



Variety Ireland Recycle Mobility Programme Impact Report 2026

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Variety – the Children's Charity of Ireland (Variety Ireland)



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Summary



Variety - the Children's Charity of Ireland, also known as Variety Ireland, helps children from across the disability spectrum, all over the island of Ireland up to the age of 18 years.

Variety Ireland's "Recycle Mobility Programme" provides special adaptive mobility trikes to children across the disability spectrum throughout Ireland, so that they can be included in outdoor activities with their family and friends.

Once the child has outgrown their trike it is then upcycled and passed to another child or special school in Ireland, so children can be included in cycling activities with their family and friends. This makes the Programme environmentally friendly and sustainable.

The aim of the Programme is to ensure children with mobility issues are included in cycling activities with their family and friends, whilst also contributing to the overall health and wellbeing of the child and the family members.

This study titled "Variety Ireland Recycle Mobility Programme Impact Report 2025" was conducted by Dr. Mary E. Collins CPsychol, EdD. MSc. BA. EMCC and Dr Pádraic Dunne PhD, MSc, BSc from RCSI University of Medicine and Health Sciences, in October 2025.

Data in this report consists of forty-six survey responses which were analysed, representing a range of counties, diagnoses, and ages. All respondents were recipients of specially adapted mobility trikes, received through the Variety Ireland Recycle Mobility Programme.

A qualitative study was also conducted with families, whose children received specially adapted mobility trikes through this Programme. The aim was to explore the impact of the trikes on both the child and the wider family unit. In-depth interviews were conducted with eight families, and thematic analysis was used to identify recurring patterns and insights. The report is divided into two sections: Impact on the Child and Impact on the Family, each containing three key themes supported by anonymised quotes from male and female participants.

The Return on Investment (ROI) in this Programme showed almost a 5 to 1 positive investment, in combined direct and indirect savings. Over a 3–5 year trike lifespan, cumulative ROI could rise from between €8 and €20, per €1 invested.

Contributors



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Dr. Mary Collins is a Chartered Psychologist, Author, and Leadership Coach with over 20 years' experience in leadership development and talent management. She is Programme Director of the Professional Diploma in Leadership & Workplace Wellbeing at RCSI, working with senior healthcare leaders. Mary also runs a successful business psychology practice and serves on the Advisory Board of the American Irish Medical Summit, focusing on leadership psychology and wellbeing. She co-directs the global Neuroscience Coaching Network and was awarded a Coaching Hero Award in 2019.

Formerly Head of Talent and Learning at Deloitte Ireland, Mary is a sought-after international speaker on the intergenerational workforce, emotional intelligence, and resilience. Her work blends academic research with practical application, and she has authored several books, including her latest on Emotional Intelligence & Dentistry (2025).



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Dr Pádraic Dunne (PhD) is an immunologist, practicing psychotherapist, accredited senior coach, and certified lifestyle medicine professional, based at the Centre for Positive Health Sciences (CPHS). As a Senior Lecturer (US: Associate Professor) and lead researcher of the Digital Health Research Group, Pádraic is interested in the development of health coach-led health and wellbeing programmes for the public. Online health coaching platforms can deliver motivational and educational support to citizens, in conjunction with existing community-based services like Sláintecare Healthy Communities and Healthy Ireland.

Pádraic is also a Co-director of the Centre's MSc in Positive Health Coaching and Director of the online Certificate, An Introduction to Lifestyle Medicine.



Variety – the Children’s Charity of Ireland

Variety – the Children’s Charity of Ireland, also known as Variety Ireland, is an Irish not-for-profit registered charity, founded in Ireland in 1951. Its main core values are addressing and helping children who are sick, disadvantaged or have additional needs. Many Programmes the charity operates are designed to address the mental and physical wellbeing of children from across the disability spectrum living on the island of Ireland. Variety Ireland also has “Triple Lock” status which is only awarded to charities by The Charities Institute of Ireland that uphold the highest standards in transparent reporting, ethical fundraising and strong governance structures. This recognition is the gold standard for Irish charities to offer assurances to donors, members and the public.

As a charity with a non-paid CEO or board members, who dedicate their time to the charity of free and without expense, this ensures that they maximise all funding provided via government, corporate and public donations which goes directly to helping children we serve. Our environmental sustainability policy ensures we design and operate Programmes that benefit children and families as well as the environment.

Recycle Mobility Programme

In the Summer of 2021, Variety Ireland, with the support of Minister Anne Rabbitte and the Department of Children, Equality Disability, Integration and Youth and Minister Eamon Ryan and The Department of Transport launched the Recycle Mobility Programme. The Programme is designed to provide financial assistance to parents or guardians of children with disabilities who are looking to purchase a special mobility trike for their child. Variety Ireland has been able to achieve this through government and corporate funding, as well as the generosity of public donations.

Variety Ireland also upcycles preloved mobility trikes, that are handed back to the charity by families receiving their new trikes. The charity passes these on to special schools and organisations looking after children with mobility issues, so these children can enjoy the same experience and delight of being able to cycle a bike in safety and comfort. The Recycle Mobility Programme ensures that old trikes do not reach harmful landfill sites which is not only good for the environment, but also offers major financial savings to all stakeholders given we do not have to constantly have to pay for new trikes once a child has outgrown their old trike.

2022: Impact Report

In 2022, Variety – the Children’s Charity of Ireland published our Recycle Mobility Programme Impact Report, which was co-designed by Dr Jolanta Burke and the Variety Ireland charity in conjunction with The Department of Children, Equality, Disabilities, Integration and Youth and the Department of Transport in Ireland with the main aim of identifying the impact of providing young people with tricycles on their own quality of life and their family’s wellbeing.

All parents whose children received a tricycle since the launch of the programme in 2021, were invited to participate in this once-off online survey. They responded to a range of demographic questions relating to their gender, age, relationship to the child and the length of time their child had a tricycle.

The main questionnaire comprised close and open-ended questions. There were five close-ended questions on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The aim was to identify the impact of the wellbeing improvements associated with the receipt of a tricycle.

