



Sligo Sport and Recreation Partnership

Enniscrone Community Sports Hub

Evaluation Report 2023



SPÓRT ÉIREANN
SPORT IRELAND



ciste na
gcuntas díomhaoin
the dormant
accounts fund

Supporting Organisations
Enabling Social Change



How Much Did the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub Do?

3,739

Number of participants engaged

229

Number of individual programmes delivered

21

Number of training and capacity building programmes delivered

155

Number of participants engaged in training and capacity building workshops

11

Number of local groups associated with the Hub

How Well Did the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub Do?

78,386

Reach achieved through social media posts

77%

Of community respondents were aware of the Hub

58%

Of Hub partners understand the purpose of the Hub

75%

Of Hub partners felt they had influence on what happens at the Hub

100%

Of Hub partners felt supported by SSRP and want to work with them in future

91%

Of Hub partners felt welcome at the Hub

77%

Of Hub programme participants felt welcome at the Hub

89%

Of Enniscrone community survey respondents are likely to participate in sport and physical activity in the area in future

Was Anyone Better Off as a Result of the Hub?

Impact on Hub Programme Participants (Adult)

65%

Of Hub participants report having made new friends or connections

64%

Of Hub participants report having become more physically active

63%

Of Hub participants report that their mental health has improved

55%

Of Hub participants report that their fitness levels improved

Impact on Hub Programme Participants (Youth)

65%

Of parents felt their child had become more physically active

58%

Of parents reported that their child had made new friends

56%

Of parents felt their child had improved their fitness levels

51%

Of parents felt their child had become more interested in sport and physical activity

Impact on Hub Partners

65%

Of Hub partners felt the Hub brought people from different communities together

58%

Of Hub partners felt the Hub increased opportunities to be physically active

56%

Of Hub partners felt their relationship with other clubs and community organisations had improved

Impact on the Enniscrone Community

94%

Of community survey respondents felt the Hub contributed to community cohesion

70%

Of community survey respondents report that sport and physical activity opportunities have increased

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About S3 Solutions

Established in 2013, S3 Solutions is an independent consultancy company delivering on a mission to “leave a positive and lasting impact on the people, organisations and communities we work with, supporting social change.”

S3 Solutions works specifically with community & voluntary and public sector organisations to deliver meaningful social change. S3 Solutions brings together a multidisciplinary team of experienced researchers, social impact analysts, business and economic consultants to provide applied social research through highly engaging consulting services that produce actionable insights and innovative solutions.

The Authors

Georgia O’Kane is a Senior Consultant (Research and Evaluation Division) at S3 Solutions and led the delivery and formation of this evaluation.

Acknowledgements

This evaluation was commissioned by Sligo Sport and Recreation Partnership. We would like to thank the Sligo Sport and Recreational Partnership Board of Directors, Deirdre Lavin (SSRP CEO) and Diane Middleton Cox (Community Sports Development Officer and Enniscrone Community Sports Hub Coordinator) for their commissioning of and trust in our research efforts. The commitment of Sligo Sport and Recreation Partnership to this contract has enabled a comprehensive evaluation report.

We would also like to thank the partner organisations involved in the development and delivery of the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub including local sports clubs, local commercial sports providers, local community organisations, Swim Ireland, and Sligo County Council. These organisations participated in the consultation process, providing invaluable insight to the operations of the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub, the partnership with Sligo Sport and Recreation Partnership and with each other, and the impact of the Hub for its participants and the Enniscrone Community.

Finally, we would like to extend our gratitude to people of Enniscrone for their participation in the community survey, sharing key insights on the current sport and physical activity provision in the area and their views on the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub.

Foreword

On behalf of Sligo Sport and Recreation Partnership, we are pleased to welcome the publication of the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub Evaluation Report. This evaluation focuses on Years 1-3 of a 5-year project.

At the outset, we are delighted to note the broad range of community and agency stakeholders who participated in the evaluation, and we thank them for their valued input.

Sligo Sport and Recreation Partnership is committed to facilitating opportunities for people to participate in sport and physical activity with a particular focus on disadvantaged communities. The Community Sports Hubs has enabled this to be achieved.

The choice of Enniscrone as a Hub site was informed by a key first step which involved a detailed local community needs analysis. During this process, community organisations demonstrated a keen desire and ambition to establish a Hub; this commitment followed through once the Hub activity commenced. This resulted in the planning and delivery of many successful sport and physical activity programmes, inclusive of all ages and ability levels, and included the development of 3 new minority sports clubs: a noteworthy achievement.

The insights presented in this evaluation highlight that investment in the development of a Community Sports Hub has made a significant impact, improving opportunities for participation with a resulting positive impact on the health and wellbeing of participants.

We extend our thanks to the volunteers in sports clubs and community organisations for their enthusiasm and commitment in building their capacity to lead and deliver quality programmes, many of which are referenced throughout this report.

We wish to acknowledge the positive collaboration and investment support from our local partner agencies including Sligo County Council, West Sligo Family Resource Centre and Swim Ireland, which has been a critical success factor in enabling the Hub to deliver on its targets.

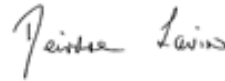
We wish to acknowledge the expertise, dedication and drive of SSRP Senior Community Sports Development Officer Diane Middleton Cox for her professionalism in coordinating the Hub and the evaluation.

We acknowledge Sport Ireland for the funding made available for this evaluation and we also wish to thank S3 Solutions for facilitating the evaluation.

SSRP looks forward to taking the learning from this evaluation and applying it as we continue to work with all partners to further build capacity and deliver sustained, quality sport and physical activity programme opportunities led by strong community sports organisations in Enniscrone.



Emer Concannon
Chairperson
Sligo Sport and Recreation Partnership



Deirdre Lavin
Chief Executive Officer
Sligo Sport and Recreation Partnership

Section 1: Introduction to the Report

1.1. Introduction and Purpose of the Report

This report sets out an independent and objective evaluation of Sligo Sport and Recreation Partnership's Enniscrone Community Sports Hub. Launched in 2020, the Hub aims to increase participation in sport and physical activity in the area through a partnership approach to delivery.

The purpose of this evaluation is to determine the nature of the approach taken by Sligo Sport and Recreation Partnership (SSRP) in the management and delivery of the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub and the extent to which this has led to the development of sustainable activities, pathways, relationships, and the sustainability of the Hub itself, since its establishment.

1.2. Report Objectives

The objectives of this evaluation report are to:

- Determine possible changes to participation rates in the Hub area.
- Assess the effectiveness of Hub delivery, evaluating performance in the context of wider policy objectives and funding criteria and identifying key enablers and inhibitors to success.
- Examine the adequacy of Hub implementation/administration structures and systems.
- Gather evidence of the impact of the project on participants.
- Produce evidence-based recommendations for improvement in service efficiency and effectiveness.

1.3. Report Structure

This report includes the following:

- **Section 2** sets out the rationale and context for the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub.
- **Section 3** presents an overview of how the Hub is delivered.
- **Section 4** sets out the methodology used to inform this evaluation.
- **Section 5** presents the M1 findings.
- **Section 6** presents the survey findings.
- **Section 7** presents the consultation findings and three case studies of newly developed clubs and programmes.
- **Section 8** includes discussion, learning and analysis.
- **Section 9** sets out the evaluation's conclusions and recommendations.

1.4. Introduction to Sligo Sport and Recreation Partnership

Sligo Sport and Recreation Partnership (SSRP) is one of 29 Local Sports Partnerships in Ireland. SSRP operates in partnership with government agencies, local authorities, NGBs, sports clubs, communities and schools to facilitate physical activity programmes and events that promote increased participation in sport and physical activity and builds sport and physical activity capacity by providing training and education opportunities for clubs, communities, coaches and volunteers.

The vision of SSRP is:

“Sport and Recreation: A Way of Life in Sligo.”

SSRP seeks to increase physical activity participation by ensuring there is a broad range of opportunities for everyone in County Sligo. SSRP’s delivery is premised on the belief that sport and physical activity should be enjoyable, make us feel good, improve our health and wellbeing, increase our skills and introduce us to new people and places.

1.5. Introduction to the Hub Funder: Sport Ireland

Community Sports Hubs are funded by Sport Ireland under Dormant Accounts. Sport Ireland is the authority tasked with the development of sport in Ireland. This includes participation in sport, high performance sport, anti-doping, coaching and the development of the Sport Ireland National Sports Campus. Community Sports Hubs are one of a number of interventions and initiatives aimed at tackling disadvantage and increasing participation in sport and physical activity among people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities.



Section 2: Rationale & Context for the Hub

2.1. Introduction

This section introduces Sligo Sport and Recreation Partnership's (SSRP) Enniscrone Community Sports Hub and sets out the context within which it was conceptualised and delivered, offering an insight to the rationale for the Hub .

2.2. Introduction to the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub

Community Sports Hubs are a collective of progressive sports clubs and other local organisations that want to work together to improve the sports offered in their local community. The objective is to bring those interested in promoting sports participation together to plan, coordinate and deliver increased sport and physical activity opportunities. The Community Sports Hubs provide information, support and advice on a wide range of sports and physical activities to make it easier for people to become more active. Funded by Sport Ireland through Dormant Accounts, the Hubs have a focus on disadvantaged communities such as people who are economically or socially disadvantaged; people who are educationally disadvantaged; and/or persons with a disability.

The Enniscrone Community Sports Hub was formed in 2020. Enniscrone is a small seaside town in County Sligo with a population of 1,291. The demographics of the area synergise strongly with Dormant Accounts' focus on disadvantaged communities. The majority of Enniscrone falls within the electoral divisions of Kilglass and Castleconor West, both of which are rated marginally below average in terms of deprivation; Kilglass at -5.38 and Castleconor West at -0.70. Enniscrone also has higher rates of disability amongst its population than the State (29% vs. 22%), lower levels of employment (47% vs 56%), and lower levels of education, with 22% of the Enniscrone population achieving no education past lower secondary school level compared with 19% of the State.

Whilst focusing on disadvantaged communities, Enniscrone Community Sports Hub aims to increase the number of people of all ages and backgrounds participating in physical activity in their community through pathways for participation and capacity building. This is facilitated through a model of delivery which has a partnership approach at its core. The Hub offers a range of sporting activities to the geographical area, and aims to grow participation, engage with community and sporting groups, encourage more community leadership, enhance facilities, and bring stakeholders together to plan and deliver sport. Key areas of work for the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub include capacity building; programming; building strong clubs; and enhancing facility usage.

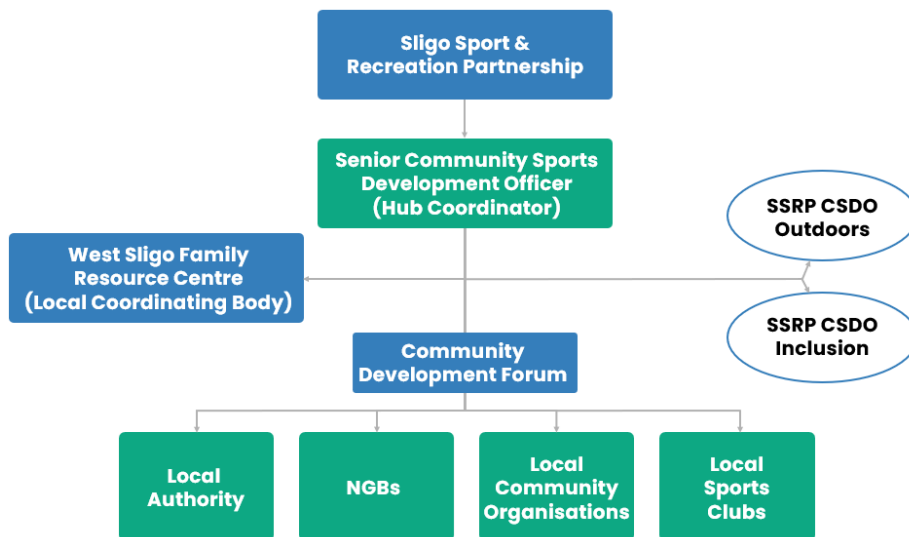
Section 3: Hub Implementation & Delivery

3.1. Introduction

Sligo Sport and Recreation Partnership (SSRP) submitted an application to Sport Ireland’s Dormant Accounts Fund in 2019 and received initial funding of €62,500 to establish a 5-year Community Sport Hub in Enniscrone in 2020. Further funding was providing for 2021 (€40,000), 2022 (€30,000), and 2023 (€20,000). Additionally, indirect funding and in kind investment was provided annually by Sligo County Council, HSE, and SSRP.

This section outlines the history and operations of the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub from its establishment in 2020, including details about how the Hub was implemented, the stakeholders involved, and key delivery achievements to date.

3.2. Hub Management Structure



The Enniscrone Community Sports Hub is facilitated by SSRP, with Hub coordination overseen by the SSRP Senior Community Sports Development Officer. There are ten central and committed partners involved in the management and delivery of the Hub. This includes West Sligo Family Resource Centre which operates as the overall local co-ordinating body, providing access to key target groups who are most in need and staffing capacity to support the initiative from an administration and communications perspective. Other partners include Sligo County Council, NGBs, community organisations, and sports clubs who work collectively to increase sport and physical activity participation and opportunities in the area. Each partner signs a Partnership Agreement with SSRP which formalises the relationship and sets out each partner’s individual role, the targets and timelines of the partnership and relevant funding arrangements.

3.3. Hub Delivery Model

Enniscrone Community Sports Hub encompasses a model of delivery which has a partnership approach at its core, aiming to enhance community leadership, community capacity and collaboration between key area stakeholders in the planning and delivery of sport. This model is displayed below:

Partnership Working

Hub delivery focuses on a bottom-up partnership approach whereby SSRP acts as a facilitator, seeking input and ideas from organisations and individuals in Enniscrone.

Partnerships are formalised through Partnership Agreements and partners work together to share ideas and develop, promote and deliver sport and physical activity opportunities which align with the needs of the area. This includes the determination of facility development opportunities, appropriate capital investments and the identification of training and capacity building needs.

Key achievements in this area include the development of a strong community network and strong links with NGBs.



Training and Capacity Building

The Hub's bottom-up approach and focus on sustainability places an emphasis on the development of club and community capacity in Enniscrone. The Hub focuses on empowering club and community group personnel to facilitate sport and physical activity through governance and best practice support such as safeguarding and vetting policies, and through a range of training and development opportunities delivered based on need.

Sport and Physical Activity Programming

SSRP and Hub Partners work together to facilitate sport and physical activity programming in Enniscrone. This includes the creation of new sports clubs, the delivery of national programmes at the local level and the development of a diverse range of sport and physical activities led by local community groups.

