

# No One Shouted Stop - Until Now

The GAA's Response to  
Ireland's Demographic  
Shift



WHERE WE ALL BELONG



## No One Shouted Stop—Until Now: The GAA’s Response to Ireland’s Demographic Shift

This report has been produced by the GAA National Demographics Committee under Chair, Benny Hurl. The committee was appointed by Uachtarán GAA, Iarlaith Ó Broin, and began its work in February 2024. The purpose of the National Demographics Committee is to monitor and evaluate the impact of demographic issues on Participation, Retention, and Performance across Gaelic games. They work to ensure that the Association’s policies and practices are reflective of current and future demographic changes.

In developing this report, we have investigated the demographic impact on the entire Gaelic games family, including the GAA, LGFA, and the Camogie Association.

The committee would also like to acknowledge the input of the County Demographics Officers who have sourced information from clubs across the GAA. The GAA Data Hub project was initially proposed by the National Urban and Rural Committee 2017-2020 and developed in partnership with People and Place (<https://peopleandplace.ie/>). The GAA is grateful for the support of Sport Ireland and the Dormant Accounts fund which contributed to the success of the Data Hub.

### National Demographics Committee Members

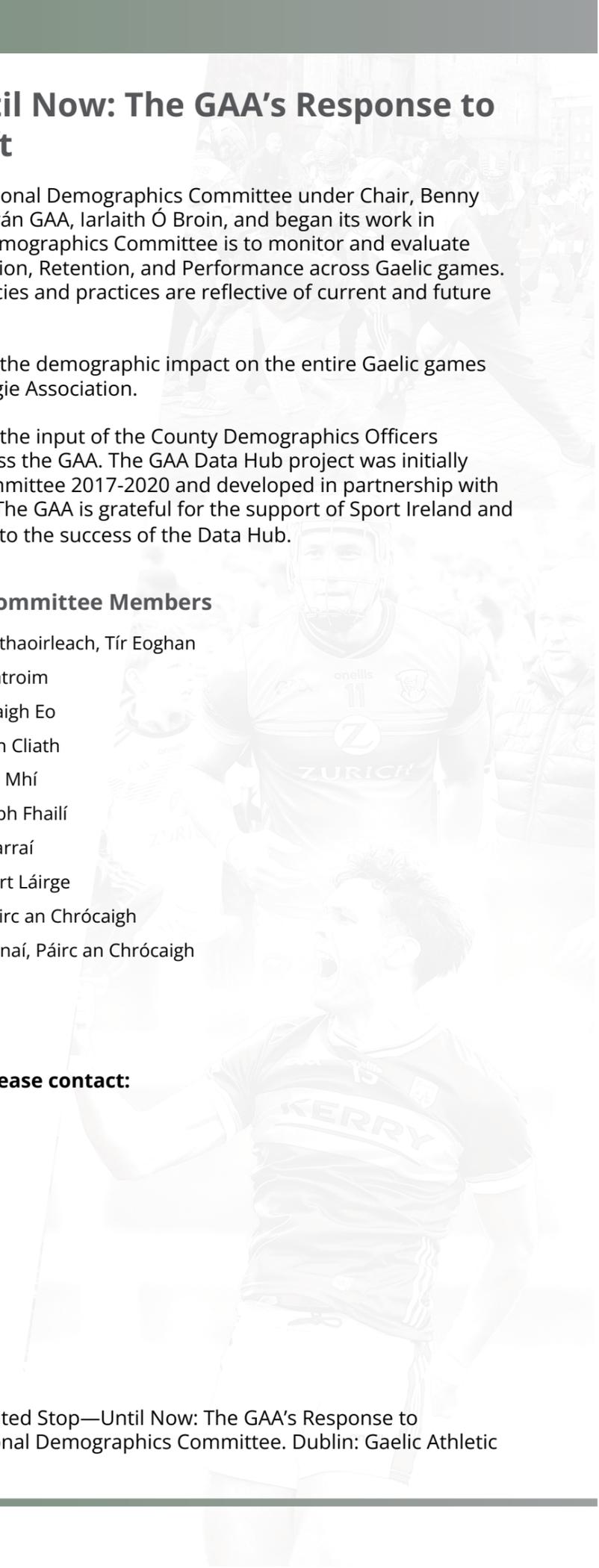
Benny Hurl	Cathaoirleach, Tír Eoghan
Enda Stenson	Liatroim
Katherine Maughan	Maigh Eo
Brendan Waters	Áth Cliath
Paddy Kelly	An Mhí
Colm Cummins	Uíbh Fhailí
Liam Lynch	Ciarraí
Senan Cooke	Port Láirge
Conor Weir	Páirc an Chrócaigh
Peter Horgan	Rúnaí, Páirc an Chrócaigh

### For further information about this report please contact:

Dr Peter Horgan  
Gaelic Athletic Association  
Croke Park  
Dublin. D03 P6K7  
[peter.horgan@gaa.ie](mailto:peter.horgan@gaa.ie)  
+353 1 8363222  
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# Teachtaracht Ón Uachtarán



Cuirim fáilte roimh fhoilsiú na tuarascála seo a thugann léargas dúinn ar an aistriú daonra atá ag tarlú in Éirinn le fada an lá agus ar an tionchar atá aige ar ár gcuid clubanna ar fud na tíre. Níl aon neart ag Cumann Lúthchleas Gael ar an aistriú daonra seo ná ar na cúiseanna a bhaineann leis. Mar sin féin, tá dualgas orainn a chinntiú go bhfuil muid go fóill ag croílár an phobail fud fad na tíre, go háirithe agus muid ag tarraingt ar 150 bliain den Chumann a bheith ar an fhód. Tá am an ghátair buailte linn agus ní mór dúinn gníomhú agus pleanáil le tabhairt faoi na dúshláin éagsúla atá amach romhainn maidir leis an cheist seo.

As my great friend and mentor Páraic Duffy once reminded me, the GAA's greatest challenge is not simply to survive, but to remain truly relevant — to ensure that what we do continues to matter in the lives of our people and our communities.

In the last 100 years no bigger issue has emerged to be a threat to our ability to stay relevant to our members and their communities than the subject of demographics.

In less than a decade we will celebrate our 150th anniversary. However, as we stand a short distance out from that significant milestone we are faced with our greatest existential threat in generations.

Neither the decimation and erosion of rural life nor the explosive growth of urban towns and cities are issues that the GAA created nor, are they problems we alone are able to readily solve. However, we know that the ripple effect of these developments will be felt on our shores and perhaps no other sporting organisation on the island will experience and suffer more.

We always say that the GAA is many things, but it is ultimately, always about People. Behind the cold statistics of rural depopulation and urban expansion are People, and the strength of the GAA is People and the work they do in our clubs and in the communities they are proud to represent.

Many clubs now find themselves facing an uncertain future because of dwindling numbers, with survival an achievement.

Yet at the same time, we have clubs who find themselves struggling to cope with a population deluge

which in reality has left them struggling to cope with adequate coaches, pitches and opportunities to meet the needs of all their members satisfactorily.

Many of the headline figures in this report have been in circulation since Congress last February.

This report repeats them here with additional context and makes thought provoking projections and asks us to stop and really think about what happens next.

Safeguarding the GAA's position in a changing Ireland was a theme of the landmark MacNamee Commission of 1971 and the groundbreaking Strategic Review Committee of 2002. Both of them signposted the threat posed by the rural/urban divide if the GAA was not able to cope with it. As it appears before us again in 2025 the reality is that inertia is not an option.

The work of our National Demographics Committee led by Benny Hurl makes for essential reading.

Many of these challenges are outside of the GAA's remit to control. But what we must do is have a conversation about how capable we are to be able to still have a foothold and a pulse in our cities, towns, villages and rural communities.

A constant in the remarkable history of the GAA has been its robustness; its ability to meet challenges and to find a way to stay at the heart of Irish life. I say that not out of complacency but out of a conviction that we can plot a path forward. This current generation of GAA members have shown themselves capable of making big decisions. In the last few short years alone the moves we have made around the FRC, the Tailteann Cup and the Split Season have shown that the GAA is determined to be modern and relevant, without disregarding or disrespecting values and ethos that have served us well.

It is impossible to imagine an Ireland that does not have the GAA as a central part of it. But to ensure this is always the case we need to think and act.

*If nothing else, the recommendations in this report signal the need for a serious debate about the future direction of how we assist our clubs in rural and urban Ireland. A twin track approach to stop clubs disappearing, while also facilitating new clubs appearing is a challenge that will not go away. The independently verified analysis of the positive economic and social value of Gaelic games to the health and wellbeing of the Irish people and to Irish communities means that state assistance for the GAA in addressing these issues is something we need to target and pursue. I urge everyone to seize this report as an opportunity to futureproof the role the GAA plays in Irish life.*

Larlaith Ó Broin

Uachtarán Cumann Lúthchleas Gael



## National Demographics Committee Members

### Benny Hurl Cathairleach, Tír Eoghan

A member of Ardboe O'Donovan Rossas, Co. Tyrone with whom he had a long playing career, played minor and under 21 for Tyrone teams, played for his college Ulster University, a graduate in Quantity Surveying. Benny has managed and coached Ardboe teams at all levels.



### Enda Stenson Liatroim

A member of the Eslin GAA club, Enda Stenson is a former Chairman of the Leitrim GAA County Board and a long time Gaelic football referee. During his tenure, he focused on supporting grassroots clubs, strengthening facilities, and engaging volunteers across the county.



He is also an Independent councillor on Leitrim County Council, representing the Carrick on Shannon area.

### Katherine Maughan Maigh Eo

Katherine Maughan is a Lecturer at the Technological University of the Shannon, Midwest. She previously worked as a town planner with Limerick, Clare, and Kildare County Councils, gaining extensive experience in local planning and development.



Originally from Crossmolina, Co. Mayo, and a member of Deel Rovers GAA Club, Katherine now lives in Limerick, where she is involved with Crecora Manister GAA Club.

### Brendan Waters Áth Cliath

Brendan is a member of the St Brigids GAA club and the Dublin GAA Management Committee. He is a director of two companies, Dublin GAA Spawell Clusters CLG and Dublin GAA Hollystown CLG, who are developing pitches and other facilities to help overcome the GAA infrastructure deficit in Dublin.



Brendan served as secretary to the committee who prepared the SRC Report: Enhancing Community Identity (2002). Brendan also chaired the committee who prepared Unleashing the Blue Wave: A Strategy for Dublin GAA (2011).

### Paddy Kelly An Mhí

Paddy Kelly is a member of Kiltale GAA in Meath. He recently completed five years as Vice-Chair of the County Board, following five years on Central Council. He has served on Leinster Council for many years and was involved in the Demise of Rural Communities Committee.



Locally, he chaired a county group that successfully oversaw the formation of a new club in East Meath, Eastern Gaels.

### Colm Cummins Uíbh Fhailí

Colm Cummins is a long-standing member and former Chairperson of Edenderry GAA Club with over 20 years' experience in GAA administration. He has served as Chair of the National Urban and Rural Development Committee, where he promoted the use of demographic data in planning. A former Offaly GAA County Secretary, Colm now chairs the GAA Taskforce on Volunteering.



### Liam Lynch Ciarraí

Liam is a member of Austin Stacks in Tralee of which he was a former Chairman. He is the current Vice Chairperson of Kerry GAA and a former member of the GAA's National Planning and Training Committee.



He has been involved in coaching and administering teams for many years and is passionate about the impact of the changing demographic backdrop on both rural and urban clubs, seeing it at first hand on pitch sidelines.

### Senan Cooke Port Láirge

Dr. Senan Cooke, from Dunhill, Co. Waterford, is a former Kilkenny hurler, having served as Secretary and Chairperson of both St Senans, Kilmacow (Kilkenny), and Dunhill GAA (Waterford).



Senan has contributed nationally as a member of the Commission for Economic Development for Rural Areas (CEDRA), bringing his insight into rural communities and their development needs. He has also led seven successful community-focused social enterprises and was awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award by the Department of Rural & Community Development in 2025.

### Conor Weir Páirc an Chrócaigh

Conor is a native of Cork and is now a member of St James Gaels/An Caisleán GAA Club. He is also an accredited Performance Analyst with the GAA. Conor serves as Data Analyst with the Association where he provides technical and analytical support for games development, competition tracking, and performance insight across Gaelic Games.



### Peter Horgan Rúnaí, Páirc an Chrócaigh

Dr. Peter Horgan, of Midleton GAA, Co. Cork, is Strategy, Insights & Innovation Manager at the Gaelic Athletic Association. He previously served as Education Officer and Games Development Project Coordinator, overseeing coach development programmes across Gaelic games. He has led major initiatives including the GAA Data Hub and research on coaching practices, youth participation, and female coaching engagement.



