



Young People's Participation in Youth Organisations



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1. Introduction

This Statistical Spotlight outlines available data on young people's participation in youth organisations in Ireland and the European Union (EU), from both national and European surveys. Data are presented on reported participation in youth organisations by survey respondents. The first part of the Spotlight focuses on participation in youth organisations as reported by persons aged 15-30 years old, firstly in Ireland specifically, and then in all EU Member States. The second part focuses on participation in youth organisations by young people in the Growing Up in Ireland study at ages 13, 17/18 and 20 years.

Presenting data on participation in youth organisations such as youth clubs, can help policy-makers and other stakeholders to understand whether there are patterns in the use of youth services, and whether there are any gaps in the use of youth organisations for young people in relation to specific behavioural or societal characteristics. Identifying variation in young people's involvement in youth organisations across EU Member States and among different subgroups, such as by gender, age, level of education, occupation, social class, family structure, migrant background, disability status, or regional differences, can help to identify whether or not certain population subgroups are more likely to participate in youth organisations. It can also help to identify potential support needs of certain population subgroups, to further encourage their participation in youth organisations. This evidence can support the development of effective strategies and policies to promote participation in youth organisations.

In this Spotlight, data are presented on participation in youth organisations from surveys from the following reports:

- Flash Eurobarometer 319a: Youth on the Move (2011);
- Flash Eurobarometer 375: European Youth: Participation in Democratic Life (2013);
- Flash Eurobarometer 408: European Youth (2014);
- Flash Eurobarometer 455: European Youth (2017);
- Flash Eurobarometer: European Parliament Youth Survey (2021);
- Growing Up in Ireland (GUI): The Lives of 13-year-olds (2011/12);



- Growing Up in Ireland (GUI): The Lives of 17/18-year-olds (2015/16); and
- Growing Up in Ireland (GUI): The Lives of 20-year-olds (2018/19).¹

The statistics are rounded to the nearest whole number in both the tables and figures, and in the text.

¹ All years listed here are survey (not publication) years.



2. Participation in youth organisations by 15-30-year-olds in Ireland and the EU

The data in this section come from Flash Eurobarometer reports from surveys conducted in 2011², 2013³, 2014⁴ and 2017,⁵ and the Flash Eurobarometer: European Parliament Youth Survey 2021.⁶ The Eurobarometer surveys use the term “youth organisation” in a broad sense: a youth-led, non-profit, voluntary generally non-governmental association, which implements activities for young people and/or engages in advocacy work to promote their cause.

Participation in youth organisations by 15-30-year-olds in Ireland has varied from 26% in 2011, to 37% in 2013, 25% in 2014 and 25% in 2017. This is based on the Flash Eurobarometer surveys from 2011, 2013, 2014 and 2017, where 15-30-year-olds were asked if, in the past year (or last 12 months), they had participated in any activities of a youth club, leisure-time club or any kind of youth organisation.⁷ In the 2021 Flash Eurobarometer survey, 16-30-year-olds were asked if they had ever joined a youth organisation. In the 2021 survey, in Ireland, 23% of respondents reported that they had ever joined a youth organisation.

2.1 Youth organisation participation in Ireland classified by gender

In Ireland, the percentage of male and female 15-30-year-olds who reported that they took part in a youth organisation in the last 12 months was similar across survey

² A sample size of 27,029 15-30-year-olds in the EU27 was used for the survey in 2011, which included 1003 15-30-year-olds in Ireland. *Flash Eurobarometer 319a “Youth on the Move” Report* (Fieldwork: February 2011; Publication: May 2011). Available at: <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/873>

³ A sample size of 12,927 15-30-year-olds in the EU27 was used for the survey in 2013, which included 500 15-30-year-olds in Ireland. *Flash Eurobarometer 375 European Youth Report* (Fieldwork: April 2013; Publication: May 2013). Available at: <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/1119>

⁴ A sample size of 13,454 15-30-year-olds in the EU28 was used for the survey in 2014, which included 503 15-30-year-olds in Ireland. *Flash Eurobarometer 408 European Youth Report* (Fieldwork: December 2014; Publication: April 2015). Available at: <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2009>

⁵ A sample size of 10,927 15-30-year-olds in the EU28 was used for the survey in 2017, which included 400 15-30-year-olds in Ireland. *Flash Eurobarometer 455 European Youth Report* (Fieldwork: September 2017; Publication: January 2018). Available at: <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2163>

⁶ A sample size of 18,156 16-30-year-olds in the EU27 was used for the survey in 2021, which included 568 16-30-year-olds in Ireland. *Flash Eurobarometer European Parliament Youth Survey Report* (Fieldwork: June 2021; Publication: September 2021). Available at: <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2574>

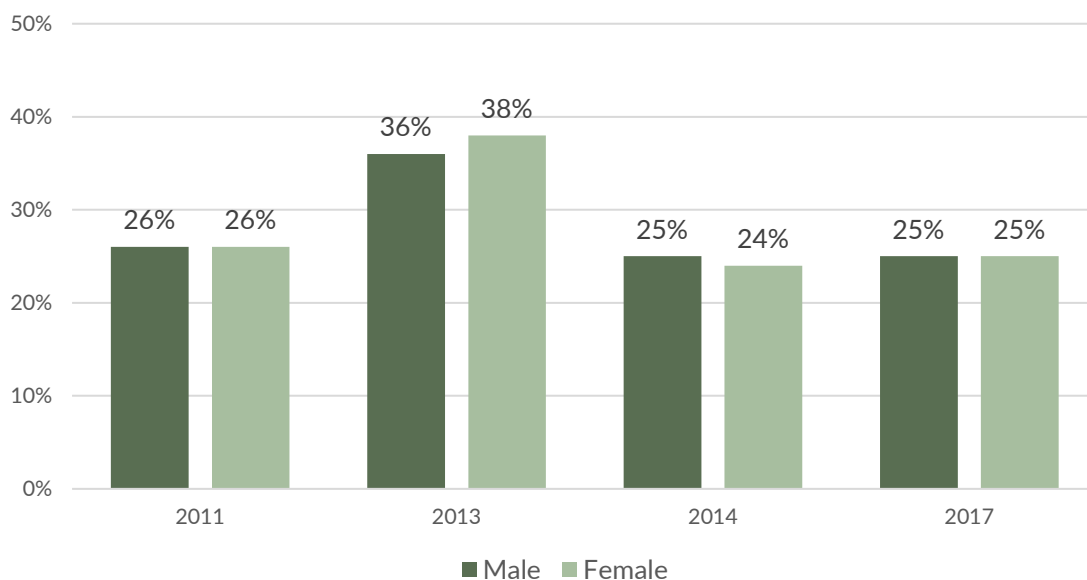
⁷ Note that the question on participation in a youth club, leisure-time club or any kind of youth organisation is a distinct question. There are other questions in the survey on participation in other organisations including sports clubs; cultural organisations; political organisations; and environmental organisations.



years (Figure 1). For example, in 2017, 25% of males and 25% of females responded that they had taken part in a youth organisation in the past year.

Of the four survey years, there was a higher participation recorded by both males (36%) and females (38%) in 2013. The larger percentages in 2013 follow a pattern seen in other European results. Comparing the EU28 results from the four survey years, the data show an increase in the level of participation in “youth clubs or leisure-time clubs or any kind of youth organisation” in 2013 (22%) compared to 2011 (18%), 2014 (16%) and 2017 (20%). See sections 2.7 to 2.10 for further information on European results.