The following sub-sections further explore and provide greater detail on the delivery model.

Foundation of the Hub: Needs Analysis

The Enniscrone Community Sports Hub was formed in response to a needs analysis conducted in April 2019. In preparation, a small number of taster sessions for physical activity programmes were facilitated to build relationships with local organisations. SSRP then developed an informative Community Sports Hub presentation along with community group and club audit forms. This process focused on reaching local clubs, facility providers and community groups through local promotion and engagement in advance of the community consultation. Despite its rural isolation and level of disadvantage, SSRP witnessed a high-level of community response and cooperation with this process. The consultation evidenced a significant need for a Hub in the area, with local sports clubs, community organisations and local partners displaying readiness to undertake this project and deliver on its goals.





11 groups involving 14 participants were represented in the needs analysis including:

- Castleconnor GAA
- Castleconnor Community Council
- Enniscrone Community Council
- Enniscrone Golf Club
- Enniscrone/Kilglass Community Games
- Enniscrone/Kilglass GAA
- Enniscrone Walking Club
- Irish Surfing Association
- Sligo GAA
- Waterpoint Leisure Centre
- West Sligo Family Resource Centre

Following collective engagement, SSRP conducted one-to-one meetings with participants and groups from the area. The following barriers and gaps were identified:

Geographical isolation; situated over 1 hour from Sligo Town	Economic disadvantage creates an affordability barrier	Limited choice; particular desire for athletics/basketball	Lack of personal confidence among 'hard to reach' groups
Sports clubs struggle to attract hard to reach groups	Capacity building opportunities are rare; impacting on club / organisational capacity	Lack of a joined-up approach to sport; groups working in silos	
Lack of usage for some facilities in both Enniscrone and Castleconnor		Lack of facilities for some sports with the priority the need for an athletics training track	

Based on the needs analysis, the central achievements sought of the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub include:

-  Forming a new Community Sports Development Forum
-  Development of a new athletics training facility and club
-  Creation of new opportunities for women, men, youth and older adults
-  Increasing usage of local facilities.

Summary of Sport and Physical Activity



Key achievements include:

- **3 new minority sports clubs developed:** Razorbacks Basketball Club, West Sligo Athletics Club and Enniscrone Surf Lifesaving 
- **Club-Community outreach programmes:** including Operation Transformation with Enniscrone Kilglass GAA Club and Walking Football with Kilglass Enniscrone United FC
- **Inclusive programmes:** including a ‘disability golf for youth’ programme delivered with Enniscrone Golf Club and ‘Surf Therapy for young people with autism’; delivered with 7th Wave Surf Club 
- **Online physical activity programmes:** Men’s Indoor Rowing, Women’s Pilates, Teen Fitness and Youth Dance
- **Community-led programmes:** including Community Walking Programmes; Stronger for Longer; and Youth Multi-Sport Camps 
- **National Initiatives:** Men on the Move; SwimminWomen; Bike Week; HerOutdoors Week; National Play Day; AquaMoves (HerMoves); Open Water Programmes

Summary of Training and Capacity Building



Sport-Specific Training

-  Activator Poles
-  Athletic Leader 1
-  Basketball Ireland Coaching Award
-  Online Social Tennis
-  Online Walking Leader

-  Orienteering
-  Sprocket Rocket Cycling
-  Walking Football Coaching
-  Water Safety

Generic Training

-  Active Leadership
-  First Aid
-  Safeguarding 1
-  Women in Sport Leadership

COVID-19 Pandemic

The Enniscrone Community Sports Hub was first established in 2020, paralleling the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic's restrictions on social gathering affected the formation and delivery of the Hub, necessitating the adaptation of delivery to this context. Planned in-person programming was remodeled for online delivery or replaced with remote activities. The redesign of Enniscrone sports programming paralleled the adaptation of all of SSRP's programming for pandemic delivery. Once online, SSRP focused on bringing these new opportunities to the Enniscrone Community, allowing local people to access programming in their homes which, outside of the pandemic, would have required travel to Sligo town and beyond.

The Hub remained focused on creating strong community links with partners, local agencies, and community groups during the pandemic. Whilst an official launch of the Hub was originally planned for 2020, this was instead instigated informally by the Hub Coordinator who contacted lead partners to begin Hub operations.



Section 4: Methodology

4.1. Introduction

This section sets out the methodology used to carry out the evaluation, including approaches to data collection, data analysis, and limitations.

4.2. Defining Success

This evaluation is aided by an Outcomes Based Accountability Framework (OBA) which underpins the methodology. OBA is a recognised tool for effective impact measurement and provides a framework for measuring the impact of interventions and initiatives on outcomes and enables discussions to take place about how to continually improve those outcomes, focusing on two key areas: population accountability and performance accountability.¹ Centrally, this evaluation framework seeks to answer three key questions:

- How much did the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub do?
- How well did the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub do?
- Was anyone better off as a result of the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub?

The indicators under this framework align with the evaluation framework developed by Sport Ireland for the *Community Sports & Physical Activity Hubs: Evaluation Report 2019*.

4.3. Data Collection

The evaluation adopted a mixed method approach to data collection. This included the following activity, carried out between October and December 2023:

- Desk-based analysis of Hub data including details of the needs analysis, monitoring reports from 2020-2023 and M1/PACE+ data from the Open Water Programme.
- 1 x web-based survey for members of the Enniscrone community and/or participants of Hub activities, aligning to Sport Ireland's 2019 national evaluation of Community Sports Hubs. The survey attracted 170 responses.
- 9 x individual interviews and 1 focus group with Hub partners (total of 14 individuals). This includes 5 x community sports providers/clubs (including the NGB Swim Ireland), 4 x

¹ Orme, S. (2021) Outcomes Based Accountability: A Refresher. Available at: <https://www.assemblyresearchmatters.org/2021/05/20/outcomes-based-accountability-a-refresher/>

community organisations, 2 x commercial sports providers, and 1 x Sligo County Council representative.

4.4. Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis was conducted using both thematic and narrative approaches. Categories were developed, coded, and reduced. Survey data, researchers' observations and thematic data from interviews was cross referenced to identify emergent themes and issues and to explore the relationships between issues. Participant sampling and data collection continued until no new conceptual insights were generated and the research team felt they had gathered repeated evidence for the thematic analysis, thus reaching theoretical saturation.

4.5. Limitations

Efforts have been made to enhance the reliability and validity of findings through multiple method consultation. However, we note the following limitations:

- With regards to the community survey, errors due to question non-responses may exist. The number of respondents who chose to respond to a question may be different from those who chose not to respond, thus creating a self-selection bias.
- Whilst this evaluation sought to determine possible changes to participation rates in the Enniscrone area, limited M1 data and PACE+ data was available to assess this metric. The Swim Ireland Open Water Programme was the only programme delivered through the Hub which collected this data, and the programme team experienced challenges with obtaining 3-month follow-up data from participants. Resultingly, conclusions about the impact of the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub on local participation rates are based largely on responses from the community survey and qualitative feedback from Hub partners and SSRP staff. As with feedback of this nature, there is risk of social desirability bias as partners and SSRP staff are reporting on the impact of their own efforts.²

² Social desirability bias is the tendency for people to respond to research questions, consultation and surveys in a manner which they believe is socially acceptable or desirable, rather than providing truthful and accurate information. This can occur because individuals seek social approval; fear criticism or negative consequences; try to meet what they perceive to be the researcher's expectations; and/or may possess unconscious biases. In social research, this bias can distort study findings, as it may lead to over-reporting positive behaviours or attitudes and under-reporting negative ones.

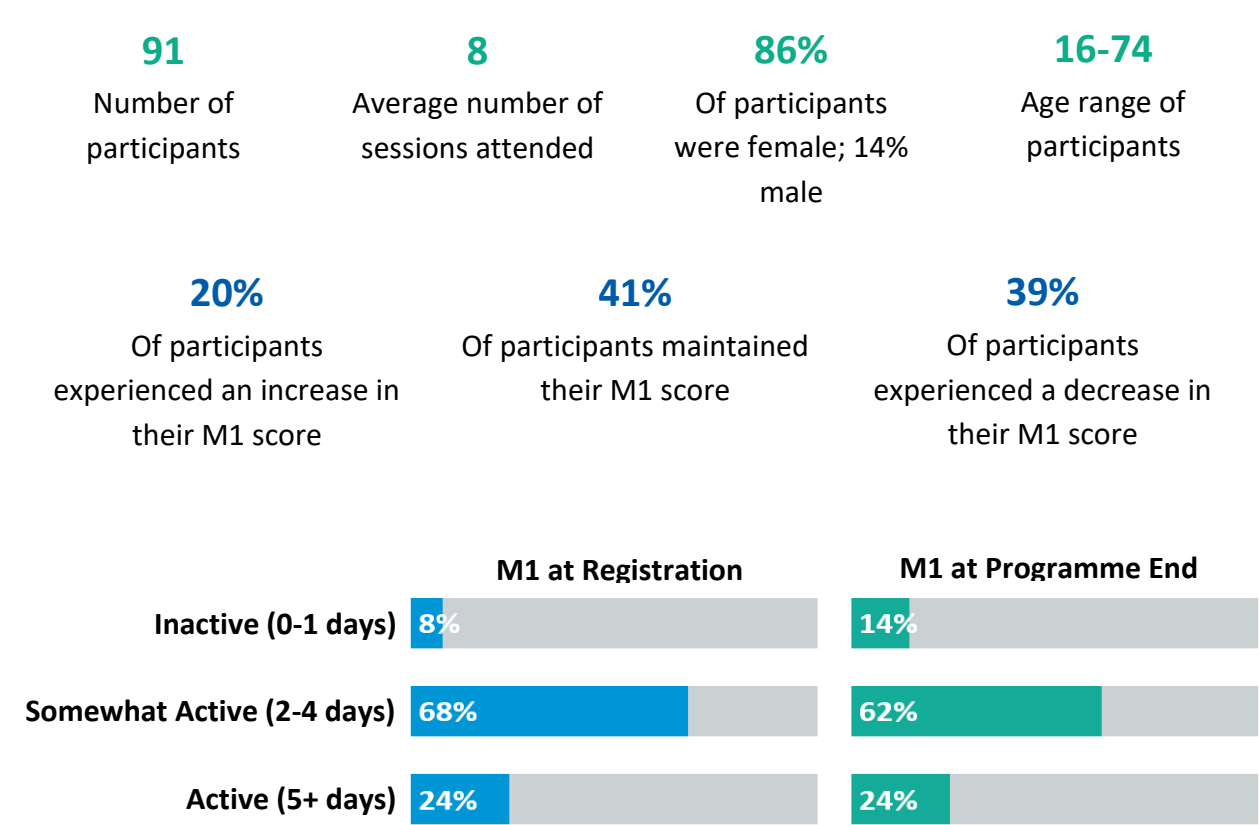
Section 5: M1 Findings

5.1. Introduction

This section presents the M1 findings utilised to determine changes to participation levels.

5.2. Swim Ireland Open Water Programme: M1 Data

M1 Data was collected for Swim Ireland’s Enniscrone Open Water Programme. Data was collected across four programmes which ranged from 8 to 96 sessions in length³. The following presents a summary analysis; a more detailed analysis is available in Appendix 1.



³ No statistically significant relationship[was found between the number of sessions attended and M1 score.

5.3. Swim Ireland Open Water Programme: PACE+ Data

PACE+ Data was collected for Swim Ireland’s Enniscrone Open Water Programme, for participants aged under 16. Data was collected across two programmes, one 5 sessions in length and one 15 sessions in length⁴.

15

Number of participants

5

Average number of sessions attended

67%

Of participants were female; 33% male

7-14

Age range of participants

73%

Of participants experienced an increase in their PACE+ score (last 7 days)

27%

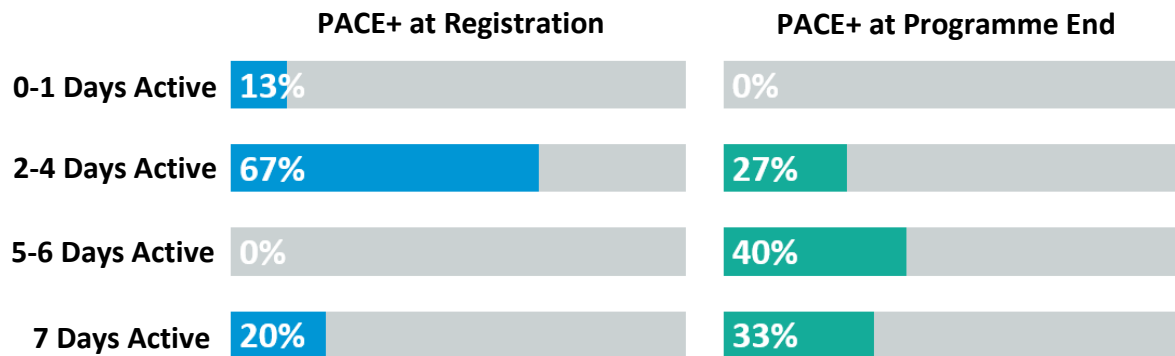
Of participants maintained their PACE+ score (last 7 days)

87%

Of participants experienced an increase in their PACE+ score (usual 7 days)

13%

Of participants maintained their PACE+ score (usual 7 days)



3.6

Average PACE+ Score at Registration (Usual 7 days)

5.53

Average PACE+ Score at Programme End (Usual 7 days)

+53.61%

Average Change in PACE+ Score (Usual 7 days)

3.47

Average PACE+ Score at Registration (Last 7 days)

5.47

Average PACE+ Score at Programme End (Last 7 days)

+57.64%

Average Change in PACE+ Score (Last 7 days)

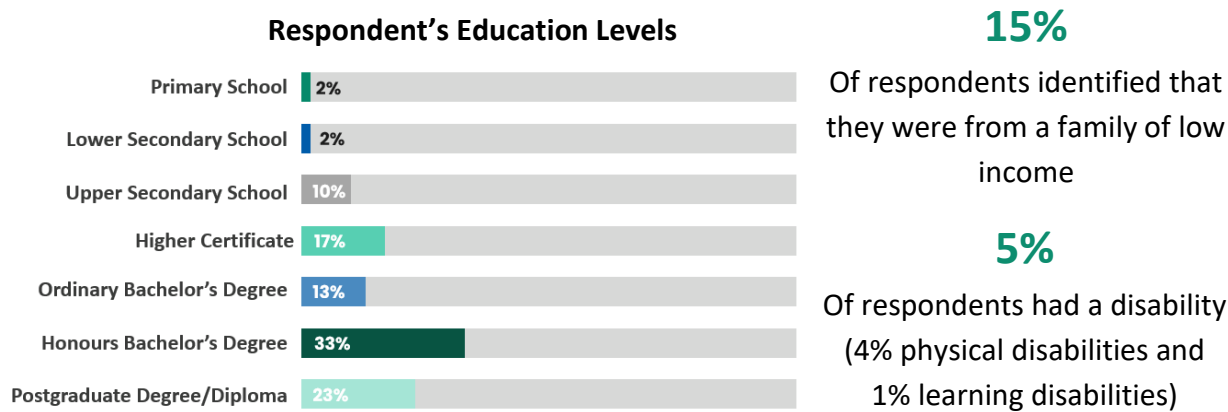
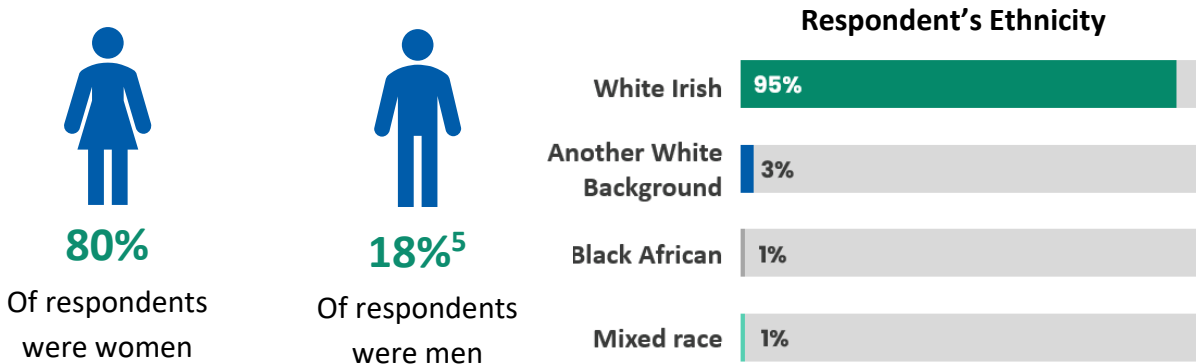
⁴ No statistically significant relationship[was found between the number of sessions attended and M1 score.

