figure 8.4, the expense of joining a club is a significant barrier to membership for those who do gym exercises (39.1%) but who are not currently members. This is not entirely surprising given that membership of gyms is often associated with high fees. Of those playing soccer, running or cycling, expense is much less of an issue with less than 7% citing it as a barrier to club membership in each case. For these individuals, not wanting to participate competitively or a general lack of interest were far more likely to be cited as reasons for not being a club member.

It must also be recognised that activities may be taking place within an organised format but not within a traditional club context (for example, “meet and train” groups for running or cycling, 5-a-side soccer leagues etc.). This is evidenced in Figure 8.5 which shows the proportion of those participating in popular sports who are not members of a club yet say they are participating in some form of organised activity (training or competition). It may be that in many cases participating outside a club environment means greater flexibility for participants as well as avoiding the need for a membership fee to join a club. However, people who play soccer outside a club may pay for the use of pitches and those who swim may still have to pay to access a pool. These people may simply find participating outside a club involves less hassle. It may be that clubs are not providing flexible enough offerings to cater to their needs. The question of what might encourage membership among existing non-members who are active participants is examined later in this chapter.

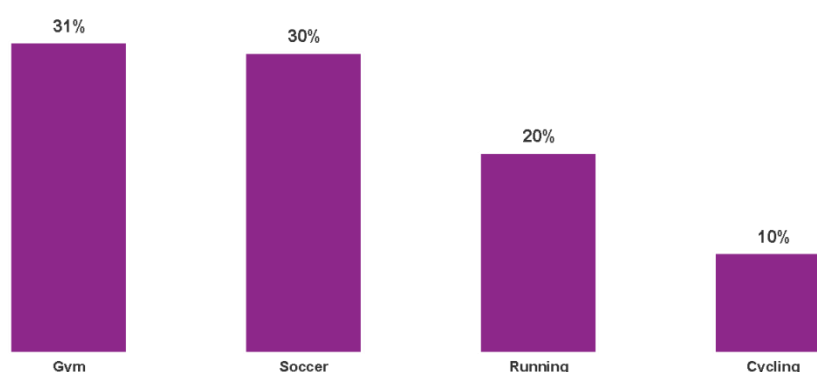
Figure 8.5 – Participation In Organised Sport By Club Members/Non-Members



Interest In Joining A Club

Seventy-two per cent of respondents indicated some interest in joining a club for a sport they were participating in. The highest interest in joining a club for a sport they are participating in is with those involved in gym activities (31%) or soccer (30%) as displayed in Figure 8.6. This question was also asked of those participating in golf and GAA sports outside the club environment, but again the numbers for these two sports were too small to report on. At the other end of the spectrum those participating in cycling outside the club environment are the least likely to want to join a club (10%). These results could suggest that the benefits of a gym, such as facilities and equipment provided, and the opportunity for a regular schedule of group training, as with soccer clubs may be considered attractive incentives for joining a club for some individuals playing these sports, and this may be driving the higher levels of interest among these groups. With cycling these two factors are likely to be less important, as it is an individual sport with very few barriers to participation and those who participate in cycling may want their participation to be flexible without the commitment of a club membership.

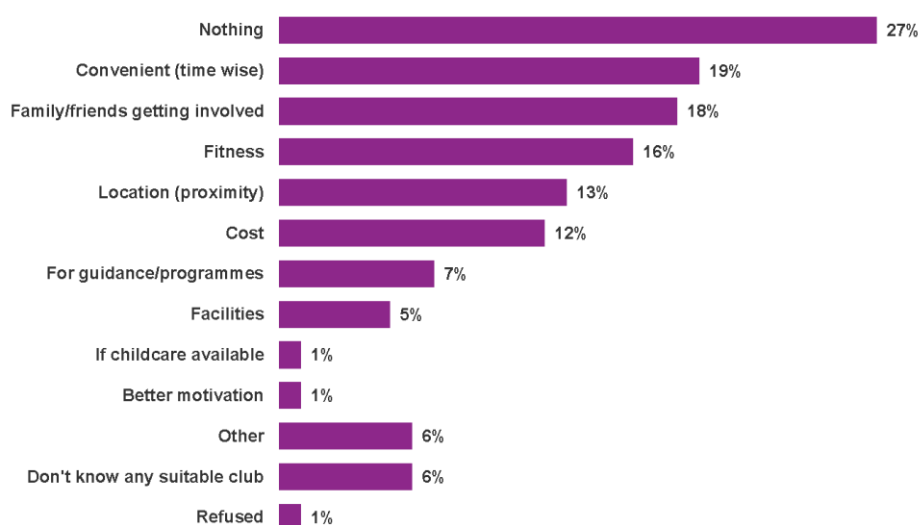
Figure 8.6 Interest In Joining A Club



When asked what would encourage them to become a member of a club the reasons most commonly cited were having more time, friends and family getting involved, and cheaper or free opportunities. For clubs trying to increase their membership levels this may indicate the potential of group discounts to encourage people to join with their friends and reduce the cost of the membership fee.

However it should be recognised that for a significant proportion of people already playing sport, there is nothing that would encourage them to become a member for at least one of the sports in which they are participating (26%). What may be surprising is that, of those who expressed this view, 59% were classed as being highly active compared to only 48% of those who might be interested in joining a club. This shows that of those participating in a sport with no interest in joining a club, a majority is actually very active in sport. For these individuals at least this suggests a belief that a club would add little value to their sporting experience.

Figure 8.7 – Factors Encouraging Membership



Those aged 50-64 are most likely to say there is nothing that would encourage them to join a club in the case of at least one of the sports they were participating in (52%). It may be that older age groups feel that sports clubs are not suitable for them, which may highlight the need to communicate the benefits of club membership (both physical and social), with appropriately tailored messages to different groups.

