



SPÓRT ÉIREANN
SPORT IRELAND

IRISH SPORTS MONITOR 2023 / SUMMARY RESEARCH REPORT





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IRISH SPORTS MONITOR 2023

SUMMARY RESEARCH REPORT

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Introduction



This report outlines the key findings from the Irish Sports Monitor (ISM) 2023.

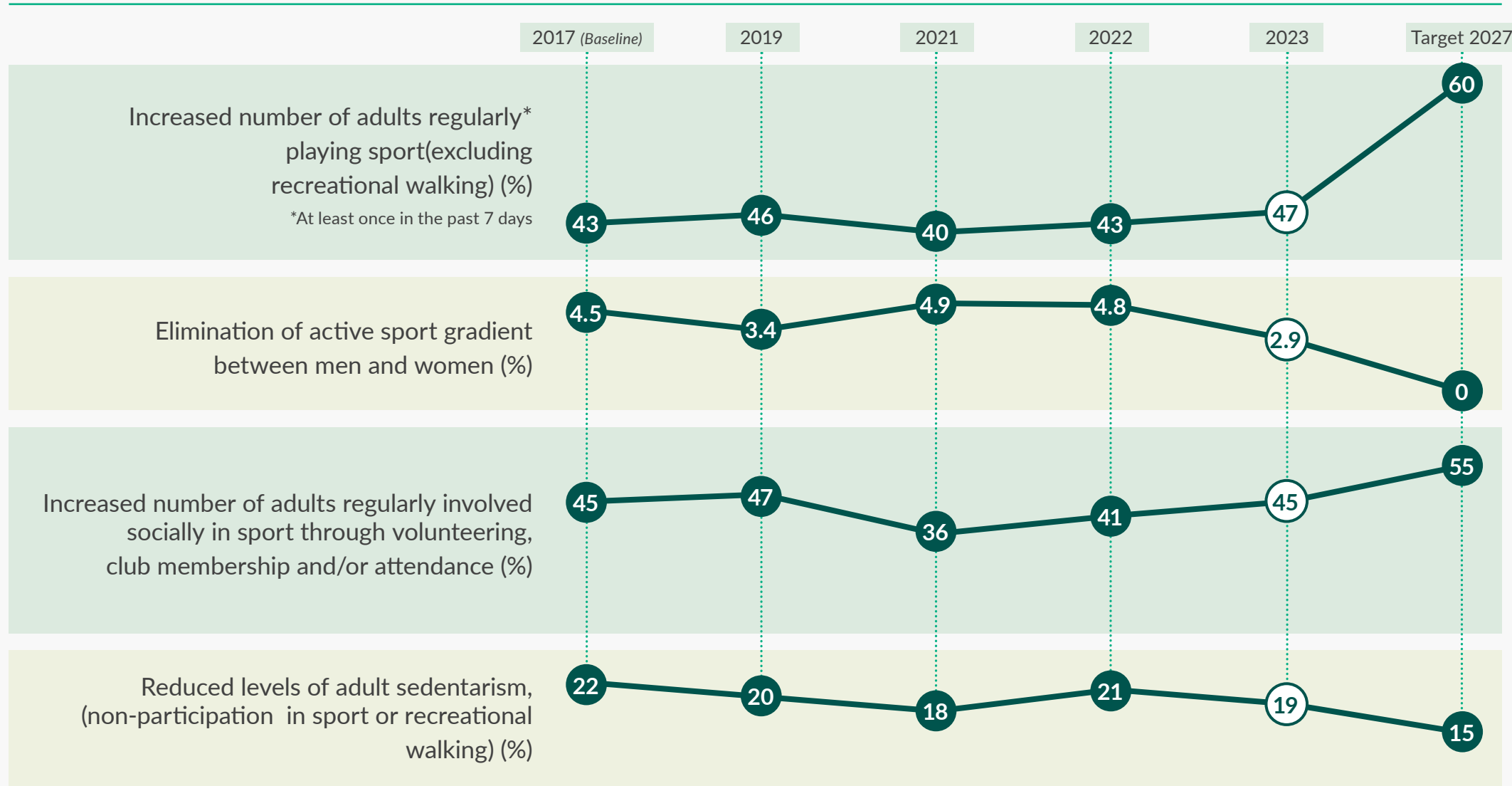
The ISM is a nationally representative population survey conducted to track changes in sport and physical activity in Ireland. Key measures monitored by the ISM include sport participation, club membership, volunteering and event attendance as well as overall physical activity levels. The ISM also assesses recreational walking and walking or cycling as modes of transportation.

Fieldwork for ISM 2023 took place throughout the year and included interviews with 8,512 participants aged 16 and older.



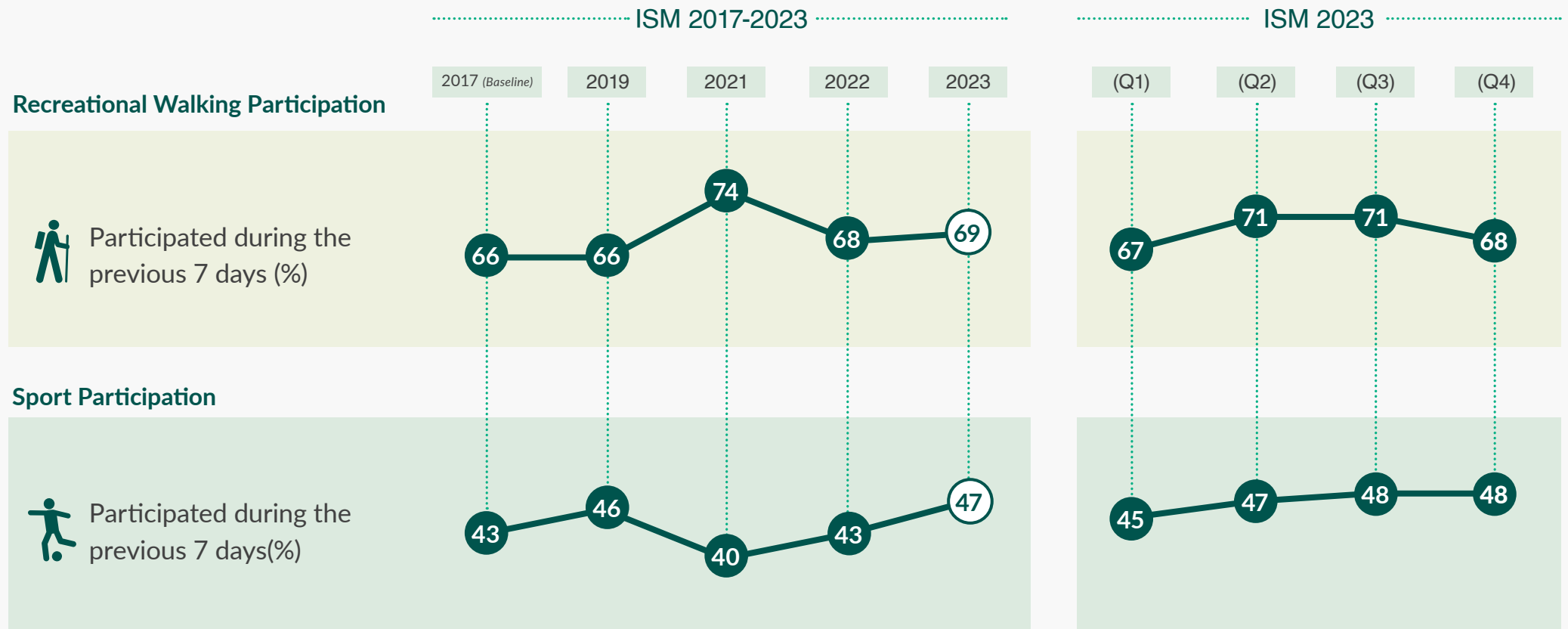
1. Progress Towards Targets

Sports participation was 47% in 2023, the highest annual rate of participation recorded by the ISM. The gender gradient in sports participation narrowed to 2.9 percentage points, dropping below 3% for the first time.



2. Sports Participation

Sports participation rates increased throughout 2023 while recreational walking rates peaked in the spring and summer of 2023.



