

**Sport and Physical Activity among those aged over 16
in County Wicklow**

By

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Executive Summary

Active Participation in Sport

- 48.3% of Wicklow adults (aged 16 and over) take part in sport regularly, this is the equivalent of approximately 50,000 adults taking part regularly.
- Men (53.6%) are more likely to take part than women (43.1%)
- Social gradients continue impact active and social participation.
- Exercise is the most popular activity.
- Nearly 80% of participants took part in more than one session a week at an intensity sufficient to raise their breath/sweat.
- Most participants take part on their own.

Broader Physical Activity

- Over 68% of residents take part in recreational walking
- Women are more likely to take part than men (73.5% and 62.8%).
- The proportion who are walking and cycling for transport is the same as the national figures.

Social Participation

- Social participation is on par with the national average.
- Gyms are the most popular clubs to belong to while GAA is the most popular sport to volunteer for and GAA and Soccer are the most popular sports for spectators.
- The majority of social participation is focussed on individual activities.

Sport and Health

- Overall the proportion of those meeting the guidelines and who are sedentary is the same as the national average.
- Women in Wicklow are less likely to be sedentary than men.
- Over 61% of residents would like to take part in more sport.
- Time is the most common barrier to taking part in sport/activity.

1. INTRODUCTION

The National Physical Activity Guidelines¹ recommend at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity activity on 5 or more days a week for adults. The 30 minutes can be accumulated in bouts of 10 minutes or more over the course of a day. Being active confers significant health and related benefits² and participation in sport and active leisure plays an increasingly important role in adult physical activity levels worldwide³. The benefits from activity can be gained at any age. The English Longitudinal Study of Ageing⁴ tracked participants whose average age was over 65 for 8 years. Participants who took up activity in those 8 years also saw health benefits despite being previously inactive. Physical activity contributes to healthy ageing regardless of current age.

This report provides evidence on the sport and recreational exercise activity of adults (aged 16 and over) in county Wicklow. The analysis aims to be of interest and assistance to those involved in the promotion of sport in Wicklow, particularly Local Authorities, Wicklow LSP, clubs and volunteers.

Scope

The figures in this report are based on the results of the 2011 and 2013 Irish Sports Monitor (ISM) surveys. The data from both years were combined into one dataset of 734 respondents to try to reduce the error margin within the results. Based on this sample size the error margin around key high level results is about 3.6%. So if we report a participation rate of 48.3% in the report we would expect that the true participation rate for Wicklow lies somewhere between 48.3% – 3.6% and 48.3% + 3.6% i.e. between 44.7% and 51.9%⁵ Where the sample has been divided into further sub-samples by gender or age, the error margin is increased. **So, the results are only an indication of sports participation in Wicklow and should be treated with caution.**

The ISM asks interviewees about their active and social participation in sport in the previous 7 days. Further details of the aims and methodology of the ISM can be found in ISM Annual Reports (available at http://www.irishsportscouncil.ie/Research/The_Irish_Sports_Monitor/). The ISM is designed to be

¹ <http://www.getirelandactive.ie/guidelines-resources/how-much-physical-activity-is-required/>

² <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1402378/pdf/20060314s00023p801.pdf>

<http://www.health.gov/paguidelines/guidelines/chapter2.aspx>

<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs385/en/>

³ <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3401184/pdf/nihms389131.pdf>

⁴ Regular physical activity in later life boosts likelihood of 'healthy aging' up to sevenfold, November 5th 2013, <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2013/11/131125185600.htm>

⁵ This is known as a 95% confidence interval for the statistic in question. We would expect this interval to contain the true proportion 95% of the times that the survey was undertaken.

representative of Ireland's population as a whole rather than the population of any individual county. Therefore it was necessary to re-weight the data for this report so that the sample more closely represented Wicklow's current demographic profile. Gender, age and employment status were considered in this re-weighting exercise. The Appendix compares the demographic profile of the dataset used for the report with the profile of Wicklow recorded by the Central Statistics Office in the 2011 Census of Population.

A feature of the ISM is the inclusion of periodic flexible modules on particular topical policy issues. These modules are included over a number of months and therefore only include a sub-sample of the annual survey respondents. For this reason it is not always possible to carry out a meaningful analysis beyond the national situation. During 2011 and 2013 flexible modules were included on issues such as gender issues in Irish sport, interest in playing more sport, motivations for participating in sport, barriers to participation, perceptions of health and wellness and engagement in other behaviours (smoking, drinking alcohol, dieting, watching TV, etc.) which might influence health and wellness, and knowledge of the sports policy environment nationally and locally. These issues are reported on in the relevant annual report to which the reader is referred for such analysis. However, where respondent numbers allowed and where findings of local interest emerged these issues are explored in this current report. Readers are reminded of the statistical limitations within such analysis and to regard such references as indicative only.

Statistical Analysis

In this report, the charts and tables generally show percentage participation rates in a given activity by a particular group (e.g. the percentage of women who play team sport). Where this is not the case the report highlights the basis for the participation rates. The report includes certain national figures for comparison purposes. In the main such national figures are composite averages from 2011 and 2013. Exceptions to this approach are noted.

ISM Definition of Sport and Physical Activity

The primary justification for public investment in sport is to increase physical activity and hence to improve health⁶. Consistent with this aim (and with the *Irish Sports Council Act, 1999*), the report

⁶ <http://www.dttas.ie/corporate> - High Level Goal for sport "To contribute to a healthier and more active society by promoting sports participation and by supporting high performance and the provision of facilities."

defines “sport” broadly, to include recreational exercise (e.g. swimming, gym, dance classes, yoga, etc.), as well as field games (e.g. soccer, Gaelic football). The ISM also records recreational walking, walking and cycling for transport, allowing sport to be set in the context of more general physical activity.

Limitations

All statistical surveys are approximate. In the case of the ISM, measurement error may be caused by people recalling activity inaccurately, respondents wishing to paint themselves in a good light (social desirability bias), failure to survey hard-to-reach groups, mistakes made by interviewers, and so on. For example foreign nationals are underrepresented in the overall ISM and in the Wicklow sample. Previous research has suggested that their participation rates are lower than Irish nationals this suggests that participation rates are likely to be over-stated in this respect. All participation rates have margin of errors and small differences should not be over-interpreted as meaningful particularly where the sample size is relatively small. So, when looking at the figures below it is important to remember that they are at best an approximation.

Common Sporting Patterns across Ireland

We have tried to keep this briefing report as concise as possible by focussing on those issues which emerged most strongly from our analysis of the Wicklow data. Because of the small sample size within the county the results of our analysis of certain issues were less clear cut than we might have anticipated. We have generally not referred to these issues in great detail in the report. Included here are the relationships between income, education, disability, family circumstances, nationality and participation. In the main the relationship between these issues and sports participation have strong and consistent patterns in the national research data. The reader is referred to the annual reports for more detail on them. However, we make particular if brief reference to two issues here because of their special importance as determinants of sports participation. These issues are the social gradients and participation, and disability and participation.

While the ISM has shown that the gender gap has narrowed over the years, social gradients continue to strongly impact on all aspects of active and social participation with higher income earners and those with higher educational attainment significantly more likely to play sport, be club members, volunteer for sport and attend sporting events. While income and education are closely correlated they have also been shown to be strong influences on participation separately. Social gradients have

been a consistent feature of sports participation research in Ireland for over a decade and have been relatively resilient to policy efforts which have sought to address them in the intervening period.

A detailed analysis of social gradients is not possible for Wicklow because of the sample size. However, the evidence available suggests that social gradients are as strong in Wicklow as elsewhere in the country. For example: 51.3% of those with a third level education took part in sport compared to 43.7% of those without; and 7.4% among the more highly educated group are sedentary compared to 11.6% of those with a lower level of education. In respect of social participation there is also a pattern with those with higher education more likely to volunteer for sport, attend a sporting event and belong to a sports club.

The ISM asks respondents whether they have any long-term illness, health problem or disability that limits their daily activities. Those who answer “yes” to this question are also asked whether this problem prevents their participation in sport or exercise. 17% of Wicklow based respondents answered yes to the first question with over 12% (72% of those with an illness/disability) also answering yes to the second question. These figures are in line with the national figures⁷. Those with an illness/disability are also less likely to take part with 37.6% of those with an illness/disability taking part compared to 50.6% without. There is some difference in participation between those with a disability that limits sport participation however the sample size for this group is very small. Those with an illness/disability are also less likely to cycle for transport. About one quarter of those with an illness/disability are highly active compared to over one third of those without while 17.4% of those with an illness/disability are sedentary compared to 8.3% of those without.

There is little difference in levels of recreational walking between those with and without an illness or disability (63.4% and 69.4% respectively). This activity provides an alternative route for those with an illness/disability to stay active. With regards to social participation, those with an illness/disability are less likely to be a member of a club, volunteer for sport or attend a sporting event. Overall, individual sports are preferred with five times as many participants compared to team sports. Swimming is the most popular sporting activity among this group.

