



Club Manual

The Inclusive GAA Club

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GAA



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The first line of the GAA's Official Guide spells out how the GAA reaches into every corner of Ireland and many communities across the globe. In doing this, the GAA works as an anti-sectarian and anti-racist organisation and is fully committed to principles of inclusion and diversity at all levels. This is what the GAA believes in and expects its members to live up to: opting out of these responsibilities isn't an option.

Since the vast bulk of the GAA's work is done at Club level then it follows that we must bring life to these principles of inclusion and diversity at Club level. They're not just something for our provincial or national leaders: they're something for us to work on and deliver on a daily basis at Club level. If the Clubs don't drive this work forward, then not much is going to happen.

This chapter discusses inclusion and diversity in the GAA Club and provides tips to clubs on how to promote inclusiveness.

1: GAA Anti-Sectarian and Anti-Racist Policy

“The term ‘Inclusiveness’ is included as one of the 6 core values in the Associations Strategic Vision and Action Plan.”

At Congress in 2009, rule 1.12 of the Official Guide was amended to state the following:

GAA Official Guide, Rule 1.12: The Association is Anti-Sectarian and Anti-Racist. Any conduct by deed, word or gesture of a sectarian or racist nature against any player, official, spectator or anyone else, in the course of activities organised by the Association, shall be deemed to have discredited the Association.

The term ‘Inclusiveness’ is included as one of the 6 core values in the Associations Strategic Vision and Action Plan. The vision outlined for the Association in this document 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.

All these are clear statements that outline our commitment that the GAA is an organization that welcomes everybody and respects people of all nationalities, religion, ethnicities, ages and abilities. Each unit, every player, member, official and supporter has a duty to ensure that these statements are lived in every Club.

2: Inclusion and Diversity

The words “Inclusion” and “Diversity” tend to get bandied about a lot. To keep things simple, we should work to these definitions:

Inclusion essentially means people having a sense of belonging, of being comfortable in being part of something they value. Diversity means being aware of, accommodating and celebrating difference.

Making people feel included is absolutely central to what the GAA does: we talk about “our” Club and “our” County, about “our” teams and “our” players. What’s more, we actually mean it. But we need to take it to the next level and offer that wonderful sense of belonging to others out there.

The great thing about belonging is that no matter how many people we offer it to, it is never watered down! Inclusion and Diversity in many ways go hand-in-hand. Real Inclusion reflects Diversity, i.e. it’s interested in offering that sense of belonging to everyone, irrespective of age, gender, religion, race, sexual orientation and/or disability. One place where we still have a particular back-log of work is in bringing women, and women’s gaelic games, fully on board within the GAA. This is maybe the best starting point for a lot of Clubs.





3: What this does not mean for the GAA Club

Some people worry that by focusing on Inclusion and Diversity we will water down the GAA, making it into something that caters for everything and stands for nothing. This is most definitely not what Inclusion and Diversity are about.

The GAA remains the Gaelic Athletic Association. That means we're proud of and celebrate our Irishness; that we focus on Gaelic games and activities; that we're community-based; and that we cherish our amateur and volunteer bases. We don't compromise on those fundamentals. The GAA Club doesn't become a one-size-fits-all organization.

We remain and are proud of what we are: but in doing and remaining true to all that, we are open and welcoming to others.

4: GAA Inclusion Strategy

In April, the GAA, the Ladies Football Association and the Camogie Association launched a joint inclusion and integration strategy. The strategic intent (aim) stated in this document is we “offer an inclusive and welcoming environment for everyone to participate in our games and culture”. By putting in place all of the recommendations of the document, it is envisaged that in 2016 we can 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”

There are a number of key projects detailed in the document. A number of these are outlined as follows:

1. The appointment of a dedicated officer (supported by the Office of the Minister for Integration) to promote best practice within our units.
2. Development of inclusion and integration modules for schools in Ireland following consultation with Cumann na mBunscol and other partners in Education.
3. Developing 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. Developing a welcome pack and DVD for Clubs and Schools that will give a basic introduction to Gaelic games.
5. Developing new games formats for people with a disability and encourage them to take part.
6. Promoting ‘have-a-go’ days in our clubs. ‘Have a go days’ are open days where clubs invite the children and parents of newcomer and established communities to the Club to introduce them to Gaelic Games.
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.

A copy of this strategy is available on the Club zone section of the GAA website, www.gaa.ie/inclusion

5: Disability Games

All people with special needs and/or a disability should have an equal opportunity to partake in Gaelic games to reach their full potential. A series of County level events should be organised to encourage Clubs to run activities to attract new members or cater for existing members with a disability.

Some of the activities that your Club can run or participate in are:

- Adapted FUNdamentals/ABC Have a Ball
- Wheelchair hurling and camogie
- Wheelchair football
- Adapted Rounders
- 'Come and Try' days through the various Sports Inclusion Disability Officers and/or Local Sports Partnerships.

For more information on Disability sport support please contact:

Special Olympics Ireland
www.specialolympics.ie

Irish Special Schools Sports Council
www.issc.ie

Irish Wheelchair Association (Sport)
www.iwa.ie

Cerebral Palsy Sport Ireland
www.cpsi.ie

Irish Blind Sports
www.ibs.ie

Irish Deaf Sports Association
www.irishdeafsports.net

Cara Adapted Physical Activity Centre
www.carapacentre.ie

Disability Sports NI
www.dnsi.co.uk

Ulster Deaf Sports Council
www.ulsterdeafsports.org

Northern Ireland Blind Sports/RNIB
www.rnib.org.uk

UK Sports Association for People with Learning Disabilities
www.uksportsassociation.org



6: Welcoming the New Irish

Many, many GAA people have direct personal or family experience of emigration. They know what it's like to have to go abroad for work, simply because the opportunities don't exist at home. That experience should leave us well-placed to appreciate the plight of the many migrants who now live in our communities. Many of our emigrants were bolstered by the GAA when they arrived in their new countries but the people now coming to us have no such support.

There are a few simple steps that a Club can take to welcome the new Irish to our clubs:

- Find out how many migrants live and/or work in the local community.
- Get an idea of where they're from
- Make contact with them and invite them to a Club function/event/game

- Run a "have-a-go" day to introduce them to the Club and the games
- Run a cultural evening which mixes and-matches Irish culture/music/song/dance with theirs
- Welcome them into the local community/the GAA

GAA Welcome Pack and DVD

The GAA recently launched a 'GAA Welcome Pack and DVD', which can be a useful tool in helping to introduce the GAA to newcomers. The DVD is 20 minutes in length and outlines all of the various skills of Hurling and Gaelic Football. A copy of this can be obtained by emailing inclusion@gaa.ie





7: 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.

“Terminology that solely focuses on nationality will become obsolete for most second and third-generation migrants living in Ireland.”

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-faceted, 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]

Ireland's National Action Plan Against Racism: Planning for Diversity covered the period 2005 – 2008.

It originated from commitments given by Governments at the United Nations World Conference Against Racism in South Africa in 2001.

The NPAR set out a plan of action for key areas of public life in order to develop measures to accommodate cultural diversity in Ireland.

Planning for Diversity covers the period 2005 – 2008.

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.

“Integration can be a multi-faceted, intercultural process that requires the state, majority and minority ethnic communities to work together.”

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.

A special thanks to the Ulster Council for the provision of information for the above chapter and to the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism, (NCCRI), for help with the definitions in the Glossary of Terms. For more on this topic, counties in Ulster should consult the Club Maith toolkit.