



Irish Sports Monitor 2021

Interim report - Q3

Introduction & Key Findings

Key Findings

- The increase in sports participation during Q2 has been sustained in Q3, with 43% of the adult population now regularly participating in sport.
- While the numbers of men participating in sport have increased, the numbers of women remain unchanged. This is leading to a growing gender gap in participation.
- As organised sport recommenced during the second and third quarters this has led to increased social participation through volunteering and attendance at events, both of which are nearly back at their pre-pandemic levels.
- Increases in active travel means that the numbers now walking and cycling for travel are ahead of their pre-pandemic levels.

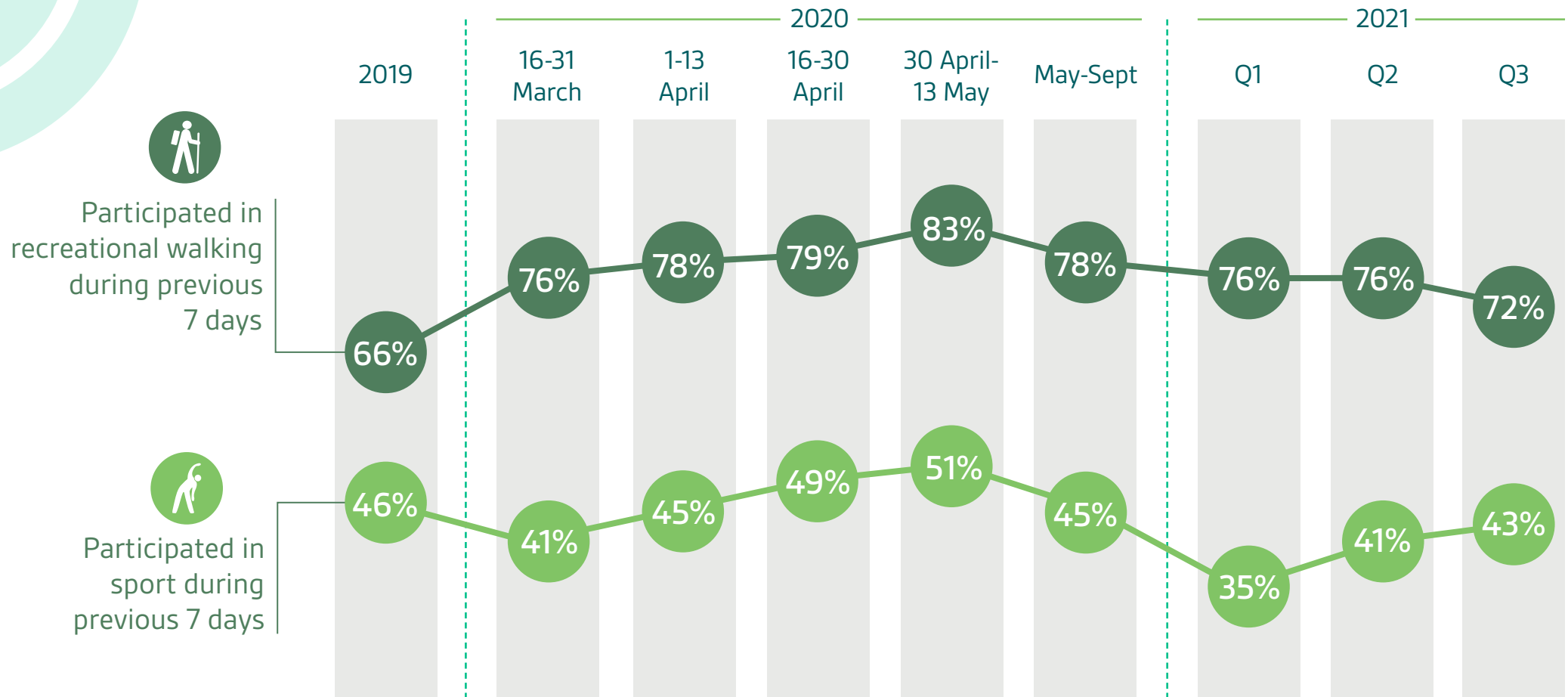


Introduction

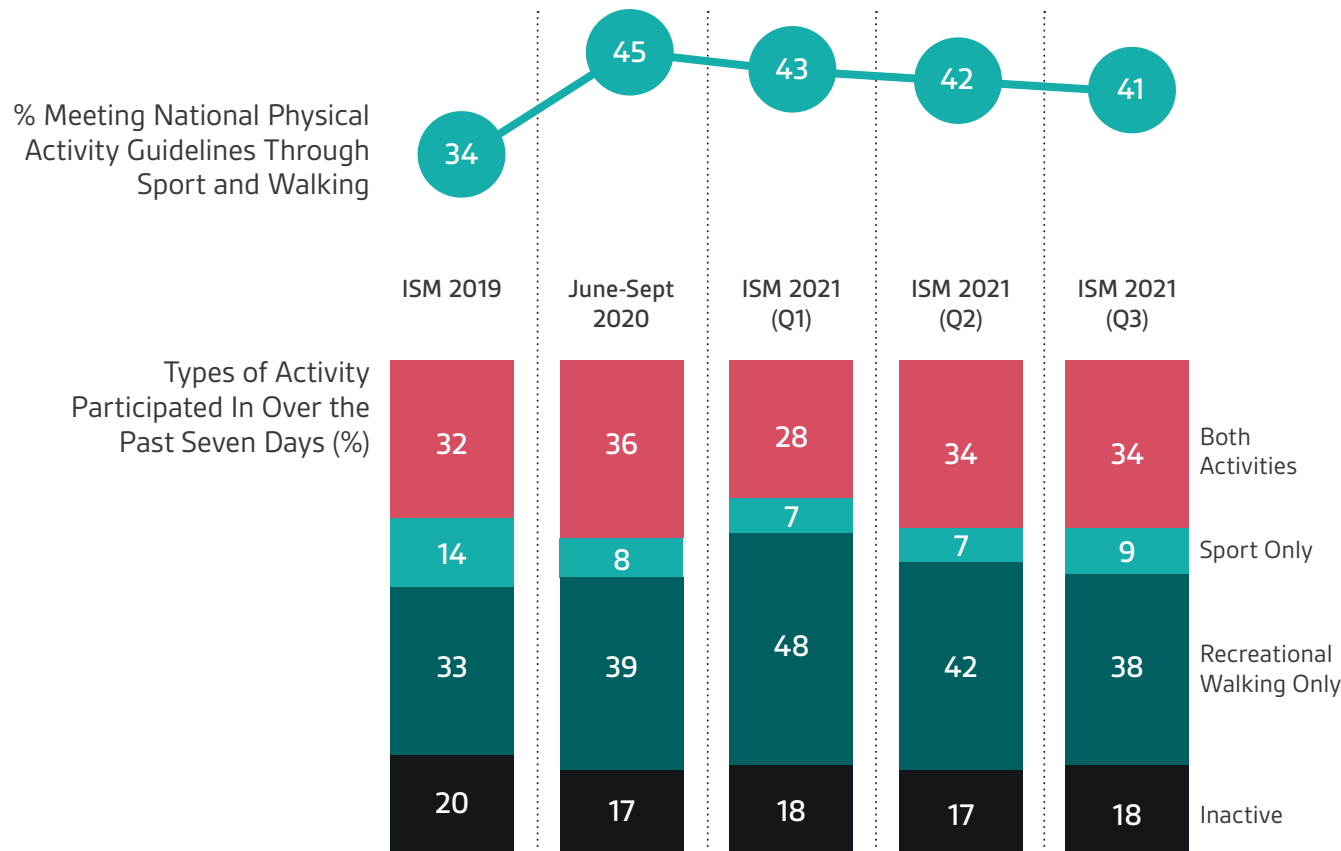
- This interim report presents the results from the first 9 months of data collection on the Irish Sports Monitor 2021 (ISM 2021).
- Comparisons are provided between Q1, Q2 and Q3 results of 2021 and the ISM 2019, along with equivalent research conducted during 2020.
- Full technical details are provided in the Appendix.



The increased sports participation during Q2 has been maintained during Q3



Increases in recreational walking and sports participation mean that 41% now meet the National Physical Activity guidelines through these activities alone




Inactive means taking part in no sport or recreational walking. It has the same meaning as sedentary in the National Sports Policy.

Commentary

- No difference between genders in proportions meeting the National Physical Activity guidelines, however men more likely than women to participate in both activities (36% and 32% respectively).
- The number of under-25s that are inactive has almost doubled over the past quarter - from 6% in Q2 to 11% in Q3.
- Strong age and social gradients exist, 48% of under-35s achieve the activity guidelines, compared to 38% of those older than this. Additionally, 46% of ABC1s are sufficiently active compared to 38% of C2DEs.
- Those with a long-term illness or disability are less likely than others to achieve the guidelines (30% and 45% respectively).