Figure 1. Percentage of 15-30-year-olds who took part in a youth organisation in the last 12 months, classified by gender, Ireland (2011, 2013, 2014, 2017)



Source: Flash Eurobarometer Youth Reports from 2011, 2013, 2014, 2017

2.2 Youth organisation participation in Ireland classified by age group

In Ireland, for the four comparable Eurobarometer survey years (2011, 2013, 2014, and 2017), participation in youth organisations decreased with increasing age. For example, in 2017, the percentage of respondents who reported that they took part in a youth organisation was 31% at ages 15-19 years, 27% at ages 20-24 years, and 19% at ages 25-30 years (Table 1). Of the three age groups, 20-24 years was the only age group that reported an increase in participation from 2011 to 2017 (20% in 2011



compared to 27% in 2017), whereas there was a decrease from 42% to 31% for 15-19-year-olds and no change (19% to 19%) for 25-30-year-olds for 2011 to 2017, respectively. Similarly, to the results on gender presented above, there was a higher participation reported from all age groups in 2013.

Table 1. Percentage of 15-30-year-olds who took part in a youth organisation in the last 12 months, classified by age group, Ireland (2011, 2013, 2014, 2017)

| Year | Age | | |
|------|-------|-------|-------|
| | 15-19 | 20-24 | 25-30 |
| 2011 | 42% | 20% | 19% |
| 2013 | 50% | 37% | 27% |
| 2014 | 44% | 23% | 16% |
| 2017 | 31% | 27% | 19% |

Source: Flash Eurobarometer Youth Reports from 2011, 2013, 2014, 2017

2.3 Youth organisation participation in Ireland classified by age at end of education

For respondents who reported that they had participated in a youth organisation in the last year, the age at which they ended education varied. In all survey years, the percentage of respondents who reported participation in a youth organisation was highest for those still studying versus those that had ended their education (Table 2). For example, in 2017, 31% of those still studying reported participating in a youth organisation, compared to 10% of those who were 15 years old at the end of their education, 19% of those who were 16-19 years old at the end of their education, and 19% of those who were 20 or more years old at the end of their education.

Table 2. Percentage of 15-30-year-olds who took part in a youth organisation in the last 12 months, classified by age at end of education, Ireland (2011, 2013, 2014, 2017)

| Year | Age at end of education* | | | |
|------|--------------------------|-------|-----|----------------|
| | 15- | 16-19 | 20+ | Still studying |
| 2011 | 12% | 24% | 19% | 33% |
| 2013 | 34% | 34% | 33% | 43% |
| 2014 | 21% | 17% | 24% | 33% |
| 2017 | 10% | 19% | 19% | 31% |

Source: Flash Eurobarometer Youth Reports from 2011, 2013, 2014, 2017

*Age at end of education not available for 2011, but current/completed education or training status used as proxy in table



2.4 Youth organisation participation in Ireland classified by respondent occupation scale

In Ireland, the percentage who reported that they had participated in a youth organisation in the past year, by occupation, varied by survey year (Table 3). In 2013, 44% of manual workers, 40% of persons not working, 34% of employees, and 22% of self-employed persons participated in a youth organisation in the past year. In 2014 this changed to 27% of self-employed, 26% of persons not working, 24% of manual workers, and 23% of employees. In 2017, the pattern changed back to be more similar to 2013, with 26% of manual workers, 25% of persons not working, 22% of employees, and 15% of self-employed persons reporting that they had participated in a youth organisation in the past year. In both 2013 and 2017, highest participation was in the manual workers group and lowest participation was in the self-employed group. For example, in 2013 and 2017, 44% and 26%, respectively, reported that they had taken part in a youth organisation in the past year, which were higher proportions than within other occupation scale categories for those years. In 2014, the highest proportion was represented by self-employed respondents, with 27% of self-employed respondents reporting that they had taken part in a youth organisation, compared to 26% not working, 24% manual workers and 23% employees.

Table 3. Percentage of 15-30-year-olds who took part in a youth organisation in the last 12 months, classified by respondent occupation scale, Ireland (2013, 2014, 2017)

| Respondent occupation scale | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------|----------|----------------|-------------|----------|
| Year | Self-employed | Employee | Manual workers | Not working | Studying |
| 2013 | 22% | 34% | 44% | 40% | NA |
| 2014 | 27% | 23% | 24% | 26% | NA |
| 2017 | 15% | 22% | 26% | 25% | 29% |

Source: Flash Eurobarometer Youth Reports from 2013, 2014, 2017

*Data unavailable for 2011

NA = not available



2.5 Youth organisation participation in Ireland classified by urban/rural location

Participation in youth organisations varied by urban/rural location,⁸ i.e., whether the respondents lived in a rural village, small/mid-size town, or large town. While the percentage of respondents in each category who reported that they had taken part in a youth organisation in the past year was similar in 2011, there was greater variability in the other three survey years. For example, in 2017, the percentage of respondents who reported that they had participated in a youth club, leisure-time club or any kind of youth organisation was highest for respondents living in small/mid-size towns (31%), then those living in rural villages (24%), and lowest for those living in large towns (21%). In all of the most recent three survey years, the percentage of 15-30-year-olds in Ireland who participated in a youth organisation was highest for respondents living in small/mid-size towns when compared to the other categories (Table 4).

Table 4. Percentage of 15-30-year-olds who took part in a youth organisation in the last 12 months, classified by urban/rural location, Ireland (2011, 2013, 2014, 2017)

| Year | Urban/rural location | | |
|------|----------------------|---------------------|------------|
| | Rural village | Small/mid-size town | Large town |
| 2011 | 27% | 26% | 25% |
| 2013 | 38% | 43% | 32% |
| 2014 | 25% | 31% | 20% |
| 2017 | 24% | 31% | 21% |

Source: Flash Eurobarometer Youth Reports from 2011, 2013, 2014, 2017

*In 2011, urban/rural location (or subjective urbanisation) categories were Rural zone, Other town/urban/centre, and Metropolitan area

2.6 Youth organisation participation in Ireland classified by region

Two survey years (2013 and 2014) were available where regions were categorised in the same way and thus there is availability of comparable data. There was variation in respondents' reported participation in youth organisations in relation to region (Table 5). For example, in 2013, 40% of respondents in Connaught/Ulster and 38% of

⁸ The term used in Eurobarometer surveys for urban/rural location is "subjective urbanisation"



respondents in the Rest of Leinster (which excludes Dublin) reported participating in a youth organisation in the last year. However, in 2014, the highest percentages reporting participation in a youth organisation were 30% of respondents in Munster and 27% of respondents in Dublin (Table 5).

Table 5. Percentage of 15-30-year-olds who took part in a youth organisation in the last 12 months, classified by region, Ireland (2013, 2014)

| Region | | | | | |
|--------|--------|------------------|---------|------------------|---------|
| Year | Dublin | Rest of Leinster | Munster | Connaught/Ulster | Ireland |
| 2013 | 35% | 38% | 37% | 40% | 37% |
| 2014 | 27% | 20% | 30% | 21% | 25% |

