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An Overview of the Use of Growing Up in Ireland Data Files 2010-19

Prepared by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs
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Growing Up in Ireland
National Longitudinal Study of Children

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Contents

Figures

1. Introduction

Growing Up in Ireland (GUI) is the national longitudinal study of children, funded by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) and managed by DCYA in association with the Central Statistics Office (CSO). The GUI Study is currently carried out on behalf of DCYA by a GUI Study Team at the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI), in collaboration with researchers from Trinity College Dublin[1].

GUI represents a significant investment by the State in scientifically robust, policy relevant research and data on the lives of children, young people and families. A key priority for DCYA is to maximise the value of this investment through facilitating and promoting the use of archived GUI datasets, in order to generate evidence to inform policymaking.

These datasets, GUI Research Microdata Files (RMFs) and Anonymised Microdata Files (AMFs) are available on application through the Irish Social Science Data Archive (ISSDA), located at University College Dublin, and the Central Statistics Office (CSO). They have been prepared under the Statistics Act 1993, which provides a guarantee of confidentiality for participants and ensures the data can only be used for statistical research purposes.

The aims of this report are to:

- ✓ document the extent to which researchers have accessed available GUI datasets since 2010
- ✓ highlight in so far as possible the range of institutions using the datasets
- ✓ outline key research themes proposed by successful applicants
- ✓ assess the frequency of access to GUI data compared to other datasets archived at ISSDA and the CSO.

[1]In 2019, following discussions between DCYA, the CSO and the ESRI on how best to secure a long-term sustainable future for GUI, a Government decision agreed to transfer GUI to the CSO from 2023. Planning to transition GUI data collection to the CSO is now underway, subject to funding approval from the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER). DCYA will remain the project sponsor for GUI from 2023 and mechanisms will be put in place to ensure continued input from children/young people, as well as scientific and policy stakeholders, into the development of GUI and the identification of research needs.

The report is based on summary data made available to DCYA for statistical purposes from successful applications for access to GUI microdata files. This includes the number of applications, the title of the research proposal, the institution that each applicant is affiliated with, an outline of the theme of the proposed research and the rate of access for GUI data compared to other archived datasets.

The analysis in this report provides an important insight into the extent to which GUI datasets have been used and the broad nature of research being pursued using GUI data. It shows that:

- there have been **1295** successful project-based applications for access to GUI data between 2010 and mid-October 2019, reflecting a high level of demand for the data
- research themes proposed by applicants have covered all the domains in GUI
- successful applications have come from 130 research institutions and a range of public sector bodies
- GUI data was the most frequently accessed dataset held by both the Central Statistics Office and the Irish Social Science Data Archive in 2019.

Given the level of investment in GUI as a national data and research resource, a key aim of DCYA is to maximise the take up of GUI datasets. This analysis shows a high level of use of GUI data relative to other available datasets, widespread use of the data across the research sector and across potential themes arising from the survey's domain coverage.

The availability of GUI datasets is an important national resource that supports research and can reduce the costs of research and unnecessary duplication of data collection effort. It provides researchers with high quality, scientifically robust and policy relevant national data, saving time and money that primary data collection would involve. The strong levels of take up reflected in this analysis are important evidence of their value. There are two limitations of this analysis which are worth noting:

- The categorisation of research themes across applications is derived from summary information provided to DCYA from the application process, so the categories are necessarily broad, and are indicative rather than definitive.

- As this report is based on summary data from the application process it is not possible to identify specific outputs or analyses generated by successful applicants. The report is primarily a much needed empirical analysis of the rate and extent of the use of available datasets across institutions and themes.

However, there is a significant amount of material arising from GUI data analysis already in the public domain that allows us to address this second limitation. Section 7 of this report provides an overview of published outputs from GUI data, referencing reports from the GUI Study itself but also external publications from researchers using available datasets. Section 7 also highlights how Government Departments and public bodies have successfully used GUI data to shed light on key policy problems and to help inform the development of policies and services.

The report is structured as follows:

- Background to Growing Up in Ireland
- Datasets Available from GUI
- An Overview of Access to GUI data since 2010
- Access to GUI Data by Research Theme
- Access to GUI Data by Institution Type
- Reports and Outputs from GUI Data
- Conclusion.

2. Background to Growing Up in Ireland

Growing Up in Ireland (GUI) is the national longitudinal study of children, funded by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) and managed by DCYA in association with the Central Statistics Office (CSO). GUI is currently conducted on behalf of DCYA by a GUI Study Team at the ESRI, in collaboration with researchers from Trinity College, Dublin.

The establishment of GUI was approved by Government in March 2002. The overarching aim of the study was to examine the factors that contribute to or undermine the well-being of children in Ireland, and to contribute to the setting of effective and responsive policies relating to children and to the design of services for children and families.

The need for a large-scale national children's study of this type was first proposed in 1980 in the Task Force on Child Care Services, and again by the Commission on the Family in 1998. In 2000, the National Children's Strategy proposed the establishment of a longitudinal study in the context of continued need for empirical data and research on children.