Previous Club Members

Figure 8.8 shows the breakdown of those who have previously been a member of a club for a sport that they currently participate in (base sizes for golf and Gaelic football were too small to report on). The majority of those participating in soccer and exercise outside the club environment were previously members of a club; whereas the opposite is the case for running and cycling. It may be that soccer clubs and gyms were not catering to the needs of those who left, but it may also be in part due to people not having the interest or time to commit to becoming a club member, instead preferring to continue to engage in these activities in a more informal, flexible manner. For some it may be that a life transition, such as moving house, job, etc. may have intruded into the experience of being a member of a particular club. These reasons feature to a large extent in Figure 8.9 below.

Figure 8.8 – Previous Membership Of A Club Of Those Who Are Not Currently A Member Of A Sport They Participate In

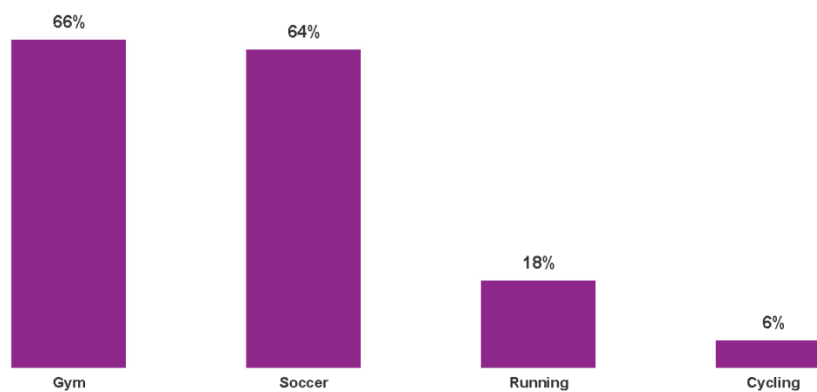
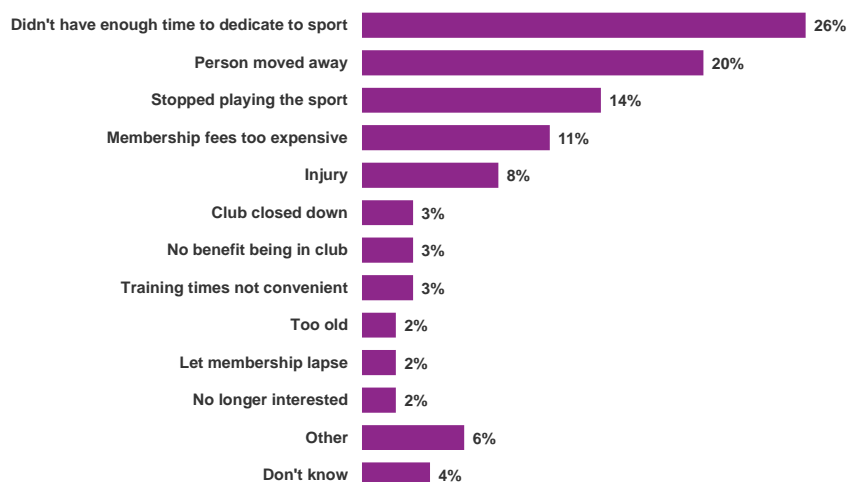


Figure 8.9 Reasons For Ceasing Club Membership



Not having enough time to dedicate to the sport is the most common reason for no longer being a member of a club. Clearly time commitments associated with club membership are an issue for people, with greater flexibility required if people are going to consider joining or re-joining a club.

Summary

Clubs have an important role to play in the development of sport and in increasing sporting participation in Ireland. As well as facilitating the activities, clubs will, in many cases also enrich the experience through their social nature. However, clubs may also be perceived as an environment focused on competitive sport and structured training, which may explain why many adults choose not to participate in a club environment.

There are some key challenges facing clubs if they are to increase membership levels. Most adult participants prefer casual and flexible participation instead of more structured competitive sort. Clubs will therefore need to adapt their offerings to cater for these needs. This presents a significant challenge for organisations which have traditionally been geared towards structured competitive sport. Emphasising and developing the social and non-competitive side of clubs is something which could encourage people to join a club as they move through adulthood

More social active participation in sport can provide an important avenue through which higher levels of sporting participation could be encouraged, by providing organised sporting structures in conjunction with a social aspect to participation.

That friends/relatives joining a club is the second most common reason cited by people for being interested in joining a club shows that some tend to see participation as a recreational pursuit which they enjoy and want to spend with friends, as opposed to simply carrying out a physical activity for the health benefits associated with it; though health is still the main reason cited for engagement in sport and physical activity. This is perhaps an aspect of club membership which could be emphasised further in any efforts to encourage greater membership levels.

Motivation can often be an issue for people when it comes to staying physically active. Clubs can play an important role in this regard through their regular and structured activities which members are encouraged to participate in. Clubs could also act as a motivational factor for staying active by fostering a sense of connection and community among their members.

Sport and Health

9. Sport and Health

Introduction

The ISM in 2013 featured several additional questions which were asked of respondents during five months of data collection, exploring aspects of an individual's perception of their health and well-being and prevalence of other health-influencing behaviours.

In this section, a particular emphasis has been placed on the comparison between highly active individuals (those who meet the National Physical Activity guidelines) and sedentary individuals, to identify points of difference between the two groups. The definitions for what constitutes being identified as highly active or sedentary used in previous sections, apply here.

It must be noted that the measures of health utilised in the ISM 2013 are broad in nature and self-reported. Also, there are numerous factors that are associated with the physical activity and health relationship. As such the findings in this section can only be regarded as indicative of differences between individuals of differing activity levels, rather than providing definitive conclusions on the relationship between physical activity and health. Furthermore, there are many factors involved in why an individual may or may not participate in a high level of physical activity, such as an illness or disability. Therefore, for the purposes of this section, respondents who reported that they had an illness or disability which prevented them from participating in sport or exercise were excluded from any analyses, unless otherwise stated.