Source: Flash Eurobarometer Youth Reports from 2013, 2014

*Data unavailable for 2011; different regional categories used in 2017 survey

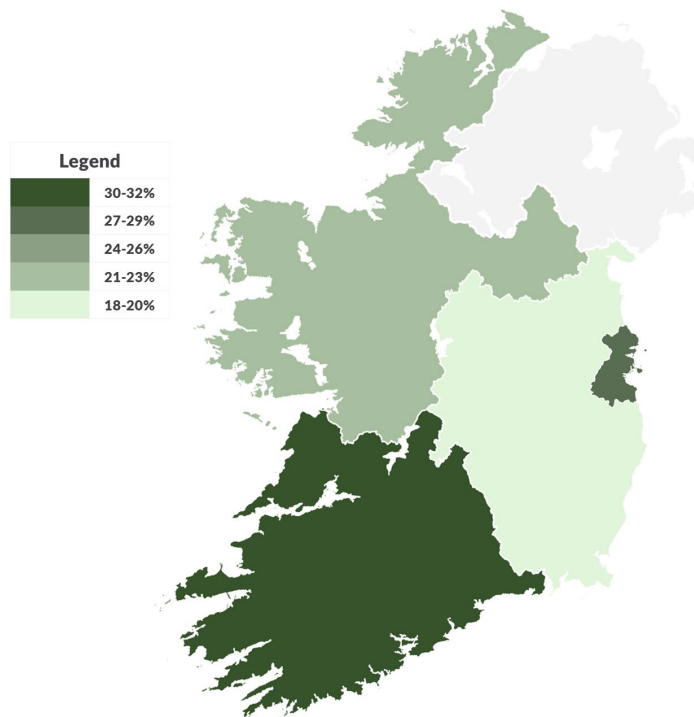


Figure 2. Percentage of 'yes' responses across Ireland to the question "In the last 12 months, have you participated in any activities of the following organisations: a youth club, leisure-time club or any kind of youth organisation?" (2014)

2.7 Youth organisation participation in Ireland and the EU27 classified by key socio-demographic characteristics

The most recent 2021 Eurobarometer survey uses a distinct set of questions and asks the respondents if they have ever joined a youth organisation. The survey covers the population of EU citizens who are residents in one of the 27 Member States of the EU and between 16 and 30 years of age.



Respondents were categorised across 10 different characteristics – gender, age, age at end of education, respondent occupation scale, urban/rural location, highest level of education of the respondent’s mother, highest level of education of the respondent’s father, their household’s financial situation, the type of respondent, and the number of European languages the respondent speaks. The survey results include footnotes where a statistically significant difference between the results (within each of these characteristics) was found (Table 6). For example, in Ireland, key statistically significant differences were found by age and by gender. By age, 30% of 16-19-year-olds reported that they had ever joined a youth organisation compared to 18% of 26-30-year-olds. By gender, 67% of 16-30-year-olds who identified as another gender (not male or female) reported that they had ever joined a youth organisation compared to 24% of males and 21% of females.⁹ Note, however, that the small number of people identifying as another gender may not provide a large enough sample size (<10 in this case) to accurately reflect this figure in the survey results.

As another example, for survey respondents whose education had ceased, the highest percentage of those that had ever joined a youth organisation was by those who ceased education at 16-19 years old (24%) compared to those who ceased education in their lives up to the age of 15 (9%) or aged 20+ (19%; although the difference between the results across these three age groups was not statistically significant). These results compare with 27% who were still studying and responded that they had ever joined a youth organisation.

For the household financial situation categories, the highest percentage of respondents in Ireland that had ever joined a youth organisation was those whose household financial situation was categorised as “not enough money for basic bills” (43%) compared to other categories such as “can afford to buy whatever we need for a good standard of living” (26%) and “enough money for basic bills but not for food and clothes” (22%; although the difference between the results across the five categories of household financial situation was not statistically significant; Table 6).

⁹ Note that the sample size of 16-30-year-olds who identified as another gender (not male or female) was small (sample size = 7; weighted total = 8) compared to the sample sizes of 16-30-year-olds who identified as either male (sample size = 230; weighted total = 283) or female (sample size = 331; weighted total = 277).



In the type of respondent categories, 40% of those who indicated that they were lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex responded that they had ever joined a youth organisation (note that this is based on a sample size of 87; the differences between this result and the results for other types of respondent were not statistically significant; Table 6).

Taking the EU27 as a whole, statistically significant differences were found in key socio-demographic characteristics such as age at which education ceased, respondent occupation scale, and financial situation of the household. The percentage of respondents who were still studying who had ever joined a youth organisation (16%) was significantly higher than those that ceased their education at age 16-19 years (13%) or 20+ years (14%). The percentage of respondents who noted that they “can afford to buy whatever we need for a good standard of living” who had ever joined a youth organisation (16%) was significantly higher than those who noted that they “can afford to buy some more expensive things but not as expensive as a car or new house for example” (14%).

In the EU27, 17% of self-employed respondents reported that they had ever joined a youth organisation; this was significantly higher than the 14% in each other group of respondents, categorised as employee, manual worker, or not working, who reported that they had ever joined a youth organisation. The percentage of 16-30-year-olds who had ever joined a youth organisation was also significantly higher among respondents who speak more than one European language (16%) than among those who speak only one (12%) or none (11%; Table 6).¹⁰

Comparing the percentage of 16-30-year-olds who reported that they had ever joined a youth organisation across all categories within the 10 different socio-economic characteristics, Ireland’s percentages were higher when compared to the EU27 in all but two of the categories (Table 6). These two categories are as follows. For respondents whose education ceased before the age of 15, 9% of 16-30-year-olds in Ireland reported that they had ever joined a youth organisation *versus* 15% in

¹⁰ Note that the sample size of 16-30-year-olds who speak more than one European language was larger (sample size = 12,270; weighted total = 11,605) compared to the sample sizes of 16-30-year-olds who speak one European language (sample size = 5,401; weighted total = 5,994) or none, *i.e.*, no European languages (sample size = 485; weighted total = 557).



the EU27. For respondents whose father’s highest level of education was categorised as “no formal education/did not complete primary school”, 11% of 16-30-year-olds in Ireland reported that they had ever joined a youth organisation *versus* 15% in the EU27.

Table 6. Percentage of 16-30-year-olds who have ever joined a youth organisation, classified by key socio-demographic characteristics, Ireland and EU27 (2021)

| Variable | | IE | EU27 |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Gender | Male | 24% | 15% ⁱ |
| | Female | 21% | 14% |
| | In another way / Prefer not to say | 67% ⁱⁱ | 16% |
| Age | 16-19 years | 30% ⁱⁱⁱ | 16% ^{iv} |
| | 20-25 years | 22% | 15% ^{iv} |
| | 26-30 years | 18% | 13% |
| Age at which education ceased | Up to 15 | 9% | 15% |
| | 16-19 | 24% | 13% |
| | 20+ | 19% | 14% |
| | Still studying | 27% | 16% ^v |
| Respondent occupation scale | Self-employed | 20% | 17% ^{vi} |
| | Employee | 25% | 14% |
| | Manual worker | 19% | 14% |
| | Not working | 23% | 14% |
| Urban/rural location | Rural area | 23% | 15% ^{vii} |
| | Small/medium-sized town | 22% | 14% |
| | Large town/city | 24% | 15% ^{vii} |
| Highest level of education attained by mother | No formal education/did not complete primary school | 30% | 18% ^{viii} |
| | Primary school | 25% | 16% ^{ix} |
| | Secondary school | 22% | 14% |
| | Technical or vocational training | 34% | 13% |
| | College or university level education | 22% | 16% ^x |
| Highest level of education attained by father | No formal education/did not complete primary school | 11% | 15% |
| | Primary school | 20% | 14% |
| | Secondary school | 22% | 14% |
| | Technical or vocational training | 35% | 13% |
| | College or university level education | 22% | 17% ^{xi} |
| Financial situation household | Not enough money for basic bills | 43% | 15% |
| | Enough money for basic bills but not for food and clothes | 22% | 16% |
| | Enough money for food, clothes and shoes but not enough for more expensive things | 22% | 14% |



| Variable | | IE | EU27 |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|---------------------|
| | Can afford to buy some more expensive things but not as expensive as a car or new house for example | 22% | 14% |
| | Can afford to buy whatever we need for a good standard of living | 26% | 16% ^{xii} |
| Type of respondent | Ethnic, religious or other minority | 25% | 19% |
| | Migrant, refugee, asylum seeker or displaced person | 27% | 18% |
| | Person with a disability/disabilities | 30% | 17% |
| | Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex | 40% | 18% |
| | None of the above | 20% | 13% |
| Number of European languages you speak | None | 13% | 11% |
| | One | 20% | 12% |
| | More than one | 28% | 16% ^{xiii} |

