**Participation in Sports**

The Continuous Household Survey (CHS)[[1]](#footnote-1) is designed to provide a regular source of information on a variety of issues relevant to Northern Ireland including participation in sports. The findings of the survey show that participation in sport by adults in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough was similar to that for Northern Ireland overall most years. After reaching a high of 61% participation in 2019/20, in 2021/22, participation in sport by adults in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough fell to just 40% which was 5 percentage points below the Northern Ireland average. By 2023/24, participation had increased to 57% in the Borough which is six percentage points above the Northern Ireland average of 51%. In 2023/24 in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough, 50% of respondents participated in sport (excludes walking) in the previous 4 weeks compared to 44% in Northern Ireland overall.

| Participated in sport | Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon | Northern Ireland |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 2017/18 | 54% | 54% |
| 2018/19 | 55% | 56% |
| 2019/20 | 61% | 56% |
| 2021/22 | 40% | 45% |
| 2022/23 | 47% | 48% |
| 2023/24 | 57% | 51% |

*Table 1: Participation in sport by adults in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough and Northern Ireland 2017/18 – 2023-24[[2]](#footnote-2). Source: Continuous Household Survey, Department for Communities.*

*Figure 1: Participation in sport by adults in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough and Northern Ireland 2017/18 – 2023/24. Source: Continuous Household Survey, Department for Communities.*

In the Borough and Northern Ireland overall the proportion of respondents who normally participate in sport on at least one day per week has fallen slightly since 2019/20[[3]](#footnote-3). In Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon, 54% of respondents stated that they normally participate in sport on at least one day per week compared to 48% in Northern Ireland overall.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Normally participates in sport on at least one day per week | Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon | Northern Ireland |
| 2017/18 | 48% | 49% |
| 2018/19 | 50% | 51% |
| 2019/20 | 56% | 52% |
| 2023/24 | 54% | 48% |

*Table 2: Participation in sport by adults in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough and Northern Ireland 2017/18 – 2023-24[[4]](#footnote-4). Source: Continuous Household Survey, Department for Communities.*

*Figure 2: Participation in sport by adults in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough and Northern Ireland 2017/18 – 2023/24. Source: Continuous Household Survey, Department for Communities.*

The Northern Ireland Young Life and Times survey (YLT)[[5]](#footnote-5) gives young people aged 16 the chance to give their views and experience on a number of topics.

In 2023 the YLT asked how many times during a normal week would respondents spend at least 60 minutes during a day playing sports or doing some physical activity[[6]](#footnote-6). The target set by the Public Health Agency and Department of Health for young people under 18 years of age is 60 minutes every day. Results from the YLT show that just 10% of 16-year-olds living in the Borough at least meet this target. In Northern Ireland, just 8% meet the target or more while in all other LGD’s the average is 7%. In 2016, the last time when the sports module was included in the questionnaire, the equivalent figure was 6% for the Borough and 8% for Northern Ireland overall so, while the NI position appears to be unchanged, more children in the Borough appear to be meeting the target.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon | Northern Ireland | All other LGD’s |
| Never | 6% | 8% | 8% |
| Once a week | 17% | 19% | 20% |
| 2 – 3 times a week | 41% | 36% | 35% |
| 4 – 6 times a week | 26% | 29% | 29% |
| 7 times a week | 9% | 6% | 5% |
| More often | 1% | 2% | 2% |

*Table 3: Proportion of YLT (16-year-old) respondents who during a* ***normal week would you spend at least 60 minutes during a day playing sports or doing some physical activity*** *in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough and Northern Ireland (and including an average for all other LGDs), 2023****. Source: Youth Life and Times (YLT) Survey, 2023. Results produced by QUB YLT team.***

*Figure 3: Proportion of YLT (16-year-old) respondents who during a* ***normal week would you spend at least 60 minutes during a day playing sports or doing some physical activity*** *in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough and Northern Ireland (and including an average for all other LGDs), 2023****. Source: Youth Life and Times (YLT) Survey, 2023.***

The reasons given for not taking part in sport or physical activity more often by respondents in the Borough were at similar levels to Northern Ireland respondents overall. However, in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon, poor health and disability was identified by 11% of respondents (compared to 7% in 2016) as a reason for not taking part in physical activity more often, compared to 8% in Northern Ireland. The costs involved were also a bigger barrier for 16-year-olds in the Borough compared to Northern Ireland overall with 27% of respondents selecting this as a reason. Almost a third of respondents in the Borough said that not having anyone to go with was one of the reasons why they didn’t participate in sport and physical activity more often while not having enough time was selected by 56% of respondents in the Borough and 57% in Northern Ireland overall as the reason for not participating in sports and physical activity more often.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon | Northern Ireland | All other LGD’s |
| Not enough time | 56% | 57% | 57% |
| Poor health or disability | 11% | 8% | 8% |
| I don’t have anyone I can go with | 31% | 27% | 27% |
| Difficulty in getting there/lack of transport | 25% | 23% | 22% |
| The costs involved | 27% | 20% | 19% |
| I don’t know where I can do the activities I want to do | 22% | 18% | 17% |
| Other | 11% | 15% | 15% |

*Table 4: Reasons preventing YLT (16-year-old) respondents from taking part in sport and physical activity more often in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough and Northern Ireland (and including an average for all other LGDs), 2023****. Source: Youth Life and Times (YLT) Survey, 2023.***

*Figure 3: Reasons preventing YLT (16-year-old) respondents from taking part in sport and physical activity more often in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough and Northern Ireland (and including an average for all other LGDs), 2023****. Source: Youth Life and Times (YLT) Survey, 2023.***

Further information on participation in sports can be found via the following links:

<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/topics/statistics-and-research/sport-museums-and-libraries-statistics>

[YLT About | ARK - Access Research Knowledge](https://www.ark.ac.uk/ARK/ylt/about)

1. Continuous Household Survey - <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/central-survey-unit/continuous-household-survey> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Due to the reduced sample size in 2020/21, no information for the 11 local government districts were produced for this year. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. 2023/24 was the first time this question was asked since 2019/20. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Due to the reduction in the size of the questionnaire the days per week question was not included for a couple of years. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Young Life and Times Survey (ARK) - <https://www.ark.ac.uk/ylt/> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. This is the first time a sport module was included in the questionnaire since 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)