

Adult Participation in Sport and Physical Activity in Cork
(Irish Sports Monitor 2015 and 2017)

Introduction

This brief document presents high-level results on participation in sport and physical activity of adults (aged 16+) resident in Cork during 2015 and 2017. The material is prepared for Cork LSP.

Data Source

Results are based on the combined data¹ from the 2015 and 2017 Irish Sports Monitor (ISM) surveys in which 2,033 Cork residents took part. The ISM is a nationally representative survey, which interviews respondents aged 16 and over via telephone² about their participation in sport, recreational walking and active commuting. Data is collected throughout the year to minimise seasonality effects. The ISM has limitations like all social science surveys, one of which is that some groups are easier to reach than others. To counteract potential bias arising from this, data are re-weighted to match more closely the population characteristics in the 2016 Census of Population.

Margin of Error

All statistical surveys have margins of error which are primarily a function of sample size. Here, the margin of error for headline results is $\pm 2.2\%$. So if we report here that 43.1% take part in sport, the true sports participation figure is considered to lie between 40.9% and 45.3%. Where results are broken down further by gender, age, etc. the margin of error increases. As a result, small differences in the results should not be over-interpreted.

Participation in sport and exercise

43.1% of respondents take part in sport and exercise at least once a week. As with national trends men are more likely to take part in sport and exercise than women (46.4% and 40% respectively). The five most popular sporting activities in Cork are personal exercise (14.4%), swimming (9.2%), running (6.8%), cycling (4.3%) and soccer (3.7%). There are some gender differences with men more likely to play hurling/camogie, cycling, golf, running and soccer while women are more likely to take part in

¹ The data for the two years was combined to boost the sample size for the county.

² Mobile and landline from 2015 onwards

personal exercise, dance, Pilates and yoga. The proportion of men and women playing Gaelic football, swimming and weights is fairly similar.

Figure 1: Most popular sporting activities in Cork

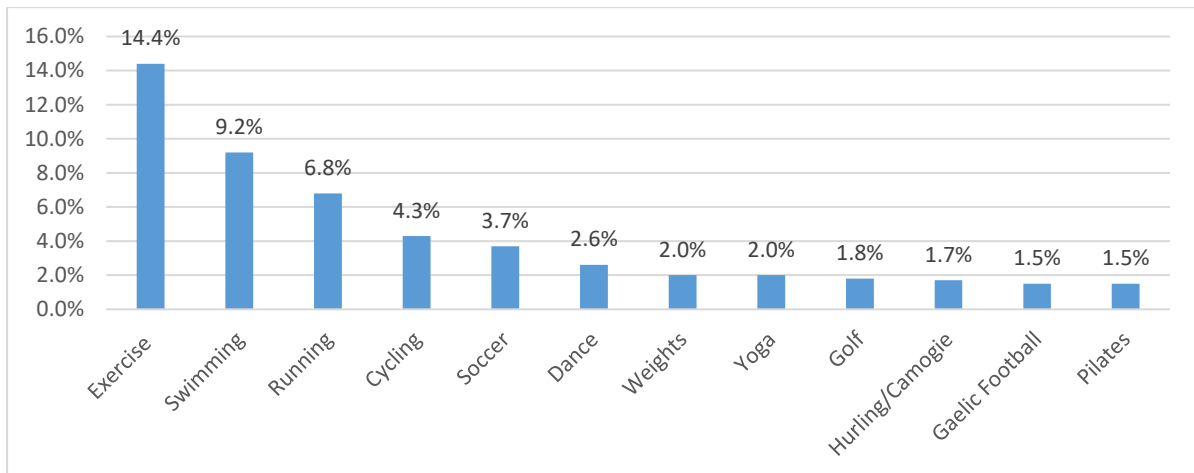
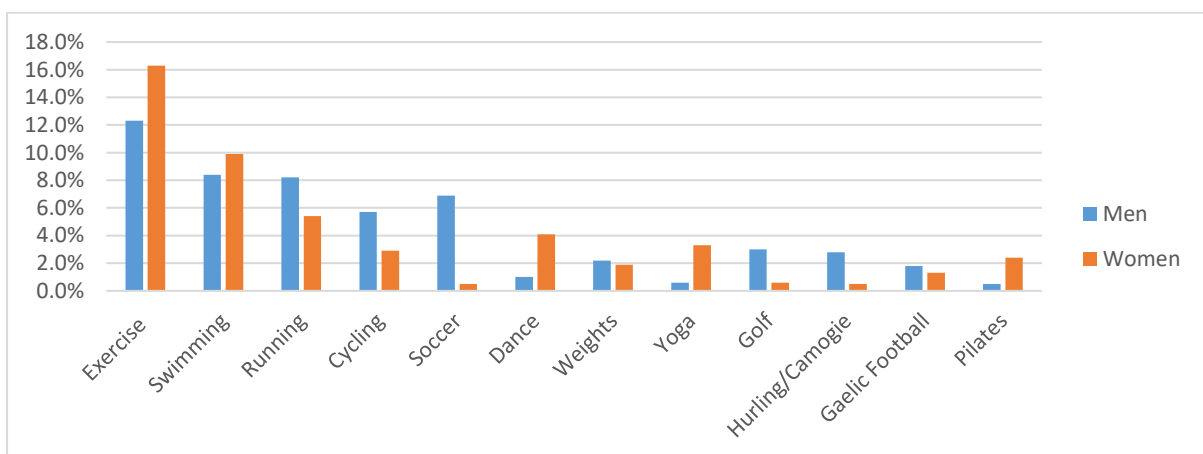