2024: Evaluation Study

Since the launch of Variety – the Children’s Charity of Ireland’s Recycle Mobility Programme in 2021, the charity with the support of The Department of Children, Equality Disability, Integration and Youth, The Department of Transport, the HSE, corporate partners and donors have, delivered 350 special mobility trikes to children with disabilities across Ireland.

Ongoing research studies with families who have already received their special mobility trikes between 2022 and August 2024 allowed us to evaluate the success of this programme in great depth. This part of the evaluation study shows the impact that special mobility trikes are having on both the child and family members which supports inclusion and equal access to cycling for children and teens with mobility issues.

2025: Physiotherapy Needs & Trike Scheme Survey

This report builds on findings from Variety Ireland’s Recycle Mobility Programme evaluation (2024). A Quantitative Survey & Interview Study was completed by RCSI researchers in 2025 to assess the impact of adapted tricycles on children with disabilities and their families, with a focus on the physiotherapy needs of individual children.

2025

Variety Ireland's Recycle Mobility Programme Physiotherapy Needs & Trike Scheme Survey



2025

Variety Ireland’s Recycle Mobility Programme

Physiotherapy Needs & Trike Scheme Survey



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Executive Summary

Purpose

Variety Ireland surveyed parents/guardians of children with significant disabilities to understand:

1. Current physiotherapy needs, costs, and access barriers across Ireland.
2. Opinions on the Variety Trike Scheme, which provides adapted mobility trikes to children.

Respondents

Forty-six survey responses were analysed, representing a range of counties, diagnoses, and ages.

Key Findings

High physiotherapy need

Most children currently require physiotherapy, with many receiving professional recommendations for ongoing sessions.

Frequency of physiotherapy

Attendance varies widely, from weekly sessions to only occasional or rare appointments.

Several families reported difficulty securing timely appointments.

Cost burden

Costs per session ranged from €50 to over €100. Many families pay privately; out-of-pocket expenses are substantial, particularly outside major urban centres. Travel distances can exceed 30 km, adding time and fuel costs.

Regional variation

Families in some counties report consistently higher costs and longer travel distances than others.

Diagnosis and costs

Certain medical diagnoses like Cerebral Palsy, were associated with more frequent physiotherapy use and higher costs.

Return on Investment (ROI)

In 2025, every €1 invested returns between €2.8 to €4.1 in combined direct and indirect savings. Over a 3–5 year trike lifespan, cumulative ROI could rise from between €8 and €20, per €1 invested.

Impact of the Variety Trike scheme on the health and wellbeing of children

Physical wellbeing - 100% of parents agreed that the trike improved their child's physical wellbeing.

Mental wellbeing - 96% reported improvements.

Physiotherapy - 100% agreed the trike plays an important role in physiotherapy.

Daily use strengthens impact - Children using trikes once a day or more, reported the highest wellbeing measures.

Conclusions

- Physiotherapy remains essential for children with significant physical disabilities but services are costly and unevenly available.
- The Variety Trike Scheme is strongly endorsed by families as enhancing physical and mental wellbeing, as well as supporting physiotherapy goals.
- The survey data supports continuing and expanding the scheme, while also advocating for fairer access to affordable physiotherapy across Ireland.

Summary Report

This report presents the findings from Variety Ireland’s survey of parents and guardians of children living with health and wellbeing disabilities. The survey was designed to better understand current physiotherapy needs, associated costs, and access challenges across different regions in Ireland. In addition, it explored parent and guardian experiences of the Variety trike scheme, which provides specially adapted trikes to children with physical disabilities. The trikes are intended not only to encourage mobility and participation in family life but also to assess whether they can reduce physiotherapy needs and improve wellbeing. This report summarises the survey responses using simple descriptive statistics, tables, and charts, and also looks at possible relationships between factors such as cost, location, diagnosis, and trike use. The aim is to provide an accessible, data-driven picture that can inform future support services, fundraising priorities, and advocacy efforts.

Survey findings

Does your child currently require physiotherapy for their condition?

Table 1. Ninety-six percent of respondents (n=46) require physiotherapy for their condition.

Response	Count	Percent
Yes	44	95.7%
No	2	4.3%

Has a medical professional recommended physiotherapy for your child as part of their physical well-being?

Table 2. Ninety-four percent of children were prescribed physiotherapy to improve their health and wellbeing.

Response	Count	Percent
Yes	43	93.5%
No	3	6.5%

How often does your child attend physiotherapy sessions?