ⁱ Males significantly higher than females

ⁱⁱ Other gender significantly higher than males and females

ⁱⁱⁱ 16-19 years significantly higher than 26-30 years

^{iv} 16-19 years and 20-25 years significantly higher than 26-30 years

^v Still studying significantly higher than those that ended education aged 16-19 or 20+

^{vi} Self-employed significantly higher than employee, manual worker, or not working

^{vii} Rural area and large town/city both significantly higher than small/medium-sized town

^{viii} Those whose mother has no formal education/did not complete primary school significantly higher than those whose mother completed secondary school or technical or vocational training

^{ix} Those whose mother completed primary school significantly higher than those whose mother completed technical or vocational training

^x Those whose mother completed college or university level education significantly higher than those whose mother completed secondary school or technical or vocational training

^{xi} Those whose father completed college or university level education significantly higher than those whose father completed primary school, secondary school, or technical or vocational training

^{xii} "Can afford to buy whatever we need for a good standard of living" significantly higher than "Can afford to buy some more expensive things but not as expensive as a car or new house for example"

^{xiii} More than one EU language significantly higher than none or one

Source: Flash Eurobarometer Youth Survey Report, 2021

2.8 Youth organisation participation in the EU27 classified by EU Member State

Over one fifth (23%) of 16-30-year-olds in Ireland reported that they had joined a youth organisation at some point in their lives. This compares to 14% across the EU27 (Table 7). Ireland ranked second in the EU27 in the percentage of 16-30-year-olds who reported that they had ever joined a youth organisation in 2021. Other high-ranking countries included Malta (34%), Cyprus (22%) and Romania (22%). The lowest-ranking countries included Finland (9%) and Czechia (9%).



Table 7. Percentage of 16-30-year-olds who have ever joined a youth organisation, classified by EU Member State, EU27 (2021)

| Percentage of respondents who answered yes to the following question: Have you ever joined a youth organisation? | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Malta | 34% |
| Ireland | 23% |
| Cyprus | 22% |
| Romania | 22% |
| Bulgaria | 21% |
| Luxembourg | 20% |
| Slovenia | 20% |
| Estonia | 20% |
| Lithuania | 19% |
| Latvia | 19% |
| Portugal | 18% |
| Croatia | 18% |
| Sweden | 17% |
| Belgium | 17% |
| Italy | 17% |
| Austria | 15% |
| EU27 | 14% |
| Poland | 14% |
| Spain | 14% |
| Germany | 14% |
| Denmark | 13% |
| Netherlands | 12% |
| Hungary | 12% |
| Slovakia | 12% |
| Greece | 11% |
| France | 11% |
| Finland | 9% |
| Czechia | 9% |

Source: Flash Eurobarometer Youth Survey Report, 2021
Table is ordered by highest to lowest yes values

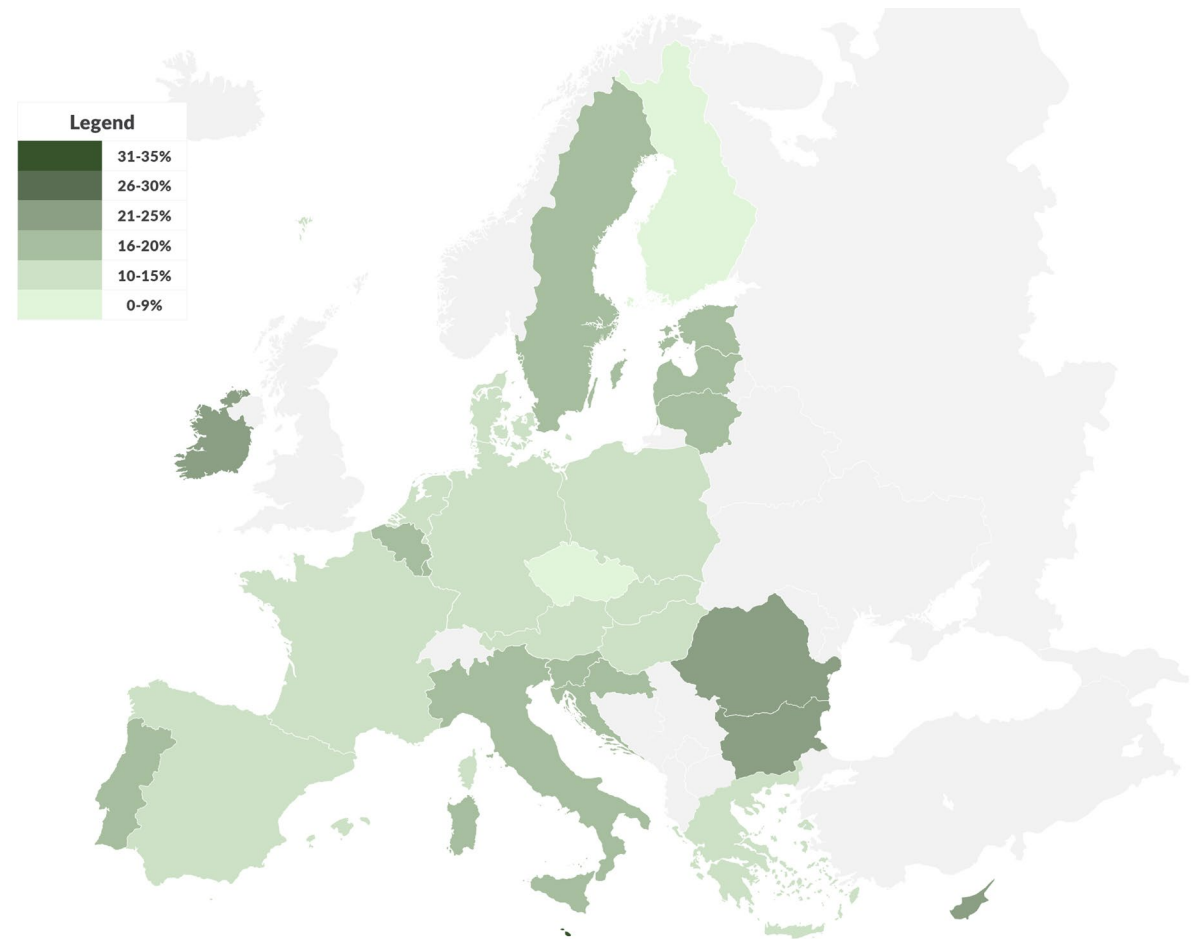


Figure 3. Percentage of 'yes' responses to the question "Have you ever joined a youth organisation?" across the EU (2021)



2.9 Youth organisation participation in the EU27 classified by gender

Participation in youth organisations in Ireland was slightly higher for males (24%) than females (21%) in 2021. In Malta, 38% of male respondents reported that they had ever joined a youth organisation, compared to 30% of female respondents. The largest gaps between male and female responses were found in results from Lithuania (14% male; 26% female) and Latvia (13% male; 25% female), with about 12 percentage points more female participation in youth organisations than male participation. Conversely, there was no gap between males and females in Czechia, with both 9% of male and 9% of female respondents reporting that they had ever joined a youth organisation (Table 8).

