

# THE IRISH TIMES

## Irish are more likely to view women's sports than people in UK

New survey also finds that 'lack of interest' is main reason for not engaging with female sports

Tue, Mar 6, 2018, [Aine McMahon](#)

Irish people are more than twice as likely to attend or watch a women's sports event as people in the UK, according to a new survey. More than one-third (36 per cent) of Irish adults who responded to the review by [Liberty Insurance](#) said they had attended or watched a women's sports event in the past 12 months, compared with just 17 per cent in the UK. Men's sport remains more popular in both countries, however, with 75 per cent of Irish adults and 49 per cent of UK adults saying that they had attended or watched a major men's sporting event in the same period.

The survey was carried out in [Ireland](#) by RedC Research and included responses from more than 1,000 Irish adults. The survey also found that Irish men are more likely than Irish women to watch or attend female sports events.

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Some 43 per cent of Irish men had attended or watched a major women's sports event in the last 12 months, versus 30 per cent of women. In the UK, 25 per cent of men and 10 per cent of women had attended or watched equivalent sports events. Older men are the most likely to follow female sports. The survey found that more than half (57 per cent) of Irish men over the age of 55 had watched or attended a women's sporting event, versus just 30 per cent of women in the same age bracket.

A "general lack of interest" was the most frequently cited reason for a lack of engagement with women's sport. Some 47 per cent of Irish people and 55 per cent of people in the UK cited this as their primary reason for not attending or watching women's sports. According to the survey, other barriers to engagement for Irish people included a lack of knowledge (16 per cent), a lack of time (15 per cent), insufficient buzz or excitement (12 per cent), and not growing up with women's sports (16 per cent). [Deirdre Ashe](#), director of personal lines at Liberty Insurance, said 2017 represented an important year for women's sport in Ireland, but more needed to be done to increase participation. "The success of Ireland's hosting of the Women's Rugby World Cup, [Joy Neville](#) being awarded World Rugby referee of the year and record-breaking attendances at the All Ireland Ladies Football Final proved to be particular

highlights. “However, our research suggests more needs to be done to generate a broader awareness of women’s sport, its heroes, rivalries, and narratives. This has to start at an early age. If children are not exposed to female sport, they are highly unlikely to engage with it as adults.”