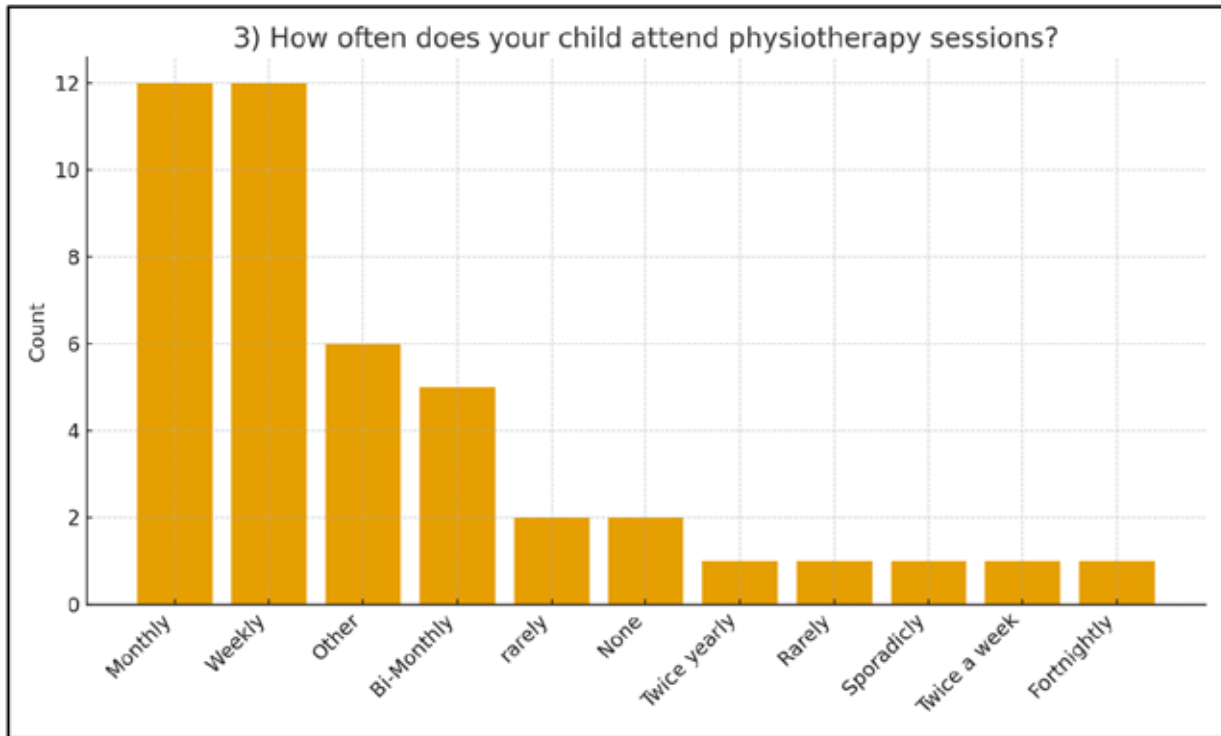


Figure 1. The majority of children require physiotherapy sessions weekly (27%) or monthly (27%).

How much does each physiotherapy session cost?

Metric	Value
N	46
Mean	€80.43
Median	€90.0
Std Dev	€20.0
Min	€50.0
Max	€100.0

How far do you typically travel for your child's physiotherapy appointments?

Table 4. Fifty-nine percent of survey respondents (n=46) travel up to 20 Km to receive physiotherapy for their child.

Response	Count	Percent
1-10km	16	34.8%
11-20km	11	23.9%
More than 30km	10	21.7%
21-30km	9	19.6%

Who pays for your child's physiotherapy?

Table 5. Parents of guardians pay the majority (63%) of physiotherapy costs.

Response	Count	Percent
Parent or Guardian	29	63.0%
HSE	14	30.4%
Publicly Funded	3	6.5%

How easy is it to secure a physiotherapy appointment for your child?

Table 6. Eighty-five percent of survey respondents (n=46) find it hard or extremely difficult to secure a physiotherapy appointment for their child.

Response	Count	Percent
Hard	24	52.2%
Extremely Difficult	15	32.6%
Easy	6	13.0%
Unable to Get Appointment	1	2.2%

Has the special mobility trike received through Variety’s Recycle Mobility Programme improved your child’s physical well-being?

Table 7. Eighty percent of respondents strongly agree, while 20% agree that the Variety Recycle Mobility Programme has improved the physical wellbeing of their child.

Response	Count	Percent
Strongly Agree	37	80.4%
Agree	9	19.6%

Has the special mobility trike improved your child’s mental well-being?

Table 8. Seventy-six percent of respondents strongly agree, while 20% agree that the Variety Recycle Mobility Programme has improved the mental wellbeing of their child.

Response	Count	Percent
Strongly Agree	35	76.1%
Agree	9	19.6%
No Change	2	4.3%

Do you believe the trike plays an important role in your child’s physiotherapy needs?

Table 9. Eighty-nine percent of respondents strongly agree, while 11% agree that the Variety Recycle Mobility Programme plays an important role in mitigating the physiotherapy needs of their child.

Response	Count	Percent
Strongly Agree	41	89.1%
Agree	5	10.9%

How often does your child use the special mobility trike?

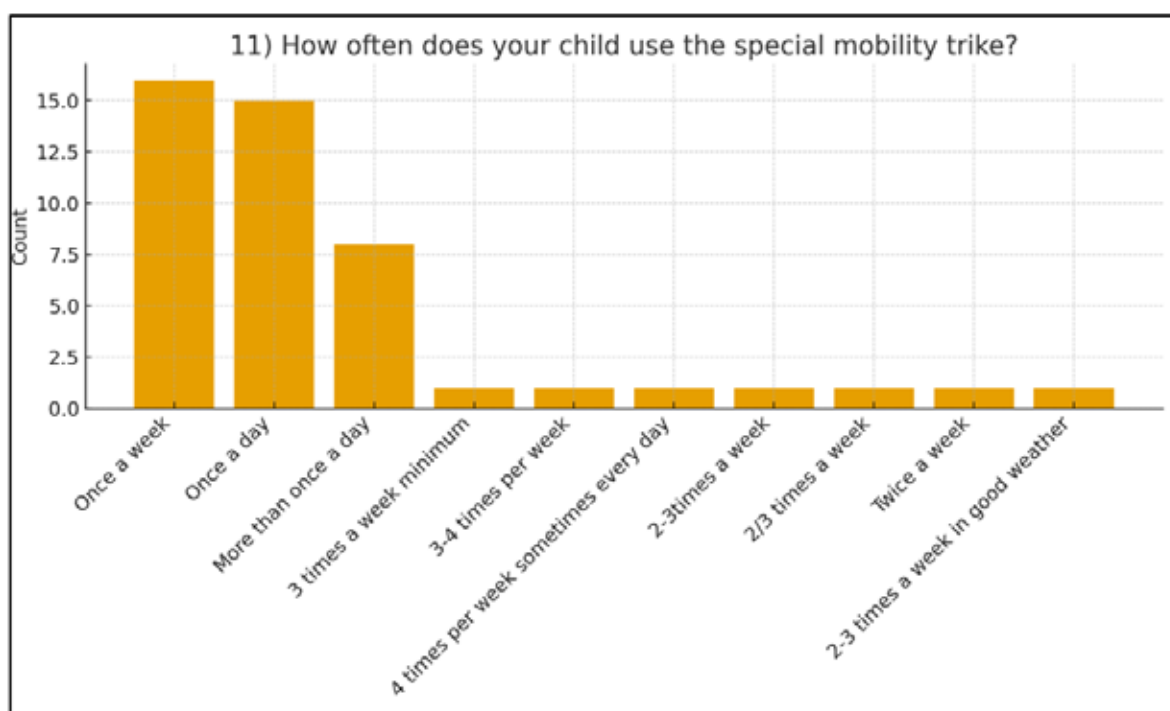


Figure 2. Thirty-five percent of respondents report the trikes being used weekly, while 33% report daily use.