The ISM 2013 explored some other measures of health, such as feeling unwell and GP visitation among respondents. However, few, if any, significant differences were observed based on activity level specifically. As such, these results are not presented in this section. Similarly, measures investigating incidence of stress and sleeping well were also asked of respondents, though again, few differences were observed based on activity level, and these results have also been omitted from this section.

Key results that emerge are:

- In terms of perceptions of health (i.e. how healthy a person believes they are), highly active individuals are significantly more likely than sedentary individuals to report their weight (89%), alcohol consumption (72%) and eating habits (89%) as healthy.
- Fewer highly active individuals report engaging in smoking (17%) than sedentary individuals (25%).
- A higher proportion of sedentary individuals watched more than 5 hours of television in the previous day (9%) compared with highly active individuals (3%).

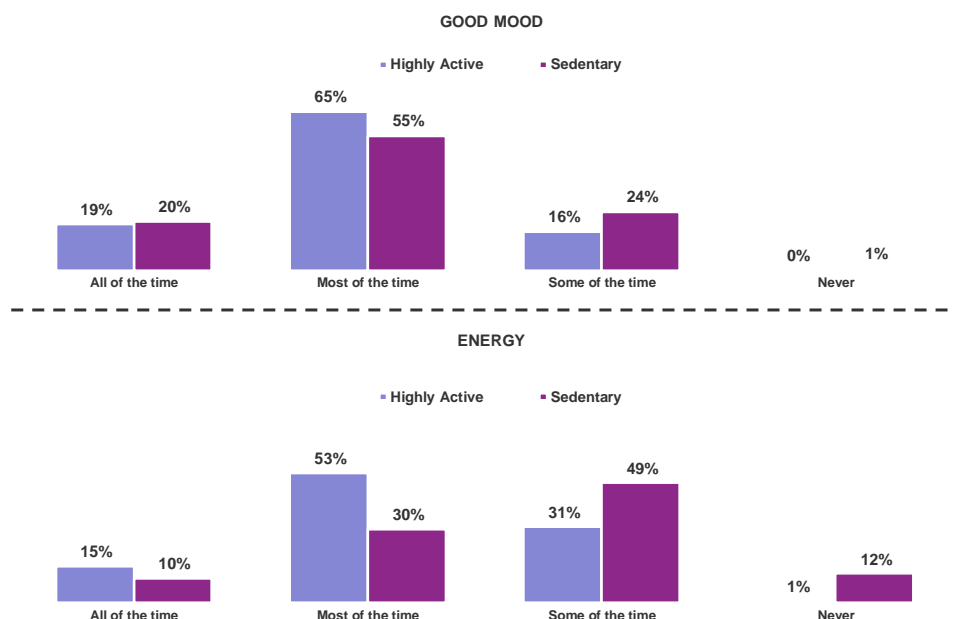
Measures of Well-being

The vast majority of individuals reported feeling in a good mood at least some of the time, regardless of activity status. However, breaking down the actual frequency of good mood reveals significant differences between the groups. For instance, significantly more highly active individuals reported feeling in a good mood at least most of the time in the previous month (84%) compared with sedentary individuals (75%).

Similarly, significantly more highly active individuals reported feeling energetic at least most of the time (67%) than sedentary individuals (40%).

While these findings suggest an association between high levels of physical activity and good mood and energy, causation cannot be determined given the subjective nature of responses. For instance, while high levels of physical activity may have influenced good mood and energy, the converse could also be true, with high levels of good mood and energy encouraging an individual to take part in greater levels of physical activity.

Figure 9.1 Good Mood And Energy



Perceptions of Health

The ISM 2013 also explored whether respondents judged their weight, alcohol consumption and eating habits as healthy or unhealthy. It should be noted that the findings reflect respondents' *perceptions* of their own health, as actual weight, alcohol consumption and eating habits have not been recorded. With this in mind, the results suggest that highly active individuals are more likely than sedentary individuals to perceive themselves as healthy overall. A significantly higher proportion of highly active individuals reported their weight as healthy (89%) than sedentary individuals (71%). As discussed earlier in the report, weight control is a key motivator for engagement in physical activity, and this appears to be reflected in this finding.

Similarly, a significantly higher proportion of highly active individuals report having healthy alcohol consumption (72%) than sedentary individuals (61%). However, a significantly higher proportion of sedentary individuals reported this question as not applicable (26% versus 15% of highly active individuals), suggesting that perhaps fewer sedentary individuals consume alcohol. This finding reflects the fact that sedentary individuals in this study were more likely to fall within older age categories, among which there is a lower likelihood of drinking than those within younger age categories.

In relation to eating habits, significantly more highly active individuals report their eating habits as healthy (89% of highly active individuals and 80% of sedentary individuals) which seems to suggest an overall greater attention to health related factors among individuals who engage in high levels of physical activity.