## Executive Summary

In 1968, John Healy's seminal work *No One Shouted Stop* sounded the alarm on rural decline, a warning that echoed through Irish society but was never fully heeded. Today, the same forces Healy described have intensified, reshaping Ireland's demographic landscape with unprecedented speed. Urbanisation, eastward migration, and rural depopulation are no longer distant trends; they are lived realities, eroding the social fabric of communities and placing Gaelic games at a crossroads.

This time, the GAA is shouting stop. We are raising the alarm, both for the Association and government, because the stakes could not be higher. Without urgent, coordinated action, rural clubs will disappear, leaving parishes without representation, while urban clubs will implode under the weight of unchecked growth. These issues have been raised previously. The MacNamee Report (1971) and the Strategic Review of 2002 each identified the potential impact of demographic changes on Gaelic games. However, the warnings were not acted upon. Now, the Association faces an existential challenge: adapt to demographic change or risk losing its foundational role as Ireland's most inclusive, community-driven sporting body.

This report is not simply an analysis; it is a call to arms. It sets out the evidence, the risks, and the roadmap for renewal. The message is clear: demography must be placed at the heart of GAA strategy. The next decade will decide whether Gaelic games remain a vibrant force in Irish life or become fractured by demographic divides.

## Key Demographic Realities

- **Population Surge & Imbalance:** Ireland's population exceeds 7 million, the highest since 1851. Growth is concentrated in Dublin and commuter belts, where 1 in 3 people live within one hour of the capital. Yet only 18% of GAA clubs are located there. There is an urgent need for the rejuvenation of existing clubs and the formation of new clubs.
- The majority of GAA clubs remain rural (78%), where populations are shrinking.
- **Youth Concentration:** Just 50 clubs account for 25.5% of all 0–5-year-olds, while 1,000 clubs share only 22% of this cohort. This imbalance is the clearest warning sign of future participation collapse.
- **Birth Rate Inequality:** Dublin has the highest number of children aged 0 – 5 years, followed by Antrim, Cork, Down, Galway, and Kildare. In fact, these six counties are home to more than half (52%) of all 0–5-year-olds on the island of Ireland.
- **Birth Rate Decline:** Births have fallen by 26.7% since 2010, compounding rural decline and threatening underage structures, and are projected to continue to fall over the coming years.
- **Overcrowding in Existing Clubs:** Many urban clubs are experiencing high demand, resulting in stretched resources, limited access to facilities which result in a significant reduction in player retention in teenage years.
- **Smaller clubs, operating in the shadow of the larger clubs, find it more difficult to both attract new members and to access facilities.**
- **Barriers to Participation:** Children and families moving into new urban communities often find it difficult to join a local club, reducing opportunities for engagement in Gaelic games.
- **Missed Opportunities for Growth:** The GAA risks losing potential players and supporters in growing urban areas if it does not provide accessible clubs and facilities.

## Strategic Actions

The report sets out a three-pillar response:

### 1. Internal Reform

- **Redefine Club Models:** Expand upon the definition of a club to support, 1) the development of new clubs in urban areas which focus initially on underage levels, and 2) to ensure that rural clubs facing depopulation can continue to exist
- **Adapt Competition Formats:** Permit 11/9-a-side games, cluster competitions, and new tiers for smaller clubs.
- **Modernise Byelaws:** Create flexibility for counties so that eligibility and transfer rules can support demographically challenged clubs.
- **Facilities Strategy:** Create an Association wide facilities strategy which prioritises investment in high-growth urban hubs and commuter belts.
- **Pilot Projects:** Launch targeted interventions in Kerry and Kildare to test urban and rural solutions.

### 2. External Engagement

- **Advocacy Framework:** Build an all-island strategy to influence government and local authorities.
- **Planning & Infrastructure:** Secure zoning, development levies, and funding for GAA facilities.
- **Dual-Use Models:** Promote shared facility strategies and rural social enterprise partnerships.

### 3. Data-Driven Planning

- **Demographic Analysis System:** Predict participation trends and facility needs.
- **Evidence-Informed Policy:** Align resources with population shifts and participation patterns.

## The Cost of Inaction

Demographic change is not a slow-moving trend, it is a tidal wave already reshaping Ireland. If the GAA fails to act decisively, the consequences will be severe, irreversible, and existential. If the GAA fails to act:

- Rural clubs will disappear, leaving parishes without representation.
- Urban clubs will not be able to provide Gaelic games activity for their communities.
- Volunteer ethos will collapse, and Gaelic games will lose cultural relevance.

## Conclusion

Demographic change is not a future threat; it is a present reality. This report provides a roadmap for renewal, ensuring Gaelic games remain inclusive, resilient, and central to Irish life. The next decade will decide whether the GAA thrives or fractures.

# GAELIC GAMES IN NUMBERS (ALL CODES)

Census 2021/2022

Total Population  
**7,052,602**

Total Clubs  
**2,371**

Total Members  
**760,183**

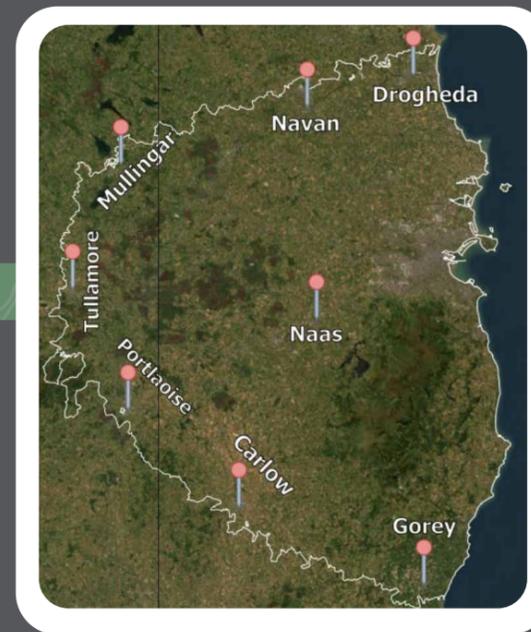
# DUBLIN COMMUTER BELT

Total Population  
**2,304,899**

% Total Population  
**32.7%**

% Total Clubs  
**18%**

% Total Members  
**25.7%**



# EASTERN SEABOARD

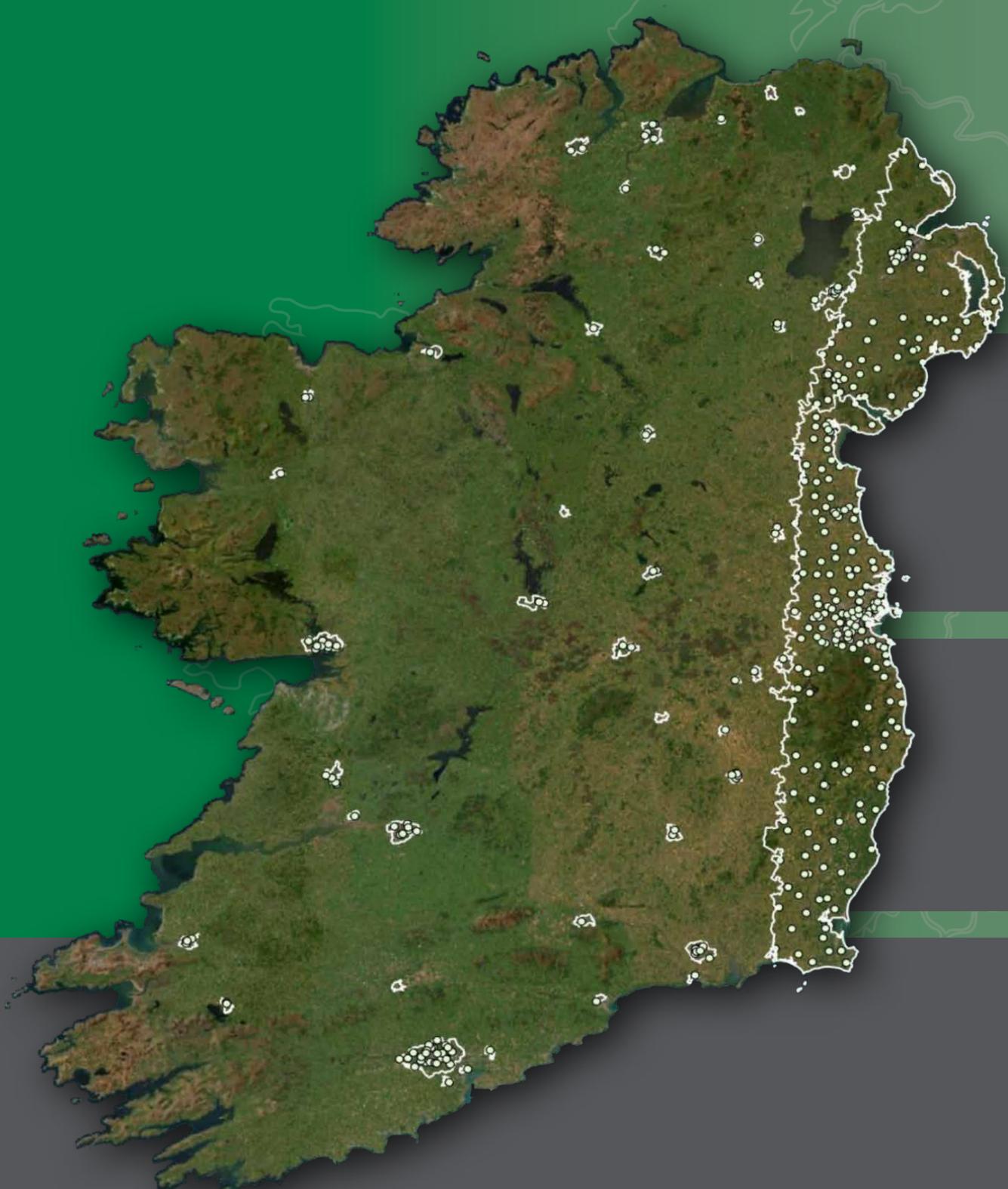
Total Population  
**3,071,222**

% Total Population  
**43.5%**

% Total Clubs  
**18.6%**

% Total Members  
**25.4%**

# EASTERN SEABOARD MAJOR CITIES & MAJOR TOWNS (>10K)



Total Population:

**4,420,760**

% of Total Population

**62.7%**

% Total Clubs

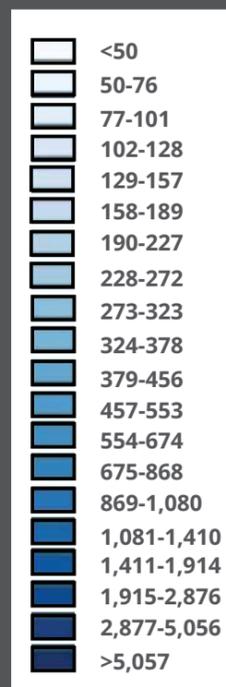
**26.3%**

% Total Members

**36.6%**

# POPULATION OF 0-5-YEAR-OLDS

Population of 0 – 5 Year Olds according to Club catchment areas:

