

# Analysis of Republic of Ireland National Policies Supporting Health Promotion in Sport Clubs

Van Hoyer, A.<sup>1</sup>, Cullen, B.<sup>2</sup>, Regan, C.<sup>3</sup>, Lane, A.<sup>4</sup>, Vuillemin, A.<sup>5</sup>, & Woods, C.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> PAfH Cluster, HRI, University of Limerick, <sup>2</sup> Sport Ireland, <sup>3</sup> Gaelic Athletic Association, <sup>4</sup> Technological University of the Shannon, <sup>5</sup> Université Côte d'Azur

## Background

- 12% of European practice sport and 6% volunteer in sports clubs (Sport Eurobarometer 2018)
- Only 26% of European countries have a policy on sports clubs for health (Whiting, Mendes et al. 2021)
- Sport Clubs have called for support from national policy-makers on guidelines, funding, advocacy (Johnson, Van Hoyer et al. 2020)

## Aims

To review national to local policies supporting health promotion development in sports clubs.

## Methods

- Online semi structured Interviews with key stakeholders
- 11 participants from sport and health department, National Governing Bodies, Local Sport Partnership and academia.
- Ethical approval from EHS ethic committee
- Interview guide and data analysis based on the Health Promoting Sports Clubs-National Audit Tool, created by the World Health Organisation, reviewing 11 sections from stakeholders, policy framing and evaluation, communication, program...
- Analysis at local level centred on Limerick County

## Results

### Searching process

- ⇒ Different national strategies mention schools, workplace as “settings”, where sports clubs could also be recognised as such but not mentioned this way (e.g. Smarter travel policy)
- ⇒ Different national and local strategy talk about community-based organisation, without including sport clubs in their description

### Policy documents

- ⇒ 51 policy action from 17 policy documents
- ⇒ 6 actions at local level from 3 policies

### Health Promotion

- ⇒ Only 4 actions focusing on health promotion in a holistic way
- ⇒ Others focusing on health topics with 13 focusing on physical activity (PA) participation, 8 on gender, 8 on disabilities, 3 on suicide prevention, 3 on inequalities

### Department implicated

- ⇒ Policies from health, sport, education, youth, justice and rural department
- ⇒ 32 actions are intersectoral, implicating other departments

### Mention of sports clubs

- ⇒ Huge variation in how to mention organised sport, from clubs, to sport clubs, to sport organisation, to sport, limiting the identification of single structure

### Presence of national coordination

- ⇒ No national committee/leadership group to foster health promotion in sport

### Surveillance and monitoring system

- ⇒ No monitoring or surveillance of sports clubs health promotion

### Program

- ⇒ GAA healthy club project funded and supported through policies, but no opportunity for other sport discipline to be implicated so far.

### Local level implementation

- ⇒ Local Sport Partnerships are acknowledged as key actors supporting sports clubs, and representing sport at local level, where their main mission is promoting PA.

## Conclusions

Sports clubs have called for a system supporting their investment in health promotion, where a limited resources so far have been invested to help them to become health promoting settings, acknowledging the global health promotion concept beyond health topics. Priorities include participation in PA, supporting women and disabled people engagement in sport. Coordination and surveillance are lacking at national level and national policy implementation mobilise principally local sport partnership.

### Identification of policies via databases and interviews

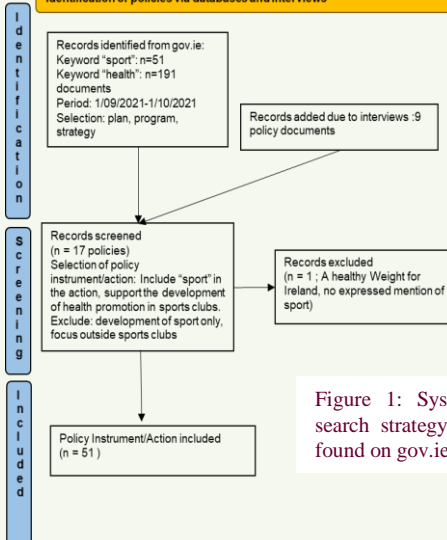


Figure 1: Systematic review search strategy which can be found on gov.ie

### References:

Whiting, S., et al. (2021). "Promoting health-enhancing physical activity in Europe: Surveillance, policy development and implementation 2015–2018." *Health Policy* 125(8): 1023-1030.

Johnson, S., et al. (2020). "Building health-promoting sports clubs: a participative concept mapping approach." *Public Health* 188: 8-17.

"This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No 101028401"