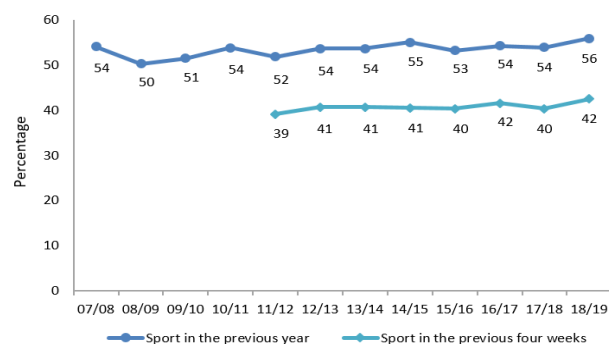


Main stories

- In 2018/19, 56% of all adults had participated in sport within the last 12 months, an increase compared to 2017/18 (54%).
- The proportion of children who had participated in sport outside of school was similar to the previous year (87% in 2018/19 compared to 84% in 2017/18).
- Seven out of every ten adults who had participated in sport cited “Keep fit” and “Improved physical health” as a benefit of participating (71% and 69% respectively), while six out of every ten (58%) cited “Improved mental health”. Other benefits of participating that were stated by respondents included “Have fun” (55%), “Made me feel better about myself” (43%) and “Lose weight” (38%).

Sport participation

Increase on previous year's figure



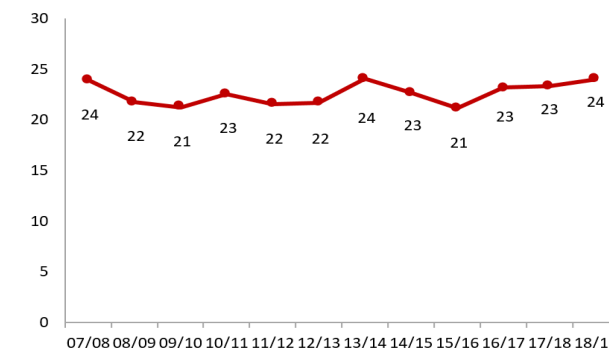
Most popular sports

Most popular sports remain the same



Sports club membership

No change from previous year's figures



The proportion of adults who had taken part in sport within the last year increased from the previous year, while sport participation in the last 4 weeks was similar to the previous year's results and consistent with the longer term trend.

Swimming or diving remained the most popular sport amongst adults with over one in five adults (21%) participating at least once within the previous year. Keepfit, Aerobics, Yoga, Dance exercise (19%), Jogging (13%) and Cycling for recreation (11%) remain the next most popular sports amongst adults.

Around one quarter of adults were members of a sports club within the last year. This was similar to the previous year's figures and in keeping with the longer term trend.

Contents

Page

Sport trends	3
Gender and sport participation	4
Age and sport participation	5
Disability and sport participation	6
Deprivation and sport participation	7
Regular participation in sport	8
Sport club membership	9
Walking for recreation	10
Encourage participation in sporting events/ Sports coaching	11
Coaching capacity	12
Level of sports coaching/ participants coached by age	13
Attendance at live sports events/ Popular live sports events	14
Children's sport participation outside of school	15
Definitions and technical notes	16

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Introduction

The Department for Communities (DfC) has responsibility for the development of sport and physical recreation in Northern Ireland. DfC provides funding for sport, develops sport policy and supports sports initiatives. DfC promotes sport in the context of the strategy for sport, 'Sport Matters: The Northern Ireland Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation, 2009-2019'. Sport Matters was developed by the former Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure in partnership with Sport Northern Ireland and approved by the Northern Ireland Executive in December 2009. Critical to the fabric of the strategy is the inherent vision of 'a culture of lifelong enjoyment and success in sport' and this vision is underpinned by actions and key steps that will demonstrate what success looks like.

Sport Matters also contains a number of high level targets designed to improve levels and frequency of participation in sport and physical recreation across the Northern Ireland population. The targets which are aimed at adults and particular groups of people who are currently known to have lower participation rates in sport and physical recreation are set out below:

- To have stopped the decline of adult participation rates in sport and physical recreation by 2013.

By 2019, from the 2011 baseline, the following will be targeted.

- A minimum increase of 3 percentage points in adult participation rates in sport and physical recreation.
- A minimum increase of 6 percentage points in the participation rates of women, socio-economically disadvantaged groups, people with a disability and with older people in sport and physical recreation.

An action plan has also been developed to improve health and wellbeing through participation in sport and active recreation for people with a disability in Northern Ireland. The vision of 'Active Living: No Limits 2021' is to afford everyone with a disability an equal opportunity to access sport and active recreation. The vision will be delivered through encouraging and facilitating a collaborative approach to increasing participation in sport and active recreation by people with a disability leading to healthier and more active lifestyles.

Continuous Household Survey

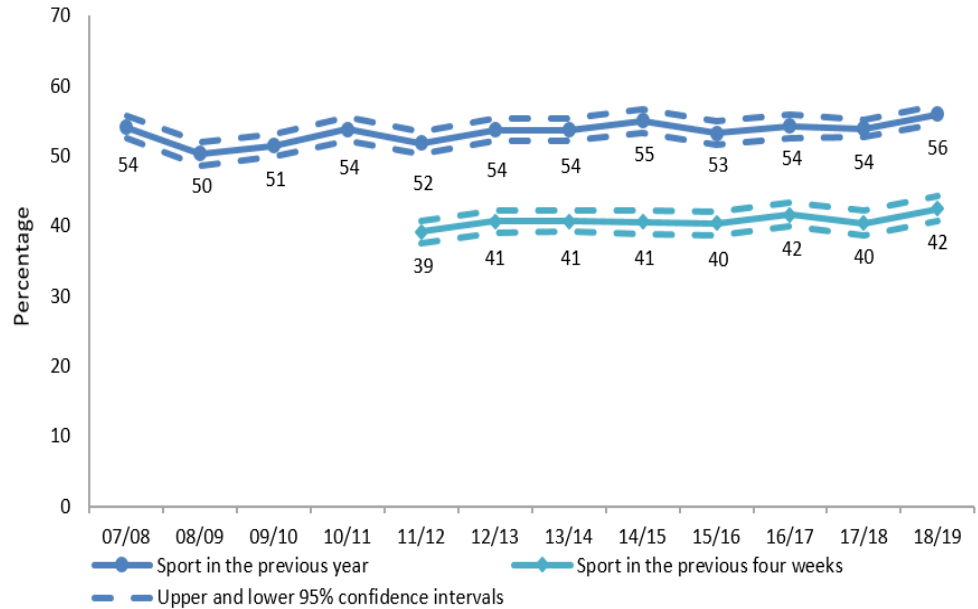
This report presents the findings from the 2018/19 Continuous Household Survey (CHS) in relation to sport participation by the adult population in Northern Ireland. This information will be used in the monitoring of targets in Sport Matters. More information relating to the CHS methodology and the interpretation of the figures can be found in the definitions and technical notes section. Data tables are available in [Excel](#) and [ODS format](#). The sport participation questions which were asked in the CHS 2018/19 are available [here](#).

Sport trends

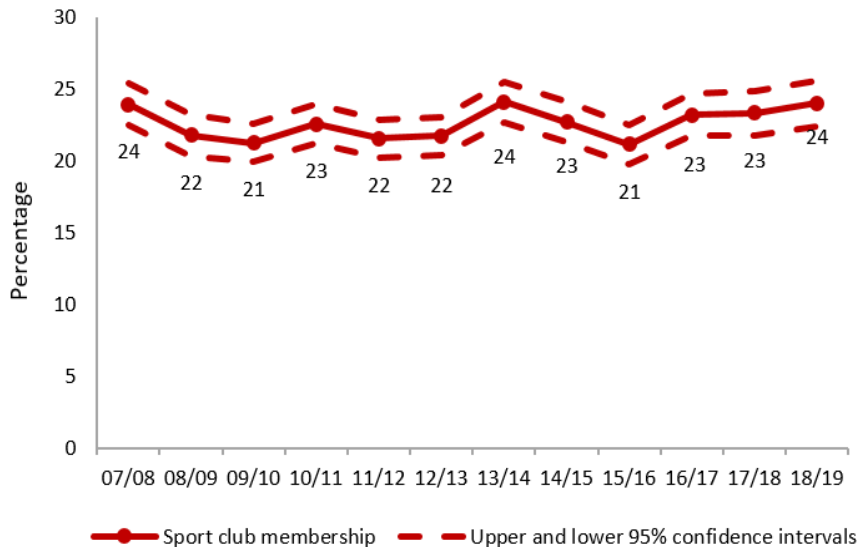
Sport participation within the last year has increased while sports participation in the previous four weeks remains stable

More than half of adults (56%) participated in sport at least once within the last year, an increase on the proportion in 2017/18 (54%). The sport participation rate has remained fairly stable over the previous eight years, following an initial decline between 2007/08 and 2008/09.

