

In association with



Inclusion and Integration Strategy 2009-2015

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- A person wearing a yellow long-sleeved shirt and a green protective helmet with a white face mask is seated in a wheelchair on an indoor court. They are holding a wooden camogie stick. In the background, another person in a yellow shirt is visible, and a blue helmet is on the left. The court floor is light-colored with yellow lines.
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Introduction to Inclusion and Integration Strategy

The playing of Gaelic Games is a unique and integral part of Irish culture and tradition.

The Gaelic Athletic Association was founded in 1884 to promote Irish pastimes and culture, including the playing of Gaelic Football and Hurling. These games have been played throughout Ireland for many centuries and the founding of the Association put in place a structure that resulted in clubs developing in every town, rural parish and village in Ireland. The games have grown to be the country's most popular sports and over 2,000 clubs exist today.

In 1905, An Cumann Camógaíochta was officially formed to promote the sport of camogie and over 1,000 camogie clubs now exist today. In 1974, Cumann Peil na mBan was formed to promote ladies Gaelic football and it too has witnessed enormous growth in popularity, with over 1,000 clubs in existence. The playing of camogie and ladies Gaelic football are now the most popular women's sports in Ireland.

The popularity of our games abroad, particularly amongst the Irish Diaspora, is also on the increase and there are now over 200 affiliated clubs playing Gaelic games around the world.

Ireland has seen enormous demographic changes in recent years and people of many nationalities and ethnicities have been welcomed to our shores. There are now 300,000 more people living in Ireland since 2002. More of us live in urban areas: six out of every 10 people. We are also a very young population. In 2002, 26% of the population was under 18; in 2008, young people make up 24% of the population. In 2002, there were 274,000 people who were of non-Irish national background; in 2008 there were over 465,000. While the current downturn in the economy will result in the numbers of immigrants decreasing, many thousands have decided to make Ireland their home.

In the last 18 months the GAA has consulted with over 8000 of its members and interest groups at home and abroad in the development of a Strategic Vision and Action Plan 2009-2015. A dedicated section on Inclusion and Integration is included as one of the eleven key themes included in this plan.

During this time a dedicated team representing the GAA, Ladies Football, Camogie, Handball and Rounders was tasked with examining best practices in Inclusion and Integration in Irish sport and in Irish society in order to develop a stand alone inclusion strategy for all organisations of the Gaelic Games Family. The process included submissions from schools, clubs and individuals. These submissions identified challenges, successes and best practices from city, urban and rural contexts.

The team also consulted with experts and representatives from more than 20 organisations and groups and many made formal submissions.

The team developed a specific series of proposals and recommendations to the GAA's National Strategic Planning Group.

The strategy and specific targets were also presented to the leadership of Camogie, Ladies Football, Handball and Rounders and the proposals were adopted by each organisation. The strategy has now been adopted as policy by all organisations and a set of accountable actions have been agreed at National, Provincial, County and Club level within each organisation



Teachtaireacht ón Uachtarán

Message from the GAA President - Níoclás Ó Braonán

Is cúis mhór áthais dom an deis seo a fháil chun cúpla focal a scríobh ar fhoilsiú an phlean thábhachtach seo don Chumann Lúthchleas Gael.

In our 125-year history, the Gaelic Athletic Association has come a long way. It is accepted as one of the great amateur sporting associations in the world today. It is part of the Irish consciousness and plays an influential role in Irish society that extends far beyond our basic aim of promoting Gaelic games.

Throughout the history of the Association, we have always reflected the society in which we operate. Our role in Irish society has changed in many ways in that time. From our formative years, in addition to the on-field success of our two main sports, we have developed into a key social and cultural institution. We provide leadership within the community we serve and we improve the lives of those we come into contact with.

The Association launched its Strategic Vision and Action Plan in November of 2008. The vision for the GAA outlined in this plan is “that everybody has the opportunity to be welcomed to take part in our games and culture, to participate fully, to grow and develop and to be inspired to keep a lifelong engagement with our Association.” Inclusiveness is listed as one of the organisation’s values and states that we welcome everybody to be part of our Association, that we are anti sectarian and we are anti racist. These are strong statements that demonstrate our commitment and our belief that the Association is for all people.

