Inclusion, Diversity and Integration Policy

Sport is a universal language that should offer the opportunity for people to engage and connect with others regardless of cultural or ethnic origin, gender, age, sexual orientation or religious belief. It brings communities together and provides inspiration for others to promote and organise sporting activities. The GAA, Rounders Council of Ireland, GAA Handball Ireland, Ladies Gaelic Football Association and the Camogie Association Inclusion and Integration Strategy seeks to “offer an inclusive and welcoming environment for everyone to participate in our Games and Culture”.

Our aspiration is to be in a position to state that:

‘We have an outstanding reputation for attracting and retaining members in all our sports from all sections of the community. We welcome people of all nationalities, ethnicities, religions, ages and abilities into our sports and we make it easy for everybody to take part. We champion equality within the Irish sporting landscape and communities overseas. We work with the GAA family to make sure that we offer an inclusive and welcoming environment for everyone’.

As with any strategy it is important to ensure that our members and the general public understand what we mean when we state that we wish to aspire to the principles of “Inclusion”, “Diversity” and “Integration”. Inclusion essentially means people having a sense of belonging, of being comfortable in being part of what they value. Diversity means being aware of, accommodating and celebrating difference. Integration in this instance; means the integration of the family of Gaelic Games i.e., the GAA, the Rounders Council of Ireland, GAA Handball Ireland, the Ladies Gaelic Football Association and the Camogie Association Inclusion and Diversity in many ways go hand-in-hand. Real inclusion reflects diversity, i.e. it aims to offer that sense of belonging to everyone, irrespective of gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, race or membership of the Traveller community and/or disability.

INCLUSION

Gaelic Games have been at the heart of communities throughout Ireland for over 125 years. They have never been solely about sport or recreation. They have been about building a sense of community and identity, at both local and national levels. In more recent times our Gaelic Games’ Associations have sought to positively include people with disabilities in our Games. These efforts include Wheelchair Hurling/Camogie, Adapted Football and Blind Rounders. ‘Have-a-Go/International Days’ which give members of Minority Ethnic communities a chance to try out various Gaelic Games’ activities. Equality and Disability Awareness Training have been delivered to GAA, the Rounders Council of Ireland, GAA Handball Ireland, the Ladies Gaelic Football Association and the Camogie Association personnel while the Give Respect – Get Respect Initiative at Senior Intercounty matches clearly reflect the message that our Associations understand our responsibility in recognising and promoting diversity on the island of Ireland.
DIVERSITY
We have always had diversity in Ireland and in the recent decade that diversity has become more varied and complex. Diversity is a positive enriching source of vitality and growth, but it can also be a source of conflict and hurt. Many differences such as language, ethnicity, and social class are linked, as are parallel issues such as identity, educational attainment and the ability to participate fully in the economic, social, cultural and sporting landscape within society.

Why is it important that Gaelic Games reflect the diverse Ireland that we live in today?
• Our Clubs are there to serve their community and many are the hub of the community
• Our Associations are inclusive organisations
• It’s the right thing to do

INTEGRATION
The Integration of the family of Gaelic Games has been in operation in Ulster since 2002 with the aim of giving a shared focus to the development and promotion of all Gaelic Games and Culture. The GAA, the Rounders Council of Ireland, GAA Handball Ireland, the Ladies Gaelic Football Association and the Camogie Association are working at national level to develop an integration strategy that will focus on co-operation in various areas such as coaching, games development, public relations, marketing, club governance, youth development, refereeing and strategic planning. Integration is not just about assimilation, it is about co-operation. Each organisation and sporting code will keep their identity, while working together on a broad range of issues to enhance the promotion of Gaelic Games.

WHY INTEGRATE?
The integration process draws together the resources and talent of the five organisations and assist all codes in developing their games, thus increasing grassroots participation. In the last few years Inclusion & Integration Committees have been established at Provincial and County level with representatives from the GAA, the Rounders Council of Ireland, GAA Handball Ireland, the Ladies Gaelic Football Association and the Camogie Association working together to advance and promote meaningful integration.

It is the intension that Integration will:
• Create a ‘family’ focus in all associations
• Create a new focus in coaching and games development
• Enhance club development
• Better promote the health and wellbeing agenda
• Promote equality
• Bring a holistic approach to the future direction of Gaelic Games

The establishment in recent years of Inclusion & Integration Committees at both Provincial and County with representatives from Ladies Gaelic Football and Camogie alongside their colleagues from Football, Hurling, Handball and Rounders will assist us in directing our work so that we may state that:

‘We have an outstanding reputation for attracting and retaining members in all our sports from all sections of the community. We welcome people of all nationalities, ethnicities, religions, ages and abilities into our sports and we make it easy for everybody to take part. We champion equality within the Irish sporting landscape and communities overseas. We work with the GAA family to make sure that we offer an inclusive and welcoming environment for everyone’.
Glossary of Terms

The following glossary is provided as a useful tool for Clubs and Club members seeking to further explore the concept of intercultural dialogue. They are not intended as absolute or legal definitions but as an aid to understanding.

