

IRELAND

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FACTSHEET 2018



Total population

4 784 383

Median age

36.9 YEARS

GDP per capita

53 100 €

% of GDP for health: **5.2**

% of GDP for education: **3.3**

% of GDP for sports: **0.1**



Population **MALE**

49.5%

Population **FEMALE**

50.5%

Life expectancy, **MALES**

79.9 YEARS

Life expectancy, **FEMALES**

83.6 YEARS

Sources: Eurostat (2016)

Success story

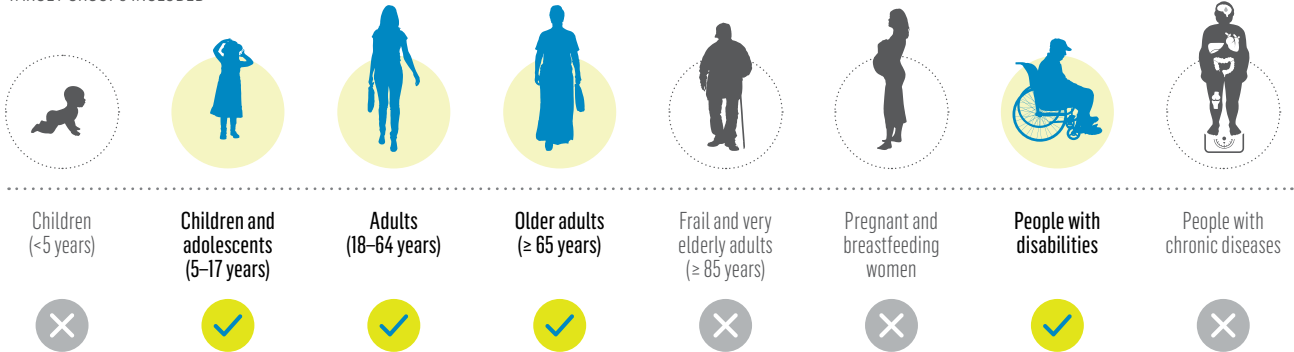
“Go for Life” is the national programme for sports and physical activity for older people in Ireland. This “Age & Opportunity” initiative is funded by Sport Ireland and delivered nationally in partnership with local sports partnerships and the Health Service Executive health promotion units. The aim of Go for Life is to get “more older people more active more often”, and its objectives are closely aligned with those of Sport Ireland’s strategy, the National Physical Activity Plan (NPAP), the Positive Ageing Strategy and Healthy Ireland. Most Go for Life interventions are led by peers.



MONITORING AND SURVEILLANCE

National recommendations on physical activity for health

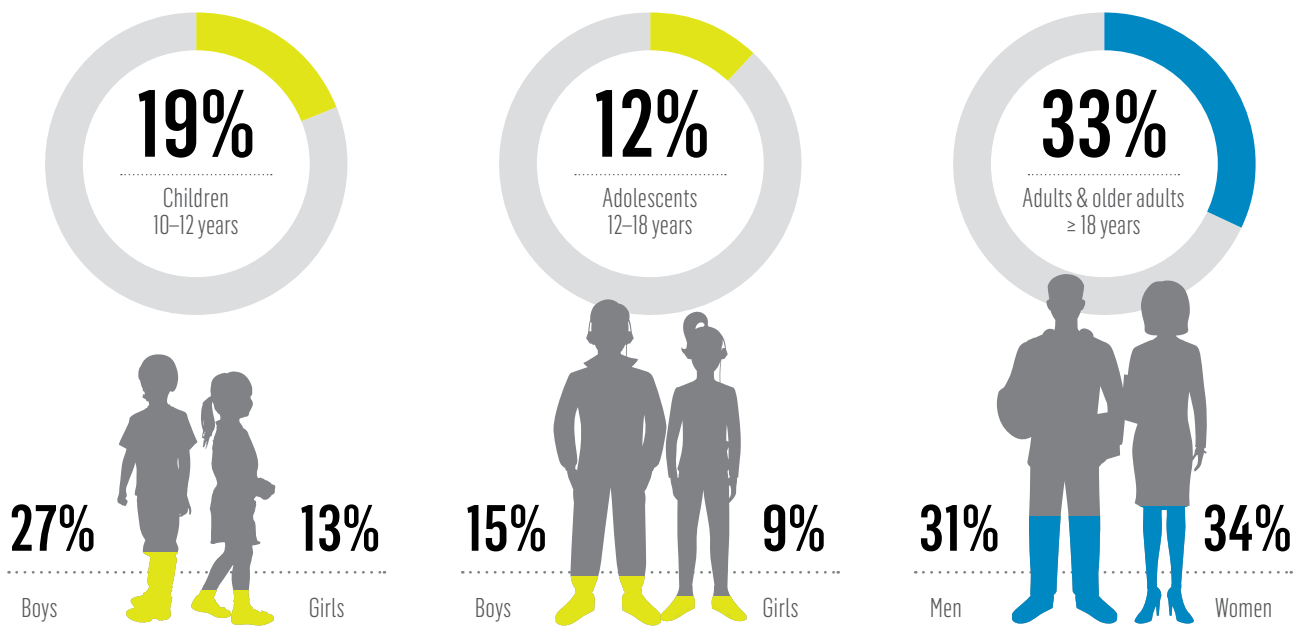
TARGET GROUPS INCLUDED



The national recommendations were implemented in 2009 and are based on WHO's global recommendations for physical activity and health (2010) and the European Union physical activity guidelines (2008).

Level of physical activity

ESTIMATED PREVALENCE OF SUFFICIENT PHYSICAL ACTIVITY LEVELS



Adults who achieved 30 min of moderate- or greater-intensity physical activity at least five times in the previous 7 days are considered "highly active". An additional 54.4% were considered "fairly active" but do not fulfil the recommendation.