Since its establishment, all GUI data have been collected under the Statistics Act 1993, the legislation which governs the gathering and compilation of official statistics in Ireland and mandates the work of the Central Statistics Office. GUI is carried out by way of a section 11 arrangement, a section of the Act which allows the CSO to make arrangements with public bodies for the collection of official statistics. The Statistics Act also guarantees the confidentiality of respondents and ensures the data can only be used for statistical purposes.

GUI provides an important national data and research resource on the lives of children, families and young people, which has helped inform policy development and service provision. A large number of reports from the findings, over 80 to date, have been published by the GUI Study Team. In addition to this core body of work, datasets from each wave of the survey are prepared and archived for wider research

use, so as to maximise the value of the data and realise their potential in so far as possible.

GUI collects data from two large cohorts of children and their families: Cohort '98, members of which were mainly born in 1998; and Cohort '08, born in 2008. Data collection began with Cohort '98 when they were nine years old in 2007 and were collected again from this group at the ages of 13, 17/18, and 20 years old. Data collection began with Cohort '08 in 2008 when they were nine months old and data were collected again from this group at ages 3, 5, 7/8 and 9 years old.

With the exception of data collection for 7/8 year-olds in 2016, all waves of data collection to date have involved interviewer administered and self-complete instruments in the home. Respondents included the young person as well as their primary and secondary caregiver. At 7/8 years old, data were collected from primary caregivers of Cohort '08 via a postal survey. Preparations have begun for the collection of data from Cohort '08 at the age of 13 in 2021. The pilot phase for this wave took place in 2020. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, this pilot was carried out via a combination of web survey and telephone interviews.

Data collection spans three main domains in the lives of children and young people: health, education and socio-emotional well-being. A fourth domain, civic and economic participation, is added at age 17. GUI also collects important socio demographic data from parents/guardians in relation to social class, income, level of parental education and family structure, as well as data from parents/guardians on issues such as health, family relationships, perceptions of their children's development and educational aspirations for their children.

The survey collects data via direct measures (e.g. weight, height, and cognitive assessment), time use diaries and questionnaires. GUI uses a number of standardised scales to measure key constructs in the questionnaires, some of which are used by comparable studies elsewhere. Data are also collected from teachers at primary school level and from secondary school Principals.

3. Datasets available from GUI

As noted earlier, GUI data is collected under the Statistics Act 1993, which guarantees the confidentiality of respondents and ensures the data can only be used for statistical research purposes. Two types of datasets are prepared in line with the requirements of the Act and made available from each wave of GUI data collection:

- Anonymised Microdata Files (AMFs) include data on a range of variables from each wave of the survey and are available to researchers through the Irish Social Science Data Archive (ISSDA) located at University College Dublin. AMF datasets are comprehensive, and are designed to meet the needs of the majority of researchers.
- Research Microdata Files (RMFs) include a more detailed set of variables held at the CSO. RMFs are designed specifically for situations where researchers have already exhausted the use of data available on the AMFs and require access to some specific more detailed variables. RMFs are carefully pseudonymised in line with the Statistics Act 1993 and access to the RMFs is subject to strict conditions. These are set out in a formal written agreement with the CSO and involve the appointment of successful applicants as Officers of Statistics, subject to the approval of the Director General of the CSO.

In the case of both AMFs and RMFs, access to GUI data files is only provided for *bona fide* research purposes on a *project-specific* and *time-limited* basis. Access to GUI data is not permitted for commercial purposes. The maximum period of access is one year for the RMF and five years for the AMF. In the case of the AMF, researchers must delete the data files when they have finished using them.

In the case of the RMF, researchers access the data files securely through the CSO online Researcher Data Portal. Aggregated data outputs are released to researchers from the data portal once they have been reviewed and approved by the CSO as being non-disclosive (i.e. not capable of identifying individuals).

In addition to the microdata files themselves, the GUI Study Team at the ESRI provide extensive supporting documentation to help researchers make sense of the data files and their structure. This documentation is invaluable and plays an important role in the take up and use of GUI data.

The GUI Study Team also run regular data workshops to introduce interested researchers to the data and familiarise them with their structure and content. From 2020 it is anticipated that some of these workshops will be made available via webinar. The workshops are advertised through the GUI website as well as via Instagram and Twitter. For those who have not been able to attend workshops, the workshop presentations (some with audio) are also made available on the GUI website.

To further contribute to policy relevant research and capacity building for the future, DCYA funds PhD Scholarships through the Irish Research Council for projects using GUI data on topics linked to DCYA policies and strategies.

For more information on how to apply for access to GUI AMFs and RMFs see the GUI Data Flyer.

4. Access to GUI Data since 2010: An Overview

ISSDA AMF Access

The total number of successful AMF access requests to ISSDA covering the period from 2010 to mid-October 2019 was **2,284**. This represents a high level of GUI microdata usage. ISSDA's application procedure records requests for access to data from multiple waves but pertaining to the same project separately, i.e. one applicant pursuing one project applying for access to 4 waves of data is recorded as 4 individual requests.

For the purposes of this report and comparability with RMF applications, the AMF applications have therefore been aggregated into **967 successful project applications** since 2010, so that each application that pertains to the same project, even where it covers several waves of data, is recorded as representing one project.