Section 6: Survey Findings

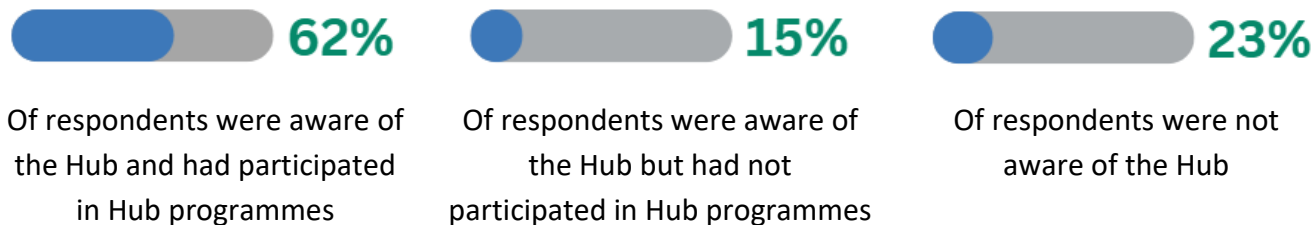
6.1. Introduction

This section presents the evaluation’s survey. 170 individuals living in Enniscrone responded to the survey. An overview of the survey findings is provided below.

6.2. Survey Respondents



6.3. Awareness of the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub



⁵ 2% of respondents indicated that they would ‘prefer not to say’ when asked about their gender.

6.4. Communication, Advertising and Awareness

People from Enniscrone most commonly find information about sport and physical activity opportunities through the following avenues:

52%

Posts on local community group's social media or websites

44%

Posts on a local sports club's social media or websites

33%

Posts on Sligo Sport and Recreation Partnership's social media or website

3.4/5



Respondents scored the ease with which they can find out about sport and physical activity opportunities in Enniscrone on a scale of 1-5 (1 = Very Poor and 5 = Excellent). The average score provided was 3.4/, suggesting that people in Enniscrone feel it is somewhat easy to find out about sport and physical activity opportunities, but it could be easier. 21% of respondents provided scores of 1 or 2 whilst 46% provided scores of 4-5.



71% of respondents felt that over the last 3 years, the level of advertising for sport and physical activity opportunities had increased in Enniscrone.

23% of respondents felt there had been no change in the level of advertising, whilst 6% felt the level of advertising had decreased.

6.5. Opportunities for Sport and Physical Activity in Enniscrone

3.6/5



Respondents scored the availability of opportunities for sport and physical activity on a scale of 1-5 (1 = Very Poor and 5 = Excellent). The average score provided was 3.6, suggesting that on average, people in Enniscrone feel that the availability of opportunities is fair but could be improved. 14% of respondents provided scores of 1 or 2 whilst 51% provided scores of 4 or 5.



70%

Agree that they can easily access sport or physical activity programmes in Enniscrone



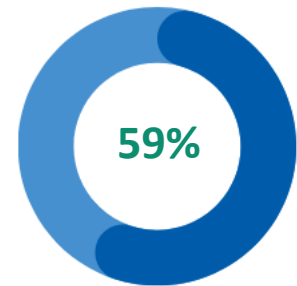
71%

Agree that they can comfortably afford to access sport and physical activity programmes in Enniscrone



70% of respondents feel that opportunities to participate in sport and physical activity have increased since 2020. 3% feel that opportunities have stayed the same and 5% feel that opportunities have decreased. 21% were unsure.

59% of respondents feel that the accessibility of opportunities to participate in sport and physical activity have improved since 2020.⁶ 16% of respondents feel accessibility has remained the same. 25% of respondents were unsure.



The top 3 most significant ways in which people think access to opportunities has increased are:



88%

The variety of activities available has increased



46%

There are better links between sports clubs and/or community groups now



33%

The availability of suitable facilities has increased

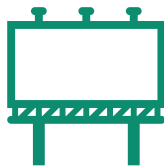
⁶ Accessibility refers to how easy or difficult it is to attend available opportunities and accounts for factors such as affordability, transport needs, and the level of ability required to attend.

The top 3 barriers to sport and physical in Enniscrone were identified as:



51%

Busy family life



36%

Lack of awareness of what's available



34%

The timing of activities does not suit

6.6. Facilities for Sport and Physical Activity in Enniscrone

Respondents use a range of facilities in Enniscrone. The most common are:



84%

Beach



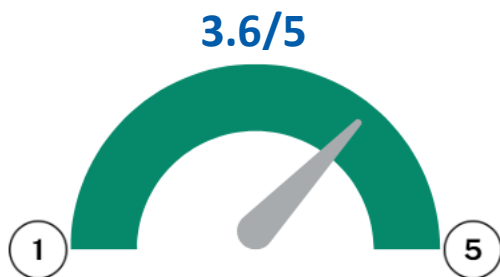
63%

Roads/footpaths



44%

Waterpoint Leisure Centre

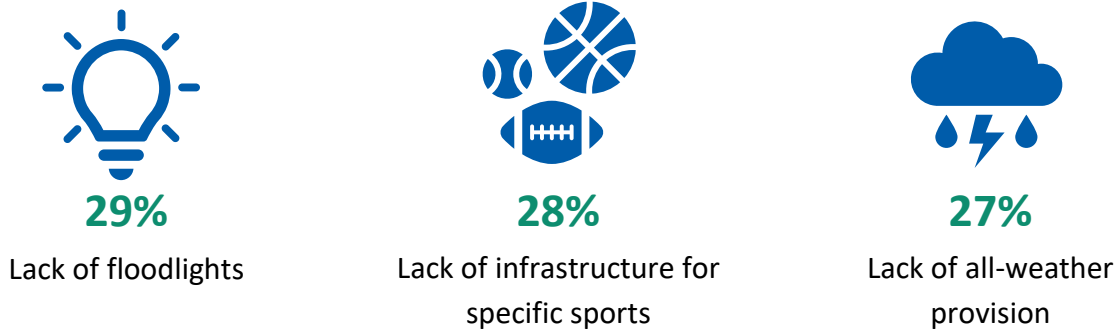


Respondents scored the quality of sport and physical activity facilities on a scale of 1-5 (1 = Very Poor and 5 = Excellent). The average score provided was 3.6%, suggesting that on average, people in Enniscrone think facilities are fair but could be improved. 14% of respondents provided scores of 1 or 2 whilst 52% provided scores of 4 or 5.



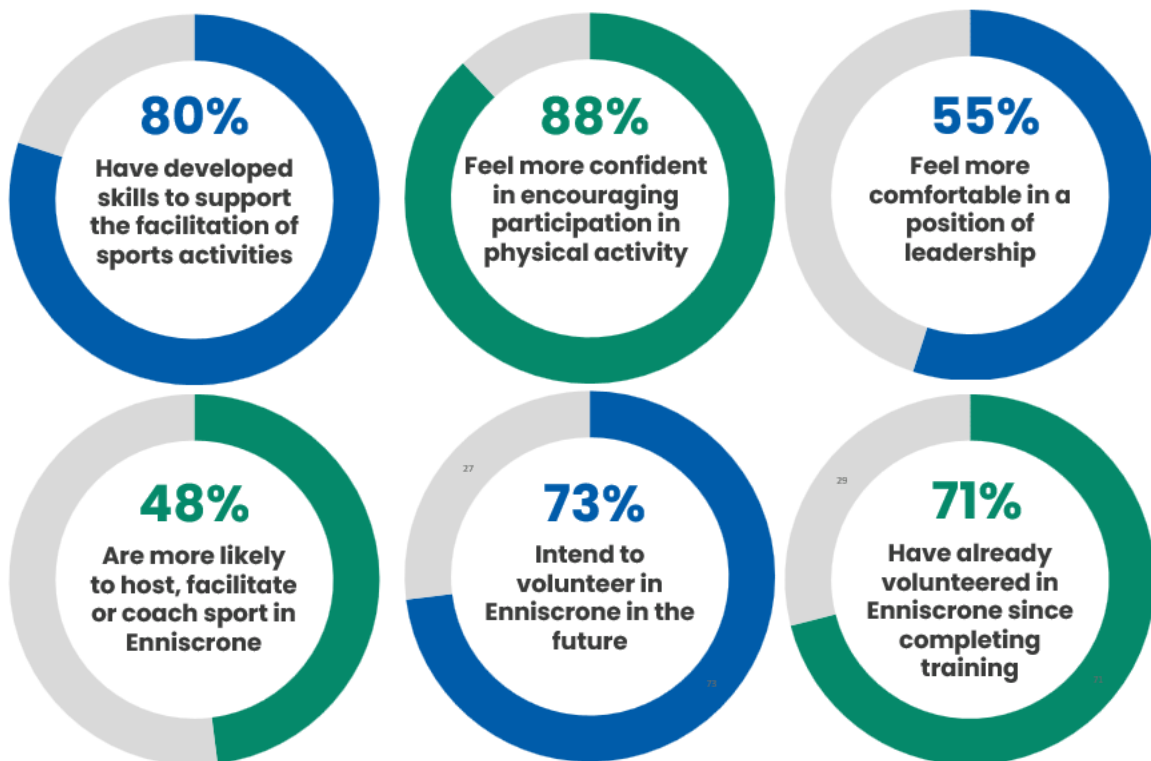
60% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of facilities in Enniscrone

Respondents reported on the limitations of facilities in Enniscrone. Whilst 18% of respondents felt there were no limitations with facilities, 82% identified factors which could be improved upon. The most common limitations identified were:



6.7. Training Provision through the Hub

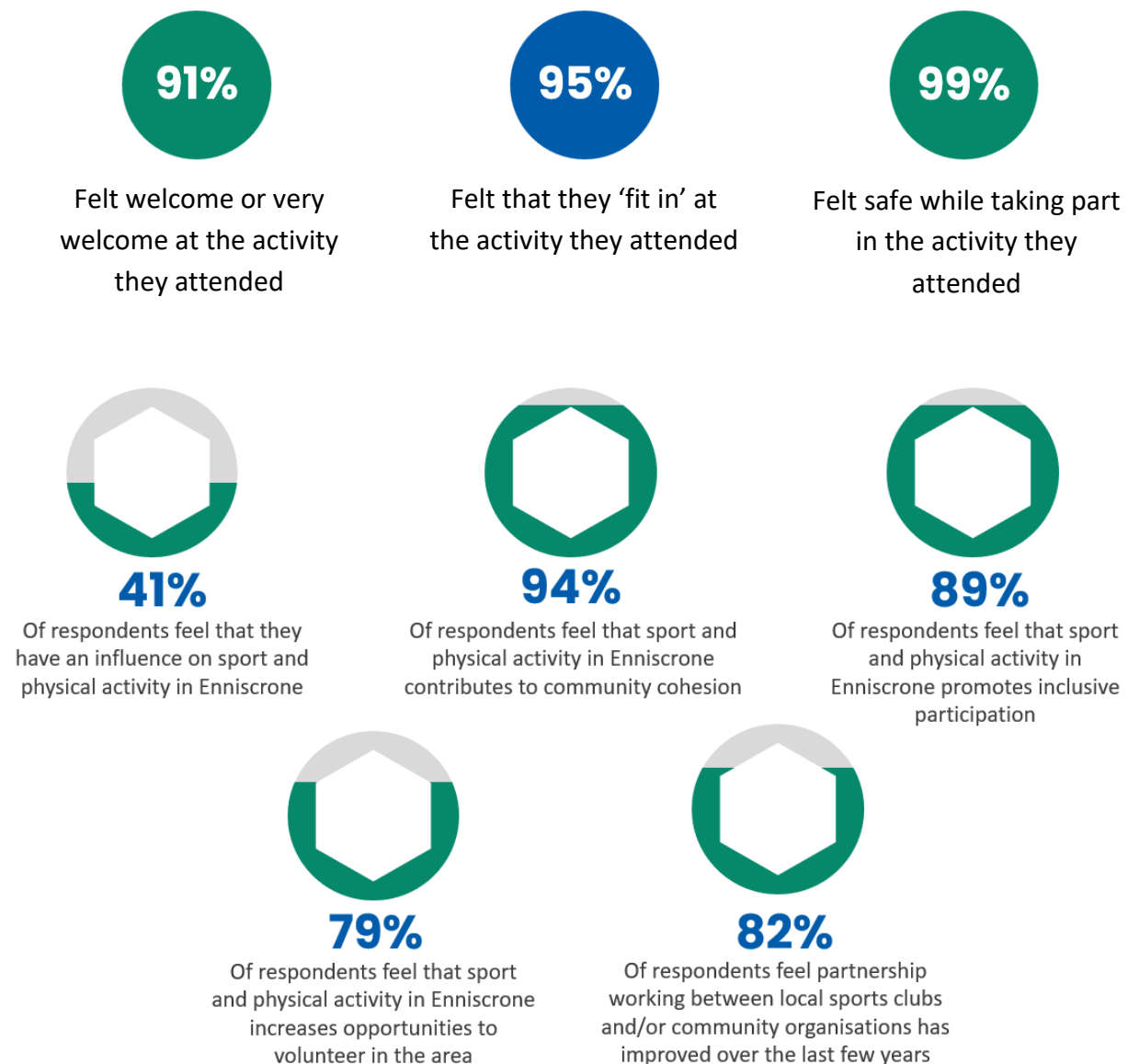
32% of respondents had accessed training opportunities provided through the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub. The most commonly accessed training opportunities were Coaching Young Children (11%), First Aid (10%), and Athletic Leader (10%). Feedback from those that accessed training on the impact included:



6.8. Sport and Physical Activity Provision through the Hub

62% of respondents had accessed sport and physical activity opportunities delivered through the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub. The most commonly accessed opportunities were the Open Water Programme (38%), West Sligo Athletic Club (30%), and Social Ball (12%).