**Assimilation**
Assimilation was an unsuccessful policy aiming to absorb minority ethnic groups into the majority community, with an expectation that communities, their needs and their culture would become invisible or would expire. Assimilation has been largely discredited and has been superseded by concepts of integration, multiculturalism and interculturalism. (See also Integration).

**Asylum seeker**
An asylum seeker is a person seeking to be recognised as a refugee under the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, to which Ireland is a signatory. If someone is granted this recognition, they are granted refugee status and are no longer considered to be an asylum seeker. [See also refugee].

**Black**
People can describe themselves as Black for a number of reasons for example, in relation to their physical appearance, their ancestry, as a political term, or all of the above. Some people use the word Black to mean ‘of African origin’; whereas others mean ‘non-white’ and would include people from Asia for example. Black is not generally considered to be a derogatory term and in Ireland, the term ‘Black and minority ethnic group[s]’ is often used.

**Coloured**
The word ‘coloured’ is now considered to be a derogatory term in Ireland and many other countries. It was frequently used in the US in the past and was enshrined in law in South Africa during the apartheid era when the term Coloureds was one of the four main racial groups identified by law [Blacks, Whites, Coloureds and Indians]. ‘People of Colour’ is an accepted term in some countries but it is not commonly used in Ireland.

**Cultural Diversity**
An all encompassing term that can include ethnic, country or origin, religious diversity and is accepted by the Irish Government as being inclusive of the Traveller community

**Ethnic minority**
In the UK an ethnic group was defined by the House of Lords as a group that regards itself or is regarded by others as a distinct community by virtue of certain characteristics that will help to distinguish the group from the surrounding community. These terms are increasingly used in Ireland, particularly in a legislative context. However, such terminology can be limited in other contexts. Terminology that solely focuses on nationality will become obsolete for most second and third-generation migrants living in Ireland. The term ‘non national’ should be avoided altogether as it is both inaccurate [most people have a nationality from their country of origin] and has negative connotations. ‘Foreign national’ has most recently been used in draft immigration legislation to refer only to people who are not EU citizens and so using the term to refer to all migrants to Ireland may also cause confusion. ‘Non-Irish national’ may be the least problematic.
‘Illegal’
Migrants who do not have a valid work permit or visa in Ireland are sometimes described as ‘illegal’. There are a number of reasons why someone could find themselves in such a situation, sometimes through workers whose employer did not renew their work permit. In this context, an alternative to the use of the term ‘illegal’ is ‘undocumented’. Asylum seekers are sometimes been described as ‘illegal’. This is a misnomer. Asylum seekers cannot be illegal as everyone has a recognized human right to seek asylum. There are then processes in place to decide whether an asylum seeker has met the definition of refugee.

Integration
The concept of integration is a complex one and while there are many different views as to what constitutes integration, it is still part of an ongoing debate in Ireland. In the most simplistic terms integration can be a one way process [in effect assimilation] where minority communities are expected to adapt or change without any expectation of change from the state or majority communities. On the other hand, ‘integration can be a multi-facetted, intercultural process that requires the state, majority and minority ethnic communities to work together and asylum to make accommodation of diversity, without glossing over challenges and barriers such as extremism or racism.’ [See also assimilation and interculturalism].

Intercultural Dialogue
‘Intercultural dialogue’ aims to allow individuals and groups to engage in an open conversation about living and working in a multi-ethnic society. It is a key component of interculturalism [see below]. 2008 was designated European Year of Intercultural Dialogue by the European Union.

Interculturalism
Interculturalism is essentially about interaction between majority and minority cultures to foster understanding and respect. It is about ensuring that cultural diversity is acknowledged and catered for. Developing a more inclusive and intercultural society is about inclusion by design, not as an add-on or afterthought. It is essentially about creating the conditions for interaction, equality of opportunity, understanding and respect.

Irish Born Child
‘Irish born child’, sometimes referred to as IBC, usually refers to a child born in Ireland whose parents are not Irish or EEA citizens. Prior to January 2005, Irish born children were entitled to Irish citizenship. Following the Citizenship Referendum in 2004, legislation was passed so that it was no longer possible for persons born in Ireland to obtain automatic Irish citizenship.

Leave to remain
Also known as ‘permission to remain.’ This is a statement of the conditions and duration on which a non-EEA citizen is permitted to remain in Ireland. It is given on behalf of the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform in the form of a stamp in the person’s passport. The main grounds upon which further permission to remain can be obtained are: for the purposes of employment, to study, to operate a business or as a dependant family member of an Irish or EEA citizen residing in the State.

Another type of leave to remain is humanitarian leave to remain, typically granted to an seeker who does not succeed in being recognised as a refugee through the asylum process but who is recognised as having humanitarian grounds on which to stay in Ireland.
**Migrant worker**
The term ‘migrant worker’ refers to a person who is to be engaged, is engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a State of which he or she is not a national.