3. Most Popular Sports

Most sports increased their participation rates between 2022 and 2023. Swimming (8%) running (7%) and golf (3%) increased in participation and cycling (5%) remains ahead of 2019 levels of participation. Team sports including soccer (4%) and Gaelic football (3%) also increased in participation. Participation in personal exercise (17%), increased by 2 percentage points.

Types of sports participated in during previous 7 days



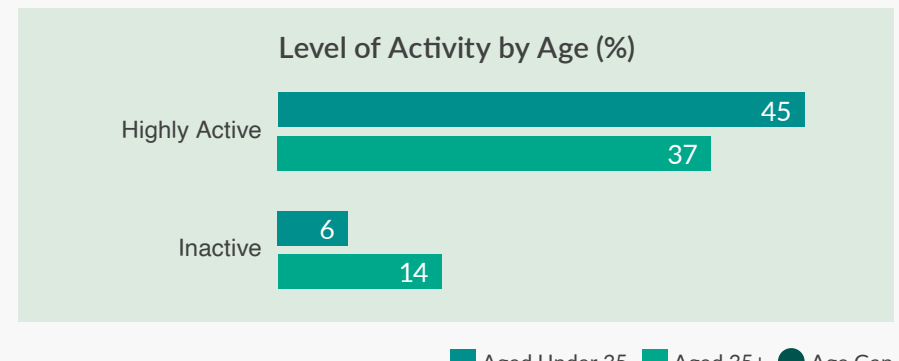
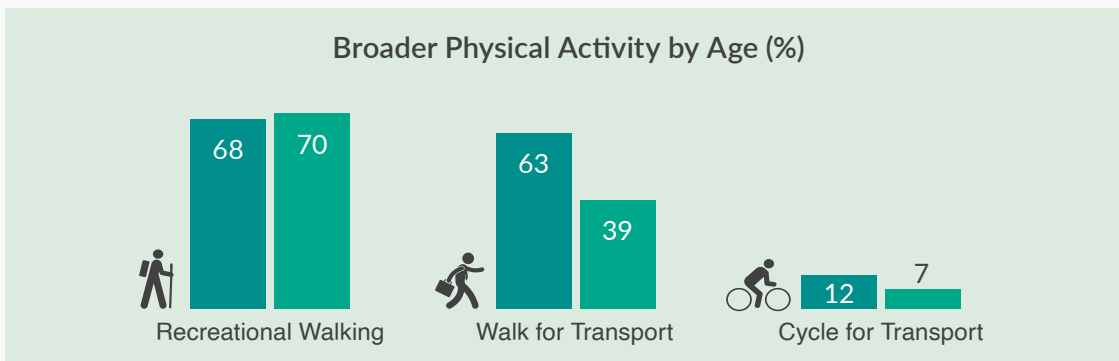
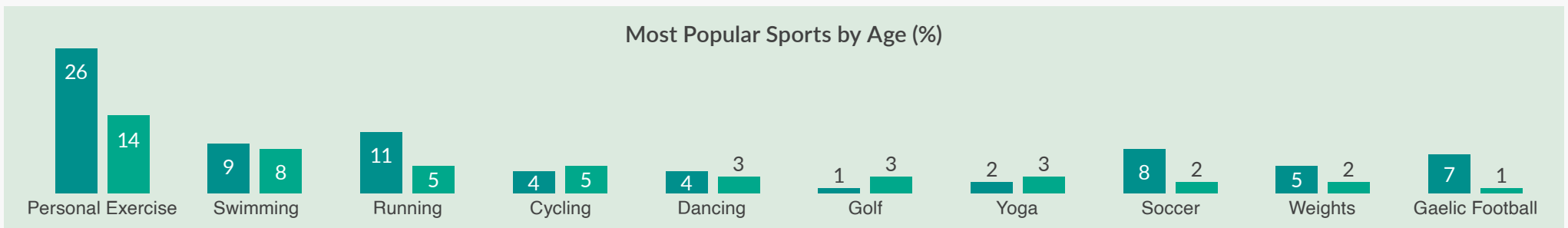
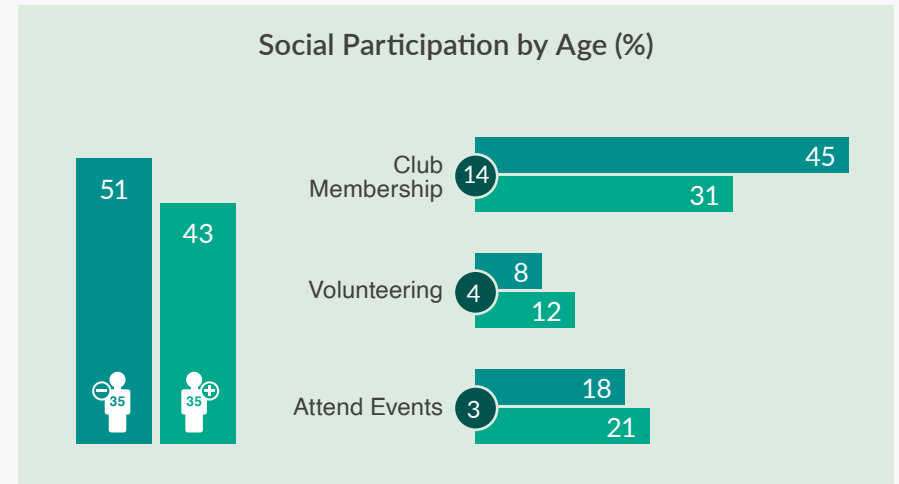
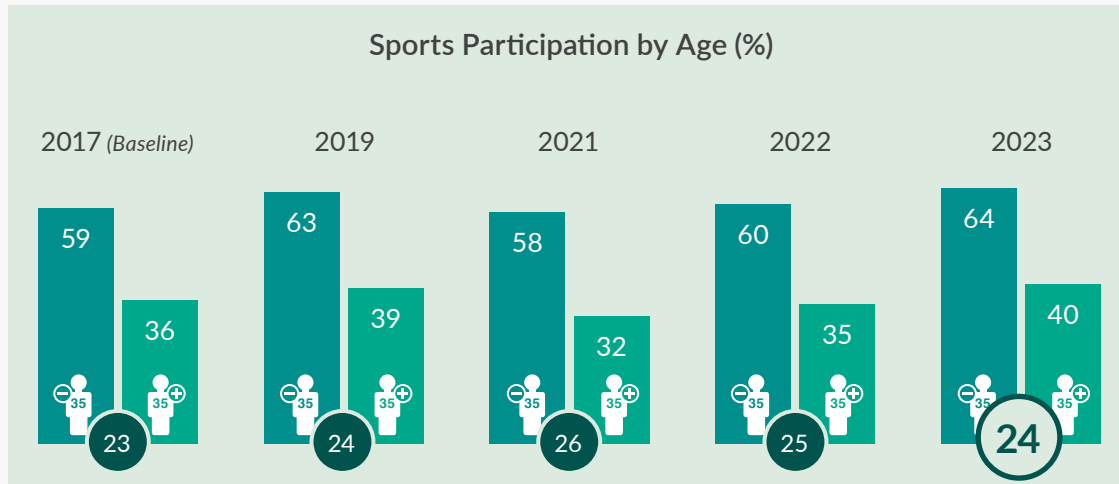
* 2017 = Baseline figure

4. Social Participation in Sport

Club membership and volunteering increased by 4 and 2 percentage points respectively since 2022, exceeding 2017 baseline levels and almost returning to pre-pandemic 2019 levels. One in every five people attended a sports event, exceeding levels seen in 2019.