⁷ Nationally the ISM reported that 18.3% had an illness/disability with 13.7% of the population indicating that this prevented participation.

2. RESULTS

2.1 Overall Physical Activity

Table 1 compares physical activity participation in Wicklow with the national average. It captures regular⁸ participation activity through sport, recreational walking and active travel i.e. walking and cycling for transport. In the tables below, the “highly active” are those who meet the National Physical Activity Guidelines⁹ while those who are “sedentary” don’t take part in sport, do no recreational walking and don’t walk or cycle for transport. Based on the 2011 Census data the 48.3% participating in sport is equivalent to approximately 50,000 adults aged 16 and over taking part in regular sporting activity in Wicklow.

Table 1: Summary of Physical Activity – Wicklow vs. National

	Wicklow	National
Sporting Participation	48.3%	46.0%
Recreational Walking	68.3%	64.3%
Walk for Transport	44.0%	40.0%
Cycle for Transport	7.9%	10.1%
Highly Active	33.1%	30.3%
Sedentary	9.8%	13.2%

Participation levels in sport, recreational walking and walking for transport in Wicklow are slightly higher than national levels although only in the case of recreational walking does the difference approach statistical significance¹⁰. As a result Wicklow residents are also slightly more likely to be highly active and less likely to be sedentary than nationwide residents generally.

In **Table 2** overleaf we see that this is true for both men and women. With the exception of cycling for transport, participation in all other forms of activity is higher among men and women in Wicklow than nationally. Men are more likely to take part in sport and cycling for transport while recreational walking and walking for transport are more popular among women. Women in Wicklow are also slightly more likely to be highly active and less likely to be sedentary compared to Wicklow men and

⁸ The ISM asks respondent about their participation in the previous 7 days so “regular” can be regarded here as being equivalent to participation at least once a week in each type of activity

⁹ For adults to be highly active requires that they take part in at least 5 sessions of physical activity per week of at least 30 minutes duration at a moderate intensity or greater. Moderate intensity is considered sufficient to raise the person’s breathing rate.

¹⁰ Statistical significance refers to the likelihood that a finding is caused by something other than chance. It should be noted that statistical significance does not always indicate practical significance

their national counterparts. The low level of sedentarism among Wicklow women compared to Wicklow men and even more so to women nationally is particularly noteworthy. In the main it derives from their high levels of walking, both recreational and for transport.

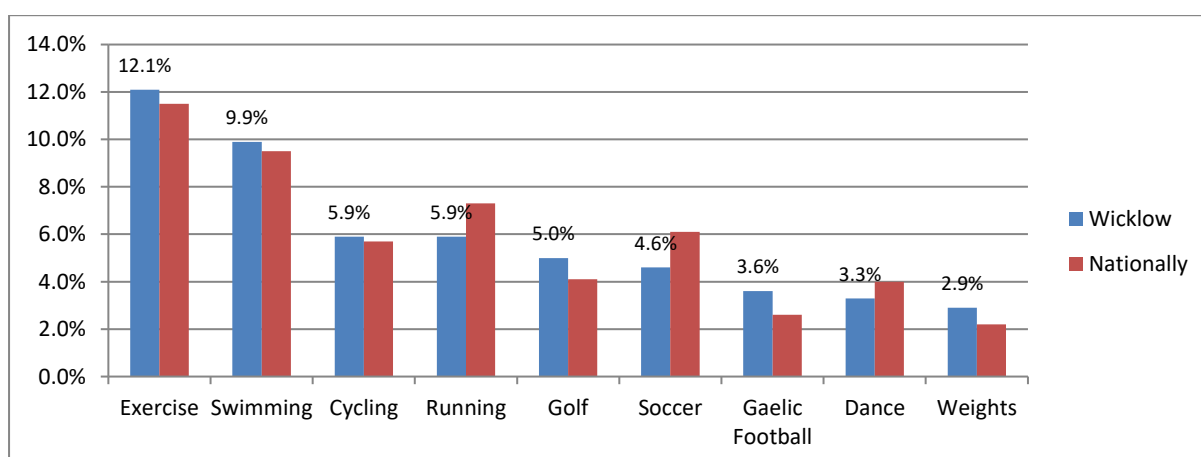
Table 2: Summary of Physical Activity by gender – Wicklow vs. National

	Wicklow		National	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Sporting Participation	53.6%	43.1%	51.5%	40.9%
Recreational Walking	62.8%	73.5%	58.0%	70.3%
Walk for Transport	41.3%	46.6%	39.1%	40.9%
Cycle for Transport	11.6%	4.3%	14.6%	5.7%
Highly Active	31.1%	35.0%	29.9%	30.7%
Sedentary	11.8%	7.9%	13.3%	13.0%

2.2 Most Popular Sporting Activities

Figures 2.2 and 2.3a and b shows the most popular sports in Wicklow overall and by gender. Only sports with an overall participation level of 2%¹¹ or greater are shown. Individual sports dominate, accounting for 7 of the most popular activities. There is little difference in the profile of sports played compared to nationally. Overall, 43.2% of all participants take part in individual sports compared to 9.9% in team sports.

Figure 2.2: Top Participation Sports in Wicklow - Overall



¹¹ Sports with participation rates between 1% and 2% are boxing, hillwalking, horse riding, martial arts, pilates, rugby, tennis and yoga

Figure 2.3a: Top Participation Sports in Wicklow– Men

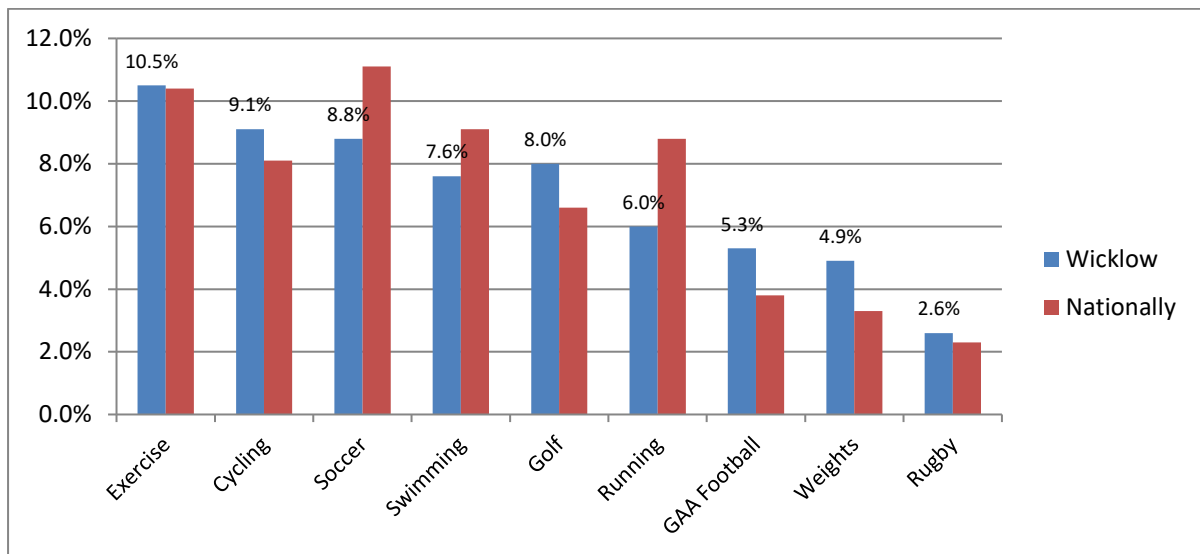
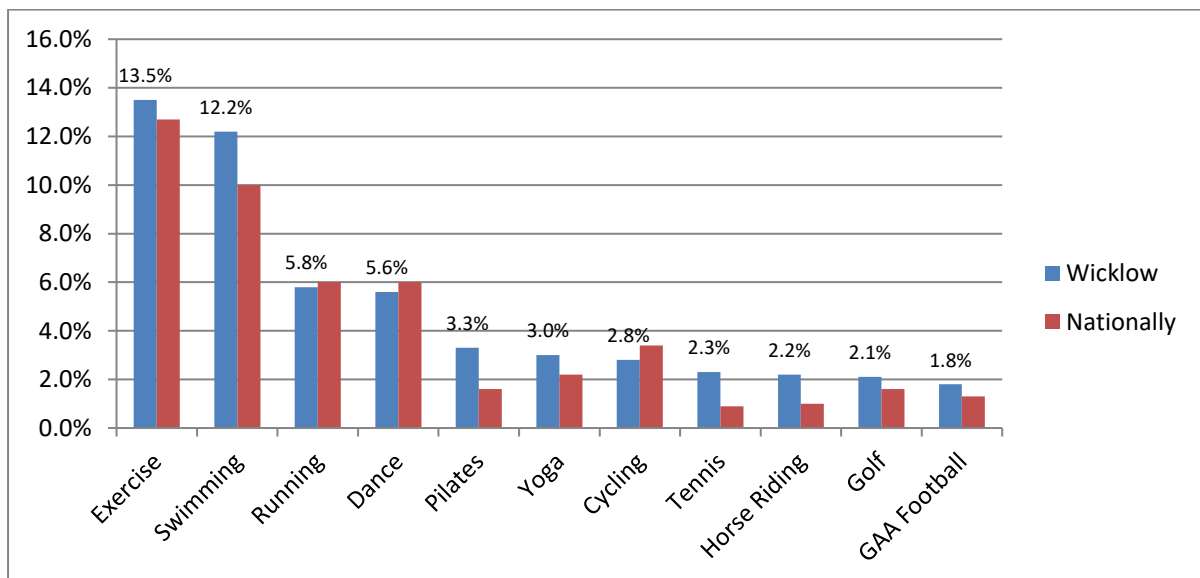


