ESSA-SPORT
Improving the Supply of Skills to the Sector

NATIONAL REPORT

Analysis of labour market realities and challenges in the sport and physical activity sector
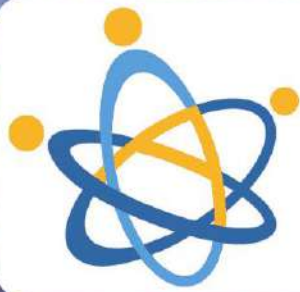
Ireland

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This national report has been produced by the *Institute of Technology Tralee (IT Tralee)* who are a full partner and national coordinator in the ESSA-Sport project, using the methodology and structure provided by the coordinator EOSE.

1

THE ESSA-SPORT PROJECT AND BACKGROUND TO THE NATIONAL REPORT

a) The ESSA-Sport Project

The aim of the ESSA-Sport project, funded by the European Commission under the Erasmus+ programme, was to establish a European Sector Skills Alliance covering the full breadth of the sport and physical activity sector across the European Union. The project was a direct response to the identified needs and challenges of the sport and physical activity sector.

The 3-year project, which began in October 2016, aimed to create a knowledge base and plan for action within the sector on the key issues of skills and workforce development which are central to helping the sector grow, to equip those working or volunteering with the right skills and to enable the sector to fulfil its potential as a social, health and economic driver. The overall ambition was to create an evidential basis for change and improvement, to create a major consultation on skills and to build a lasting consultation network at national and European level to take forward the conclusions and recommendations made in national and European Reports.

The project has identified skill needs and future priorities based on national and European level research and consultation activities.

The consortium, composed of 20 national coordinators and 5 European networks, is proud to have generated new knowledge and data as well as consultation activities at all levels to support policy and priority actions in the sport and physical activity sector.

b) The National Report

This National Report presents the main findings collated and analysed through the ESSA-Sport project at the national level.

Each nation in Europe has its own specificities, realities and challenges in terms of employment and skills in sport and the aims of the national report are:
- to describe the national sport and education systems
- to present new knowledge gathered for the sector in terms of employment and skills
- to propose concrete conclusions and recommendations/ priority actions for implementation at the national level.

c) The sport and education system

The first step of the overall process was for all national coordinators to conduct a series of desk research activities using a common methodology.

Firstly, in Section 2 of this report, there is a presentation of key political, geographical, economic and population factors and characteristics of the national labour market.

Section 3 presents the characteristics, evolution and future perspective of the national sport and physical activity sector/system.

The overall national education and training system is presented in Section 5 whereas the way it is specifically organised in the sport and physical activity sector is presented in Section 6.

d) Sport Labour Market Statistics

Section 4 of the national report focuses on the work carried out by national coordinators and main findings obtained in an attempt to collate available data and statistics on the sport and physical activity labour market in all EU Member States.

Indeed, to make an impact on the sector and allow it to unlock its potential to improve people's lives, it is necessary to have a precise idea of the size and characteristics of the current labour market, and information about changes and tendencies. This information has been missing for many years since the last (partial) attempt to get a European map of employment for the sector took place in 2004 (Vocasport project, EOSE 2004).

The aim of the current initiative was to fill a knowledge gap by undertaking wide research activities at both European and national levels to identify the scale and scope of employment in the emerging and growing sport and physical activity sector.

NACE is the statistical classification of economic activities in the European Community, while ISCO is the International Standard Classification of Occupations. The ESSA-Sport consortium has been successful in collecting the most relevant NACE and ISCO data related to the sport sector, gathered from National Statistics Offices and the European body Eurostat. This data on the size and characteristics of the sport labour market at the national level is presented in section 4.

e) European Employer Skills Survey

Following the desk research and collection of available statistics for the sport labour market, the focus was then to design and launch the first ever European Employer Skills Survey for the sport and physical activity sector. The objective was to consult the widest variety of employers from the sector and collate data on the labour market, skills needs, gaps and shortages, future tendencies/perspectives, realities and difficulties to recruit and retain staff and volunteers.

In the context of a dynamic and complex labour market, gathering information on current and future skill needs can support better matching of education, training and employment.

In recent years, better understanding of labour market needs and skills matching have featured prominently on the policy agenda of many countries, driven by both rapid technological advances and global competition. Skills matching can also help reduce unemployment, particularly among young people. It helps to build a better life for individuals by improving employability, social mobility and inclusion.

The ambition through the design and launch of the first ever European Employer Skills Survey for the sport and physical activity sector was to identify and analyse the growing and changing labour market, to build an up to date picture of employment, and to identify the skill needs and future priorities based on national and EU level research – building a skills map for the sector.

The main results and key information from the European Employer Skills Survey at the national level are presented in Section 7 of this report.

f) Consultations and conclusions

Once all of the employment and skills data had been gathered from sources of labour market statistics and the Employer Skills Survey conducted, the aim in each country was then to discuss and consult on the data with relevant national stakeholders, through meetings, round-tables, one-to-one discussions etc. A summary report on consultation activities implemented at the national level is presented in Section 8.

Finally, it was the aim of the ESSA-Sport project to implement a bottom-up approach and present national findings and conclusions from the entire project and all activities including desk research, data collection and consultation.

The development of recommendations and actions for the sector to tackle the identified challenges will ensure the legacy of the ESSA-Sport project as the sector builds on the data collected for sustained reforms to improve skills of paid staff and volunteers and meet the potential of the sport and physical activity sector. National conclusions and recommendations are presented in Sections 9 and 10 of this report.

2

NATIONAL KEY FACTS AND OVERALL LABOUR MARKET

2. NATIONAL KEY FACTS AND OVERALL DATA ON THE LABOUR MARKET

a) National key facts and data

The Republic of Ireland is situated in north-western Europe. Ireland borders Northern Ireland to the northeast and is otherwise an island nation. It is separated from Great Britain by the Irish Sea.

Ireland is a parliamentary republic consisting of 26 counties. The Parliament is called the Oireachtas. There are two Houses of Parliament: Dáil Éireann (House of Representatives) and Seanad Éireann (Senate). The Dáil has 166 members known as Teachtaí Dála (TD), who are elected using proportional representation with a single transferrable vote (PR-STV). Elections take place at least every five years. The head of government - the Taoiseach (equivalent to a prime minister) - is appointed by the president after nomination by the Lower House (Dáil Éireann) and exercises executive power. The head of state - the president - mostly has ceremonial powers. Ireland is a modern European country with a high standard of living and advanced economy and technology. The capital city, Dublin, is located on the east coast of Ireland.

The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Ireland was worth 276 billion euro in 2016. The GDP value of Ireland represents 0.49 percent of the world economy.

https://tradingeconomics.com/ireland/gdp.

Consumer prices in Ireland rose 0.5 percent year-on-year in February of 2018, compared to a 0.2 percent increase in the previous month. This was the highest inflation rate since November 2017. The inflation rate has been below 1% since 2014. Ireland's unemployment rate is enjoying a downward trend in recent years and is currently approximately 6.1%.

The most important sectors of Ireland's economy in 2016 were industry (38.9 %), wholesale and retail trade, transport, accommodation and food service activities (12.9 %) and public administration, defence, education, human health and social work activities (12.3%). Intra-EU trade accounts for 51% of Ireland's exports (United Kingdom 13%, Belgium 13% and Germany 7%), while 26% go to the United States and 5% to Switzerland.

In terms of imports, 68% come from EU Member States (United Kingdom 29%, France 13% and Germany 10%), while outside the EU 15% come from the United States and 4% from China.

The climate of Ireland is mild, moist and changeable with abundant rainfall and a lack of temperature extremes. The first humans arrived in Ireland between 7,000 and 6,000 BC after the end of the last ice age. In the 4th century AD Christianity spread to Ireland, probably through trade with England and France. The Vikings first attacked Ireland in 795. They looted monasteries, took women and children as slaves. However they were also traders and craftsmen. In the 9th century they founded Ireland's first towns, Dublin, Wexford, Cork and Limerick. They also gave Ireland its name, a combination of the Gaelic word Eire and the Viking word land. In the early 13th century the English extended their control over most of Ireland. In 1948 Ireland became a republic. In 1973 Ireland joined the EEC (forerunner of the EU). In 1999 Ireland joined the Euro. Ireland has 11 members of the European Parliament (MEPs). Ireland negotiated an opt-out from Schengen area.

Today the population of Ireland is 4.9 million. The population density for the State in 2011 was 67 persons per km2. In terms of area, 84,421 km2. A greater proportion of the population is concentrated in the eastern part of the country. The official language of Ireland is Irish (Gaeilge) although the native language for most of the inhabitants is English. The international community in Ireland has been growing rapidly

over the last 30 years. Nationalities in the Republic of Ireland (2011) are as follows, Irish (including dual-Irish/other): 86.9%, UK: 2.5%, Other EU 6.1%, Other Europe: 0.7%, Asia: 1.5%, Africa: 0.9%, USA: 0.2%, Other countries: 0.5%, Multiple nationality: 0.1%, Not stated: 1.2%. ("Census 2016 Summary Results - Part 1" (PDF). Central Statistics Office. 2016.).

b) Characteristics of the overall labour market

Irish Regional Labour Markets Bulletins provide the latest official overview of the labour market at regional level. These reports provide the key statistics regarding the supply and demand for skills in each of Ireland's eight administrative regions, which are the eight NUTS 3 regions (NUTS-Nomenclature of Territorial Units). The NUTS 3 regions are: Border, Dublin, Mid-East, Midland, Mid-West, South-East, South-West and West.2 NUTS 3 regions in Ireland. Dublin has the biggest workforce and tends to have the highest rate of employment while the Border, Midland and West regions tend to have somewhat lower rates of employment.

Ireland's economy is generally referred to as a 'Knowledge Economy' because of the significant focus on high-technology, life sciences and financial services industries. Industries in Ireland include Agriculture, General Industry (Pharmaceuticals and Medical Technologies, Services (e.g. Financial), Food, Computers, Electrical and Electronic) and Tourism.

Ireland has a workforce of about 2.4 million people. Financial services employ about 35,000 people, the ICT and software sectors employ about 50,000 people. The Agriculture, Forestry, Mining and Fishing sectors in Ireland employ about 8% of the workforce and contribute about 5% to GDP. The Pharmaceutical and Medical Technologies sectors employ approximately 75,000 people. Foreign-owned multinational companies operating in Ireland account for a significant portion of Ireland's Gross Domestic Product. These foreign-owned companies make up 14 of the top 20 Irish companies, based on turnover, and employ about one quarter of the Irish private sector labour force. Ireland is one of the biggest exporters of pharmaceuticals and medical technologies and software-based products in the world.

Tourism contributes significantly to the Irish economy. Nine million people visited the country in 2017. Economic activities related to tourism, account for about 4% of GNP. Tourism in Ireland employs approximately 200,000 people. Most tourists visiting Ireland come from the United Kingdom, the United States, Germany and France.

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tourism_in_the_Republic_of_Ireland)

The Alcoholic beverage industry in Ireland employs, directly and indirectly, nearly 100,000 people.

Ireland's economy grew significantly from the mid-1990's until around 2007, giving rise to the term 'Celtic Tiger'. The global financial crisis in 2007-8 and thereafter, was accompanied by a crisis in the Irish banking sector and a related dramatic decrease in construction and property values. Recent years (since 2013) have seen a continued growth in employment in Ireland with a significant recovery in persons employed. Growth was particularly strong in a number of sectors, including construction, accommodation and food, and education.

In terms of occupations, opportunities are evident for those employed in professional occupations, skilled trades and personal services. An increase in inward migration (including an increase in the number of new employment permits being issued) indicates that Ireland has re-established itself as an attractive place to work.

(https://careersportal.ie/work_employment/labourmarket.php) Health and fitness in Ireland is developing as people are becoming more active. According to Marketing Institute of Ireland report in 2016, the "marketplace for gyms and fitness centres is changing as a result of the cost-cutting consumer mindset – leading to the expansion of no-frills 'budget' gyms".

https://mii.ie/blogpost/1316142/258598/Exercise--Fitness-Ireland-September-2016-Report

3

THE NATIONAL SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY SECTOR

3. THE NATIONAL SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY SECTOR

a) National Sports Sector: Main Stakeholders

The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport is responsible for formulating policy and overseeing its implementation. Sport Ireland is the statutory agency for sport and has primary responsibility for implementing National Sports Policy. Sport Ireland was established under the Sport Ireland Act in October 2015. Sport is defined in accordance with the Council of Europe definition of sport.

The National Physical Activity Plan was launched in January 2016 with the aim of increasing participation in all types of physical activity through sixty actions across eight themes; public awareness, education and communication, children and young people, health, environment, workplaces, sport and physical activity in the community, research, monitoring and evaluation and implementation through partnership. The plan operates across all of Government departments including heath, education, sport, transport, environment, etc. A link to the plan is available below.

www.getirelandactive.ie/Professionals/National-PA-Plan.pdf.

The National Physical Activity Plan, the document outlines the lead organisations and the partner organisations for each action which includes the Department of Health, the HSE, the Department of Education and Skills, Department of Children and Youth Affairs, Local Authorities etc. Sport Ireland is the lead organisation on seven of these actions:

- Action 6 "conduct an annual National Week of Physical Activity and Sport to link in with the European Week of Sport",
- Action 41 "continue to support the Community Sport and Physical Activity Hubs in disadvantaged areas",
- Action 43 "rollout a new Active Communities Walking Programme in all LSP areas and support over 500 new active community walking groups around the country under the Get Ireland Walking initiative",
- Action 45 "develop physical activity for health culture in Ireland through the development of the new Get Ireland Running, Get Ireland Cycling, Get Ireland Swimming initiatives",
- Action 46, "strengthen and enhance the capacity of the LSPs to further develop locally led plans and more long term sustainable physical activity programmes"
- Action 47 "continue to support the work of the National Governing Bodies of sport in implementing programmes to promote physical activity" with the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport. In addition to this Sport Ireland is also the partner organisation on an additional twelve actions, particularly among the research and evaluation action areas, and will likely be involved in the thirteen actions which specify "all stakeholders".
- Action 48 "develop programmes to address transitions and drop out from physical activity and sport" and is the co lead on two actions,

In implementing the National Physical Activity Plan, Sport Ireland will work with National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs), Local Sports Partnerships (LSPs), Local Authorities, Government Departments, schools, community groups, etc.

b) Additional Stakeholders in the Sports Sector

Apart from the Department of Tourism, Transport and Sport, and Sport Ireland whose roles have been described above, the following represents a summary of the other stakeholders in sport in Ireland.

A number of other Government Departments are involved in areas relating to sport and physical activity:

- The Department of Education and Skills is responsible for education policy including that relating to Physical Education in the schools.

- The Department of Children and Youth Affairs develop policies focussing on child welfare and protection. Its policy document called Better Outcomes Brighter Futures includes a number of commitments around getting children involved in sport and physical activity as a means of fostering well-being.

- The Department of Health is responsible for health policy and has developed a policy framework called "Healthy Ireland" which places a strong emphasis on strategies which enhance health and well-being (including the development of the National Physical Activity Plan and the National Plan for Obesity). The Health Services Executive (HSE) implements health policy and provides services. The Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government is responsible for planning and the built environment including physical infrastructure that might facilitate physical activity (walking and cycling ways).

All of these Departments are name-checked to carry out actions under the National Physical Activity Plan.

There are 31 Local Authorities responsible for local planning and service delivery. They are also charged with lead responsibility under the National Physical Activity Plan for actions relating to delivering a network of cycling routes and footpaths, recreational spaces etc.

There is a national network of 27 Local Sports Partnerships which were established to drive participation in sport at a local level. LSPs comprise representatives of various sectors including sport, community, Local Authority, health and education. They work together to develop participation programmes and initiatives locally.

There are over 60 State-recognised National Governing Bodies of Sport in Ireland responsible for regulating and managing their sports. Some of these are organised on a 32 county basis (all island) while some are organised on a 26 county basis (Republic of Ireland). A number of them cater specifically for people with physical and intellectual disabilities.

Ireland Active is the National representative body for the fitness and leisure sector in Ireland. [The definition of sport encompasses such activities which are extremely popular among adults in Ireland - see below].

The Olympic Council of Ireland and Paralympic Ireland are responsible for matters relating to the Olympics and Paralympics respectively in Ireland. Their importance is around high performance sport matters.

The Cara Centre for Adapted Physical Activity (Sport Inclusion Ireland) provides supports and services aimed at increasing participation in sport and physical activity among persons with a disability.

Age and Opportunity run sport and physical activity programmes for people aged 50+.

c) Economics and the Sports Sectors

Consumers' expenditure on Sport / Sport-related goods and services amounted to 1.885 billion euro in 2008. This represented 2% of total Irish economy consumers' expenditure, 1.4% of total Irish economy's Gross Value-Added / GDP and 2% of total Irish employment. The net economic value of volunteering in sport is estimated as being in the range of 322-582 million euro.

The economic impacts of sport described in this study include a significant contribution from the sport-related tourism/overseas sector. The contribution of tourism and the overseas sector to Ireland in terms of flows into the domestic economy was €200.8 million per annum in 2008. This consists of overseas tourists expenditures on admissions to sport events and purchases of sports equipment, clothing and footwear in / from Ireland. It also includes the contribution of the overseas sector to prize income in Ireland, and the purchase of Irish-made sports TV programmes and Irish-owned broadcasting rights by TV networks in the out-of-state sector.

It is estimated that the expenditures of €200.8 million generates additional spending of €454.4 million in the economy through direct, indirect and induced effects. These expenditures lead to 2,859 FTE jobs in Ireland, which result in additional wages/salaries of €101.5 million to Irish households. These overseas sector / tourism-supported jobs create additional Gross Value Added of €188.6 million, which is the tourism / overseas-sector's contribution to the domestic economy.

In addition to the direct and indirect economic impacts of sport, there are a number of important wider socioeconomic benefits arising from participation in sport and sport-related volunteering. Among the key benefits which this assessment has highlighted include:

- The benefits for well-being through participation in sport;
- The particular benefits for health through increased physical activity;
- Through sustaining a healthier population, sport reduces the costs of the health service;
- Increased productivity with associated economic benefits;
- Community benefits, including the contribution to social capital and social cohesion arising from participation and volunteering more generally;
- The wider impacts on the Irish population arising from investment in success of elite sport,
- incentivising further participatory and community-related benefits; and
- The financial benefits for the Exchequer through increased economic activity and reduced health service costs.

https://www.sportireland.ie/Research/Economic_Impact_of_Sport_2010_/Indecon.pdf

The Indecon Report for Sport Ireland, 2010 highlights the very significant contribution provided by sport to the Irish economy. It also demonstrates the vital role played by sport in supporting the development of social capital and in contributing to the health and quality of life of the Irish population. Importantly, the assessment also demonstrates that there is a very significant net overall return on government investment in sport in Ireland. A number of implications for government policy on the development of sport in Ireland and recommendations for future research in this area arise from the detailed work undertaken as part of this study, which are summarised below.

- The very significant contribution of sport in the Irish economy, in terms of spending, output and particularly employment supported, has not been fully acknowledged and should be highlighted to policy-makers and the wider population;

- The vital role played by sport and sport-related volunteering in supporting the development of social capital and local communities, and contributing to the health and quality of life of the Irish population must also be highlighted;

- It is important that government policy takes into account the important finding of this study that government investment in sport generates a strong positive return for the Exchequer, while participation in sport also reduces the risk of obesity and lifestyle-related costs facing the health service;

- There are deficiencies in both the collation and dissemination of data/information at the level of individual sports and sporting organisations in Ireland that should be addressed as part of the ongoing development of information systems. This should include an annual census of sports clubs and associations across all National Governing Bodies;

- Further research is required in relation to the economic and other benefits of sport at regional and local level in Ireland.

d) Sports Facilities

Ireland Active (https://www.irelandactive.ie/) estimates that there are 700 leisure, health and fitness facilities across Ireland. Of that figure there are an estimated 450 swimming pools with 150 being public (i.e. Local Authority and other public facilities) and 300 being private (200 of which are in hotels).

Team sports were more likely to be taken up at a sports club (39%) or college/school (27%) and individual sports were more likely to be taken up at a local sports facility (31%) or a club (24%).

72% of participants do not have to search for facilities and 92% have no difficulties finding a suitable location. The same proportion was also satisfied with the availability of place to participate.

Ireland Active provide a list of white flag accredited leisure facilities on their website. Safety, hygiene, customer engagement & HR criteria are considered for white flag accreditation (http://www.irelandactive.ie/resources/countyId/10/). Swim Ireland also provide a map of swimming pools available across Ireland (http://www.swimireland.ie/locate-a-pool/). As previously mentioned Local Sports Partnerships are established in every country to provide sporting opportunities for locals and information on clubs. National Governing Bodies are also a resource for clubs available for specific sports. Local Authorities (LA) also have information on public facilities within their area of responsibility although this may not be systematic throughout all LA areas.