An important commitment outlined in the Strategic, Vision and Action plan is being realised today. The launch of this “Inclusion and Integration Strategy” is the first of its kind, a joint initiative between the GAA, Ladies Football and Camogie in addressing the issue of inclusion in terms of race, ethnicity, the Traveller community, religion, gender, and disability. This document outlines a number of very practical steps that will help those who have little knowledge or experience of our games to become involved.

Many of our clubs around the country have played an active role in inclusion over many years, and in more

recent times, have opened their doors to newcomers to Ireland from all over the world. Cumann na mBunscol has also played a major role in our schools in encouraging children of all nationalities to play our games. Indeed, it is most encouraging to see children of many nationalities participating in the Cumann na mBunscol finals played at Croke Park each year. This plan will help to strengthen all of this good work.

The Ulster Council has also been playing an active role in reaching out to communities who have not been traditionally involved in Gaelic Games, through their various community outreach and diversity initiatives. I would like to compliment them for this work and wish them continued success in this area.

I would like to thank Minister Conor Lenihan for the support that he has given us in developing this strategy. I would also like to thank Ladies Football, Camogie, Rounders and Handball for their contributions and we look forward to working with them in the coming years in putting this plan into action.

I would like to thank all the Government bodies, Non Government Organisation’s and groups who operate in this area on a daily basis, for their input to this strategy. I would also like to thank all those members of the wider community who gave their time freely to meet with our task force to help devise this strategy.

I would like to pay a special compliment to the task force, under the chairmanship of Jerry Grogan, who have put many hours of work in to developing this plan.

In conclusion, we will continue to play our part in ensuring that Ireland is a country where people of all nationalities can participate in Irish culture through the playing of our national games.

Níoclás Ó Braonán
Uachtarán Cumann Lúthchleas Gael



Teachtaireacht ón Uachtarán

Message from the Camogie Association President -
Joan O'Flynn

In recent years, communities in Ireland have become increasingly diverse as more people of various nationalities and ethnic and cultural backgrounds come to live and work here. There is also an emerging understanding that the opportunity to participate in sports is not the same for all groups in society.

It is, therefore, timely that the family of Gaelic Games has come together to establish an Inclusion and Integration Strategy. The Strategy is a clear signal that all of the Gaelic Games bodies will consciously work to actively engage all sections of society in our activities. In doing this we will also seek to ensure that the experience of being involved in Gaelic Games is both welcoming and positive.

Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael is delighted to be a partner in this initiative. The implementation of the

Strategy will enrich and strengthen our capacity, at club, national and overseas levels, to:

- connect people, of different ages, backgrounds and abilities, through our games
- strengthen communities through our games
- develop our games through communities.

Míle buíochas to the diverse range of groups and organisations associated with the Strategy. I am particularly pleased that the experiences of organisations working with new communities or communities who experience social exclusion first hand, informed the development of the Strategy. I look forward to further strengthening links with these groups in the future.

Siobhán Ní Fhloinn

Uachtarán Cumann Camógaíochta na nGael





Teachtaireacht ón Uachtarán

Message from the Ladies Gaelic Football Association
President - Pat Quill

Gaelic Games are an integral part of Irish society and life in communities all over the country and beyond and I am delighted to welcome the launch of this Integration and Inclusion Strategy. This strategy formalises and puts a structure on an approach to encouraging people of all ages and from all backgrounds to take an active part in our wonderful games.

It is encouraging to see that this strategy covers all the GAA family and is the result of widespread discussions and consultations with interest groups and members.

Over the last decade or so, Ireland's population demographic has changed beyond recognition and this has to be welcomed and sports associations must adapt. The influx of non-Irish nationals has made Ireland a more diverse society and presents so many opportunities for our country and sports organisations. The wider GAA family must welcome non-Irish nationals with open arms and we need to examine all our measures to ensure this.

Ladies Gaelic Football has grown exponentially in the last 15 years, and now boasts a membership well in excess of 130,000. The fun and enjoyment our sport brings to young girls and women all over Ireland and overseas is the main reason people are involved in the sport. The growth and success of Ladies Gaelic Football is acknowledged as one of the most important landmarks in the GAA's 125 year history.

For years Ladies Gaelic Football has opened its doors to all who knocked and we abided by the ambition to "offer an inclusive and welcoming environment for everyone", which is the same aim of this strategy. We have introduced a Gaelic4Mothers initiative and a Gaelic4Girls programme which encourage women and girls of all abilities to play sport for fun and get out and be active. That is what sport and Ladies Gaelic Football is all about.