Table 8. Percentage of 16-30-year-olds who have ever joined a youth organisation, classified by gender, EU27 (2021)

| Country | Male | Female | Total |
|------------|------|--------|-------|
| Malta | 38% | 30% | 34% |
| Ireland | 24% | 21% | 23% |
| Cyprus | 23% | 22% | 22% |
| Romania | 19% | 25% | 22% |
| Bulgaria | 20% | 22% | 21% |
| Luxembourg | 18% | 22% | 20% |
| Slovenia | 20% | 19% | 20% |
| Estonia | 17% | 22% | 20% |
| Lithuania | 14% | 26% | 19% |
| Latvia | 13% | 25% | 19% |
| Portugal | 17% | 19% | 18% |
| Croatia | 16% | 19% | 18% |
| Sweden | 18% | 16% | 17% |
| Belgium | 21% | 14% | 17% |
| Italy | 18% | 16% | 17% |
| Austria | 14% | 17% | 15% |
| EU27 | 15% | 14% | 14% |
| Poland | 14% | 14% | 14% |
| Spain | 14% | 14% | 14% |
| Germany | 14% | 13% | 14% |



| Country | Male | Female | Total |
|-------------|------|--------|-------|
| Denmark | 17% | 9% | 13% |
| Netherlands | 13% | 11% | 12% |
| Hungary | 12% | 12% | 12% |
| Slovakia | 14% | 9% | 12% |
| Greece | 12% | 11% | 11% |
| France | 13% | 9% | 11% |
| Finland | 10% | 8% | 9% |
| Czechia | 9% | 9% | 9% |

Source: Flash Eurobarometer Youth Survey Report, 2021

Table is ordered by total highest to lowest yes values

2.10 Youth organisation participation in the EU28 classified by EU Member State and gender

In the 2017 Flash Eurobarometer survey, respondents were asked if, in the last 12 months, they had participated in any activities of the following organisations: “a youth club, leisure-time club or any kind of youth organisation”. The survey covers the population of EU citizens who are residents in one of the 28 Member States of the EU and between 15 and 30 years of age.

In 2017, one quarter (25%) of Irish respondents reported that they had been active in a youth club, leisure-time club or any kind of youth organisation at least once in the preceding 12 months, versus the EU28 average of 20% of respondents (Table 9; Figure 4). Ireland ranked third in the EU28 in the percentage of 15-30-year-olds who reported that they had been active in a youth organisation at least once in the last year. Other high-ranking countries included Belgium (30%), Italy (27%) and Germany (23%). The lowest-ranking countries included Lithuania (8%), Malta (7%), and Slovakia (5%).

Participation in youth organisations in Ireland was the same for males (25%) and females (25%). In Belgium, 33% of male respondents reported that they had been active in a youth organisation compared to 28% of female respondents. In Slovakia, 4% of males versus 7% of females reported that they had been active in a youth club, leisure-time club or any kind of youth organisation at least once in the preceding 12 months (Table 9).



Table 9. Percentage of 15-30-year-olds who took part in a youth organisation in the last 12 months, classified by EU Member State and gender, EU28 (2017)

| Country | Male | Female | Total |
|----------------|------|--------|-------|
| Belgium | 33% | 28% | 30% |
| Italy | 25% | 30% | 27% |
| Ireland | 25% | 25% | 25% |
| Germany | 24% | 21% | 23% |
| Luxembourg | 27% | 19% | 23% |
| Slovenia | 21% | 22% | 21% |
| EU28 | 21% | 18% | 20% |
| France | 25% | 15% | 20% |
| United Kingdom | 22% | 17% | 20% |
| Austria | 19% | 20% | 19% |
| Spain | 23% | 14% | 19% |
| Portugal | 18% | 20% | 19% |
| Czechia | 19% | 15% | 17% |
| Romania | 18% | 16% | 17% |
| Latvia | 14% | 18% | 16% |
| Netherlands | 16% | 17% | 16% |
| Sweden | 23% | 10% | 16% |
| Hungary | 18% | 12% | 15% |
| Bulgaria | 12% | 17% | 14% |
| Estonia | 11% | 17% | 14% |
| Greece | 13% | 15% | 14% |
| Poland | 16% | 12% | 14% |
| Denmark | 12% | 14% | 13% |
| Finland | 11% | 15% | 13% |
| Croatia | 8% | 10% | 9% |
| Cyprus | 6% | 11% | 8% |
| Lithuania | 5% | 12% | 8% |
| Malta | 11% | 2% | 7% |
| Slovakia | 4% | 7% | 5% |

Source: Flash Eurobarometer 455 European Youth Report, 2017

Table is ordered by highest to lowest total values



| Country | Total |
|----------------|-------|
| EU28 | 20% |
| Austria | 19% |
| Belgium | 30% |
| Bulgaria | 14% |
| Croatia | 9% |
| Cyprus | 8% |
| Czechia | 17% |
| Denmark | 13% |
| Estonia | 14% |
| Finland | 13% |
| France | 20% |
| Germany | 23% |
| Greece | 14% |
| Hungary | 15% |
| Ireland | 25% |
| Italy | 27% |
| Latvia | 16% |
| Lithuania | 8% |
| Luxembourg | 23% |
| Malta | 7% |
| Netherlands | 16% |
| Poland | 14% |
| Portugal | 19% |
| Romania | 17% |
| Slovakia | 5% |
| Slovenia | 21% |
| Spain | 19% |
| Sweden | 16% |
| United Kingdom | 20% |