The Central Statistics Office (www.cso.ie) included a module on sport and physical activity the 2013 Quarterly National Household Survey - http://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/q-sp/qsp2013q02/. The survey found that sports clubs were the most popular location for participants (27.6%) followed by public places (24.4%), gyms (24%), public swimming pools (6.4%), the countryside (3.2%), community halls (2.8%), schools or colleges (2.7%) and other (8.8%).

While the Irish Sports Monitor does not ask questions regarding location, the 2015 ISM included a module asking participants where they initially began playing their current sport/activity. 30% of participants took up their current sport at a local sports facility, 26% took up the activity at a sports clubs, 16% initially participated in a public space, 13% began the activity in school/college and 12% began the activity at home/with family.

e) The role and contribution of the voluntary sector and non-profit sport sector

The Irish Sports Monitor is a survey carried out by Sport Ireland to monitor adult participation in sport in Ireland (https://www.sportireland.ie/Research/The_Irish_Sports_Monitor/). The latest survey was published in 2017. 10.8 per cent of respondents to the ISM 2017 volunteered in sport on a regular basis, with Gaelic football (3.4 per cent), soccer (2.2 per cent), hurling/camogie (2 per cent), rugby (0.6 per cent) and running (0.5 per cent) the most common sports for which people volunteered. It is estimated that almost 270,000 people participate in some form of sport-related voluntary activity in Ireland.

On an annual basis, it is estimated that approximately 37.2 million volunteer-hours are spent on sport-related activities. The annual value of volunteering in sport ranges between a lower-bound estimate of €322 million annually and an upper-bound estimate of €582 million annually. This underscores the important role and value played by volunteering in Irish sport. In economic terms, volunteers act as an input (of labour) into the conduct of amateur community sport and elite professional sport. Without them, there would be fewer sports activities and / or they would be more expensive to produce. Volunteers, then, play a major role in sustaining the high level of sporting activity in Ireland, with all the associated health and social benefits, and also contribute significantly to the development of elite level sport in Ireland, which has done so much to enhance the international prestige of Irish sport.

(https://www.sportireland.ie/Research/Economic_Impact_of_Sport_2010_/Indecon.pdf)

f) The levels of sport and physical activity participation

The Irish Sports Monitor (ISM) is a nationally representative survey of adults aged 16 years and older, since 2007 seven reports have been commissioned to explore participation and attitudes to sport and exercise. The most recent report (ISM 2017) suggests that personal exercise, (e.g. gym membership), is the most popular sport / physical activity (12.4%), with swimming (8.5%), running (6.2%), cycling (5.1 %) and soccer (4.1 %) the next most popular. Participation in soccer has decreased by 0.7 percentage points since the 2015 report.

The 10 most popular sports in Ireland in 2017 are the same as in 2015: with the exception of cycling (5.1 per cent) all other sports have a regular participation rate of below 5 per cent. The order of popularity of the top Irish sports remains the same as in the previous (2015) study, with the exception of Gaelic football which is now the eighth most popular sporting activity in terms of participation, having previously been the ninth most popular.

Nearly one third (32.6 per cent) of the Irish population achieve the minimum level of activity set by the National Physical Activity Guidelines, while the proportion categorised as sedentary remains unchanged (13 %) since 2015. Some 45.3 per cent of men and 40.8 per cent of women take part in sport/exercise, representing a decrease among men (from 47.2 per cent in 2015) and a slight increase among women (from 39.3 per cent in 2015). This gender gap is narrower than at any point since Irish Sports Monitor was introduced in 2007.

Just under a fifth of respondents attended a sporting event, with Gaelic football, soccer, hurling/camogie, rugby, swimming and running the most popular among spectators.

The main findings of the 2017 ISM were:
- the most popular sports to participate in are personal exercise (12.4%), swimming (8.5%), running (6.2%), cycling (5.1%) and soccer (4.1%).

- 45.3% of men and 40.8% of women take part in sport/exercise. This represents a decrease among men (from 47.2% in 2015) and a slight increase among women (from 39.3% in 2015).

- an increase in the proportions walking for recreation (from 63.6% to 66.2%), and the proportion walking for transport (from 45.6% to 46.6%).

- an increase in the proportion that is highly active, with almost a third (32.6%) now achieving the minimum level of activity set by the National Physical Activity Guidelines.

- almost 9 out of 10 (86%) feel that there are more opportunities now to participate in sport than there were 10 years ago.

- 28% currently use technology to measure the amount or nature of physical activity they undertake, with 43% having used it at some stage in the past.

The ISM Report 2017 is available at:

https://www.sportireland.ie/Research/Irish%20Sports%20Monitor%202017%20-%20Half%20Year%20Report/Irish%20Sports%20Monitor%202017.pdf

Those with a long term illness/disability are less likely to take part in sport and exercise (31.6%). In 2017, Sport Ireland launched its Policy on Participation in Sport by People with Disabilities. The policy describes Sport Ireland's intention to support and promote opportunities for people with disabilities to take part in sport and physical activity and in athletes with disabilities. The policy identifies key organisations such as National Governing Bodies of Sport, Local Sports Partnerships, Cara and Paralympics Ireland which will help ensure enhanced opportunities for all to participate in sport. The Sport Ireland Policy on Participation in Sport by People with Disabilities affirms Paralympics Ireland's role as the lead agency in the support of high performance athletes with disabilities. It also affirms Cara's role in advocating for the inclusion of people with disabilities in sport and physical activity, encouraging a national vision while supporting local provision, and building capacity through education and training programmes.

https://www.sportireland.ie/Media/Latest_News/Sport%20Ireland%20Launch%20Policy%20on%20Participation%20in%20Sport%20by%20People%20with%20Disabilities.html

g) Sports Clubs and Membership

In 2010 the report "Assessment of Economic Impact of Sport in Ireland" estimated that there were 12,000 sports clubs across Ireland with approximately 1.7 million members. Below are the figures for the number of clubs per sport and the estimated number of members as well as the average size per club. It should be noted that some of these clubs operate on a all island basis.

NGB	Number of Clubs	Estimated Total number of Members	Average Club Size (Members)
ONAKAI	74	6,528	88
Angling Council of Ireland	367	20,000	54
Athletics Association of Ireland	266	49,117	185
Badminton Ireland	378	13,897	37
Basketball Ireland	223	16,500	74
Baton Twirling Sport Association of Ireland	21	951	45

Bowling League of Ireland	31	2343	76
Cumann Camogaíochta Na Gael	409	71,200	174
Cerebral Palsy Sport Ireland	19	305	16
Comhairle Liathroid Laimhe Na Eireann	142	9,486	65
Cricket Ireland	52	5,406	104
Croquet Association of Ireland	8	222	28
Cycling Ireland	139	4,535	33
Irish football Association	2,454	250,125	102
Cumann Luthchleas Gael	1,908	550,000	288
Golfing Union Of Ireland	329	166,419	506
Horse Sport Ireland	450	25,996	58
Horseshoe Pitchers Association Of Ireland	51	612	12
Irish Amateur Archery Association	30	510	17
Irish Amateur Boxing Association	211	10,550	50
Irish Amateur Rowing Union	55	3,537	64
Irish Amateur Weightlifting Association	18	507	28
Irish Amateur Wrestling Association	13	830	64
Irish American Football Association	20	985	49
Irish Blind Sports	14	393	28
Irish Canoe Union	85	6,220	73
Irish Clay Pigeon Shooting Association	35	1,075	31
Irish Deaf Sports Association	6	322	54
Irish Fencing Federation	26	1722	66
Irish Gymnastics Limited	84	6,826	81
Irish Hockey Association	109		23,239
Irish Judo Association	41	894	22
Irish Ladies Golf Union	318	49,822	157
Irish Martial Arts Commission	238	13,000	55
Irish Olympic Handball Association	12	3,221	268
Irish Orienteering Association	21	2,464	117

Bol Chumann Na Eireann	96	2,964	31
Irish Rugby Football Union	167	62,596	375
Irish Sailing Association	104	25,391	244
Irish Squash	40	1,786	45
Irish Surfing Association	14	2,758	197
Irish Table Tennis Association	65	2,171	33
Irish Taekwondo Union	24	590	25
Irish Tenpin Bowling	20	2,568	128
Irish Tug Of War Association	58	560	10
Irish Underwater Council	69	2,468	36
Irish Waterski Federation	10	2,026	203
Irish Wheelchair Association	76	2,174	29
Cumann Peile Gael Na mBan	778	117,514	151
Motor Cycling Union of Ireland	40	4780	120
Motorsport Ireland	36	6,892	191
Mountaineering Ireland	112	9,308	83
National Community Games	670	38,340	57
Pitch & Putt Union of Ireland	118	10,309	87
Racquetball Association Of Ireland			28
Shooting Sports Association Of Ireland	37	3,745	101
ROI Snooker & Billiards Association	43	500	
Special Olympics Ireland	368	9443	
Speleological Union Of Ireland	17	179	11
Swim Ireland	105	10,130	96
Tennis Ireland	138	49,620	360
Triathlon Ireland	46	3,548	77
Volleyball Association Of Ireland	39	1,000	26
Total	11,978	1,695,029	142

(Information provided by Sport Ireland in 2018.)

h) High Performance and Professional sports

The below information was taken from the Sport Ireland High Performance unit for the year 2017 and displays the number of funded athletes per National Governing body and type of funding provided for athletes.

National Governing Body	Podium	World Class	International
	(€40,000)	(€20,000)	(€12,000)
Athletics Ireland	2	3	8
Badminton Ireland	0	1	3
Irish Amateur Boxing Association	1	3	1
Irish Canoe Union	0	0	5
Irish Clay Target Shooting Association	0	0	2
Cycling Ireland	3	4	7
Paralympics Ireland	6	2	6
Pentathlon Ireland	0	2	0
Rowing Ireland	3	2	3
Irish Sailing Association	1	2	1
Swim Ireland	0	1	7
Triathlon Ireland	0	0	1*
Irish Taekwondo Union	0	0	1*
Hockey Ireland	0	0	1*

*Money is given as pool funding to NGBs to support specific athletes and is not given directly to athletes. (Information provided by Sport Ireland in 2018.)

In addition to the above the Irish Rugby Football Union also have players contracted on a full time basis and the Football Association of Ireland have players on a full time and semi-professional basis.

Sport Ireland is responsible for the promotion and development of sport in Ireland. In planning for the future, Sport Ireland undertakes a consultation process focusing on women of all ages and backgrounds. This consultation process examines how Ireland can encourage more females to take part and flourish in all aspects of sport whether as participants, volunteers, high performance athletes or employees working in sport:

https://www.sportireland.ie/Participation/Women_in_Sport/

4

SPORT LABOUR MARKET STATISTICS

4. SPORT LABOUR MARKET STATISTICS

a) Ireland: Sport Labour Market Survey

The following is a summary of the findings of the existing national statistics on employment trends in the physical activity, physical education and sports sectors from desk research activities.

The data for this section was collated from the Irish Central Statistics Office and Eurostat and other sources where indicated. The sports sector in Ireland is relatively minor in relation to the major sectors (Pharmaceuticals; IT Services, Hardware, Software; Food / Agriculture, etc) and is closely related to other sectors (e.g. tourism, hospitality) and therefore data was not always readily identifiable as sports-specific. The two digit NACE Rev.2 employment estimate (including two digit code 85 and 93) is the most detailed level of data available from the Labour Force Survey (LFS). Three and four digit disaggregation is not available. The data beyond 93 (i.e. two digits) was not available for one of two reasons, reflecting the relatively small size of the sector:

"Data has been suppressed to protect the confidentiality of individual enterprises"

or

"falls under the limit of discretion / uncertainty"

The population of the Republic of Ireland is increasing. It has increased from 4.588 million in 2011 to 4.761 million in 2016, an increase of approximately 3.8% during those years. The population in all age categories (0-14, 15-24, 25-54, 55-64 and 65+) exhibit changes during the same period. The population of citizens aged 65+ increased by more than 100,000 and the 55-64 category also saw a significant increase. There appeared to be a slight decrease in the 15-24 age group.

The total number of employed persons in most NACE categories recorded (F, G, H, I, M, N, P and Q) show an increase between 2011 and 2016, especially in Construction (F; ~30,000), Accommodation and Food Services (I; approximately 29,000) and Professional, Scientific and Technical (M; 30,000).
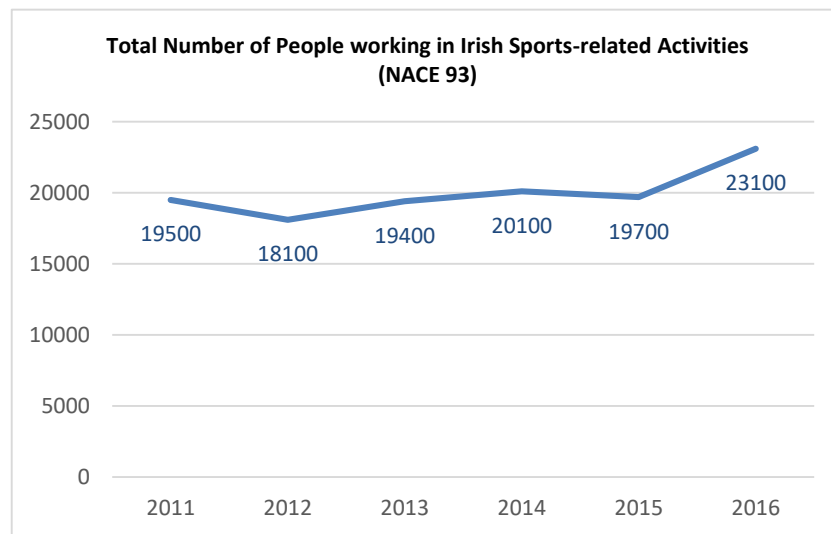
Under NACE Code 93.1 Sports activities, there has been a combined increase of 2,100 persons working in the constituent sectors. Detailed information on NACE sub-codes relating to the Sports Sector in Ireland is not available. This is due to the sector being relatively small. Additional information would, however, enable tracking of the development of the sector as well as trends therein. Sport Ireland have indicated that there were approximately 12,000 sports clubs with 1.7 million members in 2010 – some operating across the entire island of Ireland (i.e. including Northern Ireland).

A study in 2008 (Indecon Report by Irish Sports Council) around the Economic Impact of Sport, 2010 (http://www.kildare.ie/kildaresp/Publications/LinkToDocument,26282,en.pdf) presented the sectoral breakdown of significant contribution of sport and sport-related spending to employment across the Irish economy. The report finds a total of 38,225 full-time equivalent jobs supported directly and indirectly through sport and sport-related spending. The commercial non-sport sector (which supplies goods and services into the sports sectors) accounted for close to 15,000 of these jobs or 40% of the total, while the voluntary sport sector contributed 8,826 jobs (23% of the total) and the commercial sport sector supported 8,134 of the jobs or 21% of the overall. Sport-related activities and spending supported a total of 6,180 full-time equivalent jobs (16% of the total) in the central and local government sectors. An updated report on similar figures is not available.

b) The total number of persons working in the 93 'Sports Activities' sector
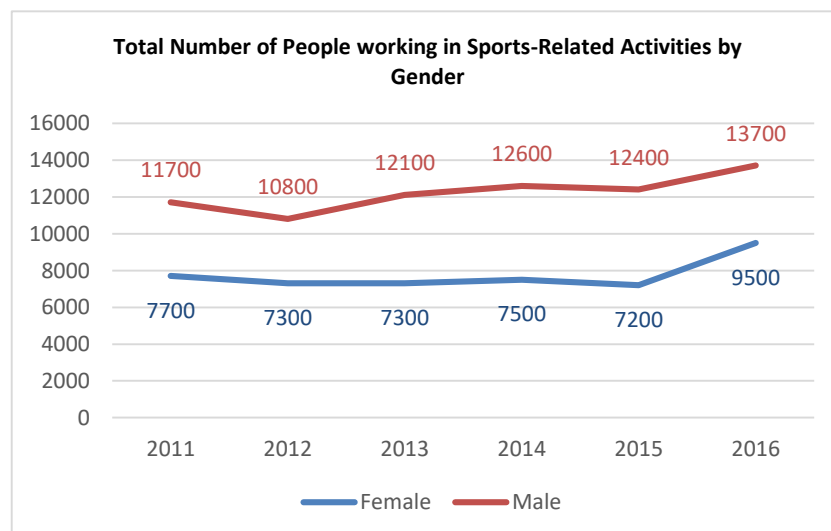
The total population working in the Irish sports-related sector in 2016 was 23100. This represents the highest figure and a generally increasing trend over the previous 6 years. This trend appears somewhat fragile however, in that some decreases in employment numbers are also evident, for example in 2012 and in 2015. This data is ISCO code 342

(Source: appsso.eurostat.ec.eurpoa.eu/nui/submitviewtableaction.do). The data is limited in that it reports all employees in the sector – managers, cleaners, administrative staff, fitness instructors, coaches, tutors, etc. It was not possible to determine numbers of self-employed people, such as fitness instructors, personal trainers, swim teachers, etc., nor if these were working in a full-time or part-time capacity.

Total Number of People working in Irish Sports-related Activities (NACE 93)

Year	Number
2011	19500
2012	18100
2013	19400
2014	20100
2015	19700
2016	23100

c) Persons working in the Sports Sector by Gender

The number of male employees has exceeded the number of female employees in sports related activities throughout the presented years. The average difference is +35.5% of male employees compared to female employees in this sector between 2011 and 2016. The increase in employment between 2015 and 2016 is evident in both genders.

Total Number of People working in Sports-Related Activities by Gender

Year	Female	Male
2011	7700	11700
2012	7300	10800
2013	7300	12100
2014	7500	12600
2015	7200	12400
2016	9500	13700

d) Persons Working in the Sports Sector by Contract Type

Contract type data was found for 2016 only. In this case, 14116 employees were full-time and 9681 were part-time. These data are NACE 93. ISCO Code 342 figures (also from Eurostat) quote 4942 employees as full-time and 4053 part-time employees. The Irish Central Statistics Office cannot provide information beyond NACE 93. It is not clear in many cases if people working as fitness instructors, outdoor instructors, coaches or personal trainers are employees or self-employed agents working on a given premises. This seems to vary from facility to facility. The Golden Pages telephone directory (accessed March 2019) lists 197 private personal trainers.
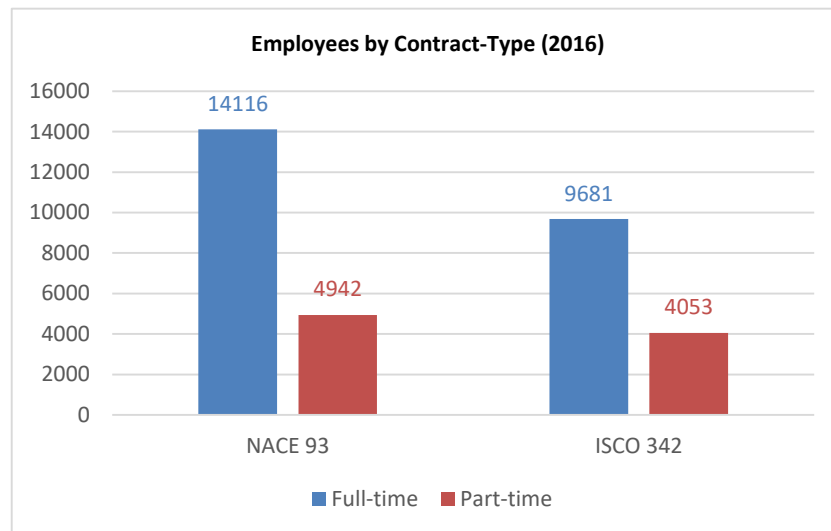

e) Persons working in the Sports Sector by Age Category

The number of employees in the sector by category of age was difficult to retrieve, firstly in the sports sector and secondly for the age categories specified in the ESSA-Sport report template. ISCO Code 342 data for 2016 only suggests the following breakdown:

<25 years	26-49 years	50+ years
1374	6259	1361

NACE 93 data (www.cso.ie) quotes the following:

Year	Total Employees	15-29 years	30-64 years
2011	19500	8000	11000
2012	18100	6700	11100
2013	19400	6700	12300
2014	20100	7100	12700
2015	19700	7400	12000
2016	23100	9100	13500

Employees in the Sports Sector by Age
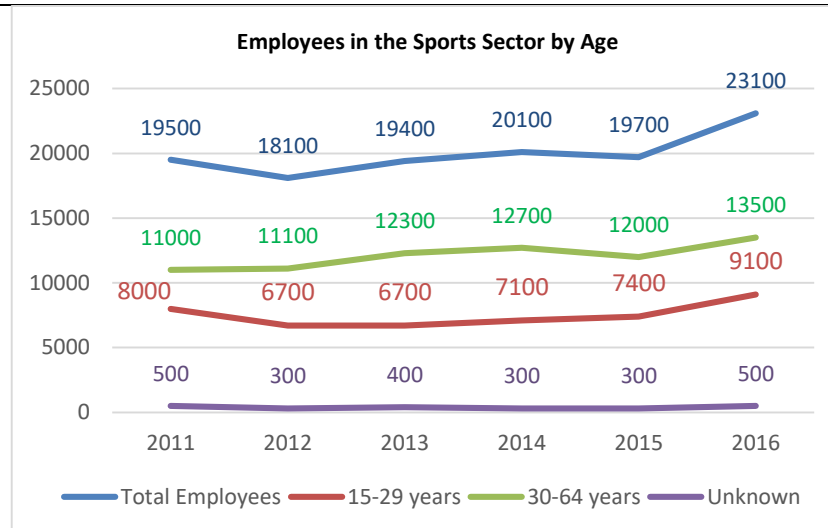
There is some inconsistency in the figures. A shortfall ("unknown") reflected in the figure above suggests an average discrepancy of 383 per year in terms of employees of unknown / unreported age. The trend year on year is reasonably consistent across the age categories.

f) Persons working in the Sports Sector by Level of Education

Some longitudinal information was found for the number of persons working in this sector by level of education. The data was available in the categories Level 1 and 2 education (up to lower secondary education), Level 3 or 4 level education (up to post-secondary but non-tertiary education), and Level 5 or greater (tertiary education) (Eurostat: Employment in Sport by Educational Attainment Level: [sprt.emp.edu]). The sector is characterised by, on average, 16% of employees with Level 1-2 education, 39% of employees with Level 3-4 education and 45% of employees with Level 5-8 education. There appears to have been no significant change in these proportions between 2011 and 2016.