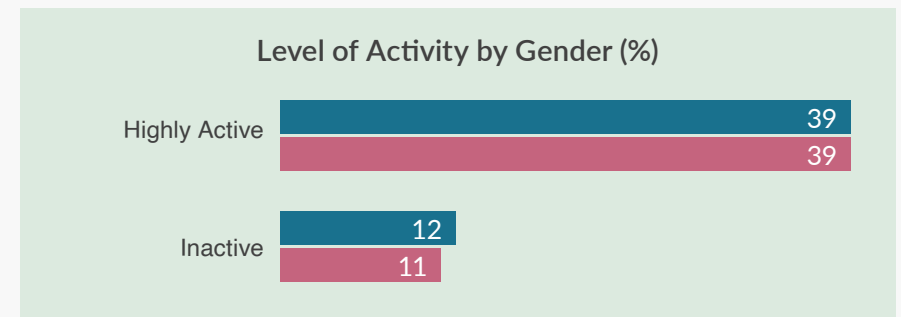
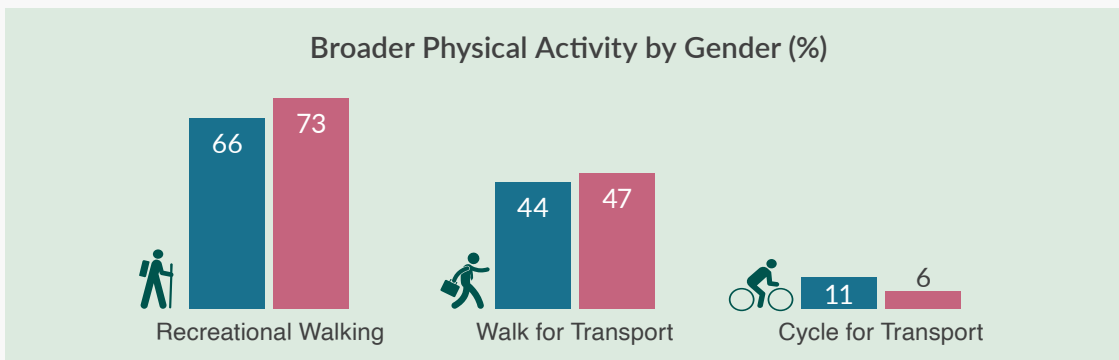
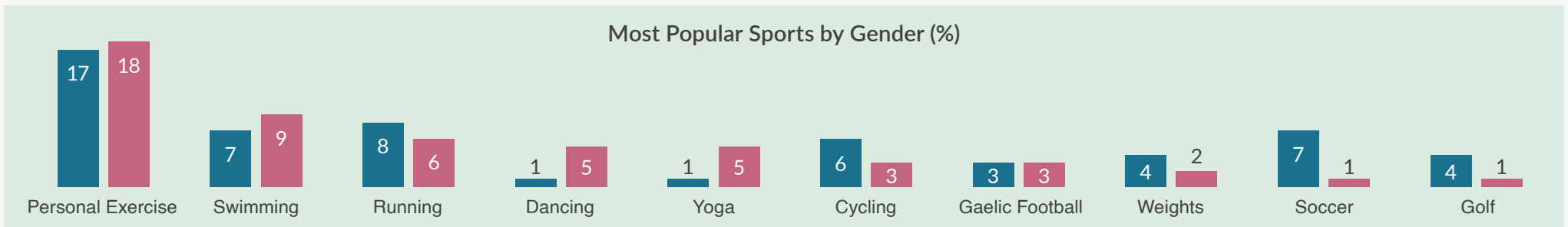
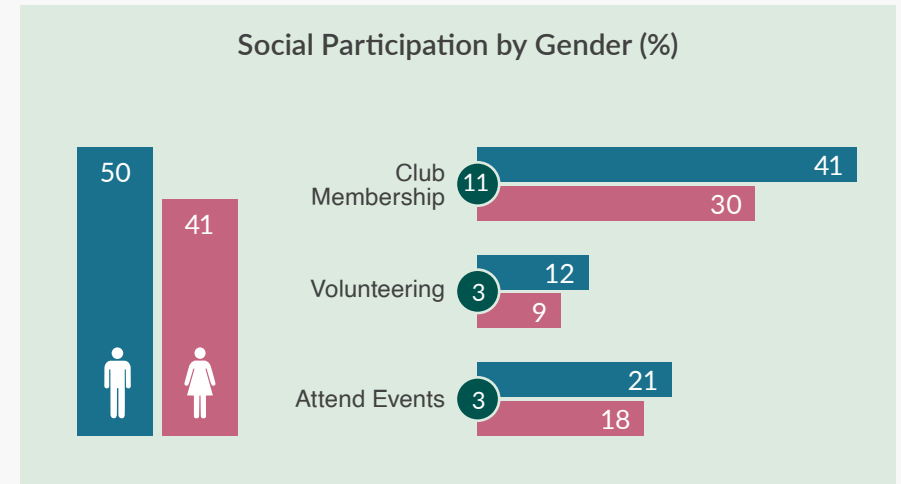
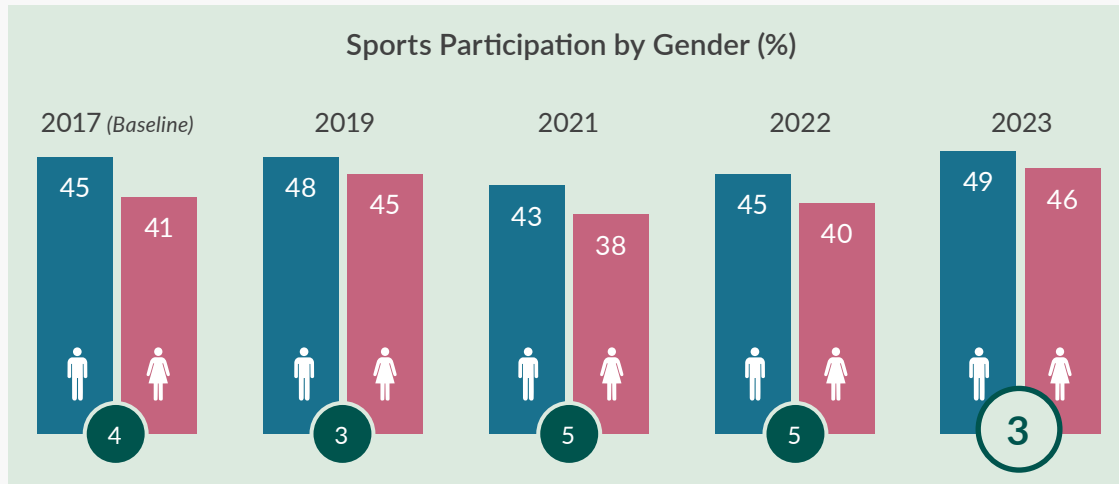