Similarly, since first recorded in the 2011/12 Continuous Household Survey (CHS), around four out of every ten adults have taken part in sport at least once within the previous four weeks, with 42% in 2018/19.



Sport club membership



Around one quarter (24%) of adults were a member of a sports club or organisation within the previous year. This proportion is unchanged when compared with the 2017/18 figure (23%) and is in keeping with the longer term trend.

Since 2007/08 sports club membership has remained fairly consistent between one fifth and one quarter of the adult population.

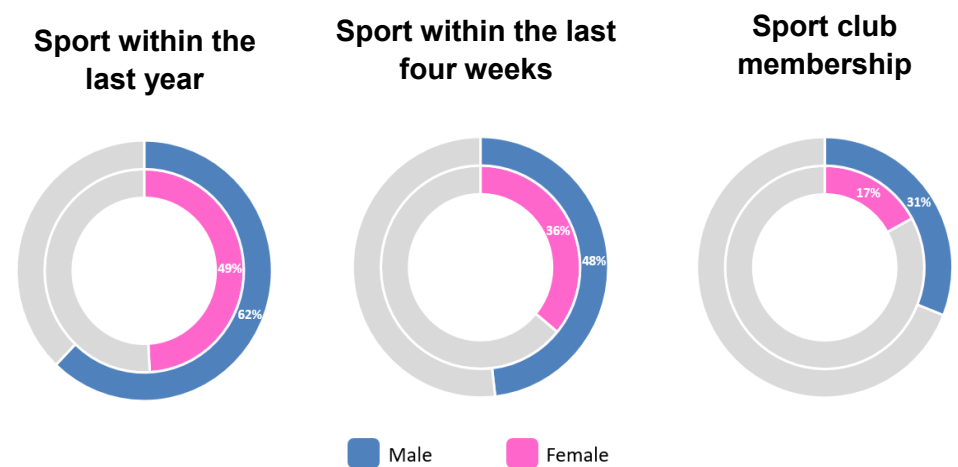
Gender and sport participation

Women less likely to participate in sport

Females aged 16 and over were less likely to have taken part in sport at least once within the last year (49%) than males (62%). Similarly when looking at participation rates over the previous four weeks, over a third of females (36%) stated that they had taken part in sport compared to nearly half of all males (48%).

Males were also more likely to be a member of a sports club (31%) than females (17%). Since 2007/08 the gap between adult male and female participation rates has remained broadly consistent.

Since 2011/12 (45%), the proportion of females participating has remained fairly consistent at just under a half of all female adults, although showing a slight increase over the period to a peak of 49% in both 2017/18 and 2018/19.

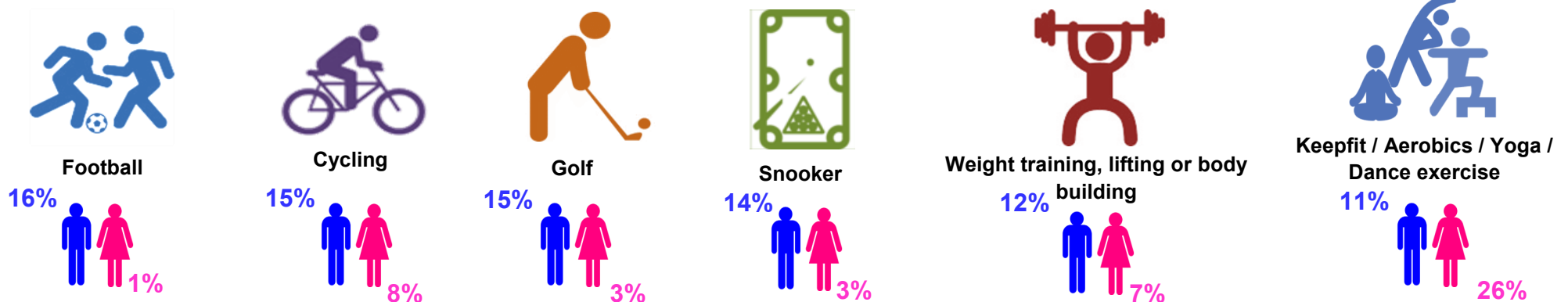


Sport preferences amongst males and females

There were differences in the types of sports males and females participated in within the last year. Compared with females, a higher proportion of males participated in 25 of the 36 sports listed in the survey. Some of the most notable differences where a higher proportion of males participated include 'football', 'cycling for recreation', 'golf', 'snooker' and 'weight training / lifting or bodybuilding'.

Women were more likely than men to have participated in four of the 36 sports listed. These were 'Keepfit / Aerobics / Yoga / Dance exercise', 'Ice skating', 'Horse riding' and 'Netball'.

Some of the sports where no differences between males and females were observed include; 'swimming or diving', 'canoeing/kayaking', 'skiing', 'track and field athletics', 'hockey', 'gymnastics', 'rowing', and 'ice hockey.'



Age and sport participation

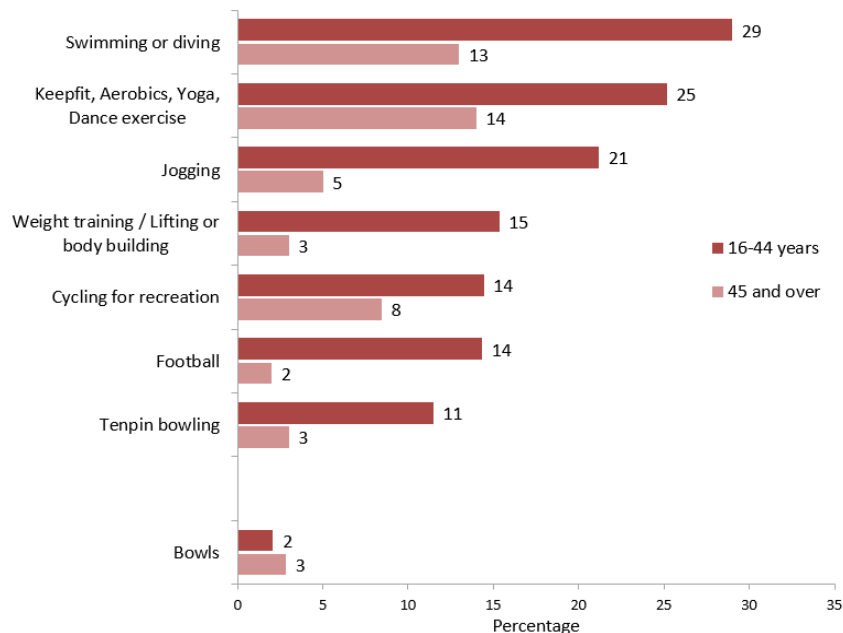
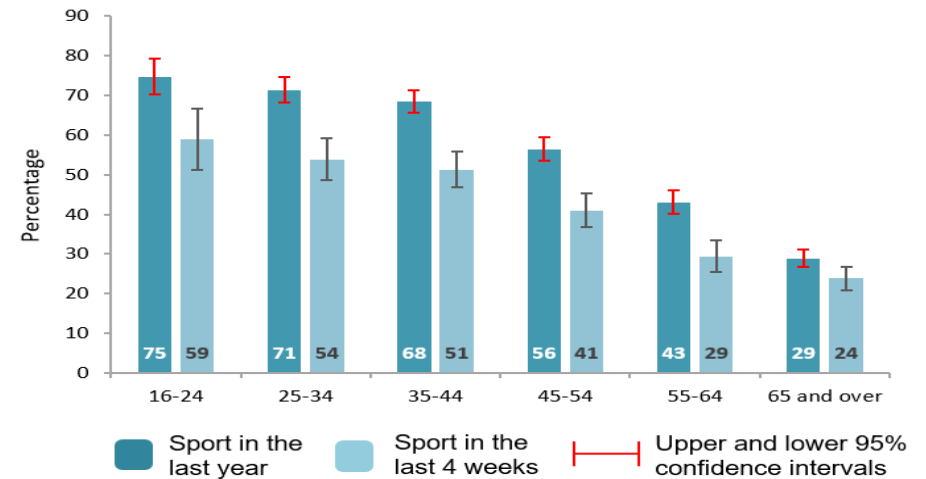
Older people less likely to participate in sport

Sport participation declines with age among adults. Those aged 45 and over were less likely to have participated in any sport within the last year (41%) or within the last 4 weeks (30%) compared to younger adults aged 16-44 years (71% and 53% respectively).