Employees in the Sector by Level of Education
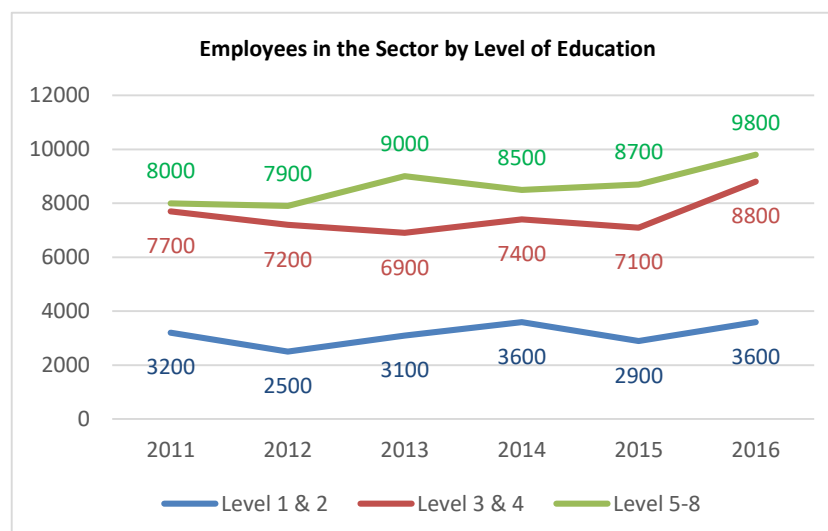

The data suggest lower level education employment has reached a plateau while employment of people with intermediate and higher (tertiary level) education is experiencing an increasing trend, but these are not significant as yet.

The Irish Central Statistics Office cannot provide information beyond NACE 93. The following can be estimated from other sources of information:

- 617 Leisure Centres (2018) probably have one manager in each case.
- 447 Gyms (not in leisure centre) probably have one manager / owner in each case.
- 119 Swimming pools (not in hotels) probably have one manager in each case.
- 413 Swimming pools (in hotels) probably have one manager in each case.

It is not clear in many cases if people working as fitness instructors, outdoor instructors, coaches or personal trainers are employees or self-employed agents working on a given premises. This seems to vary from facility to facility. The Golden Pages telephone directory (accessed March 2019) lists 197 private personal trainers.
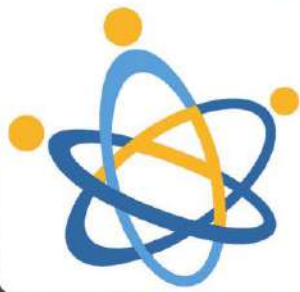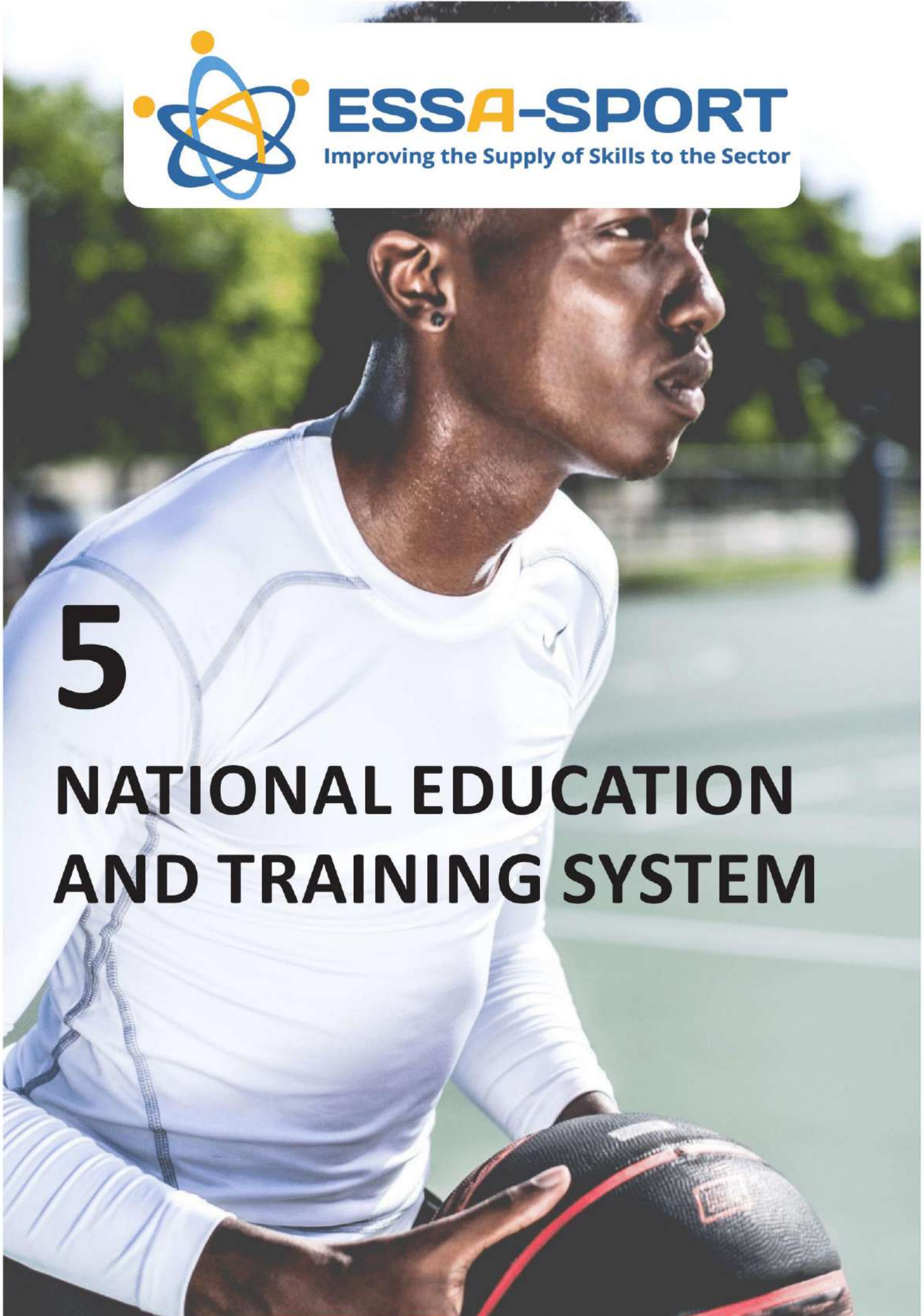
5

NATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

a) National Training and Education System – Ireland

Education is compulsory for children in Ireland from the ages of six to 16 or until students have completed three years of second-level education. The Irish education system is made up of primary, second, third-level and further education. State-funded education is available at all levels, unless you choose to send your child to a private institution.

b) Pre-Primary or Pre-school education:

Pre-school education is usually provided by privately funded childcare facilities or providers. The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme provides a free year of early childhood care and education for children of pre-school age. Some pre-school initiatives focused on children at risk are funded by the Department of Education and Skills.

The compulsory school age in Ireland is 6 and all forms of pre-primary education are optional. However, children from the age of 4 can be enrolled in infant classes in primary schools. Nearly 40% of 4-year-olds and virtually all 5-year-olds attend primary school, where early education is provided in infant classes.

In addition to the provision for children in the infant classes in primary schools, the Department of Education and Skills funds some specific pre-primary services. These include:

- The Early Start Programme, a pre-primary initiative in designated areas of urban disadvantage, for children who are most at risk of not succeeding in education. The total number of spaces provided by the existing 40 Early Start centres is 1,650.
- The Rutland Street Project, a programme in a Dublin inner city community. Although not part of Early Start, it was used to pilot many of the approaches later incorporated in the Early Start project.

With the exception of the above, early childhood education and care services in Ireland are delivered outside the formal education system, by a diverse range of private, community and voluntary interests and are described variously as crèches, nurseries, pre-schools, naíonraí (Irish language pre-schools), playgroups and daycare services. Government investment in such provision is primarily implemented by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA).

The Department of Education and Skills has a key role in supporting quality within the sector and works closely with the DCYA. The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) produced an Aistear-in-Action toolkit which is a resource for use in early years settings showing how the Aistear themes of Wellbeing, Identity and Belonging, Exploring and Thinking and Communication translate into practice. While participation is voluntary, 67,000 or 94% of eligible children are enrolled in pre-school services for the 2011/12 school year.

c) Primary (first-level) education

Children do not have to attend school until the age of six but it is usual for children to begin school the September following their fourth birthday. Four-year-olds and five-year-olds are enrolled in the junior or senior infant classes.

The primary education sector includes state-funded primary schools, special schools and private primary schools. The state-funded schools include religious schools, non-denominational schools, multi-denominational schools and Gaelscoileanna (Irish-medium schools). For historical reasons, most primary

schools are state-aided parish schools, although this pattern is changing. The state pays the bulk of the building and running costs of state-funded primary schools, but a local contribution is made towards their running costs. Teachers' salaries are paid by the Department of Education and Skills, and the schools are inspected by the Department's Inspectorate.

Although children are not obliged to attend school until the age of six, almost all children begin school in the September following their fourth birthday. Nearly 40% of four-year-olds and almost all five-year-olds are enrolled in infant classes in primary schools (sometimes called national schools). Primary education consists of an eight-year cycle: junior infants, senior infants, and first to sixth classes. Pupils normally transfer to post-primary education at the age of twelve.

The general aims of primary education are:

- To enable the child to live a full life as a child and to realise his or her potential as a unique individual
- To enable the child to develop as a social being through living and co-operating with others and so contribute to the good of society
- To prepare the child for a continuum of learning.

The primary curriculum aims to provide a broad learning experience and encourages a rich variety of approaches to teaching and learning that cater for the different needs of individual children. The revised primary curriculum, launched in 1999, was the first complete revision of the curriculum since 1971. The revised curriculum is designed to nurture the child in all dimensions of his or her life—spiritual, moral, cognitive, emotional, imaginative, aesthetic, social and physical.

The curriculum is divided into the following key areas:

- Language – Irish and English
- Mathematics
- Social, Environment and Scientific Education
- Arts Education, including Visual Arts, Music and Drama
- Physical Education
- Social, Personal and Health Education.

d) Post-Primary / Second-level Education

The post-primary education sector comprises secondary, vocational, community and comprehensive schools. Secondary schools are privately owned and managed. Vocational schools are state-established and administered by Education and Training Boards (ETBs), while community and comprehensive schools are managed by Boards of Management of differing compositions.

Post-primary education consists of a three-year Junior Cycle (lower secondary), followed by a two or three year Senior Cycle (upper secondary), depending on whether the optional Transition Year (TY) is taken. Students usually begin the Junior Cycle at age 12. The Junior Certificate examination is taken after three years. The main objective of the Junior Cycle is for students to complete a broad and balanced curriculum, and to develop the knowledge and skills that will enable them to proceed to Senior Cycle education. A new Framework for Junior Cycle is going to make significant changes to the current Junior Cycle beginning in September 2014.

The Senior Cycle caters for students in the 15 to 18 year age group. It includes an optional Transition Year, which follows immediately after the Junior Cycle. TY provides an opportunity for students to experience a wide range of educational inputs, including work experience, over the course of a year that is free from formal examinations. During the final two years of Senior Cycle students take one of three programmes, each leading to a State Examination: the traditional Leaving Certificate, the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) or the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA).

1) The Leaving Certificate

The traditional Leaving Certificate examination is the terminal examination of post-primary education and is taken when students are typically 17 or 18 years of age. Syllabuses are available in more than 30 subjects and students are required to take at least five subjects, one of which must be Irish. The traditional Leaving Certificate is the main basis upon which places in universities, institutes of technology and colleges of education are allocated to school-leavers.

2) The Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme

The Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) is similar to the traditional Leaving Certificate Programme, with a concentration on technical subjects and some additional modules which have a vocational focus.

3) The Leaving Certificate Applied Programme

The Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) Programme is a self-contained two-year course, intended to meet the needs of those students who are not adequately catered for by other Leaving Certificate programmes. It is a person-centred course involving a cross-curricular approach rather than a subject based structure.

4) Apprenticeships and Traineeships

https://cumulus.cedefop.europa.eu/files/vetelib/2016/2016_CR_IE.pdf

The apprenticeship system in Ireland is governed by the 1967 Industrial Training Act and is organised by SOLAS; FET funding and planning authority in co-operation with the Department (Ministry) of Education and Skills, employers and unions. An apprenticeship normally consists of seven phases: three off-the-job and four on-the-job. Phases 1, 3, 5 and 7 take place with the employer, while Phases 2, 4 and 6 take place at an ETB (phase 2) or an institute of technology (phases 4 and 6). The total duration of off-the-job phases is approximately 40 weeks.

Apprentices are considered to be part of the employed population in Ireland and pay the appropriate level of employment insurance. They sign an employment contract with the employer and therefore have the legal status and associated rights and responsibilities of employees. Until recently there were 27 statutory apprenticeship trades (governed under the Industrial Training Act 1967), the majority of which are concentrated in engineering and construction trades.

The largest numbers of apprentices are typically enrolled in electrical and carpentry/joinery trades. However, following a review of the apprenticeship system by the Department (Ministry) of Education and Skills in 2013, a decision was made to expand the apprenticeship system to other sectors of the economy.

Traineeships involve employers and ETBs working together in a dual system of occupational training leading to a qualification. The training content and occupational standards are based on employer

consultation and development of a traineeship programme is triggered by the identification of job opportunities within a sector.

Traineeships combine workplace training with formal off-the-job tuition in an ETB Training Centre. Traineeships vary in duration from six to twenty-four months, depending on the scope of the curriculum, the skill requirement of the occupation and the entry level of the trainees. As most trainees had been unemployed prior to commencing the traineeship, trainees in Ireland are not considered to be part of the employed; consequently, in contrast to apprentices, trainees receive an allowance rather than a wage and they do not pay employment insurance. Traineeships typically cover occupations such as hairdresser and childcare worker.

5) Further Education and Training

Further Education and Training (FET) covers education and training which occurs after second level schooling but which is not part of the third level system. It includes programmes such as Post-Leaving Certificate courses; the Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (second-chance education for the unemployed); programmes in Youthreach for early school-leavers; other literacy and basic education; and self-funded evening adult programmes in second-level schools. There are number of providers of Further and Adult Education and Training and a wide variety of schools, organisations and institutions, are involved in the delivery of continuing education and training for young school leavers and adults:

6) Education and Training Boards (ETBs)

The 16 ETBs (www.etbi.ie) were established on 1st July 2013 following from the commencement of the Education and Training Boards Act 2013. The ETBs have responsibility for the delivery of primary, post primary and further education in line with their predecessor VECs. The former training functions of FÁS have also been transferred to the ETBs.

7) SOLAS

SOLAS (www.solas.ie) was established on 27 October 2013, following the commencement of the Further Education and Training Act 2013. SOLAS works with the ETBs to support the development of appropriate further education and training programmes and curricula and the sourcing of further education and training interventions from the private, public and not for profit sector.

8) Adult Education and Training

Adult Education is set out in Learning for Life - White Paper on Adult Education, published in 2000. A range of education and training is provided by various organisations aimed at upskilling and reskilling people who are unemployed. Providing skills for work is a priority.

9) Institutions Providing Adult Education and Training

The main provider of further and adult education and training are the Education and Training Boards (ETBs). Full-Time Programmes in Further Education include, Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) Courses, Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS) and Youthreach programmes.

Part-Time Programmes in Further Education include, Back To Education Initiative (BTEI), Adult Literacy and Community Education programmes.

e) Higher Education / Third-Level Education

Higher Education in Ireland is provided mainly by 7 Universities, 14 Institutes of Technology, including the Dublin Institute of Technology and 7 Colleges of Education. In addition, a number of other third level institutions provide specialist education in such fields as art and design, medicine, business studies, rural development, theology, music and law.

Applications for entry to undergraduate courses in universities, colleges of education, institutes of technology and some other institutes of higher education are processed by the Central Applications Office (CAO; www.cao.ie). The aim of the system is to process applications centrally and to deal with them in an efficient and fair manner. The participating institutions retain the function of making decisions on admissions.

The Higher Education Authority (HEA; www.hea.ie) is the statutory planning and development body for higher education and research in Ireland. The HEA has wide advisory powers throughout the whole of the third-level education sector. In addition, it is the funding authority for the universities, institutes of technology and other designated higher education institutions.

The Universities Act, 1997 sets out the objects and functions of a university, the structure and role of governing bodies, staffing arrangements, composition and role of academic councils and sections relating to property, finance and reporting. The governing authorities are required to see that strategic development plans are in place, and that procedures for evaluating teaching and research are in place. The HEA has an overseeing role on such plans and quality assurance procedures. The legislative framework preserves the academic freedom of the universities and respects the diverse traditions and institutional autonomy of each university.

1) Irish Universities

University College Dublin, Belfield, Dublin 4	www.ucd.ie
University College Cork, Cork	www.ucc.ie
National University of Ireland, Galway	www.nuigalway.ie
National University of Ireland, Maynooth	www.nuim.ie
University of Limerick, Limerick	www.ul.ie
Trinity College, Dublin	www.tcd.ie
Dublin City University	www.dcu.ie

2) National University of Ireland Recognised Colleges

Institute of Public Administration	www.ipa.ie
Milltown Institute of Theology & Philosophy	www.milltown-institute.ie
National College of Art and Design	www.ncad.ie
Royal College of Surgeons Ireland	www.rcsi.ie
Shannon College of Hotel Management	www.shannoncollege.com

The Irish Government enacted the Technological Universities Act 2018 in March 2018, to establish a process whereby consortia of Institutes of Technology could submit an application for Technological

University designation. One consortium has been designated to date and other applications are in process. Technological Universities will focus on science and technology programmes that are vocationally and professionally oriented. Technological Universities will address the social and economic needs of their region and will engage in industry-focused research. https://hea.ie/policy/he-reform/technological-universities/

3) Technological University

Technological University dublin   www.tudublin.ie

The Institutes of Technology Act, 2006, created a similar relationship between the institutes and the HEA as that between the HEA and the universities. It provides for greater institutional autonomy, improved governance and a statutory guarantee of academic freedom for the Institutes of Technology (http://www.thea.ie/)

4) Institutes Of Technology

Dublin Institute of Technology	www.dit.ie
Athlone Institute of Technology	www.ait.ie
Cork Institute of Technology	www.cit.ie
Dundalk Institute of Technology	www.dkit.ie
Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology	www.iadt.ie
Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology	www.gmit.ie
Institute of Technology, Blanchardstown	www.itb.ie
Institute of Technology, Carlow	www.itcarlow.ie
Institute of Technology, Sligo	www.itsligo.ie
Institute of Technology, Tallaght	www.it-tallaght.ie
Institute of Technology, Tralee	www.ittralee.ie
Letterkenny Institute of Technology	www.lyit.ie
Limerick Institute of Technology	www.lit.ie
Limerick Institute of Technology Tipperary	www.lit.ie/Tipperary
Waterford Institute of Technology	www.wit.ie

5) Colleges of Education (each allied to a University)

The Church of Ireland College of Education	www.cice.ie
Froebel College of Education	www.froebel.ie
Coláiste Mhuire, Marino Institute of Education	www.mie.ie
St. Angela's College	www.stangelas.nuigalway.ie
St. Patrick's College of Education	www.spd.dcu.ie

Mary Immaculate College	www.mic.ul.ie
Mater Dei Institute	www.materdei.ie

6) Other State-Aided Institutions

All Hallows College	www.allhallows.ie
Dublin Insitute for Advanced Studies	www.dias.ie
Garda College	www.garda.ie
Military College	www.military.ie
National College of Ireland	www.ncirl.ie
Pontifical University of Maynooth	www.maynoothcollege.ie
Royal Irish Academy of Music	www.riam.ie
St Patrick's, Carlow College	www.carlowcollege.ie
Honorable Society of Kings Inn	www.kingsinns.ie
Law Society of Ireland	www.lawsociety.ie

f) National Framework of Qualifications

Certification in the Further and Higher Education and Training Sector is usually in alignment with the Irish National Framework of Qualifications. The Irish National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), established in 2003, is a framework through which all learning achievements may be measured and related to each other in a coherent way. The Irish NFQ is an awards framework of 10 levels, which is aligned to the European Framework of Qualifications. The many different types and sizes of qualifications included in the NFQ, are organised based on their level of knowledge, skill and competence.