5. Age and Sports Participation



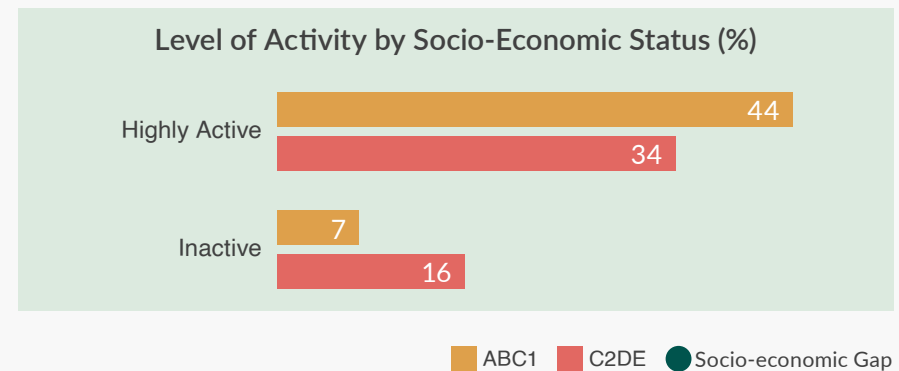
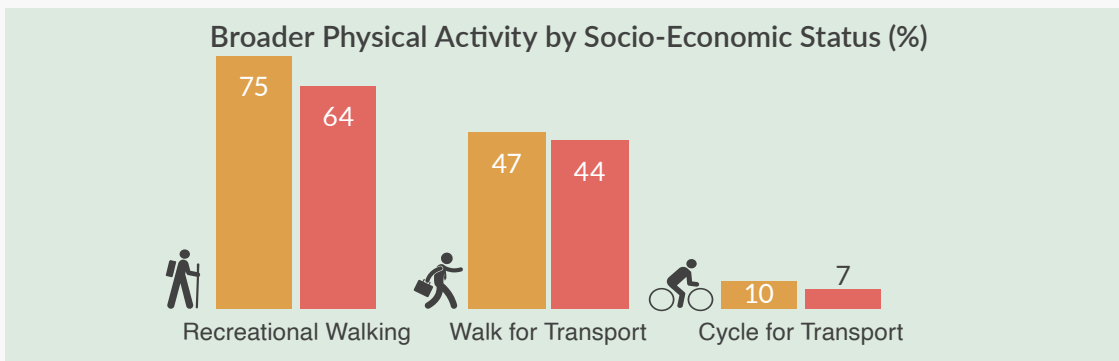
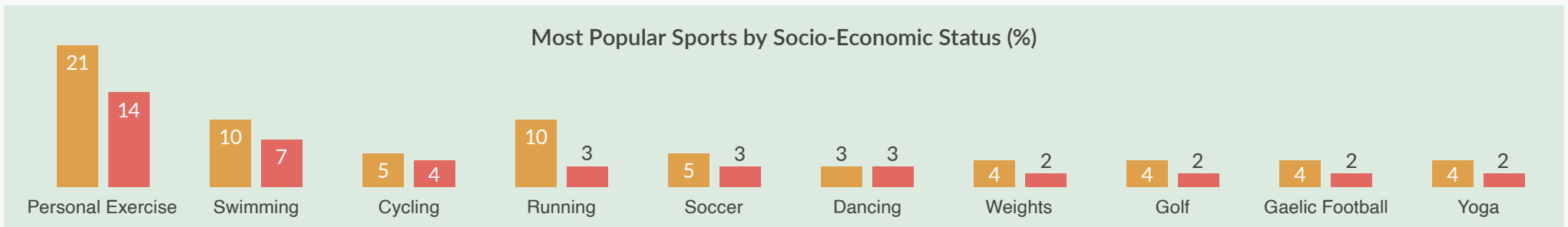
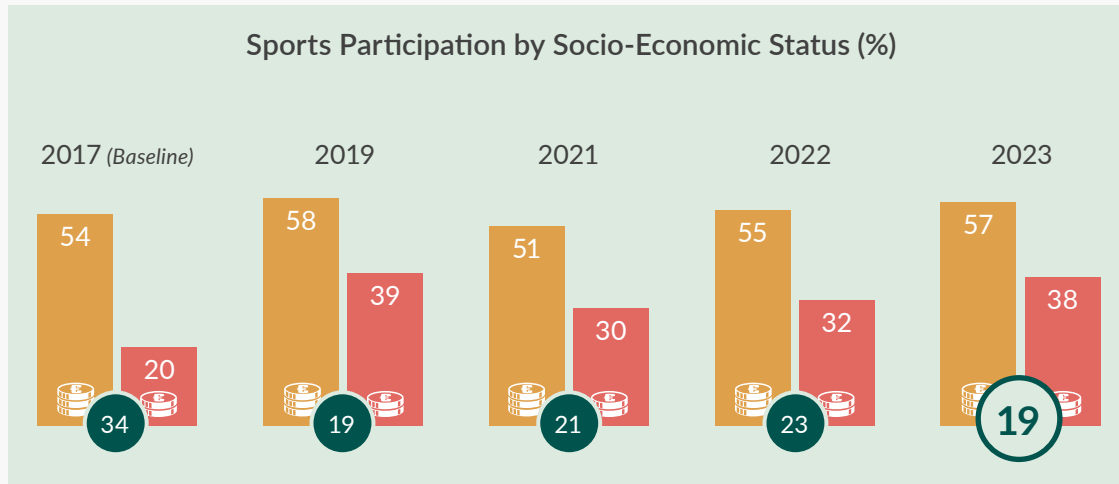
■ Aged Under 35
 ■ Aged 35+
 ● Age Gap

6. Gender and Sports Participation



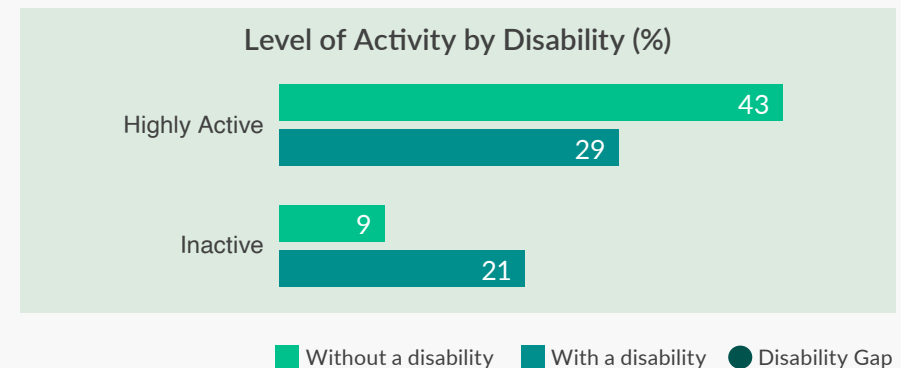
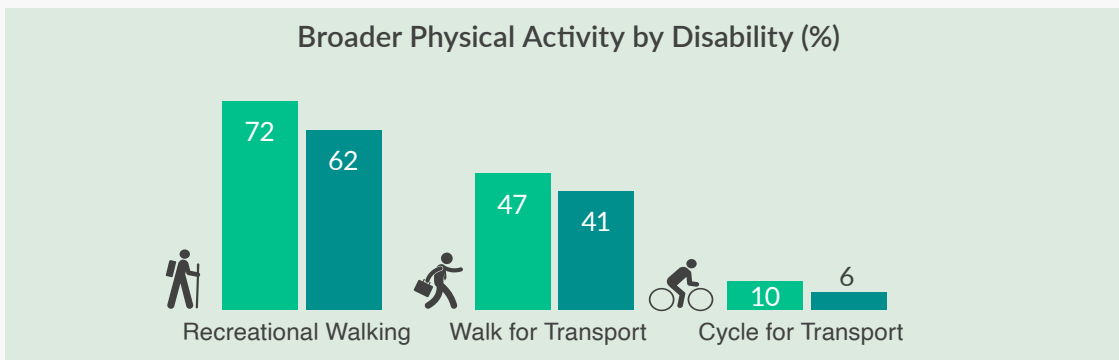
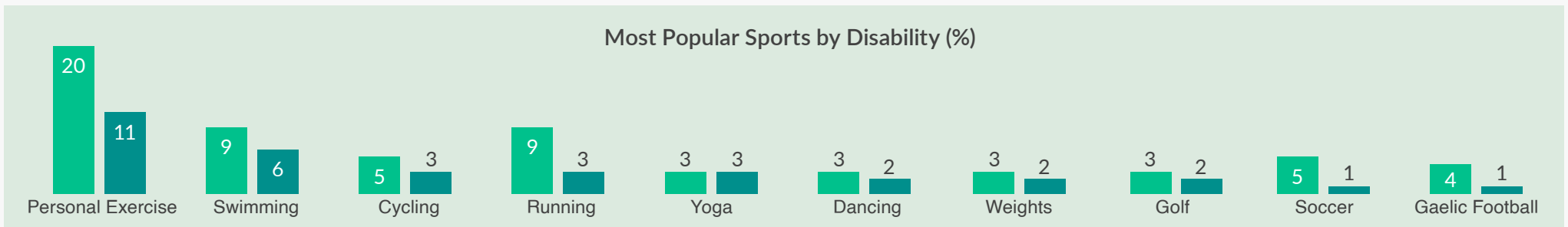
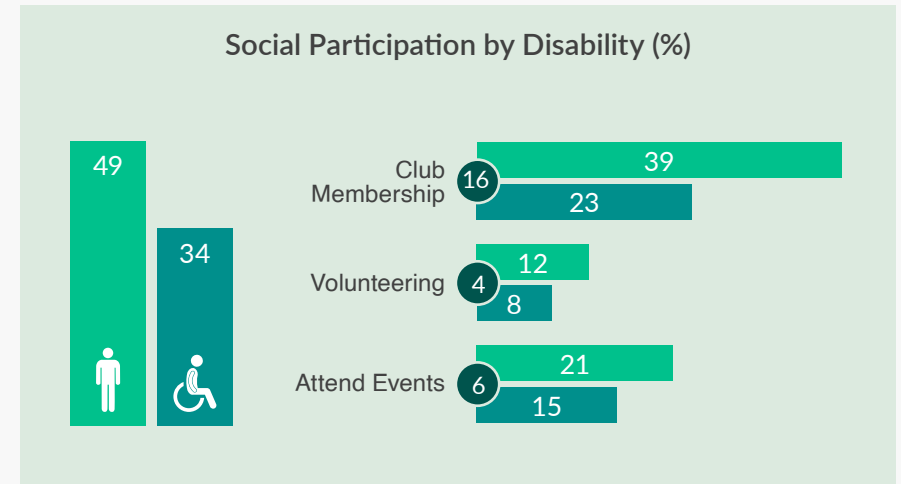
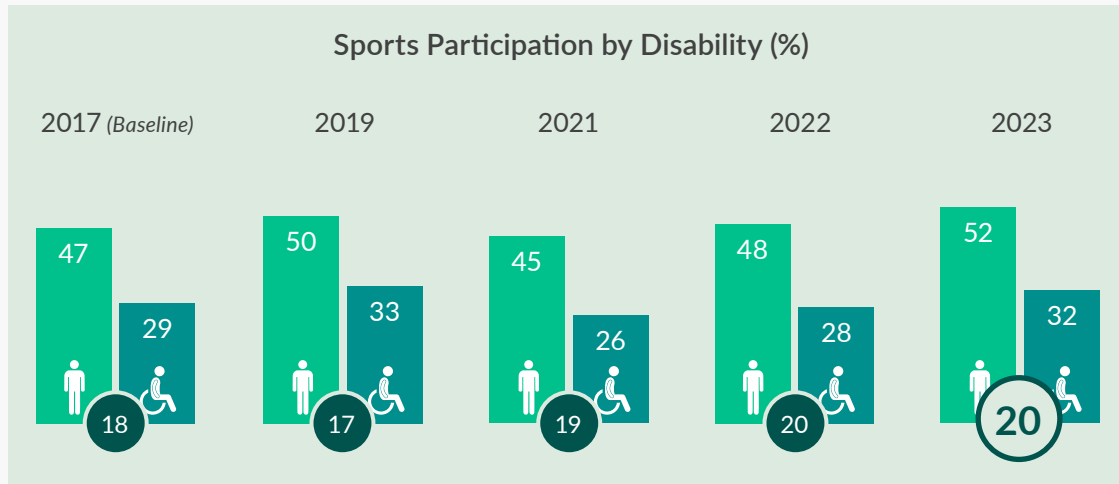
■ Male ■ Female ● Gender Gap