Participation in **Sport** during previous 7 days

Increases in sports participation among older age groups, however the gender gap continues to grow



		ISM 2019	June-Sept 2020	ISM 2021 (Q1)	ISM 2021 (Q2)	ISM 2021 (Q3)
Gender	Men	48	47	35	45	49
	Women	45	41	34	38	38
Age Group	16-24	70	75	58	70	68
	25-34	57	55	45	53	53
	35-44	49	52	39	44	51
	45-54	42	37	28	37	38
	55+	31	23	19	23	26
Location	Dublin	50	50	39	45	50
	Rest of Leinster	46	40	37	37	40
	Munster	46	45	31	40	42
	Connacht/Ulster	42	39	31	42	39
Social Class	ABC1	58	60	45	56	53
	C2DE	39	31	26	30	33
Disability	Those with Disability	33	29	23	27	27
	Those without Disability	50	48	38	46	49

- Participation among men continues to increase leading to a growing gender gap.
- Increases in sports participation among older age groups during 2021, although sizeable age gradient remains.
- Sports participation among those without a disability has returned to pre-pandemic levels, creating a widening gap compared to those with a disability.

The reopening of gyms and swimming pools has led to an increase in the numbers engaging in personal exercise and swimming


Types of sports participated in during previous 7 days





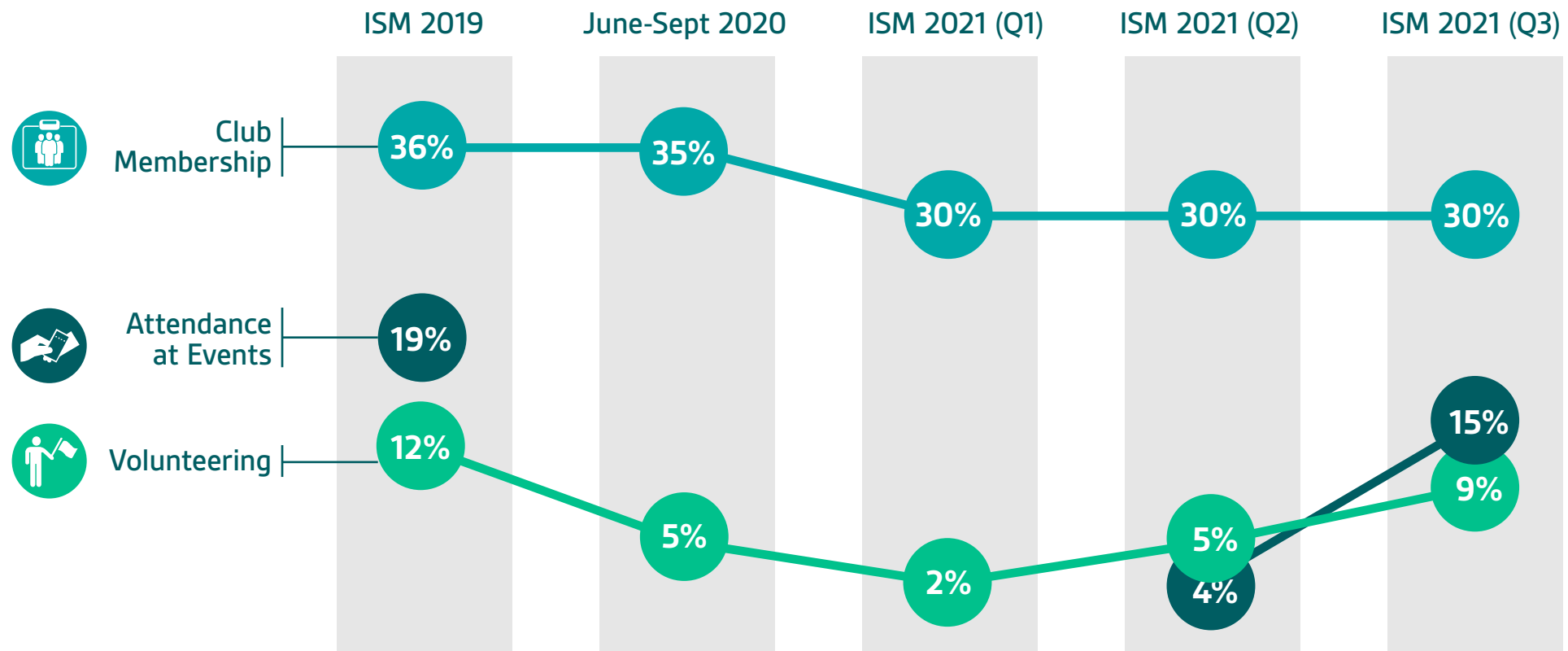
Participation in **Recreational Walking** during previous 7 days