The Major Award-types in the Irish NFQ and equivalent European Framework of Qualification (EQF) level are listed below:

Level 1   Certificate (EQF Level 1)

Level 2   Certificate (EQF Level 1)

Level 3   Certificate (Junior Certificate) (EQF Level 2)

Level 4   Certificate (Leaving Certificate) (EQF Level 3)

Level 5   Certificate (Leaving Certificate) (EQF Level 4)

Level 6   Advanced Certificate and Higher Certificate (EQF Level 5)

Level 7   Ordinary Bachelor Degree (EQF Level 6)

Level 8   Honours Bachelor Degree and Higher Diploma (EQF Level 6)

Level 9   Masters Degree and Postgraduate Diploma (EQF Level 7)

Level 10   Doctoral Degree and Higher Doctorate (EQF Level 8)

from:

http://www.qqi.ie/Documents/Referencing%20Irish%20NFQ%20to%20the%20European%20QF%20for%20Lifelong%20Learning.pdf

The Irish NFQ was the first national qualification framework to complete its referencing to the European qualifications framework (EQF), in 2009. The country built on experiences and conclusions of self-certification of compatibility of the Irish NFQ with the qualifications framework for the European higher education area (QF-EHEA), completed in 2006.

http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/ireland_-_european_inventory_on_nqf_2018.pdf

Since then, significant changes in the institutional and legislative landscape have taken place. Most of the agencies that endorsed the 2009 referencing report were abolished and the 2012 Qualifications and Quality Assurance Act established new institutional arrangements for NFQ governance. It introduced more coherent and strengthened provisions for the integration of the NFQ as well as access, transfer and progression policies into quality assurance arrangements in post secondary school education and training. The NFQ has also undergone some technical changes. A new professional award type at NQF levels 5 to 9 (EQF levels 4 to 7) was introduced. A new school qualification at NQF level 3 (EQF level 2) has been introduced to replace the junior certificate which was last issued in 2016. Drawing on the conclusions and recommendations of the most recent evaluation of the framework, re-referencing of the NFQ to EQF will recommence in 2019.

g) Quality and Qualifications Ireland

Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI – www.qqi.ie) is an independent State agency responsible for promoting quality and accountability in education and training services in Ireland. QQI was established in 2012 by the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012.

The roles of QQI are to:

- promote, maintain and develop the Irish National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ), a 10-level framework for the development, recognition and awarding of qualifications in Ireland;
- approve programmes offered at a variety of schools, colleges and further and higher education and training institutions. These programmes lead to qualifications (QQI awards) listed in the NFQ, which are recognised internationally;
- regulate and promote the quality of programmes offered by schools and colleges leading to qualifications in the NFQ for the benefit of learners, employers and other interested parties;
- ensure that providers (any university, college or institution) offering national qualifications provide a positive, high-quality experience to international learners coming to study in Ireland. We will do this by authorising the International Education Mark (IEM);
- provide academic advice on the recognition of foreign qualifications in Ireland through a service called NARIC Ireland – the National Academic Recognition Information Centre. We also provide advice on the recognition of Irish qualifications abroad;
- inform the public about quality assured education and training programmes and qualifications through a database of programmes and a register of providers;
- manage a national scheme for the quality assurance of English language services (Accreditation and Coordination of English Language Services - ACELS);

✦ advise the Minister for Education and Skills about national policy on quality assurance and improvement in education and training.

(From: http://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/About-Us.aspx)

h) Provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs

The Department of Education and Skills (DES) provides for the education of children with special education needs through a number of support mechanisms depending on the child's assessed disability. Section 2 of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act 2004 requires that:

"A child with special educational needs shall be educated in an inclusive environment with children who do not have such needs unless the nature or degree of those needs of the child is such that to do so would be inconsistent with:

✦ The best interests of the child as determined in accordance with any assessment carried out under this Act

✦ The effective provision of education for children with whom the child is to be educated."

✦ In general, educational provision for children with special needs is made:

✦ In special-purpose schools;

✦ In special classes attached to ordinary schools;

✦ In integrated settings in mainstream classes.

The nature and level of the educational response is based on the child's professionally-assessed disability. The Department's policy is to achieve as much integration as possible, as envisaged in Section 2 of the EPSEN Act. Where placement in an integrated setting is considered to be the appropriate response, provision will normally take the form of resource teaching or special needs assistant support, or both, depending on the pupil's assessed level of need.

While the DES' policy is to ensure the maximum possible integration of children with special needs into ordinary mainstream schools, students who have been assessed as having special educational needs have access to a range of special support services. The services range from special schools dedicated to particular disability groups, through special classes/units attached to ordinary schools, to placement on an integrated basis in ordinary schools with supports.

Children with more severe levels of disability may require placement in a special school or special class attached to a mainstream primary school. Each such facility is dedicated to a particular disability group and each operates at a specially reduced pupil teacher ratio. Pupils attending these facilities attract special rates of capitation funding and are entitled to avail of the special school transport service and the school bus escort service.

i) Non-Formal and Informal Learning

There are positive developments both at national and institution level towards the development of system-wide capacity for the recognition of prior learning (RPL), although there is no overarching national policy in this area. In February 2015, Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) has established the national Recognition of Prior Learning Practitioner Network. This network has been established to provide a coherent voice and a peer support environment for practitioners, including the objective that they may shape and inform policy relating to RPL. In parallel, the Department of Education and Skills (DES) are considering the establishment of a Working Group to support national development of RPL.

In January 2016, Ireland's National Skill's Strategy 2025: Ireland's Future was published (DES & DSRI, 2016) and provides a strategic vision with specific objectives for Ireland's future skills requirements. The National Skills Strategy (NSS) includes a specific action for greater recognition of workplace learning and capacity for RPL through a multi-agency approach. The NSS is being implemented in the context of comprehensive reforms that are underway in both the further education and training and higher education sectors.

A key strength of RPL in Ireland is that, traditionally, RPL practice has grown organically and so is understood as a bottom-up approach. Although the manner in which RPL is applied and understood on the ground is often varied, there is an energy and a deep seated commitment to excellent practice and innovation in RPL. Nevertheless, promoting a common understanding of RPL through the development of a national policy / strategy to span across education sectors and workplace learning is desired. A more transparent, coherent and consistent approach to RPL to guide future arrangements, build confidence and capacity for RPL can be considered the key enablers to further development in this area.

Sources:

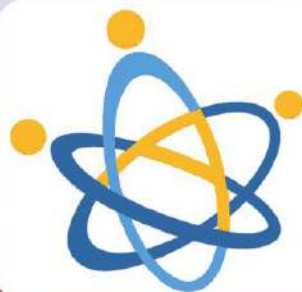2016 update to the European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning, Country Report, Ireland, Cedefop

https://cumulus.cedefop.europa.eu/files/vetelib/2016/2016_validate_IE.pdf

And

https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/pub_national_skills_strategy_2025.pdf

ESS*A*-SPORT
Improving the Supply of Skills to the Sector

6

NATIONAL SPORT EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

6. NATIONAL SPORT EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

a) Sport in Schools

The National Sports Policy undertakes to prioritise sports like swimming, cycling and running which have the greatest potential for generating higher levels of active participation across the life course, seeking to ensure that children have the necessary skills to engage in these activities in a meaningful way while also investing in the development of infrastructure, programmes and people to help sustain participation throughout adolescence and adulthood.

The State provides resources for early childhood services through universal and targeted subsidies for the provision of childcare and early education and to promote enjoyment of, and interest in, physical activity and physical literacy for young children. State support is guided by a national curriculum framework (Aistear), a national quality framework (Síolta), and Diversity, Equality and Inclusion guidelines which provide a useful basis from which to develop initiatives to promote physical activity and physical literacy with young children and their parents/guardians.

b) Provision of Sports-related Qualifications in Higher Education

Most qualifications in Sport offered by Irish Universities are at degree level (NFQ Level 7 and 8). The discipline area is broad, encompassing Coaching, Exercise, Sport, Health, Recreation, Physiology, Fitness, etc., and the qualification titles reflect this. The website www.qualifax.ie provides prospective learners with a search facility for courses of interest across further education and higher education sectors. Sport, Exercise, Recreation, Health degree courses are provided across the higher education sector, by Institutes of Technology, Technological Universities and Universities.

c) The Role of Sport Federations in the delivery of Sport Education

Sport Ireland is empowered to develop sport education in the country to cover not only coaching but fitness industry courses, anti-doping issues, governance, child protection, etc. With an expanding and increasingly diverse workforce and with increasing mobility within the EU it is important that sports-related qualifications are included in the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and referenced by the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). As well as assisting with workforce development this could help with workforce mobility across EU member states. The pursuit of a geographically mobile workforce can enrich the knowledge base of Ireland's sport sector.

d) Other vocational and Professional Qualifications in Sport and Physical Activity

There are a range of private providers who offer training and education in sport related areas. Historically the emphasis has been on aspect of exercise and fitness (aerobics, weights, circuits, strength & conditioning. Many providers also cater for courses targeting specialist population e.g. older people.

The Register of Exercise Professionals (Reps Ireland; www.repsireland.ie) is a member of EREPS, the European Register of Exercise Professionals (www.ereps.eu). The industry standards used by REPs Ireland are based upon the European standards developed by the European Health & Fitness Association (EHFA; http://www.ehfa-standards.eu/es-standards). REPs Ireland operates independently of all Education Providers and facilities and all approved REPs Ireland Education Providers are independently audited and adhere to an agreed Code of Ethical Practice. REPs Ireland has compiled a list of approved course

providers (http://www.repsireland.ie/approved-education-providers). This list includes a range of public and private providers.

ITEC (www.itecworld.co.uk) also operates in Ireland, largely in partnership with Futher Education providers.

The National Council for Exercise and Fitness (NCEF; www.ncef.ie) is affiliated to the University of Limerick (UL) and is a provider of education and training for exercise and health fitness Professionals. NCEF provides Health Fitness Instructor qualifications at Levels 6,7 & 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and at Levels 5 & 6 on the European Framework (EQF).

e) Sport Education and the European Qualifications Framework

Ireland was an early adopter of the European Qualifications Framework. Coaching Ireland (a unit within the national sports council Sport Ireland) and other providers have applied the framework for nearly two decades. Acknowledgement of this is outlined on page 71 of the National Sports Policy 2018-2027. http://www.dttas.ie/sites/default/files/publications/sport/english/national-sports-policy-2018-2027/national-sports-policy-2018.pdf

1) Coach Education

National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs) organise and administer organised sport in Ireland; they train and deploy coaches and referees. Coach education is developed in conjunctions with Coaching Ireland to develop an internationally recognised coach education system.

2) Provision of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) in sport and physical activity

The National centre for Disability Sport – the CARA centre, based in the Institute of Technology Tralee offers training in inclusive sport from a disability perspective. It works closely with NGBs and LSPs in the delivery of this training. It also works with leisure centres to upskill staff to ensure that community based sport, fitness and physical activity programmes are adapted for people with disabilities are required.

Coaching Ireland has developed a Coaching Children module which it disseminates through LSPs to enhance the quality of experience for children in sport. Coaching Ireland has linked with a range of other European agencies (the Hungarian Coaches Association, the Netherlands Olympic Committee, the European University of Madrid, Lithuanian Sport University and the Royal Belgian Football Association. And Leeds Beckett University) through Eurasmus Plus to develop online training for coaches of children and youth.

According to the National Sports Policy 2018-2017 'Sport Ireland will lead in the development of a sports sector workforce strategy which addresses recruitment, increased professionalisation, development, validation and recognition, provision for Continuous Professional Development (CPD), diversity of leadership throughout the sector and Irish representation on international sports federations.' Sport Ireland will lead in the development of a sports sector workforce strategy which addresses recruitment, increased professionalisation, development, validation and recognition, provision for Continuous Professional Development (CPD), diversity of leadership throughout the sector and Irish representation on international sports federations. We will support Sport Ireland's efforts to develop a long term strategy for education, learning and development.

Tertiary educators have systems of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) whereby upon proof of competence/knowledge of subject matter, exemptions may be applied to academic modules.

f) The provision of training for volunteers in Sport Volunteers

Local Sports Partnerships also have a role in capacity building in sport offering a range of training opportunities such as; training for parents to improve children's physical literacy, first aid, child welfare, etc.,

NGB training covers, in addition to coach and official education, a range of areas such as; child welfare, disability awareness, first aid, sports administration and governance, and fundraising. The National Sports Policy 2018 – 2027 has committed to providing dedicated funding to NGBs, from Sport Ireland to support this training.

Sport in not a regulated profession in Ireland, thus there are no legal requirements to work in the sector. Ireland as a member of the EU recognises qualifications from other member states as per the Treaty of Rome.

Education and Training in subsections of the Sports Sector

g) Coaching and Coach Development

Sport Ireland Coaching is the unit within Sport Ireland with the lead role in the development of coaching in Ireland on an all-island basis. The role includes highlighting the importance of quality coaching in developing our athletes and providing opportunities for participants has the lead role in development of coaching on an all island basis, highlighting the importance of quality coaching in developing our athletes and providing opportunities for participants.

The main objectives of Sport Ireland Coaching are:
- Raise the standard, status and profile of coaching in Ireland to provide performers and participants with the best quality coaching through their involvement in sport
- Lead the development of coaching in Ireland through the implementation of a quality coach and tutor education and support programme.
- Work in partnership with NGBs and the wider sporting sector on an all island basis.

Coaching Ireland works in partnership with 60 National Governing Bodies (NGB's) in order to achieve these objectives. The organisation operates within the context of the policies of Sport Ireland and the Sport Northern Ireland. Sport Ireland Coaching has a very broad but coaching-focused remit which includes the following roles:
- Ensure performers and participants receive the best quality coaching throughout their involvement in sport.
- Lead the development of coaching in Ireland through the implementation of coach education and support programmes (CDPI)
- Deliver services to NGBs and coaches.
- Develop, implement and manage coach certification, accreditation, continuing professional development and licensing systems with the relevant partners.
- Establish agreements with key partners to develop coaching (NGBs, agencies, LSPs and others)
- Ensure there are sufficient tutors of appropriate quality and skill to educate coaches.

- Quality assure the coaching system internally and appoint external bodies as required.
- Manage information on coaching and a coaches database for Ireland.
- Implement a research and information programme.
- Manage and monitor the implementation of the strategy.
- Raise the status and profile of coaching in Ireland.
- Develop an implementation plan.
- Develop and introduce coach recognition awards.

National Governing Bodies develop coach education and coaching systems based on sports-specific needs. Coaching Ireland facilitates this development by assisting the National Governing Bodies to put in place the elements of the system. Coaching Ireland also plays a role in quality assurance across these elements. All partners in Coaching Development Programme for Ireland (CDPI) play a role in common areas, such as promotion of coaching and increasing the status of coaching.

The objectives of the CDPI are to:

- Provide a pathway for progression for each participant and performer.
- Ensure a pathway for progression for each developing coach.
- Promote safety, fun and challenge through coaching with the following targets:
  - An appropriately qualified coach for every participant and performer.
  - A qualification for every coach.
- Consolidate the work done to date and the elements and systems of CDPI.
- Further develop sustainable National Governing Body coaching and coach education systems, with the right balance between volunteer and professional inputs.

Information Source: Sport Ireland Coaching Ireland (https://www.sportireland.ie/Coaching-Ireland/)

h) Officials in Sports

National Governing Bodies are responsible for the training and deployment of officials in their respective sports. There is a recognition of male dominance and the latest National Sports Policy

2018 – 2027, has identified the desirability of increasing the number women who are educated to be referees and officials. Each national governing body recruits and / or trains its own sports officials, including referees, commissaires, linesmen, stewards, etc. For example:

- Athletics www.athleticsireland.ie/competition/officials/
- Soccer www.fai.ie/domestic/referees/welcome
- Basketball https://nrcireland.com/ref/ and www.basketballireland.ie/tableofficials/
- Rugby http://www.irishrugby.ie/referees/referee_information.php and, for example, https://munsterrugby.ie/domestic/referees/
- Cycling www.cyclingireland.ie/page/about/commissaires

i) Management and Administration

There are a variety of sports management-related degree courses on offer in Ireland. The title of each qualification varies. Examples of these degree courses, include:

- Business with Sports Management

- Sports and Exercise Management
- Recreation and Sports Management
- Sports Coaching and Business Management
- Business Studies with Sports Management
- Management in Tourism and Sports

The sample programmes listed above are at NFQ Levels 7 and 8 (bachelor degrees) and are provided by higher education institutions (universities, technological universities and institutes of technology). Other programmes have sports management options but this may not be reflected in the award title. Further education providers also provide certificate and advanced certificate qualifications in business, leisure, recreation management programmes at NFQ level 5 and 6.

The qualifications and experience of sports administrators probably varies as much as it does in other sectors – from competence derived from years of hands-on experience to formal degree level qualifications.

There is no national system for tracking the careers of graduates of sport qualifications specifically. Individual Higher Education providers or academic departments therein may remain in contact with graduates for networking, industry contact, promotional purposes.

The Higher Education Authority regularly publishes various statistical analyses, including analysis of first destination of university graduates.

j) Anti-Doping

National Governing Bodies of Sport play a role in keeping their membership informed and educated about anti-doping rules. Each NGB has appointed an anti-doping officer (ADO). The ADO has numerous responsibilities such as education of members about doping in sport, assisting with the testing programme by providing a national calendar with events suitable to testing.

Sport Ireland and NGBs work together to educate athletes and athlete support personnel on at least the following:

- Substances and methods on the Prohibited List and how to check their medications against the List
- Anti-doping rule violations
- Consequences of doping, including sanctions, health and social consequences
- Doping Control procedures
- Athletes' and Athlete Support Personnel's rights and responsibilities
- Therapeutic use exemptions
- Managing the risks of nutritional supplements
- Harm of doping to the spirit of sport

Sport Ireland provides a range of education materials and programmes, which the NGB is responsible for making available to their membership to increase awareness of the anti-doping rules.

7

FINDINGS FROM THE EMPLOYER SKILLS SURVEY

7. FINDINGS FROM THE EMPLOYER SURVEY

a) Introduction

Of the 3812 responses to the full EU Employer Skills Survey, Ireland contributed 2.2% or 84 responses. These 84 responses represent a positive contribution to the overall Survey since Ireland has a population of 4.8 million people or 0.88% of the population of the EU (approximately 512.6 million people). The 84 responses is rather a small figure when looking for definitive and valid conclusions and recommendations for National consideration.

In many respects, the Irish response profile mirrors that of the overall EU Survey, but several differences reflect differences in the Irish sports sector in general. Examples of major differences between Ireland and other EU countries are the relatively low number of professional athletes (with significant numbers of amateur, elite athletes) and the high number of (and reliance on) volunteers in sports clubs and events.

b) The Irish Response Profile

The top 7 responses in the Irish Employers Skills Survey were:

1. Sport Federations (41.7%)

2. Sports Clubs (15.5%)

3. Sport for All Organisation (8.3%)

4. Fitness Clubs / Centre (8.3%)

5. Local Authority (7.1%)

6. Outdoor Activity Provider (7.1%)

7. University / College (7.1%)

Which of the following best describes your organisation?

■ n=84

Organisation	%
Ministry responsible for sport	0,00%
Municipality / local authority	7,14%
Network association (umbrella organisation)	1,19%
Sport body	1,19%
Sport federation	41,67%
Sport for all organisation	8,33%
Employers representative organisation	0,00%
Trade union	0,00%
Sport club	15,48%
Fitness club / centre	8,33%
Outdoor activity provider	7,14%
Sport institute / Sport academy	0,00%
University / college	7,14%
Sports facility operator	2,38%
Accommodation provider	0,00%
Other	0,00%

Sports Federations were the second most common respondent in the EU Survey, while Sports Clubs were the main respondent in the EU Survey. This difference may reflect the relatively small and voluntary nature of club administration and the active, influential role of sports federations in the context of the Irish sports context.

c) The Scope of Respondents' Organisations

The respondents of the Irish survey reported the scope of their organisation as follows:

54% 'National' bodies, 28.6% 'Local' bodies, 9.5% 'Regional' bodies, 4.8% 'International' and 3.17% 'European' in operation. In the EU Survey, most respondents (38.6%) described their scope as 'Local' while the scope of 27% was 'Regional' and another 27% were 'National' organisations. The 'National' scope is reflective of the high number of responses from 'Sports Federations' which have national remits.