Do you believe the trike helps your child participate more in activities with family and friends outside the home?

Table 10. Sixty-seven percent of respondents strongly agree, while 30% agree that the Variety Recycle Mobility Programme helps their child to participate in more activities with family and friends outside of the family home.

Response	Count	Percent
Strongly Agree	31	67.4%
Agree	14	30.4%
No Change	1	2.2%

Additional Comparisons - Cost of physiotherapy per session by county

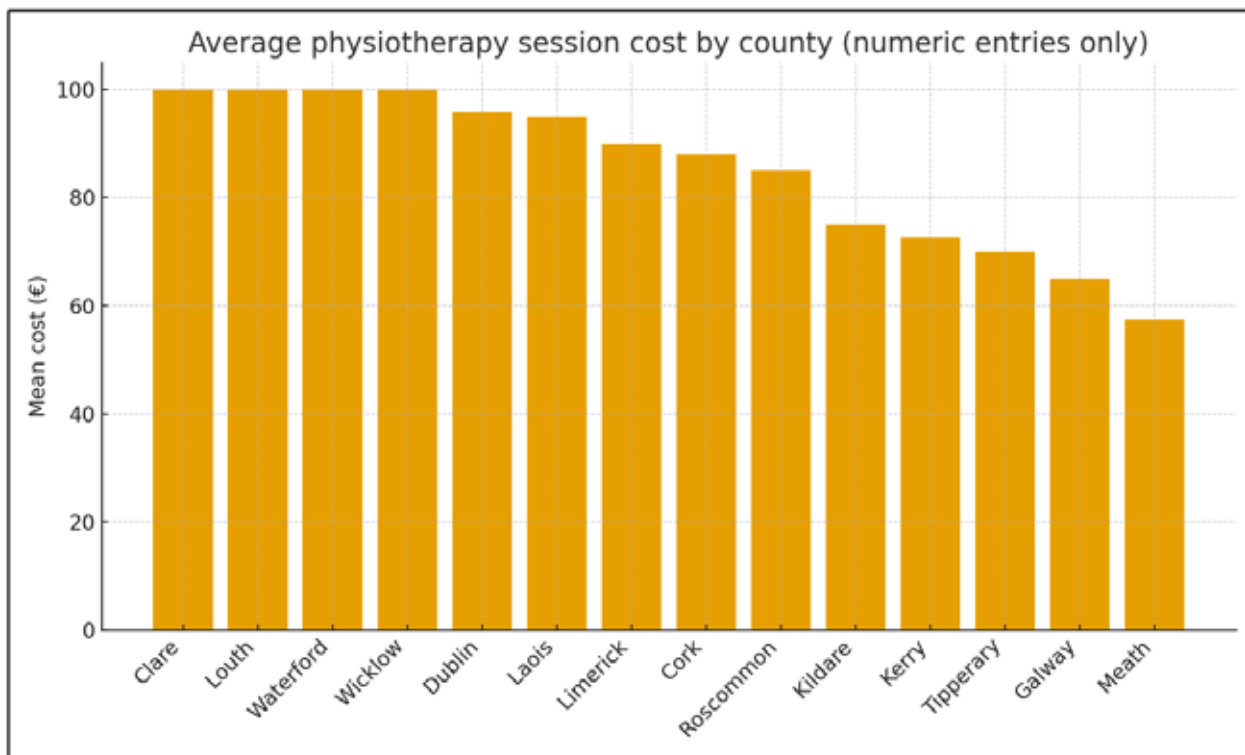


Figure 3. Respondents living in Clare, Louth, Waterford, Wicklow, pay €100 per physiotherapy session, while those residing in Meath pay the least at €50 per session.

Trike Use vs. Reported Benefits

Parents/guardians strongly endorse the trike’s benefits. Physical wellbeing and the trike’s role in reducing the need for physiotherapy were universally positive (100%) among respondents; mental wellbeing was also very high (95.7% overall), with a small number reporting No Change. Where sample sizes are larger (Once a week, Once a day, More than once a day), Strongly Agree rates remain high, especially for Once a day use. Several additional use categories exist with N=1, which are positive but too small to interpret beyond noting consistency.

Return on Investment (ROI) from the Variety Ireland Trike Scheme

This data is based on the October 2025 survey of 46 families that demonstrated an average physiotherapy session cost of €80.43 (12 sessions per year = €965.16 per child per year). It provides the most accurate estimate to date of the return on investment (ROI) from providing adapted trikes to children with disabilities, both individually and in school-class settings.

2025 Findings

- Children reached: 1,944 (174 individuals + 1,770 school pupils)
- Trikes provided: 233 (174 individual + 59 school-class)
- Government investment (assumed €1,000/trike): €233,000
- Annual physiotherapy baseline: €965.16 per child (12 sessions × €80.43)

Table 11. ROI Estimates (2025). In 2025, every €1 invested returns between €2.8 to €4.1 in combined direct and indirect savings.

Scenario	Investment (€)	Direct Savings (€)	Indirect Savings (€)	Total Savings (€)	ROI (per €1)
Conservative	233,000	311,669	335,100	646,769	2.78
Moderate	233,000	511,052	441,000	952,052	4.09

Interpretation

Using the average survey-based physiotherapy cost, the Variety Trike Scheme delivers significant savings. In 2025, every €1 invested returns between €2.8 to €4.1 in combined direct and indirect savings. Over a 3 to 5-year trike lifespan, cumulative ROI could rise from between €8 and €20, per €1 invested. These calculations exclude long-term benefits such as improved child health, reduced caregiver burden, and greater community inclusion, which would further increase the true value of the scheme.