Figure 2.3b: Top Participation Sports in Wicklow– Women



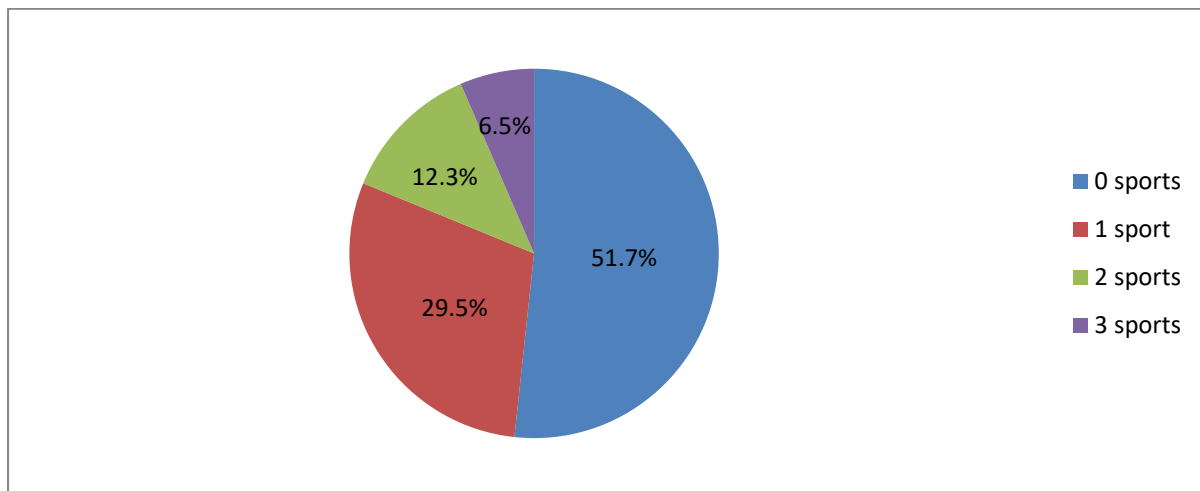
Exercise is the most popular activity for men and women in Wicklow but otherwise there are some notable gender differences as evident from figures 2.3a and 2.3.b. Cycling, gaelic football, golf, rugby, soccer and weights are more popular among men while pilates, swimming and yoga are more popular among women. Running stands out as having even levels of participation among Wicklow men and women. This contrasts with the national picture where running is significantly more popular among men. The relatively stronger popularity of team sports among men is reflected at a combined level with 15.9% of men taking part in team sports compared to 4% of women. The gap in individual sports is much smaller with 44.7% of men participating here compared to 41.8% of women.

It is particularly noteworthy that there are more than 10 times as many women participating in individual activities as in team sports in Wicklow. Participation declines among both men and women with age. This may be a cohort effect as younger people today play more sport than previous generations. Nationally, the drop off is slightly steeper for men than for women during early adulthood reflecting the drop out by men from team sport during this period of their lives¹². Participation in individual sports (not shown) tends to sustain more strongly and endure transitions across the life course for both men and women.

2.3 FITT Analysis

The ISM asks respondents questions about how often they play sport, for how long, at what intensity and in what context. This allows us to conduct an F (Frequency), I (Intensity), T (Time) and T (Type) analysis on participation patterns. Before looking at this aspect of participation we briefly look at the distribution of participants by number of sports played in **Figure 2.4** below which shows that almost 1 in 5 adults in Wicklow participated in two or more sports in the past 7 days during 2011 – 2013.

Figure 2.4: Proportion playing none, one, two and three sports



In **Figures 2.5 – 2.8** we look at the FITT of participation. Figure 2.5 shows that almost 80% of all participants took part twice or more often in the previous week. The average number of sessions played per week is 3.6 with no difference here between men and women.

Figure 2.5: Number of sporting sessions of participants in previous 7 days (Base: All participants)

¹² See <http://www.irishsportsCouncil.ie/Research/Keeping-Them-in-the-Game-2013-/> for detailed analysis of transitions into and out of sport over the life course

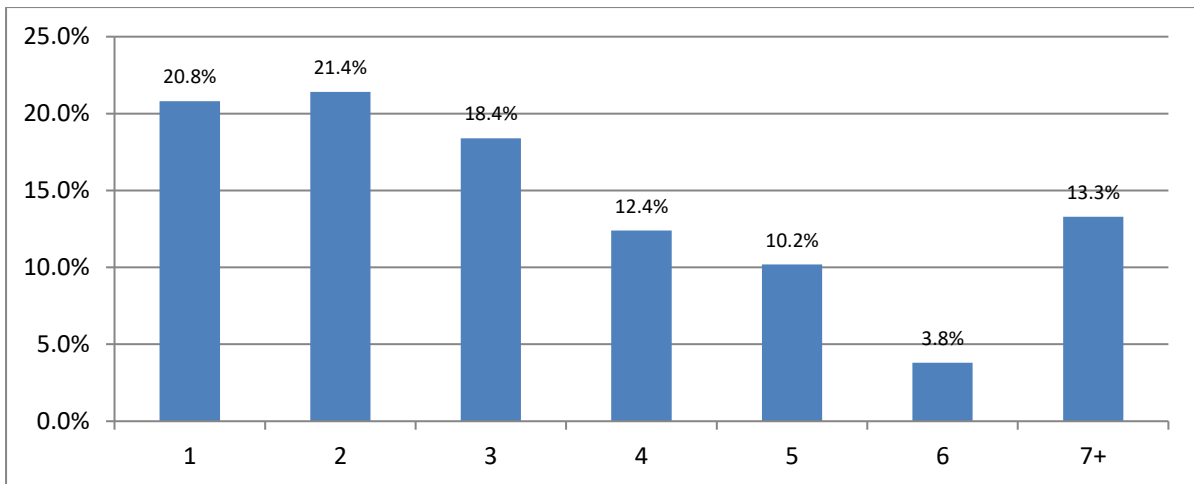
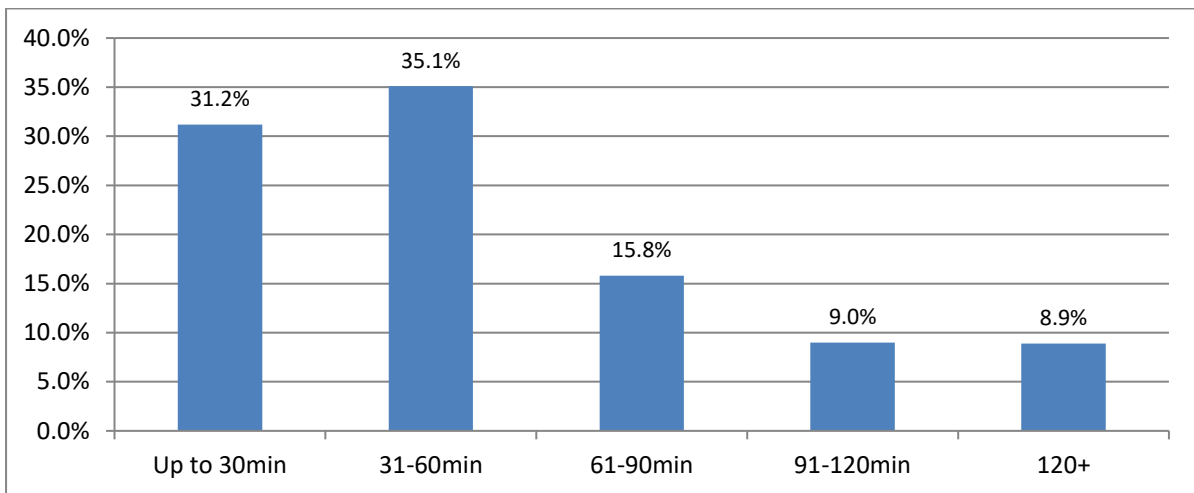


Figure 2.6: Duration of sporting sessions in previous 7 days (Base: All participants)



On average participants spend 68 minutes in each session with men spending significantly longer than women (78 vs. 57 minutes) reflecting the stronger popularity of golf among men, a sport regularly involving sessions of 4 hours. Over $\frac{3}{4}$ of all participants take part in at least one session for 30 minutes or more a week.

