

## **Sport Matters: Manifesto for Sport and Physical Activity in Ireland**

On February 8<sup>th</sup>, the general public will vote to elect our next government and while many issues and items will dominate debate over the coming weeks, we believe that now is the opportunity to put sport and physical activity to the fore and ensure the new government, whoever they may be, are aware and focused on why #SportMatters.

### **INVESTMENT IN SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IS INVESTMENT IN HEALTH**

In 2018 Ireland's first ever National Sports Policy was published. The document, which covers the ten-year period from 2018 - 2027 recognises all the good sport does for Ireland and the vast, untapped potential there is for sport and physical activity to play an even greater role over the next decade. Which is why there is a commitment to DOUBLE funding in sport and physical activity over the next ten years. Interestingly the first statistic in the policy document relates to health and the fact that physical inactivity and its related impacts are costing the country some €1.5 BILLION annually on the health budget - a cost that is rising every year. The health budget now exceeds €17 billion annually.

Sport and physical activity are good for the health of the nation. That is a fact. We would like every politician to take that on board over the coming years and ensure that the funding commitment in the National Sports Policy is met, but also that additional funds are found to invest in people and programmes that will specifically tackle the problems of physical inactivity. Let our ambition be to become the fittest and healthiest nation in Europe and not run the risk of being known as the most obese nation in Western Europe as has been suggested. That is our single biggest ask. We talk about Ireland 2040 - lets build the health of our nation into that programme.

In addition to the above, we know more can be done and we asked our members, the 78 National Governing Bodies and 28 Local Sports Partnerships that deliver sport daily, what they thought was important:

**They listed in order of priority; -**

- 1. Resource the National Sports Policy properly and effectively**
- 2. Ensure multi annual core funding for NGB's and LSP's**
- 3. Provide support for organisations working to be sports governance compliant by January 2021**
- 4. Provide annual sports capital grants**
- 5. Implement meaningful insurance reform**
- 6. Provide a budget for volunteer recruitment and training**

**They also listed some of the ways that would help Government finance more programmes going forward:-**

- 1. Redirect 5% of the sweetened sugar drinks tax income annually to tackle physical inactivity in children of primary school age.**
- 2. Administer a portion of the increase of Betting Tax to develop and implement communication and educational programmes on the importance of sport & physical activity and the protection of those at risk from problem gambling in our sporting community.**

3. Lowering of the €250 eligibility threshold for capital reliefs for individual donations to Sports Capital programmes
4. That Government Introduces a scheme to enable NGB's to attract philanthropic finance support for their high-performance programmes



The work of the Federation has continued to showcase the economic, social and health value of sport to Irish society. Our recent Investec Economic **research** report showcased that for **every €100** government invests in sport in Ireland they receive a **return of €195**. The same report estimated the value of **sports volunteers at over €1.1bn per annum** and highlighted how the sector supports 40,000 jobs. In addition to being of substantial economic benefit whether through sports tourism, major events or employment in administration, sport and physical activity also has the power to address issues of mental and physical health and social inclusion among ethnic minorities, people of all abilities and age groups.

Our recent consultation with our members also highlighted further issues/topics that they believe should form part of government thinking on sport and physical activity:

- The formation of a Department of Sport and Tourism with a senior minister to maximise the reach of, and benefit of sport & physical activity in Ireland.
- A more integrated and collaborate approach to Sport and Physical Activity among government departments to combat the growing health crises
- Support to ensure security of employment of LSP staff with Local authorities
- Support for NGB's (funding and personnel) to ensure sustainability of programmes for disability access and inclusion
- Multi-Sport Development Officers for niche & emerging Sports
- Utilisation of funding streams such as the National Lottery to fund a people and programmes grant scheme.

***Our membership is comprised of:***

**NGB members:**

Angling Council of Ireland | Archery Ireland Athletics Ireland | Athletics Ireland | Badminton Ireland | Baton Twirling Sport Association of Ireland | Bol Chumann na hÉireann (Irish Road Bowling Association) | Bowling League of Ireland | CARA | The Camogie Association | Canoe Ireland | Comhairle Liathróid Láimhe Na hÉireann (GAA Handball) | Cricket Ireland | Croquet Association of Ireland | Cycling Ireland | DIT Sport | Football Association of Ireland | Fencing Ireland | GAA | Olympics Federation of Ireland | Irish Wheelchair Association – Sport | Paralympics Ireland | Irish Kidney Association | Student Sport Ireland | Deaf Sports Ireland | Special Olympics Ireland | Golfing Union of Ireland | Gymnastics Ireland | Horse Sport Ireland | Horseshoe Pitchers Association of Ireland | Inline Hockey | Ireland Lacrosse | Irish Athletic Boxing Association | Irish Amateur Wrestling Association | Irish American Football Association | Irish Cheer Sport Association | Irish Clay Target Shooting Association | Irish Flying Disc Association | Hockey Ireland | Irish Ice Hockey Association | Irish Ladies Golf Union | Ice Skating Association of Ireland | Irish Indoor Bowling Association | Irish Judo Association | Irish Martial Arts Commission | Irish Olympic Handball | Irish Orienteering Association | Irish Rugby Football Union | Irish Sailing | Irish Squash | Irish Surfing Association | Irish Table Tennis Association | Irish Taekwondo Union | Irish Tenpin Bowling Association | Irish Underwater Council | Irish Waterski and Wakeboard Federation | Irish Water Safety (Lifesaving Sport) | Ladies Gaelic Football Association | Motor Cycle Union of Ireland | Motorsport Ireland | Mountaineering Ireland | National Aero Club Ireland | National Coarse Fishing Federation of Ireland | Pentathlon | Pitch and Putt Union of Ireland | Racquetball Association of Ireland | Rowing Ireland | Snowsports Association of Ireland | Swim Ireland | Tennis Ireland | Triathlon Ireland | Irish Tug of-War Association | Weightlifting Ireland | Vision Sports Ireland | Volleyball Association of Ireland | Target Shooting Ireland | Speleological Union of Ireland | Karate Ireland – ONAKAI | Softball Ireland

**LSP members:**

Carlow | Cavan | Clare | Cork | Donegal | Dublin City | Dun Laoghaire Rathdown | Fingal | Kerry | Kildare | Kilkenny | Laois | Leitrim | Limerick | Longford | Louth | Mayo | Meath | Monaghan | Offaly | Sligo | South Dublin County | Tipperary | Waterford | Westmeath | Wexford | Wicklow