In the year leading up to October 2019, there were 316 requests to access GUI waves, comprising 70 discrete projects. GUI AMFs were the most frequently requested of the 60 datasets held by ISSDA in 2019.

ISSDA is Ireland's national centre for quantitative data acquisition, preservation, and dissemination. As a national service ISSDA archives a large number of Irish and international comparative datasets, including for example Irish Household Budget Surveys and Labour Force Surveys, the Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing (TILDA) and the EU Survey of Income and Living Conditions (SILC).

A 2017 ISSDA report on the impact of its service, based on a survey of ISSDA users, highlights the positive experiences of GUI users[2]. Based at UCD Library, ISSDA's mission is to ensure wide access to quantitative datasets in the social sciences and to advance the promotion of international comparative studies of the Irish economy and Irish society. ISSDA makes these datasets available for secondary analysis by

[2] see http://www.ucd.ie/t4cms/Demonstrating%20the%20Value%20&%20Impact%20of%20ISSDA.pdf

students, academics and researchers in the higher education and public sectors and provides an important service to support:

- Archival preservation (GUI is an important cultural archive as well as an important research and data resource)
- Secondary use and analysis for research
- Teaching and learning use
- Replication and validation of research.

GUI data held by ISSDA is accessed by researchers at all levels, from undergraduate, through post-graduate through to academic and professional researchers. Importantly, GUI data is also accessed from ISSDA for teaching purposes, helping to build capacity and skills in data analysis for the future, and further adding value to the investment in the study itself.

CSO RMF Access

The total number of successful RMF access requests to the CSO covering the period 2011 to mid-October 2019 was **188.** DCYA/CSO procedures for RMF applications record group applications as a single request (i.e. a group application from an institution consisting of multiple applicants pursuing different projects). Therefore, for comparability, the RMF applications have been disaggregated in this report into **328 successful project applications**, which can each cover multiple waves of data collection. This represents a high rate of use of GUI RMFs.

In the year leading up to mid-October 2019 for example, there were 22 applications to access the RMF data files, comprising 56 discrete projects. As was the case with AMFs at ISSDA, this represents the highest number of project applications to access any RMF held by the CSO during the period[3]. This is noteworthy, given the range of RMFs provided by the CSO on a variety of national statistics.

The CSO is Ireland's national statistical office which is mandated under the Statistics Act 1993 to impartially collect, analyse and make available statistics about Ireland's people, society and economy. The CSO provides access to RMFs for a range of

[3] Source: correspondence with CSO Statistician. The RMF data file with the second highest number of project applications was Place of Work, School or College Anonymised Records (POWSCAR).

datasets collected by the Office, under stringent conditions laid down by the Statistics Act. The primary objective of the CSO in providing access to microdata is to support the research community and to ensure that maximum usage is made of the data collected by the CSO. This approach supports the move towards evidence-based policy-making, has the potential to reduce the cost of research and also helps to avoid duplicate data collections.

Under the provisions of the Statistics Act, 1993, the CSO provide access to RMFs under strict conditions to ensure that the integrity and confidentiality of data collected under the Act is maintained. As noted earlier, access is granted for scientific and statistical purposes only. When considering applying for access to a GUI RMF, a researcher should examine in the first instance if the required data are already available from the GUI AMF at ISSDA.

Summary AMF/RMF Access since 2010

In summary, for the purpose of comparability, each single AMF/RMF request in this analysis represents **a single research project**, which can include access to multiple waves of data collection. In total, this analysis covers **1,295** project-based applications for access to GUI microdata files over the period from 2010 until mid-October 2019.