Figure 2: Most popular sporting activities in Cork – By Gender

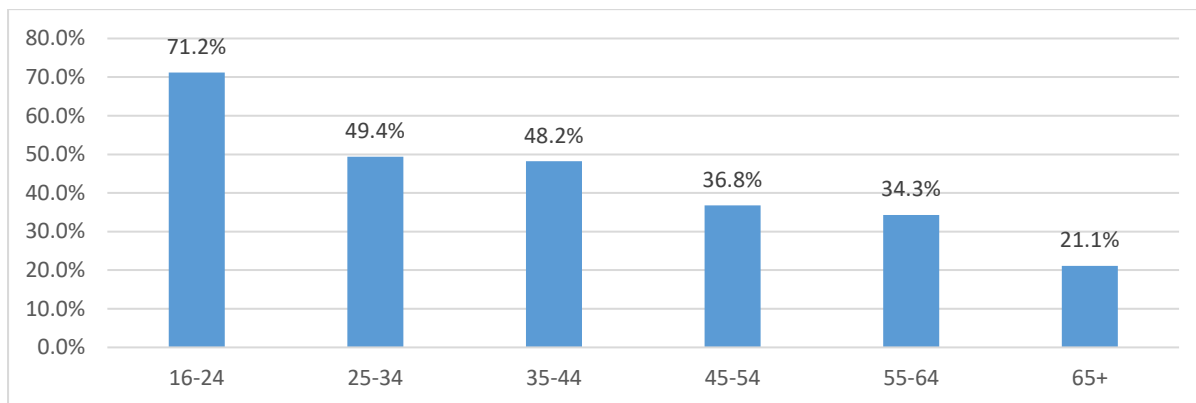


Overall 39.3% of participants take part in individual activities while 8.1% take part in team based activities. Both men (40.3%) and women (38.3%) prefer to take part in individual activities however over three times as many men (13.1%) take part in team based sports compared to women (3.3%).

Younger age groups are more likely to take part in sport with over three quarters of those aged 16-24 years (71.2%) compared to just over one in five of those aged 65 years or more (21.1%) taking part. Younger age groups are also more likely to take part in team based sports; 32.6% of those aged 16-24

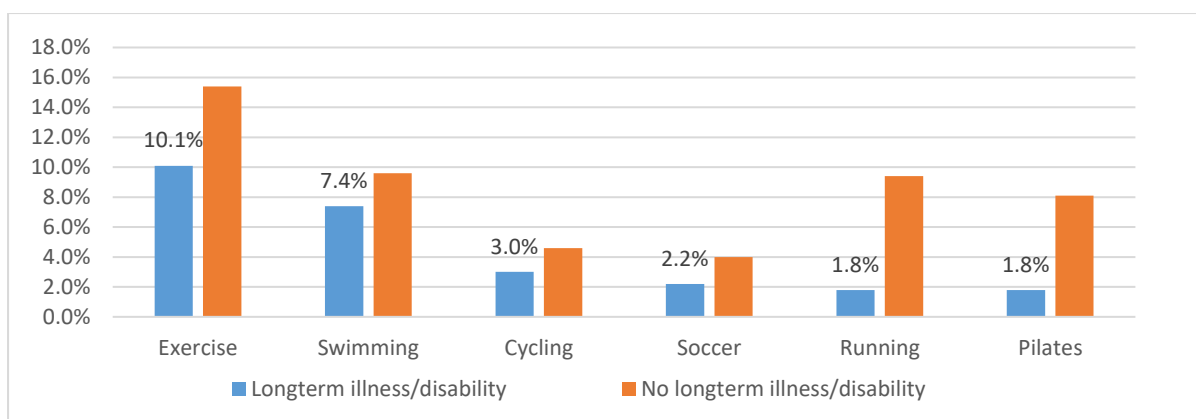
years take part in team sport. This drops to 9.9% for those aged 25-34 years and continues to decline as age increased. This is likely because team based activities are harder to organised around busy lives. There is a gradual decline in participation overall with age as can be seen in **Figure 3**.

Figure 3: Participation in sport by age group



Those with a long-term illness/disability are less likely to take part in sport (28.5%) compared to those without a long-term illness/disability (45.9%). 72.7% of those with an illness/disability reported this prevents them from taking part in sport and exercise. While the proportion of those with a long-term illness/disability taking part in sport is lower, many of the most popular sporting activities are the same as the most popular sports overall as can be seen in **Figure 4** below.

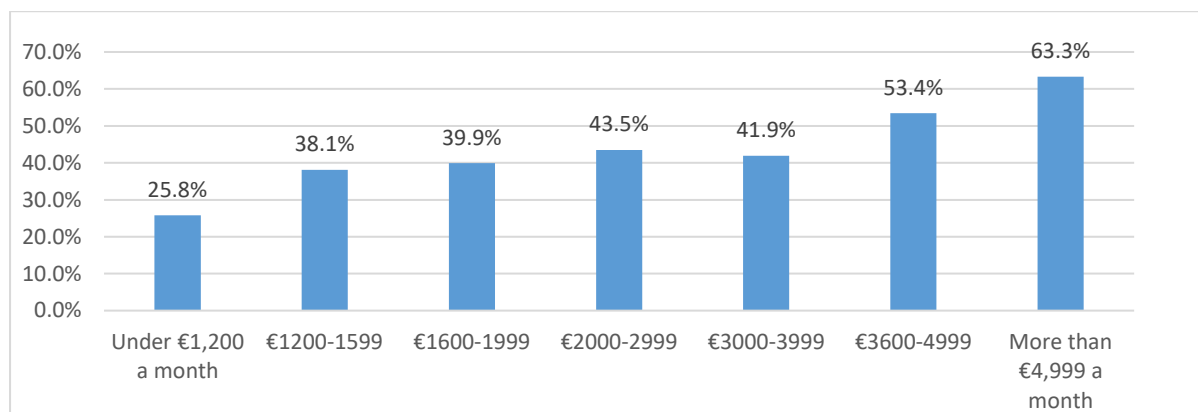
Figure 4: Participation in sport activities among those with a long-term illness/disability



Those earning lower incomes are less likely to take part in sport/exercise. As can be seen in **Figure 5**, there is a gradual increase in participation as income increases with 25.8% of those earning under €1,200 a month taking part in sport compared to 63.3% of those earning €4,999 a month. Previous

studies have shown time constraints are the most common barrier to participation rather than cost to participation. However, those earning lower incomes are more likely to feel they have less control and that they cannot overcome these barriers.