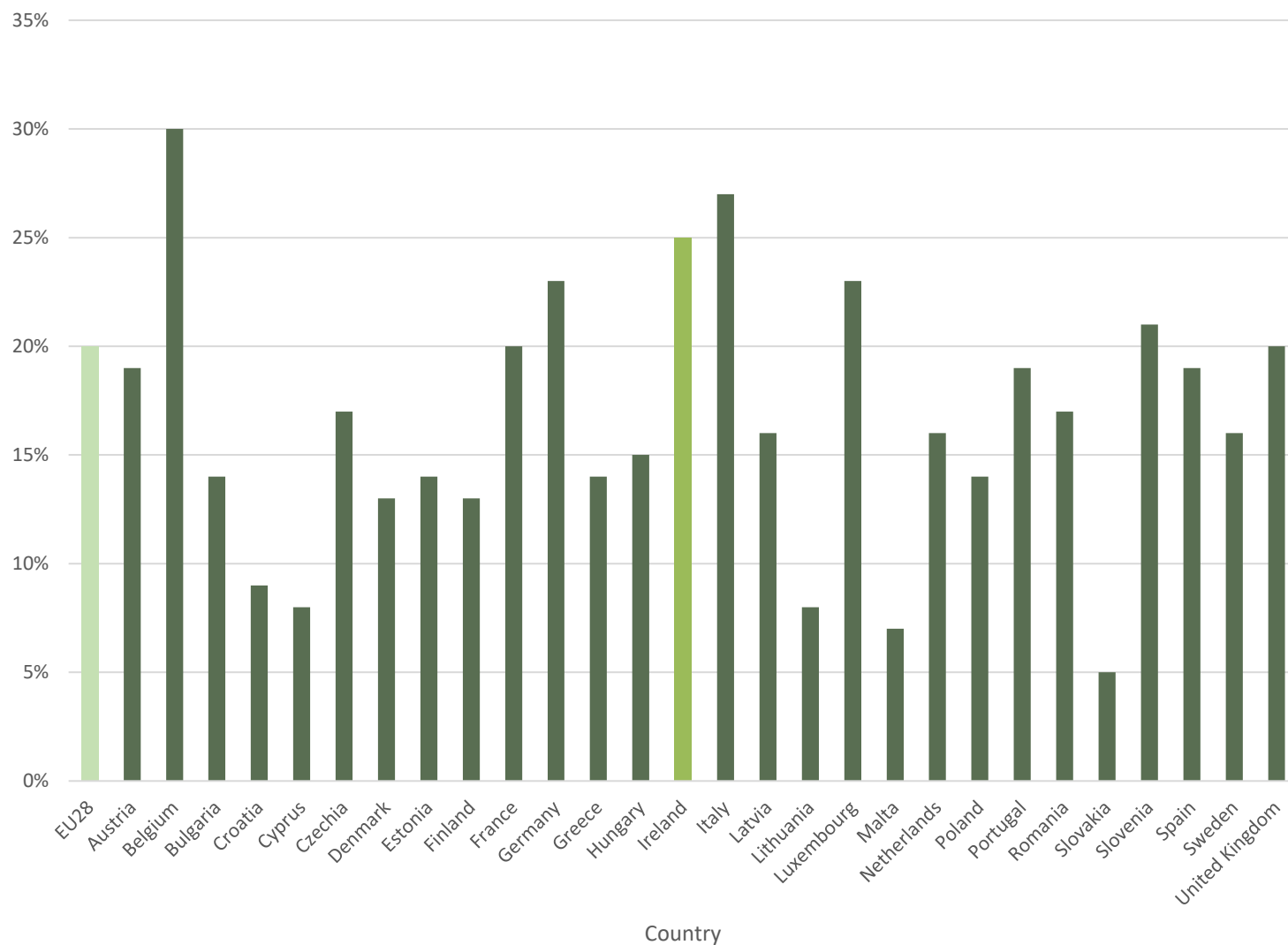


Figure 4. Percentage of 15-30-year-olds who took part in a youth organisation in the last 12 months, classified by EU Member State, EU28 (2017).



3. Participation in youth organisations by young people in the Growing Up in Ireland study at ages 13, 17/18 and 20 years

The data in this section come from Growing Up in Ireland (GUI) surveys conducted in 2011/12, 2015/16 and 2018/19 on one survey group of young people known as “Cohort '98” (who were first recruited into the GUI study when they were 9 years old in 2007).¹¹ The results of these surveys are described in the GUI reports for Cohort '98 at ages 13 years old,¹² 17/18 years old,¹³ and 20 years old.¹⁴ The GUI survey includes questions in the activities section on whether respondents take part in group activities such as Guides or Scouts, youth clubs, community or church groups.¹⁵ This question was asked to Cohort '98 at ages 13, 17/18 and 20 years with slightly different wordings, as outlined below.

In 2011/12, the GUI study collected data on participation in youth organisations from 13-year-olds.¹⁶ The youth group participation survey question included participation in groups such as Guides or Scouts, youth clubs, community or church groups. In the 13-year-old questionnaire, Q31 asks survey respondents how often they do each of the following activities. Respondents were given five activity options and could select all that applied, including: “take part in clubs or groups such as Guides or Scouts, youth club, community or church groups”.

In 2015/16, the GUI study collected data on participation in youth organisations from 17/18-year-olds.¹⁷ The youth group participation survey question was specific to

¹¹ This group of young people was first surveyed at age 9 years in 2007. The first wave of GUI from Cohort '98 comprised 8,568 9-year-olds.

¹² Williams, J., Thornton, M., Morgan, M., Quail, A., Smyth, E., Murphy, D., & O'Mahony, D. (2018) *Growing Up in Ireland: The Lives of 13-year-olds*. Available at: <https://www.growingup.ie/pubs/Lives-of-13-Year-olds-report.pdf>

¹³ McNamara, E., Murphy, D., Murray, A., Smyth, E., & Watson, D. (2020) *Growing Up in Ireland: The Lives of 17/18-year-olds*. Available at: <https://www.growingup.ie/pubs/GUI-lives-of-17-18-year-olds-web-ready.pdf>

¹⁴ O'Mahony, D., McNamara, E., McClintock, R., Murray, A., Smyth, E., & Watson, D. (2021) *Growing Up in Ireland: The Lives of 20-year-olds: Making the transition to adulthood*. Available at: <https://www.growingup.ie/pubs/The-Lives-of-20-Year-Olds.pdf>

¹⁵ Note that the question on participation in group activities such as Guides or Scouts, youth clubs, community or church groups is specific to this type of activity. There are other questions in the survey on participation in other activities including sports clubs; art, drama, dance or music clubs; and school/student councils.

¹⁶ This data was collected in the second wave of GUI from Cohort '98, comprising 7,400 13-year-olds who were previously interviewed through the study at age 9.

¹⁷ This data was collected in the third wave of GUI from Cohort '98, comprising 6,039 17/18-year-olds who were previously interviewed through the study at ages 9 and 13.



youth club participation. In the 17/18-year-old questionnaire, question J1 asks survey respondents if they have taken part in any of the following activities in the past year. Respondents were given nine options and could select all that applied, including: “youth clubs where you can hang out with other people”.

In 2018/19, the GUI study collected data on participation in youth organisations from 20-year-olds.¹⁸ The survey question included participation in groups such as the Scouts, Guides and youth clubs. In the 20-year-old questionnaire, question A1 asks survey respondents which of these activities they do regularly for fun or to relax. Respondents had 15 options and could select all that applied, including: “other organised group activity such as scouts, guides, youth club”.

Due to the difference in the wording of survey questions between the three years of surveys, the results (*i.e.*, the quantified values) between years are not directly comparable. However, the patterns in the results from each year can be compared. In the following tables, results are presented together, with the caveat that only the patterns in the results and not the values can be used for comparison between years.

3.1 Youth club participation based on gender

Participation in youth clubs was the same for males and females at age 17 but varied somewhat by gender at ages 13 and 20. More 13-year-old females (36%) participated in youth clubs compared to males (32%), with slightly more participation in youth clubs by 20-year-old males (10%) compared to females (9%; Table 10).

Table 10. Percentage of GUI survey respondents who reported that they had participated in a youth group, by gender

| Age | Gender | | Total |
|-------|--------|--------|-------|
| | Male | Female | |
| 13 | 32% | 36% | 34% |
| 17/18 | 14% | 14% | 14% |
| 20 | 10% | 9% | 10% |

Source: Growing Up in Ireland (GUI) data from surveys conducted in 2011/12, 2015/16 and 2018/19

¹⁸ This data was collected in the fourth wave of GUI from Cohort '98, comprising 5,190 20-year-olds who were previously interviewed through the study at ages 9, 13 and 17/18 years.



3.2 Youth club participation based on social class

Both higher percentages of 13-year-olds (40%) and 17/18-year-olds (18%) in the family social class category “no class assigned/never worked” reported that they participated in youth groups compared to other social class categories – “professional/managerial”, “other non-manual/skilled manual”, and “semi-skilled/unskilled manual” (Table 11). There was less variation at age 20, where 10% of GUI survey respondents reported participation in youth clubs in each of the three family social class categories of “professional/managerial”, “semi-skilled/unskilled manual”, and “no class assigned/never worked”, along with 8% of respondents in the “other non-manual/skilled manual” social class category.

Table 11. Percentage of GUI survey respondents who reported that they had participated in a youth group, by social class

| Age | Social Class | | | | Total |
|-------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------|
| | Professional/ Managerial | Other non-manual/Skilled manual | Semi-skilled/ Unskilled manual | No class assigned/ Never worked | |
| 13 | 32% | 35% | 34% | 40% | 34% |
| 17/18 | 10% | 16% | 15% | 18% | 14% |
| 20 | 10% | 8% | 10% | 10% | 10% |

Source: Growing Up in Ireland (GUI) data from surveys conducted in 2011/12, 2015/16 and 2018/19

3.3 Youth club participation based on household income quintile

Participation in youth clubs varied by household income (measured using equivalised household annual income quintiles). Participation in clubs or groups such as Guides or Scouts, youth clubs, and community groups, tended to be lower in the highest income quintiles and higher in the lowest income quintiles. For example, for each of the three survey years/ages, those in the lowest household annual income quintile had higher levels of participation in youth clubs than those in the highest household annual income quintile (Table 12).



