



Pre Budget Submission 2022

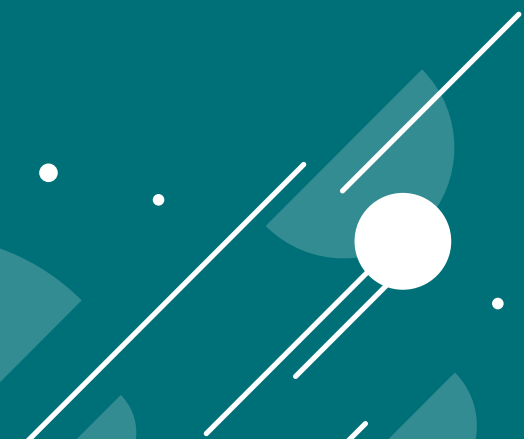
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FEDERATION OF
**IRISH
SPORT**





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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 throughout the island of Ireland. Collectively they encompass more than 13,000 clubs that in turn give everyone in the country – young and old – the opportunity to become involved in sport, to be active and just as importantly to stay active. They work hard to ensure that those participating – be they athletes, volunteers, or supporters – do so in a fun and safe learning environment that is welcoming to all.

We are making this submission on their behalf.

‘The past 18 months have been an incredible test of the sector’s resilience while showcasing the immense value sport and physical activity contributes to society in Ireland’

*Mary O’Connor,
CEO Federation of Irish Sport*



The government's commitment to sport in Ireland has been very evident in recent years. There has been the succession of much welcomed Sports Capital Programmes, including a recent one for new sports equipment. But perhaps most importantly there has been our first ever National Sports Policy, the ten-year plan in which the government has committed to doubling funding for sport over the next decade. That commitment has been honoured in the last two budgets when funding has been increased year on year. And then there was the much-welcomed Sports Resilience Fund, set up to help sport through the pandemic – a fund which has done so much to preserve the structures so necessary for sport to happen.

Over the last year physical activities such as walking, running, cycling, and swimming (in the ocean) have been hugely important for the health of the nation, both physical and mental, while the exploits of our high-performance athletes have lifted the spirits of the country. If ever we needed proof that investing in sport is good for Ireland just look at the recent exploits of our Olympians and Paralympians who went to Tokyo and brought home eleven medals including that Kellie Harrington gold. How fitting that she was the athlete the government chose to launch the National Sports Policy in 2018.



We believe that there has never been a better opportunity to harness the power of sport for our country. We believe that an increased investment NOW will have a dis-proportionate positive impact for the country that will continue long into the future.

In making this submission we are conscious of the many demands there will be on government to help so many different parts of the economy and because of that we have concentrated on a small number of asks that we believe best harness the power of sport in the re-building of a post- Covid Ireland.

It is our strong recommendation that investment in sport for the next twelve months should concentrate on the areas of People and Programmes. The point we want to emphasise is the importance of increasing funding in providing more opportunities to get more people active.

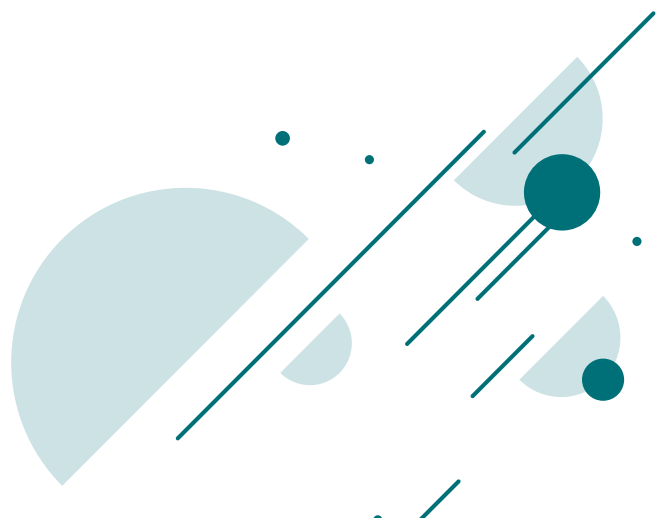
This is of course totally in line with the ambitions of the National Sports Policy which seeks to increase participation by 17% (from 43% to 60%) over the life of that programme.