More detailed analysis of sport participation in the last year by age group shows that there is no difference in the sport participation rate for 16-24 year olds and those aged 25-34 years. Similarly, there is no difference between 25-34 year olds and 35-44 year olds. The participation rate then decreases with each subsequent age group to 29% of those aged 65 and over.

Similarly, when looking at participation rates over the last 4 weeks, three out of every five adults aged 16-24 (59%) had taken part in sport compared to just one quarter of adults aged 65 and over (24%).

From 2011/12, participation rates for adults aged 65 and over have steadily increased from 22% reaching a peak of 29% in 2018/19.



Sport preferences amongst younger and older adults

Comparison of participation in particular sports by those aged under 45 and those aged 45 and over shows that adults in the latter age category were less likely to have participated in the majority of sports in the last year. The only sport where those aged 45 and over were more likely to participate was bowls.

When looking at participation in sport over the last 4 weeks, the results were similar. However there was a higher proportion of adults aged 45 and over who had participated in 'bowls' in the last 4 weeks (2%) and in 'martial arts' (1%) compared to those aged under 45 (both 0%), although participation rates for both sports are low.

Disability and sport participation

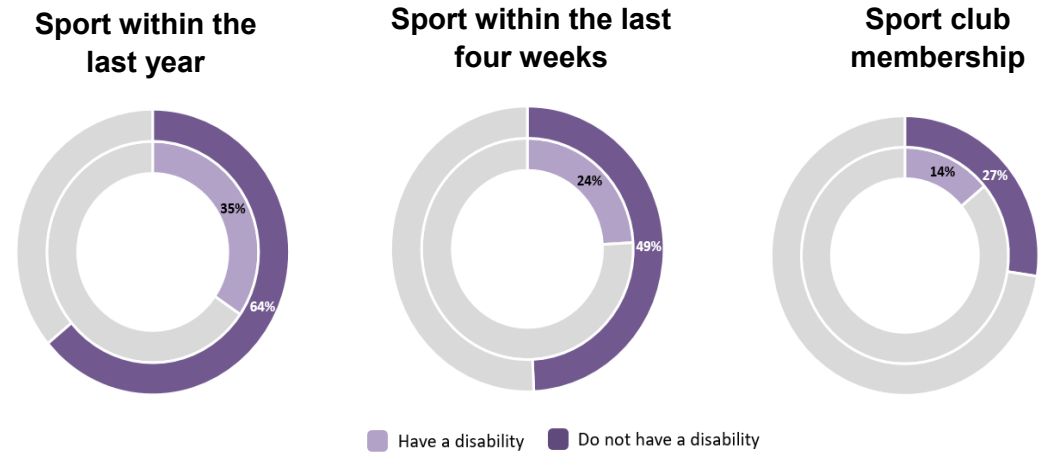
Those who have a disability less likely to participate in sport

Those aged 16 and over who have a disability were less likely to have taken part in sport at least once within the last year (35%) compared with those who do not have a disability (64%).

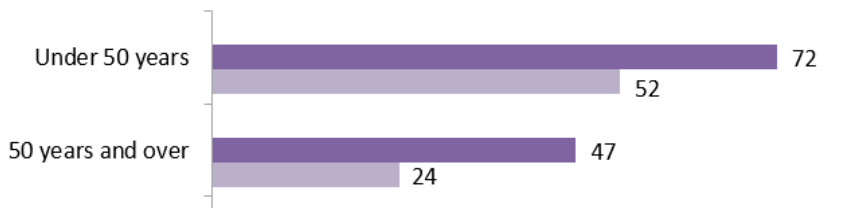
A similar disparity was found when participation rates over the last four weeks were considered, where almost a quarter of those with a disability (24%) were found to have taken part in sport compared to almost half of adults who do not have a disability (49%).

Fourteen per cent of adults with a disability were members of a sports club, a lower proportion than the 27% of those who do not have a disability.

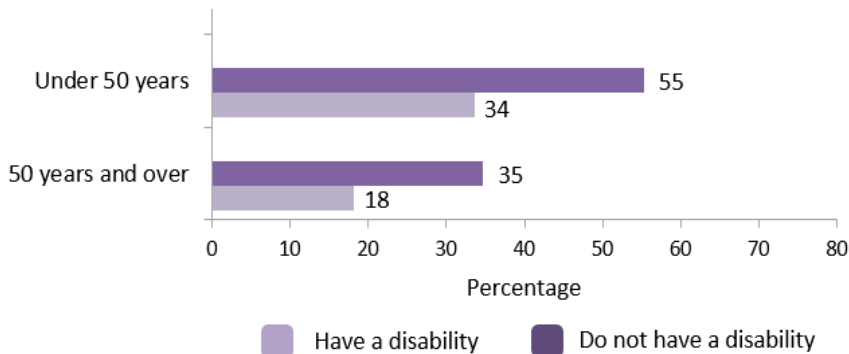
Rates of participation in sport for adults who have a disability have remained fairly consistent at around a third of adults since 2011/12 (32%), aside from a slight decrease to 26% in 2012/13.



Sport within the year



Sport within the last four weeks



Disability and age

Disability and age are closely related. On balance, the older we become the more likely we are to have a disability. Results have also shown that age and sport participation are negatively correlated, as we get older, the less likely we are to participate in sport.

Considering age and disability, analysis was conducted on broad age groups under 50 years and 50 years and over. The results show that both younger and older adults who have a disability were less likely to participate in sport within the previous year than those who do not have a disability. This suggests that irrespective of age, disability negatively affects the likelihood of adults participating in sport, although there is a bigger differential among older adults.

When participation rates over the last four weeks were considered, the results were similar.

Deprivation and sport participation

Adults living in the most deprived areas less likely to participate in sport

Adults living in the most deprived areas in Northern Ireland were less likely to have participated in sport within the previous year (46%) or within the last 4 weeks (35%) than those adults living in the least deprived areas (65% and 53%, respectively). Similarly, those living in the most deprived areas were less likely to be a member of a sports club (19%) than those living in the least deprived areas (27%).

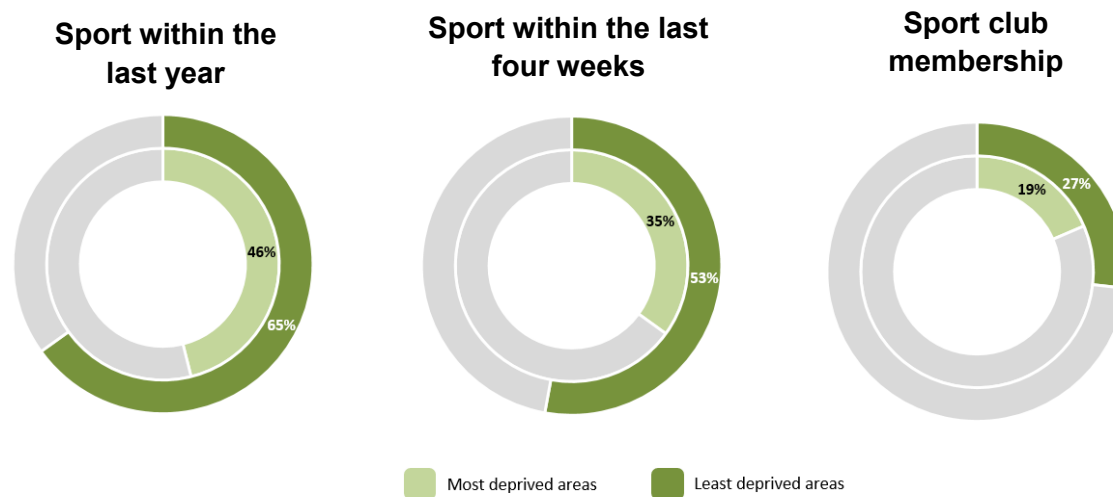
Participation rates for adults who live in the most deprived areas have remained fairly consistent at around four of every ten adults over the period 2011/12 (44%) to 2018/19 (46%).