Table 12. Percentage of GUI survey respondents who reported that they had participated in a youth group, by household income quintile

| Equivalised Household Annual Income Quintiles | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------|-----|-----|-----|---------|-------|
| Age | Lowest | 2nd | 3rd | 4th | Highest | Total |
| 13 | 37% | 36% | 37% | 32% | 29% | 34% |
| 17/18 | 21% | 15% | 14% | 10% | 11% | 14% |
| 20 | 10% | 11% | 10% | 8% | 8% | 9% |

Source: Growing Up in Ireland (GUI) data from surveys conducted in 2011/12, 2015/16 and 2018/19

3.4 Youth club participation based on family structure

The percentage of survey respondents participating in youth clubs was similar for respondents with different family structures at age 13, but varied somewhat for respondents at ages 17/18 and 20 years (Table 13). For example, more 17/18-year-old survey respondents in one-parent families with three or more children (21%) participated in youth groups compared to 17/18-year-old survey respondents in one-parent families with one or two children (17%), or in two-parent families with three or more children (14%) or one or two children (13%).

Table 13. Percentage of GUI survey respondents who reported that they had participated in a youth group, by family structure

| Family Structure (Household Type) | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|-------|
| Age | One-Parent 1 or 2 children | One-Parent 3+ children | Two-Parent 1 or 2 children | Two-Parent 3+ children | Total |
| 13 | 35% | 33% | 33% | 35% | 34% |
| 17/18 | 17% | 21% | 13% | 14% | 14% |
| 20 | 10% | 16% | 9% | 13% | 10% |

Source: Growing Up in Ireland (GUI) data from surveys conducted in 2011/12, 2015/16 and 2018/19

*Family Structure is represented by household type at each age, respectively

3.5 Youth club participation based on region classification

At age 13, more of the GUI survey respondents living in rural areas reported that they had participated in a youth club (39%) when compared to survey respondents living in urban areas (28%). However, this pattern changed at age 17/18, with more of the GUI survey respondents living in urban areas reporting that they had participated in a



youth club (15%) when compared to survey respondents living in rural areas (13%; Table 14).

Table 14. Percentage of GUI survey respondents who reported that they had participated in a youth group, by region classification

| Region Classification | | | |
|-----------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Age | Urban | Rural | Total |
| 13 | 28% | 39% | 34% |
| 17/18 | 15% | 13% | 14% |
| 20 | 10% | 9% | 10% |

Source: Growing Up in Ireland (GUI) data from surveys conducted in 2011/12, 2015/16 and 2018/19

3.6 Youth club participation based on housing tenure

At ages 13, 17/18 and 20 years, young people’s participation in youth clubs was greater for those living in housing categorised as rented via local authority/housing body/private *versus* those living in housing categorised as owned outright/mortgage/tenant purchase. For example, at age 17/18, 20% of survey respondents living in rented housing reported that they participated in a youth club compared to 13% of survey respondents living in owned housing (Table 15). Note that housing tenancy at Wave 4 (20 years of age) was analysed using Wave 3 tenancy status of parents.

Table 15. Percentage of GUI survey respondents who reported that they had participated in a youth group, by housing tenure

| Housing Tenure | | | |
|----------------|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Age | Owned outright/ mortgage/tenant purchase | Rented via Local Authority/Housing body/Private | Total |
| 13 | 34% | 37% | 34% |
| 17/18 | 13% | 20% | 14% |
| 20* | 9% | 11% | 9% |

Source: Growing Up in Ireland (GUI) data from surveys conducted in 2011/12, 2015/16 and 2018/19

*Note that this is the parent's/parents' Wave 3 tenancy status as opposed to the 20-year-old's tenancy status



3.7 Youth club participation based on migrant background

To assign migrant background to GUI survey participants, country of birth of the primary and secondary caregivers at Wave 1 was used. If either of the caregivers reported a country of birth outside of Ireland, the child was assigned a migrant background.

At ages 13, 17/18 and 20 years, the percentage of survey respondents who reported that they had participated in a youth group was very similar for those assigned a migrant background and those not assigned a migrant background (Table 16).

Table 16. Percentage of GUI survey respondents who reported that they had participated in a youth group, by migrant background

| Age | Migrant | | Total |
|-------|---------|-----|-------|
| | No | Yes | |
| 13 | 34% | 34% | 34% |
| 17/18 | 14% | 14% | 14% |
| 20 | 9% | 10% | 10% |

Source: Growing Up in Ireland (GUI) data from surveys conducted in 2011/12, 2015/16 and 2018/19

3.8 Youth club participation based on disability

Disability status was assigned using a variable capturing Parent/Young Adult self-report of a chronic condition/disability at each wave. At age 13, young people's participation in youth clubs was the same (34%) whether or not it was reported that they had a disability. However, this changed with age. For 17/18-year-olds and 20-year-olds, survey respondents who reported that they had no disability participated in youth clubs more (17% and 13%, respectively) than survey respondents who reported that they had a disability (13% and 9%, respectively).

Table 17. Percentage of GUI survey respondents who reported that they had participated in a youth group, by disability

| Age | Disability | | Total |
|-------|------------|-----|-------|
| | No | Yes | |
| 13 | 34% | 34% | 34% |
| 17/18 | 17% | 13% | 14% |
| 20 | 13% | 9% | 10% |

Source: Growing Up in Ireland (GUI) data from surveys conducted in 2011/12, 2015/16 and 2018/19



4. Summary

Based on European survey results over the last decade (2011-2021), participation in youth organisations by 15-30-year-olds in Ireland has been relatively high compared to European averages, with Ireland being one of the top three countries for young people's participation in youth organisations. For example, in 2021, 23% of 16-30-year-old survey respondents in Ireland reported having ever joined a youth organisation, compared to 14% in the EU27 as a whole, with Ireland's figure coming second of the EU Member States.

In Ireland, males and females had similar rates of participation in youth organisations, with participation slightly higher for males than females in 2021, the most recent Eurobarometer survey year. Younger people (15-19-year-olds) and those still studying had higher percentages of participation in youth organisations than those who were older (20-30-year-olds) or whose education had ceased. Generally, the percentage of 15-30-year-olds in Ireland who participated in a youth organisation was highest for respondents living in small/mid-size towns when compared to those living in rural villages or large towns. Where the household financial situation was categorised as "not enough money for basic bills", a higher percentage of respondents reported that they had ever joined a youth organisation compared to those in other household financial situations.

In the EU27 as a whole, the percentage of respondents who were still studying who had ever joined a youth organisation was also significantly higher than those that had ceased their education. Furthermore, a higher percentage of self-employed respondents reported that they had ever joined a youth organisation compared to other groups of respondents – employee, manual worker, or not working. The percentage of 16-30-year-olds who had ever joined a youth organisation was also significantly higher among respondents who speak more than one European language than among those who speak only one or none.

In the Growing Up in Ireland longitudinal study on the same group of young people ("Cohort '98") in Ireland across three survey years at ages 13, 17/18 and 20 years, there was a similar pattern to the European survey results in terms of gender, with



males and females reporting similar levels of participation in youth clubs among 17/18-year-olds and 20-year-olds.