What is the main geographical scope of your organisation?
n=63
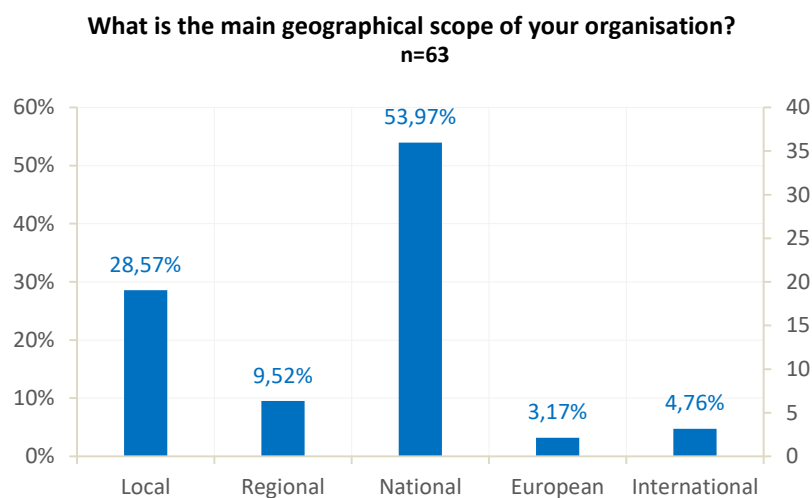
d) Respondents' Organisational Categories

The Survey requested respondents to identify their organisation according to their public, private, voluntary status.

Which of these categories best describes your organisation?
n=83
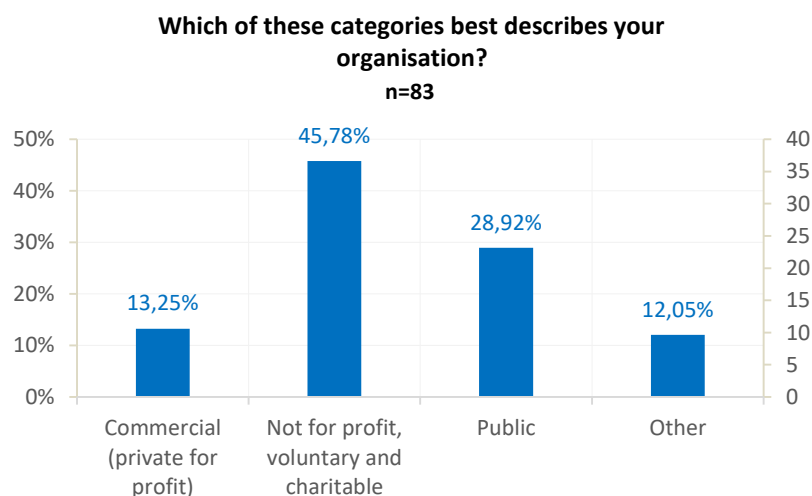
The profile of Irish respondents differs from the EU profile in terms of percentage value although the respondents rank (in terms of most responses) in the same order – Not for Profit, Public, Private. In

addition, 67.5% of respondents were 'single independent organisations' while 30% were 'part of a larger enterprise or organisation', which again reflects sports federations, clubs and local authority / public organisations which form a large portion of the respondents.

e) Size of Respondents' Organisation by Number of Paid Employees

There was a reasonably good representation in the Irish Survey from a wide range of organisations, based on number of employees. 22% of responses were from organisations with 20 – 49 employees and 19% of responses were from organisations with no paid employees. This latter figure probably reflects the large number of sports clubs in Ireland which operate entirely through voluntary input. Just over 17% of respondents represented organisations which employed 5 – 9 employees.

Approximately how many paid employees work in your organisation on average in a typical year?

n=81
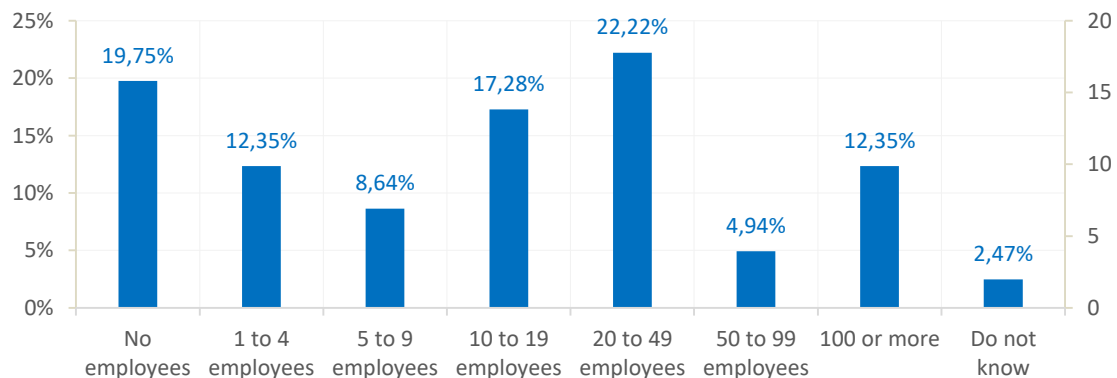
The EU Survey had the greatest response from Organisations with 1 – 4 employees (29%) while the next ranked respondents were those with no paid employees (24.6%), the same as the Irish survey. Few Irish organisation employ 50 – 99 or greater than 100 employees, and this is reflected in the Irish Survey and similarly in the EU Survey.

f) Recruitment / Employment Trend (last 12 months)

This question indicated a certain buoyancy in the Irish Sports Sector, with 92.5% of respondents indicating that their organisation had either retained the same number of employees (46.25%) or had increased its staffing (46.25%) in the last 12 months. This is a similar (if not a little higher) to the EU-wide context. Only 2.5% of respondents reported a decrease in staff, which is lower than the figure (8.8%) reported in the EU Survey.

Over 88% of the Irish respondents expected their workforce to remain the same (43.75%) or increase (45%) over the next 24 months. This optimism may reflect the buoyant economy generally that currently prevails in Ireland.

Compared to 12 months ago, would you say that the number of people employed in your organisation has…
n=80
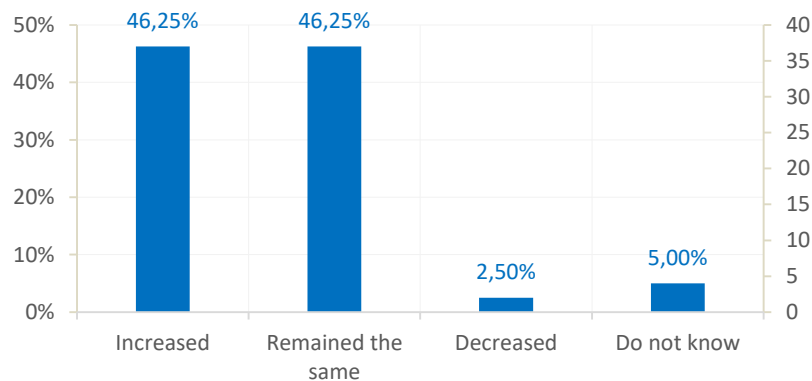
g) Voluntary / Unpaid Personnel

Over two-thirds of respondent organisations from Ireland regularly or typically engage staff on a voluntary / unpaid basis. A further 20% do so occasionally. This leaves only a small proportion of responding organisations in Ireland (12.5%) which do not ever engage voluntary staff.

In a typical year does your organisation engage any volunteers / unpaid staff?
n=80
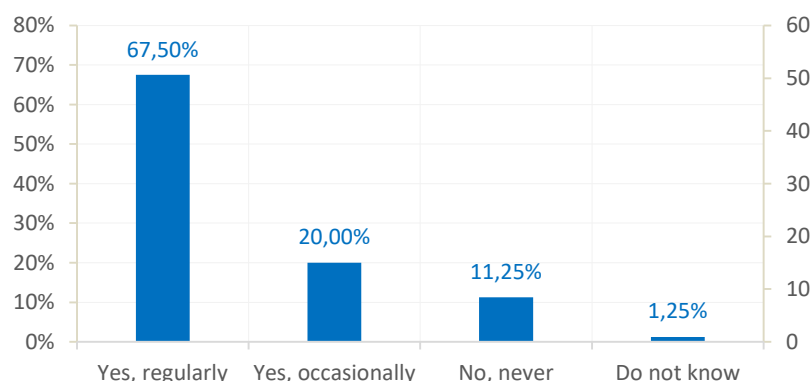
These figures are similar to the EU Survey, which reported 82.4% of responding organisations engage volunteers regularly or occasionally and 14.5% never do so.

h) Types of Personnel Employed / Engaged by Responding Organisations

The Irish respondents indicated that the types of personnel (occupations) listed in the Survey could be engaged by them at some point. The top 5 occupations sought by Irish organisations were:

- ✩ Sports Coaches (83.5%)
- ✩ Middle Management Staff (81%)
- ✩ Clerical and Office Staff (79.7%)
- ✩ Senior Management Staff (74.7%)
- ✩ Operational Staff (70.9%)

There were no occupations that did not seem to have a significant demand.

Which of these occupations are engaged in your organisation?

n=79
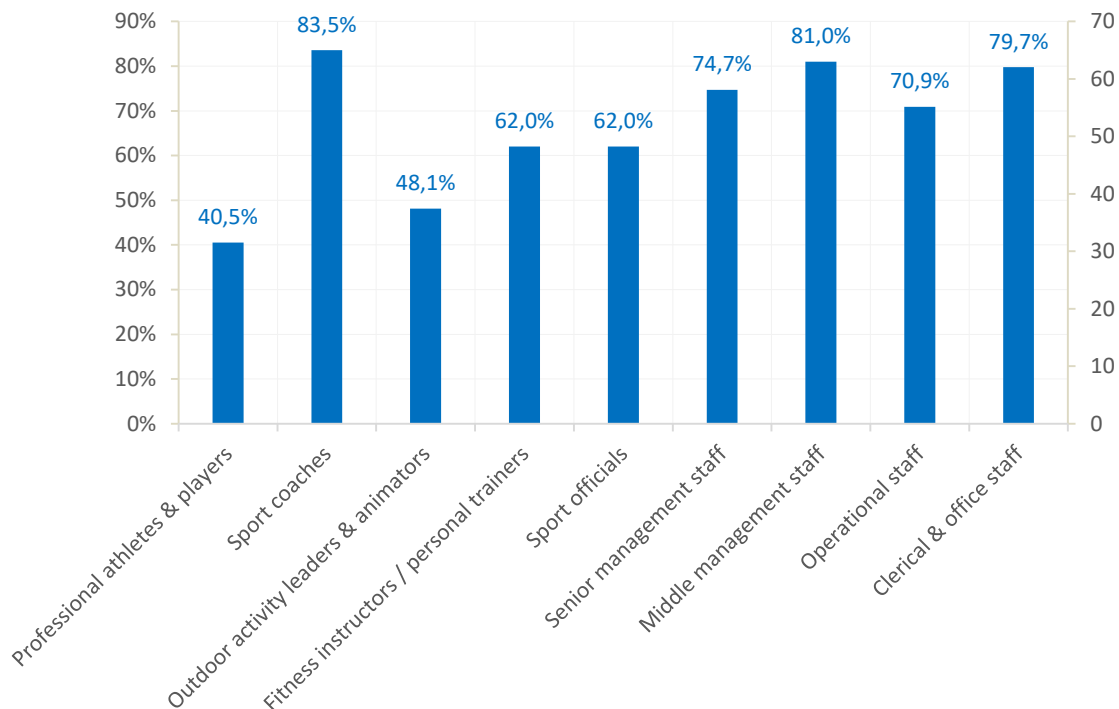
The top four of the above top five Irish occupations (from the Irish Survey) were in the top five in the EU Survey. The exception being Operational Staff in the Irish Survey were replaced by Sports Officials in the EU Survey.

i) Type of Personnel by Contract Type

The Irish respondents to this question provided clear evidence for the reliance on volunteers for the operation of sports organisations and events.

Volunteers constitute the largest cohort for the following roles in the Irish context: Athletes, Sports Coaches, Outdoor Activity Leaders, Sports Officials.

In most cases, paid employees or freelance operators provide the following roles: Fitness Instructors, Personal Trainers, Senior Management, Middle Management, Operational Staff and Clerical Staff.

Freelance operators are most evident in roles such as Fitness Instructors, Personal Trainers, Sports Coaches and Outdoor Activity Leaders.

These responses are somewhat similar to the EU Survey, although in the EU-wide contexts there appears to be greater proportions of paid (as employees) athletes, sports coaches, animators and fitness Instructors / personal trainers.

Which of these occupations are engaged in your organisation?
Breakdown by type of contract

Legend:
- Paid Employees (full and part-time)
- Self-employed or freelance
- Volunteers
- n=79

Occupation	Paid Employees	Self-employed or freelance	Volunteers
Professional athletes & players	21,9%	21,9%	78,1%
Sport coaches	40,9%	34,8%	63,6%
Outdoor activity leaders & animators	31,6%	31,6%	57,9%
Fitness instructors / personal trainers	40,8%	42,9%	38,8%
Sport officials	10,2%	12,2%	85,7%
Senior management staff	81,4%	1,7%	23,7%
Middle management staff	82,8%	0,0%	23,4%
Operational staff	60,7%	12,5%	48,2%
Clerical & office staff	84,1%	0,0%	22,2%

j) Training Priorities (Skills Needs) in the Sports Sector in Ireland

The Training Priorities (Skills Needs) of various occupations in the Sports Sector were explored in the Sectoral Skills survey. This section presents the most highly ranked skills needs for the listed occupations. The validity of these findings is arguable in that as discrete occupations are presented to the sector, the number of respondents to which they may be relevant decreases. An attempt to calculate a value for the importance of each training priority has been made in the table below by multiplying the percentage (rank) value by the number of respondents:

Percentage (Rank) x Number of Respondents = Overall Rating of Importance

If this adjustment is valid, then the top overall training priorities would include:

- Knowledge of External Policy Issues facing Sport
- Strategic Thinking
- Leading Change
- Marketing and Sales Skills

Occupation	Training Priority	Percentage (Rank)	Respondents	Overall Rating (% x Respondents)
Outdoor Activity Leaders / Animator	Team Working Skills	50% (1)	18	900
	Customer Service Skills	38.9% (2)	18	700
	Ability to Work with Children	27.8% (3)	18	500
Fitness Instructor / Personal Trainer	Marketing and Selling Skills	45.8% (1)	24	1099 (3)
	Ability to Work with People with Disabilities	33.3% (2)	24	800
	Problem Solving Skills & Customer Service Skills	29.2% (Jointly 3rd)	24	700
Sports Official	ICT Skills	44.4% (1)	9	400
	Communicate Information as an official & Conflict Management & Use of Technology, tools, equipment	33.3 (Jointly 2nd)	9	300
Senior Management	Knowledge of External Policy Issues facing Sport & Strategic Thinking	36.8% (Jointly 1st)	38	1398 (1)
	Leading Change & Marketing and Sales Skills	34.2% (Jointly 2nd)	38	1300 (2)
Middle Management	Knowledge of External Policy Issues facing Sport	40.7% (1st)	27	1099 (3)
	Strategic Thinking	33.3% (2nd)	27	899
	Business Development Skills & Organisational & Planning Skills	29.6% (Joint 3rd)	27	799
Operational Staff	Marketing and Selling Skills & Problem Solving Skills	33.3% (Joint 1st)	30	999
	Organisational and Work Planning Skills	30% (2nd)	30	900
Clerical Staff	ICT Skills	29% (1st)	31	899
	Leadership Skills	23.6% (2nd)	31	731
	Administrative, Customer Service, Decision-making Skills	19.4% (Joint 3rd)	31	

Occupation 1. Outdoor Leader / Animator (Skills Needs)

OUTDOOR ACTIVITY LEADER AND ANIMATOR: which skills (if any) are regarded as the weakest or in need of improvement in your organisation's current team?

■ n=18

Skill	Percentage
This occupation is not part of the staff of my organisation	11,11%
Sport/activity specific technical knowledge and skills	11,11%
Ability to work with children	0,00%
Ability to work with people with disabilities	27,78%
Ability to work with different participants	5,56%
Plan activity sessions	5,56%
Provide appropriate feedback	16,67%
Clearly communicate instructions	0,00%
Organise activities and events	5,56%
Ensure health and safety of participants	5,56%
Ability to work in compliance with codes of practice / ethics	5,56%
Use of technology, equipment and tools	22,22%
Customer service skills	11,11%
Marketing and selling skills	38,89%
Leadership skills	11,11%
Motivational skills	5,56%
Team working skills	5,56%
Information/Communication Technology (ICT) skills	50,00%
Decision-making skills	5,56%
Problem-solving skills	11,11%

Occupation 2. Fitness Instructor / Personal Trainer (Skills Needs)

FITNESS INSTUCTOR / PERSONAL TRAINER: which skills (if any) are regarded as the weakest or in need of improvement in your organisation's current team?

■ n=24

Skill	Percentage
This occupation is not part of the staff of my organisation	8,33%
Exercise science knowledge (anatomy / physiology)	12,50%
Understand participant needs	20,83%
Interpreting information	12,50%
Designing sessions and programmes	12,50%
Communicating effectively with participants	20,83%
Ability to work with children	12,50%
Ability to work with older adults	16,67%
Ability to work with people with disabilities	33,33%
Ability to work with different participants	16,67%
Ensure health and safety of participants	4,17%
Ability to work in compliance with codes of practice / ethics	4,17%
Use of technology, equipment and tools	20,83%
Customer service skills	29,17%
Marketing and selling skills	45,83%
Leadership skills	16,67%
Motivational skills	12,50%
Team working skills	8,33%
Information/Communication Technology (ICT) skills	25,00%
Decision-making skills	8,33%
Problem-solving skills	29,17%

Occupation 3. Sports Officials (Skills Needs)

SPORT OFFICIAL: which skills (if any) are regarded as the weakest or in need of improvement in your organisation's current team?

n=9

Skill	Percentage
This occupation is not part of the staff of my organisation	11,11%
Apply the rules and laws of the sport	0,00%
Ensure health and safety of participants	22,22%
Maintain effective working relationships	11,11%
Communicate information as an official	33,33%
Uphold integrity and fair play	11,11%
Managing conflict	33,33%
Organisational and planning skills	22,22%
Ability to work in compliance with codes of practice / ethics	22,22%
Use of technology, equipment and tools	33,33%
Customer service skills	22,22%
Negotiation skills	0,00%
Leadership skills	0,00%
Team working skills	11,11%
Information/Communication Technology (ICT) skills	44,44%
Decision-making skills	0,00%
Problem-solving skills	11,11%

Occupation 4. Senior Management Staff (Skills Needs)

SENIOR MANAGEMENT STAFF: which skills (if any) are regarded as the weakest or in need of improvement in your organisation's current team?

■ n=38

Skill	Percentage
This occupation is not part of the staff of my organisation	5,26%
Knowledge of external policy issues facing sport	36,84%
Ensure equal access to sport	13,16%
Technical knowledge and skills for sport operations	13,16%
Strategic thinking	36,84%
Business development skills	26,32%
Leadership skills	21,05%
Leading change	34,21%
Facilitating innovation	21,05%
Organisational and planning skills	18,42%
Written Communication skills	2,63%
Verbal communication skills	5,26%
Marketing and sales skills	34,21%
Customer service skills	15,79%
Motivational skills	13,16%
Negotiation skills	13,16%
Financial control and management	18,42%
Team working	5,26%
Information/Communication Technology (ICT) skills	13,16%
Decision-making skills	10,53%
Problem-solving skills	7,89%
Use of technology, equipment and tools	23,68%
Ability to work in compliance with codes of practice / ethics	10,53%

Occupation 5. Middle Management Staff (Skills Needs)

MIDDLE MANAGEMENT STAFF: which skills (if any) are regarded as the weakest or in need of improvement in your organisation's current team?