To put it simply we believe that there should an active focus on getting more people active across the wide spectrum of sporting activities. We have always believed our people are our real wealth and this is an investment in that wealth!

By concentrating on increasing investment in People and Programmes we are seeking to ensure that we give the maximum number of people the opportunity to avail of the opportunities (or programmes) to become more active right across the wide diversity of sporting activities that either already exist or can be easily created by the NGB's and the LSP's, the organisations that are responsible for organising sport in Ireland today.

In some cases, this can be achieved by increasing funding for existing programmes. However, in keeping with the overall objectives of the National Sports Policy we would suggest that a fund is put in place to challenge the NGB's and LSP's to create new and more innovative programmes to bring more people into sport and physical activity. Such a fund to be administered by Sport Ireland in the same way as which the recent Sports Resilience Fund has been administered.

We believe there has never been a better time to invest in such programmes and we are confident our NGB's and LSP's are capable of rising to the challenge. We also believe that there has never been a more receptive time for such an investment.



We are asking the government to look at five specific asks in relation to sports funding in 2022. These are as follows; –

- **Recognise the pivotal role played by our NGB's and LSP's**, and the impact that Covid has had on their finances, by putting in place a further tranche of the Sports Resilience Funding in the 2022 budget to assist them in ensuring their clubs get back to pre-Covid levels of activity in the first instance, and create the platforms needed to ensure Irish Sport meets the targets of the National Sports policy.
- **Increase overall current sports funding in the 2022 Budget**, in line with its policies (Action 45) laid out in the National Sports Policy 2018–2027.
- **Move to a multi-annual system of current funding for sport** – possibly by confirming the annual increase in funding in line with the National Sports Policy – thereby giving the NGB's and LSP's the opportunity to plan ahead.
- **Redirect €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 behaviours. Entrust sport to accelerate that change as a health intervention.
- **€2.4m (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. Ideally this could be used to create grassroot diversion programmes in which sporting activity would be linked to educational, training and employment opportunities e.g., after school clubs focusing on sport, personal development, and education – literacy/numeracy and IT sessions.

We believe that all the above is both desirable, and above all achievable when you consider the absolute amounts of investment needed – and the hugely positive impact it can and will have on the future health and prosperity of our country.

Sport embodies who we are as a nation, and we believe Sport Matters to all!

Mary O' Connor

CEO Federation of Irish Sport

Sport Matters... more than ever

Pre-COVID

Research published (September 2021) by Sport Ireland and Sheffield Hallam University illustrated the value of Sport to Ireland pre – covid and illustrates to all why Sport matters.

CONSUMER EXPENDITURE

€3.3bn spent by people in Ireland on sport-related goods and services in 2018

Sport made up 3.1% of all consumer expenditure in Ireland in 2018 (up from 2% in 2008).

The sport economy has grown faster than the economy as a whole over the last 10 years.



€3.3bn

GROSS VALUE ADDED

€3.7bn (GVA) Total value of sport to the Irish economy in 2018.

The sport economy is driven by the participation elements of sport.

Sport's economic contribution was 1.4% of total GVA in 2018 (up from 1.1% in 2008).

A small change in participation rates would have a strong positive impact on the economy.

Any investment aiming to increase sport participation is likely to be self-financing.



EMPLOYMENT

64,080

people were employed in sport in Ireland in 2018. Sport-related jobs account for 2.8% of all Irish employment, up from 2.1% in 2008



VOLUNTEERING

€1.5bn

Estimated economic value of volunteering in sport and physical activity in Ireland in 2018.