Differences in sport preferences by deprivation

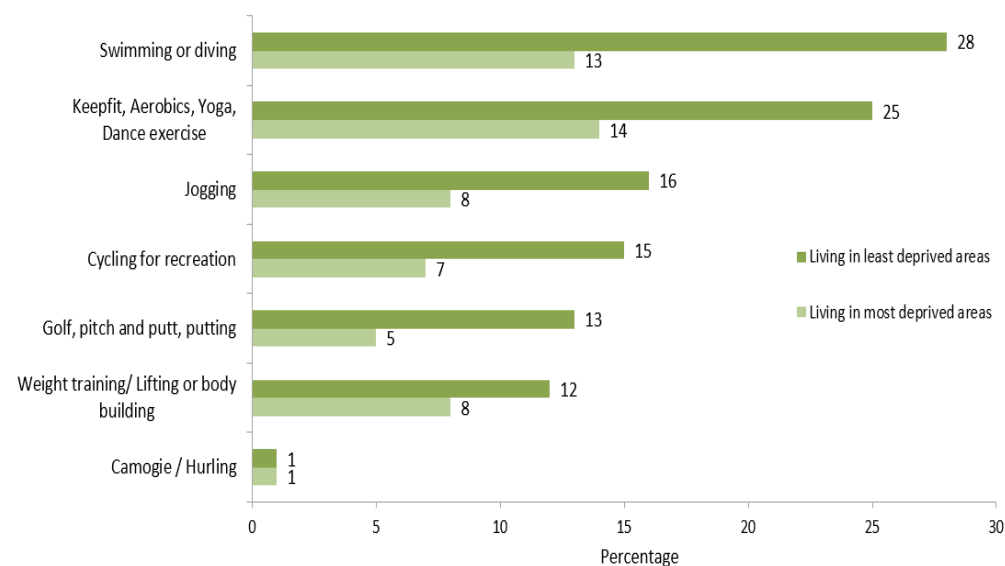
Differences in sport preferences were examined amongst those living in the most and least deprived areas in Northern Ireland. Those living in the least deprived areas were more likely to have participated in 17 of the 36 sports listed within the previous year. In contrast, adults living in the most deprived areas were more likely to have taken part in just 'netball.'

Some of the sports showing significant differences between the two groups were 'Swimming or diving' (28% v 13%), 'Keepfit, Aerobics, Yoga, Dance Exercise' (25% v 14%), 'Jogging' (16% v 8%) and 'Cycling for recreation' (15% v 7%).

Considering participation rates over the previous 4 weeks shows that adults living in the least deprived areas were more likely to have taken part in seven of the sports listed compared to those who lived in the most deprived areas. Adults who lived in the most deprived areas were more likely to have participated in 'darts', 'martial arts' 'boxing' or 'motor sports' than those in the least deprived areas over the previous 4 weeks.



Sport within the year

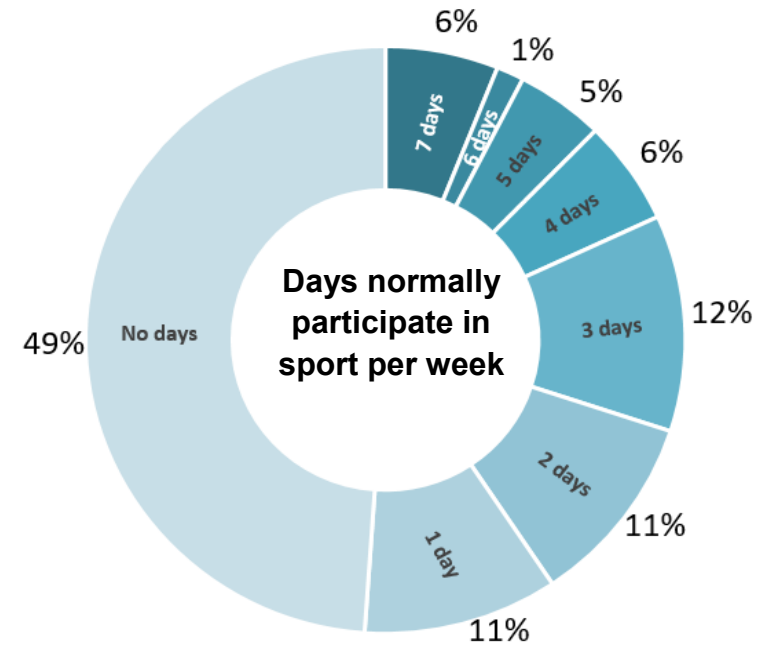
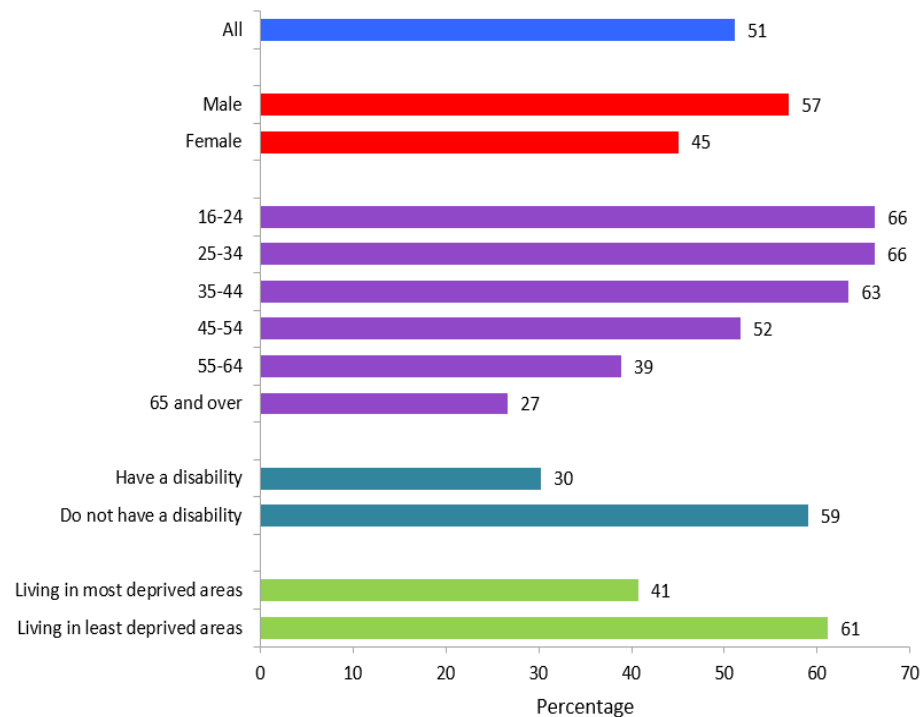


Regular participation in sport

Adults in Northern Ireland were asked how many days per week do they normally take part in sport. Whilst over half of all adults (56%) had participated in sport at least once within the previous year, 51% normally participated in sport at least one day per week, with just under a fifth (18%) normally participating on 4 or more days per week.

The proportion who had participated in sport at least one day per week, in 2018/19 (51%) is an increase compared with 2017/18 (49%).