■ n=27

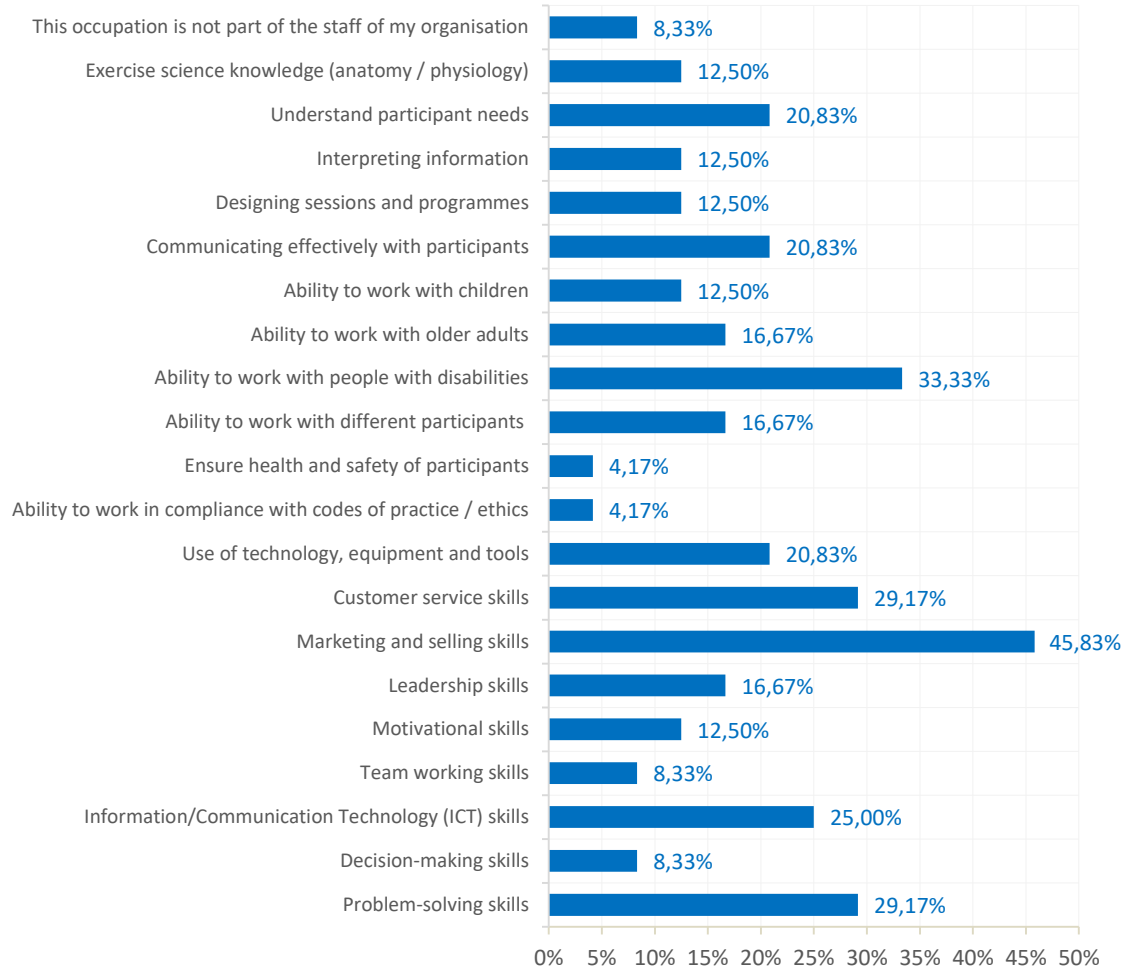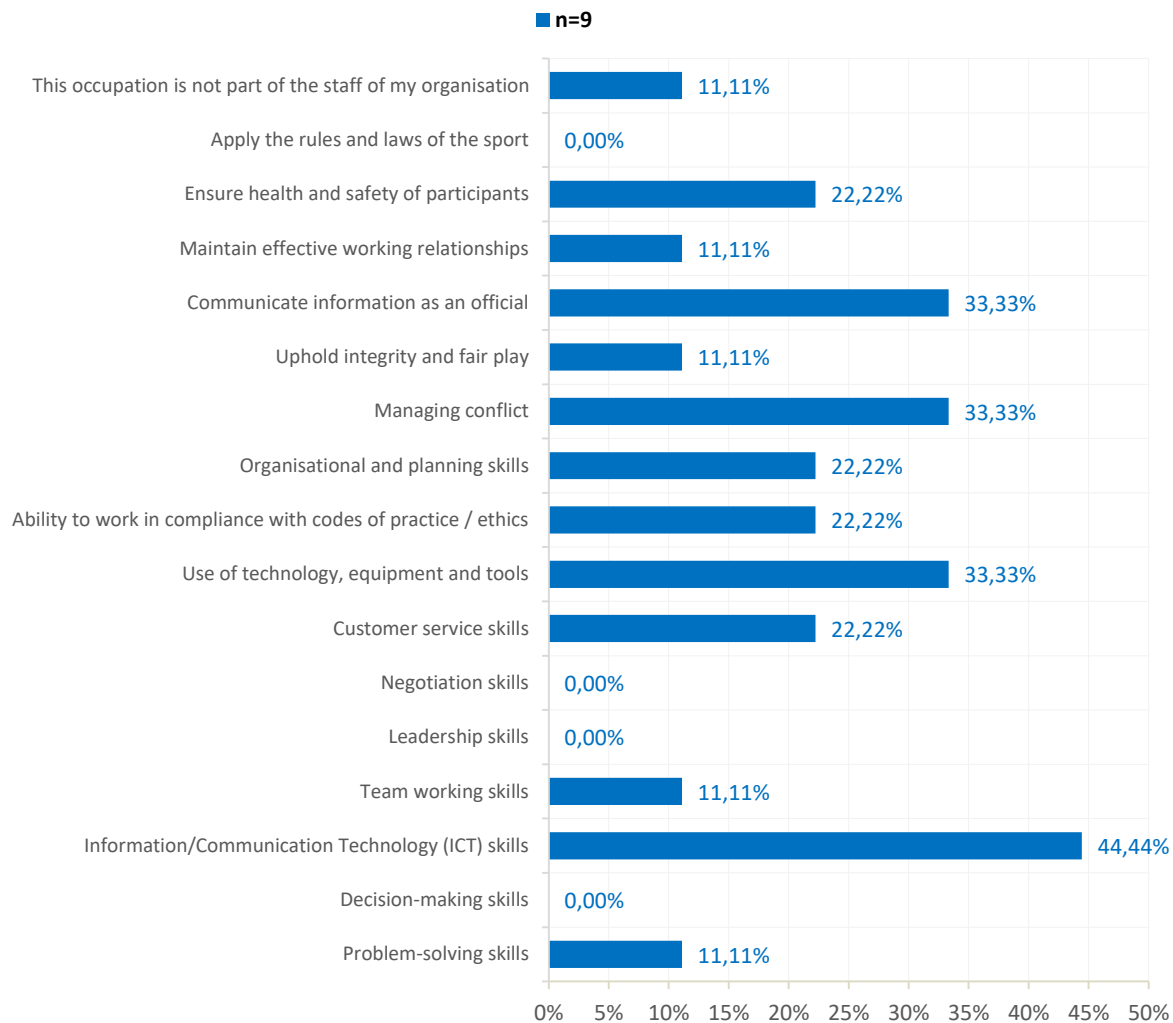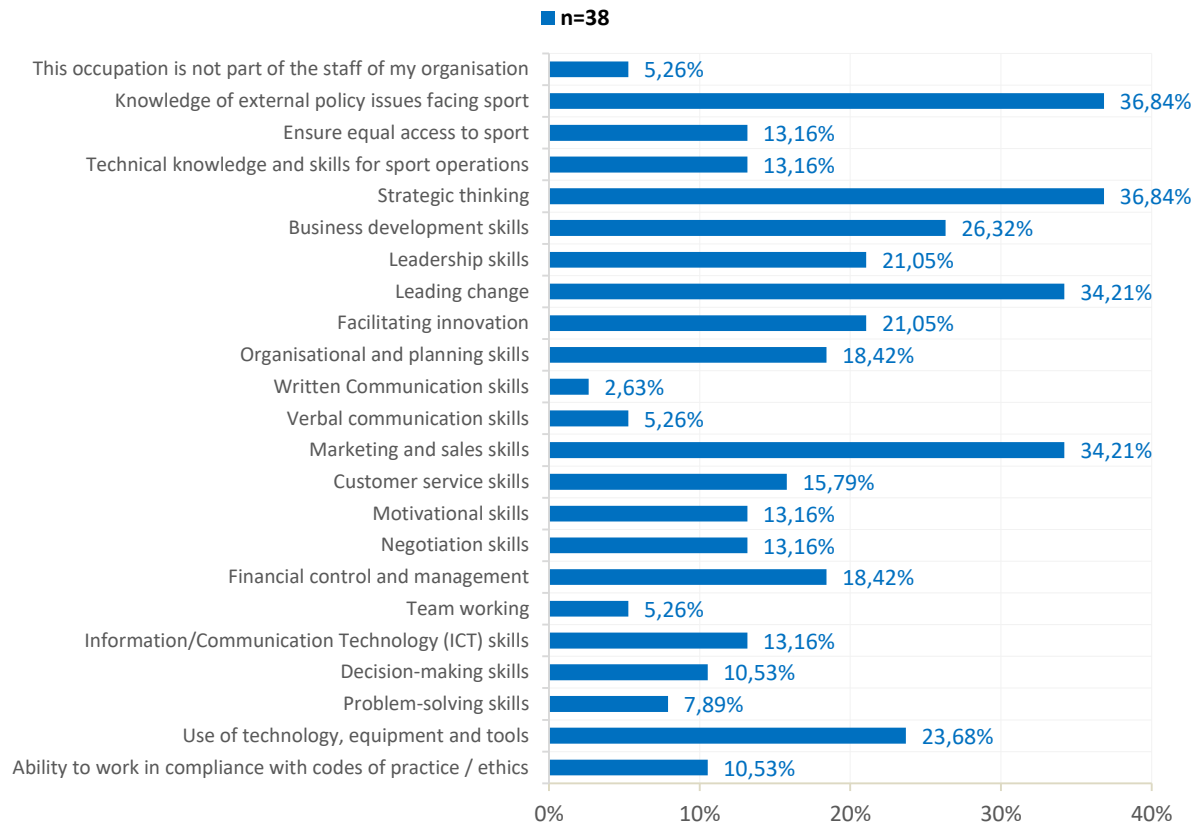| Skill	Percentage
This occupation is not part of the staff of my organisation	0,00%
Knowledge of external policy issues facing sport	40,74%
Ensure equal access to sport	3,70%
Technical knowledge and skills for sport operations	11,11%
Strategic thinking	33,33%
Business development skills	29,63%
Leadership skills	25,93%
Leading change	22,22%
Facilitating innovation	25,93%
Organisational and planning skills	29,63%
Written Communication skills	7,41%
Verbal communication skills	7,41%
Marketing and sales skills	25,93%
Customer service skills	3,70%
Motivational skills	14,81%
Negotiation skills	14,81%
Financial control and management	25,93%
Team working	7,41%
Information/Communication Technology (ICT) skills	22,22%
Decision-making skills	11,11%
Problem-solving skills	11,11%
Use of technology, equipment and tools	22,22%
Ability to work in compliance with codes of practice / ethics	7,41%

Occupation 6. Operational Staff (Skills Needs)

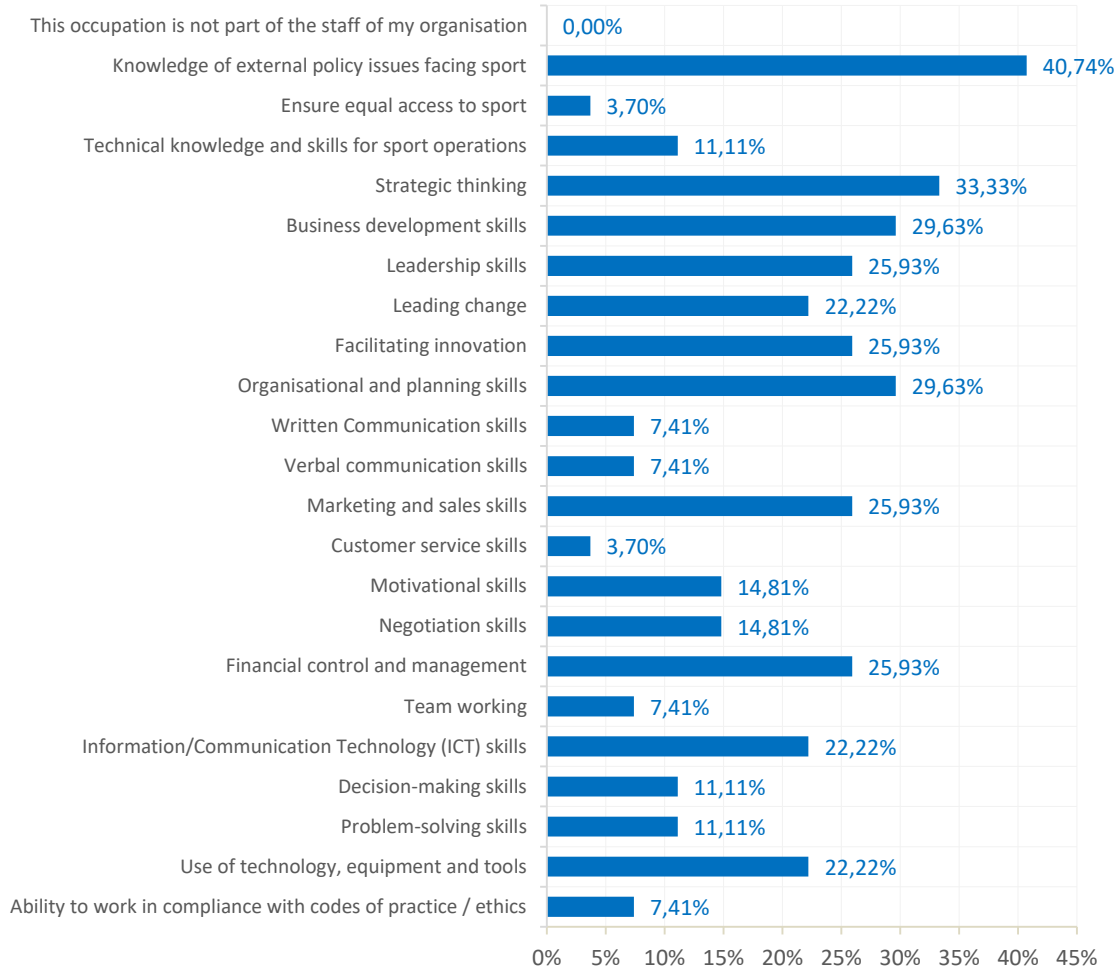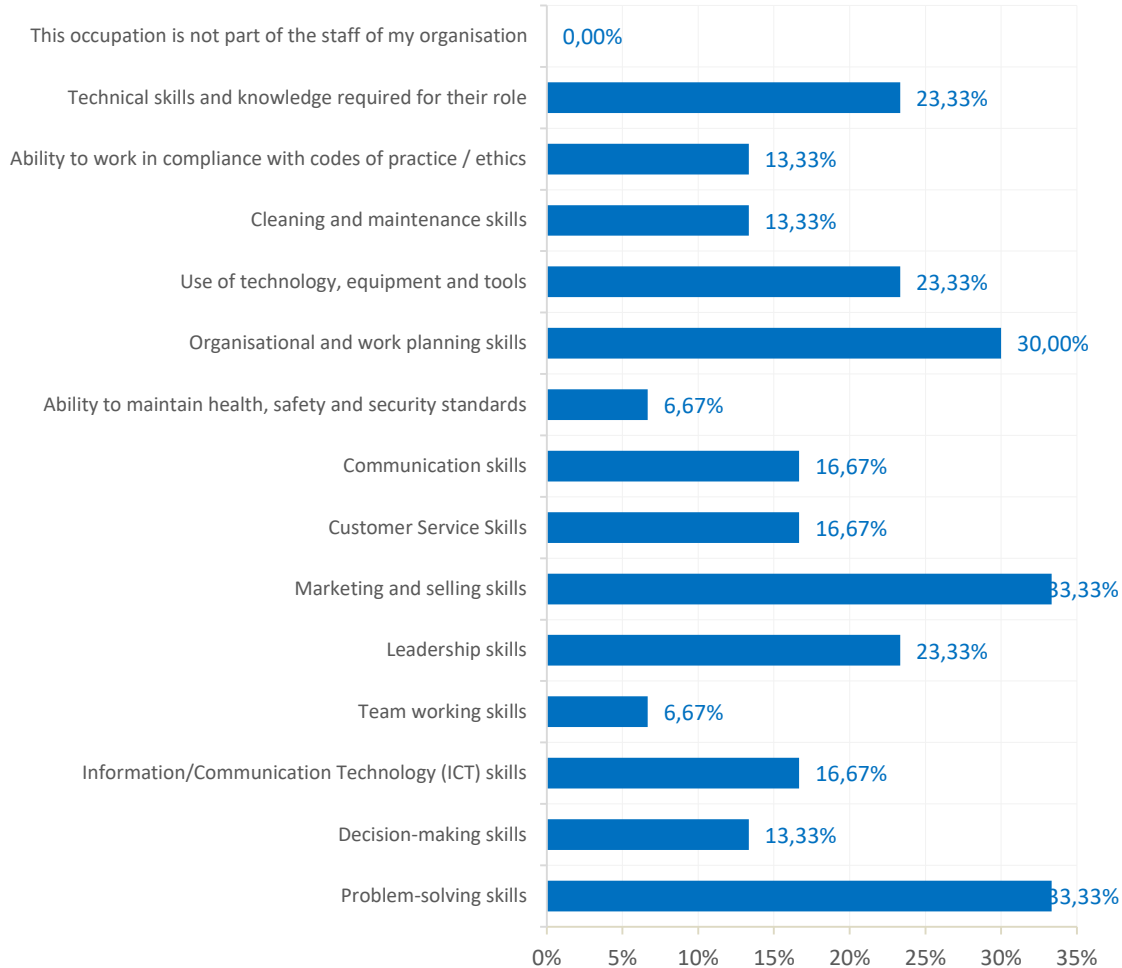**OPERATIONAL STAFF: which skills (if any) are regarded as the weakest or in need of improvement in your organisation's current team?**
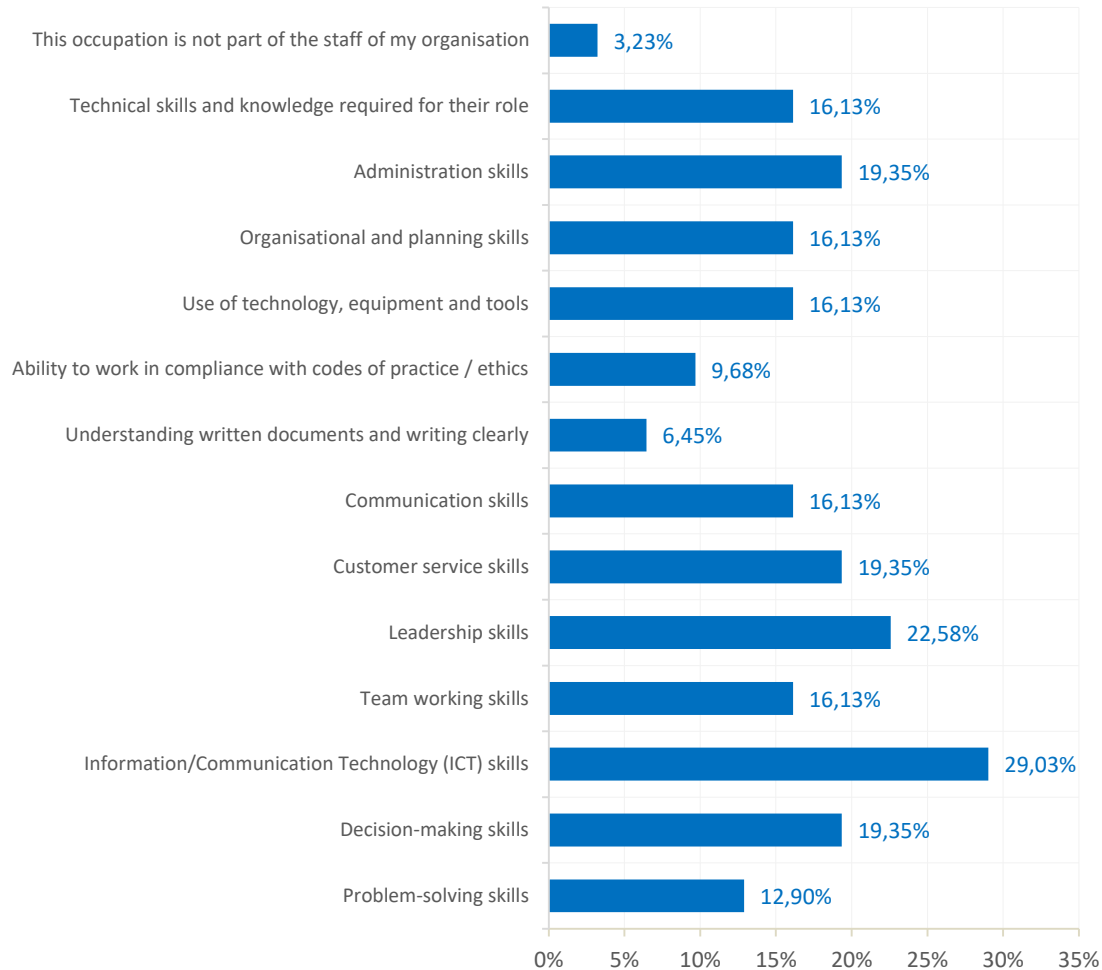
■ n=30

Skill	Percentage
This occupation is not part of the staff of my organisation	0,00%
Technical skills and knowledge required for their role	23,33%
Ability to work in compliance with codes of practice / ethics	13,33%
Cleaning and maintenance skills	13,33%
Use of technology, equipment and tools	23,33%
Organisational and work planning skills	30,00%
Ability to maintain health, safety and security standards	6,67%
Communication skills	16,67%
Customer Service Skills	16,67%
Marketing and selling skills	33,33%
Leadership skills	23,33%
Team working skills	6,67%
Information/Communication Technology (ICT) skills	16,67%
Decision-making skills	13,33%
Problem-solving skills	33,33%

**Occupation 7. Clerical Staff (Skills Needs)**

CLERICAL AND OFFICE STAFF / RECEPTIONIST: which skills (if any) are regarded as the weakest or in need of improvement in your organisation's current team?