HEALTH

97,000

Cases of disease in Ireland in 2019 were prevented by participation in sport and physical activity.

The net value of health care and wider costs savings achieved was €0.4bn in 2019.



Covid19 and the impact on Sport

In May 2021, the Federation of Irish Sport published an 'impact of COVID-19 report' analysing the effect the pandemic has had on Irish sporting bodies. The contributions of Federation member organisations paint a stark picture of the impact both financially and socially and the findings as outlined below illustrate the importance and the need for a strong budget for sport in 2022.

57% 'agree' or 'strongly agree' that they are concerned that participants from u 16 down will lose the habit of regular participation.

79% 'agree' or 'strongly agree' that with adequate financial support, they can rebound more quickly.

53% of LSPs will require ongoing financial support to return to full capacity.

57% believe COVID-19 will result in a permanent loss of sports volunteers.

69% believe minority groups have been disproportionately effected.

74% have availed of at least one government support.

“I believe it important that we take the time to recognise that the pandemic has been a watershed experience for Ireland’s economy and society. We have a unique opening now to learn from this experience, to reflect, and to take the steps to build back better. The Government is committed to recovering and renewing our economy and society, in a balanced, sustainable and inclusive manner, to the benefit of all our people and regions”.

*An Taoiseach
Micheál Martin T.D*



Our Asks

- 1. Continue Sports Resilience Funding**
- 2. Increase National Sports Policy Funding**
- 3. Commit to Multi-Annual Funding**
- 4. Redirect Sugar Sweetened Drinks Tax**
- 5. Redistribute Betting Tax levy**



Our Five Asks

The creation of the National Sports Policy was a major step towards ultimately unlocking the full potential of sport in the future development of our country. To be fair we must recognise that down through the years the government has always funded sport to varying degrees, and the creation of Sport Ireland was further evidence of that commitment, however the publication of the National Sports Policy in 2018 was a truly historic day for sport in Ireland. In it the government set out a roadmap for the next ten years and also gave a firm commitment to doubling funding for sport during that time. There has also been a strong commitment to the creation of sports facilities through various rounds of Sports Capital funding and of course the most visible manifestation has been the creation of our world class National Sports Campus which gets better every year.

It is against this background that we set out " Our Five Asks " which we would hope that the government will consider in relation to budget 2022. We set them out against delivering on the aims and objectives of the NSP and we firmly believe that the finance being requested is relatively modest against the potential returns for the health (both mental and physical), the economic impact and the reputation of Ireland particularly on an international stage.



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Continue Sports Resilience Funding

There is no doubt that COVID-19 has had a major impact 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 resulted in significant financial difficulty for the vast majority of sporting organisations and 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 will be needed to ensure that those organisations not only survive but are able to rebuild and grow in the coming years.

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 supported in the absence of full competition, events, and mass activity. We urge the government to include a provision in the 2022 budget for such further support as well as maintaining access to existing national employment and business supports.

It would be our strong recommendation – and indeed ASK – that the government, through the Department of Sport and Sport Ireland keep this in mind with a view to creating further tranches of the Sports Resilience Funding 2022. We strongly believe that any such Resilience Fund be kept totally separate from that the monies that are expected to be given to NGB's and LSP's as a further step on the road to fulfilling the stated ambitions of the NSP. There are two different tasks – the first to get our NGB's and LSP's back to where they were before Covid struck, the second to expand the People and Programmes elements of their work to meet the targets of the NSP.

We believe it would be worthwhile to remind ourselves of the damage to the sports sector over the last 18 months and the challenges it continues to face.

- 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 particular challenges faced by indoor sports that have been unable to open for the longest period of time
- The GAA, FAI and IRFU have estimated a combined financial loss for their organisations in 2020 of €81 million.
- Cash flow difficulties: organisations have fixed costs which are due regardless of the loss of revenue, such as insurance and maintenance – despite no activity or income being generated.
- The loss of members in 2020 and 2021 and beyond if public confidence to take part in organised sport does not return.
- The retention of volunteers to support the running of activities will be more challenging if the risk and workload continues to increase. Organisations have lost a significant part of their unpaid workforce, due to lockdown measures.