Figure 9.2 Perception Of Health



Lifestyle and Behaviours

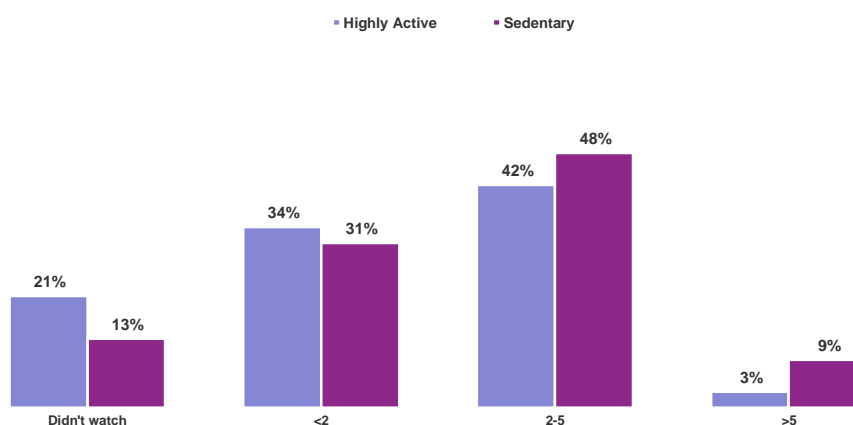
The ISM 2013 also recorded frequency of engagement in relation to a number of broader lifestyle behaviours - smoking and television viewing. While television viewing itself is not necessarily unhealthy, research has indicated that sedentary behaviours such as excessive television viewing are associated with many adverse health outcomes in adults¹⁶. Findings indicate that highly active individuals engage in fewer or less frequent unhealthy behaviours, when compared with sedentary individuals.

17% of highly active individuals reported smoking, compared with 25% of sedentary individuals, which constitutes a significant difference. This finding indicates that highly active individuals are less likely to engage in unhealthy behaviours such as smoking, although an alternative explanation could be that smokers may be less likely to engage in high levels of physical activity.

¹⁶ Wijndaele, K. et al (2011) Television viewing time independently predicts all-cause and cardiovascular mortality: the EPIC Norfolk Study. Int. J. Epidemiol. (2011) 40 (1): 150-159.doi: 10.1093/ije/dyq105

Of those who watched television, the vast majority, despite activity status, watched less than 5 hours in the previous day (76% of highly active and 78% of sedentary individuals). Significantly more highly active individuals (21%) than sedentary individuals (13%) reported not viewing television the previous day. On the opposite extreme, significantly more sedentary individuals reported watching more than 5 hours in the previous day (9%) than highly active individuals (3%).

Figure 9.3 Number Of Hours Spent Watching Television On Day Prior to Interview



Summary

Taking this section as a whole, the findings suggest benefits of physical activity on various indicators of health in line with previous national and international research. This section's findings provide support towards a positive impact of being highly active over being sedentary on well-being measures such as good mood and feeling energetic. While the majority of respondents reported their weight, alcohol consumption and eating habits as healthy, significantly more highly active individuals reported this compared with sedentary individuals. Furthermore, highly active individuals appear less likely to engage in more unhealthy behaviours, such as smoking and frequent television viewing, than sedentary individuals.

Policy Implications

10. Policy Implications

Transitioning Of Females From Recreational Walking To Sport

Sports participation within the overall population has increased since the previous study, which is a very positive development. One of the very encouraging findings from this ISM report is that some females, particularly those aged 25 to 44 are transitioning from recreational walking to sport, most notably running. Given the additional health benefits provided through sports participation, this is a very positive development. This changed activity is a positive outcome of the sports promotion activities at local and national levels. The growing network of Fit For Life and other meet and train groups, as well as the various health promotion messages, would have contributed to encouraging and facilitating this uplift in activity levels.

If it is to be encouraged further it is important to consider the particular needs of this group. Safety is a key concern for females engaging in outdoor sporting activities, particularly activities such as running which may be done alone and along roads. Females are more likely to take up these activities if they are facilitated through groups which provide both a safer context and encouragement to maintain activity levels once started. This group is also more likely than any other to have childcare requirements which need to be catered for in order to facilitate involvement in sport.

Casual Participation In Sport

Since the start of the ISM in 2007, the growing appeal of individual sports over team sports has been a constant trend. The substantial growth in sports participation since 2009 has been primarily driven by a growth in sports often participated in on an individual basis such as personal exercise, running and cycling. In turn this has seen an increase in activity participated in on a casual basis, either alone or with friends/family.

Therefore sport is seen primarily as a way of improving fitness and maximising health benefits rather than something restricted to a competitive pursuit. Sport is no longer limited to structured sessions on pitches, courts and gyms, but is taking place throughout the country on an informal basis on footpaths, roads and in parks. This is to be welcomed as the increases in sporting participation are a result of individuals motivating themselves to get active and perhaps recommencing sporting activity following years of inactivity.

This on-going movement towards casual participation in sport needs to be recognised and supported. Many of those participating in this way may have little interest in furthering their participation through joining a club or other formal sporting structure. Despite this, the growing proportion of participants who partake in sports in this way needs to have access to facilities; and policy development needs to ensure that this access is not severely limited by not being members of a club.

Participation Outside Organised Sporting Structures

That sport is increasingly being participated in on a casual basis appears to present a negative picture for the club structure in Ireland, with sports such as running and cycling having significant increases in participation levels, most of which is taking place outside of the club environment. In many cases, the club now has a diminished role within the context of overall participation levels. However in this context it is important to note that membership levels and levels of voluntary activity remain broadly unchanged.

A key challenge for clubs is to engage with those becoming newly active in the sport that they cater for. Clubs need to ensure an understanding of the motivations people have for taking part in sport and, if they so wish, ensure they can cater for these individuals, whether in terms of their level or type of involvement or the time of day or day of week on which they are participating in that sport.

While much sporting activity is taking place outside the traditional club environment, it is happening in organised or semi-organised structures. For example, many of those taking up running are participating in race events, or are joining parkrun or meet-and-train groups. In order to improve engagement with the club environment, lessons need to be learned from the success of these types of initiatives.

Gender Balance In Sports Administration

The perception by the majority that the administration of sport, at both local and national levels, is too male dominated is a major finding of this research. The perception of a gender imbalance at national level is particularly high, and is likely to be a reflection of the management and coaching structure around elite national level sports being male dominated – even in the case of elite female sports.