We regularly attract over 20,000 spectators to our All-Ireland finals, a remarkable achievement for a stand alone female sports fixture.

A huge part of our success has been our openness and willingness to adapt to change and we have seen an influx of non-Irish nationals into Ladies Gaelic Football. This is particularly true in schools and at underage level but the challenge has always been to encourage parents of these children to play an active role in the running of our clubs and Association and to ensure their children do not drift away from Gaelic Games and there is a place for everyone. I sincerely hope this is achieved through this Inclusion and Integration Strategy.

Ladies Gaelic Football clubs are springing up all over the globe from Canada to Hong Kong to Sydney. We have been successful in attracting women to our sport who are not part of the Irish Diaspora network and they have become active members and strong advocates of Ladies Gaelic Football. This is testament to the social outlet that Ladies Gaelic Football and Gaelic Games provides and indeed proof that we have a fantastic product.

I would like to thank Tonya Allen, the Leinster Games Development Officer who represented the Ladies Gaelic Football Association at task force meetings and the hard working staff of the Association.

I would like to finish by wishing all those involved well, particularly the Inclusion Officer who will have a massive role in implementing the inclusion modules for schools and the development of welcome packs and encouraging people of all sexes, nationalities, religions and ethnic backgrounds to our sports.

We are fully behind this strategy and I know this strategy will receive the full backing of all Ladies Gaelic Football members as we continue to grow and strive for excellence on and off the playing fields.

Pat Quill

Uachtarán Cumann Peil Gael na mBan



Message from the Minister for Integration

Mr Conor Lenihan TD

I am pleased to welcome the publication of the Inclusion and Integration Strategy of the GAA, the Camogie Association and the Ladies Gaelic Football Association.

We are all familiar with the new diversity which has become such a feature of Irish society over recent years, the extent of which is noted in this document. Our future as a society depends to a crucial degree on the successful integration of these newcomers into Irish life. Everyone has a part to play in bringing about this integration but the role of sporting bodies is among the more important.

When the organisations in the GAA family approached me following my appointment as Minister for Integration and outlined their plans for including immigrants in the activities of their associations, I was most impressed by their vision and by their desire to ensure that these associations were representative of the entire community including newcomers from other countries. It would be totally undesirable if, into the future, immigrants and their

children participated in and followed all sports except Gaelic games and if these games, which are such a major part of our identity as a nation, were to be largely outside their experience. Such an outcome would represent a failure of integration and would be harmful to the social solidarity we want to promote. The GAA and its sister bodies do not want this to happen and they have formulated a Strategy to ensure that it will not.

I am pleased to be associated with this work through providing financial support to the development of this Strategy and some of the elements in it. Subject to ongoing review and the availability of resources, I would hope to be able to support this work financially in the future as well.

I am confident that this Strategy will pay dividends over the years to come in promoting integration and in strengthening the GAA organisations as well.

Conor Lenihan TD
Minister for Integration





Mission, Vision and Values of the GAA

The GAA's values are the heart and soul of our Association. In every club around the world they are what binds us, what makes us unique and what attracts more and more players, members, volunteers and supporters.

Mission

“The GAA is a community based volunteer organisation promoting Gaelic games, culture and lifelong participation.”

The GAA is a volunteer organisation. We develop and promote Gaelic games at the core of Irish identity and culture.

We are dedicated to ensuring that our family of games, and the values we live, enrich the lives of our members, families and the communities we serve.

We are committed to active lifelong participation for all and to providing the best facilities.

We reach out to and include all members of our society. We promote individual development and well-being and strive to enable all our members achieve their full potential in their chosen roles.

Vision

Our vision is that everybody has the opportunity to be welcomed to take part in our games and culture, to participate fully, to grow and develop and to be inspired to keep a lifelong engagement with our Association.



Values

Community Identity

- Community is at the heart of our Association. Everything we do helps to enrich the communities we serve
- We foster a clear sense of identity and place

Amateur Status

- We are a volunteer led organisation
- All our members play and engage in our games as amateurs
- We provide a games programme at all levels to meet the needs of all our players

Inclusiveness

- We welcome everybody to be part of our Association
- We are anti sectarian
- We are anti racist

Respect

- We respect each other on and off the playing fields
- We operate with integrity at all levels
- We listen and respect the views of all

Player Welfare

- We provide the best playing experience for all our players.
- We structure our games to allow players of all abilities reach their potential

Teamwork

- Effective teamwork on and off the field is the cornerstone of our Association
- Ní neart go cur le chéile (There is no strength without working together)



Mission, Vision and Values of the Ladies Gaelic Football Association

Mission

Our mission is to enhance lives and communities for over 100,000 players.