Figure 5: Participation by Income



56.3% of respondents lived in urban locations (city or town) while 43.4% lived in rural locations (villages or “isolated locations”). A similar proportion of those living in urban (44.6%) and rural (41.2%) locations take part in sport and exercise.

Frequency, Duration and Intensity of Participation in Sport/Exercise

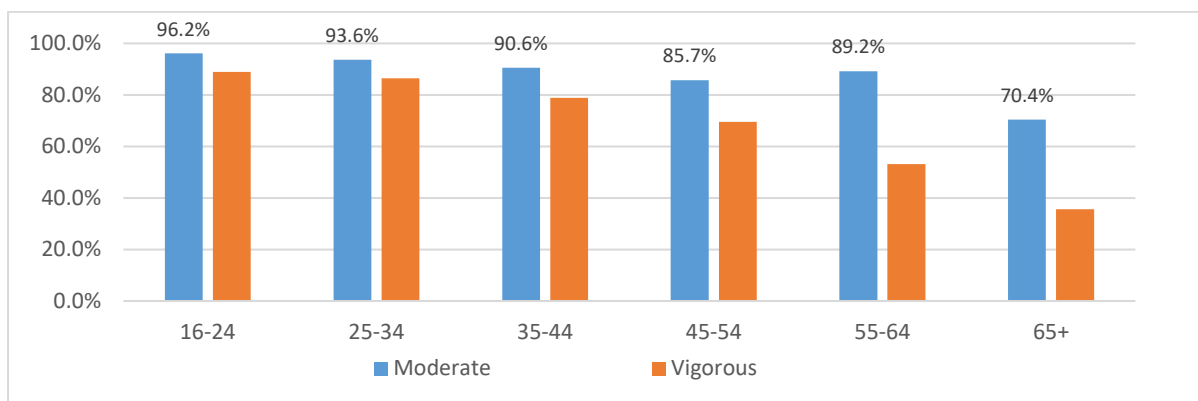
On average, participants spend 3.2 days per week playing sport. There were no gender differences in frequency of participation among male (3.3 days) and female (3.1 days) participants. On average³, participants spend an hour and a half each week on sport (91.8 minutes) with men typically playing sport for longer than women (100.4 minutes and 82.2 minutes respectively). This may be related to the type of sport being played with participants who play team sports typically spending over two hours on sport (128.6 minutes) while participants who play individual sports spend over an hour and a half (100.2 minutes).

Nearly 90% (89.9%) of participants take part at a moderate intensity (i.e. the effort was enough to raise your breathing rate) while 75.1% take part at a vigorous intensity (i.e. the effort was enough to make you out of breath/sweat). Taking part at even a moderate intensity can produce many physical and mental health benefits. The majority of both male and female participants take part at a moderate or vigorous intensity. While participants with a long term illness/disability are less likely to take part

³ Trimmed average was used.

in sport, over two thirds take part at a vigorous intensity (67.6%) and over three quarters of participants take part at a moderate intensity (78.1%). Older adults are less likely to take part in sport/exercise at a vigorous intensity however 70.4% of those aged 65 years or more take part at a moderate intensity which can provide health benefits.

