



# PRE BUDGET SUBMISSION 2021

Federation  
of Irish Sport



*The voice of Irish sport*



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***“In a year when the benefits of sport and physical activity have never been more essential to Irish Society, we need to ensure that the work of our sporting organisations is recognised and supported by Government.”***

**The Federation of Irish Sport, September 2020**





## Foreword:

The Federation of Irish Sport is the representative body for the National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs) Local sports Partnerships (LSPs) and other sporting bodies such as the Olympic Federation of Ireland, Paralympics Ireland, CARA and Ireland Active. These bodies bring sport and physical activity to life across Ireland and encompass more than 13,000 clubs, offering the opportunity to all of Irish society to take part and stay active.

Our members deliver on every level from grassroots to high-performance. They work hard to ensure that those participating; be they athlete, volunteer or supporter do so in a fun and safe learning environment that is welcoming to all.

### **We are making this submission on their behalf.**

2020 has been a challenging year for everyone in Ireland and no person or organisation remains unaffected by Covid19. The announcement in June of a €70 million Resilience fund for Sport and physical activity was welcomed and undeniably necessary. As we look to the future, we know that 2021 will be another challenging year for everyone in Irish sport. **We will need a further commitment from government in Budget 2021 to ensure that the support provided by resilience funding will not be undone by a reduction in current funding for Sport and physical activity.**

In a year when the benefits of sport and physical activity have never been more essential to Irish society, we need to ensure that the work of our sporting organisations is recognised and supported by government. By doing so, we can continue to ensure that access to and the benefits of sport and physical activity are maintained for all. *'Sport can help individuals and societies to soften the negative effects of the crisis on their lives through mechanisms that can contribute to people's health, socialisation, education and a general sense of wellbeing. In addition to its disastrous short and mid-term health impact (including inactivity, mental health risks linked to loneliness and anxiety)'*<sup>11</sup>

If the programme for government is to be achieved and the overall target of participation in sport to reach at least 60% of the population by 2027 then **Action 45 of the the National Sports Policy 2018 – 2027 needs to be honoured 'We will aim to increase funding to participation programmes for every year of the policy, with the intention to double our annual investment in participation by 2027'.**



**Our single biggest ask is that Budget 2021 provides for further investment in people and programmes by increasing funds for current expenditure. It is essential we believe for the ultimate success of the National Sports Policy, that Budget 2021 takes the third step on the road to fulfilling the promise to double funding over the next ten years.**

*In summary, our asks are that the Government;*

- ✓ Delivers on its commitment to increase current sports funding in the 2021 Budget, in line with its policies (Action 45) laid out in the National Sports Policy 2018–2027.
- ✓ Redirects €1.35m (4.5%) of the Sweetened Sugar Drinks Tax exchequer returns to fund a specific campaign to tackle the obesity problem in Ireland. This tax was created to change behaviour. Entrust sport to accelerate that change as a health intervention.
- ✓ Administers €2.34m (4.5%) of the increase of the Betting Tax to develop and implement communication and educational programmes on the importance of sport and the protection of those at risk in our sporting community.

2018 saw Government launch Ireland's first ever National Sports Policy, a comprehensive ten-year plan with 57 actions that aims to get even more people participating in sport and physical activity, while committing to doubling funding for sport to €220 million by 2027. In that Policy the important role played by the NGBs and the LSPs was put centre stage, and for the first time in a decade current funding for people and programmes was increased.

This is of course in line with the Government's commitment to double funding for sport and physical activity over the lifetime of the policy. The increased funding for sport and physical activity in the last two budgets has been widely welcomed by all of sport as a fundamental support to ensure that Sport and physical activity can be accessed by as many people as possible but also a recognition that developing sport is a continuous process and it simply must be resourced to meet challenges and opportunities with maximum capacity.