5. Access to GUI Data by Research Theme

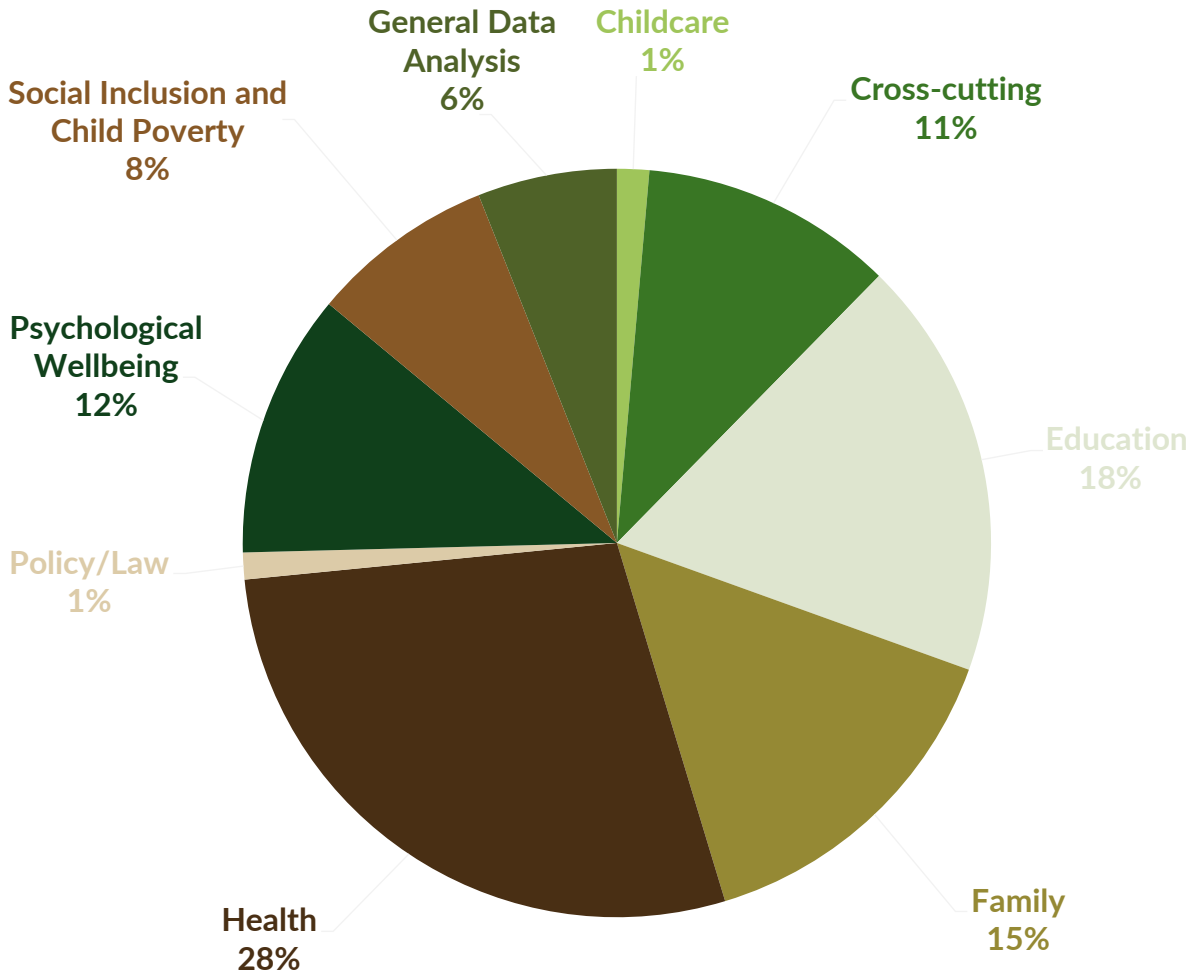
There was some variance in how ISSDA and the CSO record the subject area/themes for AMF and RMF applications. For the purpose of comparability, a set of 9 research themes or categories was derived from available data and applied to the project RMF and AMF applications. The themes broadly reflect the focus and nature of data usage that applicants had outlined in the application process.

Most project applications covered multiple themes reflecting the broad multi-domain nature of the GUI dataset. Nevertheless, in this analysis, a broad categorisation of projects was determined based on the *primary or main focus* of the project. In the case of applications with multiple themes with an apparently equal focus, the category 'Cross-cutting' was applied. A category of 'General Data Analysis' was arrived at to cover applications for AMF data – often for post graduate work – where the purpose seemed mainly to be on using the data files as part of the teaching and learning of quantitative methods.

Given that this analysis is based on the re-categorisation of themes as described in the application process, the findings on thematic coverage are indicative of broad trends, rather than definitive.

Figure 1 shows the distribution of access by research theme, with the highest share of applications proposing 'Health'-related projects (28% / 364). Applications relating to 'Education' (18% / 235), 'Family' (15% / 192) and 'Psychological Wellbeing' (12% / 148) were the next largest categories. Additionally, 11% (142) of applications appeared to have multiple themes and were categorised as 'Cross-cutting'.

Figure 1: AMF & RMF access by research theme, 2010-2019



This analysis indicates that there has been a wide range of research interest across the three key domains in GUI, with over one quarter of requests to access GUI data files proposing health-based research projects.

Figures 2 specifically highlights the distribution of AMF access by theme. This shows, that the most common research themes among AMF applications related to 'Health' (28% / 272), 'Family' (15% / 144), 'Education' (15% / 144) and 'Psychological Wellbeing' (12% / 117); followed by 'Cross-cutting' at (12% / 115) projects. Figure 2 also shows that 8% (78) of applications were for 'General Data Analysis' projects, most likely reflecting the use of AMFs for teaching purposes and their use among postgraduate students accessing the AMF data files.