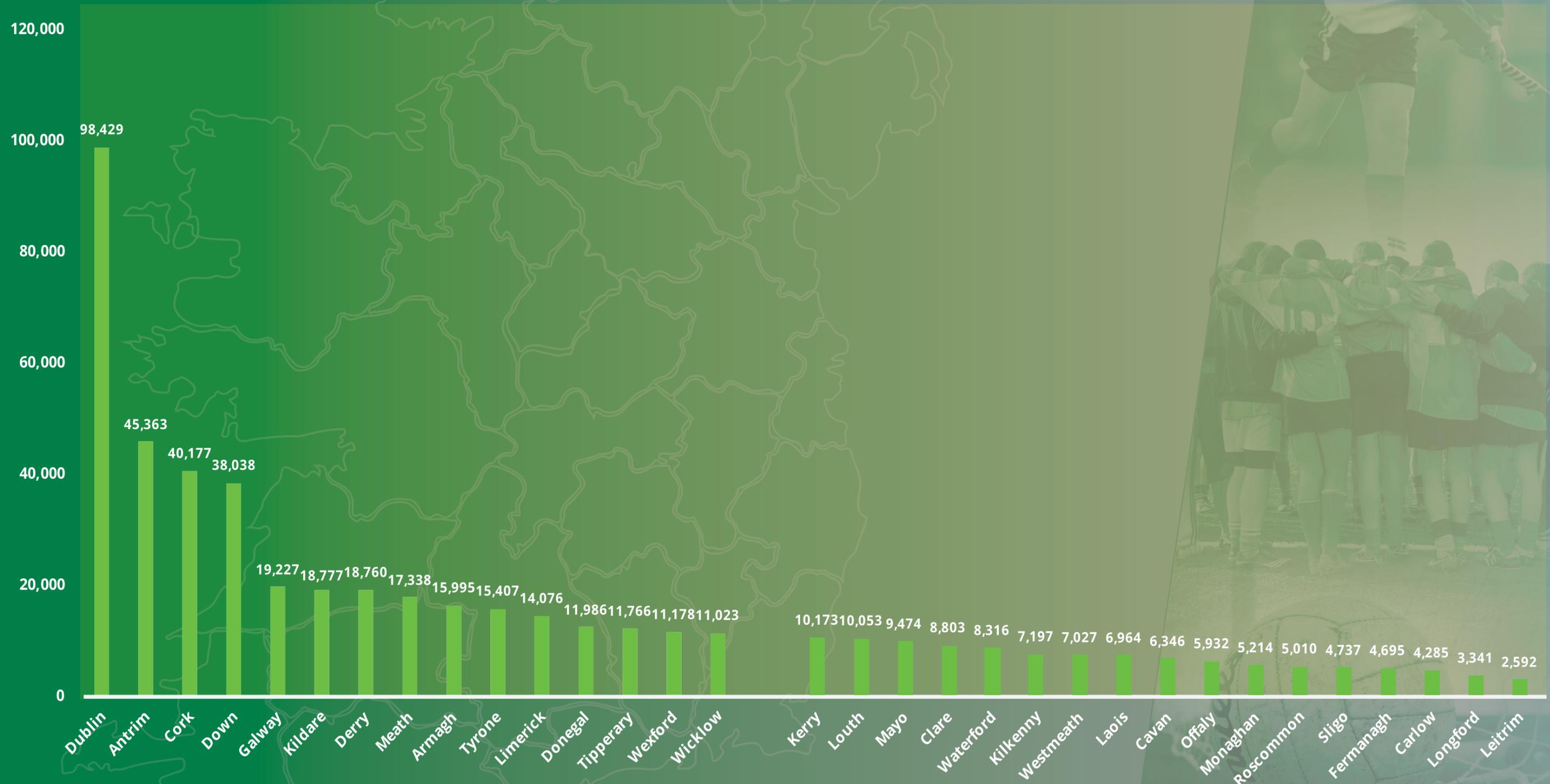


**Top 50 Clubs:**  
25% of all 0 – 5-year-olds

**Lowest 1,000 Clubs:**  
22% of all 0 – 5-year-olds

# POPULATION AGED 0-5 BY COUNTY

Census 2021 & Census 2022



# Population of 6 - 11 year olds (Go Games cohort) 2022 - 2040

Comparison relative to 2022

County	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040
Antrim	100%	99%	97%	96%	94%	93%	91%	90%	89%	88%	88%	87%	86%	85%	85%	84%	84%	84%	83%
Armagh	100%	100%	99%	98%	97%	96%	94%	93%	92%	91%	91%	90%	90%	90%	90%	89%	89%	90%	90%
Carlow	100%	98%	96%	94%	93%	91%	92%	90%	89%	87%	86%	86%	85%	85%	85%	85%	86%	87%	88%
Cavan	100%	97%	93%	90%	88%	86%	83%	81%	80%	78%	76%	75%	74%	74%	74%	74%	75%	76%	78%
Clare	100%	97%	93%	89%	87%	85%	82%	80%	78%	77%	75%	75%	74%	74%	75%	75%	77%	78%	80%
Cork	100%	97%	95%	93%	92%	91%	90%	89%	88%	88%	87%	87%	87%	87%	87%	88%	89%	89%	90%
Derry	100%	99%	97%	95%	94%	92%	91%	89%	88%	87%	86%	84%	83%	82%	82%	81%	80%	79%	79%
Donegal	100%	95%	91%	87%	83%	81%	78%	76%	75%	74%	73%	73%	73%	73%	73%	74%	75%	77%	78%
Down	100%	99%	97%	96%	94%	93%	91%	90%	89%	89%	88%	87%	87%	86%	86%	85%	85%	85%	85%
Dublin	100%	100%	99%	99%	99%	99%	99%	98%	97%	95%	93%	91%	89%	87%	85%	83%	81%	79%	77%
Fermanagh	100%	99%	99%	98%	97%	96%	93%	91%	89%	88%	87%	86%	85%	84%	84%	83%	83%	83%	83%
Galway	100%	98%	96%	94%	93%	93%	93%	93%	93%	93%	93%	94%	94%	95%	96%	97%	98%	99%	100%
Kerry	100%	96%	93%	89%	87%	84%	82%	80%	78%	76%	74%	73%	72%	71%	71%	71%	72%	73%	74%
Kildare	100%	97%	94%	92%	90%	88%	87%	85%	84%	82%	81%	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%	81%	82%	83%
Kilkenny	100%	97%	92%	87%	83%	80%	76%	75%	73%	72%	71%	70%	69%	69%	69%	69%	69%	70%	71%
Laois	100%	96%	93%	89%	86%	82%	81%	78%	75%	73%	70%	68%	67%	66%	65%	65%	66%	67%	68%
Leitrim	100%	96%	93%	88%	84%	80%	78%	75%	73%	71%	69%	68%	68%	67%	67%	68%	69%	71%	73%
Limerick	100%	98%	96%	95%	94%	94%	94%	94%	95%	95%	96%	97%	98%	99%	100%	102%	103%	104%	105%
Longford	100%	98%	95%	93%	92%	90%	90%	88%	87%	85%	84%	83%	82%	82%	82%	82%	83%	84%	86%
Louth	100%	97%	93%	90%	87%	85%	83%	82%	81%	80%	79%	78%	78%	78%	78%	78%	79%	80%	81%
Mayo	100%	97%	93%	89%	86%	84%	81%	79%	78%	76%	75%	74%	74%	74%	74%	75%	76%	77%	79%
Meath	100%	96%	91%	88%	84%	82%	80%	78%	76%	74%	73%	72%	72%	72%	72%	73%	74%	76%	78%
Monaghan	100%	96%	90%	85%	80%	76%	72%	70%	68%	67%	65%	64%	63%	63%	62%	62%	63%	63%	64%
Offaly	100%	96%	92%	89%	85%	82%	80%	78%	76%	75%	74%	73%	72%	72%	72%	72%	73%	74%	76%
Roscommon	100%	95%	90%	85%	80%	76%	72%	70%	68%	67%	65%	64%	64%	64%	64%	65%	66%	67%	69%
Sligo	100%	96%	92%	88%	85%	82%	81%	80%	79%	78%	77%	77%	77%	78%	78%	79%	80%	81%	82%
Tipperary	100%	97%	93%	90%	86%	83%	80%	78%	76%	74%	72%	70%	69%	69%	68%	68%	69%	70%	71%
Tyrone	100%	100%	100%	100%	98%	97%	95%	93%	91%	90%	89%	88%	88%	87%	87%	86%	86%	86%	86%
Waterford	100%	97%	95%	93%	90%	89%	88%	87%	86%	85%	84%	83%	83%	84%	84%	85%	86%	88%	89%
Westmeath	100%	97%	95%	93%	91%	89%	88%	87%	85%	84%	82%	81%	80%	80%	79%	79%	79%	80%	81%
Wexford	100%	98%	95%	93%	90%	89%	87%	84%	81%	79%	77%	75%	74%	73%	72%	72%	73%	74%	75%
Wicklow	100%	96%	93%	89%	87%	85%	83%	81%	79%	78%	77%	76%	76%	76%	76%	77%	78%	79%	81%
Ireland	100%	98%	96%	94%	92%	91%	90%	88%	87%	86%	85%	84%	83%	83%	82%	82%	82%	82%	82%

# Actions

The work of the GAA National Demographic Committee centres on understanding and responding to the changing profile of Irish society, ensuring that the Association continues to thrive and serve communities in an evolving environment. Many view that the Association cannot hold back the tide of demographics. The issue of demographics in Gaelic games has become something of a hot topic, with a variety of media coverage in recent months, however, there is a need to move the conversation from the scale of demographic issues to the identification of actions. The Committee has put forward a series of recommendations, involving three interconnected areas of operation that guide how the GAA can both adapt to, and shape, the demographic realities of today and the future.

## 1. Internal actions within the Association

Armed with this understanding, the Committee's recommended actions can help shape internal changes across the Association. This involves recommending updates to rules and codes, adjusting policies to better support diverse participation, and developing new practices that respond to demographic realities. Such actions ensure that the GAA's structures, competitions, and clubs remain inclusive, sustainable, and relevant in every community, from urban centres to rural parishes and international units. A suite of actions to be undertaken within the Association is presented in Section 1 below.

## 2. External actions through collaboration and engagement

Many demographic challenges and opportunities extend beyond the capacity of the GAA alone. For this reason, the Committee has also identified areas where external collaboration is essential. This can include engagement with government bodies at local and national level, partnerships with schools, community organisations, and other sporting or cultural groups. By working with these stakeholders, the GAA can both advocate for and contribute to policies and initiatives that strengthen communities, support integration, and ensure the Association remains a central and positive force in Irish life (See Section 2 below).

## 3. Enhance the Association's evidence informed strategy process

An essential step is developing a deeper understanding of demographic trends and patterns. By gathering, analysing, and interpreting reliable data, the GAA can identify where populations are growing or declining, how migration is reshaping communities, and how age, gender, and cultural shifts are influencing participation. This evidence-informed approach provides the foundation for strategic decisions and ensures that the GAA's responses are grounded in real community needs.

Together, these three strands—data and analysis, internal action, and external collaboration—form a connected framework that allows the GAA National Demographic Committee to anticipate change, adapt effectively, and continue fostering participation and community belonging for generations to come.



# Section 1: Internal Actions

The GAA faces a changing demographic and organisational landscape that requires proactive internal action to sustain clubs, ensure fair competition, and strengthen community ties. Central to this process is the re-examination of how clubs are defined, how competitions are structured, and how players move between teams.

## For Immediate Implementation

### Action 1.1 Review the definition of a club

A first priority is to review and modernise the definition of a club. Rule 3.1 of the Official Guide 2025 defines a club as a Unit eligible to participate in a Senior, Intermediate or Junior Championship Competition. However, many rural clubs are under pressure due to declining populations resulting in their being unable to field at adult level. In this scenario, in order to remain as a club, a derogation from rule may be requested from Árd Comhairle. In many instances, clubs are actively involved in promoting Gaelic games, through participation at underage level, female codes, or as part of group teams yet cannot field independently at adult level – resulting in a breach of rule. It is proposed to review this definition, with a recommendation that clubs that are actively involved in promoting Gaelic games or participating in competitions other than adult championships can retain their designation as a club.

### Action 1.2 Targeted growth of new and existing clubs

On a strategic basis, the Association should target specific areas for the formation of new clubs. Such clubs would focus on youth development initially. These clubs would begin with nursery and Go Games age groups, and over time, as players grow and develop, field at youth, and subsequently adult level.

The need to field an adult team in a championship to be considered a club also impacts on the Association's ability to form new clubs, particularly in urban areas where there is demand for new units to cater for growing numbers. In conjunction with Action 1.1 (above), this action would prioritise the formation of clubs in areas of significant population growth.

### Action 1.3 Pilot initiatives in Kerry and Kildare

The Kerry & Kildare Pilot Project aims to address critical demographic challenges impacting the GAA in both rural and urban contexts. This project proposes targeted interventions in both counties, focusing on increasing participation, improving integration, influencing planning policies, and creating sustainable club structures.

The pilot will operate in:

- Urban Kerry: Tralee & Killarney
- Rural Kerry: Iveragh Peninsula and similar regions
- Urban Kildare: Naas, Celbridge & Maynooth

28• Rural Kildare: 14 identified clubs with declining populations

### Action 1.4 Modify our games formats/programmes to provide adequate number and quality of games to our players

Competition structures must also evolve. Standard 15-a-side formats are increasingly unsustainable for clubs with limited numbers. Alternative models, including 11- or 9-a-side competitions, blitz style tournaments, and modified rules, should be permitted, with county championships formally recognising reduced formats.

In addition, regional and cluster-based competitions would allow small clubs to pool resources and guarantee regular fixtures. A more nuanced grading system, based on both player numbers and performance, would help match clubs of similar scale rather than relying solely on geography or age brackets.

### Action 1.5 Review and update the guidance for independent teams

According to Rule 3.19 (n) and Rule 6.8, two or more Club(s) that are unable to field a Club team at U.21/20, U.17 or younger age-grades may seek permission from the County Committee for their players to play with another team.

In the case of 4 or fewer players, this is through a permission to play, while for 5 or more players clubs form Independent Teams.

Given the increasing prevalence of Independent Teams across many age groups (and especially containing demographically challenged clubs), it is proposed that:

1. Due to the limited number of players per team, Independent Teams shall not be formed for Go Games or younger age groups
2. The approval of an Independent Team by a County Committee would include a stipulation that the constituent clubs of the Independent Team would take part in officially organised adapted games competitions/tournaments as single entities. This ensures that each club can participate under their own banner on a given year.