7. Socio-Economic Status and Sports Participation



■ ABC1
 ■ C2DE
 ● Socio-economic Gap

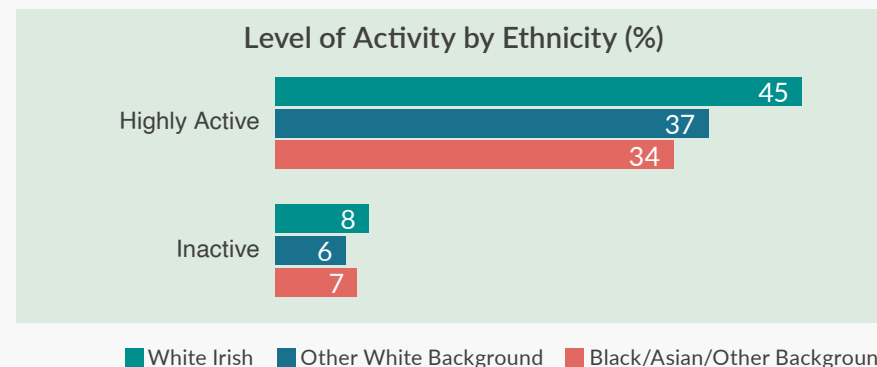
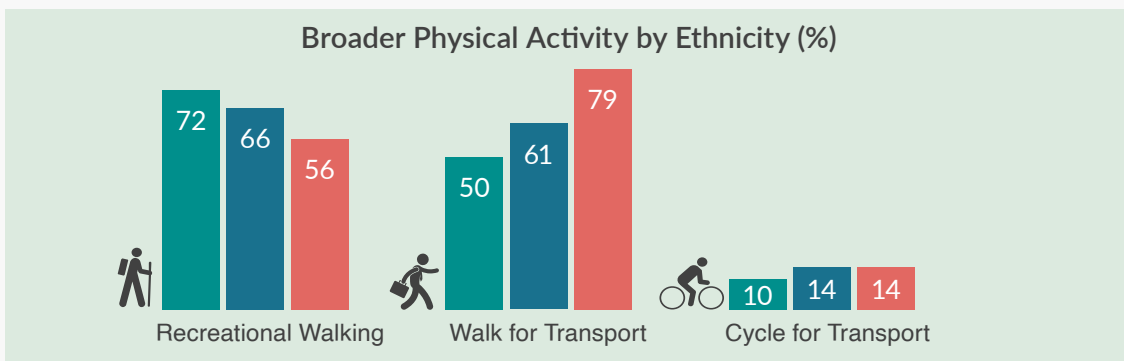
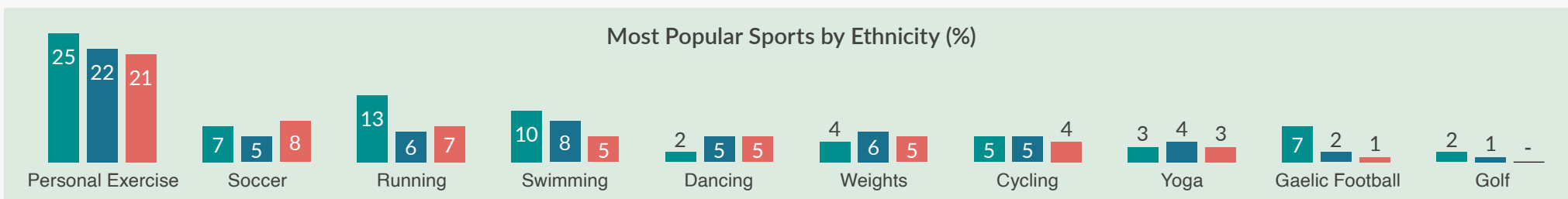
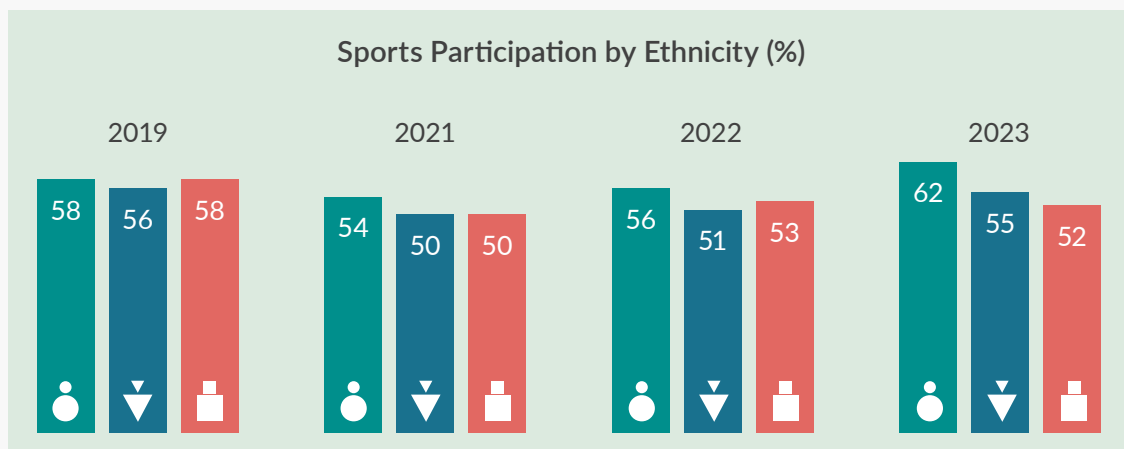
8. Disability and Sports Participation