As shown in **Figure 2.7** (overleaf) almost 50% of players reported that their efforts in a typical sporting session were sufficient to raise their breathing rate noticeably with 43% reporting being out of breath or sweating as a result of the session. Intensity levels are very similar for men and women.

Figure 2.7: Intensity of sporting sessions of participants in previous 7 days

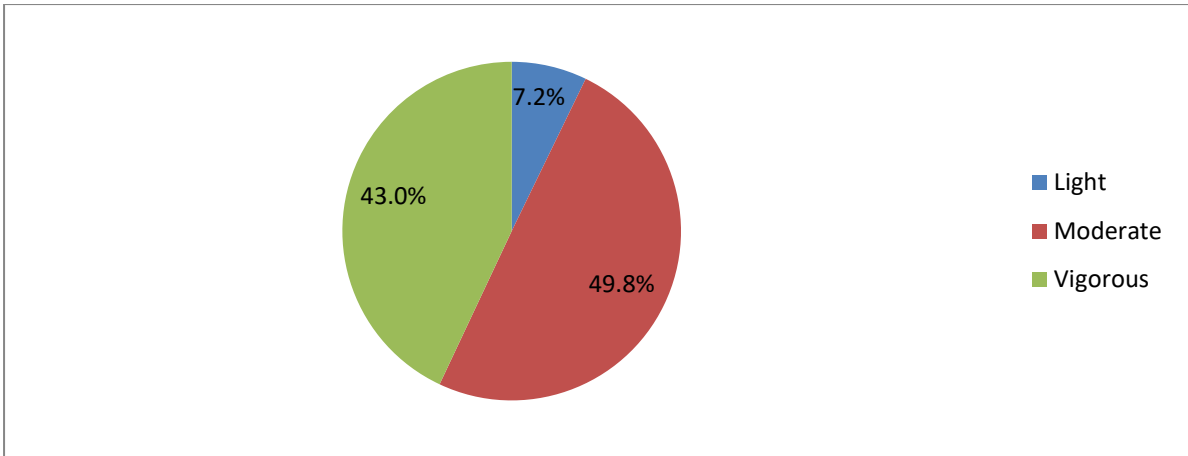
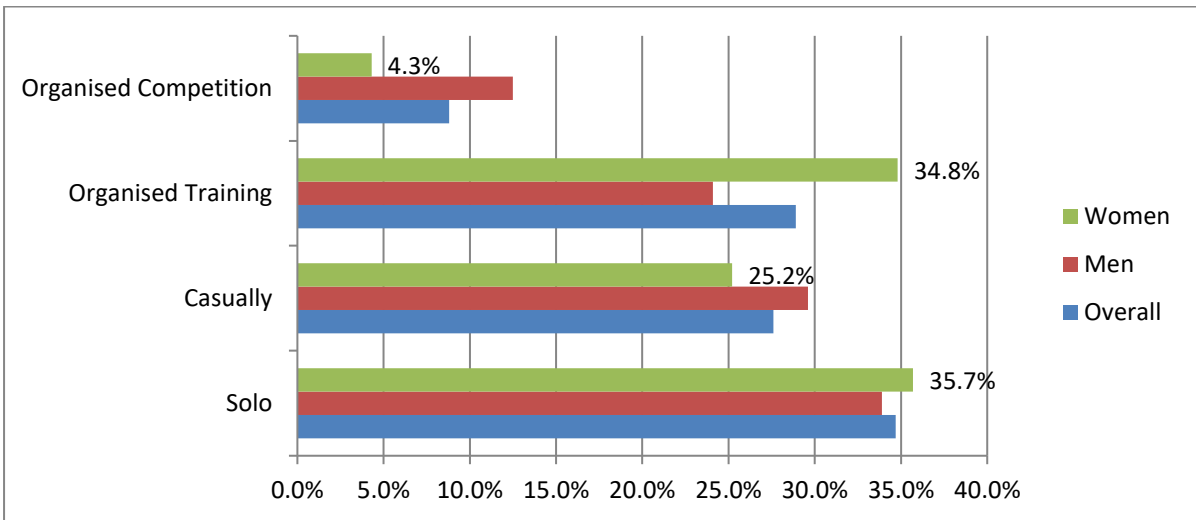


Figure 2.8: Context of sporting participation and by gender



From **Figure 2.8** we can see that just over 60% of all adult participation in sport takes place in an unstructured environment (i.e. either solo or casually with family and friends) with less than 40% being played in an organised context. There is little difference between men and women when it comes to unstructured sport. In the case of organised sport, both genders have a preference for organised training and classes over competition which in the case of women is particularly strong.

Most adult sport now takes place in a solo context in contrast to the situation that existed when the first Irish Sports Monitor survey was administered in 2007. At that time most sport was undertaken with family and friends in a casual setting. This current situation reflects the growth of sports such as running, swimming, exercise, and cycling in recent years.

Research has shown that the biggest disparity in health status is between those who participate in no sport or physical activity and those who are active to any extent, rather than between those who are

active to differing degrees (Fahey et al., 2004; Lunn and Layte, 2008). In keeping with this, it is a primary focus of national policy to concentrate on getting people, who do not actively participate in sport and exercise, to take up some form of activity. The analysis presented above supports this as an appropriate goal for policy. What it shows is that once an individual is engaged in a sport or exercise activity, there is a good chance they will participate more than once a week, for longer than half-an-hour and that they will do so sufficiently to get out of breath or sweat. Thus, most participants are likely to be getting some degree of health benefit from their participation. The key issue remains whether they are an active participant in the first place. Nevertheless, the findings with respect to the context of participation are also noteworthy as regards policy that aims to increase participation. The majority of sporting activity is occurring outside of formal sporting structures suggesting that policy mechanisms that rely on pre-existing sporting bodies are less likely to be successful unless those bodies can reach out beyond the existing sporting and social networks with which they currently engage.

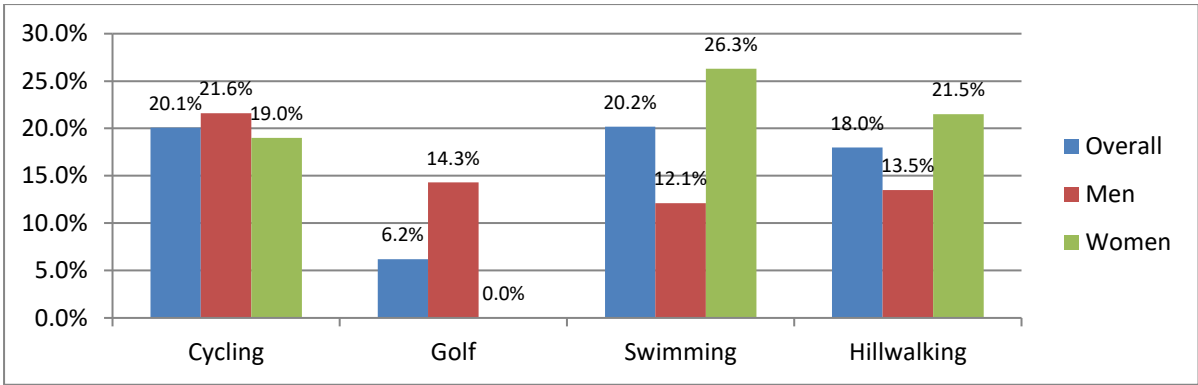
As regards the social benefits of sport, the fact that 34.7% of activity is undertaken by people on their own is striking. Previous research has identified that the primary reason cited by non-participants for not playing sport is lack of time (Fahey et al., 2004; CSO, 2007). The solo activities identified are highly efficient forms of exercise, which take up relatively little time and do not require much in the way of coordination between people. There may therefore be a trade off between the health benefits that such solo exercise activities bring and the social benefits that accompany other types of participation.

2.4 Interest in doing more sports

In 2011 ISM respondents were asked about their interest in doing more sport or exercise, if so which sport they would like to do more of and, if not, what were the reasons preventing them from engaging in more activity. Encouragingly over half (61.4%) of participants in Wicklow are interested in increasing their sporting activity with non-participants more likely to be so inclined than participants (71.1% and 51.8%). **Figure 2.9** shows the preferred sports in Wicklow which is broadly similar to those reported nationally. They also mirror closely the most popular sports participated in with the exception of exercise which features slightly lower in people's sporting wish list than in actual participation terms. Cycling, swimming and hill walking feature strongly. Cycling was also the most cited sport by men while women were more interested in taking part in swimming.