57% of respondents also had children who accessed sport and physical activity opportunities through the Hub. The most commonly accessed opportunities by the children of respondents were West Sligo Athletic Club (33%), Open Water Programme (30%) and Children’s Cycling Skills during Bike Week (14%). Feedback from respondents that accessed opportunities included:



6.9. Impact of Sport and Physical Activity Provision

4.4 Days

Average M1 Score for Respondents

Respondents reported on their level of physical activity in the last 7 days. Physical activity is defined as activity which increases heart rate and makes individuals out of breath some of the time. The average number of days respondents were active for 30 minutes or more in the last week was 3.4/7. 4% of respondents were active 0 days in the last week, 15% 1-2 days, 35% 3-4 days, 25% 5-6 days, and 22% 7 days.

Participants reported on the impact of the sport and physical activity opportunities accessed through the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub for them. This included:



65%

Have made new friends or connections



64%

Have become more physically active



63%

Feel that their mental health has improved



55%

Feel that their fitness levels have improved



50%

Feel that their physical health has improved



39%

Have become more interested in sport and/or physical activity



35%

Feel less lonely and socially isolated



19%

Have become more interested in volunteering opportunities

Respondents also reported on the impact of sport and physical activity opportunities in Enniscrone for their children.



69%

Feel their child has become more physically active



58%

State that their children have made new friends or connections



56%

Feel that their child's fitness levels have improved



51%

Feel that their child has become more interested in sport and/or physical activity



41%

State that their children seem happier



41%

Feel that their child's physical health has improved



34%

Feel that their child's mental health has improved



13%

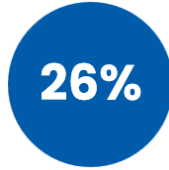
Feel that their child has become more interested in volunteering opportunities

6.10. The Future of Sport and Physical Activity in Enniscrone

Respondents indicated which organisation they view as having the biggest contribution to sport and physical activity in Enniscrone. The most commonly referenced organisations were:



Sligo Sport and Recreation Partnership



Local sports clubs and teams (incl. local GAA teams, West Sligo AC, and Surf Life Saving)



Local sport and physical activity facilities

4.5/5



Likelihood of participating in sport and physical activity in Enniscrone in future

Respondents scored their likelihood of participating in sport and physical activity in Enniscrone in future on a scale of 1-10 (1 = Very Unlikely and 5 = Very Likely). The average score provided was 4.5/5, suggesting that on average, respondents are very likely to participate in sport and physical activity in future. 3% of respondents provided scores of 1-2 whilst 89% provided scores of 4-5.

3.7/5



Likelihood of volunteering in Enniscrone in future

Respondents scored their likelihood of volunteering in Enniscrone in future on a scale of 1-10 (1 = Very Unlikely and 5 = Very Likely). The average score provided was 3.7/5, suggesting that on average, respondents are somewhat likely to volunteer in future. 24% of respondents provided scores of 1-2 whilst 50% provided scores of 4-5.

The top 3 sport and physical activity actions which respondents would like to see developed in Enniscrone over the next three years are:



53%

Development of indoor sport and physical activity facilities



53%

Financial support for existing sport and physical activity clubs



49%

Increased advertising of sport and physical activity opportunities

The top 3 sport or physical activity groups/opportunities which respondents would like to see developed in Enniscrone are:



31%

Athletics



24%

Basketball



15%

Walking

Section 7: Consultation Findings

7.1. Introduction

This section presents a thematic analysis of interview data collected from SSRP staff and Hub partners. For clarity and ease of reference, feedback is presented under the following headings:

- Understanding and Awareness of the Enniscrone Hub
- Hub Delivery
- Areas for Improvement and Development
- Facilities in Enniscrone
- Impact of the Hub
- Case Study: Open Water Programme
- Case Study: West Sligo Athletic Club
- Case Study: Razorbacks Basketball

7.2. Understanding and Awareness of the Enniscrone Hub

Consultations involved discussion about partner's understanding and awareness of the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub. Of the 12 partner organisations consulted, 7 indicated that they were aware of the Hub and demonstrated a thorough understanding of its function and purpose. This included 3 community sports clubs/providers, 1 commercial sports provider, 2 community organisations and Sligo County Council; of the community organisations, 1 was represented by an individual who also leads a sports club. These partners were aware of the Hub's purpose to improve the availability of sport and physical activity in the area and to promote opportunities for participation, particularly among non-active and hard to reach groups. The role of the Hub in creating community partnerships was also referenced. Of these partners, 5 were able to differentiate and explain the differences between the Hub, SSRP, and Sport Ireland.

5 partners displayed a lack of understanding about the purpose of the Hub, with 4 highlighting that whilst they were aware of support from SSRP, they had not heard of the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub until the consultation process began. This was observed across 2 community organisations, 2 community sports clubs/providers, and 1 commercial provider consulted. The Hub and its activities were explained to these consultees before proceeding.

“To be honest I hadn't heard about the Hub until the evaluation started and the posters went up and I was approached about this consultation. I was very aware of SSRP, and they have been very helpful to us, but I didn't know it was through the Hub.” – Partner Feedback

7.3. Hub Delivery

SSRP and 11 of the partners consulted felt the delivery of the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub had been a success to date.⁷ 75% of partners felt welcome and like they fit in at the Hub, and 75% reported that they felt like they had an influence over the delivery of the Hub and/or sport and physical activity in Enniscrone. Additionally, 50% of Hub partners felt that they had a sense of ownership or responsibility towards the Hub.

In reflecting on the progress made, SSRP staff noted that the achievements of the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub called into question previous findings at the national level which suggest that area-based Hubs are less impactful than single centre-based Hubs. Feedback on the success of the Hub and wider commentary about the delivery is provided below.

Role of Sligo Sports and Recreation Partnership

There was unanimous agreement between all 12 partner organisations about the critical role of SSRP in facilitating the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub, improving sport and physical activity opportunities in the area, and providing support to local organisations. Partners noted that they felt supported by SSRP, that they could trust the organisation, and that communication from SSRP was effective. In discussing SSRP's role, partners highlighted that SSRP offered opportunities which were not there before; "they came with funding and resources and knowledge that we had no access to before." Partners highlighted the provision of training, capital investment, and SSRP's role as a point of contact for sport and physical activity. For 1 partner, it was the mix of support from SSRP which proved successful, stating "funding is great, but the knowledge that is brought with it and the links to other organisations are so important." In considering their collaboration to date, 100% of partners indicated a desire to work with SSRP in future.

Specific and repeated reference was made to the Hub Coordinator. It was felt that having a representative for the area and a "go-to," point of contact who was "accessible," "flexible," and "solid in her role," ensured that community ideas were heard and actioned in the area. This sentiment was echoed by the SSRP Sports Coordinator, with reference made to the "professional expertise and decision-making," delivered by the Hub Coordinator and her continued focus on "alignment and collaboration."

"We're so grateful to [the Coordinator]. When I think about what we had before, it's unreal the difference we have now. We have the access to ask someone knows who might actually have answers. She has experience in how to run these programmes correctly." – Partner Feedback

⁷ Of this figure, 4 were previously unaware of the Hub. However, after the Hub's aims, actions and programming were explained, these partners were able to attribute impacts which they have observed to the Hub.

Focus on Partnership Working

Partnership working was a central tenet upon which the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub was founded. SSRP staff reported that the development of relationships in the area was initially slow as the Hub was launched during the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite this initial barrier, all partners, regardless of their variation in awareness of the Hub, reported collaboration and engagement with SSRP. Whilst 2 partners had long-standing relationships with SSRP, 6 approached SSRP with new ideas for sport and physical activity in the area and were brought into partnership with the Hub. Further, 2 partners were introduced to SSRP by West Sligo Family Resource Centre and 2 were approached directly by the Hub Coordinator. 9 consultees reported partnerships with SSRP which extended beyond the Hub, with references made to collaboration with the SIDO, Active Schools Programme, and outdoor programming. It was felt that as relationships extended beyond the Hub Coordinator, partnership with SSRP would be sustainable beyond the Hub's existence.

Beyond the relationships developed between SSRP and the partners, there was also a concerted focus placed on community partnerships. Whilst Sligo County Council felt that they were actively promoting partnership working through their involvement with the Hub, a further 6 partners felt that their relationship with other clubs and community organisations had improved as a result of the Hub. Partners referenced working together for collective initiatives such as Bike Week, HerOutdoors, and charity events. SSRP staff also highlighted that they perceived a recognition among partners of the necessity for partnership working, given the rurality of the area and the competition for resources. The example of training workshops was given, with several organisations cooperating to send respective members to shared training workshops which otherwise could not be facilitated due to low numbers.

“There has been encouragement around partnership and discussions around it. [...] The general goal is that there will be activities for people to follow after the Hub ends.” – Partner Feedback

2 partners reported feeling stronger levels of partnership toward West Sligo Family Resource Centre (FRC) than other local organisations. This aligns with West Sligo FRC's reference to being the “middle man between the community and SSRP,” and synergises with SSRP staff feelings that “the FRC would become the central manager of the Hub.” Despite two years of delivery remaining before the conclusion of the Hub, SSRP staff reported that this development is “starting to happen organically,” with West Sligo FRC already involved prominently in the delivery of the Hub.

Both SSRP and partners report an increased level of partnership working across sports and physical activity in Enniscrone. However, despite the positive advancements made, 2 partners noted that they felt the absence of the Hub Coordinator and the cessation of the Hub would undermine progress to date, with newly formed partnerships unable to fill the gaps.

“We need SSRP as much in the next 5 years from an Enniscrone Hub point of view as we did before. There is so much going on and without someone to coordinate it will be difficult. The only real people who can drive this are SSRP.” – Partner Feedback

Communications and Marketing

The partnership developed between SSRP and local partners proved particularly beneficial for the marketing of the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub. Whilst both social media channels and physical advertisements were utilised, SSRP staff noted that “local media worked best.”

“Broad targeting is not as effective – it’s easier to reach people on the ground with posters in local shops and parish churches and shops. People in local areas know how to reach those people on the ground better than we could; online you are getting those people who are capable on social media, but you miss out on those who are less advantaged and less tech savvy.” – SSRP Staff Feedback

SSRP collaborated with local partners to ensure that information relating to the Hub and available physical activity opportunities reached the community. Partners distributed information within local clubs and community organisations, reaching potential participants directly.

Physical Activity Opportunities

10 of the 12 partners consulted felt that the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub had increased opportunities to be physically active in the area. It was reported that the variety of sport and physical activity opportunities had improved (N=6), with partners reporting a “move away from the standard,” and the rise of “alternative sports.” Artistic swimming, surf lifesaving and the ‘Daily Dippers’ open water programme were highlighted as examples of this development. 1 partner also referred to an increase in physical activity opportunities which focus on the physical and social aspects of sport, rather than competition. It was highlighted that it can be “really daunting,” to join competitive sports teams for those new to the sport or returning to physical activity. However, the growing number of non-competitive physical activity opportunities in Enniscrone was felt to reduce this barrier and create more inviting physical activity environments.

“I think that opportunities are improving and have increased over the last while. They already have a great array of activities. There’s a lot of sports which I haven’t even heard of before. For example, my daughter is now in artistic swimming.” – Partner Feedback

Partners also highlighted that opportunities for sport and physical activity have become more inclusive in Enniscrone over the last number of years (N=5). The availability of provision across

the life course was highlighted, with partners referencing the ‘Buggie Buddies’ Programme which targets mothers with babies/toddlers; the variety of provision for children and young people; and inclusive provision such as chair yoga and activator walking poles programmes which are popular with older adults. Specific programming for women was also highlighted and physical accessibility was referenced, with 1 partner noting the development of the wheelchair mat at the beach. It was felt that the provision of tailored opportunities was facilitated by training provided through the Hub to sports clubs/providers including ‘Autism in Sport’ and ‘Disability in Sport’ training.

Finally, partners noted that among the increasing opportunities was a growth in more affordable sport and physical activity opportunities, with 2 partners referencing the influence of subsidies provided through the Hub. Despite this, the influence of the cost of living crisis which arose following the COVID-19 pandemic was reported to be undercutting efforts in this area, as “everyone is cutting back and the prices charged are going up.” (N=1).

“Everything is cheap [and] so highly subsidised. Artistic swimming is €15 euro for 6 weeks which is great and that gets little kids into the water and builds confidence.” – Partner Feedback

Organisational Health of Sports Clubs in Enniscrone

Discussion with sports clubs/providers referenced organisational sustainability, given the focus of the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub on creating strong sport and physical activity facilitators for the future. Sports clubs/providers (N=6) reflected on four key sustainability markers:

- 5 sports clubs/providers scored the *effectiveness of their club structure at adapting to changes and challenges* with a score of 4 or higher. The average score for this measurement was 4.5/5. Those that provided high scores referenced their “flexibility,” and experience with overcoming challenges related to delays in capital developments.
- 4 sports clubs/providers scored the *effectiveness of internal club communication and collaboration* with a score of 4 or higher. The average score was 4.3/5. 2 of these sports clubs/providers were the lone managers of their organisation. 1 provided a score of 5 based on their ‘top-down’ communication pathways.
- 4 sports clubs/providers scored their *confidence in the resilience of their club structure* with a score of 4 or higher. The average score was 4.2/5. Again, higher scores were linked to previous experience and operational flexibility.
- 2 sports clubs/providers scored the *effectiveness of their club in planning for sustainability* with a score of 4 or higher. The average score was 3.2/5. Those that provide higher scores referenced their efforts to try to think more strategically about development. Those who provided lower scores referenced more ad hoc planning processes.

