



SPÓRT ÉIREANN  
SPORT IRELAND



# Irish Sports Monitor 2022 Mid-Year Report

## Introduction & Key Findings

### Key Findings

- Participation in sport rose to its highest level since 2020 during the first half of 2022, reaching 44% during Q2.
- The proportion meeting the National Physical Activity Guidelines continues to fall, however, with 37% sufficiently active during the period from January-June. This is the lowest level since 2019.
- Little change in club membership and volunteering means that they remain below pre-pandemic levels. Attendance at events has returned to the level measured in 2019, following a sharp increase in Q2.
- The numbers walking and cycling for travel remain ahead of pre-pandemic levels, having rebounded during 2021.

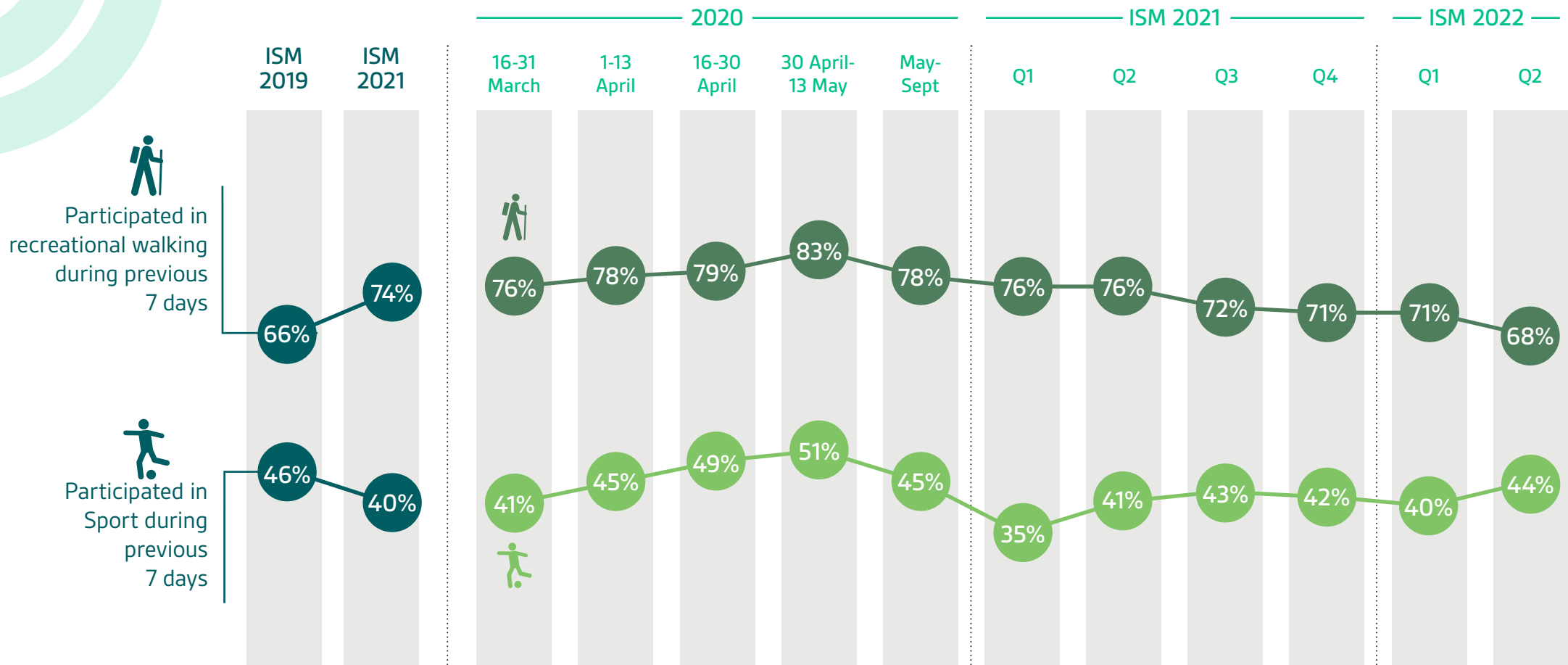


### Introduction

- This interim report presents the results from the first six months of data collection on the Irish Sports Monitor 2022 (ISM 2022).
- Comparisons are provided between Q1 and Q2 2022, along with equivalent research conducted in 2019, 2020 and 2021.
- Full technical details are provided in the Appendix.