Increase National Sports Policy Funding

It has always been our contention that it is essential that the government's commitment to doubling sports funding (over the ten-year life of the NSP) should be done incrementally, year on year, every year. Never has this been more important than for 2022. Our major ASK is that the government ensure that there is a further tranche of current funding in the budget. Not alone is it very necessary for the NGB's and LSP's but it also copper fastens the government's commitment to both sport and the National Sports Policy.

Ideally what we would like government to do in 2022 is to accelerate the monies already identified in the National Sports Policy. Given the commitment to double the funding for sport over the ten years of the NSP we have viewed that commitment as providing an annual increase in current funding of roughly 10% each year.

In real terms this has meant an additional €5.5 million in the budget for sport in 2020 and an additional €36 million for 2021 to support the delivery of the policy.

Core funding for NGBs increased from €10.8 million in 2018 to €13.845 million in 2020 and despite the additional funding of €36 million in budget 2021 core funding for NGB's remained flat at €13.8million. while core funding for LSP's increased slightly by €800,000. For the coming year we would strongly recommend that government ensure that core funding for NGB's and LSP's is increased to reflect their impactful and transformational work through the implementation of their strategic plans, participation programmes, coach and volunteer development and the employment of professional staff to administer and deliver their sport and physical activity.

To put it in perspective the total monies allocated by Sport Ireland to the NGB's and LSP's core work over the past two years exclusive of monies for the High-Performance programmes or for other designated areas (e.g., Women in Sport) have been €20,979,899 million in 2020 and €21,786, 605 in 2021.

Many of our members 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. To ensure that more and more opportunities are created for people to participate in sport and physical activity and to do so in a way that meets the highest standards of corporate governance an increase in core funding for NGB's and LSP's is fundamental to the success and transformational change of participation and inclusion in Irish society.

The Policy itself 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 2020 LSP report 348,398 people participated in locally delivered initiatives (female: 51%) and 101,035 (29%) of all participants were reached through online/virtual initiatives across the 29 local sports partnerships 700,000 people participated in European Week of Sport events.

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.





Commit to Multi Annual Funding

As far back as 2015 the government set out its belief that sport could benefit from the certainty of multi annual funding. In other words, Irish Sport could make their plans secure in the knowledge as to the kind of government support that could expect over the following years – with the caveat of course that this commitment was being made in the light of there being no unexpected impacts that might see funds being called in for other purposes.

In a sense this was enshrined in the NSP when the government set out its funding plan for sport.

In Action 45 of the National Sports Policy stating, “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. We will support Local Authorities in developing and implementing Local Sports Plans, which will aim to work with local stakeholders to increase participation levels.”

Sport welcomed that commitment and has been delighted that the government has honoured it over the first two years of the policy. However there has never been an actual commitment to multi annual funding.

We believe such a commitment would be hugely beneficial, particularly at this time and our third ASK is that the government give that commitment. **This is not about extra funding but rather about certainty.** Already there have been moves for such certainty for High performance sport. We are asking that it now be extended for all sports funding.

Our suggestion would be that the commitment be based on the four-year Olympic cycle which would be the practice internationally.



Redirect €1.35m (4.5%) of the Sugar Sweetened Drinks Tax

Our fourth ASK concerns the Sugar Sweetened Drinks Tax. Redirect €1.35m (4.5%) of the sweetened sugar drinks tax exchequer returns to sport and physical activity.

The Federation of Irish Sport strongly believes that as part of Budget 2022 provision should be made for monies raised by the Sugar Sweetened Drinks Tax (SSDT) should be seen as an earmark tax to specifically combat obesity and increase participation in sport in Ireland, an earmarked tax is where revenue generated from the SSDT tax is allocated to a specified aim, such as an education programme on reducing child obesity or inactivity. Evidence suggests that taxes that are earmarked for a social or public good increase public and political support for the tax. Linkage of the tax and sport makes for a powerful message.