Analysis of the social participation in sport within this research suggests this perception is reflective of an actual underrepresentation of females in the administration of sport, and action is undoubtedly required in order to redress this imbalance. In order to do so, further work is required to understand what is discouraging or preventing females from becoming involved in the administration of sport, or obtaining roles in administration (in particular coaching and management). The potential knock-on effect to restricting female participation in sport, both active and social, cannot be underestimated and presents challenges in terms of eliminating the gender divide that exists generally within sport.

A Resilient Social Gradient

While much of what the report presents is positive in relation to sports participation and overall levels of physical activity, it will be of concern to the public policy system that the social gradient that has existed in sport is being maintained, and in many cases is widening. This is not only the case in active participation, and meeting physical activity guidelines, but also through social participation – most notably volunteering.

This is particularly concerning given the increase in activity in many areas. For example, participation in running has increased considerably since the previous study; however the increase is driven by particular groups in the population, while others – for example, those in the DE social class – have seen no increase in participation levels in this activity. As such, this rising tide may not be lifting all boats.

Further work is needed in order to identify specific causes of this, and why perhaps particular groups are not getting involved in the activities that are becoming more popular (and are decreasing their involvement in other activities). The obstacles to participation could be for a variety of reasons – financial, social or access – and policy will be needed in order to overcome these.

Decline In Participation Among Young Males

Overall participation in sport has increased between 2011 and 2013. However deeper analysis of the data indicates that this growth is not consistent across all population groups.

It is not clear whether the decline in participation amongst young males is a one-off or may be part of a longer term trend. In exploring this issue further it is important to fully understand why young males might be dropping out of sport in order to identify the initiatives that will encourage them to retain their interests. Particular aspects of club membership may need to be considered in this respect, most notably membership fees and the growing level of “professionalism” in amateur team sports which may cause some to drop out due to the level of commitment required to sustain their involvement.

This issue is also raised in a recent report by the Irish Sports Council on transitions into and out of sport¹⁷ which highlighted the challenge in maintaining involvement as young people leave school (almost one-third of students who play extra-curricular sport cease playing the sport after leaving school). It noted that the drop-out disproportionately affected females as well as those playing team sports. This provides further support to the need to ensure that those leaving school are provided with sufficient opportunity to maintain an involvement in sport. This could be done through building stronger links between schools and wider sporting organisations/clubs so that young people can maintain their sporting involvement once they leave the formal structure of the education system. Additionally, consideration may be needed to encourage sporting activity that is easier to maintain after leaving school (for example, including a focus on individual sports alongside team-based activities).

¹⁷ Keeping Them in the Game: Taking Up and Dropping Out of Sport and Exercise in Ireland (November 2013)

Appendices

11. Technical Appendix

In order to evaluate its strategy of increasing participation in sport, the Irish Sports Council has committed to commissioning research to monitor changes in participation in the period up to 2020. In order to do so it requires a robust measurement of active and social participation across all types of sport. This measurement needs to facilitate accurate analysis at overall population and sub-group level, and as such needs to be built upon a large statistically robust sample.

Ipsos MRBI has conducted the 2011 and 2013 versions of this research, with the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) conducting previous surveys. Since the inception of the research, the methodology used has remained broadly consistent with between 6,829 and 9,767 interviews conducted in each wave.

All interviews are conducted by telephone, with Ipsos MRBI conducting interviews through its Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) unit in Dublin.

Specific details on the methodology used by Ipsos MRBI are provided below.

Sample Selection

A random location sample is used to identify the survey sample, involving a three stage process.

Stage 1: Stratified random selection of sampling points

The selection of the sample requires a stratified random selection of locations, or sampling points, to distribute the sample geographically throughout the Republic of Ireland, proportional to the required sample. The Republic of Ireland is divided geographically into 3,440 Electoral Divisions (EDs) ranged across Urban and Rural districts throughout the country. These EDs provide the basis of the sampling frame from which individual EDs are identified as the primary sampling points for this study.

In order to ensure that the EDs that are selected are representative of the required population in terms of their distribution around Ireland, variables from the latest census are used to stratify the EDs/combinations prior to the selection process, namely region and degree of urbanisation.

The first stage in the selection of these sampling points will involve the analysis and stratification of the population by broad region:

- Dublin
- Rest of Leinster
- Munster
- Connacht/Ulster

Within each region further stratification by community size is conducted by:

- County Borough
- Towns pop. 10000+
- Towns pop. 5-10000
- Towns pop. 1500-5000
- Rural areas pop < 1500

Within each of these cells, all EDs are listed with their populations and the required sampling points are selected proportional to their population, utilising a systematic selection process. In this manner 500 EDs are selected by identifying every nth ED/combination. This framework ensures a spread of interviewing across all urban and rural dimensions, and further ensures that all households have an equal opportunity for selection regardless of the size of the ED in which a household is situated. In this manner the sample is spread geographically across the entire country.

Stage 2: Identification of telephone numbers

For each sampling point, a seed telephone number is identified, and from this additional telephone numbers will be randomly identified in order to provide a total sample list of telephone numbers spread throughout all regions of Ireland. However, as the numbers are generated on an incremental basis, not all are operational, not all are operational telephone numbers and there is a high degree of wastage that is built into this sampling approach.

Stage 3: Selection of the individual in the household

Quota controls are applied to ensure that the sample is representative of the universe in terms of required demographic criteria. Quota controls are then be set for key attributes within each region.

- Age (16-44/45+)
- Gender (male/female)
- Working status (at work/not at work)

By interlocking these dimensions, interviewers are provided with specific interviewing quotas detailing the exact number of interviews to be conducted with each demographic group.

Fieldwork Scheduling

In order to account for seasonal variations in sports participation, interviews are spread across a 12 month period. In doing so monthly and quarterly quotas are set that are broadly representative of the overall sample, so that reliable ad-hoc analysis could be conducted during the year to identify emerging trends.