Conclusion

The survey results highlight the significant variation in physiotherapy access and costs faced by families across Ireland. While some families report affordable or state-funded sessions, many rely on private services with considerable out-of-pocket expenses, often linked to location, diagnosis, or frequency of physiotherapy use. Travel distance adds an additional burden for families in some regions; especially those removed from large urban centres. Importantly, the Variety trike scheme appears to be well-received: many parents and guardians believe the trikes improve their children's physical and mental wellbeing, support participation in family and community activities, and complement physiotherapy programmes. Although the sample size is modest, these findings point to a strong case for continued investment in mobility supports such as trikes, alongside efforts to address inequities in physiotherapy provision. The insights from this survey will help Variety Ireland and its partners advocate for better, fairer, and more sustainable support for children with significant disabilities and their families.

Appendix

Age of Child

Age in years	Count	Percent
6	6	13.0%
7	5	10.9%
8	5	10.9%
13	4	8.7%
14	4	8.7%
10	4	8.7%
9	3	6.5%
19	3	6.5%
11	3	6.5%
4	2	4.3%
5	2	4.3%
3	2	4.3%
16	1	2.2%
15	1	2.2%
17	1	2.2%

Summary Statistics of Age

Metric	Value
N (numeric)	46
Mean	9.74
Median	9.0
Std Dev	4.31
Min	3.0
Max	19.0

Professional Diagnosis of Child

Response	Count	Percent
Cerebral Palsy	6	23.7%
Spina Bifida	2	4.2%
Autism	1	2.2%
1Q43-44Micro deletion syndrome	1	2.2%
spinal muscular atrophy type 1.	1	2.2%
CACNA1A gene disorder	1	2.2%
Sotos syndrome; hearing impairment; ASD; Kyphosis	1	2.2%
MSL3 Syndrome	1	2.2%
Hereditary motor and sensory neuropathy	1	2.2%
Left side hemiplegia cerebral palsy	1	2.2%
Down syndrome	5	10.5%
ASD Level 3, Moderate to severe ID, Hypermobility	1	2.2%
Global developmental delay	1	2.2%
Cerebral palsy and visual impairment	1	2.2%
Arthrogryposis	1	2.2%

Professional Diagnosis of Child cont'd

Down Syndrome, Scoliosis, Hip dysplasia, Spinal cord compression C1	1	2.2%
SNC2A genetic mutation de novo, west syndrome, global developmental delay	1	2.2%
PURA Syndrome	1	2.2%
ADNP Syndrome	1	2.2%
Hereditary spastic paraplegia	1	2.2%
Global Developmental Delay	1	2.2%
Cerebral palsy and Autism	1	2.2%
ASD, DCD, Dyslexia. Hypermobility, precocious puberty	1	2.2%
Down Syndrome and Autism	1	2.2%
Down Syndrome and Infantile Spasms	1	2.2%
Russell sliver syndrome	1	2.2%
Cerebral palsy and Autism	1	2.2%
Down Syndrome, Autism, kyphoscoliosis.	1	2.2%
ASD, Moderate GDD. Epilepsy, hypotonia.	1	2.2%
Gnao1	1	2.2%
Trisomy 21 and 14Q deletion	1	2.2%

Home County of Child

Response	Count	Percent
Dublin	7	15.2%
Cork	5	10.9%
Kerry	4	8.7%
Meath	4	8.7%
Galway	4	8.7%
Kildare	4	8.7%
Tipperary	3	6.5%
Laois	2	4.3%
Waterford	2	4.3%
Wicklow	2	4.3%
Roscommon	2	4.3%
Louth	2	4.3%
Armagh	1	2.2%
Limerick	1	2.2%
Clare	1	2.2%
Antrim	1	2.2%
Down	1	2.2%

Does your child currently require physiotherapy for their condition?

Response	Count	Percent
Yes	44	95.7%
No	2	4.3%

Has a medical professional recommended physiotherapy for your child as part of their physical well-being?

Response	Count	Percent
Yes	43	93.5%
No	3	6.5%

How often does your child attend physiotherapy sessions?

Response	Count	Percent
Monthly	12	27.3%
Weekly	12	27.3%
Other	6	13.6%
Bi-Monthly	5	11.4%
Rarely	2	4.5%
None	2	4.5%
Twice yearly	1	2.3%
Rarely	1	2.3%
Sporadically	1	2.3%
Twice a week	1	2.3%
Fortnightly	1	2.3%

How much does each physiotherapy session cost?

Response €	Count	Percent
50	11	23.9%
Over €100	11	23.9%
90	8	17.4%
80	8	17.4%
100	5	10.9%
60	2	4.3%
70	1	2.2%

Summary statistics

Metric	Value
N (numeric)	46
Mean	80.43
Median	90.0
Std Dev	20.0
Min	50.0
Max	100.0

How far do you typically travel for your child's physiotherapy appointments?

Response	Count	Percent
1-10km	16	34.8%
11-20km	11	23.9%
More than 30km	10	21.7%
21-30km	9	19.6%

Summary statistics

Metric	Value
N (numeric)	46
Mean	20.65
Median	20.0
Std Dev	8.79
Min	10.0
Max	30.0

Who pays for your child's physiotherapy?

Response	Count	Percent
Parent or Guardian	29	63.0%
HSE	14	30.4%
Publicly Funded	3	6.5%

How easy is it to secure a physiotherapy appointment for your child?

Response	Count	Percent
Hard	24	52.2%
Extremely Difficult	15	32.6%
Easy	6	13.0%
Unable to Get Appointment	1	2.2%

Has the special mobility trike received through Variety Ireland's Recycle Mobility Programme improved your child's physical well-being?

Response	Count	Percent
Strongly Agree	37	80.4%
Agree	9	19.6%

Has the special mobility trike improved your child's mental well-being?