Figure 2: AMF access by research theme

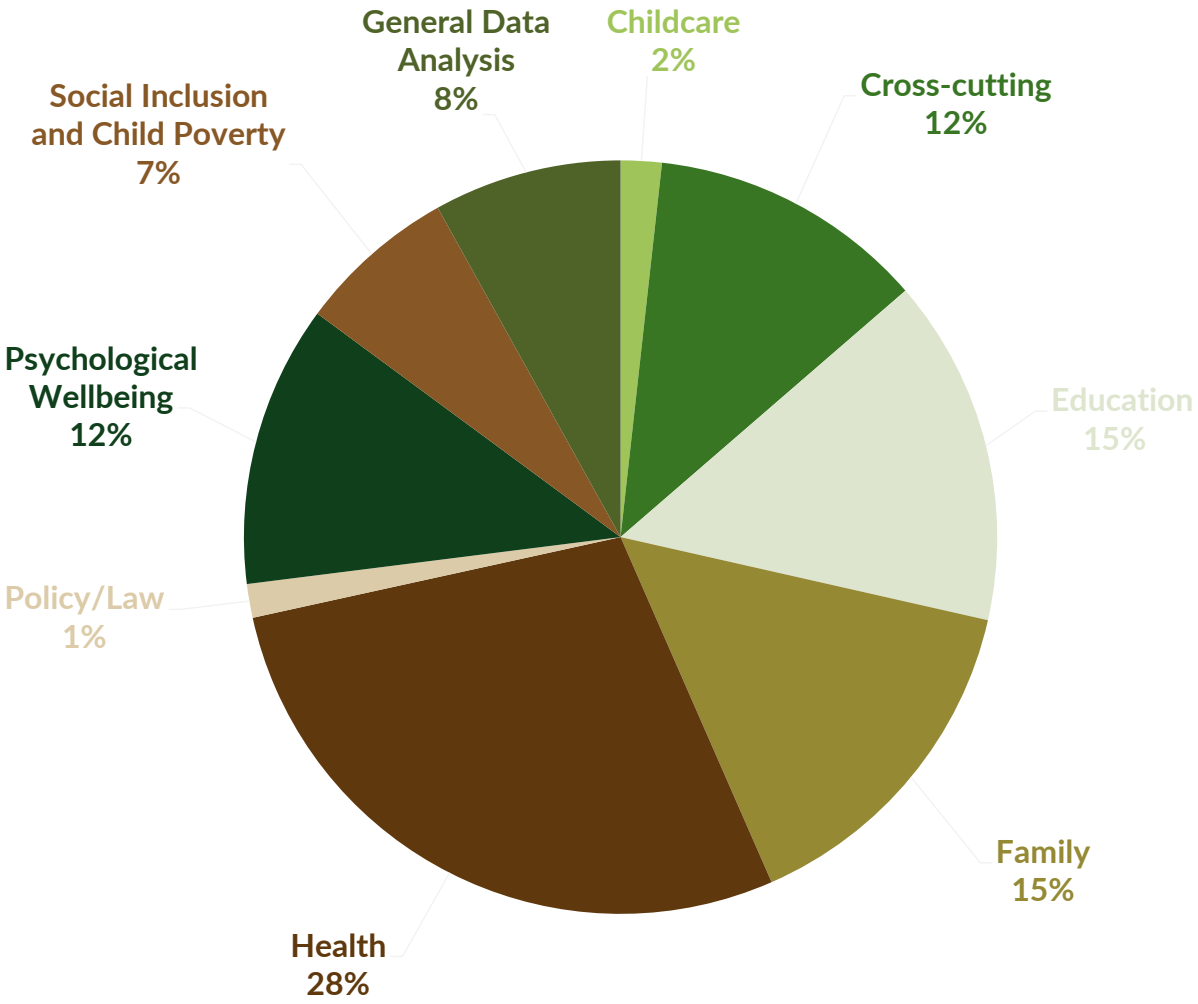
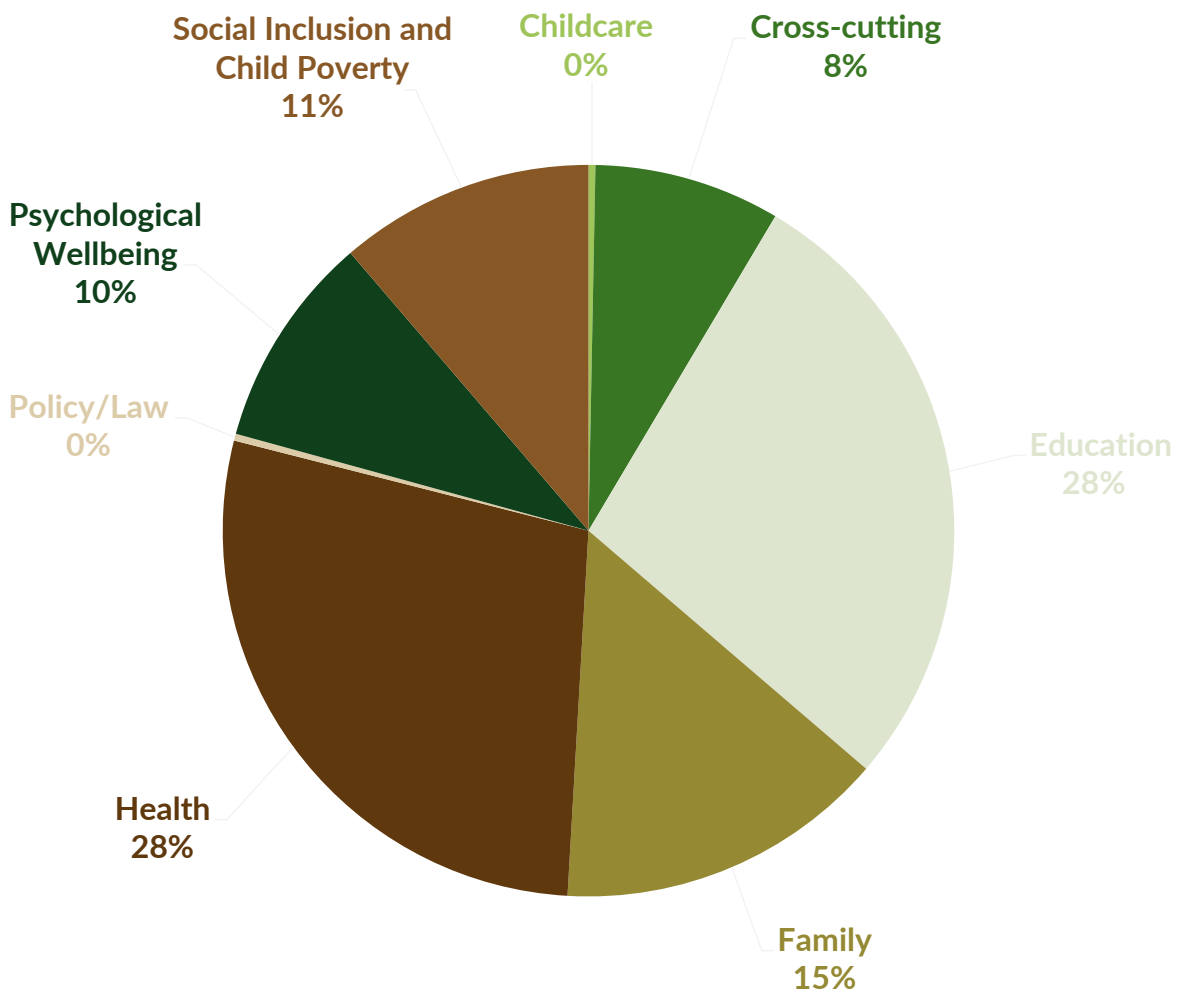