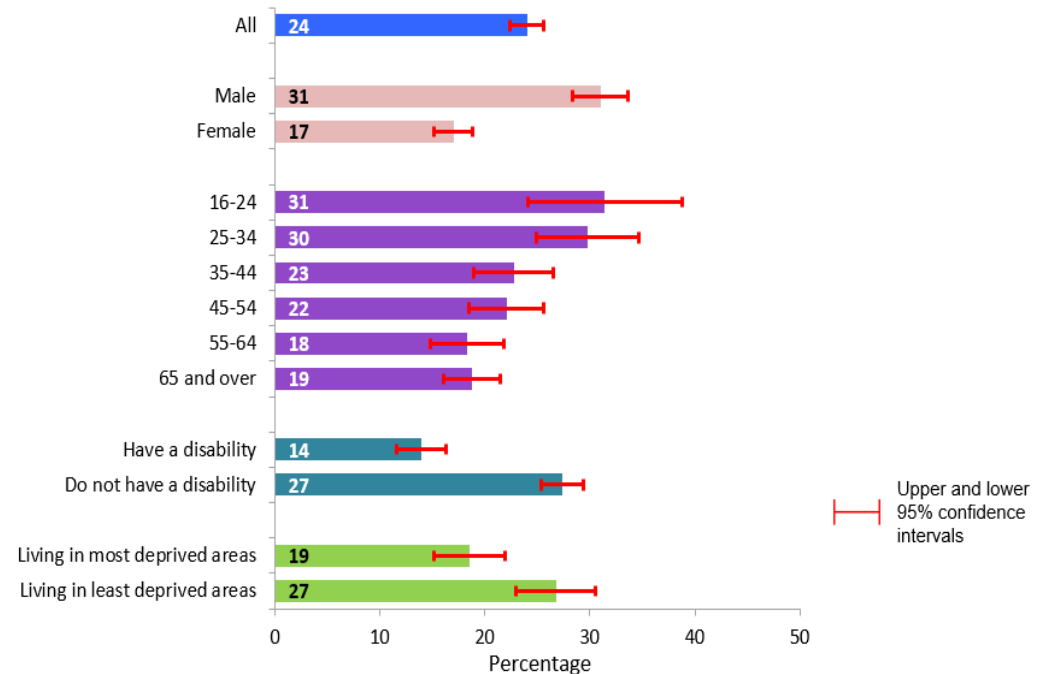
Participating in sport at least one day per week



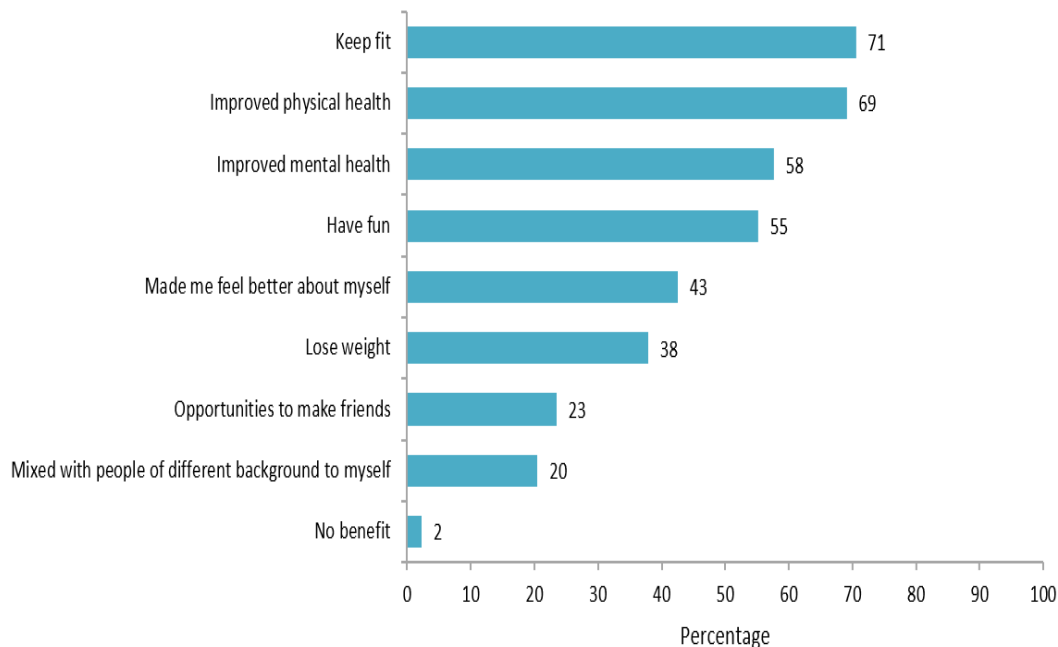
There are similar differences by gender, age, disability and deprivation as for other indicators of sport participation. Those normally participating on one or more days per week was lower for women, older adults, adults with a disability and adults living in the most deprived areas.

Sports club membership

Adults were asked if they were a member of a sports club or organisation within the previous year. Almost a quarter (24%) of adults stated that they were. As with sport participation rates, males (31%) were more likely to have been a member of a sports club or organisation than females (17%).



Benefits of sport participation



Benefits of participating in sport

Seven out of every ten (71%) adults in Northern Ireland who had participated in sport over the last year cited “Keep fit” as a benefit.

Almost seven out of every ten adults (69%) who had participated in sport cited “Improved physical health” as a benefit of participating. Other benefits of participating that were stated by respondents include “Improved mental health” (58%) “Have fun” (55%), “Made me feel better about myself” (43%) and “Lose weight” (38%).

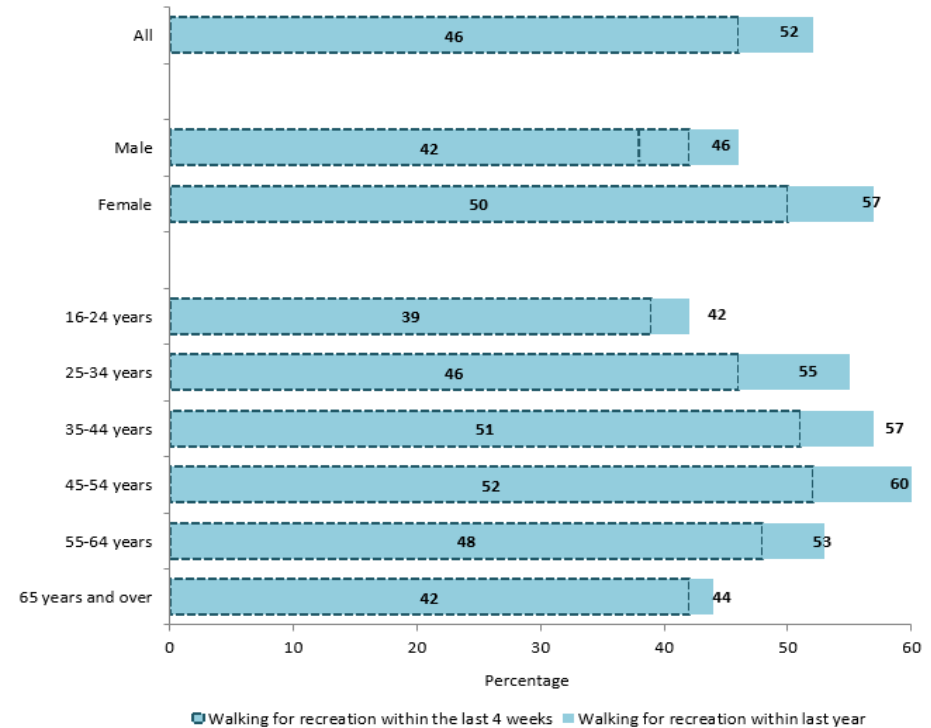
Only two per cent of all adults who had participated stated that they had experienced no benefits as a result of participating in sport over the past year.

Walking for recreation

'Walking for recreation' is not included in the overall sport participation figures. Over half of adults (52%) had walked for recreation within the previous year. In contrast to the demographic pattern seen with the overall sport participation rates, a higher proportion of females (57%) than males (46%) had walked for recreation.

Almost a fifth of adults (17%) had not participated in sport but had walked for recreation within the previous year. As with the previous results a higher proportion of non-sport participating females (22%) had walked for recreation than non-sport participating males (13%). When considering age groups, the pattern is also somewhat different than that seen when analysing sport participation. Walking for recreation rates peak among the 45-54 year age groups (60%), whilst rates for 65 years and over are similar to those for the youngest adult age group 16-24 years.

However, analysis by disability and deprivation shows that relatively fewer adults with a disability and adults living in the most deprived areas walk for recreation.



Longer term trend

Over the last six years, the proportion of adults who indicated that they walked for recreation within the previous year has increased from 36% in 2011/12 to a peak of 52% of adults in 2018/19.