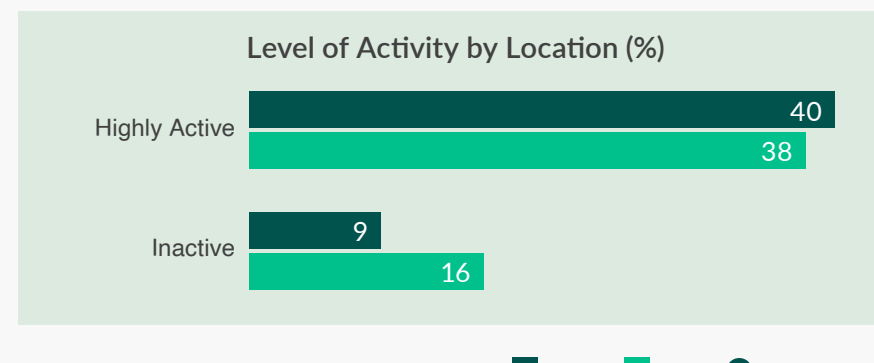
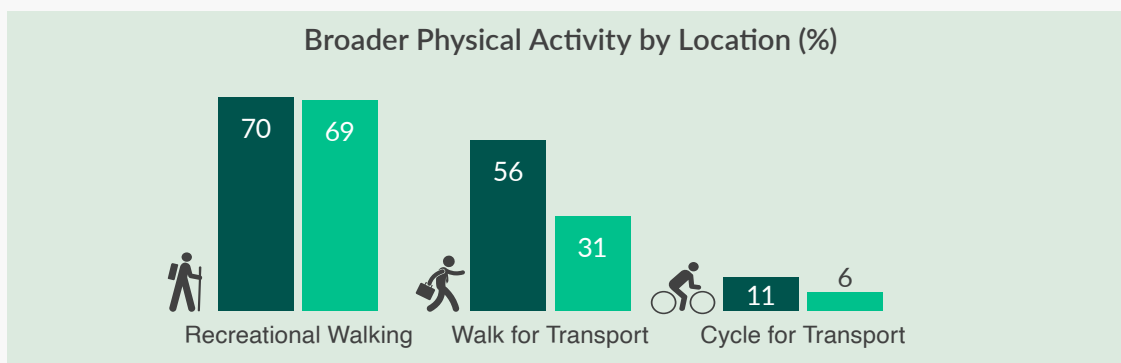
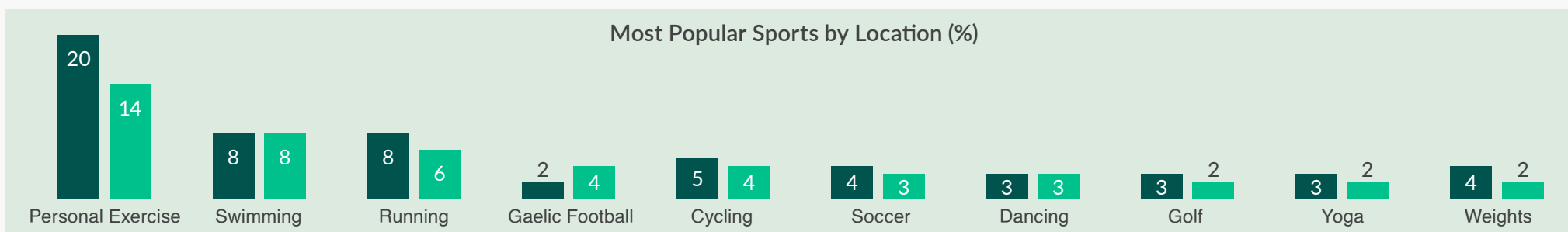
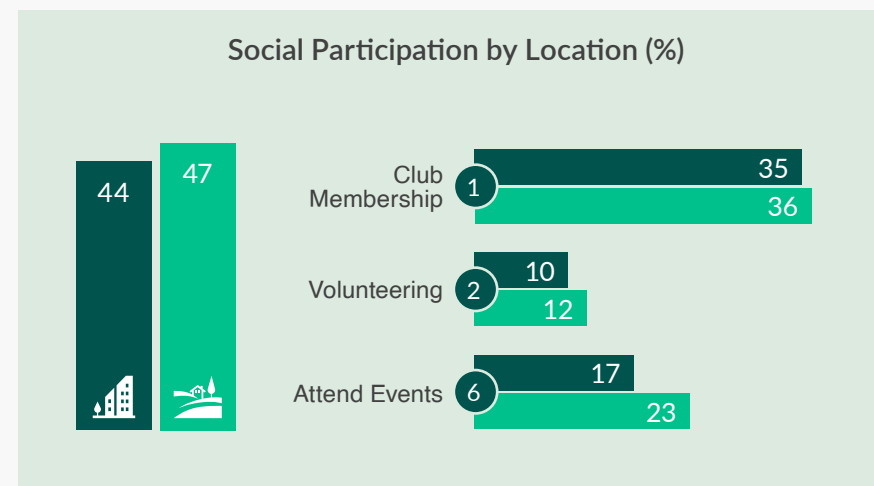
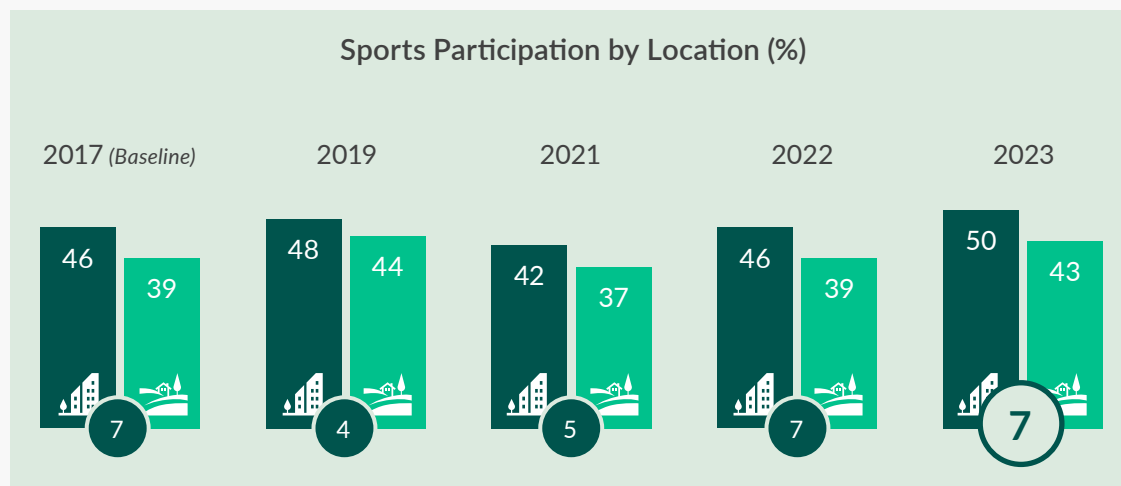
■ Without a disability
 ■ With a disability
 ● Disability Gap

9. Ethnicity and Sports Participation

In 2023, the ISM asked people about their ethnicity using the ethnic categories of the 2022 census. For analysis and reporting three broad ethnic groups were used; White Irish, Other White Background and Black, Asian, other. Due to limited sample sizes the White Irish category includes those who identify as a Traveller, and Black, Asian, or other backgrounds have been combined into one group. To equalise the average age across the ethnic groups, results for ethnicity categories are based only on respondents aged under 45 years