Figure 6: Level of intensity by age

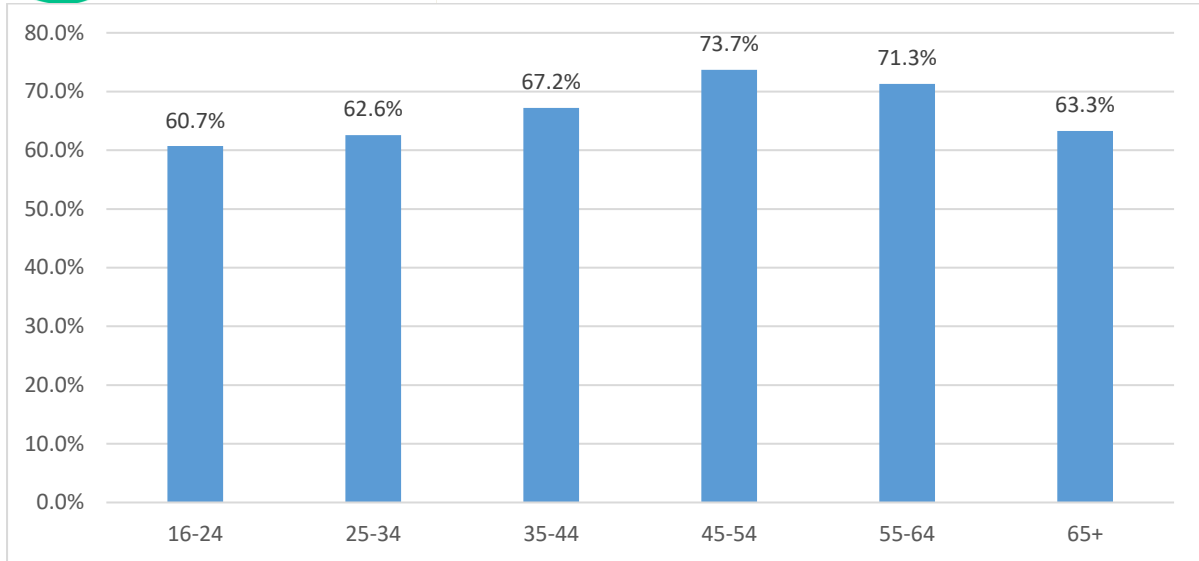


Participation in broader physical activity

Recreational Walking

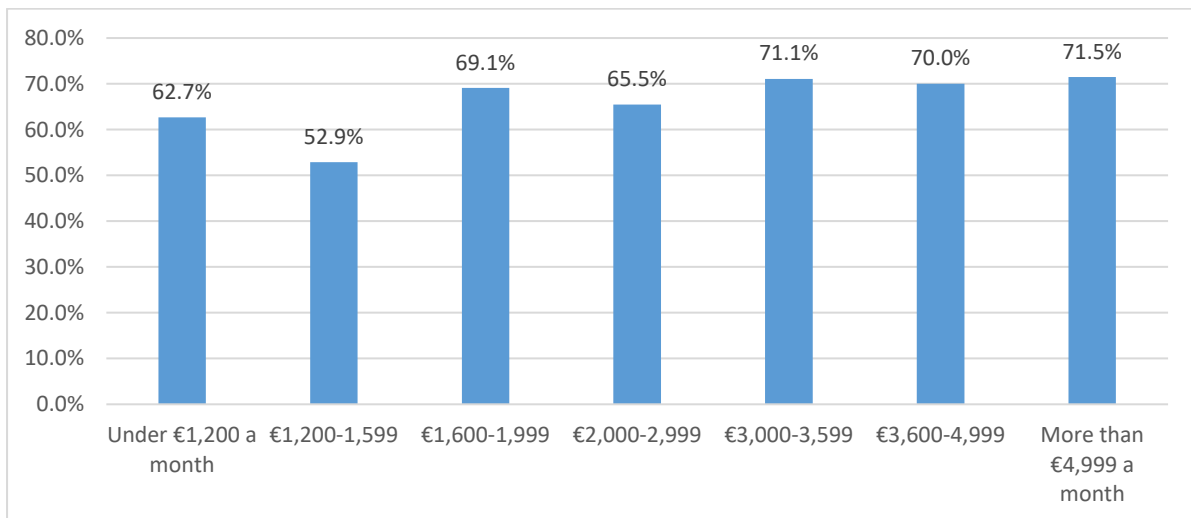
Recreational walking is the most popular form of physical activity with two in three respondents taking part at least once a week (66.6%). In contrast to sport and exercise, women are more likely to walk than men (72.8% and 60.4% respectively). Walking is popular among every age group as can be seen in **Figure 7**.

Figure 7: Recreational walking by age



Recreational walking is a low impact, low cost physical activity that can provide as many health benefits as sport. It is also more accessible for some groups. While those with a long-term illness/disability are less likely to take part in sport/exercise, 61.8% take part in recreational walking⁴. Recreational walking is also popular among every income group as can be seen in **Figure 8**.

Figure 8: Recreational Walking by income



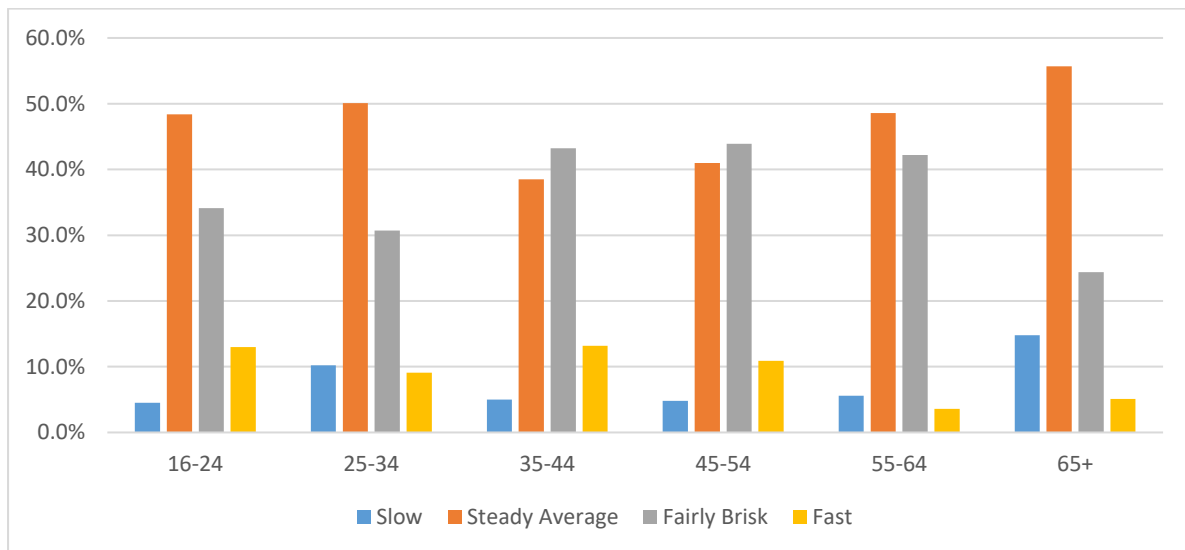
Frequency, Duration and Intensity of Participation in Recreational Walking

⁴ 67.9% of those without a long-term illness/disability take part in recreational walking.