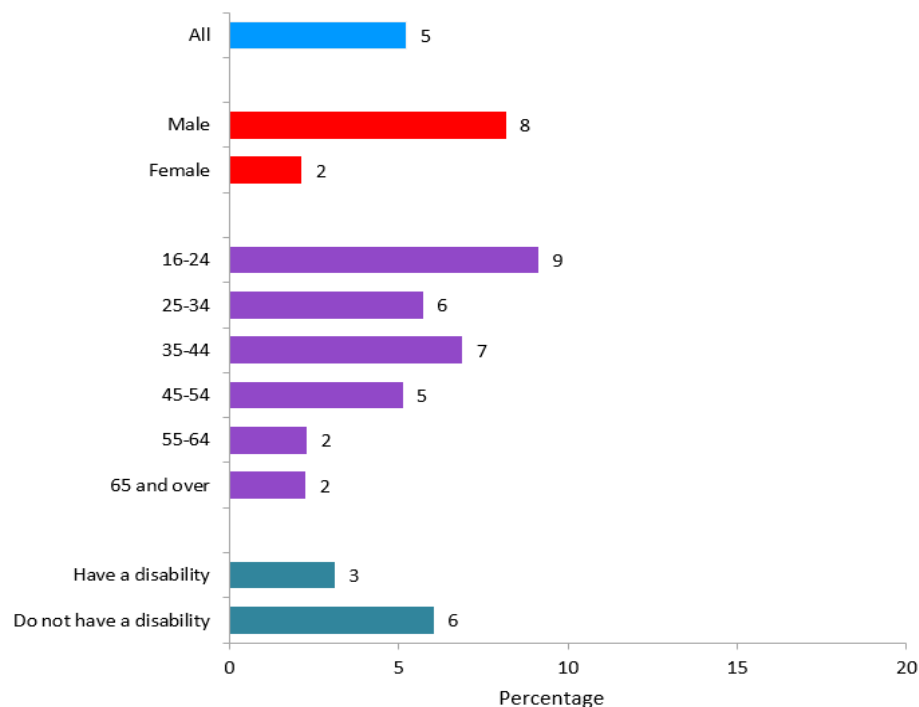
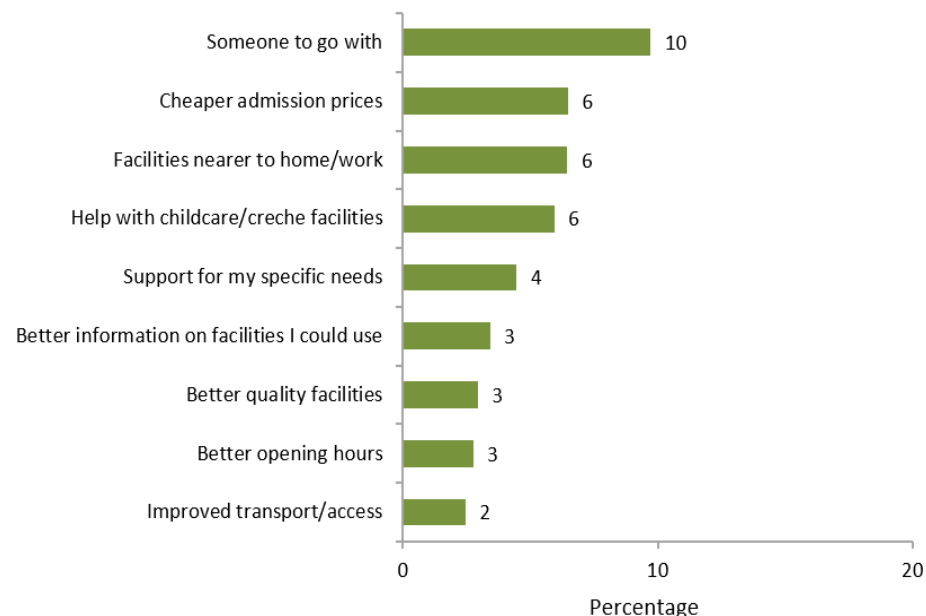
Similarly, within the same time frame, the proportion of adults who had walked for recreation within the previous 4 weeks increased from 28% in 2011/12 to a peak of 46% in 2018/19.

Encourage more participation in sport

One tenth of all adults (10%) in Northern Ireland stated that having 'someone to go with' would encourage them to participate more in sporting activities.

Six percent of adults stated they would be encouraged to participate in more in sport if there were 'cheaper admission prices', 'facilities nearer to home/work' and 'help with childcare/creche facilities' (all 6%).

Other reasons that would encourage adults to participate more in sport include 'support for my specific needs' (4%), 'better information on facilities I could use', 'better quality facilities', 'better opening hours' (all 3%) and 'improved transport/access (2%).'.



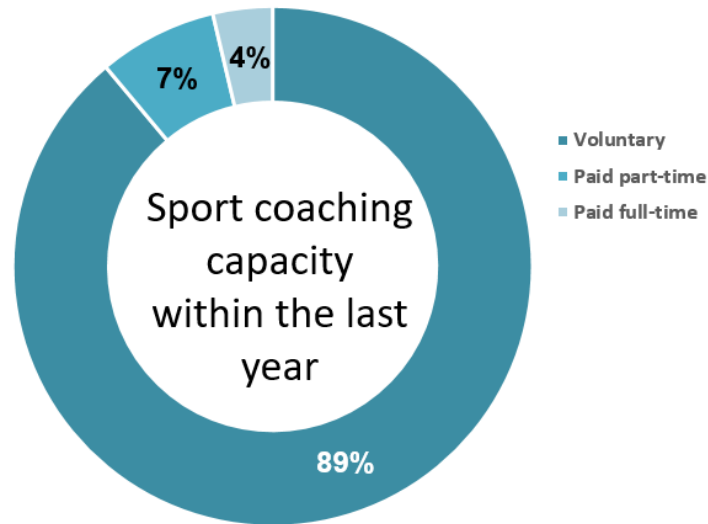
Sports coaching

Five percent of all adults had coached any sport to participants within the last year. Males (8%) were more likely to have coached sport to participants than females (2%).

Analysis by age shows that the proportions of adults coaching in age groups from 16-24 years to 45-54 years were similar. However, adults aged 55-64 years and 65 years and over were less likely to coach.

Adults who have a disability were less likely to coach than those who do not have a disability.

Coaching capacity

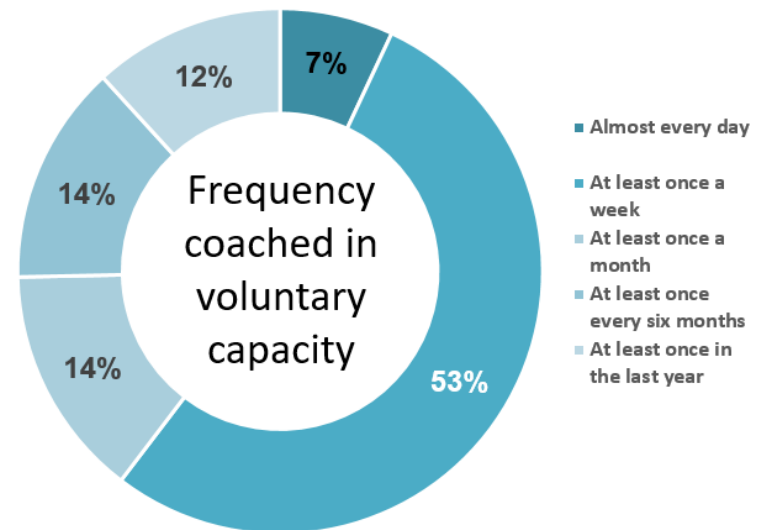


Almost nine out of every ten of those adults who had coached (89%) had coached in a voluntary capacity within the last year. Less than one in every ten had coached in a paid part-time capacity or a paid full-time capacity within the last year (7% and 4% respectively).

In 2018/19, respondents were also asked how often they have coached in a voluntary capacity over the previous year. Three in every five adults stated that they had coached in a voluntary capacity at least once a week (60%), with 7% of those saying they coached almost every day.