7.4. Areas for Improvement and Development

Support Needs of Hub Partners

Partners reflected on their support needs and how the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub could support them to build capacity. Four themes of support were identified:

- Impact Measurement (N=3): This included training and advice on how to design and implement impact measurement systems and how produce useful insights with the data.
- Human Resources (N=3): The need for administrative support, additional coaching staff, and individuals to support the management, delivery and longevity of clubs was identified. Partners hoped that SSRP could support the identification of suitable volunteers and/or the identification of potential funding sources for part-time paid positions in future.
- Social Media Use and Maximisation (N=3): Partners identified the opportunity presented by social media but noted a lack of knowledge and skills relating to effective social media use. Partners suggested that social media training workshops would fill this gap.
- Strategic Oversight and Governance (N=3): The need for support with internal policy and strategy was identified, with reference to insufficient time available to dedicate to the development of these policies, and a lack of necessary knowledge to do so.

Persistent Barriers to Sport and Physical Activity in Enniscrone

Despite the positive developments of the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub and the increase in physical activity opportunities, partners noted that several barriers to participation persist within the community. The most commonly reported barrier was the cost of participation (N=5). Whilst partners highlighted the increasing provision of subsidised and low cost options, it was felt that cost was still prohibitive for many, particularly those on low incomes.

Partners also referenced that the weather can be a barrier to participation, with an insufficient provision of indoor facilities cited (N=4). A lack of transport options to connect people to existing facilities was also highlighted (N=3 and partners felt that often people “don’t know what’s out there,” and have a lack of awareness of available opportunities (N=4). Less commonly identified barriers included that there is a lack of provision for teenage girls; a lack of programming targeting older men who are less likely to engage in older adult’s provision; and a persistent lack of accessible opportunities for people with disabilities.

7.5. Facilities in Enniscrone

Partners discussed the available sport and physical activity facilities in Enniscrone and rated them on a scale of 1-5, where 1 was very poor and 5 was excellent. The average score provided by

partners was 2.7/5 (N=9). 4 partners provided scores of 4 or 5, reporting that for a small, rural area, there are numerous facilities for GAA, soccer, and swimming, with significant opportunities presented by the natural landscape. Conversely, those that provided lower scores highlighted that the opening hours of Waterpoint (a local water park and sports centre) are reduced in the winter, just as people are looking for indoor opportunities (N=2). 3 partners highlighted the slow development of the athletics track but felt that once completed this would add to the area. It was also noted that there is a lack of private owned and operated gyms in the area (N=1) and 1 consultee felt the area was in need of an indoor hall. Finally, 2 partners reported a lack of disability accessible facilities in the area, with little development focused on this population.

4 partners stated they felt that SSRP and the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub were having a positive influence on facilities in Enniscrone, largely around the development of the athletics track. The role of the SSRP Hub Coordinator was also highlighted, with 1 consultee noting:

“She knows how to access other funding. She has more avenues than we do, and we would never been able to access it without her.” – Partner Feedback

7.6. Impact of the Hub

Impact for Sligo Sport and Recreation Partnership and the Sports Sector

SSRP staff reflected on the impact of Enniscrone Community Sports Hub on the organisation and wider sports sector in Sligo. SSRP staff reported that the biggest challenges in Enniscrone prior to the delivery of the Hub centered on the lack of a SSRP presence in the area creating infrequent engagement with the community, and the underdeveloped nature of sport and physical activity in the area, with a lack of dedicated SSRP programming, a lack of diversity in sports programming, and low levels of investment in local capacity. It was felt that these issues had been addressed, with the relationships developed with SSRP, local clubs and local organisations highlighted as sustainable and likely to persist past the conclusion of the Hub. Additionally, it was felt the provision of training and capacity building activities had developed local coaching and voluntary capacity, creating a network of qualified coaches and volunteers and increasing the overall capacity of the community, ensuring collaboration and the co-development of sport and physical activity in the area following the conclusion of the Hub.

“The coaches are the lifeblood of the Sports Partnership. When we think about the Hub in Enniscrone, we wouldn’t have found them otherwise. The impact they’re already making will be long lasting and sustained.” – SSRP Staff Feedback

Impact for Partners

Partners reported a range of impacts for their organisations as a result of their engagement with the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub. 4 sports clubs/providers and 1 community organisation reported that their members had accessed training through the Hub. This included the Women in Leadership Programme, Disability in Sport Training, and sport-specific training opportunities. Aside from the upskilling, partners referenced the networking opportunities provided by training workshops, with one partner reporting “it was fantastic because we built up a network of sixteen people and there was huge knowledge sharing across the people there.” This was echoed by SSRP who felt that bringing people from different organisations together for training “fosters the relationships and opportunities between them.” Paralleling relationships developed between partners, 11 partners referenced the impact of developing closer ties with SSRP, highlighting both the “learning,” which has resulted from this relationship and the opportunities for future collaboration. Similarly, whilst many partners had pre-existing relationships in the area, 2 felt that they had developed local connections which would support their programming in future.

In addition to training and relationship development, 4 community sports clubs/providers and 1 commercial provider referenced the provision of financial support through the Hub which aided in the purchase of equipment and the subsidising of programming to increase accessibility for local people. This was felt to be particularly important for newly established clubs, with 1 partner stating that this investment was “a real kick for us and really pushed us along financially.”

3 newly developed clubs/programmes reported seeing an increased number of participants, reportedly achieved in collaboration with the Hub. 1 commercial partner identified that they had seen both new participants as a result of the Hub and sustained and returning participants. Further, 2 sports clubs/programmes noted that they had seen increasing interest in their club but could not facilitate the growing demand due to limitations on the number of coaches available.

“It’s been huge. I’ve seen sustained participation in terms of people coming back and I’ve also seen cross over from some of the events which SSRP have on in the area though the Hub, so people come to me after those.” – Commercial Provider Feedback

Finally, Sligo County Council identified organisation-specific impacts, reporting that the local engagement conducted by the Hub was “extremely valuable,” in determining local needs and highlighting the knock-on effects of local development, with collaboration to ensure disability accessibility at Enniscrone Beach inspiring a similar development at Mullaghmore beach.

Impact on Participants

Physical Health and Fitness

Partners identified that the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub has had a positive impact on participants' physical health and fitness levels (N=9), noting that this impact has been facilitated by new opportunities and an increased variety of sports which draw in those previously uninterested in the more commonly available GAA and soccer. 1 partner reported “a lot of first timers coming out of their homes,” for new programmes and “join other programmes after.”

“My children weren't big into athletics but now they're taking part and one of them in particular is mad about it. My son came 3rd in the summer series 3k and 2nd in the autumn series. He's entering everything now.” – Partner Feedback (Parent of 3 Participants)

Social Interaction and Relationship Development

Partners highlighted that the Hub had a positive impact on social interaction and opportunities for relationship development (N=8). For 4 partners, this was exemplified by provision during the COVID-19 pandemic when most other forms of social interaction had been limited:

“It was one of the only things that people could do. It definitely gave people an outlet. They joined the programmes, got confidence, met likeminded people, and then met up with them and could do the swimming together outside.” – Partner Feedback

The impact for specific participant groups in this area was also underlined. 1 partner highlighted how sport and physical activity opportunities have supported the new Ukrainian population in Enniscrone to integrate into the area. Another referenced the impact for older adults who in the past have been underserved in the area and now have a new social outlet.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

7 partners reported that the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub had a positive impact on the mental health and wellbeing of participants. Partners highlighted the cyclical relationship between improving physical health, increased social contact, and improvements for mental health. Paralleling the impact on social interaction, partners felt that the impacts for mental health and wellbeing were most profoundly felt during the pandemic. It was reported that people “relied on classes,” and sports opportunities during the pandemic, with 1 partner commenting:

“There was one particular woman who said the programme saved her life during the COVID-19 lockdown. She couldn't put into words the impact it had had on her.” – Partner Feedback

Partners also pointed to the impact on self-confidence and self-esteem (N=4). It was felt that this impact was generated from individuals experiencing success in their sport, becoming more skilled, and being exposed to new opportunities to learn and meet others in their community.

Skill Development

Partners identified that the Hub had a positive impact on the skills of participants (N=3). In some cases, partners referenced the skills learned in a specific sport but 2 sport clubs/providers whose programmes were delivered in the open water referenced participants developing critical skills relating to safety and survival in the water.

Impact for the Enniscrone Community

Partners reported that the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub has had positive impacts for Enniscrone as a community. 11 partners highlighted that the Hub and the increased opportunities for sport in the area have improved community cohesion and facilitated new connections and relationships. It was reported that the Hub has brought people together who “wouldn’t have mixed before,” including local and new populations. The area has seen an increase in the population of refugees and asylum seekers in recent years, and consultees noted the involvement of these populations in sport and physical activity opportunities.

“Sport and physical activity are absolutely tools for cohesion. It’s social and provides migrants with something to do and something to link in with and come back to.” – Partner Feedback

Partners also reported on the economic benefits of the Hub and increased sport and physical activity opportunities in Enniscrone (N=4). It was felt the new opportunities were keeping local residents within the town and bringing others in from outside, increasing footfall and business for local shops, cafes and restaurants. SSRP staff also highlighted the economic impacts of the Hub, referencing the impact of employment opportunities for local coaches and the increased usage of the facilities in the area.

7.7. Case Study: Open Water Programme

Swim Ireland Open Water Programme



Introduction to the Programme

The Open Water Programme operates through a partnership approach between SSRP, Swim Ireland and Enniscrone & District Community Council who promote and deliver open water swimming programmes targeting local people. The programme aims to improve the confidence of participants to swim in the open water and seeks to increase skills and knowledge about how to safely engage in physical activity and recreation in open water.

“The SSRP Hub Coordinator introduced me to the Hub; SSRP were 100% behind the programme. We started to work in collaboration to ensure the links went out into the local community.”
- Swim Ireland Representative

Programme Development

- 1 Collaboration between Swim Ireland, SSRP and Enniscrone & District Community Council
- 2 Partnership agreement signed cementing the roles and responsibilities of SSRP, Swim Ireland and local community organisations
- 3 Appropriately qualified Swim Ireland registered instructors and lifeguards identified to deliver the programme

Delivery



Team of **3** coaches: beach lifeguard, Level 2 open water coach and an assistant



Programme is delivered at Enniscrone pier with equipment enhanced and beach accessibility addressed

Outcomes



428

Total Participants



28

Total Programmes Delivered



Investment in 6 buoys, galvanised wall hooks and seated bench to improve facilities to support open water swimming at the Pier



Upgrade of beach changing facilities and toilets, and beach access mat installed to improve accessibility for all

“When the programme started first it was to get people out in the water because the pools were closed. I would characterise the delivery as successful. People like the security of going out there in the water and knowing there’s a lifeguard with them and they like the structure of having someone there providing instructions.”

- Swim Ireland Manager of the Enniscrone Open Water Programme

Impact of the Programme



Physical Activity: 73% of youth participants and 20% of adult participants reported an improvement in their physical activity levels following engagement with the Open Water Programme, indicating a positive impact



Mental Health: Stakeholders highlighted the strong links between physical activity, physical fitness, regular socialisation and positive mental health.



Safety and Skills: The programme improved the confidence of participants to swim in open water and increased skills and knowledge about how to safely engage in physical activity and recreation in open water.

Sustainability and Plans for the Future

The Swim Ireland Strategic Plan for 2022-2026 commits to developing and growing open water swimming and plans are in place with SSRP to continue programme delivery in Enniscrone, attracting sustained interest. Future plans will involve continued collaboration with the prioritisation of beach accessibility and the provision of programmes for people with disabilities and people on low incomes.



7.8. Case Study: West Sligo Athletics Club



Introduction to the Club

West Sligo Athletics Club was born from the Enniscrone & District Community Council’s concept for an athletics track. With considerable local interest found for this development, the Community Council facilitated a public meeting which formed a club committee in 2022. SSRP and Athletics Ireland have supported the club committee with guidance, education and training and support to establish a new club. Athletics programming began in 2023.

Programme Development

- 1 Signed contractual agreement between SSRP and Enniscrone & District Community Council confirming grant aid towards the Castlefield athletics track
- 2 Public meeting facilitated by Enniscrone & District Community Council to discuss a club development plan. A committee was subsequently formed
- 3 SSRP provided training, advice and support on club governance
- 4 SSRP, with support from Athletics Ireland, provided subsidised coach education and training for new volunteers
- 5 SSRP provided West Sligo Athletics club with new athletics equipment
- 6 West Sligo Athletics Club became affiliated with Athletics Ireland
- 7 Partnership agreements put in place between SSRP and West Sligo Athletics Club to support a new club development programmes and events
- 8 Outreach community links developed with the West Sligo Family Resource Centre and Sanctuary Runners to support a local programme.



Delivery Model



Team of **3** coaches and **5** committee members



Catering to a large area, within and around Enniscrone



Jan-June 2023:
4 weekly athletics sessions



Sept-Dec 2023:
Weekly cross-country provision for 8-17 year olds

West Sligo Athletics Club operates a membership model with **55** adult members and **196** juvenile members (17 and under)

“In Summer 2023 we held 3k & 5k events in Easkey, Castleconnor, and Enniscrone to create awareness of our existence and to get people into athletics. Around 140-150 people took part and each race was held as a fundraiser. - West Sligo Athletics Club Committee Member

Impact of the Club



Physical Activity and Fitness: West Sligo AC provides weekly athletics programming to members, providing consistent exercise and a positive influence on fitness levels.



Lifelong Participation: Committee members feel that in engaging a large cohort of young people alongside adults up to the age of 60, the Club promotes participation across the life course.



Community Cohesion and Integration: Committee members noted that the Club brings people of different ages and backgrounds together who otherwise may not meet, including long-term local residents and new migrant populations.



Mental Health: Stakeholders highlighted the strong links between physical activity, physical fitness, regular socialisation and positive mental health.

Sustainability and Plans for the Future

- 3 year club financial projections in place
- Central focus on completing the athletics track
- Continued focus on coach development to meet programme demand
- Continued collaboration with SSRP, Athletics Ireland and the West Sligo FRC planned as well as the development of further community partners on future club development plans



7.9. Case Study: Razorbacks Basketball



Introduction to the Club

Razorbacks Basketball Club was established in 2022. The Club was established based on two separate ideas. The first centred on a youth team for the Enniscrone/Castleconnor area and the second focused on a form of basketball called SOCIA-BALL; a programme designed to reengage women in basketball using a social and non-competitive model. Sligo Sport and Recreation Partnership were aware of both ideas and brought the relevant individuals together to form one Club.

