ISRCTN14693503 https://doi.org/10.1186/ISRCTN14693503

Shining a light on success: Utilising implementation science to enhance the reach and adoption of the 'Ireland Lights Up' walking initiative

Submission date 17/04/2024	**Recruitment status** No longer recruiting	[X] Prospectively registered [X] Protocol [_] Statistical analysis plan [_] Results [_] Individual participant data [X] Record updated in last year
Registration date 01/05/2024	**Overall study status** Completed	
Last Edited 13/08/2026	**Condition category** Other	

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims
'Ireland Lights Up' encourages GAA clubs across the 32 counties to light up and bring communities together to walk and talk in a safe environment during the dark winter evenings. This research aims to explore the impact of Ireland Lights Up on those who participate in order to capture the benefits of the initiative. It also seeks to understand how effectively the initiative is implemented to enhance its delivery as well as capture its success factors for other sporting bodies to learn from. The data provided will help to inform this work alongside other data and be presented in a publishable academic manuscript.

Who can participate?
Aged 18 years or above, and involved in Ireland Lights Up.

What does the study involve?
‘Ireland Lights Up’ is an initiative that encourages people of all ages and fitness levels to get out, enjoy the fresh air and walk at their local GAA club in the winter evenings under the safety of their flood lights. Regular participants, club members or people in the local community are all welcome to take part.

Participants' answers to a questionnaire or interview will help researchers better understand who is currently taking part in Ireland Lights Up and how the initiative can made more accessible and enjoyable for everyone.

The questions are about the participants' background, club membership and how they heard about the initiative.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?
There are no risks to participating but participants are under no obligation to complete the survey and choosing not to will in no way reflect negatively upon them.

Where is the study run from?
The study is run from the Department of Health and Sport Exercise Science in South East Technological University in Waterford, Ireland.

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?
September 2023 to August 2026

Who is funding the study?
Presidents Scholarship Fund through South East Technological University, Ireland.

Who is the main contact?
Nicola Briggs, nicola.briggs@postgrad.setu.ie

Contact information

Type(s)
Scientific, Principal investigator

Contact name
Dr Aisling McGrath

ORCID ID
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3731-9165

Contact details
South East Technological University, O'Connell Bianconi Building,
Office G05, Cork Road
Waterford
Ireland
X91 N2FP
00353 51 30212
aisling.mcgrath@setu.ie

Type(s)
Public

Contact name
Ms Nicola Briggs

ORCID ID
https://orcid.org/0009-0002-8510-5938

Contact details
Desk 40, Postgraduate Office, Luke Wadding Library, SETU, Cork Road Campus
Waterford
Ireland
X91 K0EK
00353 (0) 87 4194773
nicola.briggs@postgrad.setu.ie

Additional identifiers

Protocol serial number
WD_2023_34_WSCH

Study information

Scientific Title
An implementation science study evaluating the Ireland Lights Up walking initiative in promoting social participation and physical activity outcomes in community living adults and assessing potential scale-out and sustainability to other National Governing Bodies of Sport

Acronym
ILU

Study objectives
Ireland Lights Up (ILU) is a GAA led, community-based walking initiative and consists of GAA clubs turning on their floodlights and encouraging the local community to walk around their grounds in the winter. The concept of using floodlit sports grounds to facilitate community walking programmes has the potential to be replicated across several sporting bodies. ILU has scaled up from 80 participating clubs to over 1000, demonstrating the initiative as a suitable model to engage multiple population cohorts with physical activity. The opportunity to evaluate an initiative at scale presents valuable opportunities to capture an implementation model that can be transferred across sporting bodies. Yet, a formal evaluation of the process and impact of the initiative has yet to be undertaken. This research aims to use established implementation science frameworks and mixed methods to evaluate the implementation across multiple levels and capture the health impact on participants over time.

Ethics approval required
Ethics approval required

Ethics approval(s)
Approved 19/03/2024, South East Technological University School of Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee (Health Science Building, Cork Road Campus, Waterford, X91 K0EK, Ireland; +353 (0) 51 302000; HealthSciencesResearchEthics.WD@setu.ie), ref: SETU/HSREC/23/24/010

Primary study design
Interventional

Study design
Hybrid type-two effectiveness-implementation multi-center study design to maximise real-world implementation while providing valid estimates of health outcomes

Study type(s)
Efficacy, Prevention, Quality of life

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied
Physically inactive and/or socially isolated adults in a community setting

Interventions

The research design employs a mixed methods approach guided by implementation science to systematically apply and sustain efficacious initiatives in real-world contexts. Implementation science will identify core determinants crucial for effective implementation across clubs, focusing on the community setting to maximise reach and adoption. A multi-stakeholder approach, encompassing participant, club, organisation, and systems levels within a socioecological model, will uncover barriers and facilitators of ILU implementation, with strategies to address obstacles for impact and sustainability.