Note:

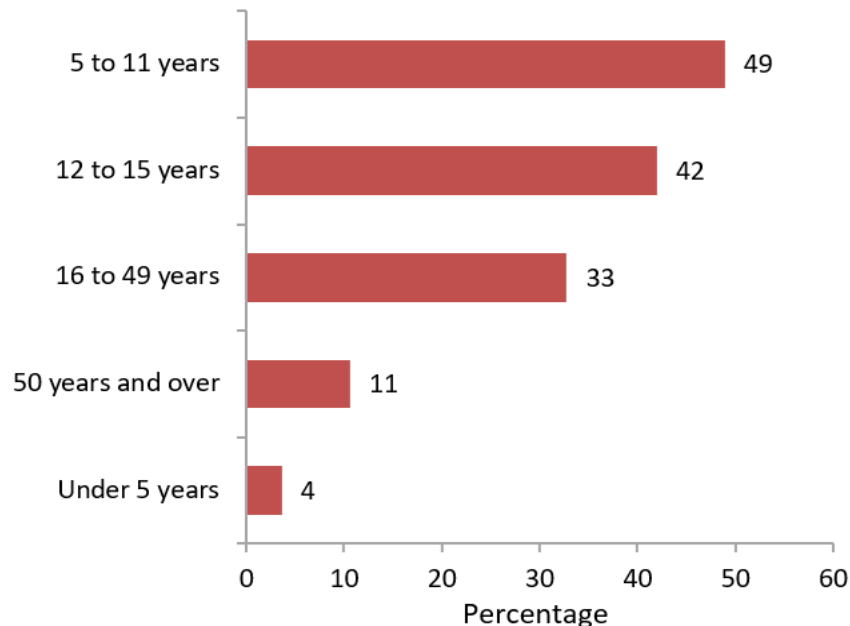
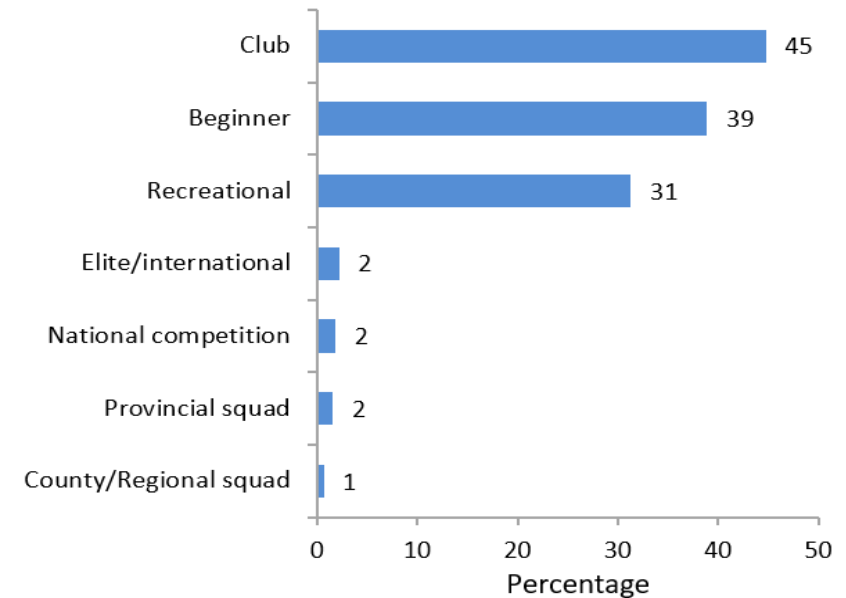
The analysis of 'type of coaching' and 'frequency of coaching' is based on smaller sample sizes (114 and 100 respectively).



Level of sports coaching

Nearly half (45%) of adults who coached stated that they coached sport at a 'club' level with two fifths of adults (39%) coaching sports at 'beginner' level. Almost one third of adults coach sports at a 'recreational' level (31%).

Other levels of sports coaching that adults reported include; 'Elite/International', 'National competition', 'Provincial squad' (each 2%) and 'Country/Regional squad' (1%).



Participants coached by age

Half (49%) of adults who coached stated that they coached individuals aged '5 to 11 years'. Two fifths (42%) of adults coached those aged '12 to 15 years', with one third (33%) coaching sport to individuals aged '16 to 49 years.'

Note:

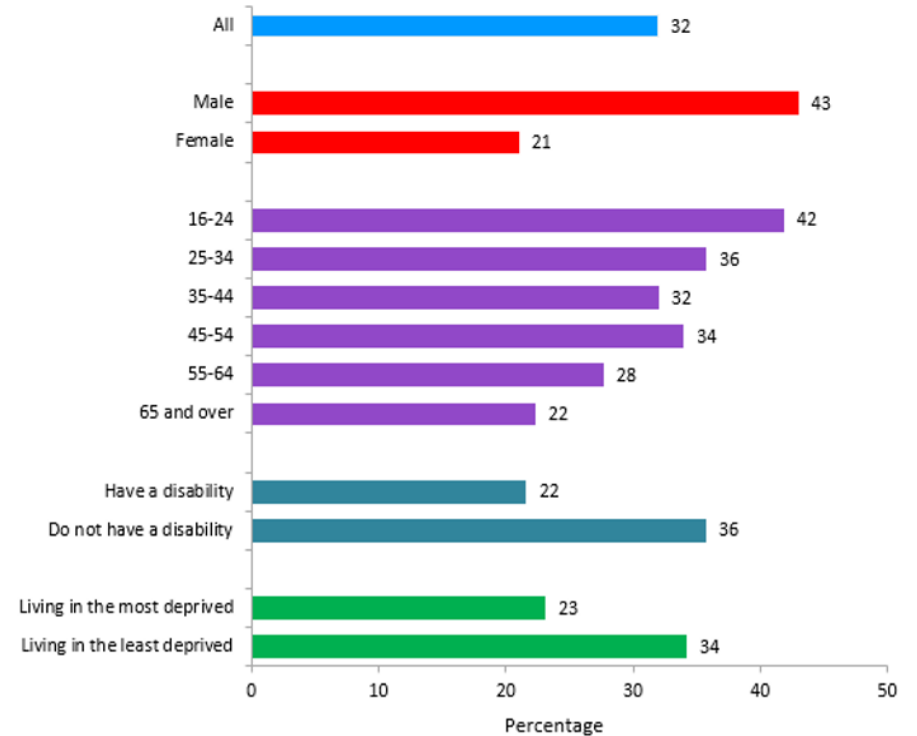
The analysis of 'level of sports coaching' and 'participants coached by age' is based on smaller sample sizes (113 and 114 respectively).

Attendance at live sports events

Almost one third of all adults (32%) had attended a live organised sporting event as a spectator within the last year. Males (43%) were more likely to have attended a live organised sporting event than females (21%).

Analysis by age shows that as age increases the proportion of adults who spectate at a live sporting event generally decreases particularly from age 45 onwards.

Analysis by disability and deprivation shows lower levels of attendance among adults with a disability and those living in the most deprived areas.



Popular live sports events

Adults who indicated that they had attended a live sporting event, at any level, in Northern Ireland as a spectator were then asked which sports they had watched as live events. The most popular sports were 'football' (11%), 'rugby' (9%), 'Gaelic' (8%), followed by 'motorcycle racing' (3%), 'hurling/camogie' (3%), 'ice hockey', 'boxing' and 'golf' (each 2%).

When analysed by gender the most popular sports watched live were:

Male / Female



Football

17% / 5%



Rugby

14% / 5%



Gaelic

11% / 6%



Motorcycle Racing

4% / 1%



Hurling/Camogie

3% / 2%



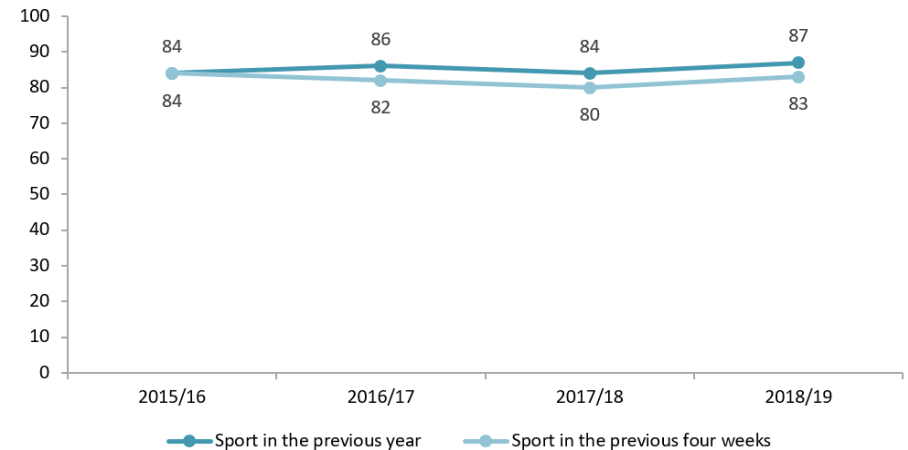
Ice hockey

3% / 2%

Children's sport participation outside of school

Parents of children aged 4 to 15 were asked about their children's sport participation outside of school. According to parents, 87% of children had participated in at least one sport within the previous year outside of school. This was similar to the proportion who had participated in sport outside of school in 2017/18 (84%).