### Action 1.6 Develop and Implement a National GAA Facilities Strategy

The GAA should commit to the development of a comprehensive National Facilities Strategy that provides a clear, evidence-informed framework for the planning, protection, financing, and development of Gaelic games infrastructure across the island.

Building on a detailed facilities audit to generate an evidence base, the GAA would set out long-term strategic priorities for facilities development, including:

- Safeguarding existing facilities through stronger planning and zoning protections,
- Targeting investment in areas of high population growth and emerging demand,
- Upgrading facilities to meet modern standards of accessibility, sustainability, energy efficiency, and gender equality,
- Promoting multi-use and dual-use models that maximise community benefit and social return on investment.

To ensure effective delivery, the strategy would establish a tiered framework for investment and development through distinguishing between local club facilities, county grounds, and regional centres of excellence, while aligning capital projects with government funding streams, local authority plans, and wider community infrastructure programmes.

Crucially, the GAA would also develop a dedicated National Facilities Investment Fund to underpin the strategy's implementation. This fund would:

- Pool and leverage GAA, government, philanthropic, and private sector resources.
- Provide a structured mechanism for co-investment with local authorities and community partners
- Support both major capital projects and smaller-scale upgrades that enhance accessibility, participation, and sustainability.
- Ensure equitable distribution of resources based on need, population growth, and facility condition.
- Together, the National Facilities Strategy and Investment Fund would create a robust, long-term framework to guide the sustainable development of Gaelic games infrastructure, ensuring facilities remain fit for purpose, community-focused, and aligned with the GAA's wider mission and participation goals

### Action 1.7 Form a Club Support Unit at national and provincial levels

The Club Support Unit (CSU), centrally and provincially based, is designed to provide comprehensive guidance, resources, and assistance to GAA clubs and county boards. Its primary aim is to ensure the sustainable growth, efficient management, and long-term viability of clubs and counties across Ireland.

The CSU will support clubs and counties through the following core functions:

- Provide expert guidance on club retention, maintenance, and creation.
- Offer operational and governance support to existing clubs and county boards.
- Facilitate access to resources and best practices for club development.
- Collaborate with local stakeholders to establish new clubs where needed, including for the One Club Model.
- Monitor club health and sustainability metrics to inform strategic planning.

The CSU will support clubs and counties through the following core functions:

- Accessing local and national government supports.
- Contributing to future local area development plans.
- Sourcing and applying for grant aid opportunities.
- Establishing and managing social enterprises to support club sustainability.
- Job creation and matching programmes to support community employment.

### Action 1.8 Introduce new tiers to competition structures to support clubs most impacted by demographic change.

To ensure competitive balance and sustainability for GAA clubs facing demographic challenges (e.g., low population) by introducing additional tiers of competition tailored to club size and player availability. For smaller or demographically challenged clubs, this approach would help retain players by offering meaningful, achievable competition, keeping them engaged both on the field and within their communities. By creating a structure that accommodates clubs of varying sizes, the GAA strengthens the social and community fabric that underpins local clubs, fostering a sense of belonging and pride. Over time, this tiered system would support the long-term sustainability of clubs across all counties, allowing them to thrive despite population shifts or other demographic challenges.

These competitions will be targeted at:

- Clubs located in rural or low-population areas, as determined by census data or county board assessments.
- Clubs that compete in the lower divisions of county leagues or championships (e.g., Junior B or C).
- Clubs with documented demographic challenges, including small player pools or limited underage structures.

### Action 1.9 - Develop a menu of byelaws to be implemented at county level

Byelaws in the GAA are formal rules adopted by county, provincial, or club units to govern their internal affairs and operations, provided they are consistent with the GAA's Official Guide. These byelaws allow for flexibility at a local level, enabling units to address specific needs or circumstances while remaining aligned with national regulations. There are currently a range of byelaws being implemented within counties, of whom other counties might not be aware. It is proposed that the Association provides a menu of options that counties can choose from to adopt within a given county.

- These include measures such as:
- Allowing urban players to join rural clubs.
- Enabling transfers based on parental or familial links.
- Permitting moves from stronger to weaker clubs.
- Restricting transfers into high-population urban clubs, and
- Exploring dual eligibility for players with ties to both rural and urban clubs.
- These measures aim to balance competitiveness, preserve rural club strength, and support community connections across the Association's structures.

## Ongoing Actions and Further Review

The following actions have been considered by the committee, and we are recommending them for further review and consideration by the Association.

### Action 1.10 Review of club catchment areas and parish rules



The GAA's traditional "Parish Rule" has long been a cornerstone of the Association, rooting club membership and identity in local community and geographic loyalty. However, with significant changes in population distribution, housing patterns, and family mobility, a review of club catchment areas and the parish rule is increasingly necessary.

Modernising this foundational rule can help ensure fair access to participation, preserve club identity, and promote sustainable development across all GAA units

### Action 1.11 Primary school-club alignment review



The GAA faces a growing challenge in how primary schools and clubs are aligned, particularly in areas where children attend schools outside their home parish due to factors like parental choice, school closures, or urban migration.

A structured Primary School-Club Alignment Review would allow the GAA to strengthen links between young players and their home clubs, ensuring long-term participation and community identity while respecting the realities of modern schooling.

### Action 1.12 Club Inter-county transfer system



Unregulated inter-county transfers can lead to a concentration of talent in already strong, resource rich clubs. This can reduce competitive balance and limit opportunities for smaller or developing clubs. To address this, it is proposed to review the process of Inter County Transfers to ensure that rules and regulations are put in place to ensure competitive balance. This would include a review whereby players who have transferred from their home, rural junior club to urban-based clubs to continue to represent their home club through an application process. These players would be permitted to play championship in two separate counties in a given year.





## Section 2: External Engagement

It would be incorrect, not to mention unfair, to think that the issues identified earlier in this report could be improved through action by the GAA alone. Evidence in recent years suggests that there is a growing interdependence between sport, community development, and public policy. Therefore, this section will discuss issues related to engagement by the GAA with external stakeholders, and how the issues of demography can be addressed. Such engagements will be required at national and local levels.

### Action 2.1 Establish an all-island external engagement and advocacy framework

To ensure that the range of engagement activities outlined above are delivered in a coherent, consistent, and impactful way, the GAA should establish an all-island external engagement and advocacy framework. This framework would coordinate relationships with government, local authorities, and community stakeholders North and South, provide clear priorities and messages, and support counties and clubs with the tools, training, and structures needed to engage effectively. By embedding monitoring and evaluation processes, the GAA can demonstrate outcomes and position itself as a leading civic voice across the island.

### Action 2.2 Engage with national government

An effective action for the GAA is to develop a structured all-island government engagement strategy, led by a cross-functional team from the Association. This strategy should identify key government stakeholders at national, regional, and local levels in both jurisdictions. In the South of Ireland, engagement would include departments such as Department of Culture, Sport, and Media, Department of Education and Youth, Department of Children, Disability and Equality, Department of Health, Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

In the North of Ireland, the Association would work with The Executive Office, Department for Communities (DfC), Department of Education, Department of Health, and Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), and the Department for Infrastructure (DfI). A structured process of engagement should start with the development of a clear set of policy priorities and messages that align both with the GAA's strategic plan and with government objectives in areas such as sport, health, inclusion, youth development, rural sustainability, and community wellbeing.

Equally, to make this engagement effective, the Association could schedule regular policy briefings and submissions, ensuring that government representatives North and South are kept informed about the GAA's contribution to society and the outcomes of its programmes. This would include producing data-driven reports that highlight the economic, social, and cultural value of GAA activity, as well as demonstrating measurable progress on government priorities. The result of this action would be a proactive, structured, and professionalised engagement strategy, ensuring that the GAA is not just reacting to government policy but actively shaping it—securing influence, resources, and recognition that will benefit clubs and communities across the Island.

### Action 2.3 Engage with local authorities



Local government is central to the sustainability and growth of the GAA North and South. County and city councils, municipal districts, and local development agencies are often the primary funders and decision-makers for sports facilities, land use, and community development projects. They also oversee critical policy areas that overlap directly with GAA priorities: youth services, health promotion, rural regeneration, social inclusion, and community cohesion.

Similar to the National Government Engagement (above), a local government engagement strategy would be developed, with similar mapping exercises to identify the key organisations and individuals concerned in each jurisdiction.

Example activities include:

- Appoint County or Provincial GAA Local Government Liaison Officers to coordinate engagement and maintain regular communication with councils.
- Host annual or biannual GAA–Local Authority Forums to review progress, share best practice, and identify co-funding opportunities.
- Encourage local clubs to participate in Public Participation Networks (PPNs) and Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) to influence grassroots policy.

### Action 2.4 Support balanced regional development



Despite policy and strategy attempts in both jurisdictions to ensure balanced regional development, this has not been fully successful. Latest census figures and trends reveal a growing urbanisation, with this growth concentrated particularly on the east coast of Ireland and in the Belfast–Dublin corridor.

The GAA Demographics Committee strongly supports and advocates for population expansion in rural Ireland to counter in some way the significant growth that has occurred and continues to occur in urban areas. The Association recognises the importance of developing sustainable rural towns and villages, retaining and increasing population therein, together with investing in necessary infrastructure and amenities.

Through the Local Government Engagement Strategy (Action 2.3), the Association should encourage submissions by its units and members that will assist in shaping local authority development strategies and council community plans North and South. These strategies must address quality of life issues, ensuring that community infrastructure and amenities, such as sporting and recreational facilities, are aligned with housing and settlement growth in both urban and rural contexts.

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### Action 2.5 Develop an All-Island Sporting Facilities Framework



Governments North and South, in partnership with key stakeholders, including the GAA, Sport Ireland, Sport NI, other sporting bodies, local authorities, and educational institutions, should lead the development of complementary national and all-island facilities strategies.

This framework would ensure that all communities, rural and urban, have equitable access to high quality, inclusive, and sustainable sporting infrastructure that meets both current and future demand. It would promote coordination across jurisdictions, prevent duplication of effort, and align investment priorities with population needs and community benefit.

### Action 2.6 Establish a Comprehensive Evidence Base for Facility Planning



The GAA, in partnership with relevant government and sporting stakeholders, should lead the creation of a robust, evidence-informed facilities planning system.

This would include:

- The development of a Facilities Calculator using demographic, participation, and geographic data to assess current and projected facility requirements for Gaelic games and wider community sport.
- Integration of data from North and South to inform national and regional facility planning.
- Use of this evidence base to guide investment, identify priority areas, and ensure equitable provision across the island.

### Action 2.7 Plan and Fund Facilities in Line with Population Growth



In line with demographic change, governments and local authorities should ensure that new and upgraded sporting facilities are developed proportionate to population growth and community needs.

Key measures include:

- Incorporating clear facility standards and zoning policies within Development Plans (South) and Local Development Plans (North).
- Requiring developers of large housing projects to contribute appropriately to recreational land and infrastructure.
- Establishing guidelines for open and green space per 1,000 residents, drawing on international best practice such as the UK's 6-acre standard.
- Ensuring access to diverse funding streams, including the Community Sport Fund, Development Contributions under Section 48 (South), and relevant Sport NI and Department for Communities programmes (North).
- Leveraging these funding sources strategically to support the upgrading of existing GAA facilities, provision of new pitches, and development of shared community hubs.

## Action 2.8 Develop an island wide dual-use facilities strategy



Recognising the need for greater efficiency and inclusivity, the GAA should lead the development of a dual-use and shared-access facilities strategy in collaboration with schools, local authorities, and community organisations.

This framework would:

- Enable underutilised GAA facilities, especially in rural areas, to serve as multi-use community hubs during off-peak times (e.g. school hours).
- Facilitate reciprocal access for GAA clubs to local authority, school, or community facilities, particularly in space-constrained urban areas.
- Establish clear governance, scheduling, and maintenance protocols to ensure fairness, safety, and accountability.
- Reduce duplication of investment while maximising participation and supporting lifelong engagement in sport.

## Action 2.9 Collaboration on rural Social Enterprise



A social enterprise is a business that trades to achieve a social or environmental mission, with the majority of its profits reinvested to achieve that mission rather than being distributed to owners or shareholders. This is true both North and South, where low population density or lack of economies of scale can limit commercial investment.

This action outlines a potential collaboration between the GAA, the Western Development Commission, Social Enterprise Republic of Ireland (South), Co-operation Ireland, Social Enterprise NI, and other key partners. Together, they could explore how social enterprise can support communities facing rural decline.

Such collaboration would shape a realistic framework that draws on the strengths of both sporting and enterprise networks, supported by relevant departments North and South, for example, the Department of Rural and Community Development (South) and the Departments for the Economy and Communities (North).



## Section 3: Enhance the Association's evidence informed strategy process

In addition to both internal GAA and external engagement actions, the continuing monitoring of demographic changes across the island of Ireland is a key action for the Association. Such actions will involve the creation of systems and structures to track changes in demography, participation, and thereby supporting evidence-informed policy.