Vision

Over 100,000 members will play Ladies Gaelic Football in one of the leading, dynamic and highest profile sporting organisations in Ireland.



Values

- Treat players, volunteers and administrators with openness and respect
- Continue to provide unique opportunities to impact on the lives of 100,000 girls and young women who play football in spirit of community, fun and friendship
- Value and respect our spectators, sponsors and supporters
- Continue to grow and develop without losing the qualities and values which have made us a great Association
- Develop structures appropriate to the largest female sporting organisation in Ireland
- Provide fair and strong leadership to the sport
- Manage the sport to the highest standards
- Provide open and accountable administration
- Operate a programme of fair and drug free football
- Be innovative, dynamic and make our members proud of the way we lead and develop our sport



Mission, Vision and Values of the Camogie Association

Mission

To lead, develop and promote the Camogie Association in a professional, progressive and inclusive way.

Vision

That Camogie will continue to be the most vibrant, attractive and popular team sport in Ireland for all females.



Values

Players

That the Camogie Association continues to attract girls from all social and ethnic backgrounds to play Camogie and that it nurtures these players.

Volunteers

The Camogie Association promotes and values the expertise, experience and contribution of volunteers at all level of our sport.

Respect

That all players, coaches, referees and administrators will be treated fairly and with respect.

Inclusion

That Camogie is a sport for all, fostering a sense of community and social inclusion wherever it is played.

Quality Standards

The Camogie Association is committed to quality standards in the administration of our sport.

Strategic Intent - Our Aim

To offer an inclusive and welcoming environment for everyone to participate in our games and in our culture

In 2016 we will be able to say: “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. The Association represented by the Ulster Council promotes links with the unionist members of our community”

Key Projects

1. We will appoint a dedicated officer (supported by the Department of Integration) to promote best practice in the area of inclusion within our units. The officer will be a shared resource between the GAA, and Ladies Football and Camogie. The Inclusion officer will be responsible for working with each organisation in the GAA family to carry out the inclusion strategy. The Ulster Provincial Director and Community Development Manager are responsible for engagement with the unionist community.
2. We will assist in the development of inclusion and integration modules for schools in Ireland following consultation with Cumann na mBunscol and other partners in education.
3. We will develop a communication strategy aimed at new and established communities in Ireland. This will focus on enabling all of our units to attract and welcome all communities into the GAA family and into our clubs and to encourage them to participate in our games.
4. We will develop a welcome pack and DVD for Clubs and Schools that will give a basic introduction to Gaelic games. This will be translated into the five most common languages for newcomers to Ireland.
 - a. Polish
 - b. Lithuanian
 - c. Latvian
 - d. Chinese
 - e. French
5. Club Manuals - We will update all our Club Manuals to reflect best practice in the area of Inclusion. All organisations will update their rules to reflect a clear anti sectarian and anti racist, position.
6. The Inclusion Officer will work with the National Coaching and Games team in each sport to develop and promote new games formats. These will be attractive to people with a disability and encourage them to take part.
7. In Ulster, the Association will establish cross community hurling and football teams, urban focused cross-community Gaelic games camps, and continue to develop links with the unionist community.
8. Inclusion training will become a standard component of all Coaching programmes for volunteer officers, Coaching and Games personnel, in all codes.
9. We will put an Inclusion Workgroup in place, including representatives from various bodies and communities, to monitor the implementation of the plan and to provide advice on best practice in the area of inclusion.
10. The ‘have-a-go day’ concept, developed by the Ulster Council, where clubs invite children and parents from all nationalities in the area to participate in a day of fun and activity around the playing of Gaelic Games, will be rolled out around the country. We will also hold ‘International Days’ in our counties.
11. We will develop and launch a respect initiative promoting respect between players, officials, mentors and spectators.