**Minority ethnic group[s]**
Sometimes also described as ‘Black and minority ethnic group[s]’, this means a group whose ethnicity is distinct from that of the majority of the population. The term ‘ethnic minority’ is sometimes used, but the term ‘minority ethnic’ draws attention to the fact that there are majorities and minorities, all with their own ethnicity – white Irish people are the majority ethnic group. Although this is the NCCRI’s preferred term, one limitation of the term ‘minority ethnic group’ is that it can infer that people from a minority ethnic background are immediately identifiable with, or would wish to be identifiable with, a particular group. Service providers should be aware that this is not always the case.

**Multiculturalism**
Multiculturalism acknowledges the need for recognition and celebration of different cultures in a society. Multiculturalism varies from one country to another and has had varied success. One criticism has been that it allowed the growth of parallel communities with little interaction between them, whilst glossing over issues such as racism and economic deprivation.

**National Action Plan Against Racism [NPAR]**

**Prejudice**
Prejudice involves ‘pre-judging’ someone and is frequently used to describe the negative attitudes some people have towards certain groups, such as religious or ethnic groups.

**‘Race’**
The term ‘race’ is a social construct used to classify people. Originally race was based on a false belief that biologically there were different species of humans, with the implication that some races were superior to others. However, research has proved that there is no single race defining gene and therefore no biological basis for dividing the human population into different races. The term race is still widely used in legislation. In Irish equality legislation, the ‘race’ ground is described as “race, colour, nationality, or ethnic or national origins.” The NCCRI encourages the use of inverted commas when use of the word ‘race’ is unavoidable.

**Racism**
Racism is a specific form of discrimination and exclusion faced by minority ethnic groups. It is based on the false belief that some ‘races’ are inherently superior to others because of different skin colour, nationality, ethnic or cultural background. Direct racial discrimination occurs when a person receives less favourable treatment or a less favourable outcome than another person in the same situation on the grounds of their ‘race’. In Irish equality legislation, the ‘race’ ground is described as, “race, colour, nationality, or ethnic or national origins.” Indirect racial discrimination occurs when a seemingly neutral policy or requirement actually has an adverse impact on a person from a minority ethnic background. Indirect discrimination can be unintentional. Institutional or systemic racism refers to the potential of processes and structures of an organisation or system to have racist outcomes, even when unintentional.
**Refugee**
A refugee is a person who has left his/her country and cannot return due to a well-founded fear of persecution on the basis of their race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion. In Ireland, membership of a social group includes, “…membership of a trade union… membership of a group of persons whose defining characteristic is their belonging to the female or male sex or having a particular sexual orientation.” [See also asylum seeker, leave to remain.]

**Religious Diversity**
A feature of the increasing diversity in Ireland is religious diversity. Christianity is the largest religious faith in Ireland and includes Roman Catholics, Protestants and in more recent years, increasing numbers of people from the Christian Orthodox communities from Greece and Eastern Europe. The growth in Pentecostal churches in Ireland has been closely but not exclusively associated with the African community in Ireland. The growing Muslim community in Ireland dates from the 1950’s and the Jewish community dates from the latter half of the nineteenth century. Followers of the Sikh, Hindu, and Bahai and many other religions are also part of the rich religious diversity in Ireland.

**Stereotyping**
Generalising about particular minority ethnic groups and labelling them, thus creating false expectations that individual members of the group will conform to certain [often negative] traits or characteristics which have been attributed to the wider group or community.

**Tolerance**
Tolerance was once a commonly used term in relation to inter-ethnic and inter-faith relations. However, it is now considered inadequate as it assumes superiority of the persons who tolerates towards the supposedly inferior group/person to be tolerated. Tolerance is most often used in connection to something people do not like; as such, to tolerate another person or persons is a minimum standard, not an ideal such as interculturalism [see above].

**Traveller**
Travellers are an indigenous minority, documented as being part of Irish society for centuries. Travellers have a long shared history and value system which make them a distinct group. They have their own language, customs and traditions. Travellers may or may not live a nomadic lifestyle. The recognition of Travellers as an ethnic group is a contested issue. To date the Irish Government has not recognised Travellers as an ethnic group whereas many NGOs, expert and specialised bodies do recognise Travellers as an ethnic group, and in Northern Ireland Irish Travellers are recognised as an ethnic group. Until this issue is resolved, the compromise achieved in the National Action Plan Against Racism is to refer to ‘Cultural and Ethnic Minorities in Ireland’, a term which is inclusive of Travellers, without necessarily recognizing Travellers as an ethnic group.

**Whole Organisation Approach**
A holistic approach to address racism and support inclusive, intercultural strategies within an organisation, with reference to equality policies and equality action plans. The National Action Plan Against Racism uses a whole organization approach with four components: mainstreaming, targeting, benchmarking and engagement.

**Xenophobia**
Fear or hatred of foreigners or people perceived to be from a different country or region.