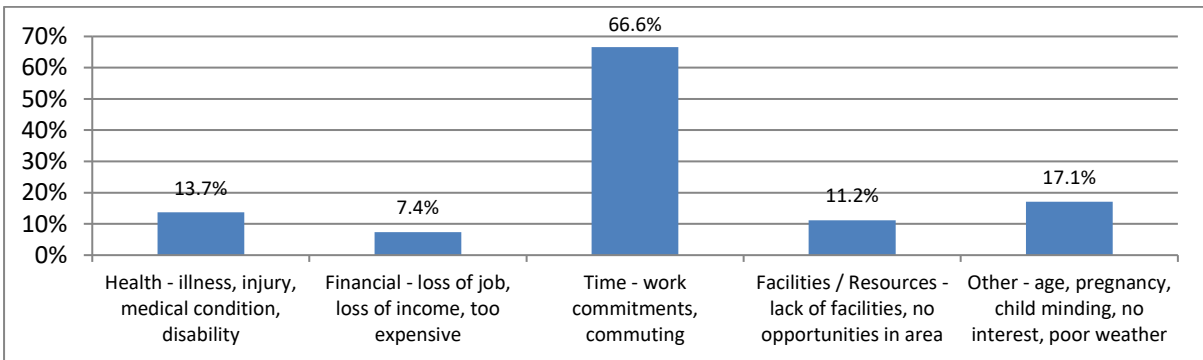
Figure 2.9 Interest in doing more sport – by sport (Base: All interested in doing more sport)¹³

¹³ Sample size is less than 100 when split by gender



When it comes to barriers to participation, time is by far the most commonly cited factor overall while for those with an illness or disability, health is the most common barrier. Neither financial issues nor lack of facilities feature particularly strongly as barriers to increasing participation. This echoes previous research findings (Fahey et al 2004, CSO 2007). Among the “other” category in **Figure 2.10** below, pregnancy and child minding responsibilities feature prominently. Overall, the analysis suggests that the major factors limiting people’s ability to participate in (more) sport lie outside their immediate control but may be capable of being influenced by the provision of more convenient, accessible offerings which they can fit into their otherwise time-pressed lives.

Figure 2.10: Barriers to increasing participation (Base: Those not interested in increasing participation)



2.5 Broader Physical Activity

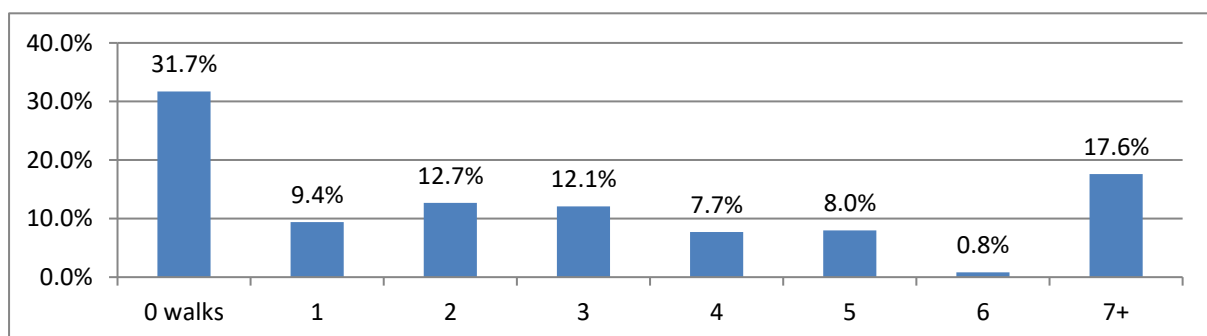
As well as looking at participation in sport and exercise, the ISM also looks at participation in broader physical activity including recreational walking, and walking and cycling for transport. This section looks at these issues and at the extent to which through a combination of sport and these physical activities respondents meet the National Physical Activity Guidelines.

Recreational Walking

Recreational walking is an important source of physical activity for the majority of adults. It can be particularly beneficial in providing health and other benefits to older age groups who do not play sport. As a low load-bearing activity that can be undertaken at various intensities, it overcomes one of the main disadvantages identified by older people to physical activity, namely that it is easier to injure yourself.¹⁴ The ISM records information about the walking habits of adults including the number of walks in the previous 7 days, the duration of each walk and the usual walking pace.

Recreational walking was the most popular activity with slightly over 68% of Wicklow adults taking part at least once in the past 7 days (**Figure 2.11**). Walking is significantly more popular with women (73.5%) than men (62.8%); it is highly popular across all age groups with over half of every age group walking. The majority of recreational walkers took part in more than one walk per week. On average adults walk four times a week with no difference between male and female walkers.

Figure 2.11: Recreational walking by number of walks in the previous 7 days



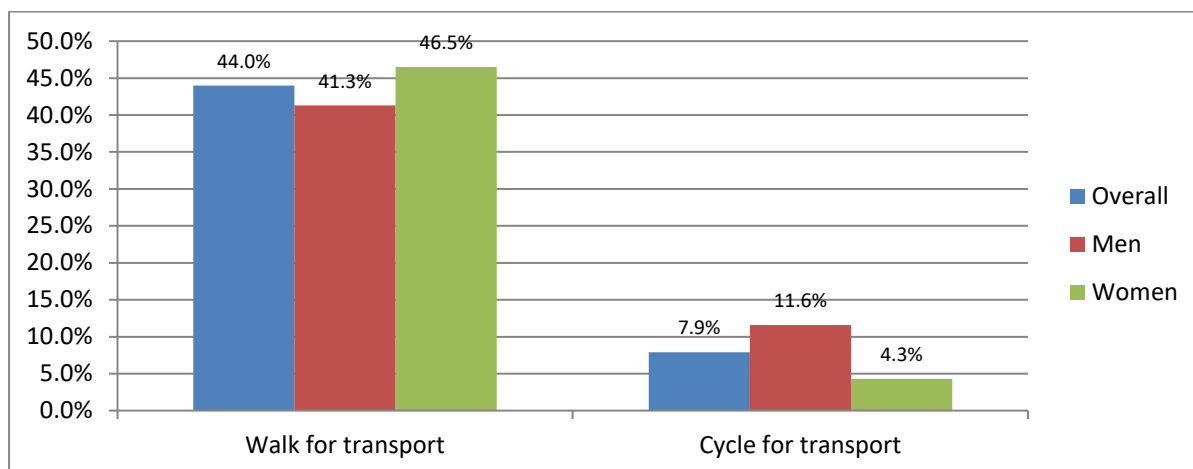
The average walking session lasts nearly 45 minutes. While women are more likely to walk there is no difference between the genders in the amount of walks or time spent walking. Over 90% of walkers report walking at a steady pace or faster.

Walking and Cycling for Transport

The ISM asks respondents if they have walked or cycled for transport in the previous 7 days. Women are more likely to walk for transport while men are more likely to cycle for transport as can be seen in **Figure 2.12** below. Younger age groups are more likely to both walk and cycle for transport. Car owners are less likely to walk for transport but more likely to cycle for transport. Urban dwellers are significantly more likely to walk for transport than rural dwellers (49.6% vs. 35.4%).

¹⁴ Physical Activity and Sport: Participation and Attitudes of Older People in Ireland, Ipsos MORI September 2009

Figure 2.12: Walking and cycling for transport by gender and overall



Overall Activity Levels

The ISM allows an approximate¹⁵ analysis of adult activity levels against the National Physical Activity Guidelines based on a four-category classification system shown in **Figure 2.13**. The system is bookended by “sedentary” and “highly active” categories which are the main focus of this section.

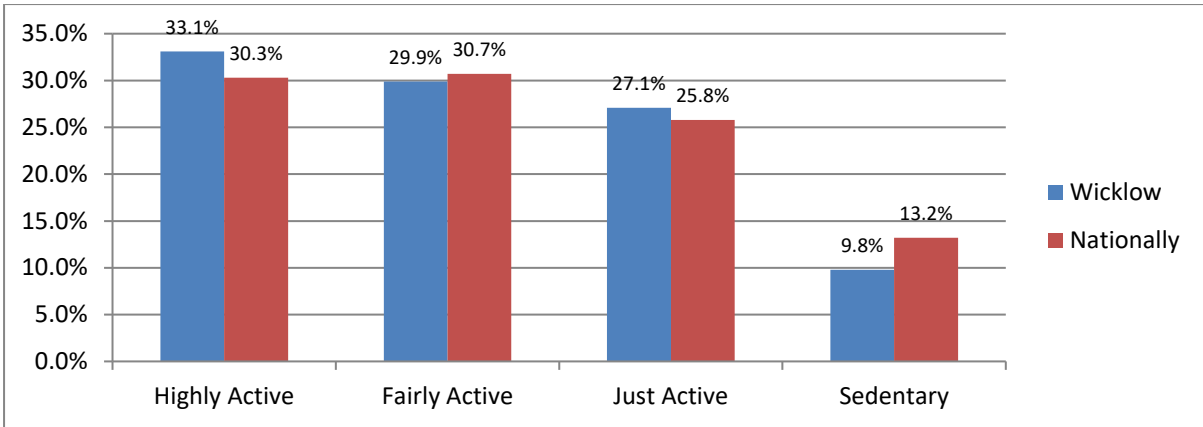
Figure 2.13: Activity Spectrum Categories and Definitions

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.