Response	Count	Percent
Strongly Agree	35	76.1%
Agree	9	19.6%
No Change	2	4.3%

Do you believe the trike plays an important role in your child's physiotherapy needs?

Response	Count	Percent
Strongly Agree	41	89.1%
Agree	5	10.9%

How often does your child use the special mobility trike?

Response	Count	Percent
Once a week	16	34.8%
Once a day	15	32.6%
More than once a day	8	17.4%
3 times a week minimum	1	2.2%
3-4 times per week	1	2.2%
4 times per week some- times every day	1	2.2%
2-3times a week	1	2.2%
2/3 times a week	1	2.2%
Twice a week	1	2.2%
2-3 times a week in good weather	1	2.2%

Do you believe the trike helps your child participate more in activities with family and friends outside the home?

Response	Count	Percent
Strongly Agree	31	67.4%
Agree	14	30.4%
No Change	1	2.2%

Additional Comparisons - Cost of physiotherapy per session by county (numeric entries only)

County	N	Mean	Median	Min	Max
Clare	1	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Louth	2	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Waterford	2	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Wicklow	2	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Dublin	7	95.71	100.0	90.0	100.0
Laois	2	95.0	95.0	90.0	100.0
Limerick	1	90.0	90.0	90.0	90.0
Cork	5	88.0	100.0	50.0	100.0
Roscommon	2	85.0	85.0	80.0	90.0
Kildare	4	75.0	80.0	50.0	90.0
Kerry	4	72.5	80.0	50.0	80.0
Tipperary	3	70.0	60.0	50.0	100.0
Galway	4	65.0	65.0	50.0	80.0
Meath	4	57.5	50.0	50.0	80.0

ROI Assumptions and Methods

- Recommended physiotherapy: 12 sessions per year per child
- Average cost per session (2025): €80.43 (€965.16 per child per year)
- Direct savings reflect substitution of paid physiotherapy by trike use:
 - Individuals: 33% (conservative) to 50% (moderate)
 - School classes: 15% (conservative) to 25% (moderate)
- Indirect savings (family/community benefits):
 - Individuals: €400–€500 per child per year
 - School pupils: €150–€200 per child per year
- *Investment: €1,000 per trike (individual and school-class units).*



Variety Ireland's Recycle Mobility Programme 2025 Trike Impact Report - Interview Themes

Variety Ireland's Recycle Mobility Programme 2025 Trike Impact Report - Interview Themes

RCSI Centre for Positive Health Sciences - October 2025

This report presents findings from a qualitative study conducted with families whose children received customised trikes from Variety, the children's charity. The aim was to explore the impact of the trikes on both the child and the wider family unit. In-depth interviews were conducted with eight families, and thematic analysis was used to identify recurring patterns and insights. The report is divided into two sections: Impact on the Child and Impact on the Family, each containing three key themes supported by anonymised quotes from male and female participants.

Impact on the Child

1. Physical Health and Mobility

Children with physical disabilities often face significant barriers to movement, exercise, and physical development. The trikes provided by Variety offer a safe, enjoyable, and therapeutic way to build muscle tone, improve coordination, and support physiotherapy goals. These trikes allow children to engage in physical activity that would otherwise be inaccessible, contributing to long-term improvements in strength and mobility.

"The cycling has had a massive impact – her coordination and posture have improved. She's now walking more confidently with support." – Participant A

"He's now able to self-propel and steer himself, which he couldn't do before. It's helping him build leg strength and balance." – Participant B

"Her walking programme has progressed since she started using the trike. It's the only exercise she enjoys and sticks with." – Participant C

2. Psychological and Emotional Wellbeing

The trikes offer children a rare opportunity for independence and self-expression, contributing to emotional wellbeing and confidence. For many children, the trike is one of the few activities they can initiate and enjoy independently. This autonomy fosters joy, motivation, and a sense of control, which are critical for emotional development.

“She’s out, she’s laughing, she’s ringing the bell – it’s joy, it’s freedom. She feels like she’s doing something on her own.” – Participant D

“He presses ‘bike’ on his device because he wants to go out – it’s his choice. That sense of control is huge for him.” – Participant E

“She smiles when she gets the message that she was on her bike today. It’s a highlight of her week.” – Participant F

3. Social Inclusion and Participation

Participation in shared activities is vital for social development. The trikes enable children to engage with peers and family in inclusive ways that promote belonging. Children who were previously excluded from outdoor play or group outings now have a way to join in, reducing isolation and increasing visibility in their communities.

“She’s not boxed off anymore – she’s part of the gang now. She cycles with her siblings and neighbours.” – Participant G

“He’s included in more than he would have been – he’s out on the campus with others, not just watching from the sidelines.” – Participant H

“She meets people she wouldn’t otherwise – the bike brings her into the community. People stop and talk to her now.” – Participant I

Impact on the Family

1. Family Bonding and Shared Activities

The trikes have transformed family dynamics by enabling shared outdoor activities that were previously inaccessible. Families can now cycle together, creating bonding moments and reducing the logistical and emotional barriers often associated with disability. These shared experiences strengthen relationships and promote a sense of normalcy.

“We can do things together now – she’s not boxed off anymore. It’s something we all enjoy.” – Participant J

“It’s created happiness – we’re active as a family. We go out more often now because it’s easier.” – Participant K

“We go for a cycle with our other kids – he’s part of it now. It’s no longer one parent staying behind.” – Participant L

2. Sibling Relationships and Inclusion

Siblings of children with disabilities often experience complex emotions around inclusion and difference. The trikes help bridge these gaps, allowing siblings to engage in shared play and activities, fostering empathy, pride, and a sense of equality. Seeing their brother or sister participate fully in family life enhances sibling relationships.