Declines in recreational walking among younger age groups and higher social groups

		Recreational Walking				
						
		ISM 2019	June-Sept 2020	ISM 2021 (Q1)	ISM 2021 (Q2)	ISM 2021 (Q3)
Gender	Men	61	72	72	71	68
	Women	70	79	80	81	77
Age Group	16-24	60	81	72	78	68
	25-34	68	76	76	83	73
	35-44	64	73	77	74	76
	45-54	66	76	82	77	72
	55+	69	75	74	73	71
Location	Dublin	62	77	73	78	72
	Rest of Leinster	66	76	76	73	69
	Munster	71	75	79	81	75
	Connacht/Ulster	64	76	75	73	74
Social Class	ABC1	69	81	83	84	77
	C2DE	64	73	73	71	68
Disability	Those with Disability	61	68	65	67	60
	Those without Disability	67	78	80	80	76

- Women remain more likely than men to walk for recreation.
- Decline in recreational walking among the youngest age groups, although activity levels remain ahead of 2019.
- The disability gap in recreational walking that emerged during 2020 has remained constant during 2021.

Notable increases in volunteering and attendance at events due to recommencement of organised sport





Club Membership during previous 7 days

Increase in club membership particularly among younger age groups




		ISM 2019	June-Sept 2020	ISM 2021 (Q1)	ISM 2021 (Q2)	ISM 2021 (Q3)
Gender	Men	43	40	38	38	39
	Women	29	31	22	23	21
Age Group	16-24	54	57	41	49	48
	25-34	43	38	28	30	34
	35-44	36	39	32	33	28
	45-54	35	31	32	33	27
	55+	25	25	22	20	23
Location	Dublin	36	37	27	30	32
	Rest of Leinster	36	34	30	31	27
	Munster	36	35	33	30	33
	Connacht/Ulster	36	35	29	32	27
Social Class	ABC1	46	47	38	40	37
	C2DE	28	26	24	22	22
Disability	Those with Disability	24	23	17	16	20
	Those without Disability	40	39	34	35	33

- While club membership levels among men remained relatively robust throughout the pandemic, membership levels among women dropped and have not yet recovered.
- Club membership among under-35s declined more sharply towards the end of 2020, although have recovered in 2021.
- Strong social and disability gaps exists in terms of club membership.