12. Survey Questionnaire

SECTION 1 – INTRO AND SCREENING

Good morning/afternoon/evening, my name is _____ and I am calling on behalf of Ipsos MRBI, Ireland's leading opinion polling and survey research company. We are conducting a survey on important social issues. Would you spare some time to answer some questions, it will take approximately 12 minutes.

Before we go to the first question I just need to reassure you that all of your answers are completely confidential and your rights under the Data Protection Act will be fully observed, including not answering and choosing to end the interview. For quality control and training purposes this interview may be monitored or recorded.

GENDER

RECORD SEX OF RESPONDENT

Male.....
Female

AGE

To ensure we interview a wide cross section of the public, could I first ask what age group you fall into?

Under 16
16-19
20-24
25-34
35-44
45-54
55-64
65+

AGE 2

And, may I ask what is your actual age?
15 to 99

WORK

Which of these best describes your current employment situation? **READ OUT. SINGLE CODE**

Working as an employee.....
Self-employed
Unemployed/seeking work.....
Retired.....
Full-time home maker / looking after family
Student.....
Not working due long term sickness or disability

WORK 2

Do you have a full-time occupation or paid job of 30 or more hours per week?

Yes
No.....
Don't know.....
Refused.....

SECTION 2 – SPORTS PARTICIPATION

Now I would like to ask you a few questions on recreation, exercise and sport. These questions are being asked on behalf of the Irish Sports Council, but they relate to a broad range of physical activities as well as traditional sports, including walking, cycling, other outdoor pursuits, water sports, and non-competitive or recreational exercise.

- A1.** First, I would like to ask you about any recreational walking you did in the last 7 days.
DO NOT include walks for transport, such as walking to work or to the shops, but DO include walks undertaken for exercise, recreation or leisure. In the last 7 days, did you take such a walk?

In the last 7 days, did you take such a walk?

Yes.....

☐

No

☐

→ **GO TO A5**

- A2.** How many walks for exercise, recreation or leisure did you take?

- A3.** Approximately how many minutes did each walk last?

a.	b.	c.	d.	e.	f.	g.
----	----	----	----	----	----	----

INT: IF INTERVIEWEE TOOK MORE THAN 7 WALKS, PLEASE RECORD THE 7 LONGEST

- A4.** How would you describe your usual walking pace during this(these) walk(s)? **TICK ONE ONLY**

Slow..... ☐
Steady, average..... ☐
Fairly Brisk ☐
Fast ☐
Don't know ☐

- A5.** I would now like to ask you about any OTHER physical activities you undertook in the past 7 days for exercise, recreation or sport. Please DO NOT include physical activity for work, transport, or domestic work like gardening or DIY. Please DO include personal exercise, such as swimming, dancing or jogging, as well as all forms of sporting activity, indoor or outdoor, whether undertaken in an organised setting or casually with family or friends. So, in the past 7 days, did you participate in any such activities?

Yes.....

☐

No

☐ → GO TO A22

- A6.** Please list up to 3 sports or activities, in the order in which you participated the most:

A6a.

A6b.

A6c.

I'd like to ask you a short series of questions about each activity, starting with the first...

INT: PROMPT ACTIVITY A6A

- A7.** On how many of the last 7 days did you take part? _____
- A8.** For how long did you take part?
Consider a usual session if you took part more than once. _____ minutes
- A9.** Was the effort enough to raise your breathing rate?
- Yes ☐
- No..... ☐
- A10.** Was the effort enough for you to be out of breath or sweat?
- Yes ☐
- No..... ☐
- A11.** In what context did the activity take place?
- Organised training/coaching/lesson ☐
- Organised competition ☐
- Casually with family or friends ☐
- On own ☐
- Other ☐

I'd like to ask you the same series of questions about the second activity... **[PROMPT ACTIVITY A6B]**

A12. On how many of the last 7 days did you take part? _____

A13. For how long did you take part?
Consider a usual session if you took part more than once. _____ minutes

A14. Was the effort enough to raise your breathing rate?

Yes

No.....

A15. Was the effort enough for you to be out of breath or sweat?

Yes

No.....

A16. In what context did the activity take place?

Organised training/coaching/lesson

Organised competition

Casually with family or friends

On own

Other

I'd like to ask you the same series of questions about the third activity... **[PROMPT ACTIVITY A6C]**

A17. On how many of the last 7 days did you take part? _____

A18. For how long did you take part?
Consider a usual session if you took part more than once. _____ minutes

A19. Was the effort enough to raise your breathing rate?

Yes

No.....

A20. Was the effort enough for you to be out of breath or sweat?

Yes

No.....

A21. In what context did the activity take place?

Organised training/coaching/lesson

Organised competition

Casually with family or friends

On own

Other

A22. I would now like to ask you about any voluntary activity associated with sport and exercise activities that you undertook in the past 7 days. Voluntary activity means any role you may have fulfilled in support of sport or recreational physical activity, for adults or children. It includes helping to run events, providing or maintaining transport, food, equipment or kit, or acting in any kind of official capacity in relation to an event, team or organisation that provides opportunities to engage in physical activities for recreation, exercise or sport.

So, in the past 7 days, were you involved in any volunteering of this type?

Yes.....

☐

No

☐

→ **GO TO A28**

A23. What were the sports or physical activities concerned (up to a maximum of 2 you were most involved in)?

A23a. _____

A23b. _____

A24. For sport ... [prompt activity A23a], what voluntary involvement did you have?

TICK ALL THAT APPLY

Providing Transport.....

Coach

Club Official

Activity Organiser

Kit Maintenance

Selector

Mentor

Referee.....

Other (please specify)

A25. How much time during the past 7 days did you devote to volunteering for this activity?

_____ hours

A26. For sport ... [prompt activity A23b], what voluntary involvement did you have?

