



THE GIRLS IN GREEN LEGACY: SEEING TELEVISED PROFESSIONAL SPORT PROVIDES A REAL INCENTIVE TO TAKE IT UP, BUT ACCESS TO LOCAL CLUBS IS VITAL

- Almost one in four (24%) parents in Ireland say the more sport is shown on TV, the more likely it is that their children will take up sport
- 15% of parents in Ireland said their child started a team sport after going to see it live and 15% said their child was inspired by a sporting role model
- More than seven in ten (72%) adults in Ireland have a local sports club within 30 minutes of their home and encouragingly, only 6% don't know where their local club is

More than 2.4m people watched RTÉ television's coverage of the Women's Football World Cup in Australia and New Zealand last summer¹. In that tournament, the Republic of Ireland's game against Canada was the most watched women's team sport event in Irish TV history with an average of 551,000 viewers.

New research from Royal London, the founding partner of the first British and Irish Lions Women's Rugby Tour, shows the wider significance of viewing figures like these. Almost one in four (24%) of parents surveyed across Ireland say the more sport is shown on TV, the more likely their children are to take it up. Furthermore, 15% of parents in Ireland say their child took up a team sport after seeing it live professionally, and 15% say their child got into team sports as they were inspired watching a sporting role model on TV. However, the ability to play alongside their friends is also a big draw for children when it comes to sport, with more than one in three (35%) of the parents in Ireland surveyed citing the opportunity to play alongside their friends as the reason their children became interested in sport.

Over a fifth (23%) of parents in Ireland say their children have been involved in team sports due to having access to a local club. When looking at how realistic this is for children across Ireland, more than seven in ten (72%) of adults have a sports club within half an hour of their home. However, one in five (22%) have to travel longer than 30 minutes, while 6% don't know where their local sports club is. Interestingly, while the numbers were low overall, of the women surveyed, they were seven times as likely as men not to know the location of their local sports club (7pc of women versus 1pc of men).

¹ See [FIFA WOMEN'S WORLD CUP COVERAGE ON RTÉ BREAKS NEW GROUND WITH AUDIENCES](#)

When reflecting on their own decision to take up team sports, 44% of adults in Ireland did so to play with friends and three in ten (30%) said it was a fun way to keep fit that wasn't solo. A quarter (25%) were encouraged to play by a teacher or coach.

Shaunagh Brown, professional rugby player for England and Harlequins, says: *“This shows just how many people want to try sports but don't feel able to. We know this affects women in particular. This Women's Lions tour, the first of its kind, will allow more people to witness women playing rugby at a high level. I was interested, but not surprised, that the research showed more adults would consider taking up a team sport if they saw people who looked and sounded like them playing it. To believe you can do it, you have to see someone like you living, breathing and enjoying it. And, even if you don't end up following a professional path with sport, the benefits you will feel from playing as part of a team in terms of greater confidence, resilience and improved social skills will be with you for the rest of your life.”*

Susie Logan, chief marketing officer at Royal London says: *“At present, through either a lack of airtime or wider exposure, some women's sports have not yet been visible enough to inspire future generations.*

“The blend of seeing it played well on TV and taking it up with friends is key. Team sports create a community and can become an important part of a child's development. We need to keep striving towards equality at all levels, whether that be what's televised or at grassroots. Both are essential to create foundations for the future and give every child the inspiration and access they need to thrive playing team sport. This is why we're proud to partner with the first British and Irish Lions Women's Rugby Tour.

Royal London has been announced as Founding Partner of the first ever Lions Women's team. The partnership will see Royal London invest in player development in each of The British & Irish Lions constituent Unions through the delivery of a special elite players' Pathways Funding grant. The grants will support the elite women's player and coach pathways in Scotland, Wales, Ireland, and England, to help Unions develop more players and coaches capable of being selected for the inaugural Lions Women's Tour. In addition, Royal London will also be investing in women's and girls' grassroots rugby across the UK and Ireland in the run-up to the Tour.

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Methodology

Research conducted with Censuswide among 3,008 UK and Ireland based adults (aged 18+). There was minimum quota of 750 adults in each nation. The fieldwork was carried out between 17/11/2023 - 23/11/2023. Censuswide abides by and employ members of the Market Research Society which is based on the ESOMAR principles.

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About Royal London Ireland

Royal London Ireland has a history of protecting its policyholders and their families for almost 200 years in Ireland, and it is committed to continue to do so for a long time to come. Our businesses heritage in Ireland is nearly 200 years. The Caledonian Insurance Company's first office opened on Dame Street, Dublin 2 in 1824. Royal London Ireland is owned by The Royal London Mutual Insurance Society Limited – the largest mutual life insurance, pensions, and investment company in the UK, and in the top 25 mutuals globally, with assets under management of €178 billion, 8.6 million policies in force and 4,100 employees. Figures quoted are as of 30 June 2023. Royal London Ireland's office is based at 47-49 St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2.