Activity levels are fairly well in line with the national picture as shown in **Figure 2.14** although there is a significantly lower rate of sedentarism in Wicklow than nationally which we have seen is primarily a function of the higher levels of recreational walking and walking for transport.

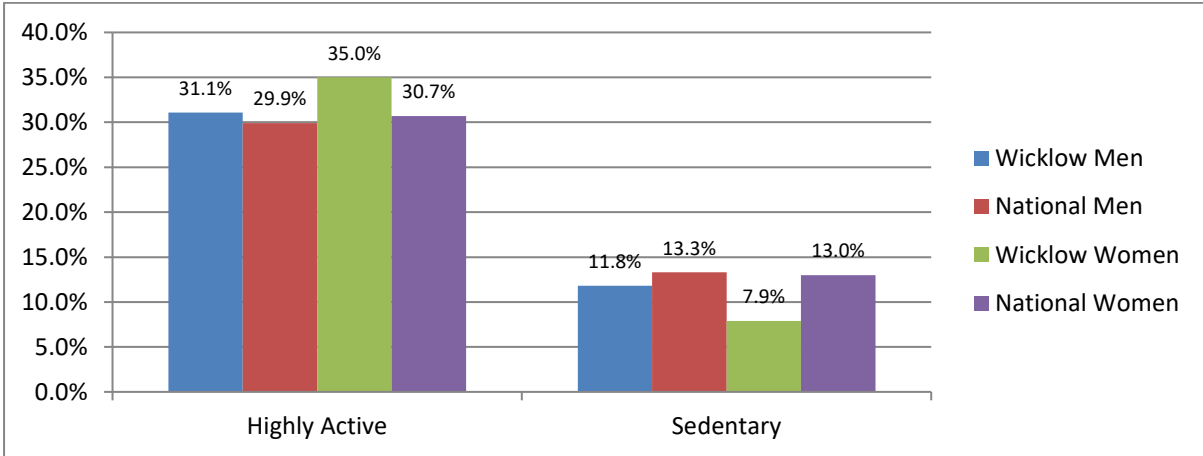
Figure 2.14 Population by activity category in Wicklow and Nationally

¹⁵ This analysis can only be regarded as approximate as it does not take account of physical activity undertaken in the workplace or in the home.



Wicklow men and women are less likely to be sedentary than their national counterparts, however the difference is more pronounced among women.

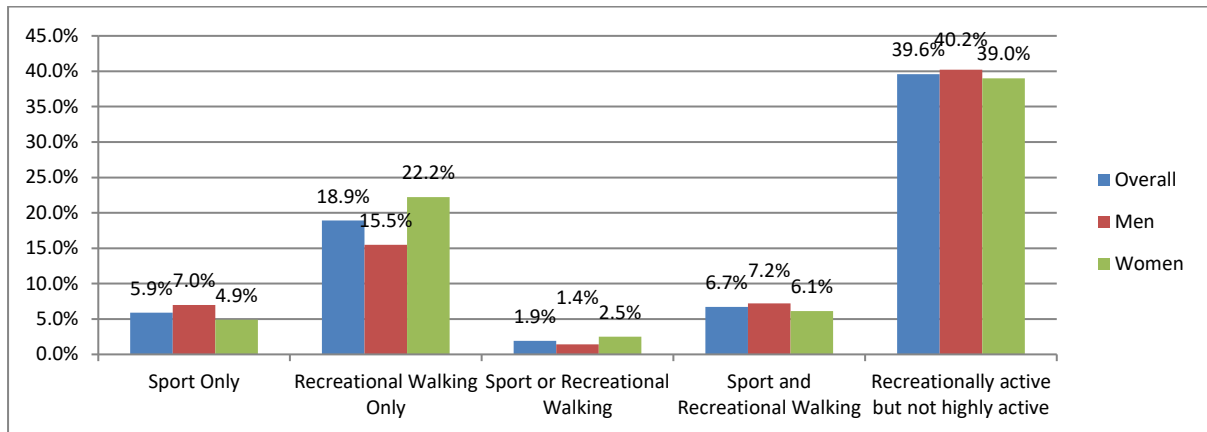
Figure 2.15: Highly Active and Sedentary in Wicklow and Nationally by Gender



The lower levels of sedentarism among Wicklow men and women compared to their national counterparts can be explained by the relatively high levels of activity in nearly every category which we saw earlier in **Table 2**. Men and women have higher levels of activity in the categories with cycling for transport the only exception. In **Figure 2.16** below we examine those who participate in sport and / or recreationally walk by whether or not they are highly active¹⁶ and by the contribution of sports participation and recreational walking to being highly active.

¹⁶ For adults to be highly active requires that they take part in at least 5 sessions of physical activity per week of at least 30 minutes duration at a moderate intensity or greater. Moderate intensity is considered sufficient to raise the person’s breathing rate. In the case of the ISM these sessions can be through sport, recreational walking or a combination of both.

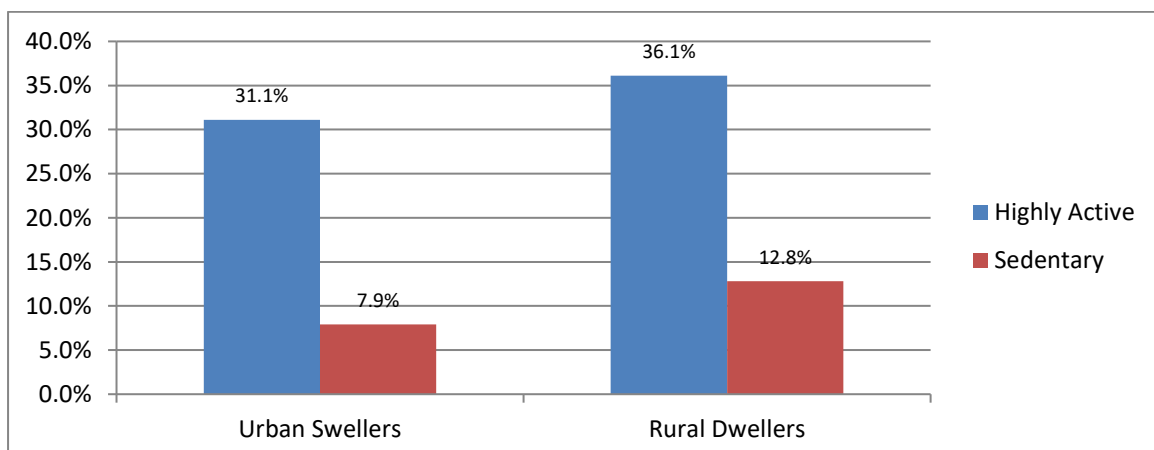
Figure 2.16 Meeting the National Physical Activity Guidelines in Wicklow: Overall and by gender – by type of activity (Base: All adults)



The above highlights some important issues local policy makers interested in getting its population more highly active. Firstly it shows the important contribution of recreational walking in helping adult men and women being highly active. It also shows that the majority of those who are involved in sport and recreational walking are participating below the level recommended by health experts.

Urban residents are slightly more likely to play sport and walk for recreation, and significantly more likely to walk for transport, than rural residents. As a consequence they are less likely to be sedentary which can be seen from **Figure 2.17**. However, what can also be seen and what is more surprising is that rural residents are much more likely to be highly active. Further analysis indicates that this is primarily due to the influence of recreational walking. While there are similar numbers of recreational walkers living in urban and rural settings 40% of those who are rural dwellers meet the Guidelines through walking only compared to 26% of their urban-dwelling counterparts.