“The Hub Coordinator was the link between our two ideas. It’s been great to have her support. She organised a basketball coaching course so that we could get people trained up; that wouldn’t have happened without her.”
- Razorbacks Coach

Programme Development

- 1 SSRP responded to a request from a volunteer hoping to establish a youth basketball club, and provided guidance and support on club governance including the development of a safeguarding policy and vetting procedure
- 2 In parallel, SSRP responded to a request from Castleconnor Community Centre to support a pilot a recreational Social Ball programme for adults, providing governance support with the committee to facilitate a programme.
- 3 SSRP organised a basketball coaching course with support from Basketball Ireland to build local capacity to deliver basketball programmes
- 4 Local demand for basketball was high and capacity to deliver was limited; SSRP encouraged and supported both programmes to combine to form one club.
- 5 Supported by an SSRP ‘Club Start-Up Grant’, the club affiliated with Basketball Ireland.
- 6 SSRP provided start up basketball equipment and a back board

Delivery Model



Team of **3** coaches and **3** committee members

30

Adult female participants regularly attending



Catering to both Castleconnor and Enniscrone

10

Adult male participants regularly attending



Adult Sessions:
2 weekly sessions for women and 1 for men

45

Children and young people regularly attending



Youth Sessions: 3 weekly sessions for 8-14 year olds

3

Ukrainian refugees regularly attending

Impact of the Club



Physical Activity and Fitness: Razorbacks Basketball Club provides weekly basketball programming to young people and adults, providing consistent exercise and having a positive influence on fitness levels.



Social Interaction and Opportunities for Integration: The focus of the Club is on non-competitive social basketball, providing regular opportunities for interaction and fun shared activities. The Club also has regular attendance from Ukrainian refugees, offering an opportunity for integration.



Mental Health: Stakeholders highlighted the strong links between physical activity, physical fitness, regular socialisation and positive mental health.

“People are buzzing with the Club. Some haven’t played since school, and it gave everyone this injection of something and made them feel good again. The social side of it is great too.”
- Razorbacks Coach

Sustainability and Plans for the Future

- Recruit additional members to become volunteers/coaches to support the growth of the club
- Support additional education and training requirements to grow a coaching team to engage new target groups including adult men and teenage girls.
- Maintain a central focus on providing a non competitive environment
- Ensure all partners sustain a collaborative approach

Section 8: Discussion, Learning & Analysis

8.1. Introduction

This section presents an analysis and discussion of the key learning for the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub. The section is framed under the following headings:

- Outcomes Based Accountability
- Critical Success Factors
- Delivering Impact: Area Based Hubs
- Strategic Relevance
- Alignment to Dormant Accounts
- Further Development and Areas for Improvement

8.2. Outcomes Based Accountability

This evaluation was founded on an evaluation framework which synergises with the framework developed by Sport Ireland for the *Community Sports & Physical Activity Hubs: Evaluation Report 2019*. Through Hub delivery data, community survey responses, and consultation with a range of Hub partners, this evaluation undertakes an objective assessment of how much the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub did, how well the Hub did, and whether anyone was better off as a result.

How much did the Enniscrone Hub do?	
Number of needs analysis processes conducted	1
Number of Facebook posts created by SSRP to advertise the Hub (estimation)	25+
Number of Instagram posts / reels created by SSRP to advertise the Hub (estimation)	6+
Number of new sports clubs developed	3
Number of sport and physical activity programmes delivered	229
Number of participants engaged	3,739
Number of female participants engaged	2,359
Number of male participants engaged	1,380
Number of training and capacity building programmes delivered	21
Number of participants engaged in training and capacity building	155
Number of voluntary / leadership opportunities created	48
Total invested in capital projects or equipment	€52,909
Number of small equipment purchases made	9
Number of local groups associated with the Hub	11
How well did the Enniscrone Hub do?	
Reach achieved through social media posts	78,386
% of community survey respondents who are aware of the Hub	77%

% of Hub partners who understand the purpose of the Hub		58%
% of Hub partners who felt they had influence on what happens at the Hub		75%
% of Hub programmes which engaged young people		21%
% of Hub programmes which specifically targeted women		3%
% of Hub programmes which specifically targeted older adults		5%
% of Hub programmes designed for people with disabilities		1%
% of Hub partners who felt supported by SSRP and want to work with them in future		100%
% of Hub partners who felt welcome at the Hub		91%
% of Hub programme participants who felt welcome at the Hub		75%
% of Hub partners who feel a sense of ownership towards the Hub		50%
% of community survey respondents who were satisfied with the quality of facilities in Enniscrone		60%
% of community survey respondents who rate facility quality with a score of 4/5 or 5/5		52%
% of Hub partners who rate the quality of facilities in Enniscrone with a score of 4/5 or 5/5		44%
% of community survey respondents who score their likelihood of participating in sport and physical activity in the area in future with a score of 4/5 or 5/5		89%
% of community survey respondents who score their likelihood of volunteering in the area in future with a score of 4/5 or 5/5		50%
Was Anyone Better Off as a Result of the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub?		
Impact on Participants	% of participants who report having made friends or connections	65%
	% of participants who report becoming more physically active	64%
	% of participants who felt their mental health had improved	63%
	% of participants who felt their fitness levels had improved	55%
	% of participants who felt their physical health had improve	50%
	% of participants who became more interested in sport and physical activity	39%
	% of participants who reported feeling less lonely and socially isolated	35%
Impact on the Enniscrone Area	% of community survey respondents who felt the Hub contributed to community cohesion	94%
	% of community survey respondents who report increased sport physical activity opportunities	70%
	% of community survey respondents who felt links between sports clubs and/or community organisations had improved	46%
Impact on Hub Partners	% of partners who felt the Hub brought people from different communities together	92%
	% of partners who felt the Hub increased opportunities to be physically active	83%
	% of partners who felt their relationship with other clubs and community organisations had improved	50%
	% of partners who felt the Hub promoted inclusive participation	42%
Impact on Sports Clubs Specifically	% of sports clubs who reported new participants	50%
	% of sports clubs who reported sustained participation	50%
	% of sports clubs who report renewed memberships	50%
	% of sports clubs who reported that members had accessed training	42%

8.3. Factors Contributing to Success

This section reviews the feedback received through this evaluation to identify factors which have underpinned the success of the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub to date.

Role of the Hub Coordinator

Partners repeatedly highlighted the efforts of the Hub Coordinator and the importance of an accessible point of contact with necessary knowledge and expertise who local partners could contact with questions or ideas about sport and physical activity in the area. The Hub Coordinator was the central driver behind the development of relationships with local sports clubs/providers and community organisations and promoted the internal collaboration of Hub partners. The Hub Coordinator also promoted cross-work with other members of SSRP, seeking their expertise and facilitating connections between these members of staff and the Enniscrone Community. This is particularly true of the SSRP Sports Inclusion Disability Officer (SIDO) and SSRP Outdoor Sports Development Officer.

These findings synergise with Sport Ireland’s *Community Sports and Physical Activity Hubs Evaluation Report (2019)*⁸ which identified the Coordinator role as a critical success factor. Sport Ireland’s evaluation specifically referenced the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub Coordinator who at the time had responsibility for a different Sligo-based Hub. Feedback collected for the 2019 evaluation mirrors that collected for this evaluation, with local partners referencing the Coordinator’s “expertise and [knowing] she was the one to go to for questions related to sport in the community.”

Capacity Building and Partnership Development

The Hub delivery model focuses on building the capacity of local sports clubs, community organisations, coaches and volunteers and creates a bottom-up partnership approach facilitating knowledge sharing, collaboration and the co-development of sport and physical activity opportunities. The evaluation survey revealed that training and capacity building workshops had positive impacts on individuals’ confidence to inhabit positions of leadership and to encourage participation in physical activity, as well as on the skills needed to facilitate sports activities and the likelihood of individuals volunteering in the community in future. In terms of partnerships, partners reported having developed inter-community partnerships and a relationship with SSRP. The establishment of partnership working in Enniscrone and generation of positive impacts for community capacity promotes sustainability, instilling the knowledge, experience and

⁸ Sport Ireland (2019) Community Sports and Physical Activity Hubs Evaluation Report. Available at: <https://www.sportireland.ie/sites/default/files/media/document/2020-04/csh-phase-23-final.pdf>

relationships necessary to not only maintain progress made to date, but to continue the development of diverse and accessible sport and physical activity opportunities which are aligned to the needs of the local area in future.

Alignment to Local Need

The Enniscrone Community Sports Hub has been developed with the needs of the local community in mind. Whilst SSRP has played a central facilitatory role, the Hub focused on local partnership working, bringing together Sligo County Council, NGBs, local community organisations, and sports clubs to enhance community leadership and collaboration in the planning and delivery of sport and physical activity. This approach was cemented from the outset with SSRP conducting a needs analysis comprising a club and community audit form, one-to-one meetings with 11 local organisations, and physical activity taster sessions to build relationships and gain a greater understanding of community need. The barriers and gaps identified through this process informed key areas of focus for the Hub. Throughout delivery, SSRP has maintained focus on community consultation through its network of local partners. With emphasis placed on the views and ideas of local partners and the community, the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub has delivered programming and training which are in alignment with local need. This is a significant contributory factor to the positive impacts generated through the Hub, with the focus on diverse, accessible and inclusive opportunities, maximising the benefits of the Hub for the local community.

Local Advertising

Building on knowledge acquired through over twenty years of operation and with a continued focus on aligning operations to local need, SSRP relied on local advertising to raise awareness of the Hub. This approach synergises with the findings of Sport Ireland’s Community Sports and Physical Activity Hubs Evaluation Report (2019)⁹ which suggests that Hub’s should tailor their marketing to the local community. For specific programming in Enniscrone, individual flyers were produced and promoted locally via the host organisation and on SSRP social media channels. SSRP engaged with local partners to ensure that information relating to the Hub and available physical activity opportunities reached potential participants directly. It is evident that this approach contributed to success; 71% of respondents to the community survey stated that since the establishment of the Hub, the level of advertising for sport and physical activity opportunities had increased in Enniscrone. Further, a greater proportion of community survey respondents

⁹ Sport Ireland (2019) Community Sports and Physical Activity Hubs Evaluation Report. Available at: <https://www.sportireland.ie/sites/default/files/media/document/2020-04/csh-phase-23-final.pdf>

reported that they access information about local sport and physical activity opportunities through local community groups (52%) and local sports clubs (44%) rather than from SSRP (33%).

Strategic Relationships

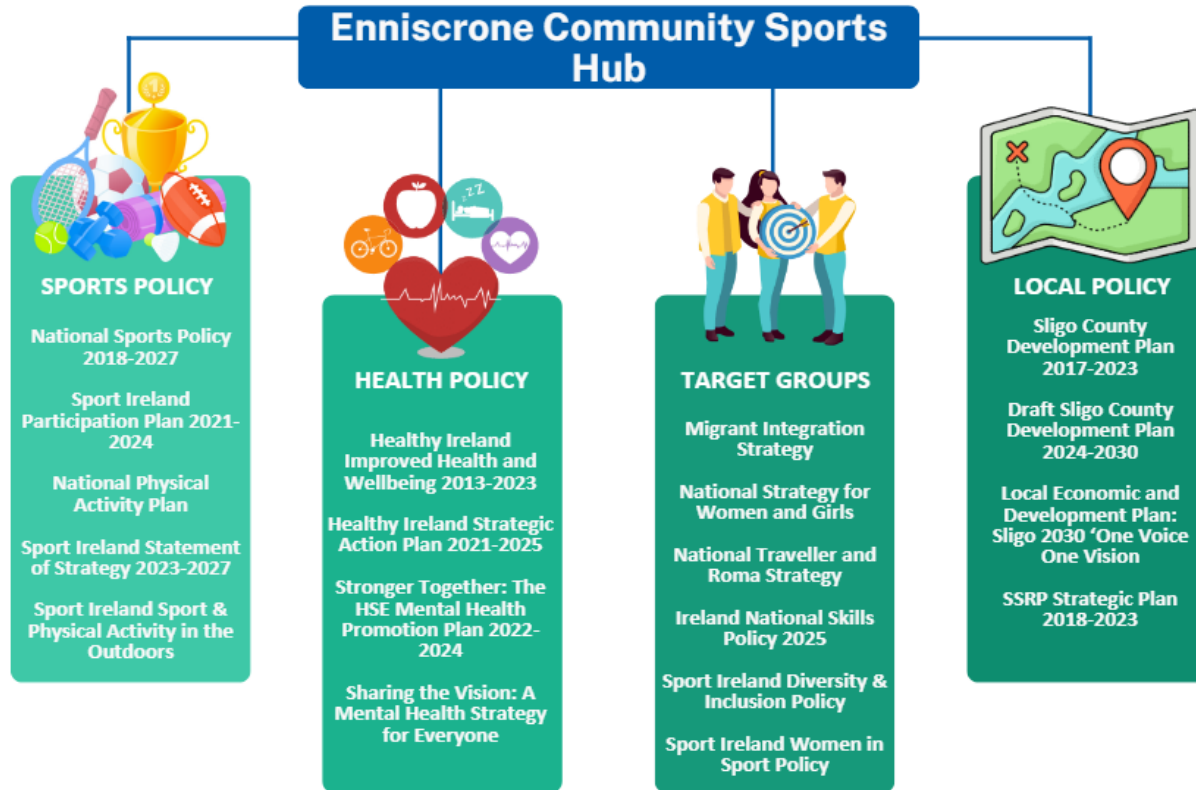
Sligo Sport and Recreation Partnership operates within a robust collaborative and partnership ethos which has underpinned the success of the Hub to date. SSRP engaged in strategic collaboration with both Swim Ireland and Sligo County Council during Hub delivery. Swim Ireland provided specialised expertise and support for the open water programming and infrastructure elements whilst the strong relationship between SSRP and Sligo County Council supported the successful development of equipment and infrastructure. A track record of partnership working enabled SSRP and Sligo County Council to work together to enhance the facilities for open water swimming, to cater to growing demand. This strategic partnership enhanced overall access to the beach and provided buoys, signage, benches and coat racks at Enniscrone Pier. To address access for people with disabilities and those with reduced mobility, a beach access mat was installed at the beach with key supports provided by Sligo County Council. Notably, Sligo County Council stated that the installation of the beach access mat had knock-on effects for local development, informing the approach to beach access mat provision more widely and inspiring a similar development in another area of the County.