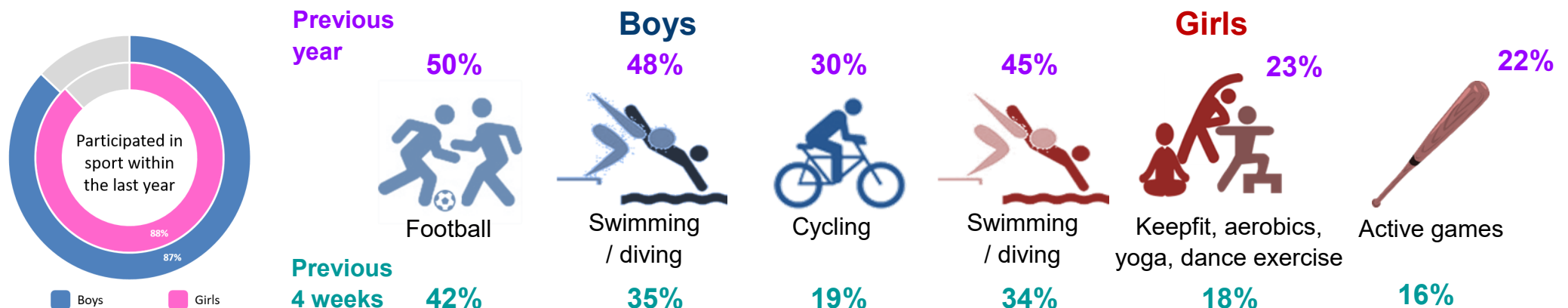
Parents were also asked about their children's sport participation outside of school within the previous 4 weeks. Over four-fifths of children (83%) had participated in sport within the previous 4 weeks, similar to the 80% who had done so in 2017/18.



Sport preferences amongst boys and girls

The most popular sports for children to take part in outside of school within the previous year were 'Swimming or diving' (47%), football (32%) and cycling (25%). These were the top three sports for boys. For girls, the top sports were 'Swimming or diving', 'gymnastics' and 'Keepfit, aerobics, yoga, dance exercise'.

Considering sport participation over the previous 4 weeks, the results were similar with the most popular sports being 'Swimming or diving' (35%), 'football' (26%) and 'cycling' (16%). Again when looking at gender the results over 4 weeks were similar to those seen previously.



Definitions and technical notes

Continuous Household Survey

The Continuous Household Survey (CHS) is a Northern Ireland wide household survey administered by Central Survey Unit, Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. The sample for this survey consists of a systematic random sample of 9,000 addresses selected from the Land and Property Service's list of private addresses. The findings reported for 2018/19 are based on 5,736 respondents, aged 16 and over, who answered the key questions required to measure progress against the draft Programme for Government indicator (arts, libraries, museums and PRONI questions) as well as the sport participation question on the survey. For the remaining questions (volunteering and places of historic interest as well as questions on the experience of engagement), the findings are based on 2,779 respondents.

Weighting the Continuous Household Survey

Analysis of the culture, arts and sport modules of the CHS have been weighted for non-response. A chi square goodness-of-fit test showed that neither the larger CHS sample (5,736) nor the smaller sample (2,779) were representative of the population by age and sex when compared with the Population and Migration Estimates Northern Ireland 2017 (NISRA). As a result, six separate weights were produced for age, sex and age and sex combined, three for each sample size.

Non-response weighting sometimes increases standard errors, although the impact tends to be fairly small, i.e. the adjustment may be less or greater than 1, but will generally be reasonably close to 1. In the case of the culture, arts and sport modules of CHS, the values of the adjustment for all three weighting systems are so close to one, it is not necessary to take account of this in the calculation of standard error and confidence intervals.

While weighting for non-response (also called post-stratification) should reduce bias, it must be acknowledged that it will not eliminate bias. The reasons individuals choose to take part in surveys are complex and depend on lots of factors specific to the individual. As a result, the non-response biases in surveys are likely to be complex. Post-stratification works on the assumption that, by aligning the survey to the population along a small number of dimensions such as age and gender, many of these complex biases will reduce. However, it would be misleading to suggest that they will be eliminated.

Sport participation (Adults) - Participated in at least one of the following activities within the 12 months prior, or 4 weeks prior to the CHS. Does not include 'walking for recreation'.

- Rugby union or league
- Football, indoors or outdoors (Inc. 5-a-side)
- Gaelic football
- Camogie or Hurling
- Cricket
- Hockey
- Ice hockey
- Netball
- Tennis
- Badminton
- Squash
- Basketball
- Table tennis
- Track and field athletics
- Jogging
- Cycling for recreation
- Walking for recreation
- Climbing
- Bowls, indoor or outdoor (lawn)
- Tenpin bowling
- Swimming or diving
- Angling/fishing
- Yachting or dinghy sailing
- Canoeing, kayaking
- Rowing
- Windsurfing/boardsailing
- Keepfit, aerobics, yoga, dance exercise
- Martial Arts (include self defence)
- Weight training/lifting/body building
- Gymnastics
- Snooker, pool, billiards
- Ice skating
- Darts
- Golf, pitch and putt, putting
- Skiing
- Horse riding
- Motor sports
- Shooting
- Boxing
- Other

Member of a sports club - Member of a sports club or organisation.

Sport participation (children) - Participated in at least one of the following activities within the 12 months prior, or 4 weeks prior to the CHS.

- Active games (e.g. skipping, rounders, Wildcats, etc.)
- Angling/fishing
- Athletics/ cross country
- Basketball/ netball/ volleyball
- Boxing
- Canoeing/ kayaking
- Climbing
- Cricket
- Cycling
- Darts
- Football
- Gaelic football
- Golf, pitch and putt, putting
- Gymnastics
- Hockey
- Ice hockey
- Horse riding
- Hurling/Camogie
- Ice skating
- Indoor/outdoor bowls
- Jogging
- Keepfit, aerobics, yoga, dance exercise
- Martial Arts
- Motor sports
- Rowing
- Rugby union or league
- Shooting
- Skateboarding/rollerblading
- Skiing
- Snooker, pool, billiards
- Swimming or diving
- Table tennis
- Tennis/badminton/squash
- Tenpin bowling
- Trampolining
- Walking for exercise/hill walking
- Weight training/lifting/body building
- Windsurfing/boardsailing
- Yachting or dinghy sailing
- Other

Deprivation – The data have been analysed by whether respondents are living in the 20% most deprived Super Output Areas (SOAs) or in the 20% least deprived SOAs. This is estimated using the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2017 which is a weighted combination of seven domains of deprivation. Rank 1 indicates the most deprived SOA, while rank 890 denotes the least deprived SOA.

¹ [Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Report 2017](#)

Disability – The questions used to ascertain whether or not a person has a disability are harmonised with the definition of disability in the Equality Act 2010. This states that a disabled population is classified on the basis of having a long-lasting physical or mental health condition or illness which restricts day-to-day activities. The disabled population in this report are those who have answered yes to both the questions below:

Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last for 12 months or more?

Does your condition or illness /do any of your conditions or illnesses reduce your ability to carry out day to day activities?

Statistical significance in this report

Any statements in this report regarding differences between groups such as males and females, different age groups, religion, etc., are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. This means that we can be 95% confident that the differences between groups are actual differences and have not just arisen by chance. Both the base numbers and the sizes of the percentages have an effect on statistical significance. Therefore on occasion, a difference between two groups may be statistically significant while the same difference in percentage points between two other groups may not be statistically significant. The reason for this is because the larger the base numbers or the closer the percentages are to 0 or 100, the smaller the standard errors. This leads to increased precision of the estimates which increases the likelihood that the difference between the proportions is actually significant and did not just arise by chance.

Other notes

The following should be noted when interpreting figures and tables:

- Percentages less than 0.5% are denoted by '0' and where there are no responses, they are denoted by '-'.