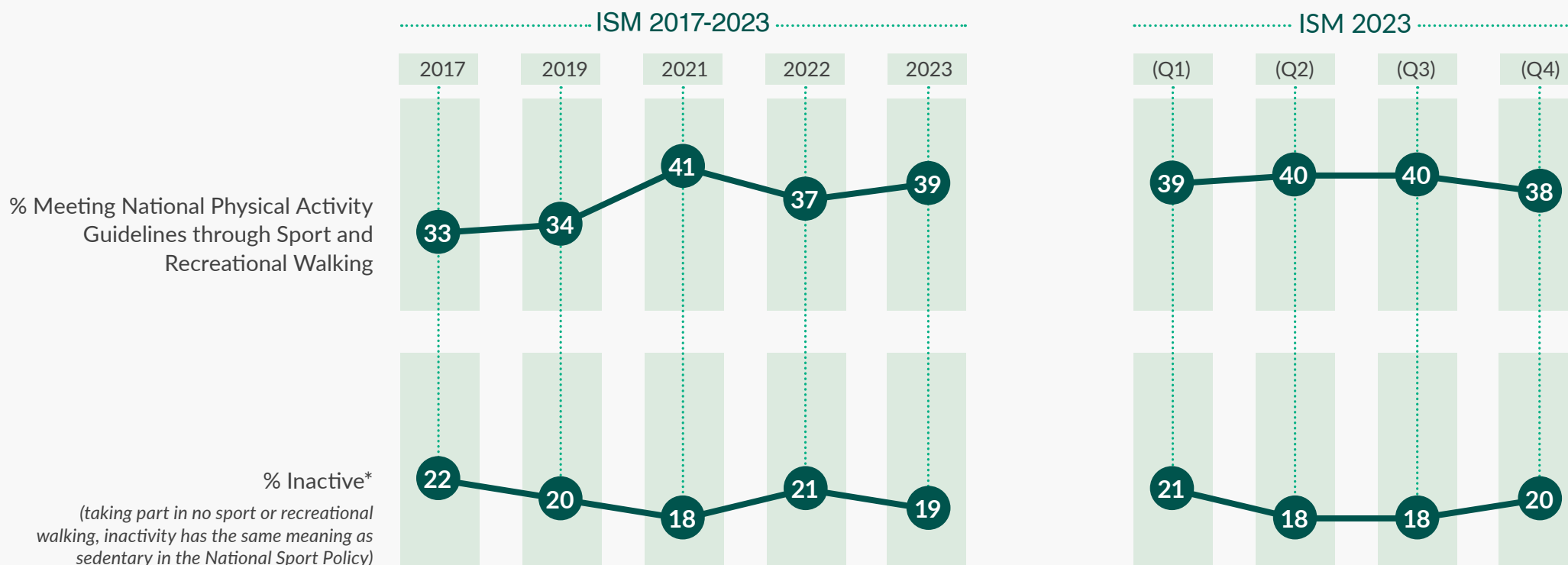
10. Urban-Rural Divide in Sports Participation



Urban Rural Location Gap

11. Proportion Meeting National Physical Activity Guidelines

Almost two in five (39%) people met the National Physical Activity Guidelines through sport and recreational walking alone, increasing by 2 percentage points since 2022.



12. Walking and Cycling for Transport

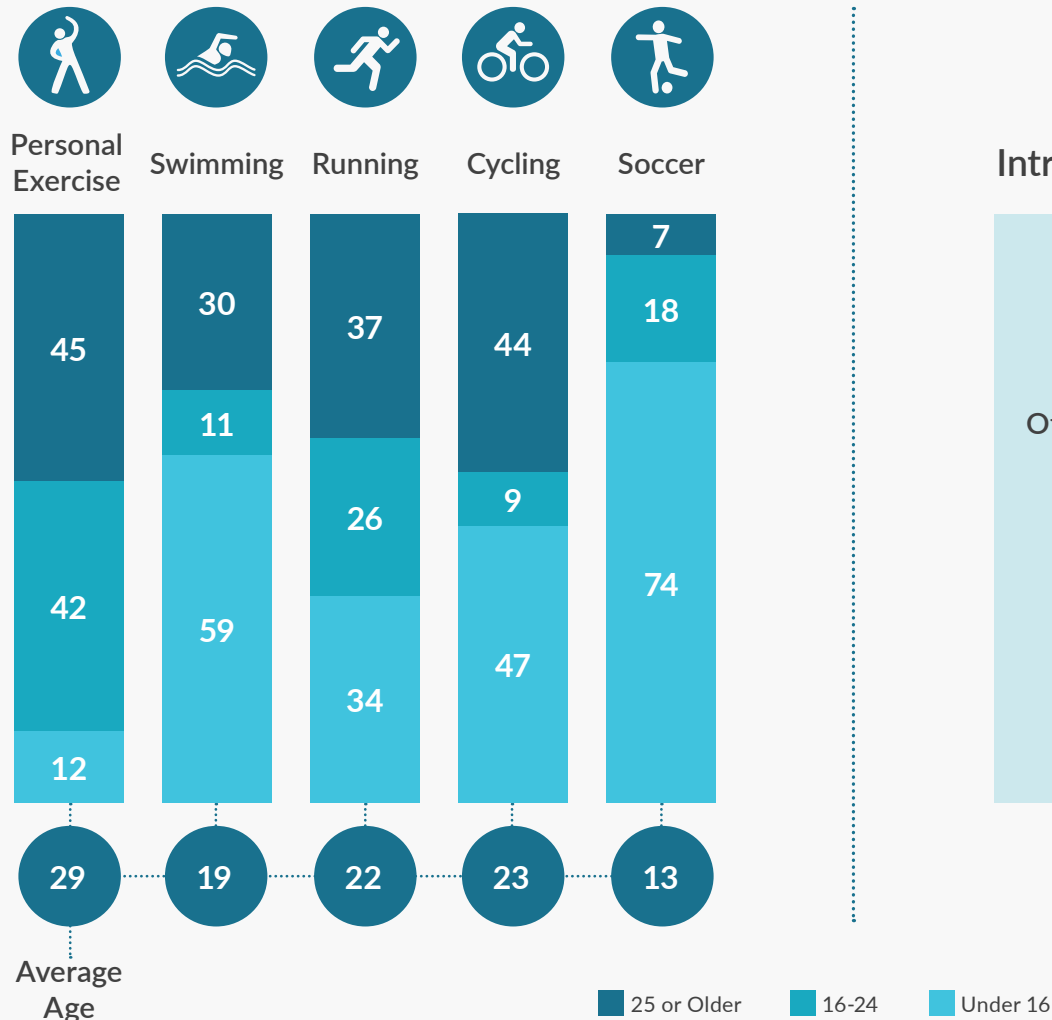
Walking for transport decreased by 8 percentage points since 2022, yet remains marginally unchanged since 2019.



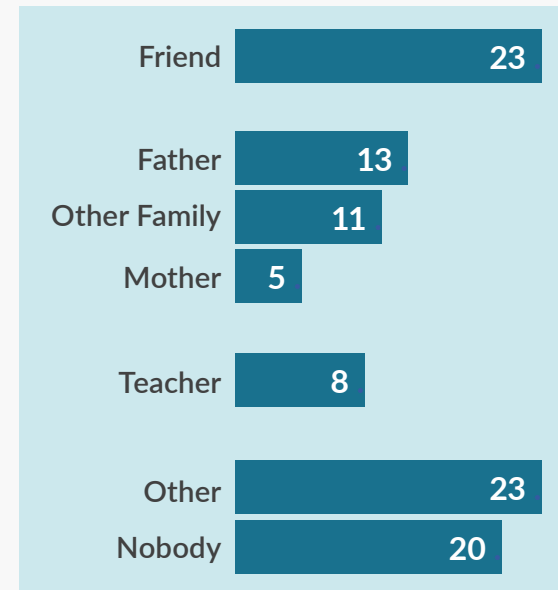
13. Uptake of Sport

Three quarters of those who played soccer took up the sport aged under 16, compared to 7% taking up the sport after age 24.