Flexibility of Approach

The flexibility of SSRP and Hub partners during delivery and their willingness to adapt to challenges encountered created the foundations upon which the success of the Hub was built. The COVID-19 pandemic was highlighted as a key example of this flexibility. The Enniscrone Community Sports Hub commenced in 2020, alongside the outbreak of the pandemic and its associated social distancing restrictions. Despite this, the Hub has delivered extensive impact for the Enniscrone area in its first three years of delivery. Whilst SSRP staff reported that the development of partnerships in the area was initially slow during the pandemic, the Hub's focus remained creating strong community links during this time, and all 12 organisations consulted subsequently reported engagement with SSRP on Hub activities. The pandemic also failed to halt the delivery of Hub programming; a total of 229 individual programmes have been delivered through the Hub, 28 in 2020 and 60 in 2021 when the pandemic was at its height. This was facilitated by work of SSRP and their associated programme partners in adapting programmes for remote delivery. Access to other SSRP programmes delivered during the pandemic was also opened up to the Enniscrone community, evidencing SSRP's efforts to capitalise on the opportunity provided by online delivery.

8.4. Strategic Relevance

This section sets out a summary of the strategic context for Enniscrone Community Sports Hub.



Given that the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub seeks to promote sports participation, increase sport and physical activity opportunities and make it easier for people to become active, there is natural synergy between the Hub and a range of local and national policy. The Hub aligns with national sports policy in its shared commitment to increasing the number of people who are active; developing Enniscrone as an active area through a community partnership approach; and placing a focus on those who have traditionally had fewer opportunities to take part in sport. The latter also synergises with policies targeting specific populations and the Hub’s commitment to the Dormant Accounts target groups. In supporting people to become more physically active, the Hub intersects with national health policy, providing people with opportunities to maintain good physical health, positive mental health and psychological wellbeing.

Finally, given its location, the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub aligns with County-level policy, synergising strongly with the Local Economic Development Plan which commits to “building the capacity of sports clubs and community organisations to facilitate sport for all, with a focus on minority sports when developing further Community Sports Hubs in disadvantaged areas.”

Finally, the Hub is in alignment with wider SSRP policy, with commitments made to “develop and sustain Community Sports Hubs as welcoming, safe and fun spaces for sport and physical activity underpinned by local capacity building.”

8.5. Alignment to Dormant Accounts

The Enniscrone Community Sports Hub was funded by Sport Ireland under Dormant Accounts. The Hub sought to increase participation in sport and physical activity with a particular focus on disadvantaged communities such as people who are economically or socially disadvantaged; people who are educationally disadvantaged; and/or persons with a disability. SSRP staff felt that the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub had targeted the right people, stating that during delivery, there was a concerted effort to “target the disadvantaged and work with those most in need.” The contribution of the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub to the enhancement of opportunities for Dormant Account’s key target groups is summarised below.

Economic Disadvantage

The Enniscrone Community Sports Hub has provided funding to provide subsidised sport and physical activity opportunities in the area. Sports clubs/providers referenced the provision of financial support through the Hub which aided in the purchase of equipment and the subsidising of programming to increase accessibility for local people. 15% of respondents to the community survey identified that they were from families of low income. Of these respondents, 76% felt they could comfortably afford to access sports clubs in Enniscrone and 72% felt they could comfortably afford to access sports or physical activity programming in Enniscrone. 72% of these respondents had accessed programming through the Hub and 78% felt that accessibility of sport and physical activity opportunities had improved since the Hub’s establishment. Just 14% felt cost was a barrier to sport and physical activity participation in Enniscrone.

Social Disadvantage

The consultation to inform this evaluation revealed a range of impacts for groups which often experience social disadvantage. 11 programmes were delivered which were specifically designed to be inclusive of older adults, with both chair yoga and activator walking poles programmes proving popular with this demographic. Partners referenced the impact for older adults who in the past have been underserved by sport and physical activity opportunities in Enniscrone and now have a new social outlet which promotes their physical and mental health and wellbeing. 11% of respondents to the community survey were aged 65 or over, with 89% of these respondents accessing sport and physical activity opportunities through the Hub, and 44% accessing training opportunities through the Hub.

Secondly, consultation also revealed the impact of the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub for refugees and asylum seekers in Enniscrone. The area has seen an increase in this population in recent years, and Hub partners reported that recent sport and physical activity opportunities have supported the new Ukrainian population to integrate into the area. Two sports clubs/providers indicated that refugees and asylum seekers had accessed their programming, and multiple references were made to the provision of Sanctuary Runners, an athletics programme designed specifically for this population.

Educational Disadvantage

14% of respondents to the community survey reported educational attainment at or below upper secondary school level. Of these respondents, 44% had accessed training opportunities, most commonly Activator Poles Leader (19%), Women in Sports Leadership (19%), and Walking Leader (13%). Those that accessed training reported having developed skills which will support their facilitation of sports activities and feeling more comfortable in positions of leadership.

Persons with a Disability

3 programmes have been delivered for people with disabilities through the Hub and the SSRP SIDO works to facilitate opportunities in Enniscrone and to create awareness of opportunities through formal links with organisations such as the Children’s Disability Network. It was felt that efforts to improve the capacity of local sports providers would increase the number of accessible programmes delivered in future. 5% of respondents to the community survey identified as having a disability. Of these respondents, 60% felt they could easily access sports clubs and sport and physical activity programming in Enniscrone. 100% of respondents with disabilities reported utilising local facilities for physical activity, 80% had accessed Hub programming and 60% accessed training opportunities. Further, 40% felt that the accessibility of sport and physical activity opportunities had improved since the Hub’s establishment, with no respondent reporting disability as a barrier to participation in sport and physical activity in Enniscrone.

8.6. Delivery Impact: Area-Based Hubs

SSRP staff referenced findings from previous evaluations of Community Sports Hubs which suggested that facility-based Hubs were more impactful and effective than area-based Hubs. Staff discussed this conclusion, reflecting on the success and key achievements of the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub. Sport Ireland’s *Community Sports & Physical Activity Hubs Evaluation Report (2019)*¹⁰ reported that:

¹⁰ Sport Ireland (2019) Community Sports and Physical Activity Hubs Evaluation Report. Available at: <https://www.sportireland.ie/sites/default/files/media/document/2020-04/csh-phase-23-final.pdf>

“Partners and coordinators find it easier to define and connect the term ‘hub’ to a facility based project and there are emerging feelings that it will be easier to sustain. The notion of a facility based project is perceived to be more closely aligned to the ‘hub’ concept as opposed to a more outreach based approach and participants may find it easier to connect with something that has a clearly identifiable location [...] Those partners and coordinators involved in area based hubs were more likely to identify logistical and coordination challenges and were also more likely to reference barriers to sustainability than those in facility based hubs.”

Contrary to these findings, 77% of respondents to the community survey and 58% of partners indicated that they were aware of the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub, evidencing an understanding of the function and purpose of the Hub and connection to the term despite the Hub’s area-based composition. Similarly, whilst it is evident that work remains to build the capacity of local partners and to begin to transfer more responsibility to the local level, over two years of Hub delivery remain and a wide range of impacts have already been facilitated for Hub participants, local sports clubs and community organisations, and the Enniscrone community.

8.7. Future Development and Areas for Improvement

This section reviews the feedback received through this evaluation to identify areas for improvement which can inform the future delivery of the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub.

Awareness and Understanding of the Hub

42% of partners were either unaware of the existence of the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub and/or unable to describe the functioning and purpose of the Hub (N=5). Given the partnership approach upon which the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub was founded and the nature of the Hub as a time-limited programme, SSRP should continue their work to engage new and existing partners, further incorporating them into Hub management and delivery. This would promote a greater sense of ownership over the activities at the Hub and will contribute to capacity of partners, enabling them to continue the positive development of sport and physical activity in Enniscrone following the Hub’s conclusion. This is particularly important in the case of community organisations who displayed a lower level of awareness of the Hub than those partners directly involved in the delivery or facilitation of a sport.

Continued Focus on the Capacity of Partner Organisations

Community Sports Hubs aim to create and facilitate strong organisations in the community that develop sport and physical activity. The findings of this evaluation evidence both the successes

achieved to date in this area and the need for a continued focus on improving the capacity of partner organisations in Enniscrone. Just 50% of Hub partners reported that their relationship with other clubs and community organisations had improved as a result of the Hub (N=6). Further, two partners felt stronger partnership with West Sligo Family Resource Centre than other organisations in the area and two further partners felt that the loss of the Hub Coordinator at the Hub's close would undermine progress made to date, with newly formed partnerships unable to fill this gap. Synergising with the commentary in the above section, there is a need to create further opportunities for partnership working, increase capacity, and promote collaboration on Hub activities to promote the sustainability of local sports clubs and prepare Hub partners for the conclusion of the Hub in two years' time. The capacity of Hub partners could be developed by addressing identified support needs, namely impact measurement, human resources, social media maximisation, strategy and governance. Capacity could also be improved by targeting the organisational health of sports clubs/providers, ensuring sustainability through improved organisational resilience, communication pathways, and planning for the future.

Measuring Impact on Participation

Just one programme delivered through the Hub collected M1 and PACE+ data which could be used to assess the impact of the Hub on sport and physical activity participation. This evidence lacked 3-month follow-up data from participants. Without the benefit of statistical data, conclusions about the impact of the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub on local participation rates are based on responses from the community survey and qualitative feedback from Hub partners and SSRP staff which presents limitations. Additionally, given the early development stage of many clubs/programmes in the area, little other formal or informal impact measurement or feedback on delivery is being collected. With feedback from Hub partners suggesting that they would benefit from support with impact measurement (N=3), it is evident that work is needed to facilitate the wide-spread implementation of impact measurement systems so as to ensure that the impact of the Hub on the participation in sport and physical activity can be determined more accurately. With the development stage of clubs in mind, this could involve an initial focus on informal assessment, ensuring regular check-ins with participants and feedback sought on delivery to ensure alignment to need. Partners may also benefit from a shared development process, with SSRP helping to create clear and measurable indicators of success.

Section 9: Conclusions and Recommendations

9.1. Introduction

This section offers conclusions on the evaluation of the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub and provides recommendations for future delivery.

9.2. Conclusions

The Enniscrone Community Sports Hub offers a clear link between the issues it sought to address, the programming and activities it delivered, and the outcomes it intended to achieve. **The Hub has achieved significant success at the mid-point of delivery.** Critical to the achievements delivered through the Hub was the highly participatory, bottom-up partnership approach to Hub development and management. A series of conclusions are presented below:

- The Enniscrone Community Sports Hub has **increased sport and physical activity opportunities** in the area.
- Whilst limited M1 and PACE+ data was available to assess the Hub’s impact on sport and physical activity participation in Enniscrone, it is evident that the Hub has delivered purposefully to the **increase of physical activity and fitness levels** in the community.
- The Hub has successfully implemented a **partnership-based approach** and has **promoted meaningful collaboration** between local sports clubs, sports providers, community organisations and Sligo Sport and Recreation Partnership. The Hub has engaged with community/sporting groups and brought stakeholders together to plan and deliver sport.
- Hub partners feel **supported by SSRP and trust the organisation.**
- Whilst a Hub Coordinator within SSRP has lead responsibility for the Enniscrone Community Sport and Physical Activity Hub, the Hub is **embedded in SSRP strategy and benefits from the experience and expertise of the entire staff team.**
- The Hub has **encouraged more community leadership** by facilitating training and promoting the capacity of local clubs, community organisations and individuals.
- The Hub has **increased the sustainability and accessibility of sport and physical activity programming** in Enniscrone, increasing the capacity of local clubs, community organisations, coaches and volunteers whose training/experience will outlast the Hub.
- The Hub has made concerted effort to **target traditionally hard to reach groups** and has **delivered for the key target groups associated with Dormant Accounts.**
- The Hub is **strategically aligned** with the priorities of multiple nationwide and local policies and strategies.
- The Hub **offers lessons in relation to the remaining delivery** of the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub and the development of future Community Sports Hubs.

9.3. Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Continued Focus on Capacity Building

The Enniscrone Community Sports Hub is contributing purposefully to the increase of sport and physical activity opportunities in the area through a partnership approach. Whilst positive progress has been made in the areas of partnership building and sport clubs/provider capacity development, it is important that work in this area continues to ensure the positive work of the Hub can be furthered by local sports partners once Hub funding ceases. With this in mind, it is recommended that the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub continue its focus on promoting inter-partner collaboration, increasing capacity, and promote collaboration on Hub activities to promote the sustainability of local sports clubs and programming facilitated by local community groups. The focus in the final two years of Hub delivery should include the transfer of critical knowledge from the Hub Coordinator to local partners, and targeted training to address the support needs of partners as identified in this evaluation.

Recommendation 2: Impact Measurement & Follow-Up Evaluation

Limited statistical data was available to assess the impact of the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub on local participation rates. Additionally, feedback from Hub partners suggests the need for impact measurement to support organisational sustainability, future delivery, and to ensure provision is continually aligned with local need. It is therefore recommended that the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub host impact measurement training for Hub partners and local sport and physical activity clubs/providers within the next 6 months. This training should be pitched at a level which aligns with the development stage of each club/provider and should be cognisant of Sport Ireland's ongoing work to develop a system for the management of programme registrations and the collection of M1 data. It is further recommended that, resources depending, a follow-up evaluation be considered at the conclusion of the Hub to provide overall conclusions about the impact of the Enniscrone Hub on local sport and physical activity participation.

Recommendation 3: Hard-to-Reach and Underserved Groups

The Enniscrone Community Sports Hub has reportedly improved the accessibility of sport and physical activity opportunities in the area and numerous impacts have been delivered for Dormant Accounts key target groups. However, consultation revealed that barriers to participation in sport and physical activity persist in Enniscrone, and Hub partners identified that a number of gaps still exist. Synergising with the recommendations outlined above, it is recommended that the Enniscrone Community Sports Hub place further emphasis on building the capacity of local partners to deliver activities for the Dormant Accounts target groups, whilst seeking to address other gaps in provision as identified through this evaluation.