The sugar sweetened tax was created 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 behavioral 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.

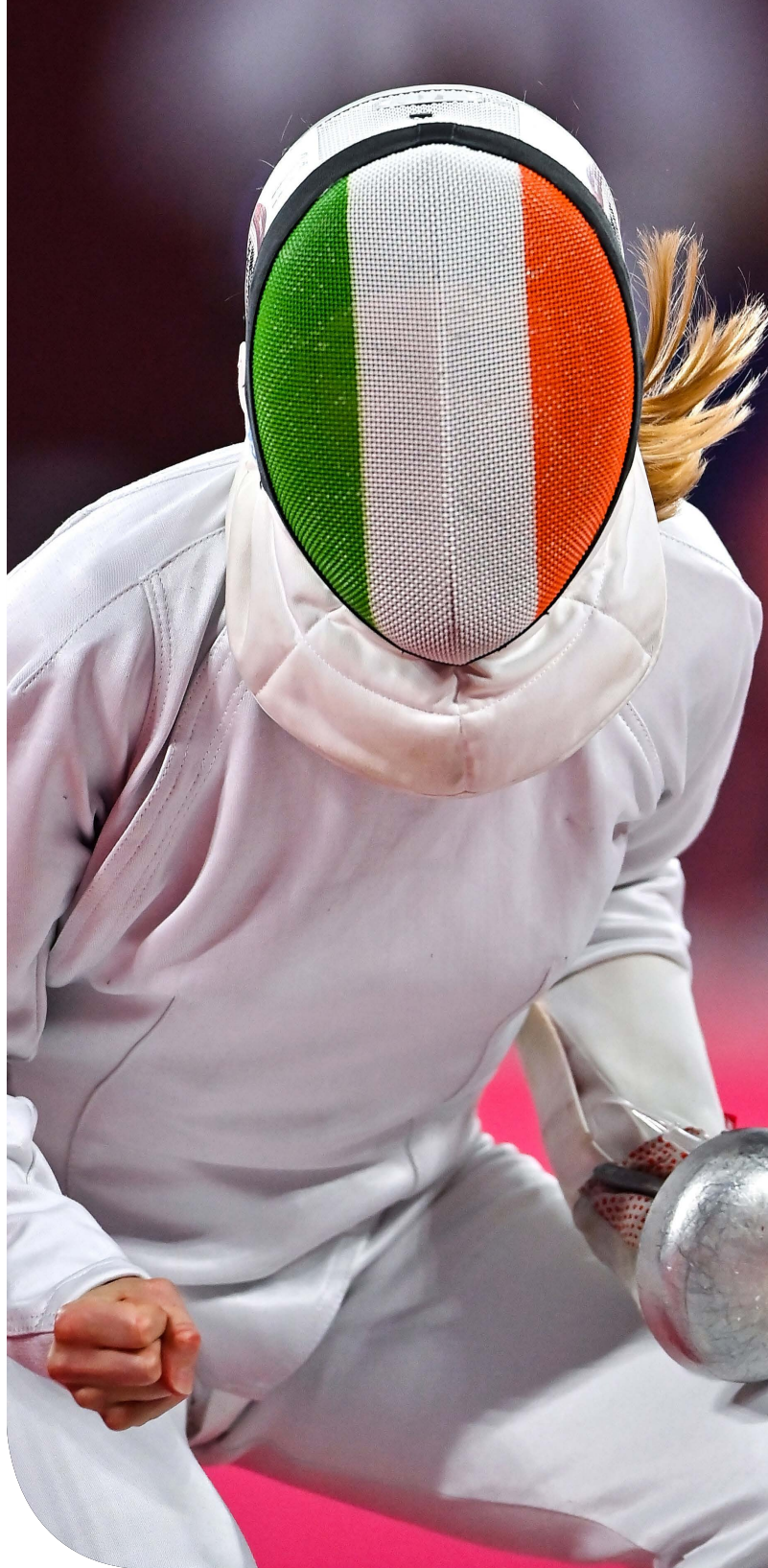
The Federation of Irish Sport are asking the government to redirect a percentage of the sugar tax to facilitate such interventions in the form of education and physical activity. We propose actions such as an increase in after school sports clubs, doubling the PE and sport curriculum in primary and secondary 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. In 2018, millions of children across the UK benefited from the government’s key milestone in tackling childhood obesity from the Soft Drinks Industry Levy, this money went towards doubling the Primary Sports Premium, the creation of a Healthy Pupils Capital Fund to help schools upgrade their sports facilities, and give children access to top quality PE equipment. The levy also gave a funding boost for healthy school breakfast clubs. A similar approach could be explored in Ireland