■ n=31

Skill	Percentage
This occupation is not part of the staff of my organisation	3,23%
Technical skills and knowledge required for their role	16,13%
Administration skills	19,35%
Organisational and planning skills	16,13%
Use of technology, equipment and tools	16,13%
Ability to work in compliance with codes of practice / ethics	9,68%
Understanding written documents and writing clearly	6,45%
Communication skills	16,13%
Customer service skills	19,35%
Leadership skills	22,58%
Team working skills	16,13%
Information/Communication Technology (ICT) skills	29,03%
Decision-making skills	19,35%
Problem-solving skills	12,90%

k) Recruitment and Retention of Staff

According to the Survey, the most common occupations sought by recruitment in the Irish Sports Sector in recent times have been middle management (55.3%), operational staff (55.3%), clerical staff and sports coaches (both 50%). Fitness Instructors and Personal Trainers (44.7%) appear to be sought relatively frequently too.

If yes, could you please indicate for which occupation(s)/role(s)
n=38
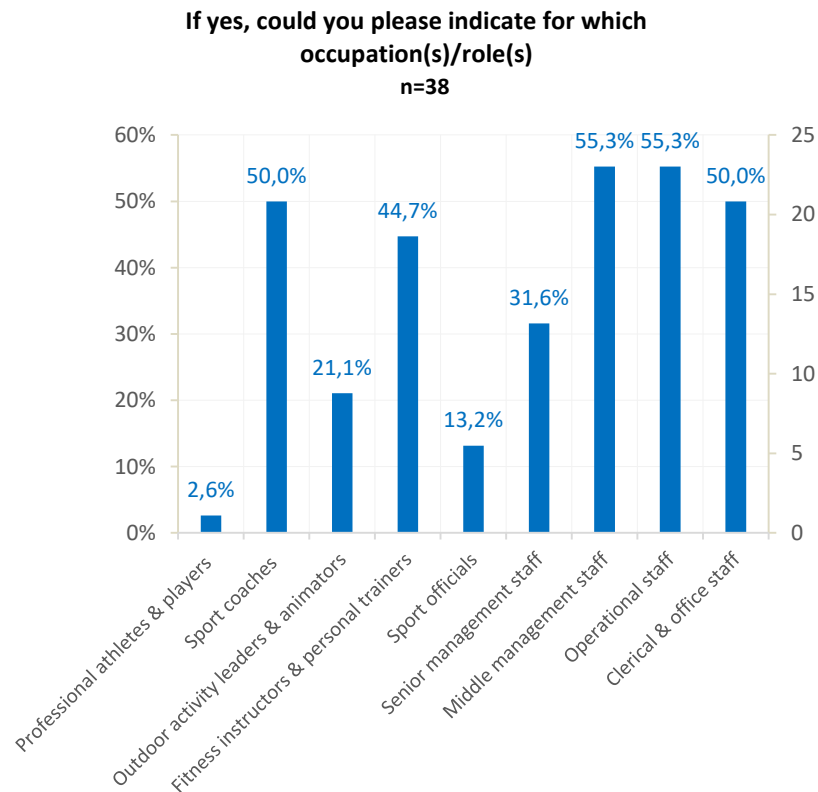
In terms of contract type in recent recruitment, all senior management, middle management, operational staff and clerical / office staff appointments were to be appointed as paid employees, while two-thirds of coaches, animators and fitness instructors were to be paid employees and the remaining one-third were to be freelance / self-employed. 80% of sports officials were expected to be freelance – although in reality, these may have been filled as voluntary or internship positions. All athlete / player appointments were similarly voluntary or freelance appointments.

If yes, could you please indicate for which occupation(s)/role(s)
Breakdown by type of contract

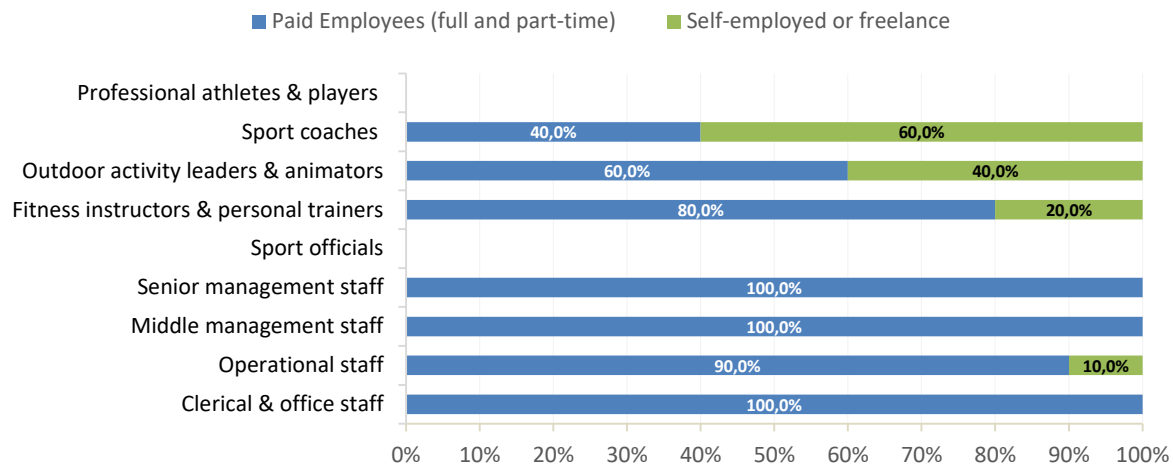■ Paid Employees (full and part-time) ■ Self-employed or freelance ■ n=38
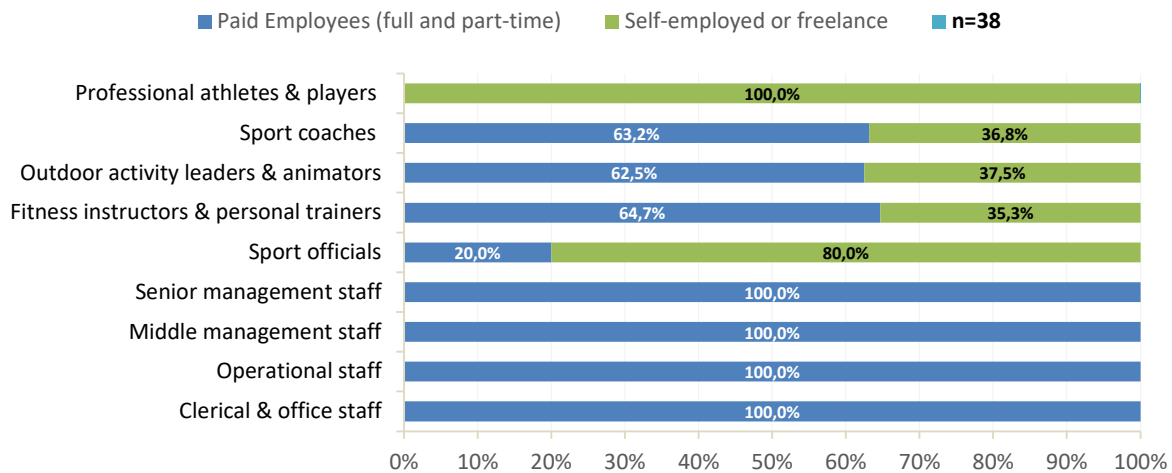
When asked which roles were difficult to fill, respondents pointed to two occupations / roles in particular, these were Middle Management and Operational staff. In the Irish context, professional athletes and players and sports officials are largely irrelevant to this question due to the amateur status of most sports, particularly the national Gaelic games, the relatively low level of funding and due to the traditionally high level of volunteerism in sport.

If yes, could you please indicate for which occupation(s)/role(s)
n=17
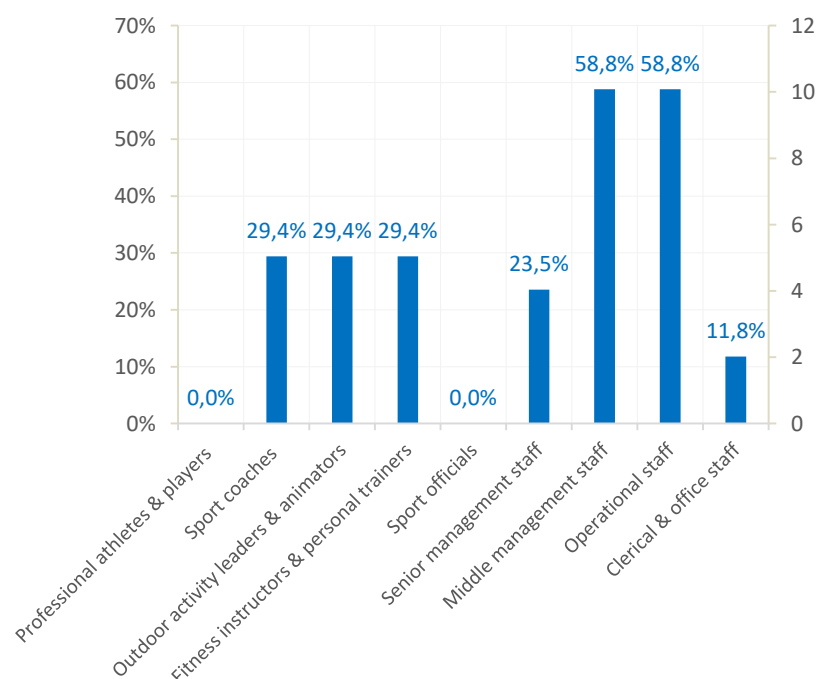
In terms of the type of contract offered to roles that are perceived by respondents as being difficult to fill, contract type (paid, employee) does not seem to be a deterrent in the case of middle management and operational roles.

If yes, could you please indicate for which occupation(s)/role(s)
*Breakdown by type of contract*

■ Paid Employees (full and part-time) ■ Self-employed or freelance

Professional athletes & players		
Sport coaches	40,0%	60,0%
Outdoor activity leaders & animators	60,0%	40,0%
Fitness instructors & personal trainers	80,0%	20,0%
Sport officials		
Senior management staff	100,0%	
Middle management staff	100,0%	
Operational staff	90,0%	10,0%
Clerical & office staff	100,0%	

The reasons highlighted by the respondents for the difficulty in recruiting certain staff are presented below. Significantly, a low number of applicants with the required skills (58.5%) and the required attitude and motivation were the most cited reason (58.5%). Approximately 44% of respondents later in the Survey disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, "It is easy to find and recruit people with the right skills to work in your organisation as paid staff" and 54% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that experience might be more important than qualification. The third ranked choice in terms of difficulty in recruiting staff may provide the applicants' perspective (unattractive terms and conditions, 41.5%).

What are/were the main causes of difficulty in recruitment?

■ n=41

|	
Low number of applicants generally	24,39%
Low number of applicants with the required skills	58,54%
Low number of applicants with required attitude and…	43,90%
Too much competition from other employers in the sector	7,32%
Too much competition from employers in other sectors	7,32%
Not enough people interested in doing this type of job	19,51%
Unattractive terms and conditions (e.g. wage) offered for…	41,46%
Lack of the level of work experience expected by the…	24,39%
Lack of qualifications expected by the organisation	17,07%
Absence of a clear career progression / lack of prospects	31,71%
Long hours work	9,76%
Seasonal work	14,63%
Too many applicants	2,44%
Movement of potential candidates to other sectors	14,63%
Geographic location (e.g. poor public transport)	17,07%
Other	24,39%

For many respondents, the responses may have been made with first-hand experience since, whatever the reason for difficulties in employing appropriate staff there were vacancies, at the time of engagement, in approximately one quarter of the organisations which contributed to this survey:

If yes, could you please indicate for which occupation(s)/role(s)

n=19
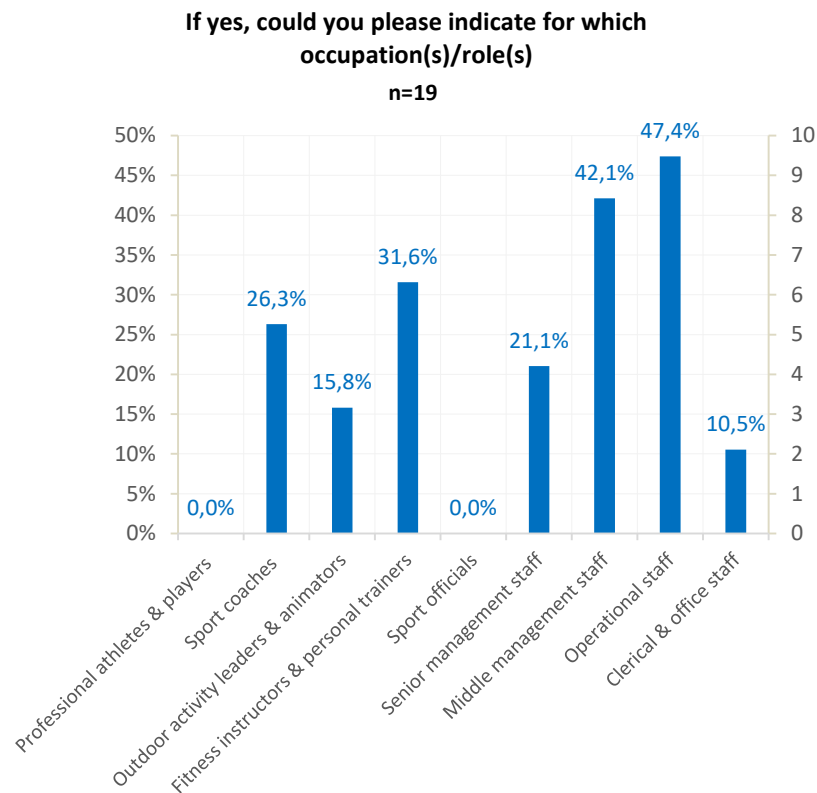
l) **Expectations and Skills of Volunteers and Paid Staff**

Nearly half of respondents (48%) indicated that their organisations experienced difficulty in retaining voluntary staff. In particular, sports coaches (72.4%) and sports officials (58.6%) seemed to present significant retention challenges, followed by members of boards of management (44.8%). Sports Coaches were also the most difficult role to recruit in the EU – wide context. Given the high reliance of the sector on volunteers, these figures could represent significant challenges for the sector.

Could you please indicate for which occupation(s)/role(s)

■ n=29
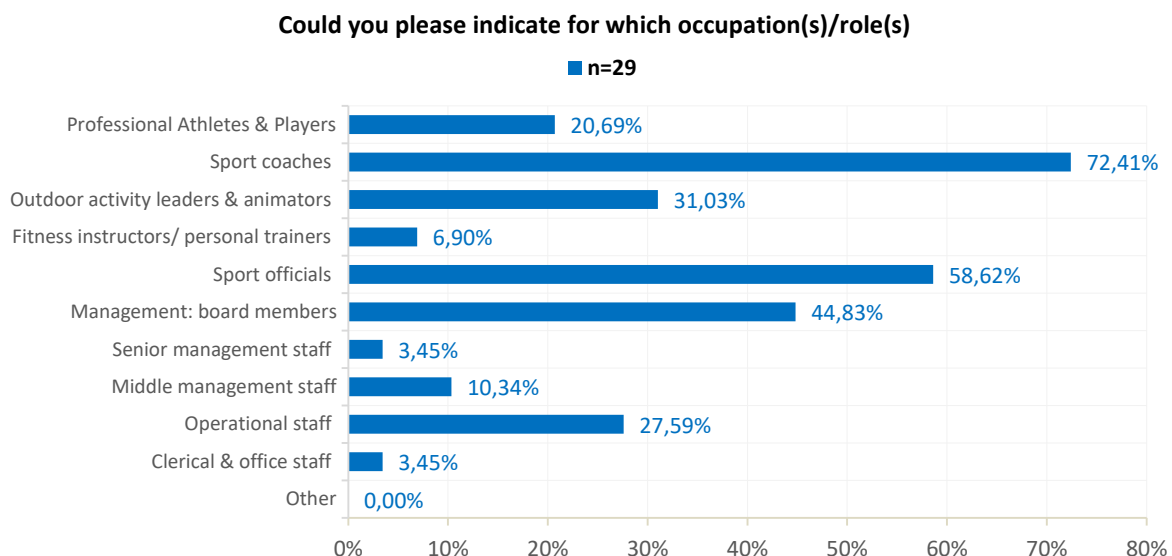
m) Challenges and Objectives for the future

It seems evident that training providers play a role presently and in the future in the advancement of the sports sector. Training must be provided in a flexible format since barriers to employees in the sports sector include:

What are the main barriers to arranging training for your workforce?

■ n=56

Barrier	Percentage
Lack of appropriate training available in subject area we…	44,64%
The courses interested in are not available locally	37,50%
The quality of the courses and training providers are not…	8,93%
Lack of knowledge about training opportunities and…	19,64%
I do not know what training provision is available	7,14%
The dates of the courses are inconvenient	39,29%
Training is too expensive	28,57%
Staff are not keen to take part in training	14,29%
Lack of fund available for training	30,36%
External courses are too expensive	32,14%
Employees are too busy to undertake any training and…	42,86%
Training is not considered as a priority for our organisation	7,14%
All our staff are fully proficient so there is no need for…	1,79%
Trained staff will be recruited by other employers or…	3,57%
There are no barriers to arranging training for our…	10,71%
Other	5,36%

n) General Observations

- Universities/ training providers should work more closely with organisations like yours (84% agree or strongly agree)
- It is difficult to recruit people from other EU countries because their qualifications are not easily understood or transferable (38% agreed or strongly agreed; 25% of respondents were unsure)
- Our staff would benefit from learning experiences in other countries (71% agreed or strongly agreed)

A significant reliance on volunteerism and the inherent informality of recruiting volunteers in the sporting context is challenged all the more by the contentions of respondents that:

- Sport Organisations are becoming more professional (>96% agree or strongly agree)
- The sector is changing, therefore the skills needed by those in the sector will need to change (>80% agree or strongly agree)
- Our expectations of volunteers are as high as paid staff when they perform the same role (52% agree or strongly agree)

- Volunteers do NOT need the same level of qualifications to perform their roles as paid staff (42% agree or strongly agree)

- The workforce (paid and unpaid) needs to be more inclusive (79% agree or strongly agree)

- More effort is needed to make Sport and Physical activity more inclusive in attracting participants (>96% agree or strongly agree)

- Expectations and priorities from national Government are causing our organisation to change (>69% agree or strongly agree)

- Improving governance should be a priority for all sport organisations (~95% agree or strongly agree)

- The skills required in our organisation are changing (>83% agree or strongly agree)

- Past experience is more important than qualifications when recruiting volunteers (59% agree or strongly agree)

- It is difficult to find and recruit people with the right skills to work in your organisation as a volunteer (69% agree or strongly agree)

- Expectations and priorities from national Government on sport organisations are increasing (81% agree or strongly agree)

Of course, the above can apply as much to paid employees as unpaid, voluntary workers. Of note, in relation to employees in the Sports sector are:

- It is not easy to progress from a technical role (e.g. as a coach or instructor) to a management position (55% agree or strongly agree)

- You find your staff are willing to train and develop themselves (67% agree or strongly agree)

- In the future there will be a demand for a better qualified workforce operating in sport organisations like yours (83% agree or strongly agree)

- It is important that your staff have access to on-going training to keep their skills up to date (95% agree or strongly agree)

- It is difficult to find relevant continuing professional development (CPD) courses for your staff (49% disagree or strongly disagree)

- Does your organisation regularly review the skills and training needs of your staff team? (88% yes or partly). Note, 55% of respondents chose 'yes'. This is significantly higher than the 35% reported in the EU Survey.