Monitoring and surveillance of physical activity

SECTORS WITH SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS

Physical activity data for children and adolescents are from the Children's Sport Participation and Physical Activity Study (2010) and the Health Behaviour in School-aged children study (2014). Data for people aged 16 years and over are from the Irish Sports Monitor (2017). For adults aged over 50 and older adults, data are from the Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing (2016). A number of additional surveys and studies are used to measure physical activity in Ireland, including the European Health Interview Survey, the Children's Sport Participation and Physical Activity Study and Health Behaviours in School Children. There is also now a research subgroup with responsibility for coordinating and developing monitoring and surveillance of physical activity in Ireland.



POLICY RESPONSE

Funding allocated specifically to physical activity promotion by sector

Physical activity promotion is coordinated by the National Physical Activity Plan Implementation Group, led by the Department of Health and Transport, Tourism and Sport, and includes representatives of Government departments, local governments and researchers.



The new **National Sports Policy 2018-2027** has been developed in collaboration with the sports sector and other stakeholders. Its three high-level goals are: increased participation, more excellence and improved capacity. Key targets of the National Sports Policy 2018–2027 include: (1) overall participation in sport to rise from 43% to 50% of the population by 2027 (the equivalent of an extra 260 000 people participating in sport); (2) more targeted high-performance funding to deliver more Olympic/Paralympic medals (from 13 medals in 2016 to a target of 20 in 2028); (3) all funded sports bodies adopting the Governance Code for the community, voluntary and charity sector. An area of particular focus will be to increase participation levels in sport and physical activity of the entire population and also to narrow the existing gradients in gender, age, socio-economic status, disability and ethnicity. For this, the new National Sports Policy will work synergistically with the National Physical Activity Plan.

National policies by sector

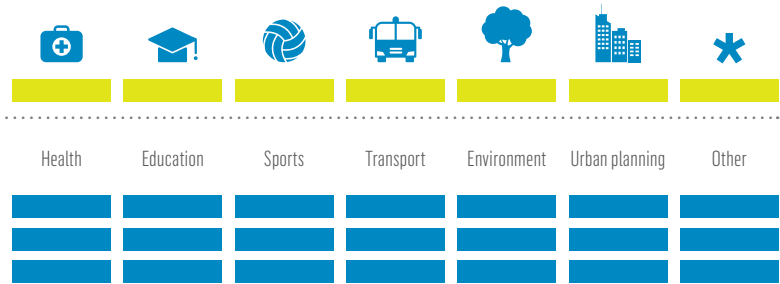
Sectors that are involved in each of the national policies or action plans to promote physical activity



Total number of policies

3

Policies with evaluation processes



Target groups addressed by national policies

- ✓ Low socioeconomic groups
- ✗ Pregnant and breastfeeding women
- ✓ Ethnic minorities
- ✗ People deprived of liberty
- ✗ Migrants
- ✓ Older people
- ✓ People with disabilities
- ✓ People with chronic diseases
- ✓ Other



Physical activity promotion in the health sector

HEALTH PROFESSIONALS WHO ARE TRAINED IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND HEALTH



Medical doctors



Nurses



Physiotherapists



Others



Making **Every Contact Count** was established by the Health Service Executive in 2016 to support the implementation of 'Healthy Ireland' in health services. The programme is to build capacity among health professionals to support patients in making healthier lifestyle choices mainly addressing risk factors for chronic disease such as physical inactivity, unhealthy diet, tobacco use and alcohol and drug use. The goal is to train all health professional who might see patients for consultations.

Training in Making Every Contact Count is mandatory at undergraduate level for all health professionals who might see patients for consultations.



Physical activity in schools

Total hours of physical education per week in **PRIMARY SCHOOLS**



1 h/week is specified in the national curriculum

Total hours of physical education per week in **SECONDARY SCHOOLS**



One double physical education class per week is mandatory in the junior and senior cycles. The junior cycle well-being curriculum, which was introduced for first-year pupils in September 2017, is intended to increase the number of hours allocated to physical education

The number of hours allotted to additional, optional and extracurricular physical activity varies by school. The quality of physical education is monitored during inspections by subject, during whole-school evaluations and/or incidental inspections.

Physical activity during school breaks



Physical activity during lessons



Physical activity programmes after school



Active travel to and from school



The **Junior Cycle Wellbeing Programme** was launched in 2017 for all students entering post-primary education. This programme provides a minimum of 300 h of cycling across 3 years of education. The programme is mandatory in all post-primary schools in Ireland (over 700 schools) reaching approximately 60 000 students per year.



Promotion of physical activity in the workplace

The **"Smarter Travel Workplace"** programme supports more sustainable travel to and from work. It is led and funded by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sports. Additionally, the **"Cycle to Work"** scheme allows employers to equip employees with bicycles tax-free once in 5 years. It is run by the Department of Finance and Revenue and financed by employees by deductions from their gross (pre-tax) salary. Both programmes are nationwide and were established in 2009.



Active travel to and from the workplace



Physical activity at the workplace



National awareness-raising campaign on physical activity

MEDIA USED IN NATIONAL CAMPAIGNS



Television



Radio



Newspapers



Social media



Public events



Public figures



The **START** campaign (2017) was led by the Health Service Executive and the Department of Health, which also funded it. Healthy Ireland 2018 is run by the Department of Health and the Department of An Taoiseach and funded by the Healthy Ireland Fund. Both are national campaigns to promote a healthy lifestyle, reduce overweight and obesity and raise awareness about physical activity, nutrition and mental health.