

## Nas CLG Tuairisc Leasa Leanáí 2020

### Naas GAACHild Welfare Report 2020

During 2020, I am pleased to report that Naas GAA has continued to successfully adopt best practice child welfare policies. This is a constantly evolving area and significant further changes lie ahead (see Garda eVetting below).

#### **Garda Online e-Vetting – Reduced from 5 to 3 years**

Garda vetting of all individuals involved with children is a legal requirement since early 2016. The GAA have been absolutely clear that each mentor must be e-vetted on the online Garda system. However, as noted previously, it is literally impossible to predict how long the process takes. Some mentors are getting e-vetted within a matter of a few weeks while many are reporting it still takes several months. The general advice is for new mentors to promptly apply and not wait until the “last minute”.

In the current year, despite the impact of Covid-19 shutdowns and the non-existence of GAA activity for weeks, Naas GAA completed 127 e-Vetting applications. **In total, we now have over 450 fully e-Vetted mentors within our club.** I have both the GAA and Garda reference numbers for each of these mentors and have made it available to the child welfare officers within each of our club’s sections. I wish to thank everyone for persisting with the online e-Vetting process.

A very important change has recently been advised by Croke Park. Prior to January 2021, our mentors only needed to get Garda eVetted every 5 years. However, as of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021, this vetting approval period has been reduced to only 3 years. To ensure no slippage, **the GAA has instructed that mentors who were vetted prior to January 2019 need to apply for Garda vetting during the early part of 2021.** I have sent an updated spreadsheet to the welfare contacts which clearly highlights the mentors who need to re-apply for Garda e-vetting. As a result of the above change, approximately 200 mentors will have to be re-vetted.

#### **Level 1 Child Welfare Training**

All mentors who are involved with children must complete a Level 1 Child Welfare Training workshop. Before the impact of the Covid-19 restrictions, I organised one “Level 1” child welfare training workshop but had to cancel two evenings scheduled for April and May. The GAA commenced online child welfare training during the early Autumn period and struggled to accommodate the national demand for such training. Frustratingly, GAA clubs were not permitted to directly organise such GAA approved training and had to schedule via county level and Croke Park. After significant delay, Naas GAA eventually secured an online training session during early November. I have urgently requested another online training session for early next year but have no confirmed date at time of writing this report.

#### **Child Welfare Issues**

Child protection matters with the utmost of confidentiality and I aim to quickly resolve issues on a local sectional basis. Thankfully, I did not have to formally escalate any child welfare issues during the year. I wish to thank the management teams within each of our club sections for taking such a professional and supportive approach to child welfare.

Finally, I wish to thank the sectional committees and especially the individuals responsible for child welfare related matters within each section. Without their continued support my Children’s Officer role would be impossible to manage.

Seosamh Ó Fríil (Joe Friel)

*“Muna gcuirir san san Earrach ní bhainfir sa bhFómhar”  
(If you don’t sow in Spring, you won’t reap in Autumn)*