On average participants walk 4 times a week, for just over 40 minutes per session (42.6 minutes⁵). While women are more likely to take part in walking, both men and women spend a similar amount of time walking for recreation per week. There were no gender differences regarding how often respondents took part (both took part 4 days per week) or the length of time spent walking between men and women (43 minutes and 42.9 minutes respectively). The majority of participants walk at a steady pace (46.4%) while over a third (36.9%) walk at a fairly brisk pace. While walking at a slow pace does increase with age, a large proportion of older walkers walk at a steady average pace.

⁵ Trimmed mean

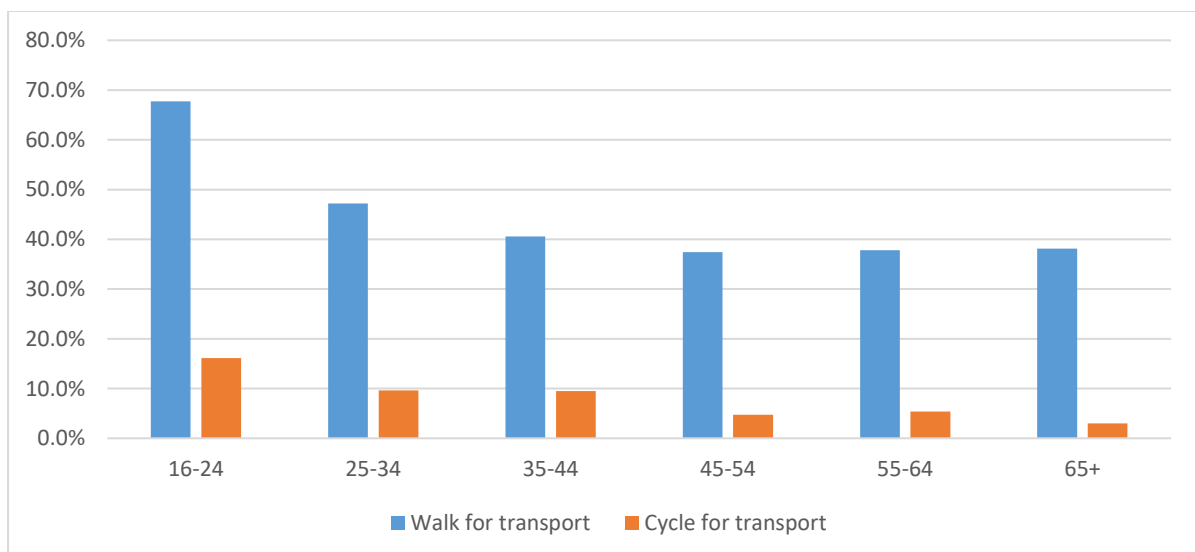
Figure 9: Pace of walking by age



Active Travel

43.7% of adults walk for transport regularly while 7.8% cycle for transport. Both men and women are equally likely to walk for transport (44.3% and 44.1% respectively). However, men are over twice as likely to cycle for transport (11.9% and 4.1% respectively). Younger adults (16-24 years) are more likely to walk and cycle for transport.

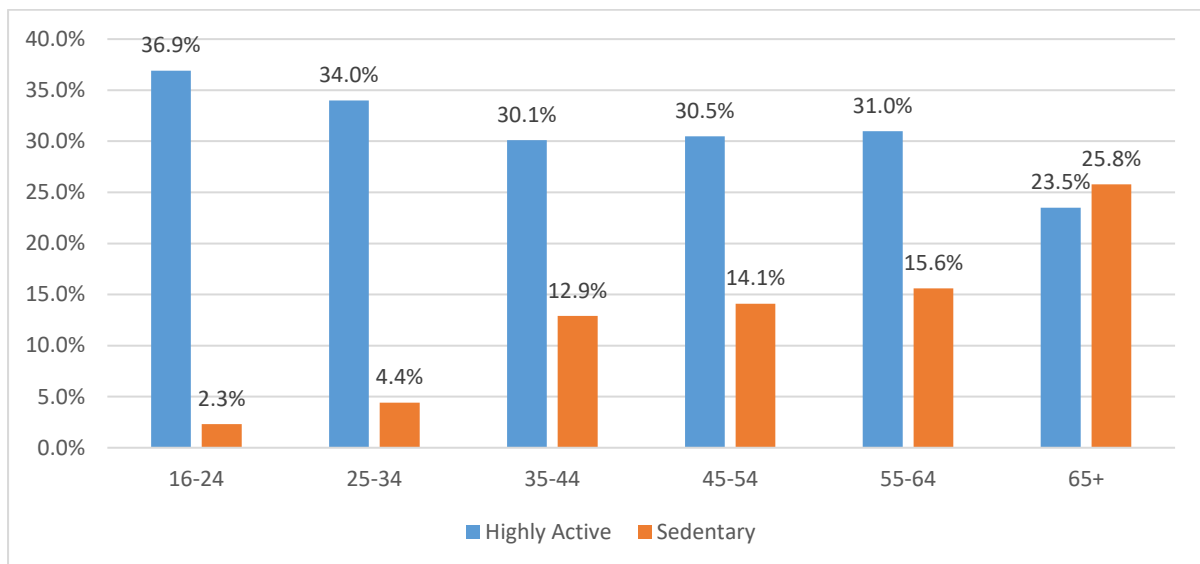
Figure 10: Active travel by age groups



Meeting the activity guidelines

30.8% of Cork respondents meeting the activity guidelines through recreational walking and/or sport⁶. Women are more likely to meet the activity guidelines than men (34.3% and 27% respectively). Overall 13.6% of respondents are sedentary and there is a similar proportion of inactivity between women and men (12.7% and 14.6% respectively). Those with a long term illness/disability are less likely to meet the activity guidelines (23.2% compared to 32.6%) and are more likely to be inactive (23.3% compared to 11.2% of those without an illness/disability).