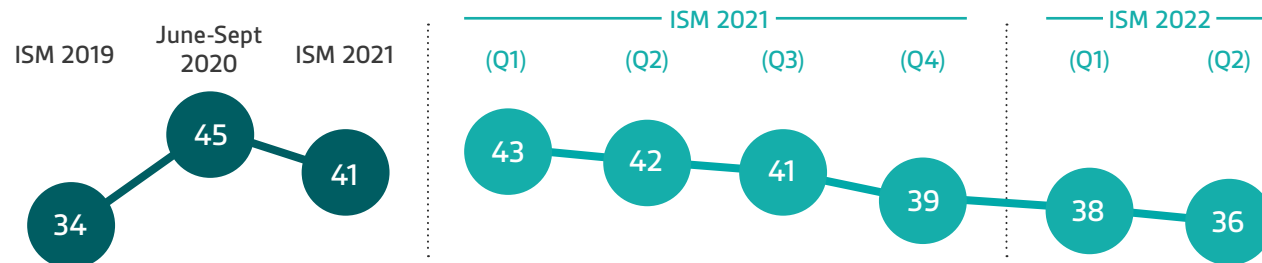


## Participation in sport rose to its highest level since 2020 in the second quarter of 2022

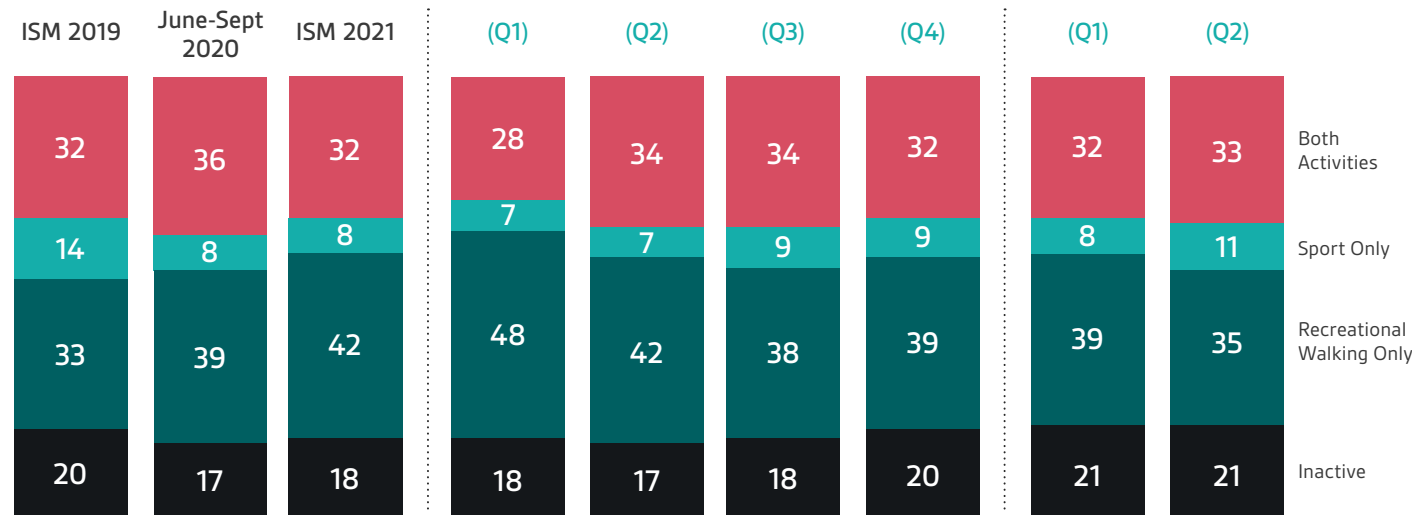


## The proportion achieving the National Physical Activity Guidelines continues to decline, a result of lower levels of recreational walking

% Meeting National Physical Activity Guidelines Through Sport and Walking



Types of Activity Participated In Over the Past Seven Days (%)



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

### Commentary – Mid-Year 2022

- Women (40%) more likely to participate in recreational walking only (men: 33%), while men (12%) are more likely to play sport only (women: 7%). Little difference by gender in the proportion meeting National Physical Activity guidelines (men: 36%, women: 38%).
- The proportion of over 25s that were inactive during the first half of 2022 is 23%, 5 points higher than the same period in 2021 (18%). Inactivity levels among under 25s (11%) remain unchanged.
- Those aged under 25 remain most likely to achieve the activity guidelines, 45% of whom did so during the first two quarters of 2022, compared to 36% of over 25s. These represent declines of 4 points and 5 points, respectively, vs. the same period in 2021.
- The social gradient continues to widen, with 45% of ABC1s sufficiently active compared to 30% of C2DEs.