National Initiatives

Initiative	Completion Date
Appointment of an Inclusion officer	Immediate
Publish Joint Inclusion Strategy	Immediate
Community Outreach and Diversity Initiatives as listed in the section titled 'Community Development, Inclusion and Cohesion' in the Ulster Council Strategic Vision and Action Plan, developed and put in place by the Ulster Council	Ongoing
Reaffirm Anti Sectarian/ Anti Racist Status	2009
Club Manual – Reflecting Best Practice	2009
Special Needs games to be developed	2009
Registration / Transfer processes to be reviewed	2009
Representative Inclusion group to be put in place to monitor progress and advise on best practice	2009
Launch of GAA Respect Programme	2009
Establish links with groups promoting social inclusion, anti-racism etc	2009
National initiatives developed to promote greater mixed gender participation in clubs	2009
Communication strategy in place to target new and established communities, as well as non-traditional groups	2011
Coach and officer training completed with 50% of all Coaches trained in Inclusion	2011
Develop and launch education model to promote inclusion	2011
Carry out a comprehensive review of the Strategy	2015
Coach and officer training completed with 100% of volunteer Coaches	2015

Provincial Initiatives

Initiative	Completion Date
Rollout of the Inclusion Strategy in the Provinces	Immediate
Ulster Council outreach initiatives developed, including cross community Gaelic Games initiatives, open days for groups who currently have no connection with the GAA and establishing links with community and other relevant groups to promote mutual understanding and respect	Ongoing
All provincial staff trained in the area of Positive inclusion, inclusive of full time Games Development Staff	2009
All provincial Strategic Plans to include specific pro-inclusion initiatives	2009
Development of Provincial Scór initiatives to increase links with newcomer groups	2011
Volunteer officer training to be completed with 50% of volunteers in the area of positive Inclusion	2011
Volunteer officer training to be completed with all volunteers in the area of positive Inclusion	2015



County Initiatives

Initiative	Completion Date
Roll out Inclusion Strategy within all County board Units and officers	Immediate
GAA coaching courses to attract and retain coaches of all nationalities, ethnicities, religions, ages and abilities	Ongoing
All fulltime County staff including fulltime Games Development personnel to receive Inclusion training	2009
International Days to be promoted in each county and to be included in each County Plan	2009
Each County plan to include specific pro-inclusion initiatives	2009
GAA Club Volunteer Workshop to include a focus on attracting and retaining volunteers of all nationalities, ethnicities, religions, ages and abilities	2009
Inclusion training to be completed by 50% of volunteer officers	2011
All officers in each county to have completed an educational module in Inclusion	2015



Club Initiatives

Initiative	Completion Date
Welcome Pack to be made available to all schools and clubs to welcome new and established communities, as well as non-traditional groups.	2009
Production of a glossary to assist coaches in the introduction and training of newcomer children, to our games.	2009
Pilot test a Jersey Scheme where jerseys are used to create links between Schools and Clubs	2009
Update Club Manual templates to reflect best practice in Inclusion.	2009
'Have a Go' pilot in place in a minimum of two clubs in each County	2011
Inclusion training to be completed by volunteer officers in Clubs as part of Club Officer Education Programmes	2011
Inclusion training to be completed by all volunteer coaches	2015
'Have a Go day' in place in 30% of all Clubs	2015



Ongoing Monitoring, Assessment and Refinement of the Strategy

An advisory group will be put in place to track and review the Strategy on a quarterly basis over the duration of the plan. This advisory group will consist of representatives of GAA, Ladies Football, and Camogie. The group will also consist of representatives of Integrating Ireland and the New Communities Partnerships and representatives from other stakeholders.

The process of ensuring that the GAA and its sister organisations provide a welcoming and enjoyable environment for people of all nationalities, ethnicities, ages, religions and abilities will be a continuously evolving process over the duration of the Plan.

The advisory group will not only assess the success of the initiatives outlined in this document but work with other sporting and government/third party institutions at home and abroad to modify our approach on an annual basis to include best practice and to reflect any new Government legislation.



Acknowledgements

Many people have contributed to the development of this Inclusion and Integration strategy over the last twelve months, it would be impossible to thank every organization individually, however, it is appropriate to thank a number of individuals and groups.

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- Cumann Peil Gael na mBan
- Comhairle Liathróid Láimhe hÉireann
- Comhairle Cluiche Corr na hÉireann
- Cumann na mBunscol
- Department Of Integration
- The Irish Sports Council/Sports NI
- Representatives of Political Parties
- The Equality Authority
- The Equality Commission NI
- NCCRI
- Integrating Ireland
- New Communities Partnership
- Pavee Point
- Sport Against Racism Ireland
- Show Racism the Red Card
- Football Association Ireland
- Irish Football Association
- Irish Rugby Football Union
- Shining Emerald Newspaper
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