### Action 3.1 Establish an Overarching Evidence-Informed Policy and Research Unit

The GAA, LGFA, and Camogie Associations should adopt a cohesive approach to policy development and research, ensuring that all strategic and operational decisions are grounded in robust evidence, led by a dedicated unit serving all Associations. This unit would:

- Provide dedicated resources to support research, evaluation, and policy formulation across all levels of Gaelic games.
- Coordinate data collection, research methodologies, and analytical processes to ensure consistency, comparability, and efficiency.
- Promote a culture of organisational learning, where insights from research are transferred into policy, programme design, and operational practice.
- Enable strategic monitoring and evaluation, ensuring investments and interventions are effective and aligned with the Associations' Mission and Values.
- Support continuous improvement in programme implementation, governance, and community engagement.
- Strengthen the case for government and local authority support by providing measurable evidence of impact and outcomes.
- This overarching unit would serve as the foundation for all demographic, participation, and policy research, ensuring that decision-making across Gaelic games is proactive, evidence-informed, and strategically aligned.

This overarching unit would serve as the foundation for all demographic, participation, and policy research, ensuring that decision-making across Gaelic games is proactive, evidence-informed, and strategically aligned.

### Action 3.2 Develop a data-informed policy and demographic analysis system

To respond effectively to demographic change and evolving participation trends, the GAA should implement a centralised data and predictive insights platform. This system would:

- Monitor population trends, school enrolments, community demographics, and participation patterns to anticipate where programmes, facilities, and resources are needed.
- Incorporate membership, participation, and community mapping to inform recruitment, retention, and engagement strategies.
- Provide predictive models to forecast future trends in player pathways, volunteer engagement, and facility demand.
- Inform the design of inclusive programmes, ensuring equitable access and targeted support for underrepresented communities, including migrants and women.
- Enable proactive decision-making for facility planning, programme delivery, and resource allocation, shifting the Associations from reactive responses to strategic foresight.
- Support scenario planning and long-term strategy development, ensuring Gaelic games remain sustainable, accessible, and responsive to Ireland's changing demographic landscape.



# Demographics : An Overview

Gaelic games have long been the heartbeat of Irish communities, fostering sport, culture, and identity across our units. However, Ireland's evolving demographic landscape presents both opportunities and challenges that require strategic adaptation. While this has long been accepted within the Association, the creation of the National Demographics Committee and the appointment of County Demographics Officers represents a significant step forward in the Association's commitment to safeguarding the future of our games.

The National Demographics Committee has undertaken a detailed analysis of population trends, member distribution, and club sustainability to inform the GAA's future policies. While demographic issues have existed for decades (as evidenced by quotations from the report of the MacNamee Commission in 1971 and The Strategic Review of 2002), recent demographic trends have heightened its impact, making it an existential concern for the Association's future.

The GAA is concerned with all the people of Ireland, urban and rural. The problem is that the Association is weakest where the population is increasing; it is strongest where the population is declining. That problem has always been there but the extent of the adverse trends in recent years has now brought a full realisation of its seriousness for the Association.

**Report of the MacNamee Commission (1971)**

The greatest implications and challenges for the GAA of the future are to be found in growing cities, larger settlements across the country, satellite towns serving major cities and the increasing number of towns with populations of more than 5,000 people. The net result is that the effects of urbanisation are being felt across the entire country, including by village and rural clubs.

**Report of the Strategic Review: Enhancing Community Identity (2002)**

Over the past five decades, Ireland has experienced a profound transformation. Once characterised by high birth rates and population stagnation caused by emigration, the country has since shifted to lower fertility levels alongside rapid population growth, driven mainly by sustained net inward migration. Increasing life expectancy has further contributed to the steady ageing of the population. When you look below the national level, the urban-rural balance has shifted and continues to shift.

There is evidence of a strong move eastwards across the island, and growth in urban centres in every county. This is particularly evident in the eastern regions, where urban centres are experiencing strong population growth. At the same time, rural and more remote areas are facing relative decline. This report examines the key components of demographic change as they impact on Ireland, as well as the participation changes that impact on the GAA. It attempts to bring together these separate analyses so that the impact of the demographic shifts experienced in Ireland in recent years can be understood in GAA terms.

The GAA's future will be shaped by both its deep historical roots and wider trends that are reshaping Irish society. Strategic, evidence-informed planning and policy development that fully integrates demographic insights is crucial for the Association. By doing so, the Association can respond effectively to shifting population patterns while ensuring sustainable growth, strengthening community bonds, and maintaining resilience in a rapidly changing world.

The National Demographics Committee believes that the GAA has not yet felt the full weight of these demographic shifts. But the warning signs are already here. The Association now stands on the precipice: in the coming decade, some clubs will be overwhelmed by demand while others will wither from lack of numbers, and the decisions taken today, and in the coming years, will determine whether the GAA emerges stronger or fractured by these divides.

## The Cost of Inaction

The cost of inaction on demographic change is both tangible and intangible, impacting participation, identity, and the long-term sustainability of clubs. If the GAA fails to adapt — or adapts too slowly — to Ireland’s changing demographics, the consequences will be severe. In rural areas, shrinking populations and falling birth rates are eroding club numbers. The impact of demographic change on rural Ireland has resulted in the closure of many of the core community features, schools, shops, and social hubs, while young families move away, and once-vibrant club facilities risk becoming empty relics. Independent teams and amalgamations may stave off collapse temporarily, but without action, clubs and decades of community pride and tradition, will disappear.

Urban clubs face a different but equally urgent threat. Rapid growth strains volunteers, facilities, and finances. Overstretched squads leave children sidelined, risking dropout, while ambitious expansion could saddle clubs with unsustainable debt. Even large urban clubs can struggle to recruit beyond traditional GAA families, leaving Gaelic games removed from Ireland’s increasingly diverse population.

The cost of inaction is existential: rural clubs may vanish, urban clubs will not be able to provide Gaelic games activity for their communities and the GAA risks losing its balance, its volunteer ethos, and its founding principle of inclusion.

## Looking Ahead

The challenge for the GAA is not whether demographic change will affect our communities, it is how prepared we are to respond. Preparing for demographic change is not about trying to control who joins or where people live, nor is it about precisely predicting those shifts. It is about ensuring that our structures, clubs, and policies are agile, inclusive, and resilient in the face of evolving population patterns. It is also about equipping our people with the right skills and insights to understand and respond to those changes.

The Association believes that demography must be placed at the heart of long-term strategic planning. This work contributes to that goal by:

- Highlighting the key demographic trends shaping GAA membership and participation.
- Identifying the challenges and gaps that cut across clubs, counties, and structures.
- Proposing actions to strengthen our capacity to plan, adapt, and anticipate future needs.

By planning ahead, the GAA can ensure that demographic change becomes a source of renewal and growth, strengthening our games and communities rather than placing them under strain. However, the GAA alone cannot overcome the challenges which arise from demographic change. The Association will need to engage with government at national and local levels, as well as other external agencies to support our members in adapting to the changing circumstances.

Despite being aware of the impact of demographic change on the Association’s activities for over 50 years, the Association’s response has so far been piecemeal. It is time for a coordinated and strategic approach to provide options for our units at club, county, provincial, and national level. Proactive adaptation is not optional, it is essential to safeguard the GAA’s future.

## GAA Demographic Change: Risk Assessment Matrix

Context	Risk	Short-Term	Long-Term	Severity
Rural	Declining playing numbers	Difficulty fielding underage teams; reliance on amalgamations	Closure of clubs; entire parishes without representation	High
	Loss of rural services (schools, shops, pubs)	Reduced community vibrancy; fewer children in schools feeding clubs	Rural depopulation entrenched; GAA clubs cease to act as community anchors	High
	Lack of housing development	Young families unable to remain local	Ageing population with no regeneration; volunteer and player base collapse	High
	Underutilised facilities	Expensive facilities lying idle; financial strain on clubs	Abandonment or sale of facilities; wasted capital investment	Medium
	Loss of identity through amalgamations	Resentment among members; diluted club traditions	Weakening of local pride and attachment to the GAA	Medium-High
Urban	Rapid membership growth without adequate club capacity	Overcrowded teams; waiting lists; children excluded	Drop-off in participation; disillusionment with GAA ethos of inclusivity	High
	Volunteer burnout	Strain on small groups of coaches/admins; difficulty meeting demand	Collapse of volunteer model; reduced quality of coaching and player experience	High
	Lack of clubs	Some children get limited game time	Reduced adult playing base; weaker inter-county pipeline	High
	Facility shortages	Training congestion; need to rent pitches at high cost	Unsustainable debt from facility development; long-term financial burden	High
	Overstretched clubs	Competitive imbalance; smaller clubs struggle to compete	Structural imbalance at county level; dominance of a few “mega-clubs”	Medium-High
	Low penetration in diverse areas	Recruitment limited to traditional GAA families	GAA fails to embed in new urban communities; cultural relevance declines	Medium-High

# Demographic Shifts in Ireland



## National Impacts

Ireland's population is undergoing significant demographic change, with patterns of growth and decline shaping communities across the island in very different ways. In 2025, the population of the island of Ireland stands at over 7 million people. This represents an increase of 26%, or 1.5 million people, over the 20 years since 2002. The last time that population levels on the island exceeded 7 million people was in the census of 1851.

However, it should be recognised that the population across the island is not uniformly spread. Broadly, two trends stand out: nationally, the population is shifting eastwards, concentrated in Dublin, Belfast, and their commuter belt counties, while within every county there is a movement from rural to urban living.

## A Shift Eastward

In considering the eastward shift of population, the population of the Dublin commuter belt (defined as approximately 1 hours travel time to Dublin) is reflected in Figure 1 below. Constructing an arc from Drogheda on the northern side, to Tullamore on the western side, to Gorey on the southern side allows us to define the population of this area. As can be seen, almost 1 in every 3 people on the island of Ireland live within this area (32.7%).



Figure 1: Comparison of population, GAA club and membership data in the Dublin commuter belt.

Using data from the GAA membership system, within the same commuter area there are a total of 290 clubs (18% of the total number of clubs on the island), 25.7% of all members.

To take a broader look at the eastern seaboard (see Figure 2), with a similar line drawn from Larne to Wexford, it is notable that over 3 million people (or more than 4 in every 10 people – 43.5%) across the island live to the east of this line.

Undertaking the same analysis of GAA data shows that 18.6% of clubs are to be found east of this line, representing 25.4% of membership.



Figure 2 Comparison of population, GAA club and membership data on the eastern seaboard.

Ireland's urban structure is characterised by a relatively small number of large cities (e.g., Dublin, Belfast, Cork, Derry, Limerick etc.), a dispersed network of regional towns (e.g., Bray, Carlow, Naas, Omagh), and a broad rural hinterland. For example, Figure 3 displays the population of the island of Ireland that lives either on the eastern seaboard or in towns or cities with a population of more than 10,000 people. As can be seen, these areas accounts for 62.7% of the entire population of the island, meaning that areas outside of these accounts for 37.3% of the population.

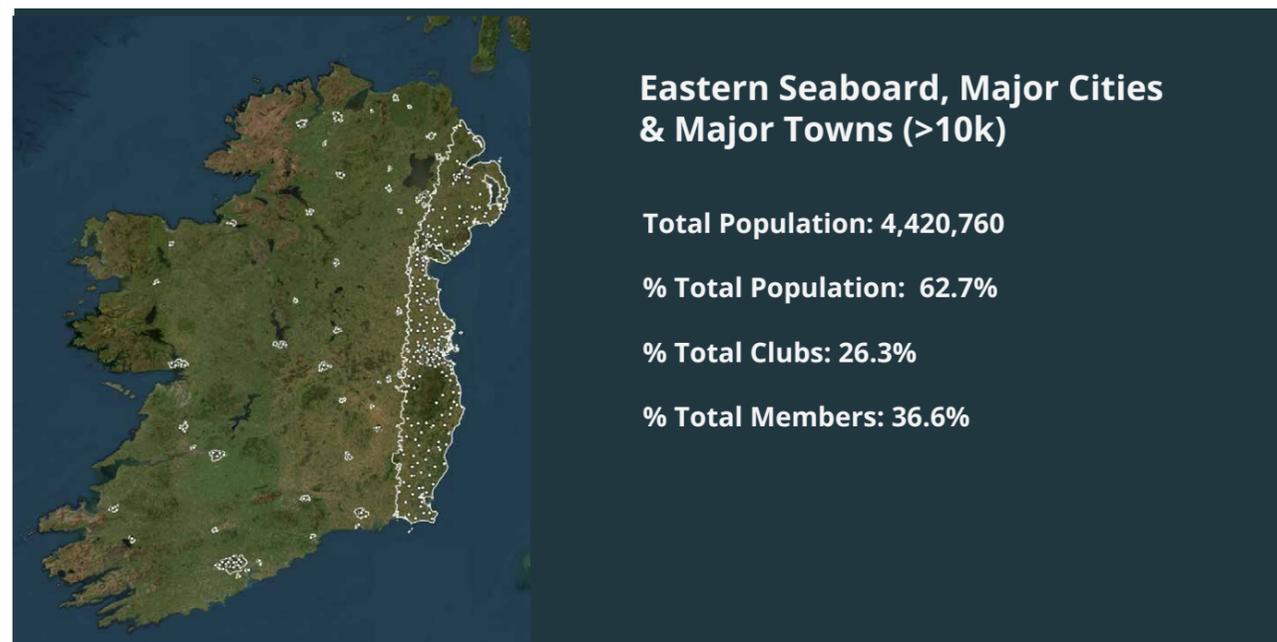


Figure 3: Representation of population imbalance across the island of Ireland.