Figure 2.17 Activity Categories – Urban and Rural Dwellers



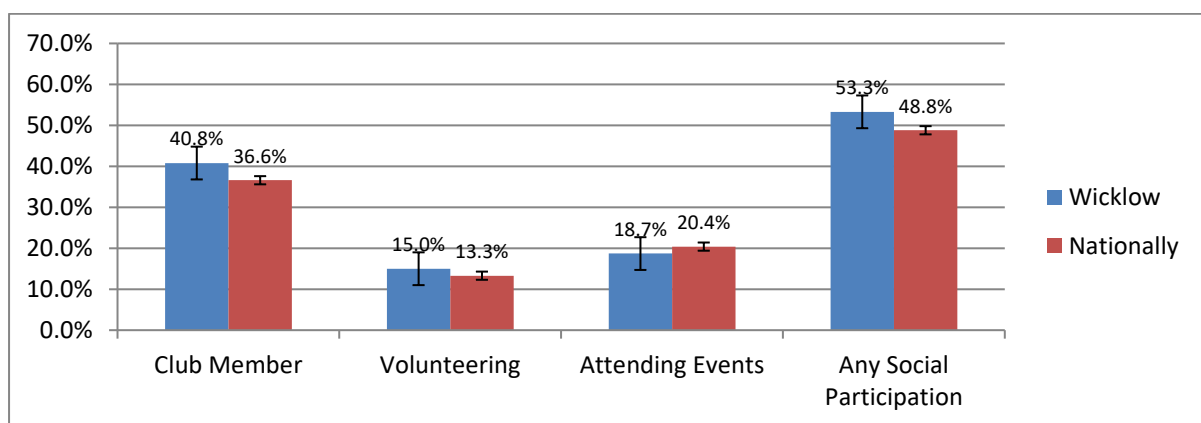
3. Social Participation

3.1 Overall

The ISM looks at social participation in sport through club membership, volunteering and attendance at sports events. In 2013 it also looked at perceptions around gender and sports administration locally and nationally as well as the reasons for participating in sport outside the club environment. These issues are examined in depth in the 2013 ISM Annual Report to which the reader is referred for further detail. That report also examines the demographics of social participation in some detail. This chapter therefore concentrates on the main headlines around social participation in Wicklow.

Before looking at each of the different forms of social participation in turn we compare the overall levels of social participation in Wicklow with the national situation in **Figure 3.1** below. Social participation in Wicklow is broadly in line with the national average if generally slightly higher¹⁷. Overall, over half of Wicklow's adults report their involvement in some form of regular social participation in sport underscoring the importance of sport in contributing to the county's social capital. There is little difference between men and women in terms of volunteering and attendance levels; there is a large and statistically significant difference in respect of club membership with more than 50% of men being club members against just less than 33% of women. There is a notable difference between urban and rural dwellers in terms of their social participation with less than 51% of them former being active socially compared to over 57% of the latter.

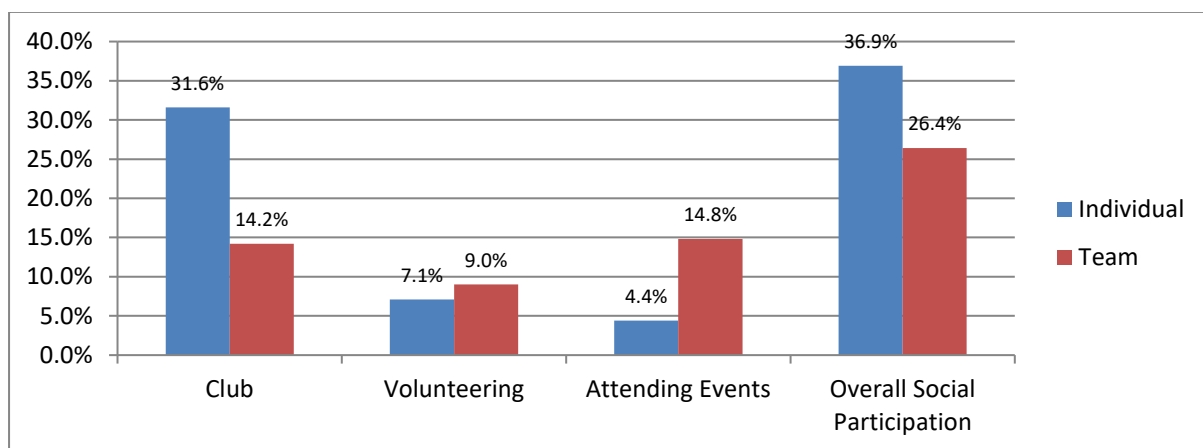
Figure 3.1: Levels of Social Participation Wicklow and nationally



¹⁷ The difference in any social participation does not reach statistical significance as seen from the overlap of the error bars in Figure 2.17

While active participation is dominated by individual sporting activities the situation is more mixed when it comes to social participation as we can see from **Figure 3.2** below. Most volunteering and attending events is associated with team sports, in all likelihood connected with children’s participation. On the other hand, club membership favours individual sports reflecting to some extent the dominance of those types of sports which are preferred by active participants. Notably individual club membership is significantly higher in Wicklow than nationally.

Figure 3.2: Social Participation in Sport by type of sport

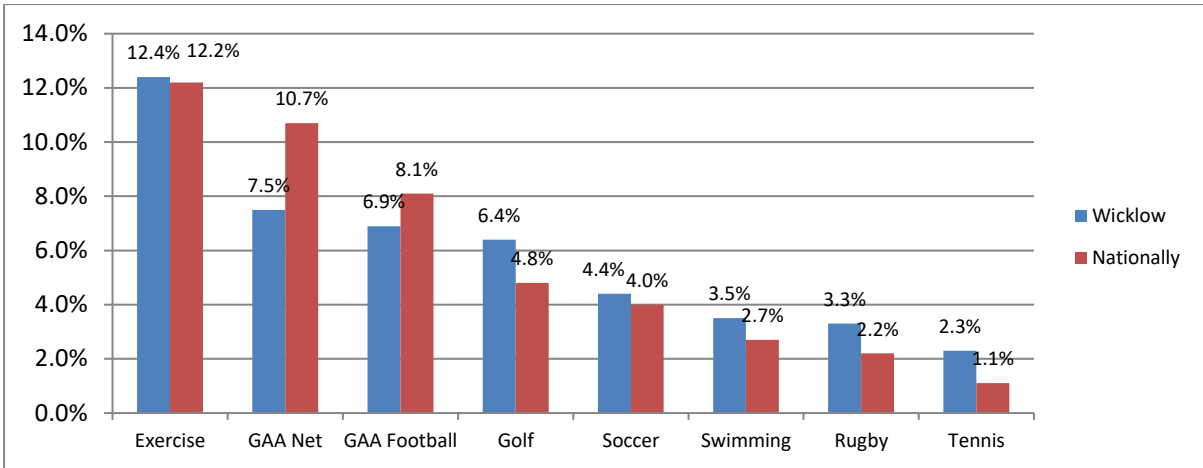


3.2 Club Membership

Figure 3.3 below shows club membership by sport¹⁸. A mix of team and individual sports is represented. With the exception perhaps of GAA clubs, membership levels are on a par with the national situation. GAA club membership is lower than nationally primarily because of the fewer members of hurling / camogie clubs in Wicklow.

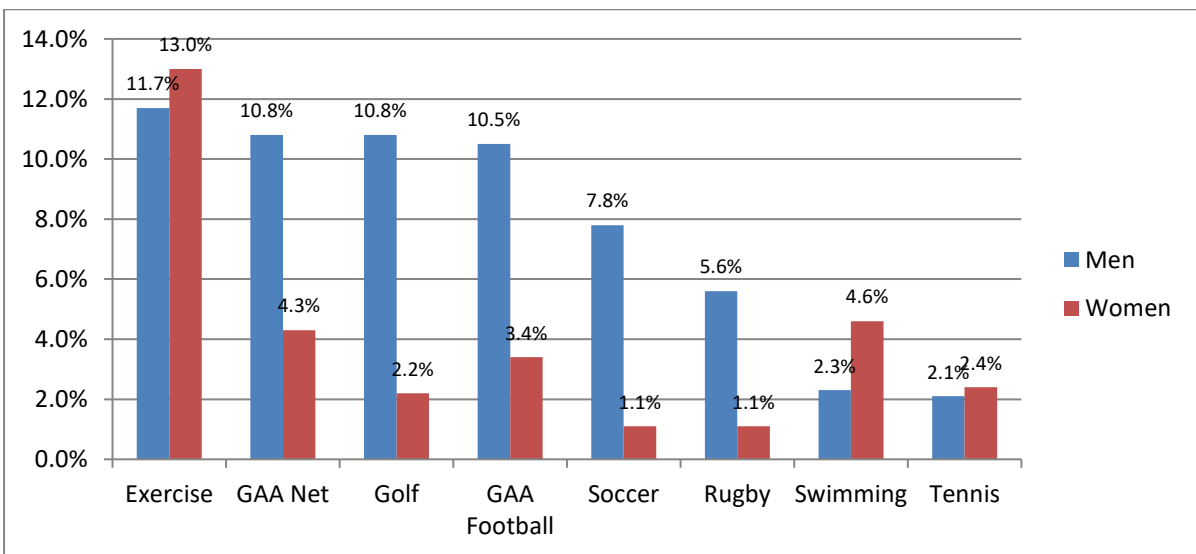
Figure 3.3: Club Membership by sport

¹⁸ Only sports with membership levels of 2% or more in Wicklow are shown. Those with membership levels between 1% and 2% are hillwalking, hurling / camogie, cycling and boxing. The “GAA Net” total combines gaelic football, hurling, camogie and handball.