Figure 11: Activity levels by age

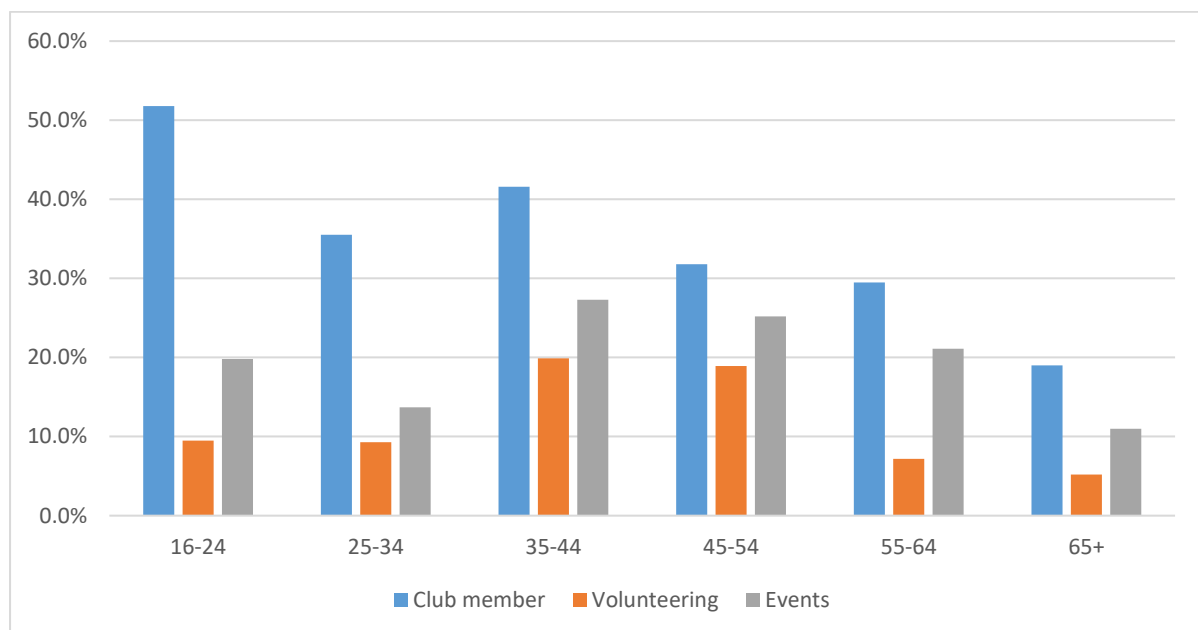


⁶ At least 30 minutes of moderate/vigorous activity, five times a week.

Social Participation

Social participation includes club membership, volunteering in sport and attending a sporting event. Nearly half (47.2%) of Cork respondents took part in some form of social participation. Over a third (34.7%) of respondents belonged to a sports club, 12.3% volunteer in sport and 19.9% have attended a sporting event within the last week. As can be seen in Figure 12 there are age differences regarding the different forms of social participation, younger adults are more likely to belong to a sports club and adults aged 35-54 years are more likely to volunteer in sport and attend a sporting event. This will be discussed in more detail below.

Figure 12: Social participation by age



Club membership

Men (41.5%) are more likely to belong to a sports club than women (28.3%). Those with a long term illness/disability are less likely to belong to a sports club (22.4% compared to 37.8% of those without an illness/disability). As with active participation, clubs which play individual sports are popular (24.9%) while one in seven belong to a team based club (14.7%). Both men and women prefer individual sports clubs (26.7% and 23.2% respectively) while over three times as many men belong to a team based sports club compared to women (22.4% and 7.3%). The most popular sports clubs among women are gyms/exercise clubs while GAA clubs are the most popular among men.