## Urban/Rural Balance

The urban/rural shift across each county is reflected in the proportions of the population living in cities, towns (with a population >5,000), and smaller settlements. As can be seen in Figure 4, a total of 58% of the population of the island of Ireland live either in cities (30%) or towns (28%), while just 42% of the population live in rural areas or smaller settlements. Comparing the GAA data, it can be seen that just 8% of clubs are in our cities, 13% in towns, with 78% of clubs to be found in the smaller settlements. The GAA membership data shows that just over 1 in every 3 GAA club members (34%) are members of clubs in either cities or towns, with 66% of members of clubs in rural or smaller settlements. An analysis of this suggests that while there are fewer clubs in cities or towns, they tend to be larger based on membership numbers. The reverse is true of clubs in rural areas, where the number of clubs is larger, though membership numbers suggest that the clubs tend to be smaller.



Figure 4: Comparison of population, GAA clubs and members living in cities, towns, and smaller settlements.

## Declining Birth Rates

An additional feature of the population of the island of Ireland is the declining birth rates. Publications from the CSO and NISRA arising from censuses North and South in recent years indicate an aging population. This is reflective of two trends. Firstly, that people are living longer, but secondly – and more alarmingly from a GAA context – is the decreasing number of births across the island. As can be seen in Figure 5, the number of children born on the island of Ireland has decreased steadily since 2010. From a height of 100,291 children born on the island in 2010, the figure is just 73,478 (a decrease of 26.74%) in 2024. This decline in the number of births has been slightly offset by an increase in the number of young children born overseas migrating to Ireland. This was most notable in the arrival of Ukrainian children after 2022. These data are equally of concern for the education sector, where fewer children will be enrolling in Primary and subsequently, Post Primary schools.

Again, the natural increase in population – due to the difference between the number of births and the number of deaths – is not evenly spread. It is likely that the most populous towns and cities will have a relatively stable number of children. Planned population growth in these areas will mean that whatever number of children are born, they are likely to live in those areas. The flip side of this is that the decline in the number of children in more rural areas will continue and impact such areas to a greater extent.

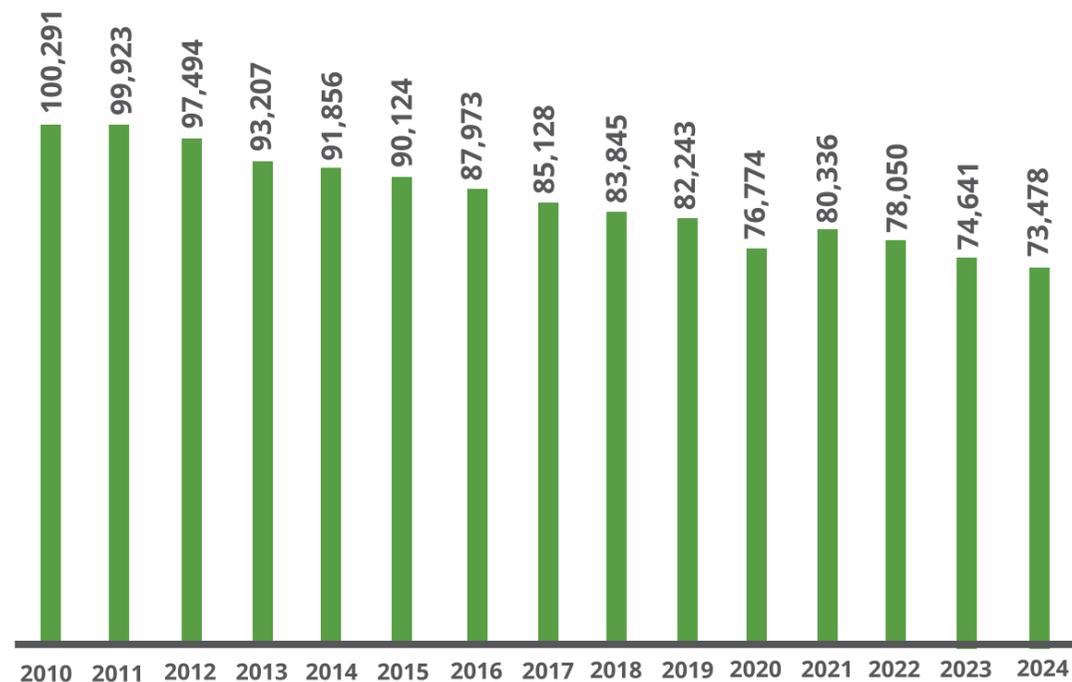


Figure 5: Number of births on the island of Ireland 2010 - 2024

## Migration

Migration remains an important component of population change in Ireland. This includes both Irish citizens returning after periods overseas and inward migration by people who may or may not hold Irish citizenship. In addition, Ireland now has a significant second-generation migrant population, many of whom were born here but come from culturally diverse households. Table 1 reports the population increase and the proportions attributable to natural increase and migration for selected counties.

Once again, there is a clear urban-rural demographic divide. Larger cities and their commuter belts — particularly Dublin, Cork, Meath, Kildare — recorded higher numbers of migrants in the most recent census. This indicates that their population increases are driven by both natural increase and migration.

In contrast, in more rural and western counties, migration plays a much stronger role than natural increase in population growth, with the proportion of growth attributable to migration often exceeding 60%, and in some cases over 70%. Longford (72.6%), Roscommon (73.1%), and Leitrim (74.1%) saw the highest migration proportions, reflecting limited natural increase (low birth rates, ageing populations). Mayo, Kerry, Clare, and Wexford also experienced majority migration-driven growth (65–69%), consistent with ageing profiles and slower natural increases.

These demographic shifts are transforming the social fabric of local communities and have direct implications for the sustainability GAA clubs, which remain central to Irish cultural and sporting life.

Table 1: Population increase from 2016 - 2022 for selected Counties

County	Population Increase 2016 - 2022	Proportion from Natural Increase (%)	Proportion from Migration (%)
Dublin	103,342	54.9	45.1
Cork	38,363	45.5	54.5
Meath	25,252	40.9	59.1
Kildare	24,473	49.2	50.8
Leitrim	3,043	25.9	74.1
Roscommon	5,451	26.9	73.1
Longford	5,941	27.4	72.6
Mayo	6,724	33.8	66.2

## County Impacts

The majority of the population of Ireland is clustered in a small number of counties. Census 2022 shows strong population growth, but the gains are uneven. Dublin remains Ireland's dominant population centre, home to nearly 1.5 million people across its four local authorities, and it has continued to expand, particularly in Fingal and South Dublin. The commuter counties surrounding the capital Meath (220, 826), Kildare (247, 774) and Louth (139, 703) have also seen sharp rises, fuelled by both natural increase and strong inward migration.

Further south and west, Cork is now home to nearly 600,000 people across city and county combined, with Galway (276, 451) and Limerick (209, 536) also consolidating their status as regional urban hubs. These cities, and the areas surrounding them, continue to attract both younger populations and inward migrants, strengthening their roles as engines of economic and cultural life outside the capital. By contrast, growth in more peripheral counties, particularly in the northwest and along the western seaboard, has been positive but modest. Donegal (167,084), Mayo (137,231), Leitrim (35,199) and Roscommon (70, 259) all recorded increases, but at slower rates than the national average. Other counties such as Kerry, Tipperary, and Kilkenny, while still growing, are doing so at much slower rates. These areas continue to face challenges linked to ageing populations, outward migration of younger cohorts, and the sustainability of rural services.

The North displays a slightly different profile but with similar pressures. The 2021 Census recorded just over 1.9 million people, with a higher population density than the South and a slightly older age profile. Growth here has also been uneven, with the strongest concentrations in and around Belfast, spilling across counties Antrim (651,321) and Down (553,261). Derry (252,231) remains the third largest county, while Armagh (194,394) and Tyrone (188,383) saw moderate growth. Fermanagh (63, 585), by contrast, is small and relatively stable in population terms.

Taken together, the census results paint a picture of an island whose population is expanding and becoming more urbanised, but also one that is ageing and increasingly dependent on migration for growth. Dublin and its surrounding counties dominate in scale and pace of expansion, while Cork, Galway and Limerick reinforce their positions as regional anchors. The overarching trend is clear: demographic change is reshaping Ireland county by county. As a result, distinct geographic clusters are emerging: some communities are growing and becoming more diverse, while others are shrinking and ageing. This fragmentation has significant implications for the Association across the spectrum of demographics.



# Implications for GAA Clubs

The changing nature of Ireland's demographics at national and local level had, and will continue to have, significant impacts on GAA clubs across the island. We have categorised these according to whether clubs are urban or rural, but caution that these challenges are being faced across the Association, in each county.

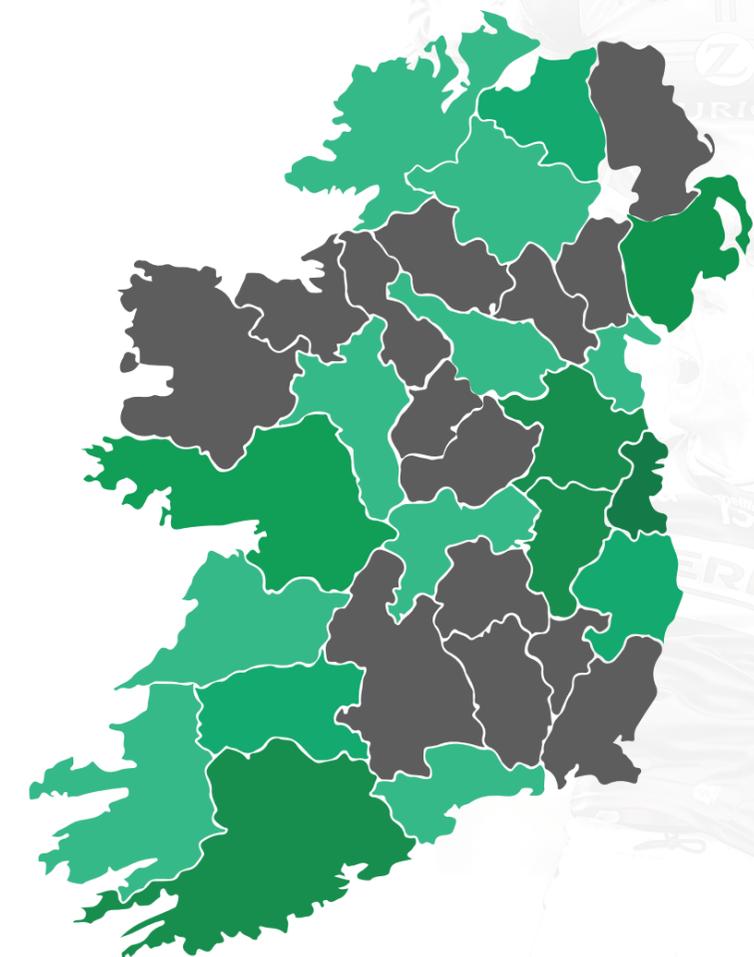
## Urban Clubs

Urban expansion is exerting a profound influence on the GAA, creating both significant opportunities for growth and acute organisational pressures. In many cities and rapidly developing commuter belt counties, clubs are experiencing substantial increases in membership. While this reflects the enduring appeal of Gaelic games, it has also placed considerable strain on the volunteer-led structures that underpin the Association. The demand for coaches, referees, and administrators now routinely exceeds supply, raising questions about the long-term sustainability of the existing volunteer model.