Figure 3 specifically highlights the distribution of RMF access by theme. This shows the most common themes among applications to access the RMF data files were 'Health' (28% / 92) and 'Education' (28% / 91), followed by 'Family' (15% / 48), 'Social Inclusion and Child Poverty' (11% / 37), and 'Psychological Wellbeing' (10% / 31). Projects related to 'Childcare' and 'Policy/Law' each accounted for less than 0.5% of these applications.

Unlike the pattern of themes for AMF access, there are no RMF applications in the 'General Data Analysis' category. This is because the RMF data files are specifically for those researchers who have exhausted the use of AMF files and for projects which have a precise research purpose which requires access to these more sensitive data files. On the other hand as noted earlier, the AMF application process facilitates access to the datasets for teaching purposes.

Figure 3: RMF access by research theme



In summary, projects related to 'Health' accounted for the highest share of applications to access both the AMF and RMF data files, followed by 'Education'. Research that focused on 'Family' represented 15% of projects applications in both cases. About 10% of projects applications to the AMF and RMF data files pertained to 'Psychological Wellbeing', 'Cross-cutting' issues or to 'Social Inclusion and Child Poverty'. The breadth of research themes represented in the project applications reflects GUI's unique multi-domain nature, which aims to describe children's lives in the round and chart their development.

6. Access to GUI Data by Institution Type

The records indicate that a total of 130 institutions were represented in applications for access to the data. The pattern of access both from within Ireland and outside Ireland is outlined below. Note that only the AMF data can be used outside the State, so international applications refer to AMFs. The use of the RMF is restricted to within the Irish State, though comparative research can be undertaken if researchers from international institutions are based in Ireland when using the data or through joint ventures with Irish institutions.

In the period 2010 to present applications included:

- 1,174 successful applications (857 AMF, 317 RMF) from 71 institutions in the Republic of Ireland
- 86 successful applications (75 AMF, 11 RMF) from 30 institutions in the rest of Europe
- 29 successful applications (all AMF) from 21 institutions from the Americas[4]
- 2 successful applications (both AMF) from 2 institutions in Asia
- 2 successful applications (both AMF) from 2 institutions in Oceania

For the purpose of this analysis, four categories of institution have been devised.

- 'Academic' institutions, which includes Universities, Institutes of Technology, teaching hospitals or third level colleges that applied to access GUI data files. Applications have emanated from all Irish universities, as well as several Institutes of Technology, private colleges and colleges of further education. A number of applications came from Universities outside of Ireland, primarily in the UK and the USA.
- 'Not-for-Profit' organisations, which includes independent research institutions, organisations registered with charitable status and a friendly society.
- 'Public Sector', which includes 6 Irish Government Departments and 18 State agencies; and 3 public bodies from outside Ireland.
- 'Private Sector', which includes registered commercial entities, notably economic consultancy firms, likely to be associated with projects being carried