Age of Taking Up Sport (Top 5 Sports)



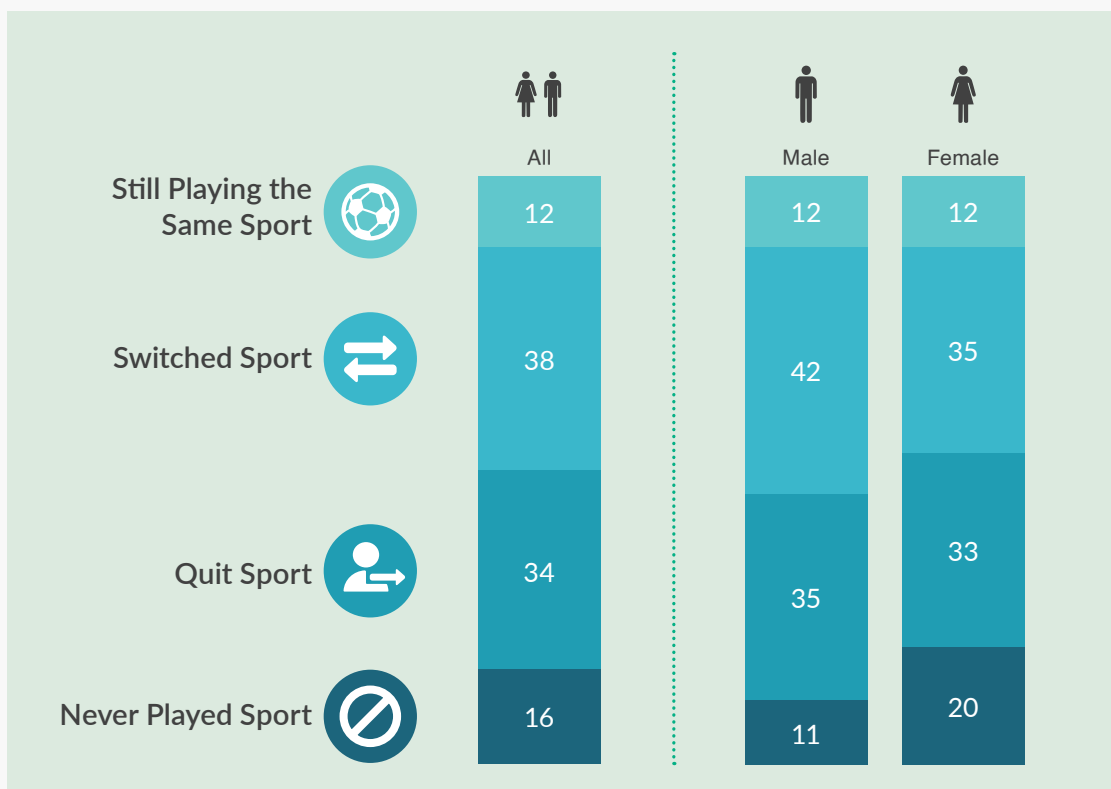
Introduced to Sport by...



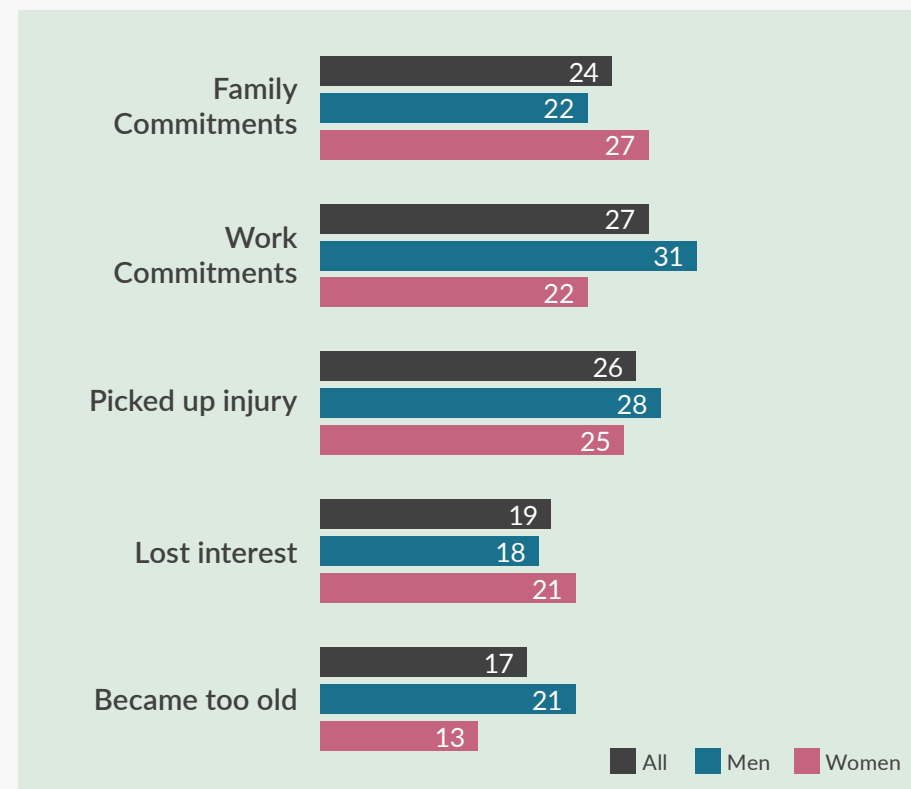
14. Drop-out in Sport

Drop out in sport was slightly higher among men (35%) than women (33%), but a fifth (20%) of women said they never played sport compared to only 1 in 10 men (11%).

Prior Sports Participation (%)



Ceasing Sport - Major Factors



15. Children and Sports Participation

Over three-quarters of parents said at least one of their children participates in sport outside of school, but this falls to just over two-thirds of parents who are not regular sports participants.



% of parents with at least one child participating in sport

78%

Among parents who regularly participate in sport



89%

Among parents who do not regularly participate in sport



68%

Most popular sports participated in outside school



30%

Gaelic Football

Soccer

28%



14%

Swimming

Hurling

8%



7%

Basketball

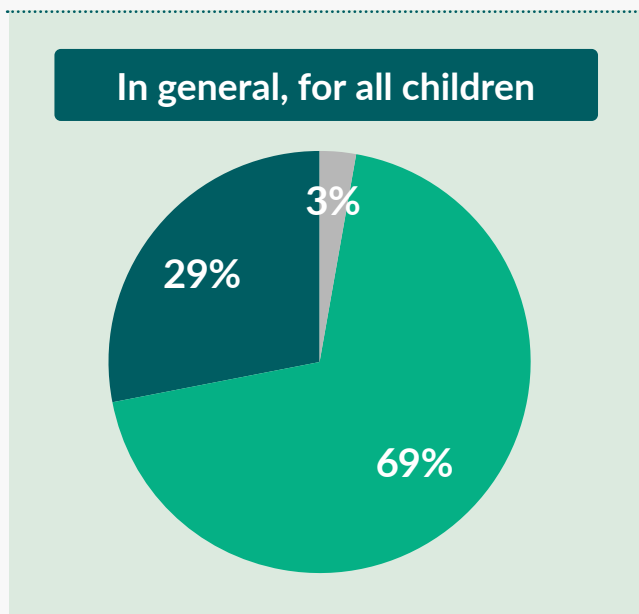
*In January and February 2023 parents were asked about sports participated in by their children outside school.

16. Equal Playing Time

A majority believe that children should get equal playing time on team sports*

Q. Which of these comes closest to your view?

- All children should get equal playing time regardless of their ability or skill.
- Teams should be picked on the basis of ability or skill levels of individual children.
- Don't know / refused



...for children aged under 10



...for children aged between 10 and 12



...for children aged between 13 and 17



**All respondents were provided with the following explanation before being asked for their opinion: There are two viewpoints when it comes to playing time that children get on sports teams. One view that all children should get equal playing time in competitive matches regardless of their ability or skill level as it benefits them as an individual. Another view is that players for matches should be chosen on the basis of their skills as it improves the team's chances of success, even if this means that some children get to play fewer matches.*

- 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 over.
- Fieldwork dates and sample sizes for this research are as follows:

Phase	Fieldwork dates	Sample size
ISM 2019	Jan - Dec 2019	8,504
ISM 2021	Jan - Dec 2021	8,508
ISM 2022	Jan - Dec 2022	8,512
ISM 2023(Q1)	Jan - Mar 2023	2,125
ISM 2023(Q2)	Apr - Jun 2023	2,129
ISM 2023(Q3)	Jul - Sept 2023	2,130
ISM 2023(Q4)	Oct - Dec 2023	2,128
ISM 2023	Jan - Dec 2023	8,512



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