We saw earlier that men were much more likely to be members of sports clubs than women. From **Figure 3.4** overleaf it is clear that this difference is principally associated with team sports and golf. In the case of team sports the ratio of men to women members is over 3:1. Of the main membership sports only exercise and swimming appear to be more attractive to women.

Figure 3.4: Club Membership by sport by gender



3.3 Volunteering

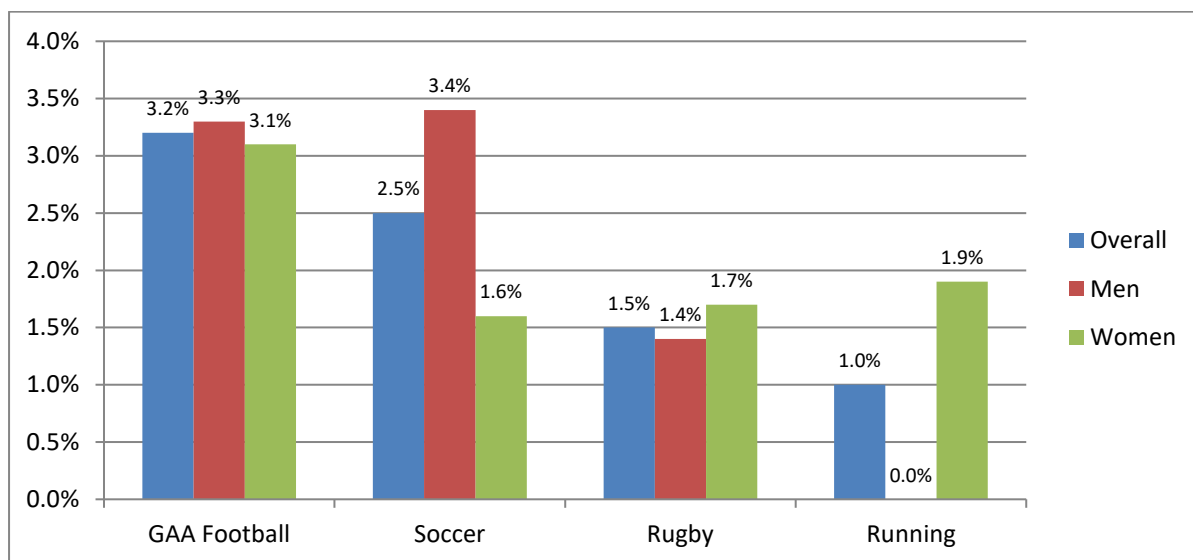
Volunteering is regarded by many as the lifeblood of sport, without which much of sporting activity, particularly that involving children, would simply not occur. It is a key component of organised sport in Ireland and, according to official sources sport features as the single activity involving the greatest amount of volunteering. The 2006 Census of Population¹⁹ identified that 33% of all volunteers were involved in sport only slightly behind the much broader category of “social / charity” at 35%.

¹⁹

<http://www.cso.ie/px/pxeirestat/Statire/SelectVarVal/saveselections.asp>

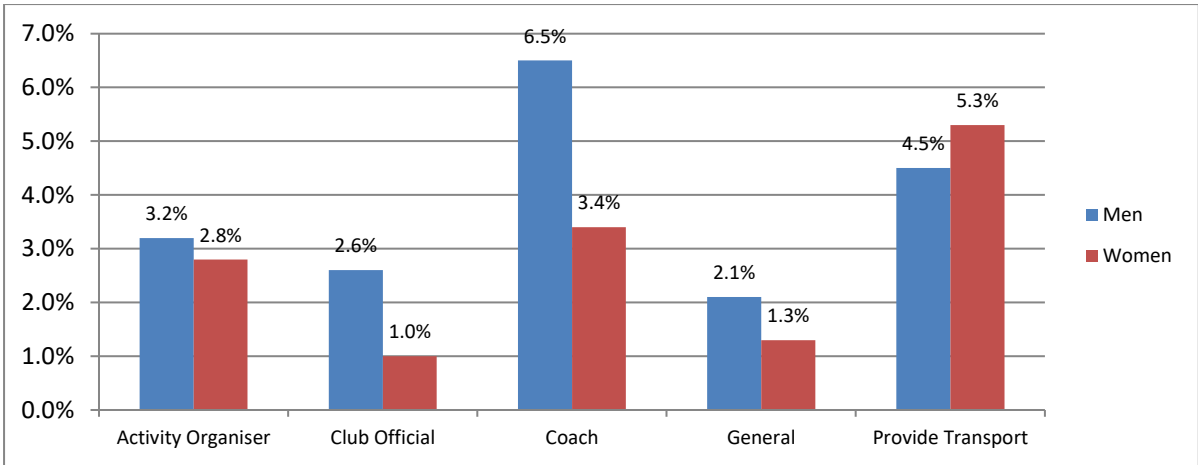
The picture for volunteering in Wicklow is similar to that nationally. About one in 7 Wicklow adults volunteered at least once in the previous 7 days during 2011 – 2013 with men being slightly more likely to volunteer than women. Team sports tend to dominate the volunteering landscape as seen in **Figure 3.5** overleaf. Only sports with an overall volunteering rate of 1% or more are shown. Volunteering is strongly associated with children’s participation in sport over twice as many parents volunteering. As with other forms of participation, volunteering demonstrates strong social gradients.

Figure 3.5: Volunteering by sport by gender



Those who volunteer spend on average just over 4 hours per week volunteering with men spending significantly more time volunteering than women (4.9 vs. 3.4 hours). The type of volunteering roles carried out also varies by gender as can be seen from **Figure 3.6** below. The nature of these roles tends to reinforce the highly gendered nature in the administration of Irish sport as perceived by the ISM respondents during 2013 – the reader is referred to the ISM Annual Report in this regard.

Figure 3.6: Volunteering Roles by gender

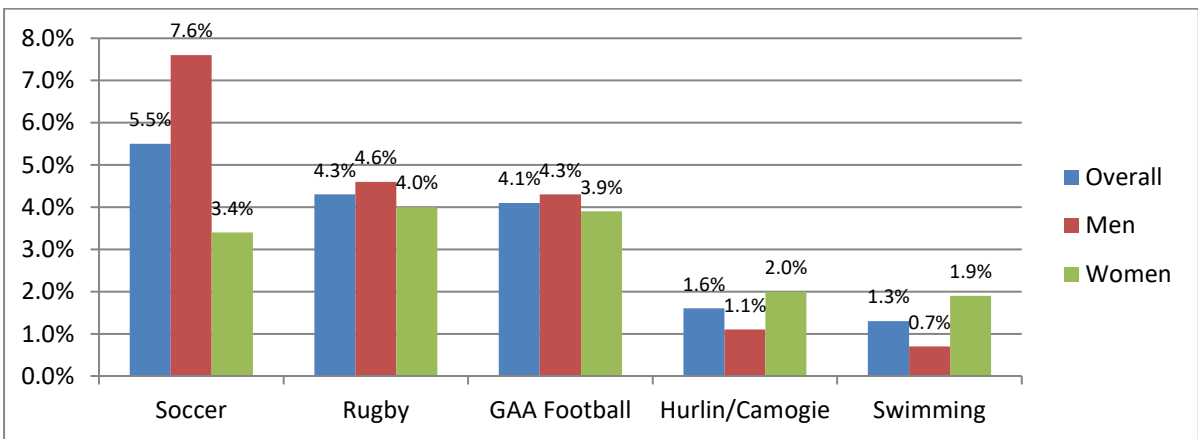


3.4 Attendance at Sporting Events

Just over one in five adults in Wicklow regularly attend some form of sporting event whether involving adults or children. Even more than volunteering, attendance is dominated by team sports with over 3 times as many adults attending such events as attend those involving individual activities. This reflects the importance of children’s activities to attendance patterns and this can be seen in Wicklow with 20.3% of those with children attending events compared to 15.8% without.

Figure 3.7 below shows attendance by sport by gender during 2011 – 2013 in Wicklow. The relatively high levels of attendance of team sports events by women in particular tend to confirm the extent to which children’s sport is involved here.

Figure 3.7: Attendance at sporting events by sport by gender



Appendix

	2011 Census	2011+2013 ISM combined
Gender	16 years plus	16 years plus
Male	48.8%	49.1%
Female	51.1%	50.9%
Age		
16-19	6.5%	6.6%
20-24	7.7%	7.7%
25-34	19.2%	19.0%
35-44	20.9%	20.9%
45-54	17.7%	17.7%
55-64	13.5%	13.6%
65+	14.5%	14.6%
Working Status (Census 2011 includes those under 16)		
Employee/Self Employed	50.7%	50.3%
Unemployed	11.4%	11.2%
Retired	12.3%	13.4%
Homemaker	10.6%	10.5%
Student	11.2%	10.8%
Unemployed-illness/disabled	3.8%	3.8%