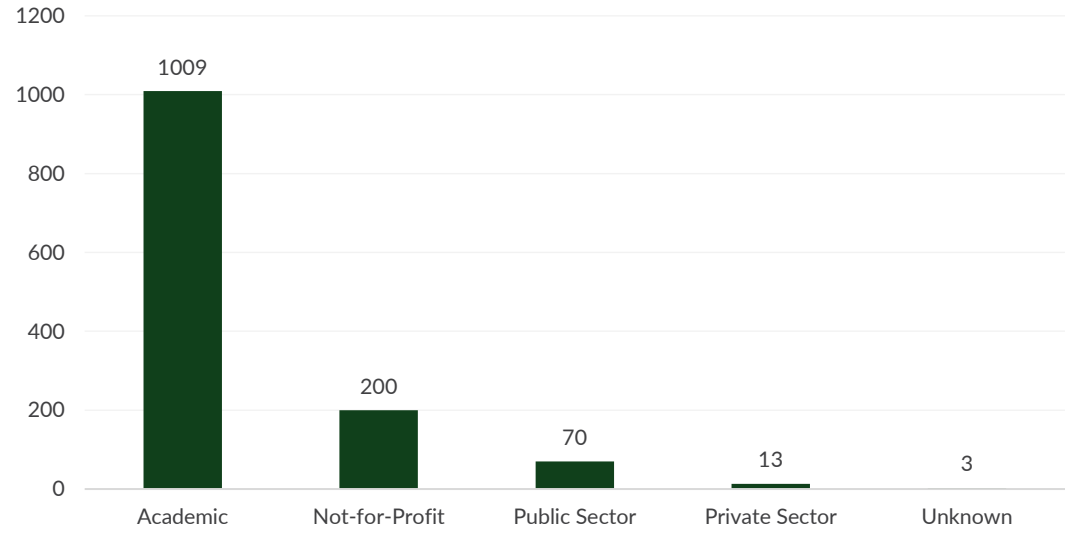
[4] Comprising the totality of the Continents of North and South America.

out for public sector bodies, as GUI data are only made available for non-commercial purposes.

Government departments and public bodies often commission academic or research institutes, or not for profit bodies, to carry out research on their behalf. In those instances, the commissioned institution requests access to the data and it is recorded as a request from that sector, even if a public sector organisation might be funding the project. It is therefore difficult to ascertain from these summary application data, how much of the research being conducted across institutes has been sponsored or funded by public sector bodies.

Figure 4 shows the number of successful applications for access to GUI data files (AMF and RMF) according to the type of institution that requested access. Most applications came from Academic institutions (1009 / 78%), followed by Not-for-Profit institutions (200 / 15%). There were 70 (5%) applications from Public Sector institutions[5] and 13 or 1% of applications from the Private Sector. In the case of 3 applications (<1% of total), data was not readily available to the authors on the type of institution that the application had originated from. This small group of applications is categorised as 'Unknown'.

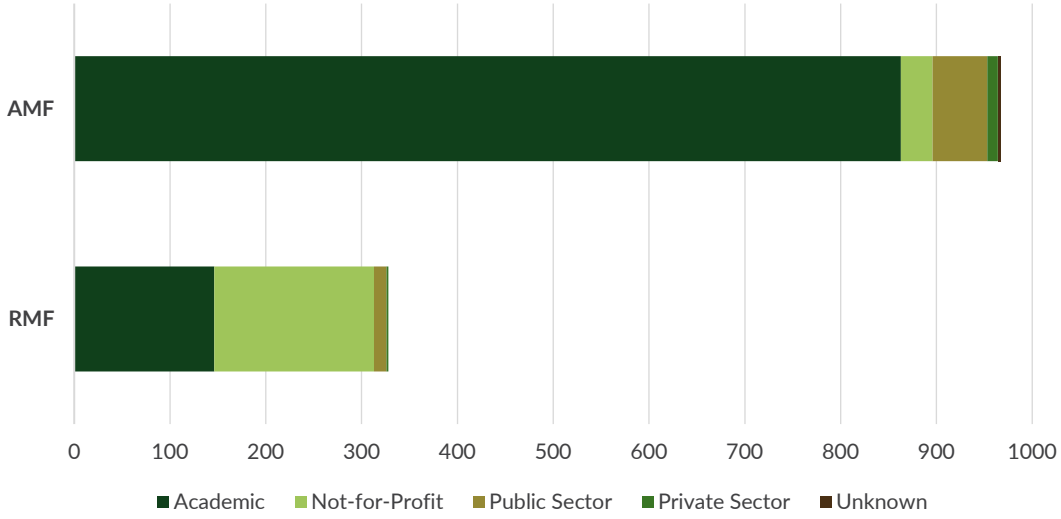
Figure 4: Combined AMF and RMF access by type of institution



[5] 'Public Sector' category includes 3 successful AMF applications from public sector institutions based outside of Ireland.

Figure 5 below shows the number of successful applications for access to AMF and RMF data files respectively, by type of institution. In relation to AMFs, most came from Academic institutions (863 / 89%), followed by the Public Sector[6] (57 / 6%), Not-for-Profit institutions (33 / 3%), the Private Sector (11 / 1%). For 3 applications this detail was not readily available (<1%).

Figure 5: AMF access and RMF access separately by type of institution



In relation to RMFs, Figure 5 shows that most came from Not-for-Profit institutions (167 / 51%), followed by requests from Academic institutions (146 / 45%), the Public Sector (13 / 4%), and 2 (1%) from the Private Sector[7].

As Figure 5 shows, there is a higher proportion of successful applications for RMF access from Not-for-Profit institutions relative to Academic and Public Sector institutions. This may reflect the inclusion of specialist research institutions in this category, insofar as the RMF data files are intended for researchers who have exhausted the use of the AMF data files. As noted above, some research funded by the public sector may be carried out on its behalf by research institutes and academic institutions, so without data on the funding source for these projects, our understanding of the extent to which applications are driven by public sector funding may be limited.