Figure 13: Club membership

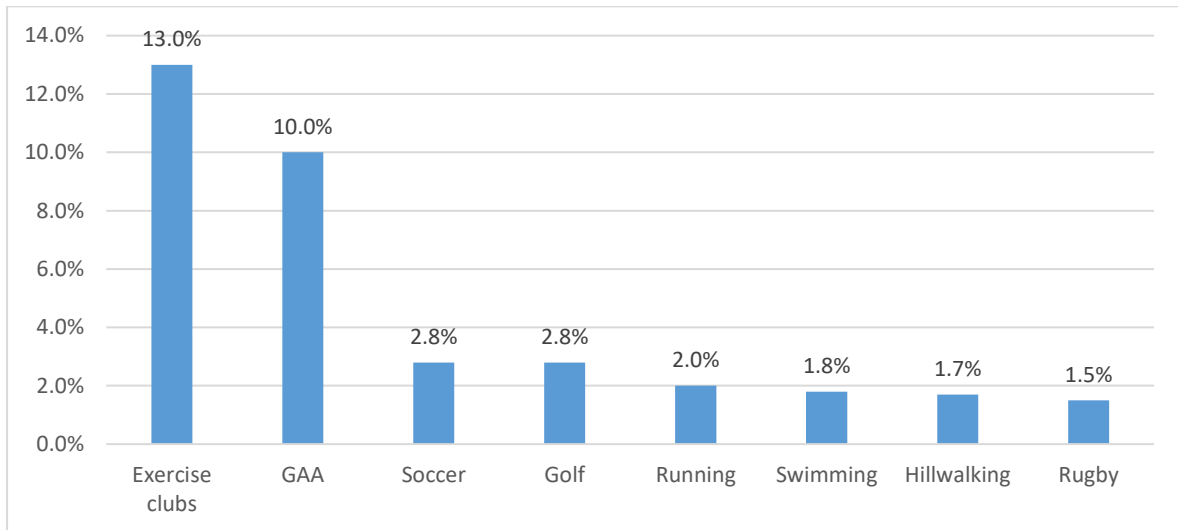
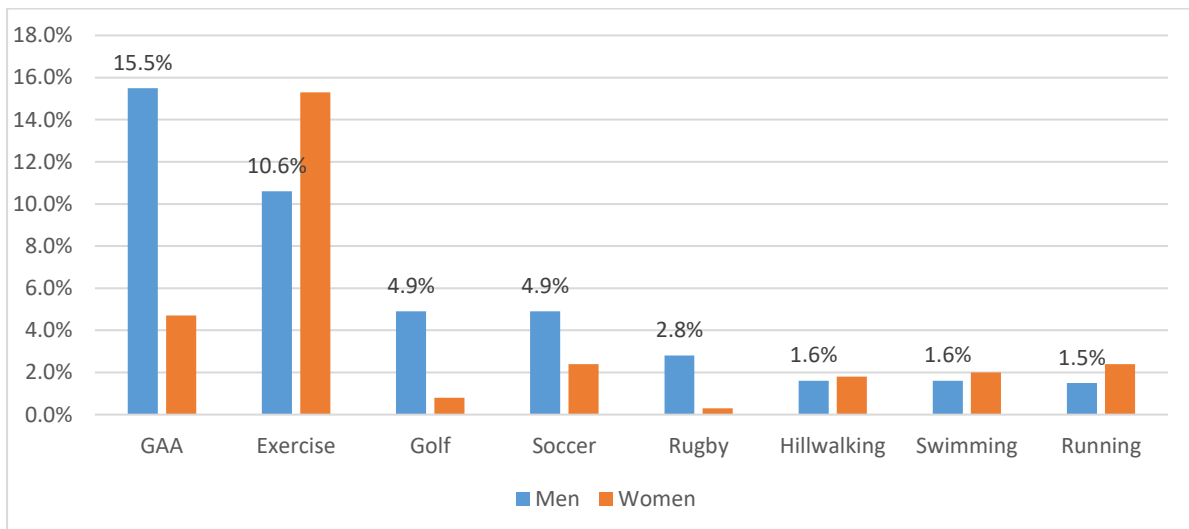


Figure 14: Club membership by gender



Volunteering in sport

Men (15%) are more likely to volunteer in sport than women (9.7%). Those aged between 35-54 years are more likely to volunteer in sport, this may be related to the fact that parents are twice as likely to volunteer than those without children (16.7% and 8.2%). As opposed to active participation and club membership, volunteers are more likely to volunteer for team sports (9.2%) than individual sports (3.6%). Hurling/Camogie and Gaelic Football are the most popular sports among volunteers. While

men are more likely to volunteer as coaches women are more likely to volunteer as activity organisers. The majority of female volunteers provide transport.

Figure 15: Volunteering in sport - overall

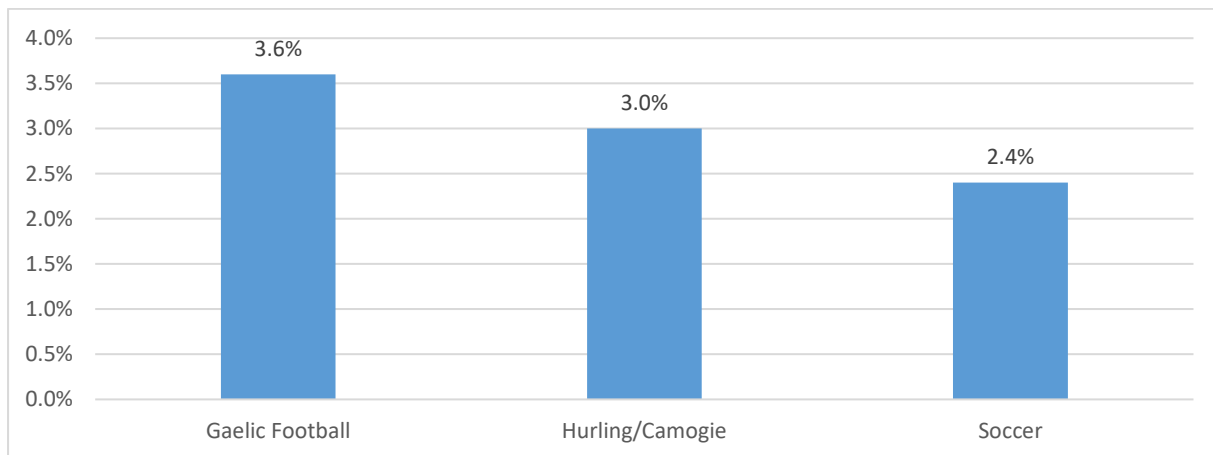
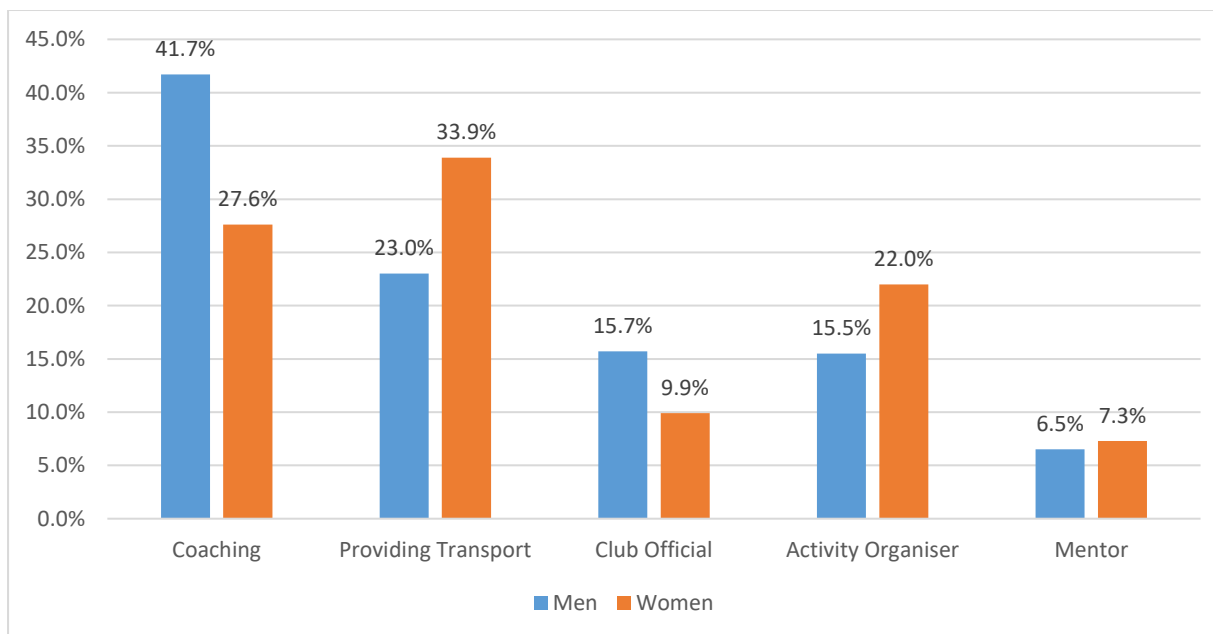