To conclude, Sport is central to the Irish story. We believe that Sport is for everyone, for the friends you make, the community you become a part of and the places you visit. Furthermore, we know that in addition to these stronger communities, consumer spending, employment levels and domestic sports tourism efforts strengthen our economy. The mental and physical benefits of sports participation and the savings a more active population generate for the health system is a further example of the enormous value sport contributes to Ireland not just now for in the long term.

Sport embodies who we are as a nation and **we believe Sport Matters to all! Sport is and will continue to contribute to our resilience through and beyond Covid-19. Government support is required more than ever to ensure sport can survive and thrive in Ireland.**

*Mary O'Connor*

Mary O'Connor

CEO, Federation of Irish Sport





## Why Sport Matters?

In 2019, the Federation of Irish Sport commissioned Investec to conduct research into the economic value of sport in Ireland. Below are some of the key findings and significant details of that report.

### *Sport's share of the economy*

Sport contributes approximately **1.4% of Gross Value Added** in Ireland. It **employs 39,500 individuals** (1.7% of total employment). Sport in Ireland also generates **€2.7 billion in household spending per annum**



### *Value of sports volunteering*

The economic value of volunteering for sport is approximately **€1.1 billion per annum**. This figure is based on the average industrial wage.

### *Sports tourism*

**Sports tourism** is worth approximately **€500million per year** to Ireland. This figure rises in years where the country hosts major international sports events.



### *Government return*

Recent research by the European Commission suggests that the State may **recoup up to €195** in tax revenue for every €100 invested in sport-related activity. Such a return on investment is clearly very attractive, the same European Commission research concluded that an active sport-related economic policy can help counter unemployment. This in stark contrast to the previous estimation of every **€100 in State investment** in sport in Ireland, the Exchequer receives **€149 back in taxes**.

### *Health cost*

**Investment in sport can help reduce public health expenditure.** Department of Health research states that **62% of the population are overweight or obese**. This is estimated to **cost the State over €1.5 billion annually**. Separate research has estimated that there are **4,000 preventable deaths** in Ireland each year due to physical inactivity.





## The Details:

Sport supports 39,500 indigenous jobs across every constituency in Ireland.

According to the Investec report, sport in Ireland also generates €2.7 billion in household spending per annum, with primary contributory items including subscriptions to clubs, clothing, footwear, equipment, admission to events and so on.

### *Sport and Health*

Physical inactivity is identified as the fourth-highest cause of deaths on a global scale. Department of Health research states that 62% of the population are overweight or obese. This is estimated to cost the State over €1.5 billion annually. Separate research has estimated that there are 4,000 preventable deaths in Ireland each year due to physical inactivity. It is fair to say that the healthcare system has the potential to reduce its expenditure on such issues of ill-health if people became more active. In the last 5 years the HSE has spent €5.7 million on obesity surgery. According to HSE figures 23% of adults in Ireland are obese and a further 37% are classed as overweight. One in every five children are heavier than is healthy.

### *Sport and tourism*

Fáilte Ireland has previously highlighted the important role that sport plays in Ireland's tourism and hospitality sector. Sports tourism is estimated to be worth €500 million per annum to the Irish economy.

Golf alone brings in 200,000 visitors to Ireland annually, generating an income of €270 million. Furthermore, recent research by Teneo put the economic value of English rugby supporters travelling to this year's Six Nations match in Dublin at €12.4m, or €829 per visitor.

In estimating the overall value of sports participation tourism, the Federation of Irish Sport commissioned Investec Report notes that researchers from the ESRI have previously estimated that 8% of overseas visitors engaged in sports activity while in Ireland. With total expenditure by visitors in Ireland reaching €5.1bn last year (per the CSO), and maintaining this estimated share of sports visitors, we estimate the total spend attributable to sports tourism was €430m in 2019.