Appendix 1: Open Water Swimming Programme

M1 Data

Introduction

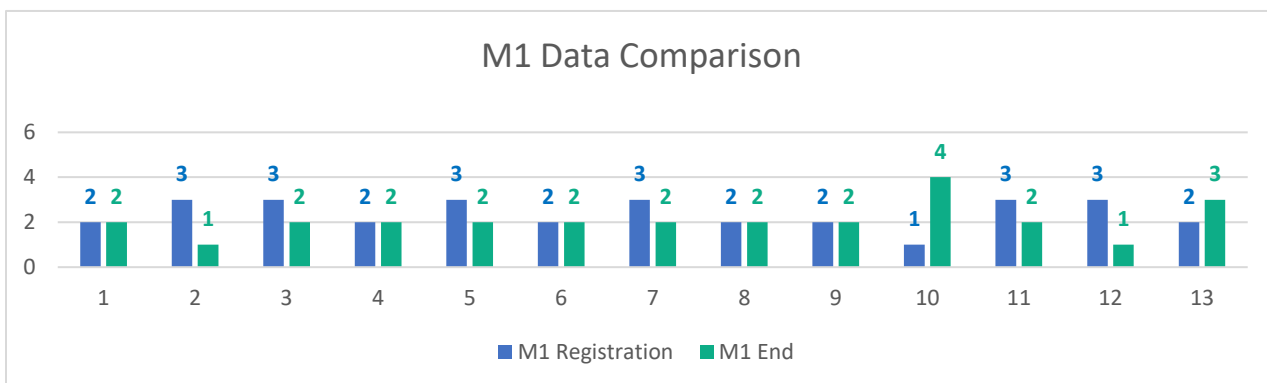
M1 Data was collected for Swim Ireland’s Enniscrone Open Water Programme. Data was collected across four programmes:

- 1 programme delivered in June 2021 featuring 8 sessions
- 1 programme delivered in July 2021 featuring 15 sessions
- 1 programme delivered in 2022 featuring a total of 96 sessions
- 1 programme delivered in 2023 featuring a total of 84 sessions

Given that sessions length is not consistent, the M1 scores for each programme were first analysed individually. This analysis is provided below.

June 2021 (8 Sessions)

13	7	100%	25-54
Number of participants	Average number of sessions attended	Of participants were female	Age range of participants



- 8% of participants were considered inactive (0-1 days) at registration, compared with 15% at programme end; an 87.5% increase.
- 92% of participants were considered somewhat active (2-4 days) at registration, compared with 85% at programme end; a 7.6% decrease.
- 0% of participants were considered active (5+ days) at either registration or programme end.
- 15% of participants experienced an increase in their M1 score.

- 38% of participants maintained their M1 score.
- 46% of participants experienced a decrease in their M1 score.
- There is a weak negative correlation evident between the number of sessions attended and the effect on M1 score. However, this correlation is not statistically significant.

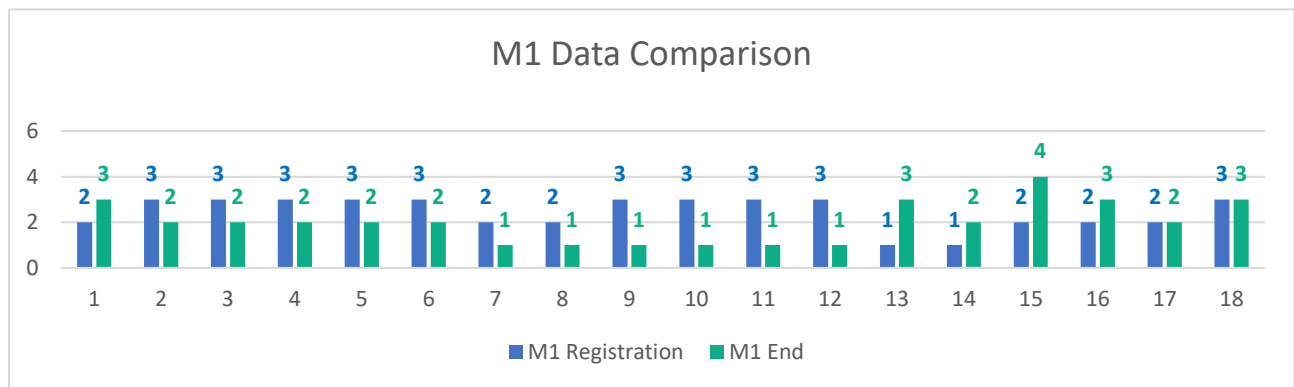
July 2021 (15 Sessions)

18
Number of participants

7
Average number of sessions attended

94%
Of participants were female; 6% male

16-69
Age range of participants



- 11% of participants were considered inactive (0-1 days) at registration, compared with 33% at programme end; a 200% increase.
- 89% of participants were considered somewhat active (2-4 days) at registration, compared with 67% at programme end; a 24.7% decrease.
- 0% of participants were considered active (5+ days) at either registration or programme end.
- 22% of participants experienced an increase in their M1 score.
- 11% of participants maintained their M1 score.
- 67% of participants experienced a decrease in their M1 score.
- There is a weak negative correlation evident between the number of sessions attended and the effect on M1 score. However, this correlation is not statistically significant.

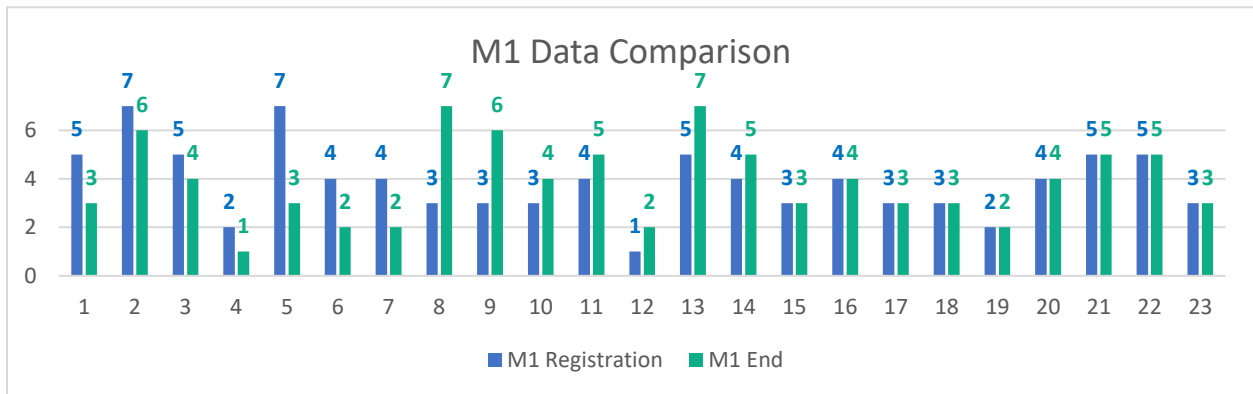
2022 (96 Sessions)

23 Number of participants

7 Average number of sessions attended

83% Of participants were female; 17% male

25-64 Age range of participants



- 4% of participants were considered inactive (0-1 days) at registration and at programme end.
- 65% of participants were considered somewhat active (2-4 days) at registration, compared with 61% at programme end; a 6.2% decrease.
- 30% of participants were considered active (5+ days) at registration, compared with 35% at programme end; a 16.7% increase.
- 30% of participants experienced an increase in their M1 score.
- 39% of participants maintained their M1 score.
- 30% of participants experienced a decrease in their M1 score.
- There is a weak positive correlation evident between the number of sessions attended and the effect on M1 score. However, this correlation is not statistically significant.

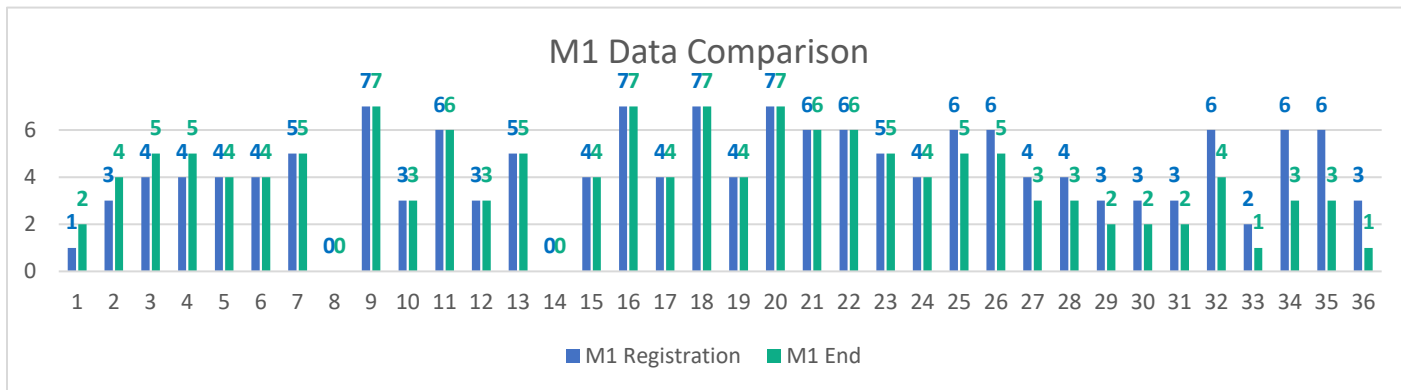
2023 (84 Sessions)

36 Number of participants

10 Average number of sessions attended

78% Of participants were female; 22% male

25-74 Age range of participants



- 8% of participants were considered inactive (0-1 days) at registration, compared with 11% at programme end; a 37.5% increase.
- 50% of participants were considered somewhat active (2-4 days) at registration and at programme end.
- 42% of participants were considered active (5+ days) at registration, compared with 39% at programme end; a 7.1% decrease.
- 11% of participants experienced an increase in their M1 score.
- 56% of participants maintained their M1 score.
- 33% of participants experienced a decrease in their M1 score.
- There is a weak positive correlation evident between the number of sessions attended and the effect on M1 score. However, this correlation is not statistically significant.

Full Overview

M1 Data was collected for Swim Ireland’s Enniscrone Open Water Programme. Data was collected across four programmes which ranged from 8 to 96 sessions in length.

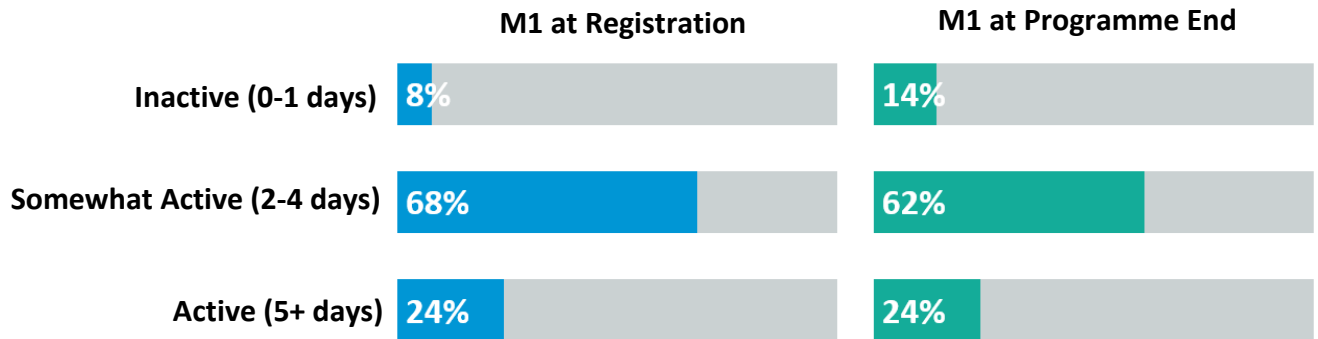
- 1 programme delivered in June 2021 featuring 8 sessions
- 1 programme delivered in July 2021 featuring 15 sessions
- 1 programme delivered in 2022 featuring a total of 96 sessions
- 1 programme delivered in 2023 featuring a total of 84 sessions.

A summary of the key findings is presented below:

91	8	86%	16-74
Number of participants	Average number of sessions attended	Of participants were female; 14% male	Age range of participants

The following refers to a collective analysis of the M1 data:

3.53	3.42	-0.08%	16-74
Average M1 Score at Registration	Average M1 Score at Programme End	Average Change in M1 Score Post-Programme	Age range of participants



In examining the data at an individual level, the following was found:

20%	41%	39%
Of participants experienced an increase in their M1 score	Of participants maintained their M1 score	Of participants experienced a decrease in their M1 score

In considering the impact of the number of sessions attended on the change in M1 score, no statistically significant relationship was found.

Desk-Based Analysis: PACE+ Data

PACE+ Data was collected for Swim Ireland’s Enniscrone Open Water Programme, for participants aged under 16. Data was collected across two programmes:

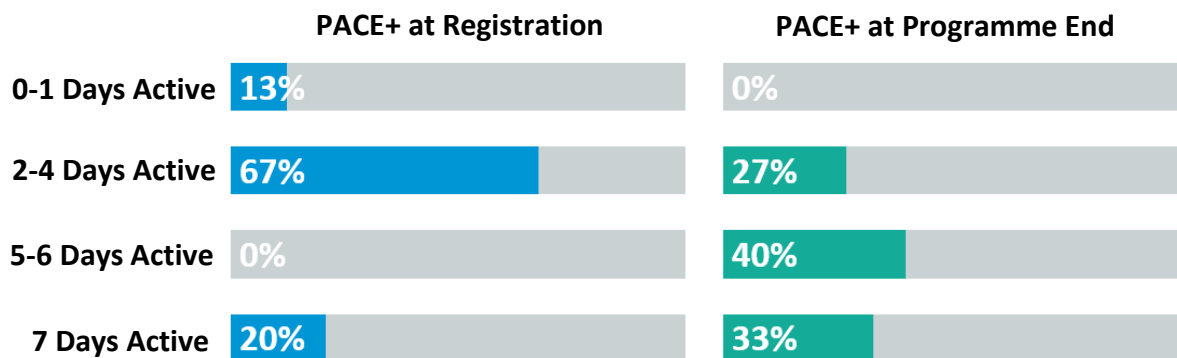
- 1 programme delivered in 2021 featuring 5 sessions
- 1 programme delivered in 2022 featuring a total of 15 sessions

A summary of key findings is presented below:

15 Number of participants	5 Average number of sessions attended	67% Of participants were female; 33% male	7-14 Age range of participants
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The following refers to a collective analysis of the PACE+ data:

3.47 Average PACE+ Score at Registration (Last 7 days)	5.47 Average PACE+ Score at Programme End (Last 7 days)	+57.64% Average Change in PACE+ Score Post-Programme (Last 7 days)
3.6 Average PACE+ Score at Registration (Usual 7 days)	5.53 Average PACE+ Score at Programme End (Usual 7 days)	+53.61% Average Change in PACE+ Score Post-Programme (Usual 7 days)



In examining the data at an individual level, the following was found:

73% Of participants experienced an increase in their PACE+ score (last 7 days)	27% Of participants maintained their PACE+ score (last 7 days)	87% Of participants experienced an increase in their PACE+ score (usual 7 days)	13% Of participants maintained their PACE+ score (usual 7 days)
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In considering the impact of the number of sessions attended on the change in PACE+ score, no statistically significant relationship was found.