## The social gradient in sports participation continues to widen, with ABC1s twice as likely to participate during Q2 2022

Participation in **Sport** during previous 7 days

Participation in <b>Sport</b> during previous 7 days					ISM 2021				ISM 2022	
		ISM 2019	June-Sept 2020	ISM 2021	(Q1)	(Q2)	(Q3)	(Q4)	(Q1)	(Q2)
Gender	Men	48	47	43	35	45	49	43	42	46
	Women	45	41	38	34	38	38	40	39	41
Age Group	16-24	70	75	64	58	70	68	61	69	67
	25-34	57	55	52	45	53	53	57	47	51
	35-44	49	52	44	39	44	51	43	41	45
	45-54	42	37	36	28	37	38	41	39	44
	55+	31	23	23	19	23	26	25	24	28
Location	Dublin	50	50	46	39	45	50	48	47	52
	Rest of Leinster	46	40	38	37	37	40	38	38	40
	Munster	46	45	38	31	40	42	40	39	42
	Connacht/Ulster	42	39	38	31	42	39	41	34	47
Social Class	ABC1	58	60	51	45	56	53	52	54	58
	C2DE	39	31	30	26	30	33	31	29	29
Disability	Those with Disability	33	29	26	23	27	27	26	26	30
	Those without Disability	50	48	45	38	46	49	47	45	49

### Commentary – Mid-Year 2022

- A larger increase in participation among men means that the gender gap increased to 5 points in Q2 compared to 3 points in Q1 2022
- Increase in sports participation among older age groups observed in 2021 has largely flattened out. Sharp increase among under 25s almost returns their participation to pre-pandemic levels.
- Increases in participation among ABC1s in the first half of 2022, combined with marginal declines for C2DEs, mean that the social gradient is 10 points larger in Q2 2022 than it was pre-pandemic.

## The disability gap in recreational walking is at its lowest level since 2019

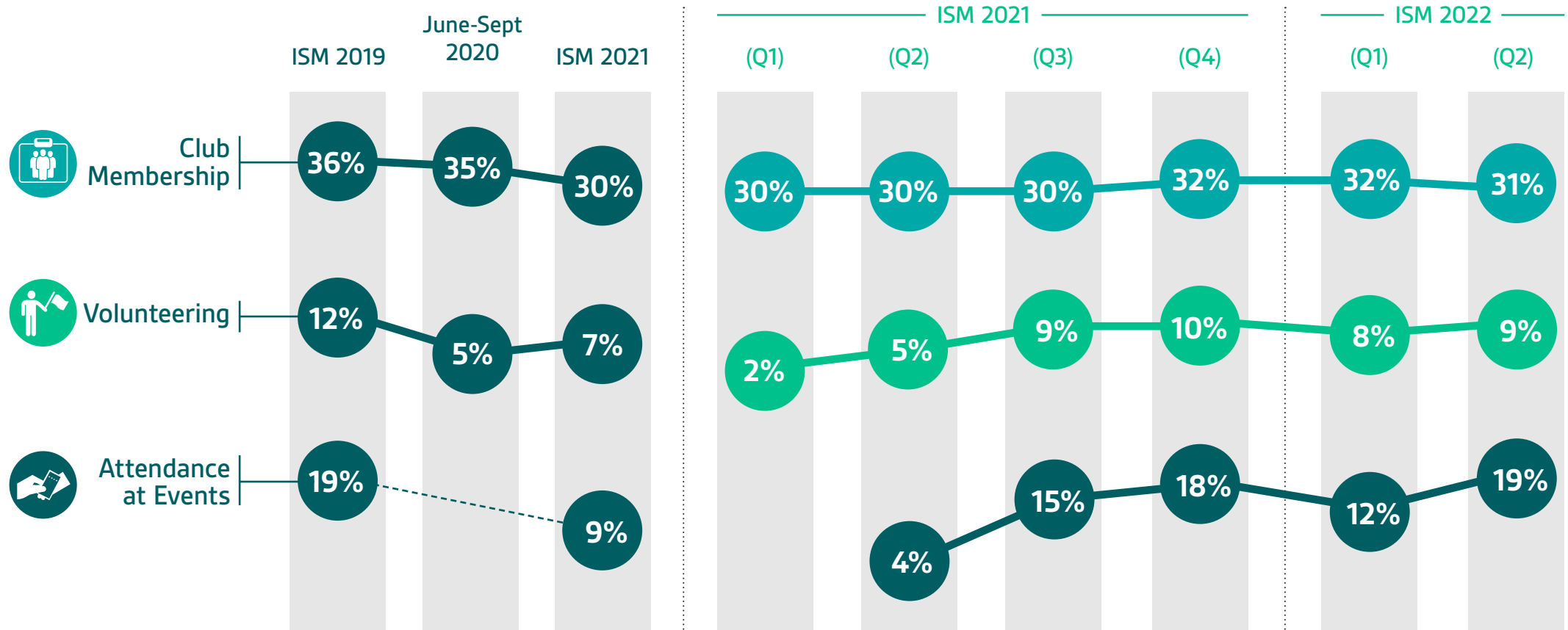
 Participation in **Recreational Walking** during previous 7 days