### *Sport and community*

Sport plays a central role in the social fabric of every county, constituency, and parish in the country. It represents the largest single source of volunteering in Ireland, with over 450,000 people volunteering in sport each week. In addition:

1. There are over 13,000 sports clubs and associations in Ireland.
2. These clubs and associations have 1.7 million members.
3. The latest Irish Sports Monitor shows that 47% of Irish adults are socially involved in physical activity.
4. 37.2 million hours of unpaid voluntary work are performed every year.
5. The value of volunteering in sport in Ireland could be as high as €1.1 billion (Investec Report, 2019).

- a. For example, a 2019 WhiteBarn Consulting Report estimates that the 91 GAA clubs in Dublin generate €1 billion SROI (social return on investment) to Dublin communities.

## COVID-19 Challenges

COVID-19 has disrupted Sport and Physical Activity as we know it. The global pandemic has impacted every club in every sport in every county, no one has been unaffected by its reach. For National Governing Bodies and Local Sports Partnerships, almost all activity was forced to cease in March 2020 and while superb efforts were made to innovate the sport and physical activity landscape during this time, public health was paramount and as such sport and physical activity was non-existent in any organised manner.

This lack of activity has resulted in significant financial difficulty for the vast majority of sporting organisations and has caused a great deal of uncertainty around the future of the sector. While the business and employment supports made available by government coupled with the sport specific rescue package of €70m announced in June assisted in keeping organisations afloat, further investment is now needed to ensure that organisations not only survive, but are able to adapt, rebuild and grow in 2021

### Some of the key challenges being faced by our members include:

- Severe and sustained loss of revenue from membership fees, sponsorship arrangements, retail/bar set ups and competition entries. **In some cases, NGBs have seen losses of up to 70% of revenue.**
- **The GAA, FAI and IRFU have estimated a combined financial loss for their organisations in 2020 of €81 million.**
- Continuation of running costs such as insurance and maintenance despite no activity or income being generated.
- Retention of members into 2021 and beyond if public confidence to take part in organised sport does not return.
- Retention of volunteers to support the running of activities will be more challenging if the risk and workload continues to increase.
- Higher levels of risk leading to inflated insurance premiums which are already a struggle for many organisations.

It is imperative that a long-term support plan is put in place to ensure the sector can survive these many challenges. Part of that support should be the honouring of the government commitment to double funding for sport and physical activity by 2027. It has never been more important for sport and physical activity to be invested in and while temporary and emergency supports are needed and welcomed, it is essential that the long-term commitment to the planning and ongoing development of the sector is honoured.





## Our Asks

### *Deliver on funding*

We are asking the Government as part of Budget 2021 to deliver the third phase of core funding this year, to remain in line to double funding over the 10-year lifetime of the National Sports Policy 2018–2027.

25% of LSP's and 33% of NGB's say their biggest single challenge in delivering on their objectives is funding. Increased investment provides an opportunity for our members to consolidate their current provision of activities while also allowing them to expand and enhance their capacity to target under-represented gradients in Irish Sport as outlined in the NSP. The policy showcases that 43% of Irish adults participate in sport but that this drops to 30% among those in the lowest income bracket and 23% among those with disabilities. Irish society is increasingly multi-cultural with some 17.3% of the Irish population born outside of Ireland. However, just 7.7% of non-Irish born adults are members of a sports club versus 19.7% of Irish born adults. Sport can make an important contribution to a more integrated society by providing an avenue for social inclusion, integration, and equal opportunities.

Since the publication of the National Sports Policy 2018 – 2027, core funding to NGBs has grown from €10.8m in 2017 to €13.8m in 2020. This increased investment provides an opportunity to further strengthen the NGB sector and assist our members in delivering on their strategic objectives.

In parallel to growth in funding, the sector has seen significant growth in participation and activity. According to the Sport Ireland 2019 Speak report 466,380 people participated in 1,427 locally delivered participation initiatives across the 29 local sports partnerships while 94,270 additional participants took part in interventions supported by the LSP network, including Daily Mile, parkrun, Playground Markings, Chalk-free play, and Active Homework initiatives. Furthermore, the onset of COVID-19 saw more people than ever active in individual forms of exercises including walking, running, and cycling. Continuing the commitment to double funding for the sport and physical activity sector provides opportunity to build on the ever-growing levels of participation and ensure that all sectors of society have the opportunity to be active and take part.