“Her siblings just think it’s brilliant – she’s part of the gang now. They cheer her on when she cycles.” – Participant M

“They include him and see him enjoying it – it’s pride and joy. It’s helped them understand his abilities better.” – Participant N

“She’s just another sibling now – ringing her bell and cycling with them. It’s no longer ‘she can’t do that.’” – Participant O

3. Reduced Stress and Increased Empowerment

For parents and caregivers, the trikes alleviate stress by providing a safe, joyful outlet for their children. They also empower families to engage more fully in community life and reduce the emotional burden of exclusion and logistical challenges. The trikes offer a sense of progress and possibility, helping families feel more connected and supported.

“It makes me less stressed – she has something that brings her joy and gets her moving.” – Participant P

“We’re proud – he’s included and enjoying himself. It’s something we never thought possible.” – Participant Q

“It helps with transitions – she’ll jump on the bike when she won’t walk. It’s a lifesaver some days.” – Participant R



 **variety**
the children's charity
Re**cycle** Mobility Programme





Summary

Summary

Variety Ireland Trike Impact Report (2025)

Prepared for Variety – The Children’s Charity of Ireland
In collaboration with Royal College of Surgeons Ireland.
Research Leads: Dr Mary Collins & Dr Pádraic Dunne,
RCSI Centre for Positive Health Sciences

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1. Executive Summary

This report builds on findings from Variety Ireland’s Recycle Mobility Programme evaluation (2024), a Quantitative Survey & Interview Study was completed by RCSI researchers in 2025 to assess the impact of adapted tricycles on children with disabilities and their families.

Key findings:

- 100% of parents report improved physical wellbeing for their child.
- 96% report enhanced mental wellbeing.
- 89% agree trikes play an important role in physiotherapy.
- Families describe trikes as “life-changing,” promoting inclusion, joy, confidence, and family bonding.
- ROI analysis indicates €2.8–€4.1 in savings per €1 invested, rising to €8–€20 over 3–5 years.

2. Introduction

The Variety Ireland Recycle Mobility Programme provides adapted tricycles to children with disabilities, enabling participation in physical activity, family outings, and inclusive play. This integrated report combines data from quantitative surveys (n=46) and qualitative interviews (n=8 families) to give a full picture of physical, psychological, and family outcomes.

3. Methodology Overview

Source	Year	Type	Sample	Focus
Variety Recycle Mobility Evaluation (RCSI/TCD)	2024	Mixed methods	27 families	Longitudinal wellbeing study
RCSI Survey	2025	Quantitative	46 respondents	Physiotherapy access, costs, ROI
RCSI Interview Study	2025	Qualitative	8 families	In-depth impact on child & family life

4. Impact on the Physical Wellbeing of the Child

100% of parents agreed that the trike improved their child's physical wellbeing. 89% agreed it played an important physiotherapy role. Average physiotherapy session cost: €80.43; trikes significantly reduced the need for professional sessions.

Figure 1. Improvement in Physical Wellbeing

Category	% Strongly Agree	% Agree	Total Positive Impact
Physical Wellbeing Improved	80%	20%	100%

“Her coordination and posture have improved — she’s now walking more confidently.”

“It’s helping him build leg strength and balance.”

“Her walking programme progressed since she started using the trike — it’s the only exercise she enjoys.”

5. Impact on Emotional and Psychological Wellbeing

96% of parents reported improved mental wellbeing, with 67% strongly agreeing their child participates more with family and friends.

“She’s out, she’s laughing, ringing the bell — it’s joy, it’s freedom.”

“He presses ‘bike’ on his device — it’s his choice. That sense of control is huge.”

“She smiles every time she gets on it. It’s the highlight of her week.”

“It makes me less stressed – she has something that brings her joy.”

6. Impact on the Family

87.5% of parents reported improvements in their own wellbeing and family quality of life. Families describe more outdoor activity, improved communication, and emotional connection.

“We can do things together now – it’s something we all enjoy.”

“Her siblings cheer her on – she’s part of the gang now.”

“It makes me less stressed – she has something that brings her joy.”

7. Return on Investment (ROI) and Policy Implications

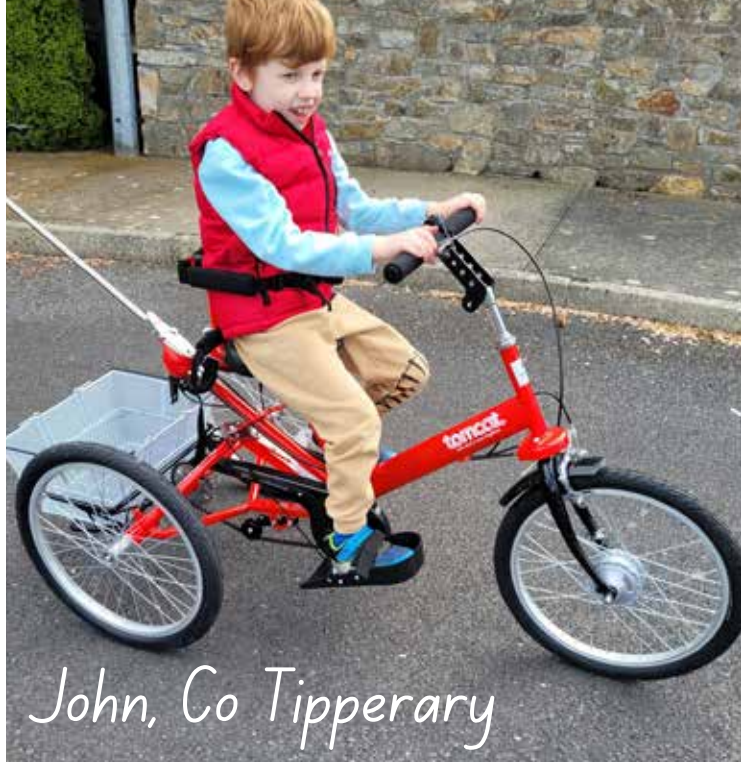
Scenario	Investment (€)	Total Savings (€)	ROI per €1
Conservative	233,000	646,769	2.78
Moderate	233,000	952,052	4.09

8. Conclusions and Recommendations

Trikes provided through Variety Ireland’s Recycle Mobility Programme have a transformative impact on children and families. Children gain strength, independence, and joy; families experience bonding, pride, and reduced stress; and society benefits from inclusion and long-term cost savings.