A hybrid type-two effectiveness-implementation study design aims to maximise real-world implementation while providing valid estimates of health outcomes. Using a framework that integrates RE-AIM and the Practical Robust Implementation and Sustainability Model (PRISM), the study will monitor ILU implementation across delivery sites, measuring outcomes and contextual factors. The Intervention Scalability Assessment Tool (ISAT) will assess ILU's scalability through ten domains, informed by the application of RE-AIM/PRISM.

Effectiveness evaluation, critical for scalability assessment, involves health impact assessments via questionnaires up to 12 months and a social value methodological approach.
Participatory research methods will integrate social impact principles, including stakeholder mapping, outcome measure consultation, validation of theories of change, measurement of outcomes, and valuation across stakeholder groups. This comprehensive approach aims to inform evidence-based practices for ILU and similar initiatives.

Intervention Type
Behavioural

Primary outcome(s)
Measured at baseline, 6 weeks, 3 months, 6 months and 12 months:
1. Life Satisfaction (ONS 4)
2. Loneliness (UCLA Loneliness Scale).
3. Social Support: The Community Life Survey
4. Social Belonging: The Community Life Survey
5. Inclusion: Office for National Statistics. Harmonised Concepts and Questions for Social Data Sources Interim Harmonised Principle.
6. Physical Activity: Milton, K., Bull, F. C., & Bauman, A. (2011) single-item physical activity measure
7. Self-rated health: Lundberg O, Manderbacka K (1996) self-rated health
8. Health Status: EQ-5D
9. Mental Health: Warwick-Edinburgh mental well-being scale (WEMWBS)

Key secondary outcome(s)
Implementation - effectiveness is measured using RE-AIM and PRISM frameworks at baseline, year 2 and year 3

Completion date
31/08/2026

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria
1. Participants of Ireland Lights up
2. Club leaders implementing Ireland Lights Up

3. Organisational leaders of Ireland Lights Up
4. Funders of Ireland Lights Up
5. Age ≥18 years
6. Provides written informed consent

Participant type(s)
Population, Service user

Healthy volunteers allowed
No

Age group
Mixed

Lower age limit
18 Years

Upper age limit
100 Years

Sex
All

Total final enrolment
363

Key exclusion criteria
Does not meet inclusion criteria

Date of first enrolment
01/10/2024

Date of final enrolment
06/01/2026

Locations

Countries of recruitment
Ireland

Study participating centre
South East Technological University
Health Sciences Building
Cork Road Campus
Cork Road
Waterford
Ireland
X91 K0EK

Study participating centre
Ballygunnar GAA Club
Waterford
Ireland
X91 R863

Study participating centre
Aghada GAA Club
Cork
Ireland
P25 P6F8

Sponsor information

Organisation
South East Technological University

ROR
https://ror.org/03fgx6868

Funder(s)

Funder type
University/education

Funder Name
South East Technological University

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan
The datasets generated during and/or analyzed during the current study will be stored in a publicly available repository called SETU Open Access Repository.

Only those on the RT who require specific data for analysis will be given access. Data management and storage will be ethically and legally compliant in line with GDPR. All participants will consent to participate in the study and have their data reported anonymously (as per ethical statement above). In addition, the data linking the individual with their code

/pseudonym, will not be stored in the OneDrive folder with all other data. This file will be stored in a separate OneDrive folder by the PI. Data files will only be shared with members of the research team who require access to the data for analytical purposes.

Data will only be stored for 5 years post publication of outcomes. The PI will be responsible for ensuring that the data is secure during storage and is destroyed appropriately post this defined period. During this period, anonymised data can be made available to third parties. The profile of this research project will be housed within the Centre for Health Behaviour Research and contact details of the PI will be accessible there for anyone wishing to access the data for further analysis. Members of the project team (GAA and research team) will define the terms of data use and will licence the same.

To meet the principles of FAIR data management, the final anonymised dataset and associated metadata will be submitted to the SETU Open Access Repository for access and appropriate reuse. If any data are restricted (e.g. due to confidentiality, legal or ethical concerns), only summary statistics or aggregated data will be made available.

IPD sharing plan summary

Available on request, Stored in publicly available repository

Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
Protocol article		28/11/2025	23/01/2026	Yes	No