Volunteering in sport during previous 7 days

Rise in volunteering levels across all demographic groups throughout 2021

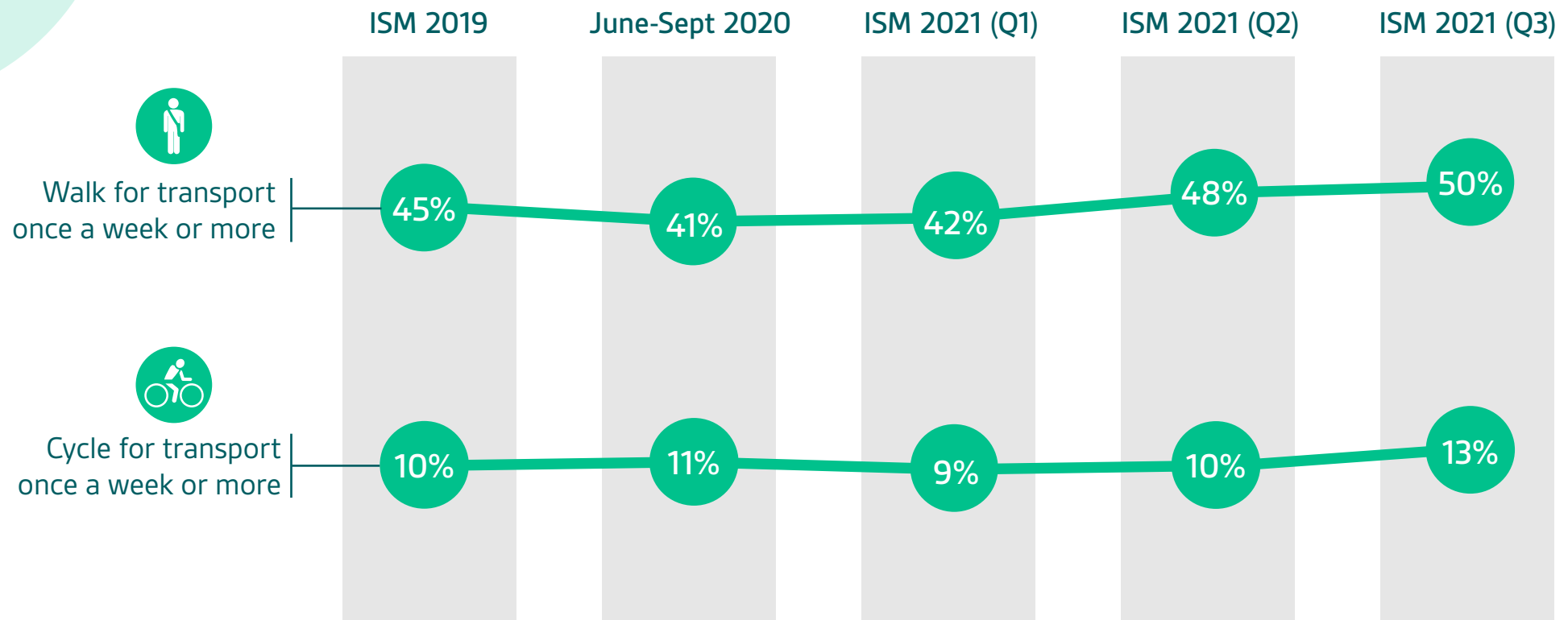


		ISM 2019	June-Sept 2020	ISM 2021 (Q1)	ISM 2021 (Q2)	ISM 2021 (Q3)
Gender	Men	14	5	3	6	10
	Women	10	4	2	4	8
Age Group	16-24	10	4	1	4	7
	25-34	9	5	3	2	6
	35-44	16	6	3	9	15
	45-54	20	7	4	9	14
	55+	8	3	2	2	5
Location	Dublin	8	3	2	4	6
	Rest of Leinster	13	4	3	5	10
	Munster	13	5	3	7	10
	Connacht/Ulster	13	6	2	5	10
Social Class	ABC1	16	6	3	7	11
	C2DE	9	3	2	3	6
Disability	Those with Disability	8	2	1	3	5
	Those without Disability	13	5	3	6	10

- Rise in volunteering levels across all groups since Q1.
- Volunteering levels among key 35-44 age group now back to pre-pandemic levels, although other age groups are still slightly behind 2019.
- Social and disability gradients in volunteering remain persistent.



The numbers walking and cycling for transport are currently higher than pre-pandemic levels



Wearable Technology and Online Classes

47% currently use at least one tool to assist them when undertaking physical activity with most reporting that it positively influences their activity levels. 25% participated in physical activity classes online during the pandemic.

25%

participated in sport or physical activity classes online during the pandemic (50% of women aged 25 to 44)

48%

of those participating in online classes took up a new activity

71%

participated in classes for a short period

47%

Use at least one tool to measure the amount and nature of physical activity (compared to 28% when last measured in 2017)



Type of Tool Used

Count number of steps taken

44%

Measure distance or speed

33%

Measure heart rate or calories burned

30%

Find the location of facilities, parks or trails

17%

Plan workout routine

10%

2017

18%

14%

13%

N/A

8%

79%

Say that it has an influence on the amount of physical activity undertaken

28%

Say that they exercise more

20%

Say that they take more steps

13%

Say that they track their exercise

11%

Say that they work harder during exercise

Appendix - Technical details

- The Irish Sports Monitor (ISM) is a large population study undertaken biennially in order to provide trends in participation in sport and physical activity in Ireland. Data collection is conducted by telephone among a representative sample of the population aged 16 and older.
- During 2020 a number of additional telephone survey measurements were undertaken to understand the impact of the Covid-19 restrictions on sport and physical activity. These replicated the questions asked on the ISM and were representative of the population aged 16 and older. Data collection was undertaken by telephone.
- Fieldwork dates and sample sizes for this research are as follows:

Phase	Fieldwork dates	Sample size
ISM 2019	Jan - Dec 2019	8,504
Special Covid-19 survey	June - Sept 2020	2,400
ISM 2021 (Q1)	Jan - Mar 2021	2,129
ISM 2021 (Q2)	Apr - Jun 2021	2,124
ISM 2021 (Q3)	July - Oct 2021	2,128





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