TICK ALL THAT APPLY

Providing Transport.....
Coach
Club Official
Activity Organiser
Kit Maintenance
Selector
Mentor
Referee.....
Other (please specify)

A27. How much time during the past 7 days did you devote to volunteering for this activity?

_____ hours

A28. Are you a member of any kind of sports club? Include clubs for traditional sports, but also walking, cycling or swimming clubs, fitness centres, gyms or other organisations that provide opportunities to engage in physical activity for recreation, exercise or sport?

Yes.....

☐

No

☐

→ **GO TO A31**

A29. How many are you a member of? _____

A30. What are the sports or physical activities concerned (up to a maximum of 3 you are most involved in)?

A30a. _____

A30b. _____

A30c. _____

A31. Given the broad definition of sporting activities we have been using, have you attended any fixtures or events in the past 7 days, either children's or adult events, as a spectator or supporter, rather than as an active participant?

Yes.....

☐

No

☐

→ **GO TO A34**

A32. How many events did you attend? _____

A33. What were the sports or physical activities concerned (up to a maximum of 3 most recent events)?

A33a. _____

A33b. _____

A33c. _____

A34. Apart from during PE lessons, did you play regular sport at school?

Yes.....

No

A35. When you were at school, did your parents play any kind of sport regularly? **TICK ONE ONLY**

Yes, both
Yes, father only
Yes, mother only
No.....
Don't Know

A36. Do you undertake any regular walks of over 15 minutes for transport, such as walking to work, walking children to school etc.? By regular I mean at least once-a-week.

Yes.....
No

A37. Do you cycle regularly as a form of transport? By regular I again mean once-a-week.

Yes.....
No

WAVES 1-3 CLUB MEMBERSHIP**IF PLAY SOCCER, GAA, RUNNING, GOLF, CYCLING, GYM (BASED ON ALL SUB-CODES)****ALL INDICATING THEY ARE NOT MEMBERS OF A CLUB RELEVANT TO THEIR SPORT****For soccer, GAA, running, golf and cycling**

- B1.** Earlier in the survey you mentioned that you participate in <INSERT SPORT>, but that you were not a member of a club for that sport. For what reasons are you not a member of a club?
DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE

Am not interested enough in the sport to join a club.....	1
Don't want to participate competitively in the sport.....	2
Am not good enough at the sport to join a club	3
Too expensive to join a club	4
Club location is not convenient	5
Club training times are not convenient.....	6
Don't know any suitable club	7
Other (specify: _____)	8
Don't know	9
Refused.....	10

For gym

- B1.** Earlier in the survey you mentioned that you participate in <INSERT SPORT>, but that you were not a member of a gym for that sport. For what reasons are you not a member of a gym?
DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE

Am not interested enough in the sport to join a club.....	1
Don't want to participate competitively in the sport.....	2
Am not good enough at the sport to join a club	3
Too expensive to join a club	4
Club location is not convenient	5
Club training times are not convenient.....	6
Don't know any suitable club	7
Other (specify: _____)	8
Don't know	9
Refused.....	10

- B2.** In the past have you ever been a member of a <INSERT SPORT> club*?

Yes	1
No.....	2

- B3.** When were you most recently a member of a <INSERT SPORT> club*?

Within past year	1
1-2 years ago	2
3-5 years ago	3
More than 5 years ago	4
Don't know	5

- B4.** And for what reasons did you cease being a member of a <INSERT SPORT> club*?
DO NOT READ OUT. MULTICODE

Stopped playing the sport	1
Didn't have enough time to dedicate to the sport	2
Moved house.....	3
Membership fees were too expensive	4
Club training times are not convenient.....	5
Club closed down	6
Other (specify: _____)	7
Don't know	8
Refused	9

- B5.** And on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not at all interested and 5 is very interested, how interested would you be now in joining a <INSERT SPORT> club*?

Not at all interested				Very interested
1	2	3	4	5

- B6.** What factors would encourage you to [join (if "No" at B2) rejoin (if "Yes" at B2)] a <INSERT SPORT> club*?

RECORD VERBATIM: _____

* Don't use word "club" when asking about gym

WAVES 4-5 SPORT AND GENDER

Ask to all participating in sports/recreational walking

Q.1 I'd now like you to think about the reasons why you choose to participate in sport or other physical activity. On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is not at all important and 5 is very important, how important are the following factors to you in being physically active?

RANDOMISE LIST. SINGLE CODE

To improve my health and fitness	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know
To relax	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know
To improve my athletic skills	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know
To compete with others	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know
To spend time with friends and family	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know
To control my weight	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know

ASK ALL

I'd now like to ask you a few questions about male and female sports

Q.2 I'm now going to read you a list of statements. On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is disagree strongly and 5 is agree strongly, could you please tell me how much you agree or disagree with each one.

SINGLE CODE

Young girls aged 12 and under have the same opportunities to participate in sport as boys of the same age	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know
Teenage girls have the same opportunities to participate in sport as boys of the same age	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know
Adult women have the same opportunities to participate in sport as men	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know
The Irish media generally does not include enough coverage of female sport	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know
Overall, female sport is less competitive than male sport	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know

ASK ALL

Q.3 I'd now like you to think about the administration and management of sport in Ireland. By that I mean acting in an official capacity in relation to an event, team or organisation. This includes roles such as coaching, leadership and committee membership both at national and local levels. Would you say that this aspect of sport is....

READ OUT. ROTATE OPTIONS 1 AND 2

...too male dominated 1
 ...too female dominated 2
 ...or that the balance between males and females is about right 3
 Don't know 4

ASK TO ALL CLUB MEMBERS

Q.4 You mentioned earlier that you are a member of a _____ club. Thinking of the administration and management of a _____ club, would you say that it is....

READ OUT. ROTATE OPTIONS 1 AND 2

...too male dominated 1

...too female dominated	2
...or that the balance between males and females is about right	3
Don't know	4

ASK ALL

Q.5 Thinking now of playing sport. Are there any sports that you feel should not be played by females and should only be played by males?