We need to invest in prevention rather than paying way over the cost for the cure. (The cost of obesity and physical inactivity is €1.5 billion a year to the health budget) By ring-fencing some of this tax and reinvesting it back into the communities and organisations where it will have the greatest impact, it will be an impactful preventative measure rather than act solely as a revenue raiser. It is important to note that earmark taxation has already been enacted in Ireland with regard to ringfencing of funding for the Plastic Bag Levy and Carbon taxes.



¹<https://www.wcrf.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/PPA-Building-Momentum-Report-WEB.pdf>



Redistribute 4.5% of the Betting Tax levy

Our fifth and final ASK concerns the Betting Tax. Redistribute 4.5% of the Betting Tax levy to develop an overarching support and education infrastructure for Sport

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. Revenues accrued from the state betting tax suggest an online and offline betting industry alone in Ireland worth €4.75 billion in 2019.

We are advocating for the redirection and earmarking of a portion of the betting tax to facilitate the establishment of a support and education body for those most affected by gambling addiction and the creation of grassroot diversion programmes.

According to the 2021 report, (Gambling trends, Harms, and responses Ireland in an International context) almost two thirds of Irish people participate in some form

of gambling with up to 55,000 men and women believed to now have a serious gambling disorder. Furthermore, it states that “traditionally betting was mostly done by men in their 20s and 30s in physical locations. Today men, women and youths under 18 are betting and online betting is the fastest growing type of gambling”. The “gamblification of sport” has become “a major issue in many countries” and has resulted in significant numbers of young males experiencing problem gambling in Ireland

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. As recommended in the Gambling trends, harms and responses report² the Federation fully endorses point 32 in the executive summary that “The gambling industry and the Irish state have a ‘duty of care’ towards those who experience gambling harms. A new levy on the industry and funding from the state should be used to fund significantly enhanced public

treatment provision, education and awareness of gambling related harms, and research into harmful gambling and the efficacy of responses to such in Ireland. The industry should not be directly involved in funding gambling research”

The Federation in asking the government to redirect and earmark €2.4m (4.5%) of the betting tax to help develop an overarching support and education infrastructure for Sport in Ireland and in doing so, help the many thousands of families impacted, by safeguarding our athletes, participants and young people who are invested and engaged in sport week in week out.



² Gambling trends, harms and responses: Ireland in an international context – was compiled by of [Maynooth University](#) academics Prof [Aphra Kerr](#), Prof John O'Brennan and [Dr Lucia Vazquez Mendoza](#)

In Conclusion

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 and physical activity's contribution to our resilience through covid-19 has been evident in every community and it will continue to play its part as we emerge from the pandemic. Government support is required more than ever to ensure that sport can survive and thrive in Ireland.

Sport embodies who we are as a nation. Sport Matters to all!

The above submission is made on behalf of all of our members.

Our Members

National Governing Bodies

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 • Golf 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 • 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 • Rugby league 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



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