Recommendations:

1. Expand the trike programme nationwide with integrated physiotherapy pathways.
2. Incorporate trikes into school-based inclusion and wellbeing programmes.
3. Develop community trike hubs for families without storage access.
4. Continue longitudinal research on mobility, wellbeing, and family flourishing.



John, Co Tipperary



Kate, Co Kildare

Family Testimonials

A few words and photos from just some of the recipients of mobility trikes funded through Variety Ireland's Recycle Mobility Programme, who took part in the RCSI Impact Report Survey & Interviews 2025



Aoife, Co Kerry



Cillian, Co Dublin



Maddie, Co Laois

"I really wasn't sure how Maddie would manage on the trike, but she has taken to it so well! It is great that she can now cycle down the road and around our home with assistance, while enjoying the experience of actually riding a bike. Without the Recycle Mobility Programme we would never have even imagined Maddie would be able to use a trike, let alone been able to afford the actual one she needs for her condition."

Gemma, Maddie's Mum

Eoin, Co Wicklow

"The newfound freedom & delight Eoin gets from his trike is wonderful. We are seeing his personality shine bright while he has fun with his big brother too.

The immeasurable benefits extend to all the family.

Our immense gratitude to all involved in supporting this initiative – you are the positive change we need!"

Majella, Eoin's Mum





Daisy, Co Cork

“People should know how wonderful and important this initiative is in helping parent’s like me with children with disabilities. Before Daisy received her new trike, she was severely restricted to the type of exercise she could get or wanted to do This made her sad, which had an emotional knock-on to both her mental and physical wellbeing, as well as my own.

Since her trike landed, all she wants to do is be outdoors cycling. This means together we can explore new greenways and parks which has brought that beautiful smile back to her face. It has also meant that she can be included in cycling activities with other family members. Prior to this she was an onlooker which made her upset. The Recycle Mobility Programme is simply amazing and it has provided my daughter with a new lease of life. Not only have we seen a massive improvement in her mental wellbeing where she now laughs more, but it’s been great as it’s a huge part of her daily exercise route.

I would encourage any parents with children who have disabilities who cannot ride a traditional bike to come forward and apply for a special mobility trike. They simply are gamechangers for families with children with disabilities!”

Tanya, Daisy’s Mum

A Word on Behalf of the HSE



Dr Aoife O'Donohue
Stiúrthóir Náisiúnta Cúntóir, Seirbhísí
Mhíchumas, Rochtain agus Imeascadh
/
Assistant National Director, Access
& Integration - Disability Services,
Transformation & Programme
Coordination



As Assistant National Director for Disability within the HSE, I am proud to commend the exceptional progress delivered to date through the Recycle Mobility Programme in partnership with Variety - the Children's Charity. This initiative has already had a transformative impact on the lives of children and young people with disabilities across the country, enabling greater independence, confidence, and participation in their communities.

By refurbishing and re-issuing previously used mobility aids, the programme not only maximises the use of valuable equipment, but also ensures that children receive timely access to the supports they need. Families have benefited enormously from improved choice and the reassurance of knowing that sustainable solutions are being prioritised. This collaborative effort reflects the best of our shared values: innovation, inclusion, and stewardship of public resources.

Looking forward to 2026 and beyond, we welcome the ambitious plans to expand this programme nationally, strengthen pathways, and increase the range of equipment available. These developments will further enhance quality of life for children while supporting a more circular and environmentally responsible healthcare system.

The HSE remains committed to working closely with Variety Ireland to advance this important work and ensure every child can reach their full potential.



Dr Aoife O'Donohue, Assistant National Director, Access & Integration - Disability Services, Transformation & Programme Coordination(HSE) at a Recycle Mobility trike presentation at Mayo Autism Camp, M.A.C

Acknowledgment

We would like to thank and acknowledge the generous support and funding The Recycle Mobility Programme has received from many different sources including: The HSE, Department of Children, Disability and Equality, Department of Transport, corporate partners and of course the incredible general public. Thank You All!

Final Word

The Recycle Mobility Programme, which is joint initiative, supported by the HSE, The Department of Children, Disability and Equality and The Department of Transport provides subsistence funding towards the cost of special adapted mobility bikes for families, schools and organisations who look after the needs of people with mobility issues. This ensures that all people regardless of their ability have equal access to cycling inclusion. This supports a sustainable business model where products are reused, repaired, or recycled, keeping value in the economy longer. Also, by preventing equipment going to landfill and extending lifespan of each trike, there are environmental savings which often translate indirectly into financial benefits (less waste/disposal cost).

The control element of the Programme ensures that all special mobility items adhere to strict EU legislation governing the compliance of special mobility trikes for European member states. The Variety – the Children’s Charity of Ireland’s Recycle Mobility Programme, which is a cross-government department supported initiative, ensures it works within the framework of the government’s “National Human Rights Strategy for Disabled People 2025-2030.”

The monitorisation of the Programme also identifies the number and geographical location of special mobility trikes being allocated to people with mobility issues along with their confirmed disability. This helps all stakeholders to identify which individual/groups are accessing and benefiting from the programme.

The financial benefit to all stakeholders based on ROI analysis indicates €2.8–€4.1 in savings per €1 invested, rising to €8–€20 over 3–5 years (RCSI 2025). This coupled with overseeing governance and administrating the programme also offers a further €2 per €1 euro invested in The Recycle Mobility Programme, year on year.

The programme evidentially contributes to improving the mental and physical well-being of people with mobility issues and other family members. It also ensures people have equal access to cycling and inclusion so they can be included in cycling activities with other family members or groups. The combined ROI to all stakeholders presents a minimum of €5 per €1 invested for new entrants into the programme with this rising to €8–€20 over 3–5 years.



Supported by



An Roinn Leanaí, Míchumais
agus Comhionannais
Department of Children,
Disability and Equality



An Roinn Iompair
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