Higher percentages of 13-year-olds and 17/18-year-olds in the family social class category “no class assigned/never worked” reported that they participated in youth groups compared to other social class categories. Generally, children from households with lower annual incomes reported more participation in youth clubs than children from households with higher annual incomes. At all three GUI study ages (13, 17/18 and 20 years), young people’s participation in youth clubs was greater for those living in rented housing than those living in owned housing. While participation in youth clubs was the same for 13-year-olds whether or not they had a disability, more 17/18-year-olds and 20-year-olds with no disability participated in youth clubs compared to those with a disability.

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Background Notes

This is the ninth publication in the Statistical Spotlight series. A Statistical Spotlight is a short publication focused on a specific topic, gathering together available statistical data and highlighting trends or patterns in the data. These are intended to be short, statistics-based publications bringing together available information for interested users. The publications include some commentary detailing (where relevant) trends and comparisons as appropriate (e.g. comparisons between gender, region, age group, etc.).

The primary purpose is to gather together the most relevant data, highlight those most recent, and draw attention to the most evident features or trends. Therefore, although it could serve as the basis for further research, none of the information contained therein should in and of itself be used to ascribe cause and effect between any two variables. In any case, much of the data considered in this Spotlight is insufficiently detailed to give anything other than a high-level snapshot of young people's participation in youth organisations in Ireland and the EU.



Sources

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<https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/873>

Flash Eurobarometer 375 European Youth Report (Fieldwork: April 2013; Publication: May 2013)

<https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/1119>

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<https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2163>

Flash Eurobarometer European Parliament Youth Survey Report (Fieldwork: June 2021; Publication: September 2021)

<https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2574>

Growing Up in Ireland (GUI) The Lives of 13-year-olds Report

<https://www.growingup.ie/pubs/Lives-of-13-Year-olds-report.pdf>

Growing Up in Ireland (GUI) The Lives of 17/18-year-olds Report

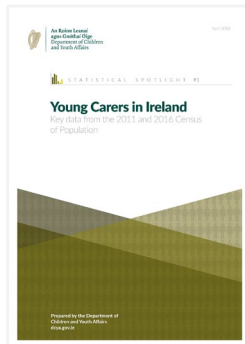
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Growing Up in Ireland (GUI) The Lives of 20-year-olds Report

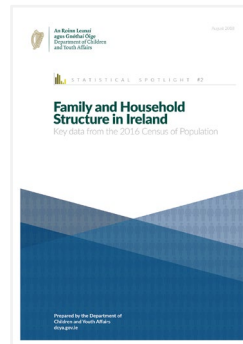
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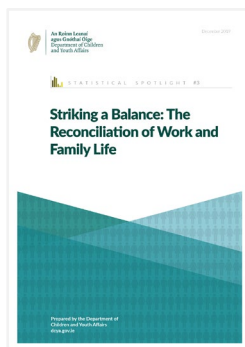
Previous Statistical Spotlights in the series



Statistical Spotlight #1
Young Carers in Ireland
Publication Date
April 2018



Statistical Spotlight #2
Family and Household Structure in Ireland
Publication Date
August 2018



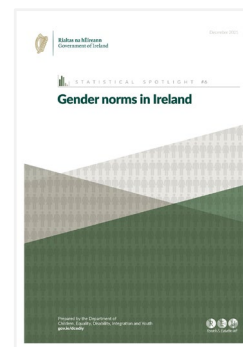
Statistical Spotlight #3
Striking a Balance: The Reconciliation of Work and Family Life
Publication Date
December 2019



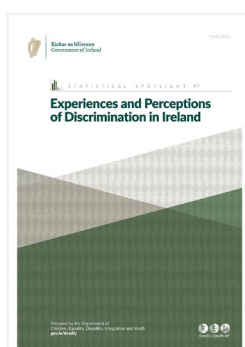
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May 2021



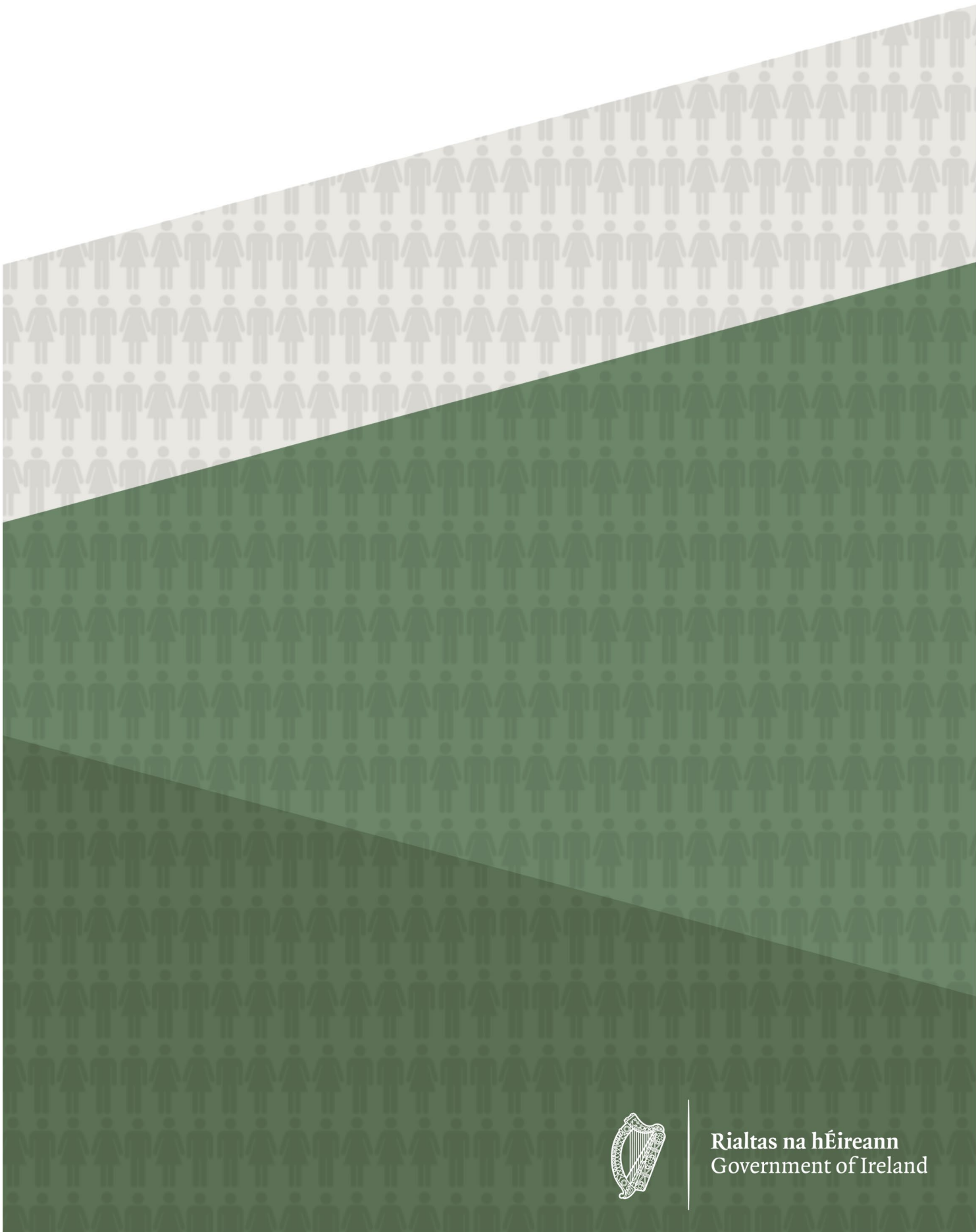
Statistical Spotlight #6
Gender Norms in Ireland
Publication Date
December 2021



Statistical Spotlight #7
Experiences and Perceptions of Discrimination in Ireland
Publication Date
March 2022



Statistical Spotlight #8
The First Five Years of Life in Ireland
Publication Date
December 2022



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