### *Sugar tax redistribution*

The Federation of Irish Sport is calling on the Government to redirect 4.2% of overall Sugar Sweetened Drinks Tax exchequer returns specifically to combat obesity and increase participation in sport in Ireland, as part of Budget 2020.

The sugar sweetened tax was legislated for to stimulate behavioural change among Irish society away from the consumption of high-sugar products. **While the tax is a financial disincentive, education is key in driving any behavioural change. Investing in sport to educate and encourage such change is a key element and should be resourced to support the overall aims of the sugar tax – to improve the health of the nation.**

The cost of obesity and physical inactivity is €1.5 billion a year to the health budget. A ten-year Obesity Policy and Action Plan (2016 – 2025) was published by the Department of Health in September 2016. Based on the available evidence, the strategy concluded that reducing obesity requires a broad range of interventions. The Federation of Irish Sport are asking the government to redirect a percentage of the sugar tax to facilitate such interventions in the form of education and physical activity. We propose actions such as an increase in after school sports clubs, doubling the PE and sport curriculum in primary and secondary schools and educating children on the benefits of a simple, active lifestyle. By redirecting this funding schools will be able to make further improvements to the quality and breadth of their sport and activity offerings and play a key part in addressing this national health issue.

Furthermore, recent evidence has shown a link between obesity and the severity of COVID-19 on individuals. A paper produced by HSE said there is “emerging evidence that obesity may be linked with Covid-19 disease severity”. This is a huge cause for concern as 23% of adults in Ireland are obese, according to the HSE. This is another reason why such interventions and redirection of funds are necessary in the move to create a healthier nation.

We need to invest in prevention rather than cure. By ring-fencing 4.2% of the tax and reinvesting it back into the communities and organisations where it will have the greatest effect it will be an impactful preventative measure rather than act solely as a revenue raiser. **Ringfencing of funding has already been sanctioned for the Plastic Bag Levy and Carbon tax.**



### *Betting tax redistribution*

The Federation of Irish Sport is calling on the Government to use revenues generated by the Betting Tax to develop and implement communication and educational programmes on the importance of sport and the protection of those at risk in our sporting community. We are advocating for the redirection of a portion of the betting tax to facilitate the establishment of a support and education body for those most affected by gambling addiction.

The NACDA 2014/2015 report stated that in the year previous to its publication 64.5% report some form of gambling, while 41.4% report gambling on a monthly basis or

more often. The study also highlights that young males (15-34 year olds) are most likely to spend more than €250 placing bets on sporting events in a bookmaker's shop, with 15.3% of young males reporting this form of gambling, more than double the proportion in the next nearest group (7.1% of males aged 35-64). Furthermore, problem gambling is most common in young males (2.9% in males aged 25-34 and 1.9% in males aged 18-24). In response to the DSM-IV problem gambling questionnaire, 4.7% of males and 1.7% of females reporting chasing losses in the last 12 months previous to the study.

Anecdotally in sport, we know that there is an increasing problem among players and athletes experiencing issues of gambling addiction and its many negative consequences. At present, there is not only a lack of support infrastructure for such individuals but there is also a significant lack of investment in education of the dangers of gambling addiction. **The Federation are asking the government to redirect €2.4m (4.5%) of the betting tax to help develop an overarching support and education infrastructure** and in doing so, help the many thousands of families impacted by gambling addiction in Ireland each year. This move is also an essential element in safeguarding our athletes, participants and young people who are invested and engaged in sport week in week out.