- New training courses are required to meet the training needs of organisations like yours (76% agree or strongly agree)

- There is a clear pathway for someone to gain employment in to organisations like yours and clear pathways for progression (49% disagree or strongly disagree)

The questions above that resulted in the strongest (80%+) responses are:

- Sport Organisations are becoming more professional (>96% agree or strongly agree)

- More effort is needed to make Sport and Physical activity more inclusive in attracting participant (>96% agree or strongly agree)

- It is important that your staff have access to on-going training to keep their skills up to date (95% agree or strongly agree)

- Improving governance should be a priority for all sport organisations (~95% agree or strongly agree)
- Does your organisation regularly review the skills and training needs of your staff team? (88% yes or partly).
- Universities/ training providers should work more closely with organisations like yours (84% agree or strongly agree)
- The skills required in our organisation are changing (>83% agree or strongly agree)
- In the future there will be a demand for a better qualified workforce operating in sport organisations like yours (83% agree or strongly agree)
- Expectations and priorities from national Government on sport organisations are increasing (81% agree or strongly agree)

8

REPORT ON NATIONAL CONSULTATIONS

8. REPORT ON NATIONAL CONSULTATIONS

a) Sectoral / National Consultation Notes:

The Irish sports sector consultation took the following form. The results of the national survey were divided into the following sections:

- ✦ Outdoor Leaders / Animators
- ✦ Fitness Instructors / Personal Trainers
- ✦ Voluntary Versus Unpaid
- ✦ Governance, Management and Recruitment

A PowerPoint presentation and associated narrative (including request for feedback) was prepared for each section. Relevant section(s) were then sent by e-mail to relevant stakeholders, e.g. outdoor industry representatives, fitness / leisure centres, local sports partnerships, academia. The questions were open questions and responses received were largely open and elaborative.

b) Fitness Instructor and Personal Trainer

The list / rank of desirable skills was questioned by several parties to the consultation exercise. Communication and understanding the needs of clients are seen as the primary skills / roles of the Fitness Instructor and Personal Trainer. These skills need to work in tandem with evidence-based knowledge. A Fitness Instructor or Personal Trainer could potentially understand the participants needs but could still misinterpret the translation of needs into bespoke exercise programme due to lack of knowledge (e.g. bio-mechanics / anatomy / practices). The better equipped [with knowledge] Fitness Instructor and Personal Trainer that is available to the public, the better the results for the end users of Fitness Instructor and Personal Trainer services.

In terms of skills deficits consultation indicated that marketing/sales and being Fitness Instructor / Personal Trainer are two distinct roles. However, if a Fitness Instructor / Personal Trainer is an effective communicator, then they should be able to drive sales and market their skills / services. They may be knowledgeable as Fitness Instructors and Personal Trainers but may not have the necessary sales skills. It is a skill where many Fitness Instructor and Personal Trainer people are not strong. In certain contexts, this is a skill to be included in Fitness Instructors and Personal Trainers development programmes.

Fitness Instructors and Personal Trainers need to be able to work with diverse populations including people with disability, but also with competence to deal with the aging population, people living with obesity issues and other health risks associated with being sedentary. The training of fitness professionals or continuing professional development opportunities should include special populations. Fitness Instructor / Personal Trainer sectors could have a structured series of CPD courses ensure development of competence across different potential client bases.

The view was expressed by a coach tutor that motivational and communicating skills should be ranked higher in order of importance. Secondly, problem solving skills is also an interesting and worthwhile addition to the 'future' list for potential employers.

An experienced trainer / assessor of fitness instructors' view was that ICT skills and Marketing / Sales skills were most important future needs in this sector. There was some surprise that ICT skills were not higher on the list of attributes or skills needs considering how much social media and online training is used in this area.

Behaviour Change and Nutrition / Lifestyle Education were suggested as skills missing on the list especially in the Personal Training sector. These would be regarded as very important skills (services) for Personal Trainer, although some acknowledgement and capture of the limitations of 'advice' sought from Personal Trainers / given by personal trainers is very important.

Advanced skills such as Exercise Referral is also something that might have been expected as there is so much growth in exercise for the management of chronic illness. This development is more advanced than 'basic' personal training and therefore could be better acknowledged and certified (similar to e.g. USA) than is currently done.

c) Outdoor Leaders

25% of Irish responses were from the outdoor sector

In terms of the most important attributes and skills of Outdoor Leaders, Irish respondents listed the following in order of importance:

1. Understanding participants needs

2. Design sessions and programmes

3. Ensure health and safety of participants

4. Work in compliance with standards and codes of ethics

5. Motivational Skills

6. Communicating effectively with participants

- *Do you agree that these skills and the order of importance is reasonable? Is there something missing?*

In terms of the most important current or future skills needs of Outdoor Leaders, Irish respondents listed the following in order of importance:

1. Marketing and selling skills

2. Ability to work with people with disabilities

3. Customer service skills

4. Problem solving skills

- *Do you agree that these are the skills needs in your sector and the order of importance is reasonable? Is there something missing?*

- *Any further comments on these findings*?

It was noted that outdoor leadership, outdoor animation may have a different definition or image depending on the country, particularly as this profession is influenced by national trends, preferences, geography, etc.

There may be a commercial/tourism/guiding theme reflected in the responses. If the emphasis was more on education and/or training there may have been somewhat different responses. The survey did not seem to explore pedagogical content knowledge and personal teaching/coaching philosophy along with sociology, psychology, and teaching and learning methodologies, for example.

In terms of the most important attributes and skills of Outdoor Leaders, Irish respondents listed the following in order of importance:

1. Clearly communicate instructions

2. Comply with standards and codes of practice and ethics

3. Ability to work with Children

4. Ensure Health and Safety of Participants

5. Team Working Skills

Responses from consultation appeared to disagree with this ranking of attributes and skills, which tended to reflect a short term (for the client) service provision, rather than a deeper life-enhancing experience. For example, while communication skills are important, one respondent suggested that communication involved much more than issuing "instructions". Good communication skills are necessary for positive engagement with people, to explain expectations and boundaries, get to know names, to know when to listening etc.

For longer term development and sustainability of the sector, it decision-making, problem-solving, and experience/judgement (broad base of skills and currency as well as time working/playing in that, or a similar, location) were suggested as alternative top-ranking attributes.

It is imperative that outdoor leaders / animators communicate the correct information and being able to communicate clearly, is secondary to this. Good decisions arise after accumulating time in the relevant environment.

Another suggestion was that "Ability to work with people with disability" might be best replaced by 'Ability to work with people of all ages'. People needs skills to relate to older people, people with disability, teenagers as well as with children. The technical skills to include people with disability, or to adapted activities for people with disabilities are certainly an essential skills requirement.

Another point made was that it is necessary that outdoor leaders ensure Health & Safety of Participants and of themselves. This also encompasses 'Comply with standards , codes of practice and ethics' .

Practicing environmentally sustainable skills is becoming absolutely essential in these times of climate change but this is not even mentioned in the listed options.

Teaching/coaching etc. is not present either. To "communicate instructions" does not adequately capture the practice of actually coaching or teaching someone. Effective empathy, first aid/rescue skills, landscape interpretation, etc. would be important to ensure a wholesome experience by the client.

It was considered that while organising activities and events is important as reflected in the survey, that the knowledge skills and competence of planning activity sessions safe, fulfilling and educational experience was a pre-requisite for being able to organise suitable events.

In terms of the most important current or future skills needs of Outdoor Leaders, Irish respondents listed the following in order of importance:

1. ICT Skills

2. Marketing and Selling Skills

3. Ability to Work with People with disabilities

National consultation gave rise to the following points.

☆ The prominence of the need to work with people with disability makes sense as we are becoming a more inclusive and tolerant society.

- It would be interesting to see numbers on how many Irish outdoor organisations actually work independently (and are routinely doing so) with PwDs on a regular basis. It may be quite small for a variety of reasons.

- Pedagogical content knowledge and personal coaching philosophy were suggested as two of the weakest attributes.

- In terms of Tourism and Guiding in the Irish context, the additional skills needs suggested were greater empathy and landscape interpretation.

- In the context of both Pedagogy and Tourism, both approaches need environmental sustainability skills.

In terms of a general recommendation, it would appear that the outdoor leadership / outdoor sector should focus on deeper pedagogical / philosophical / landscape interpretation / linking culture approaches to ensure the sustainability (futureproofing) of the sector.

d) Paid (professional) vs. voluntary leaders

The survey captured information from a large range of positions, both voluntary and paid. In summary:

- 64% of respondents had the same expectations from paid and voluntary sports coaches

- 40% of respondents had the same expectations from paid and voluntary outdoor leaders and animators

- 73% of respondents had the same expectations from paid and voluntary sports officials

- 37% and 44% of respondents had the same expectations from paid and voluntary members of senior and middle management, respectively.

- 44% of respondents had the same expectations from paid and voluntary administrative / clerical staff.

- 46% of respondents had the same expectations from paid and voluntary general operative staff.

- 68% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that attitude and personality were more important than qualifications when employing paid staff, while 59% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that experience was more important than qualifications when engaging volunteers.

- Around 80% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that paid and unpaid operatives need to be more inclusive.

- 69% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that it was difficult to recruit volunteers with the right skills.

- Respondents appeared equally divided (42% vs 44%) on whether or not volunteers should be required to have the same level of qualification as paid employees.
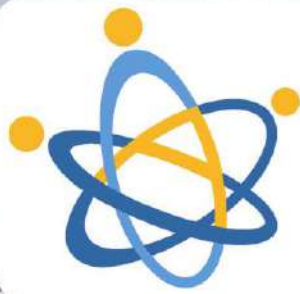
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NATIONAL
CONCLUSIONS

The survey indicates that, in the Irish context, there are similar expectations for both, more so than that indicated for some other European countries. This (similar expectations) seems to be a matter of debate from the consultation exercise. It may be that the volunteer and professional leaders have different expectations of each other, while event organisers, managers, etc., have equal expectations.

A particular case in point was that much of the response to the paid and voluntary workers was regarded as not reflective of the sector by many of those who responded to the consultation exercise. In general, it would appear that in practically all cases, there is the same expectation of paid and voluntary coaches, outdoor leaders, sports officials, management, administrative staff and general operative staff.

There appeared to be universal agreement that attitude and personality were more important than qualifications when employing paid staff and that experience was more important than qualifications when engaging volunteers.

Equally, there seems to be general agreement that both paid and unpaid operatives need to be more inclusive, that it was difficult to recruit volunteers with the right skills and that there is a roughly equal divide on whether or not volunteers should be required to have the same level of qualification as paid employees. However, the view was expressed that one cannot assume the same of people who are not paid, because rarely will they be as invested. This does not mean they should not be as invested nor that they are not required to be (because ideally they should be) but one has to realise that unpaid workers may not be as invested in the longer term, nor as willing to take responsibility for significant situations.

Caution was expressed in relation to the expectations of the unpaid Outdoor tutor / leader being different to those of paid employees with regard to professional codes of behaviour and other professional standards. One might expect that paid tutors / leaders to be familiar with and display professional standards whereas, in some situations, unpaid / volunteers usually come from a club / training setting and may not be familiar with these.

It was observed that the survey appears to omit some major aspects of leadership and guiding and educational attributes, so that perhaps respondents did not have the opportunity to choose them as key attributes or skills needs. This could give an inaccurate impression of practice across the outdoor leader sector, perhaps creating conditions for change in the wrong areas – and hence the importance of the national consultation.

The survey captured information on governance, management and employment from a wide range of private and public enterprises, leisure clubs, sports clubs and federations. In summary:

- 46% of respondents reported that their total staff complement increased in the last 12 months, and 45% of respondents reported that they expected to recruit additional staff in the next two years.
- The agencies who responded to this survey employ a very wide range of roles by varying contract types.
- 68% of responding agencies employ senior management and 78% of them employ middle management.

a) Senior and Middle Management

The top three attributes and skills of senior management are reported to be, (1) Strategic Thinking, (2) Verbal Communication Skills and (3) Ability to work in compliance with standards and codes of practice /

ethics. The top skills needs for current or future senior management were reported to be, (1) Knowledge of external policy issues facing sport (sector), (2) Strategic Thinking, (3) Leading Change and (4) Marketing / Sales skills. The top three attributes and skills of middle management are reported to be, (1) Team Working Skills, (2) Verbal Communication Skills and (3) Ability to work in compliance with standards and codes of practice / ethics. The top skills needs for current or future middle management were reported to be, (1) Knowledge of external policy issues facing sport (sector), (2) Strategic Thinking, (3) Business Development Skills (4) Organisational and Planning skills.

- 67% of respondents reported that they regularly engage voluntary staff, while a further 20% stated they did so occasionally.

- 37% and 44% respectively, of respondents had the same expectations from paid and voluntary members of senior and middle management.

- 60% of respondents employ operational staff for whom key skills are (1) Ability to work in compliance with standards and codes of practice / ethics, (2) Technical knowledge and skills required for their role, (3) Communication Skills and (4) Customer Service Skills.

b) Operational Staff

According to the survey, the current predominant skills needs of operational staff in sports sector agencies are (1) Marketing and Selling skills, (2) Problem-Solving skills and (3) Organisational and Work Planning skills.

- 46% of respondents had the same expectations from paid and voluntary general operational staff.

c) Administrative Staff

- 68% of respondents employ administrative staff for whom key skills are (1) Administration Skills (2) Communication Skills (3) Understanding written documents and writing clearly and (4) Customer Service Skills. According to the survey, the current predominant skills needs of administrative staff in sports sector agencies are (1) ICT skills, (2) Leadership skills and (3) Decision-making skills.

- 44% of respondents had the same expectations from paid and voluntary administrative / clerical staff.

d) Recruitment

- 63% of respondents reported that their organisation recruited or attempted to recruit in the last 12 months. Recruitment of a wide range of roles was reported. 100% of senior and middle managers, operational staff and administrative staff were recruited to paid positions, while approximately one-third of fitness instructors, personal trainers, activity leaders and sports coaches were self-employed. 20% of respondents recruited sports officials to paid positions and none of the respondents recruited players to paid positions.

- In terms of recruiting staff, organisations experience equal situations of finding suitable employees easily or not so easily. The roles that are most difficult to fill, according to the survey, are middle managerial and operational staff. These represent the main current vacancies in the sector. The most common reasons cited for difficulty in recruiting staff were (1) low numbers of applicants, (2) applicants without the required attitude or motivation and (3) insufficient remuneration and / or other conditions.

e) Retention of Staff

✧ Retaining staff seems to be a concern for about one-third of organisations in the sports sector. Difficulties in retaining staff (predominantly senior and middle management, operational and clerical staff) related to better remuneration elsewhere and a lack of opportunities for career progression. Approximately 45% of respondents agreed that it was not easy to progress from 'technical' to managerial positions and more respondents disagreed that there was a clear employment pathway within organisations in this sector.

f) Professionalism in the Sports Sector

✧ 64% of respondents agree that the sector is now more professional than ever and more than 81% agree or strongly agree that the sector is changing such that upskilling / training of personnel is a requirement. 83% of respondents agreed that in future, there will be a demand for more highly qualified staff.

✧ These changes are being directed from NGB level according to 69% of respondents.

✧ Nearly 95% of respondents agree or strongly agree that improving governance should be a priority for all sports and that this is important for their particular organisation (94% of respondents) not least because expectations from NGB's are increasing (81% agree or strongly agree). 67% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that staff are willing to train and upskill in light of these changes.

g) Continuing Professional Development

✧ More than 94% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that it was important for organisations in this sector to have access to CPD opportunities but were equally divided (45% agreed, 45% disagreed) on the statement that it was easy to find suitable CPD. 76% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that new training was required to address new sectoral developments. 85% agreed or strongly agreed with closer collaboration between higher education institutions and sports organisations to address training needs.

✧ The main barriers to engaging in training and CPD as identified in the survey were (1) a lack of appropriate training available, (2) employees being too busy and (3) the dates of courses were unsuitable. Also of concern was the availability of courses locally.

10

NATIONAL ACTION PLAN AND RECOMMENDATIONS

10. NATIONAL ACTION PLAN AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations fall into three categories:

a) Provision of Education and Evidence-based Training

Enhancement and expansion of existing Continuing Professional Development provision to deepen, broaden and secure (sustain) careers in the Sports Sectors. A common sectoral (or sub-sectoral) programme of continuing professional development across the European Union would facilitate inter-country recognition.

b) Supporting National Strategies

In view of the many national strategies for the enhancement of health of the country's population, the Irish sports sector is ideally positioned to engage with these strategies and provide support for their implementation.

c) Understanding the Irish Sports Sector and how to support its development into the future

To understand the trends and developments in the Irish sports sector, greater attention to the capture, collation and interpretation of sectoral information is required.

Recommendations

Recommendation	Priority Actions	Actors	Timeframe	Key Performance Indicators
Provision of Education and Evidence-based Training to deepen, broaden and sustain careers in the Sports Sectors.	Supplement the sectoral survey with education / training -specific questions, in particular targeting employees in the sector.	Higher Education Sector	2020 onwards	Focus groups and conference presentations / discussions to identify education and training needs and opportunities
	Promotion of national qualification frameworks and professional certifications within the EU	National Government agencies, Higher Education Sector, National Governing bodies, professional bodies.	2021 onwards	EU wide recognition of individual national qualifications and certifications.
	National or EU-level CPD programme with points system (where this does not exist). CPD will ensure ongoing training in best practice so clients, instructors, athletes, coaches, operators management are optimally informed to make appropriate technical and strategic decisions.	Higher Education Institutions, Professional Bodies, Government Departments of Sports and of Education.	2021 onwards	Development of structured CPD for sports sector.

Sharing of CPD nationally and internationally. |
| | Incorporation of adapted physical activity and inclusion of special populations into all aspects of the sports sector. Promotion of case studies or ambassadors of good practice as role models, especially role models from special populations. | All elements of the sector | Concerted effort from 2020 | APA and inclusive policies become seamlessly integrated into more and more aspects of the Sports Sector

Updates to training and education programme content to include support for special populations as employees and / or clients in the sports sectors. |
| | Broaden scope of knowledge for formerly 'narrow' skills sets to ensure better quality and broader scope of | Higher Education Institutions, in consultation | From next scheduled review | Formalised ongoing communication and feedback between Education Providers and |

service as well as future proofing of the career. E.g. Nutrition module in fitness instructor training; Adapted Physical Activity module in personal training; strategic planning for sports sector in new management training / induction, Coach-specific CPD. In the case of instructors, workshops on effective empathy, lifestyle intervention (advice), first aid/rescue skills, landscape interpretation, broad environment appreciation and sustainability, etc. are important elements to ensure a wholesome experience by the professional practitioner, client and other stakeholders.	with employers and employees.	of relevant programme content	Sectors, examples of best practice and tangible benefits to the sector. Updates to training and education programme content to reflect broader essentials skills and attributes of graduates for sustainable career development Greater emphasis on and provision of CPD for employees.

		Align missions, visions and services in the health and fitness sectors with one or more national strategies, e.g. National Sports Policy, Positive Aging Strategy, Healthy Ireland Framework, National Physical Activity Plan, Policy on Participation in Sport by People with Disability, etc.	Sectoral representatives, Higher Education Institutions, Coordinating Agencies	From 2019	Monitoring and compilation of initiatives to provide material for promotion and best-practice advice. Greater sense of community-wide effort through collaboration and sharing of facilities and expertise.
Supporting National Strategies Supporting National Strategies		Seek collaborative opportunities to promote healthy lifestyles for all, especially marginalised communities and cohorts.	Health Service Executive, Local Sports Partnerships, Higher Education Institutions, Primary and Post-primary Schools, Community Support Groups.	From 2019	Monitoring and compilation of initiatives to provide material for promotion and best-practice advice. Increase in examples of collaborative initiatives and sharing of expertise.
		Support 'active schools' programmes through providing schools with of advice, facilities, information, workshops, etc.	Primary and secondary schools, Higher Education Institutions. Local Sports Partnerships, Education Boards.	From 2019	Increase in examples of collaborative initiatives and sharing of expertise and benefits to school-going children.

Understanding the Irish Sports Sector and how to support its development into the future	Further consideration of the information deficits identified by the ESSA – Sport surveys and what information retrieval mechanism might best provide for information to support further sports sectoral initiatives, research and development.	Higher Education Institutions, EU, Irish Government, Central Statistics Office.	From 2020	The ability to complete the ESSA-Sport desk review template (or equivalent) as fully as other EU countries can.
	Identification of research topics which might underpin development and enhance the reputation of the sports sector in Ireland	Sectoral representatives, Higher Education Institutions, Coordinating Agencies	From 2020	Instigation and funding of research and development initiatives which aim to develop and showcase Irish sports-related capacity.
	Extend and deepen sectoral consultation with data from the ESSA – Sport National Survey to promote a sectoral ambition to establish more collaboration-led, longer term sectoral developments.	Higher Education Institutions, Sectoral representatives, Coordinating Agencies.	From 2020	Regular (annual or biennial) sports sector conference to explicitly consider sectoral developments and challenges – or incorporation of such topics into existing regular events.

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11. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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