Participation in Recreational Walking during previous 7 days					ISM 2021				ISM 2022	
		ISM 2019	June-Sept 2020	ISM 2021	(Q1)	(Q2)	(Q3)	(Q4)	(Q1)	(Q2)
Gender	Men	61	72	69	72	71	68	67	65	64
	Women	70	79	78	80	81	77	75	76	72
Age Group	16-24	60	81	72	72	78	68	71	68	65
	25-34	68	76	76	76	83	73	70	71	70
	35-44	64	73	74	77	74	76	70	70	68
	45-54	66	76	77	82	77	72	76	75	75
	55+	69	75	72	74	73	71	69	70	64
Location	Dublin	62	77	74	73	78	72	73	72	69
	Rest of Leinster	66	76	72	76	73	69	70	70	65
	Munster	71	75	76	79	81	75	72	72	73
	Connacht/Ulster	64	76	73	75	73	74	68	68	63
Social Class	ABC1	69	81	80	83	84	77	77	77	74
	C2DE	64	73	70	73	71	68	67	66	65
Disability	Those with Disability	61	68	64	65	67	60	65	64	62
	Those without Disability	67	78	77	80	80	76	73	73	70

### Commentary – Mid-Year 2022

- Women remain more likely than men to walk for recreation.
- Declines in recreational walking across all regions with Connact/Ulster reporting largest decrease vs 2021.
- Disability gap in recreational walking is at its lowest level since 2019, although declines reported by both groups.

Club membership and volunteering remain below pre-pandemic levels, event attendance bounces back





## The gender gap in club membership widens during the first half of 2022

Club membership during previous 7 days

Club membership during previous 7 days					ISM 2021				ISM 2022	
		ISM 2019	June-Sept 2020	ISM 2021	(Q1)	(Q2)	(Q3)	(Q4)	(Q1)	(Q2)
Gender	Men	43	40	37	38	38	39	34	35	36
	Women	29	31	24	22	23	21	30	28	27
Age Group	16-24	54	57	46	41	49	48	48	53	46
	25-34	43	38	33	28	30	34	38	35	34
	35-44	36	39	31	32	33	28	33	30	30
	45-54	35	31	31	32	33	27	32	35	36
	55+	25	25	22	22	20	23	22	20	22
Location	Dublin	36	37	31	27	30	32	34	38	30
	Rest of Leinster	36	34	29	30	31	27	29	30	30
	Munster	36	35	32	33	30	33	34	29	34
	Connacht/Ulster	36	35	29	29	32	27	31	27	32
Social Class	ABC1	46	47	40	38	40	37	44	44	42
	C2DE	28	26	22	24	22	22	20	21	20
Disability	Those with Disability	24	23	18	17	16	20	21	20	21
	Those without Disability	40	39	35	34	35	33	36	36	35

### Commentary – Mid-Year 2022

- Despite narrowing to 4 points in the final quarter of 2021, the gender gap in club membership has opened up again during the first half of 2022, standing at 9 points in Q2. It remains narrower than the same period in 2021, when it was 15 points.
- Rates of club membership among ABC1s have almost returned to pre-pandemic levels, while rates among C2DEs are still significantly lower than pre-pandemic levels.
- Rates of club membership among those with a disability were 3 points higher in the first half of 2022 compared to the same period last year, though remain below pre-pandemic levels.