#### COVID-19 Supports

The Federation of Irish Sport is calling on the Government to continue to support the sport and physical activity through the COVID-19 crises. While existing efforts such as wage subsidy, relief on rates and the resilience package of €70m have assisted in keeping the sector afloat the crisis is far from over. We are asking the government to allow for the provision of further COVID-19 sport specific supports for both national governing bodies and their clubs. This provision is essential given that the nature of many of our sports is such that they may not be able to fully engage in a 2021 season should COVID-19 health advice remain. **Unlike other economically beneficial sectors, the sport and physical activity sector cannot always ensure social distancing of participants. For this reason, we believe that the sector is at a distinct disadvantage in relation to current and future public health advice and as such should continue to be financially support in the absence of full competition, events, and mass activity. We urge the government to include a provision in the 2021 budget for such further support as well as maintaining access to existing national employment and business supports.**



## Our Members

### *National Governing Bodies and Representative Sport organisations*

Angling Council of Ireland • Athletics Ireland • Archery Ireland • Badminton Ireland • Basketball Ireland • Baton Twirling Sport Association of Ireland • Bol Chumann na hÉireann (Irish Road Bowling Association) • Bowling League of Ireland • CARA • The Camogie Association • Canoeing Ireland • Comhairle Liathróid Láimhe Na hÉireann (GAA Handball • Community Games) • Cricket Ireland • Croquet Association of Ireland • Cycling Ireland • Deaf Sports Ireland • Football Association of Ireland • GAA • Golfing Union of Ireland • Gymnastics Ireland • Horse Sport Ireland • Fencing 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 Kidney Association - Sport • Irish Martial Arts Commission • Irish Olympic Handball • Ireland Active • Irish Rugby Football Union • Sailing Ireland • Irish Squash • Irish Surfing Association • Irish Table Tennis Association • Irish Taekwondo Union • Irish Tenpin Bowling Association • Irish Tug of War Association • Irish Underwater Council • Irish Waterski and Wakeboard Federation • Irish Water Safety (Lifesaving Sport) • Irish Wheelchair Association • Karate Ireland – ONAKAI • Ladies Gaelic Football Association • Motor Cycle Union of Ireland • Motorsport Ireland • Mountaineering Ireland • National Aero Club Ireland • National Coarse Fishing Federation of Ireland • Olympic Federation of Ireland • Orienteering Ireland • Paralympics Ireland • Pentathlon • Pitch and Putt Union of Ireland • Racquetball Association of Ireland • Republic of Ireland Billiards and Snooker Association • Rowing Ireland • Softball Ireland • Special Olympics Ireland • Speleological Union of Ireland • Snowsports Association of Ireland • Student Sport Ireland • Swim Ireland • Target Shooting Ireland • Tennis Ireland • Triathlon Ireland • Vision Sports Ireland • Volleyball Association of Ireland • Weightlifting Ireland

### *Local Sports Partnerships*

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



*Information within this document has been sourced from the following papers, reports, and reviews.*

1. Position paper on the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the sport sector  
<https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/2020/05/covid-19-sport/#:~:text=The%20global%20outbreak%20of%20COVID,activities%20outside%20of%20their%20homes.>
2. Covid-19 HSE Clinical Guidance and Evidence  
<https://hse.drsteevenslibrary.ie/c.php?g=679077&p=4868432>
3. Covid-19 has 'dramatically' impacted provision of surgeries for obesity  
<https://www.irishexaminer.com/news/arid-40047188.html>
4. Irish Sports Monitor 2019  
<https://www.sportireland.ie/sites/default/files/media/document/2020-09/irish-sports-monitor-2019-summary-report-high-res.pdf>
5. National Sports Policy 2018-2027 <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/aaa7d9-national-sports-policy-2018-2027/>
6. Investec Economic Research Report commissioned by the Federation of Irish Sport [https://www.irishsport.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Investec\\_ONLINE\\_VERSION\\_v3.pdf](https://www.irishsport.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Investec_ONLINE_VERSION_v3.pdf)





# Women in Sport Leadership Programme





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