To illustrate this, while the average club size is approximately 350 members, the largest clubs have upwards of 5,000 members. The top 2.5% of clubs have in excess of 1,200 members. There are 74 clubs across the Association that fall into this bracket. (See Table 2)

**Table 2 : The number of very large clubs (more than 1,200 members) per county.**

Dublin	34
Meath	6
Kildare	6
Cork	6
Down	4
Galway	3
Wicklow	2
Limerick	2
Derry	2
Louth	1
Roscommon	1
Clare	1
Tyrone	1
Donegal	1
Waterford	1
Laois	1
Cavan	1
Kerry	1



**TOTAL 74**

In reviewing this analysis, it is clear that while Dublin clubs form a significant majority of these large clubs, the impact of the Dublin commuter areas (as reflected in Meath and Kildare clubs), as well as the urban areas of Cork, Down, and Galway remains important. Of interest though is the presence of significantly large clubs in otherwise predominantly rural counties, for example, the presence of a single large club in Kerry, Cavan, Waterford, Tyrone, Donegal, Clare, and Laois. Often, these clubs are located in the fastest-rising suburban and commuter areas. They may not yet match the scale of the largest urban clubs, but they are growing fast and beginning to reshape the competitive balance in their counties. The implications of this growth are evident at the player level. Large squad sizes mean that opportunities for regular and meaningful participation are limited. Insufficient game time is a key driver of player dropout, particularly among younger cohorts, and runs counter to the Association's ethos of inclusivity and participation. At the competitive level, the rapid expansion of certain urban clubs has resulted in structural imbalances, with some clubs now so large that they dominate competitions at underage and adult levels. This dynamic has prompted debate regarding whether mechanisms should be introduced to limit growth or whether excessively large clubs should be reorganised to maintain fairness and competitive integrity.

Capacity constraints in facilities further compound these pressures. Many urban clubs lack adequate access to pitches and training grounds to meet the needs of their expanding membership base. This manifests itself in overcrowding, congested timetables, and long waiting lists. The development or rental of additional facilities entails a significant financial outlay, often beyond the immediate means of clubs and county boards, thereby creating structural funding challenges.

Analysis of the GAA club facilities audit, conducted in 2024, highlights this issue. As presented later in this report (see County Demographics Snapshots) the number of full and small sided pitches that clubs own or have access to is a significant limiting factor on their ability to provide an optimum playing experience for their members (See Table 3 below for a snapshot of Counties). Many urban clubs, for example, do not own their own facilities and instead are fully reliant on local authority provision or accessing pitches through educational institutions. This is perhaps most acute in Dublin, where over half (53%) of all pitches in use are provided by local authorities, while a total of 70% of the currently available full-sized pitches are not controlled by clubs. Again, provision across the island is uneven, with some counties – such as Kilkenny – not having a single local authority provided full sized playing pitch.

Local authorities provide a planning framework for a range of sporting and recreational facilities for their local population. Given the size of a full-sized Gaelic games pitch and lack of space for the provision of sporting and recreational facilities, a tendency exists to provide smaller facilities, which may suit the playing of Go Games, or multi-use facilities, which are often too small to cater for clubs' needs. There is also a misperception that the GAA is adequately provided for in terms of facilities. In urban areas this is simply not the case and the perception that GAA units do not need the provision of playing pitches from local authorities must be challenged.

County	Clubs	Pitches	Club Owned	Local Authority	Other
Dublin	88	412	124	217	71
			30%	53%	17%
Kilkenny	41	71	58	0	13
			82%	0%	18%
Kerry	69	88	83	1	4
			94%	1%	5%

Table 3: Club pitch availability and ownership across selected Counties

Even though many people take part in Gaelic games in cities, clubs often find it difficult to connect with people outside of the usual GAA families. In large and mixed city areas, the number of people involved is still low when compared with the full size of the local population.

There are many reasons for this. In most countries, people born and raised there are more likely to join sports. People who have moved from other countries often face cultural barriers. Adults who moved to Ireland later in life did not grow up with Irish sports, so they never built a connection to them as children. They may also find it hard to join clubs where you need to already know people or understand the culture to feel welcome.

Children of migrants may have more chances to join the GAA through local schools, but their family background and cultural habits can still affect their choice to take part. Language problems can also make it harder to get involved.

The strong Irish identity of the GAA can make it more appealing to people who grew up in Ireland and understand the culture. But this same identity can discourage migrants, who may not know about the games or may not feel that the GAA is for them.

This shows both a weakness and an opportunity for the GAA; the chance to grow its reach, be more inclusive, and make Gaelic games a stronger part of life in fast changing city communities.

Despite the rapid growth of urban populations, the GAA did not establish new clubs in these areas to keep pace with demographic changes. This shortfall has led to several issues:

- **Overcrowding in Existing Clubs:** Many urban clubs are experiencing high demand, resulting in stretched resources, limited access to facilities which result in a significant reduction in player retention in teenage years.
- **Smaller clubs, operating in the shadow of the larger clubs, find it more difficult to both attract new members and to access facilities.**
- **Barriers to Participation:** Children and families moving into new urban communities often find it difficult to join a local club, reducing opportunities for engagement in Gaelic games.
- **Missed Opportunities for Growth:** The GAA risks losing potential players and supporters in growing urban areas if it does not provide accessible clubs and facilities.

Several factors have contributed to the GAA's difficulty in forming sufficient new clubs in urban settings:

- **Resource Constraints:** Securing land and developing facilities in cities is more expensive and complicated than in rural areas
- **Complex Urban Environments:** Urban areas often lack the strong parish identities found in rural regions, making it harder to rally community support for new clubs.
- **Organisational Challenges:** The GAA's traditional structures may not be as effective in addressing the unique needs of new urban communities, where there is no history of a GAA club and the populations is more transient and diverse.

If the GAA does not address the gap in urban club formation, there is a risk of declining participation in Gaelic games among young people in cities and towns, which would impact the long-term vitality of the association.

Proactive strategies, such as targeted investment, innovative club models, and stronger engagement with urban communities, are needed to ensure that the GAA remains relevant and accessible as Ireland's population continues to urbanise.

## Rural Clubs

Rural depopulation is reshaping communities across Ireland, with significant social and organisational implications for the GAA. As populations decline, local amenities such as shops, pubs, post offices, and banks are increasingly forced to close, eroding the social fabric of rural life. In many areas, the local GAA club has become the last remaining hub of activity, carrying a central role in community cohesion but simultaneously experiencing increased strain as it absorbs the social functions once provided by other facilities.

Declining populations also have a direct impact on schools, with fewer children enrolling in local primary schools. This often leads to reductions in teacher numbers and, in some cases, the closure of schools altogether. Since schools serve as vital feeders of young players into GAA clubs, their contraction directly affects the sustainability of underage teams and limits the opportunities for children to engage in Gaelic games from an early age.

Housing scarcity further compounds these challenges. National planning policy promotes compact growth for rural towns and villages. However, with little or no new development in many rural areas, young families frequently relocate to urban or commuter regions, preventing population renewal and reinforcing an ageing demographic profile. This has a twofold effect: it diminishes the pool of potential players and restricts the number of volunteers who can contribute to club administration, coaching, and refereeing.

To maintain participation, many rural clubs have responded by grouping teams at underage levels (through Independent teams) or, in some cases, fully combining clubs. In many counties, independent teams have become a staple of the fixtures programme. For example, in Cork a total of 53 clubs field as part of independent teams in Gaelic football (representing more than 1/3 of all clubs who play Gaelic football), while 47 Hurling clubs do likewise. While these options preserve opportunities to play, they can also dilute long-standing club traditions and weaken local identity, presenting a delicate balance between inclusion and the preservation of community heritage.

Paradoxically, some rural clubs that invested heavily in facilities during more prosperous times now face underutilisation. With shrinking memberships, pitches, clubhouses, and training areas risk being left idle, leaving clubs with costly assets that are no longer matched by sufficient activity to justify their upkeep.

Taken together, these demographic shifts illustrate a game of two realities: urban expansion creating pressure through scale, and rural depopulation threatening survival. The GAA's challenge is to adapt to both. Rural clubs will need more support for cross-club collaboration, flexible competition structures, and investment in sustainable community facilities. Urban clubs, by contrast, will need additional pitches, structured pathways for volunteers, and stronger outreach into new communities to ensure inclusivity. By recognising and responding to these regional demographic realities, the GAA can safeguard its role at the heart of Irish life,





# The Future of GAA Clubs

Projecting population change is inherently uncertain. Birth rates, death rates, patterns of migration, and a range of social, economic, and policy factors all interact in complex ways, meaning that population forecasts should be viewed as indicative rather than definitive. However, there are indicators of the future for GAA clubs in the shorter term. The number of children aged 0 – 5 years can provide solid guidance to a club towards their more immediate future. That figure can reveal whether a club is heading for significant growth, maintenance, survival, or slow decline.

There has been a notable decline in the population of 0–5-year-olds across the island of Ireland in recent years. This decline is shown most starkly when comparing the number of 0-5 year olds with the number of 6 - 11 year olds (see Table 4). This decline is seen in every county, with an island wide reduction of almost 82,000 children. This trend is driven by a falling birth rate and by an increase in the average age of mothers at first birth. However, there are some regional variations in this pattern. Urban centres and their surrounding commuter belts show the highest concentration of young children. (See Figure 6) This is due to their larger overall population size and their function as magnets for young families seeking employment and educational opportunities. As can be seen in Table 4 Dublin (98,429) has the highest number of children aged 0 – 5 years, followed by Antrim (45,363), Cork (40,177), Down (38,038), Galway (19,277), and Kildare (18,777). In fact, these six counties are home to more than half (52%) of all 0–5-year-olds on the island of Ireland.

Overall, rural and Western counties, such as Mayo (9,474), Kerry (10,173), Roscommon (5,010), Leitrim (2,592), and Fermanagh (4,695) are experiencing the most pronounced decline in their young populations. Indeed, the lowest 15 counties have fewer 0-5-year-olds than Dublin.

Within these smallest counties, the towns will not be insulated from the broader demographic decline, but their population of young children will generally be more stable than in the surrounding countryside. Ultimately, while the proportion of young children is decreasing in rural counties overall, those that remain are disproportionately located in the towns, creating a pattern of urbanisation within a rural context.

Table 4: Population Aged 0-5 v Population Aged 6-11 by County, Census 2021 & Census 2022

County	Population 0-5	Population 6-11	Change	Relative Change
Antrim	45,363	50,210	-4,847	-9.7%
Armagh	15,995	17,404	-1,409	-8.1%
Carlow	4,285	5,225	-940	-18.0%
Cavan	6,346	7,484	-1,138	-15.2%
Clare	8,803	10,490	-1,687	-16.1%
Cork	40,177	48,297	-8,120	-16.8%
Derry	18,760	20,847	-2,087	-10.0%
Donegal	11,986	14,240	-2,254	-15.8%
Down	38,038	42,076	-4,038	-9.6%
Dublin	98,429	112,871	-14,442	-12.8%
Fermanagh	4,695	5,144	-449	-8.7%
Galway	19,227	22,608	-3,381	-15.0%
Kerry	10,173	11,934	-1,761	-14.8%
Kildare	18,777	22,648	-3,871	-17.1%
Kilkenny	7,197	9,138	-1,941	-21.2%
Laois	6,964	8,733	-1,769	-20.3%
Leitrim	2,592	3,045	-453	-14.9%
Limerick	14,076	16,666	-2,590	-15.5%
Longford	3,341	4,169	-828	-19.9%
Louth	10,053	12,366	-2,313	-18.7%
Mayo	9,474	11,122	-1,648	-14.8%
Meath	17,338	21,539	-4,201	-19.5%
Monaghan	5,214	5,985	-771	-12.9%
Offaly	5,932	7,303	-1,371	-18.8%
Roscommon	5,010	6,011	-1,001	-16.7%
Sligo	4,737	5,634	-897	-15.9%
Tipperary	11,766	13,925	-2,159	-15.5%
Tyrone	15,407	15,884	-477	-3.0%
Waterford	8,316	10,431	-2,115	-20.3%
Westmeath	7,027	8,438	-1,411	-16.7%
Wexford	11,178	13,827	-2,649	-19.2%
Wicklow	11,023	13,775	-2,752	-20.0%
<b>Ireland</b>	<b>497,699</b>	<b>579,469</b>	<b>-81,770</b>	<b>-14.1%</b>

County	Population	% of Total
Dublin	98,429	19.8%
Antrim	45,363	9.1%
Cork	40,177	8.1%
Down	38,038	7.6%
Galway	19,227	3.9%
Kildare	18,777	3.8%
Derry	18,760	3.8%
Meath	17,338	3.5%
Armagh	15,995	3.2%
Tyrone	15,407	3.1%
Limerick	14,076	2.8%
Donegal	11,986	2.4%
Tipperary	11,766	2.4%
Wexford	11,178	2.2%
Wicklow	11,023	2.2%
Kerry	10,173	2.0%
Louth	10,053	2.0%
Mayo	9,474	1.9%
Clare	8,803	1.8%
Waterford	8,316	1.7%
Kilkenny	7,197	1.4%
Westmeath	7,027	1.4%
Laois	6,964	1.4%
Cavan	6,346	1.3%
Offaly	5,932	1.2%
Monaghan	5,214	1.0%
Roscommon	5,010	1.0%
Sligo	4,737	1.0%
Fermanagh	4,695	0.9%
Carlow	4,285	0.9%
Longford	3,341	0.7%
Leitrim	2,592	0.5%
Ireland	497,699	

Table 5: Population Aged 0-5 by County from Census 2021 & Census 2022

## Club Analysis

While the population of 0-5-year-olds is unevenly spread on a county-by-county basis, equally there is a population imbalance at the club level. The analysis of the population distribution across the club catchment areas reveals a striking and highly centralised pattern, suggesting a significant demographic imbalance across the clubs. This imbalance is reflected in that:

- The 50 clubs with the highest number of 0 – 5-year-olds in their catchment areas account for 25.5% of all children in this age group on the island of Ireland.
- Only 167 clubs (11% of all clubs) collectively account for 50% of the entire 0-5 population.
- Conversely, the remaining 89% of clubs must compete for the other 50% of the young population.