## Rise in volunteering levels across all demographic groups compared to first half of 2021

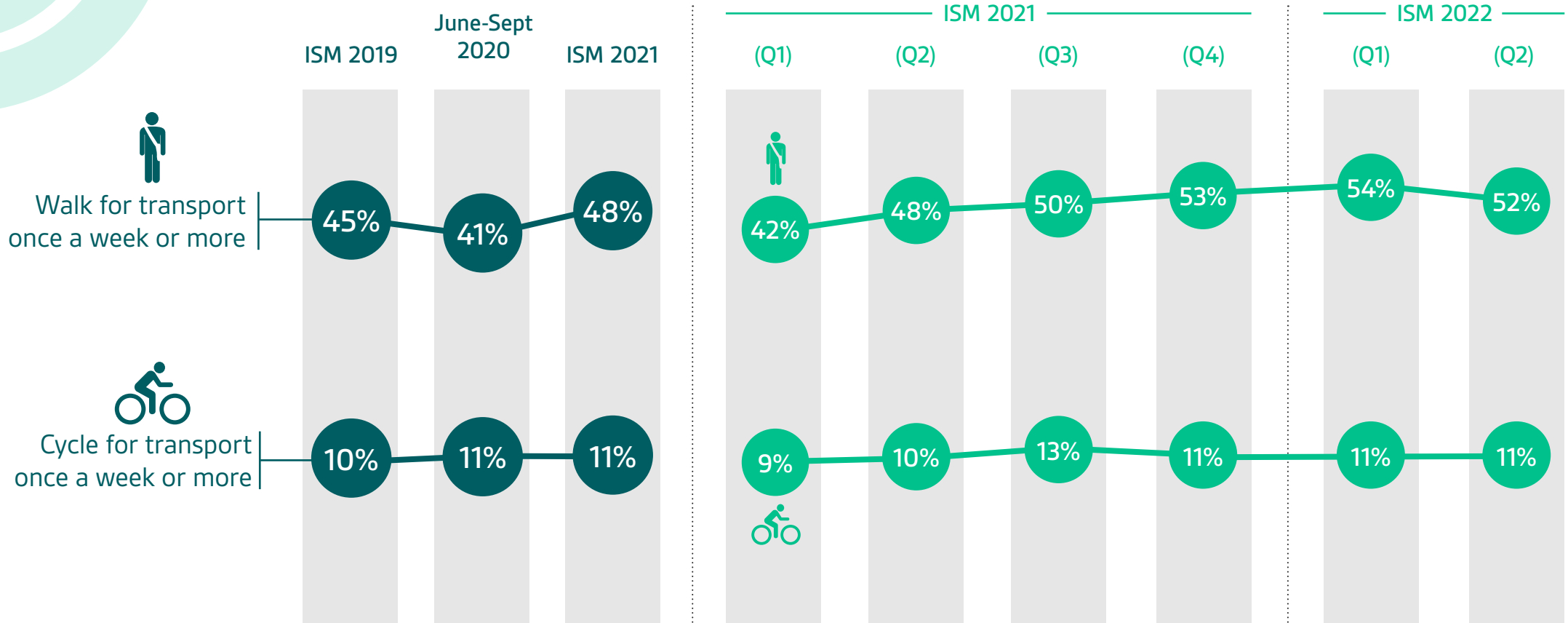
### Volunteering in sport during previous 7 days

Volunteering in sport during previous 7 days					ISM 2021				ISM 2022	
		ISM 2019	June-Sept 2020	ISM 2021	(Q1)	(Q2)	(Q3)	(Q4)	(Q1)	(Q2)
Gender	Men	14	5	7	3	6	10	10	7	10
	Women	10	4	6	2	4	8	9	8	7
Age Group	16-24	10	4	4	1	4	7	6	7	8
	25-34	9	5	4	3	2	6	3	6	3
	35-44	16	6	11	3	9	15	17	11	13
	45-54	20	7	11	4	9	14	17	15	16
	55+	8	3	4	2	2	5	6	4	5
Location	Dublin	8	3	5	2	4	6	9	7	7
	Rest of Leinster	13	4	7	3	5	10	9	9	8
	Munster	13	5	8	3	7	10	11	8	9
	Connacht/Ulster	13	6	7	2	5	10	10	6	12
Social Class	ABC1	16	6	9	3	7	11	14	11	13
	C2DE	9	3	4	2	3	6	7	5	5
Disability	Those with Disability	8	2	4	1	3	5	7	5	7
	Those without Disability	13	5	7	3	6	10	11	9	9