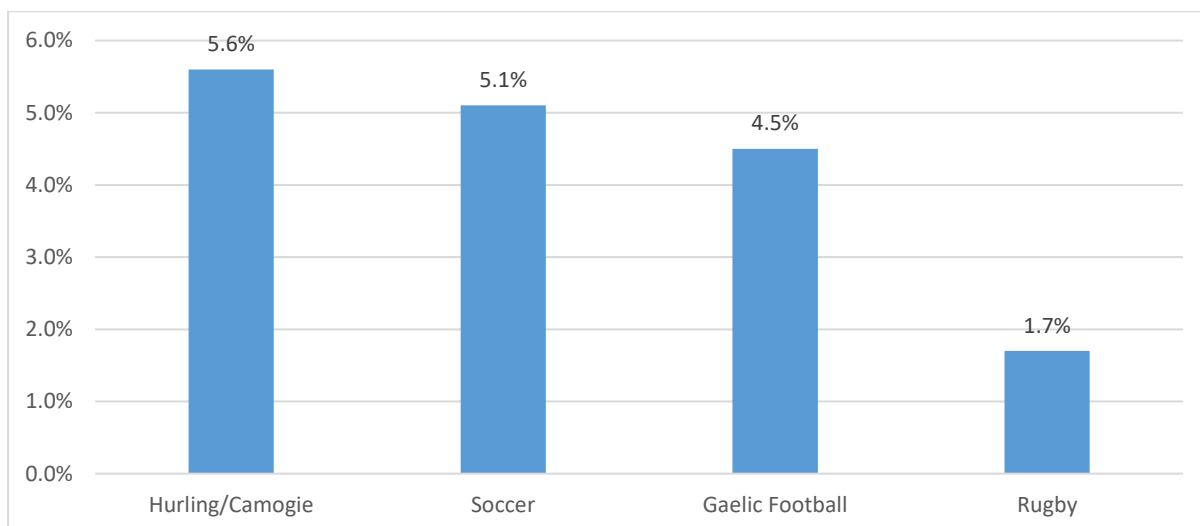
Figure 16: Volunteering Roles by Gender



Attending Sporting Events

Men (21.3%) were more slightly likely to attend a sporting event than women (18.6%) however the difference is not significant. As with volunteering, adults aged 35-54 years are more likely to attend a sporting event, possibly due to attendance at children's events. Parents are nearly twice as likely to attend a sporting event (26.1% and 14.2%). Team sports are popular among spectators with nearly four times as many attending a team sport event (16.6% and 4.4%). All of the most popular sporting events are team based sports.

Figure 17: Popular sports among spectators



Appendix A

	CSO	Cork unweighted	Weighted by Gender, Age and Education
Men	49.0%	49.8%	49%
Women	51.0%	50.2%	51%
Age			
16-19	6.6%	6.1%	6.6%
20-24	7.7%	6.9%	7.6%
25-34	17.2%	14.5%	17.3%
35-44	20.1%	24.2%	20.1%
45-54	18.7%	16.8%	18.7%
55-64	12.2%	15.9%	12.2%
65+	17.5%	15.6%	17.5%
Work			
Employee	44.9%	46.7%	44.8%
Self-Employed	8.8%	11.5%	10.6%
Unemployed	6.4%	5.8%	6.4%
Retired	14.6%	15.8%	15.7%
Homemaker	8.5%	8.2%	9.6%
Student	12.2%	8.7%	9.3%
Unable to work due to illness	4.6%	3.3%	3.7%
Education			
Primary/No formal education	11.6%	5.1%	9.5%
Junior Cert	15.8%	13.7%	15.3%
Leaving Cert	19.5%	23.6%	19.4%
Other second level	22.2%	8%	23.3%
Third Level education	30.8%	49.7%	31.6%