Yes	1
No.....	2
Don't know	3

IF YES AT Q.6, ASK Q.6 AND Q.7

Q.6 Which one sport do you think is least suited to being played by females?

List of sports.....

.7 For what reasons do you think _____ is least suited to being played by females than males?

Too dangerous	1
Females don't have sufficient strength	2
Sport not very feminine/bad image for females	3
The social circles around the sport are not suitable for females	4
Other (specify: _____)	5
Don't know	6

WAVE 6 SPORTS AND HEALTH

ASK ALL

I'd now like you a few questions about your general lifestyle.

ASK ALL

B1. Firstly I'd like you to think about how you have felt over the past month. For each of the following would you say that you have felt this way all of the time, most of the time, some of the time or never. So in the past month, how often have you...

RANDOMISE STATEMENTS. REPEAT SCALE AS NECESSARY.

	All of the time	Most of the time	Some of the time	Never	Don't know
Felt unwell	1	2	3	4	9
Felt in a good mood	1	2	3	4	9
Felt stressed.....	1	2	3	4	9
Felt energetic	1	2	3	4	9
Slept well.....	1	2	3	4	9

ASK ALL

B2. Over the past year, approximately how many times have you personally visited your GP?

0	1
1	2
2-5	3
6-10	4
More than 10 times	5
Don't know	98
Refused.....	99

ASK ALL

B3. And over the past three months, on roughly how many days would you say you were unable to carry out your normal day-to-day activities as you felt unwell? For example, unable to attend work or social events

RECORD NUMBER (MAX 89)

0	1
1	2
2-10	3
11-20	5
More than 20	6
Everyday	7
Don't know	98
Refused.....	99

ASK ALL

B4. Thinking now of the following aspects of your life, would you describe them as being healthy or unhealthy?

RANDOMISE STATEMENTS. REPEAT SCALE AS NECESSARY.

	Healthy	Unhealthy	Not applicable	Don't know
Your weight	1	2		9
The amount of alcohol you drink.....	1	2	3	9
Your eating habits	1	2		9

ASK ALL

B5. Thinking of yesterday, how many hours did you spend watching television?

Didn't watch television yesterday.....	1
Less than 2 hours.....	2
2 to 5 hours	3
More than 5 hours	4
Don't know	98
Refused.....	99

ASK ALL

B6. Do you smoke one or more cigarettes each week, whether packaged or roll your own?

Yes	1
No.....	2
Couldn't say	99

ASK ALL PARTICIPATING IN SPORT

B7. Thinking now of your participation in sport, to what extent, if at all, are you concerned that the following issues have a negative impact on other aspects of your life?

RANDOMISE STATEMENTS. PROBE TO PRECODE.

	Very concerned	Fairly concerned	Not very concerned	Not at all concerned	Don't know	Not applicable
The time spent on your involvement in sport.....	1	2	3	4		9
The money spent on your involvement in sport	1	2	3	4		9

ASK ALL PARTICIPATING IN SPORT

B8. And over the past three months, on how many days have you had an injury that has prevented you from taking part in sport?

0 days.....	1
1 day.....	2
2-5 days	3
6-10 days	4
11-30 days	5
31-60 days	6
61-89 days	7
Everyday	8
Don't know	98
Refused.....	99

Finally, I would like to ask you a few more background questions.

C1. Do you have any long-term illness, health problem or disability that limits your daily activities or work?

Yes.....

No GO TO C3.

C2. Does this prevent you from taking part in sport and exercise?

Yes.....

No

C3. Do you have any children?

Yes.....

No

C4. How many children do you have? _____

C5. What age is your youngest child? _____

C5a. How many adults live in your household? _____

C5b. How many children aged under 18 live in your household? _____

C5c. Are you?

Married

Living as married

Single

Widowed/Divorced/Separated

C6. Does your household have a car?

Yes.....

No

C7. Which of the following best describes where you live? **TICK ONE ONLY**

In a city

In a town

In a village

Isolated location

Don't know

C8. Which county do you live in? **PRECODE LIST OF COUNTIES**

[IF DUBLIN]

C9. Which of the following is your local authority?

Dublin City
Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown
Fingal
South Dublin.....

C10. What nationality are you? If joint nationality, please state both nationalities

PRECODE LIST OF NATIONALITIES

SOCIO-ECONOMIC QUESTIONS

C11. What is the highest level of education that you have completed?

Primary level or lower
Group, Inter, Junior Certificate
Leaving Certificate
Other Second Level
Third Level
Don't know
Refused.....

C12. Could I ask about the approximate level of net household income? This means the total income, after tax, PRSI and other statutory deductions, of all members of the household.

<i>Amount per week</i>	<i>Amount per month</i>	<i>Amount per year</i>
under €300	under €1200	under €15500
€300 - €399	€1200 - €1599	€15500 - €19999
€400 - €499	€1600 - €1999	€20000 - €25999
€500 - €749	€2000 - €2999	€26000 - €38999
€750 - €899	€3000 - €3599	€39000 - €46999
€900 - €1249	€3600 - €4999	€47000 - €64999
over €1249	over €4999	over €64999

13. Steering Group

Members of Irish Sports Monitor Steering Committee

Name	Role on Committee	Organisation
Frances Kavanagh	Chairperson	Member Irish Sports Council
Sheila O'Flanagan	Member	Member Irish Sports Council
John Treacy	Member	Chief Executive Irish Sports Council
Peter Smyth	Member	Director of Research Irish Sports Council
Paul Donnelly	Member	Policy Planning and Research Manager Sport Northern Ireland
Elizabeth Doyle	Secretary	Research Officer Irish Sports Council

14. Referencing Table

Reader Information

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