[6] 'Public Sector' category includes 3 successful AMF applications from public sector institutions based outside of Ireland.

[7] Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

7. Reports and Outputs from GUI Data

The GUI website lists over 80 official GUI publications, and 158 external publications based on GUI data analysis. The official publications are core reports from the Study funded by DCYA. They include a series of Key Findings from each wave of data collection highlighting headline findings; more detailed descriptive reports on the findings from each wave; thematic reports on particular policy themes; and a series of technical reports which document the piloting and design process for each wave (see GUI Publications).

The 158 external publications are journal articles, reports or books generated by researchers using GUI data (see GUI External Publications). Researchers are invited to, but are not obliged to ensure their publications are included on the GUI website (though they are obliged to acknowledge GUI in their publications). While the list of external reports may be not fully comprehensive, it provides a useful flavour of the nature and breadth of the work being completed using GUI data.

GUI data have been invaluable to DCYA and have been used to support policy development and service provision in a wide range of ways. It has for instance informed the development of two major cross-Departmental strategies; *Better Outcomes Brighter Futures: the national policy framework for children and young people (2014-2020)*; and *First Five: a whole of Government strategy for babies, young children and their families (2019-2028)*.

The data and analyses generated for DCYA on childcare use; the take up of free pre-school when it was established; the impact of the recession on children, families, parenting and family relationships; work-life balance issues for parents; educational experiences, transitions and attainment; health issues such as breastfeeding, obesity and overweight; GP visiting rates for children; and unique data from the older cohort on young people's civic, economic and political engagement are all examples of how GUI has helped us understand more clearly the experiences of children, young people and families in Irish society.

More recently DCYA has directly funded a research initiative that will draw on GUI data in relation to projects focused separately on the dynamics of child poverty and adolescent behaviours; and has funded a significant youth justice study through the Irish Research Council, the findings from which will be used specifically to help inform the development of youth justice policy.

An interdepartmental GUI Steering Group involving representatives from the Department of An Taoiseach, the Departments of Education, Health, Justice & Equality, and Employment Affairs and Social Protection, as well the CSO and Tusla, the national child and family agency, plays an important role in overseeing GUI and promoting the use of the data across the policy arena.

GUI data have also been used for policy purposes by other Government Departments, for example by the Department of Health (for its Capacity Review in 2018) and the Department of Education and Skills (in the context of a review of career guidance). The work of the National Advisory Council for Online Safety draws on GUI data; and the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment and the Commission on Communications Regulation (ComReg) have been involved in funding research using GUI data on mobile phone ownership and academic performance.

Several public bodies have also commissioned important research using GUI data to support evidence informed policy advice and development, including the Arts Council, the National Council for Special Education, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment and the National Disability Authority. Were it not for the availability of GUI datasets, this type of important analysis might not have been possible.

8. Conclusion

When established it was intended that GUI would provide much needed national data on the lives of children, young people and families, in the context of a dearth of evidence on these issues at that time. The GUI Study Team has addressed this gap through the provision of just over 80 reports since 2006, a strong dissemination strategy for these outputs and a well-established annual research conference since 2009.

Over and above these core activities, GUI data files have been archived and made available to the wider research community. Mechanisms have also been put in place to support the wider use of the available data, through for example the provision of data workshops to familiarise researchers with the structure of the data, the provision of detailed supporting documentation for data users and the establishment of a DCYA GUI PhD fellowship.

The rate of successful applications for access to the data, together with the range of research institutions and themes being covered, provides encouraging evidence that GUI data are being widely used and have become a valuable national data and research resource.

Not all applications to access the GUI data files are successful, but the majority are. For example, ISSDA estimates that there was a 1% rate of unsuccessful applications to access the GUI AMFs during 2019. The CSO confirmed that the corresponding rate of unsuccessful applications to the GUI RMFs in 2019 was 8.7%, with reasons for rejection primarily due to applications being unclear about the precise purpose of the proposed research.

Although the results are indicative given that they are based on summary information provided to DCYA for the purpose of statistical analysis, they indicate strong research interest in the three key domains of GUI: health, education and socio-emotional wellbeing. This points to the unique multi-domain nature of GUI, which aims to describe the lives of children in Ireland and chart their development. More research

may emerge on the fourth domain, civic and economic participation, as data on participants at age 17/18 become more widely used and data on 20 year olds become available.

Finally, it is worth noting that the findings in this report may underestimate the use of GUI data by Government Departments and State Agencies who fund and commission research from academic or other institutions, given that the access requests are recorded by the applicant, i.e. the organisation which carries out the research. Nonetheless, the analysis indicates that there were requests to access GUI data across 24 organisations from the Irish Public Sector, reflecting a high level of awareness among policymakers of the value of GUI. It is also important to bear in mind that academic and other research in itself also builds an evidence base which policy makers can make use of.

The findings of this analysis highlight how GUI has become an important resource and is fulfilling its role as a building block in the formation of evidence-informed policy.

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