

Physical activity policy status in Northern Ireland

MOVING policy index

Updated in May 2024 due to further relevant policies coming to our attention

This country snapshot presents detailed results of the **MOVING policy index** [1] for Northern Ireland. It highlights strengths and weaknesses in the design of national government physical activity policies. This snapshot supplements the policy index results with an in-depth look at the quality of policy design in each country. Full policy index results are outlined in the MOVING policy brief, which compares Northern Ireland to 29 other European countries.

Main messages

- 1 Northern Ireland implements policy actions in five out of the six policy areas of the MOVING framework. The highest assessment achieved was only moderate, for existing policies promoting physical activity in schools, community, and recreation (M), and for public awareness campaigns (N).
- 2 Weaknesses are identified in the following policy areas: physical activity for people of all ages and abilities (M), physical activity guidelines (N) public open space and green spaces (V), road safety actions (I). Gaps were seen in community initiatives promoting physical activity (M), and physical activity training for healthcare professionals (G).
- 3 No action was taken to promote physical activity opportunities in the workplace (O); therefore, this policy area should be prioritised. Much more needs to be done on structures and surroundings which promote physical activity (V), and on building a transport infrastructure which promotes active societies (I). The national government taking more action in policy areas V and I is key to improving overall environments that enable physical activity.

Overview of policy status

NO POLICIES IDENTIFIED

POOR

FAIR

MODERATE

GOOD

EXCELLENT

M	Make opportunities and initiatives that promote physical activity in schools, the community and sport and recreation	MODERATE
O	Offer physical activity opportunities in the workplace and training in physical activity promotion across multiple professions	NO POLICIES IDENTIFIED
V	Visualise and enact structures and surroundings which promote physical activity	POOR
I	Implement transport infrastructure and opportunities that support active societies	FAIR
N	Normalise and increase physical activity through public communication that motivates and builds behaviour change skills	MODERATE
G	Give physical activity training, assessment and counselling in healthcare settings	FAIR

This snapshot is based on national level policies only, which include UK-wide and Northern Ireland-only policies issued by the UK government. Policies issued by provincial, regional or local governments are outside the scope of this project. Page 2 highlights which policy areas assess UK-wide or home nation policies.

Methods

The MOVING policy index methods are fully explained in the associated **policy brief**. In short, the policy index combines values for a) policy presence, and b) policy design for 23 benchmarks.

The benchmarks are applied to policies in the **MOVING database** [2], collected through a comprehensive scan in 30 European countries, including Northern Ireland.

FRAMEWORK: Set of comprehensive policy actions across **3 domains**:

ACTIVE SOCIETIES

ACTIVE ENVIRONMENTS

ACTIVE PEOPLE

DATABASE:

Library of physical activity-related policies

M O V I N G

POLICY INDEX: Compares country and policy area results generated by the benchmarking tool

BENCHMARKING TOOL:






























Assesses the quality of policy design based on set criteria

Policy tools used to produce the policy index results

Breakdown of policy index results

(For full details on the policy design criteria, consult the [policy brief](#))

 No policy identified	 Meets up to 75% of policy design criteria
 Meets up to 25% of policy design criteria	 Meets up to 99% of policy design criteria
 Meets up to 50% of policy design criteria	 Meets all aspirational standards

	Physical activity in schools and PE	
	Physical activity in and outside of classrooms	
	Physical activity outside of school hours	
	Community and mass participation initiatives	
	Physical activity for people of all ages and abilities	
	Financial incentives to promote physical activity	
	Training for professions outside of healthcare	
	Physical activity in the workplace	
	Design guidelines and regulations for buildings	
	Active design guidelines outside buildings	
	Active design guidelines for open/green spaces	
	Walking and cycling infrastructure	
	Integrated urban design and land-use policies	
	Access to quality public open space and green spaces	
	Policies to support public transport	
	Road safety actions including safety of pedestrians, cyclists etc*	
	Mass communication campaigns to promote transport	
	Policies to promote active transport*	
	Mass media campaigns and social marketing promoting physical activity*	
	Develop and communicate physical activity guidelines*	
	Pre- and in-service training within health care	
	Primary care (assessment, counselling and PA prescriptions)*	
	Health care and outpatient settings	

Note: The policy landscape in any country evolves over time. These findings reflect our knowledge as of May 2023. To see latest results and for further technical information on the policy indexes, please consult our website: wcrf.org/our-policy-work. For feedback or suggested updates, please email policy@wcrf.org. More info in the CO-CREATE project can be found at co-create.eu

[1] Policy index: wcrf.org/physical-activity-policy-index [2] Policy database: policydatabase.wcrf.org