### Commentary – Mid-Year 2022

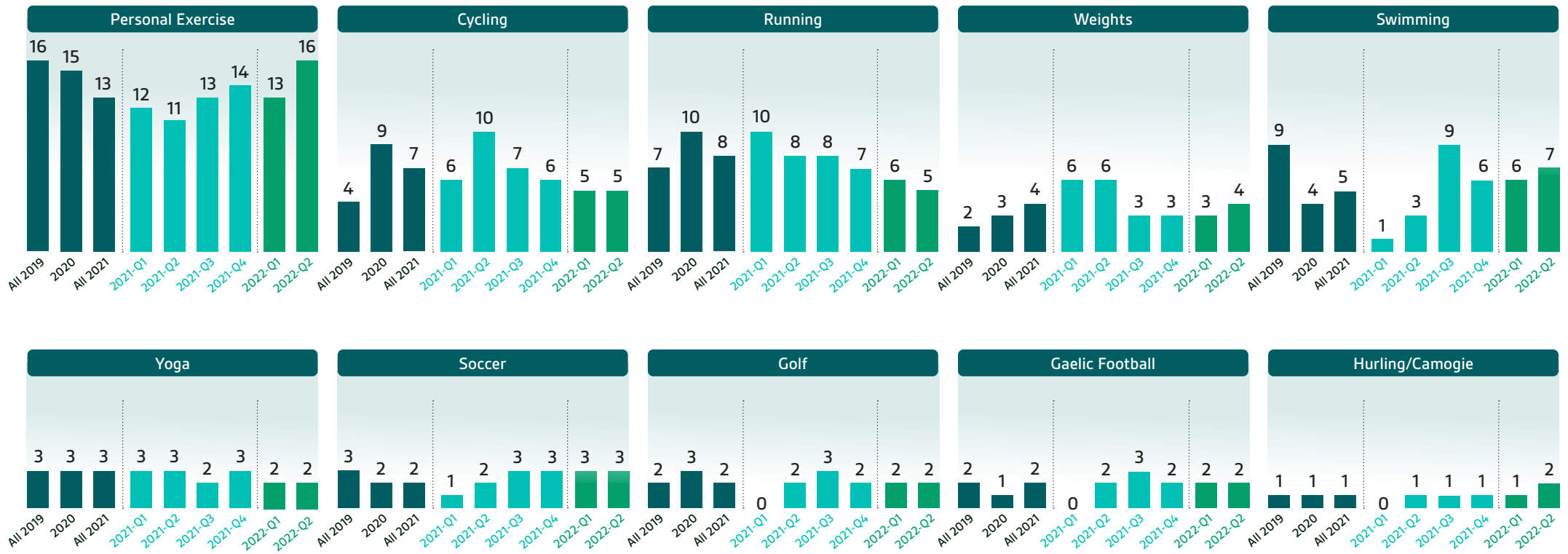
- The gender gap in volunteering has widened marginally in Q2, although remains below pre-pandemic levels.
- After increasing strongly during the latter half of 2021, rates of volunteering among those aged 35 and older have declined slightly during the first half of 2022.
- Volunteering remains below pre-pandemic levels in all regions, particularly Rest of Leinster and Munster.
- The disability gradient in volunteering has narrowed slightly compared to pre-pandemic levels. This is as a result of volunteering among those with a disability almost returning to pre-pandemic levels.

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



The numbers engaging in personal exercise returned to pre-pandemic levels in Q2. However, small declines in numbers running and cycling in first half of 2022

Types of sports participated in during previous 7 days



## Strong desire to take up a new sport, particularly for certain sports that are less commonly played

### Desire to try a new sport never previously played

**29%**

would like to try a new sport

**49%**

of those who would like to try a new sport are not regular sports participants

### Most popular sports that potential participants would like to try



**11%**

Tennis



**11%**

Rugby



**9%**

Swimming



**8%**

Golf



**8%**

Basketball

### Reason for wanting to try a new sport

**24%**

Because it looks like fun

**19%**

To Improve fitness

**17%**

To have fun

**14%**

To improve physical health

**9%**

To spend time with friends/family

## 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.
- 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 - Sept 2021	2,128
ISM 2021 (Q4)	Oct - Dec 2021	2,127
ISM 2021	Jan - Dec 2021	8,508
ISM 2022 (Q1)	Jan-Mar 2022	2,129
ISM 2022 (Q2)	Apr-Jun 2022	2,126





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