This imbalance in population concentration is perhaps the most profound immediate issue facing clubs across the Association. While it can be argued that the Association has yet to face the full force of demographic change (as reflected in a loss of clubs), the data on 0 – 5-year-olds suggests that the Association stands on the precipice of significant change based on demography.

Once again, it is necessary to caveat these data. A higher number of young children (0–5 years) in a catchment is not necessarily associated with higher club membership,

suggesting that youth engagement requires active programming. In fact, clubs in smaller communities often achieve stronger penetration, suggesting that community scale and social cohesion are more influential than raw numbers. However, it is becoming increasingly clear that many of the clubs who are thriving, especially at underage level, are those clubs with a significant population base, very well coordinated club structures, a strong coaching presence, and appropriate facilities.

This section illustrates that demography should be used not as a static forecast, but as a dynamic planning tool.

## A Tale of Demographics

There is a tendency with respect to demographics to categorise issues as either pertaining to rural or urban areas: rural depopulation and urban expansion. While there is some benefit to doing so, in fact it is an overly simplistic analysis of a complex issue. It is true to say that in rural Ireland, the risk is one of survival: sustaining clubs amid population decline and weakened community structures; while in urban Ireland, the risk is one of scale: managing growth so that clubs remain inclusive, fair, and sustainable.

However, neither 'Rural Ireland' or 'Urban Ireland' reflects a single set of issues. A more nuanced approach considers multiple overlapping dimensions that shape population patterns and community life.

One way to understand this complexity is through regional and local variation. Rather than assuming all cities or all rural areas share the same characteristics, it is more accurate to look at specific regions, for example, the differences between western and eastern counties, border regions, or commuter belts, each of which has distinct migration patterns, population trends, and cultural traditions.

Equally important is the settlement type, which varies from dense city centres to inner and outer suburbs, commuter towns, small towns, villages, and open countryside. Each type of settlement presents unique challenges, where population density, volunteer availability, and community engagement vary widely.

Taken together, these perspectives show that demographic issues are multidimensional and how the GAA must navigate a complex patchwork of demographic realities, each influencing participation, club health, and community engagement in different ways. It is only through moving beyond the simplistic urban/rural framing the Association can better understand and respond to the needs of the communities it serves. By responding proactively to these demographic shifts, the GAA can preserve its traditions while also ensuring that Gaelic games remain central to Irish life in a rapidly changing society.

# Retention and Promotion of the Irish Language and Gaeltacht Communities

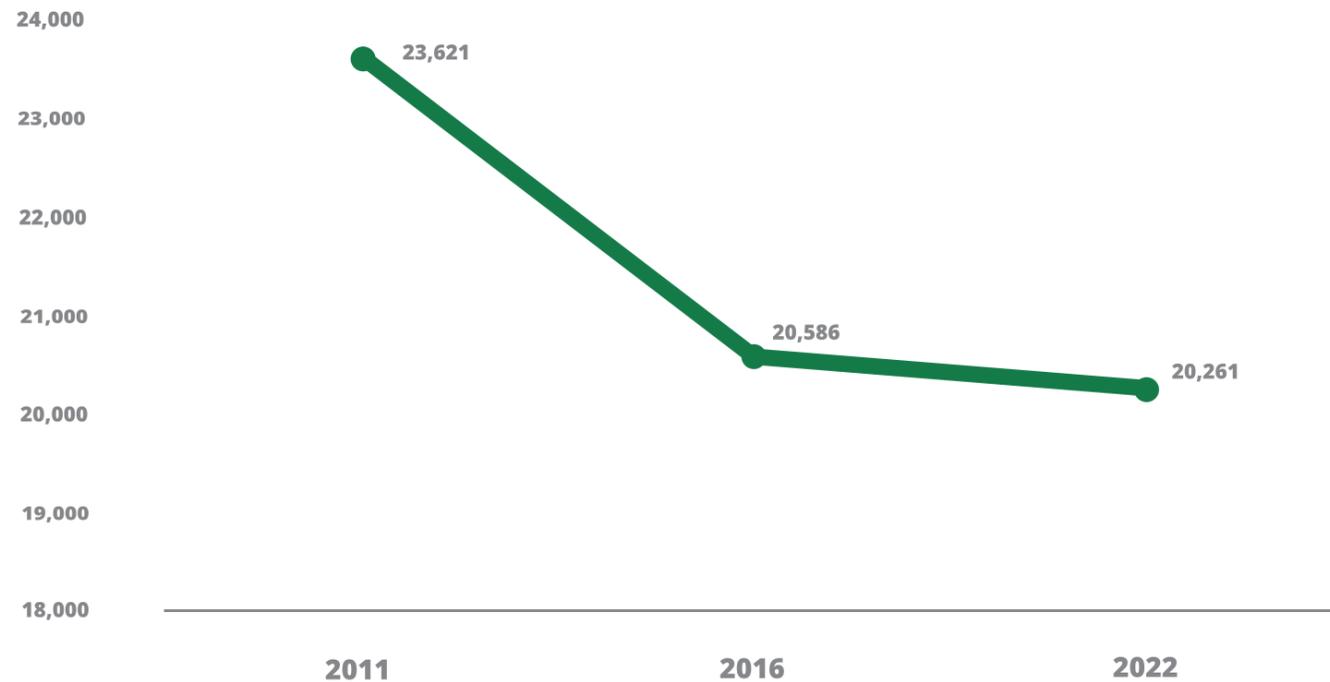


Figure 7: Number of daily Irish speakers outside of the education system by census year

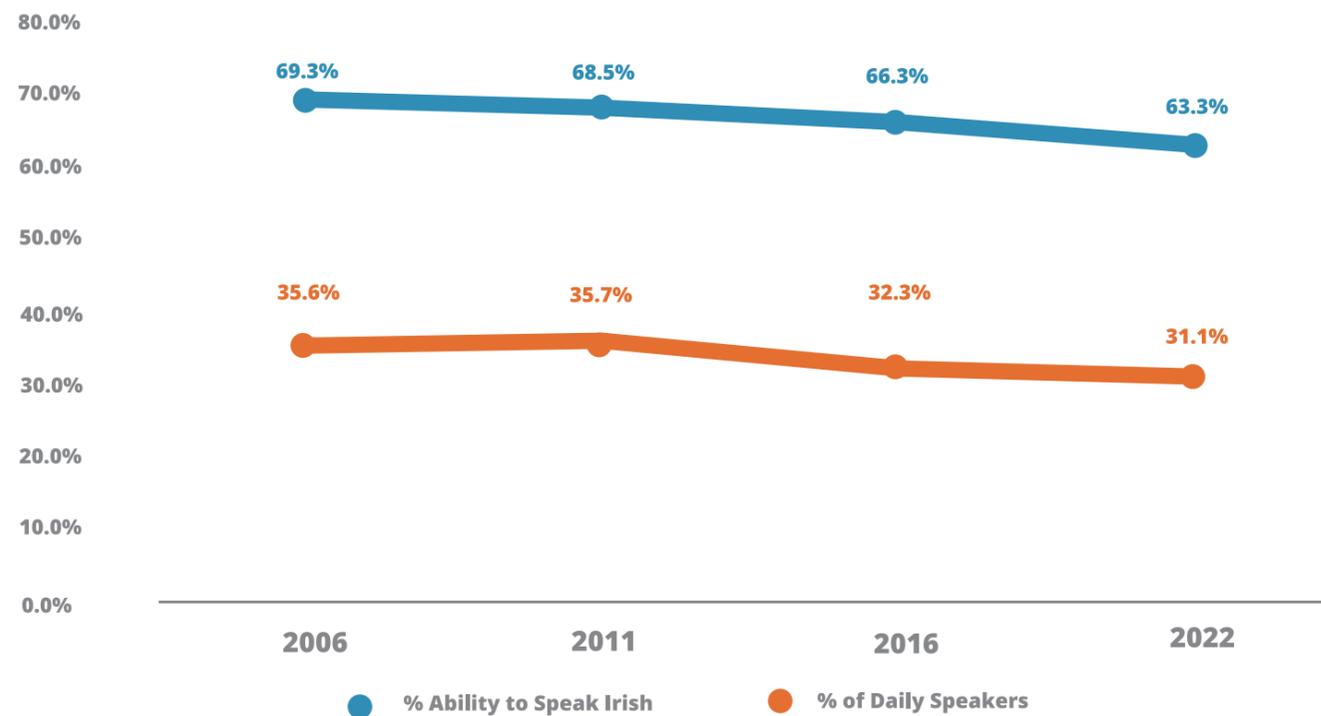


Figure 8: Proportion of the population with ability to speak Irish and daily Irish speakers by census year

The GAA has a special relationship with the Irish language, and is a foundational part of who we are as an organisation. The GAA can proudly boast to have 38 GAA clubs at the centre of the Gaeltacht communities, within the 26 Language Planning Regions (Limistéir Pleanála Teanga) in Ireland, and close to 50 clubs in total that are in the surrounding catchment of these areas. These clubs compete and connect through the Irish Language and play an important role helping to preserve our language for future generations. In recent years' Gaeilge has been enjoying a resurgence in non-traditional/non-Gaeltacht areas of the country, this has also been complemented by the GAA who now have a number of clubs outside of the Gaeltacht regions operating primarily through the Irish Language.

With the changing demographic landscape of Ireland in the last number of years, this has brought great challenges to Gaeltacht Communities in our country. Planning has been identified as having a key role in ensuring a sustainable future for the language and Gaeltacht communities. Members of these communities have faced difficulties in gaining planning permission to stay in their community, and they have also seen prices of homes increase beyond affordable levels which has in many cases been driven by demand from outside of the Gaeltacht Areas.

The effect this has had on the viability of the language can be seen in figures 7 and 8, where we have seen a continued erosion in the number of Daily Irish Speakers in these communities, as well as a decline in the ability for individuals in these communities to speak Irish. The GAA supports the Irish Language bodies who have called for a National Policy for Housing in the Gaeltacht, which should be aimed at providing certainty for Gaeltacht communities that there is a viable means for them to live in their home areas, and to continue to support the preservation of the Irish Language.

## Beatha teanga í a labhairt.

Tá gaol speisialta idir CLG agus an Ghaeilge, agus tá ait lárnach aici sa Chumann. Cúis mhór bhróid do CLG go bhfuil 38 club lonnaithe i gcroílár phobal na Gaeltachta, taobh istigh de na 26 Limistéir Phleanála Teanga in Éirinn, agus thart ar 50 clubanna in iomlán atá faoi thionchar na háite san. Imríonn agus feidhmíonn na clubanna sin trí mheán na Gaeilge, agus tá ról tábhachtach acu cabhrú le caomhnú na teanga náisiúnta do na glúnta atá le teacht. Le blianta beaga anuas, tá borradh faoin nGaeilge taobh amuigh den Ghaeltacht agus ag eascairt as an mborradh sin cuireadh clubanna ar bun taobh amuigh den Ghaeltacht a bhíonn ag feidhmiú trí Ghaeilge.

Tá dúshlán mhóra roimh phobal na Gaeltachta in Éirinn de bharr an athrú atá tagtha ar staid dhéimeagrafach na hÉireann le tamall de bhlianta anuas. Aithnítear go bhfuil ról lárnach ag cúrsaí pleanála maidir le todhchaí inmharthana a chinntiú don Ghaeilge agus do phobail na Gaeltachta. Tá an-chuid deacrachtaí ag pobal na Gaeltachta cead pleanála a fháil le go bhféadfaidís fanacht sa Ghaeltacht. Chomh maith leis sin, tá méadú mór tar éis teacht ar phraghas na dtithe rud a chiallaíonn go bhfuil siad róchostasach dóibh agus nach féidir leo iad a cheannach. Den chuid is mó is de bharr an éilimh mhóir atá ar thithe taobh amuigh den Ghaeltacht an fhadhb seo.

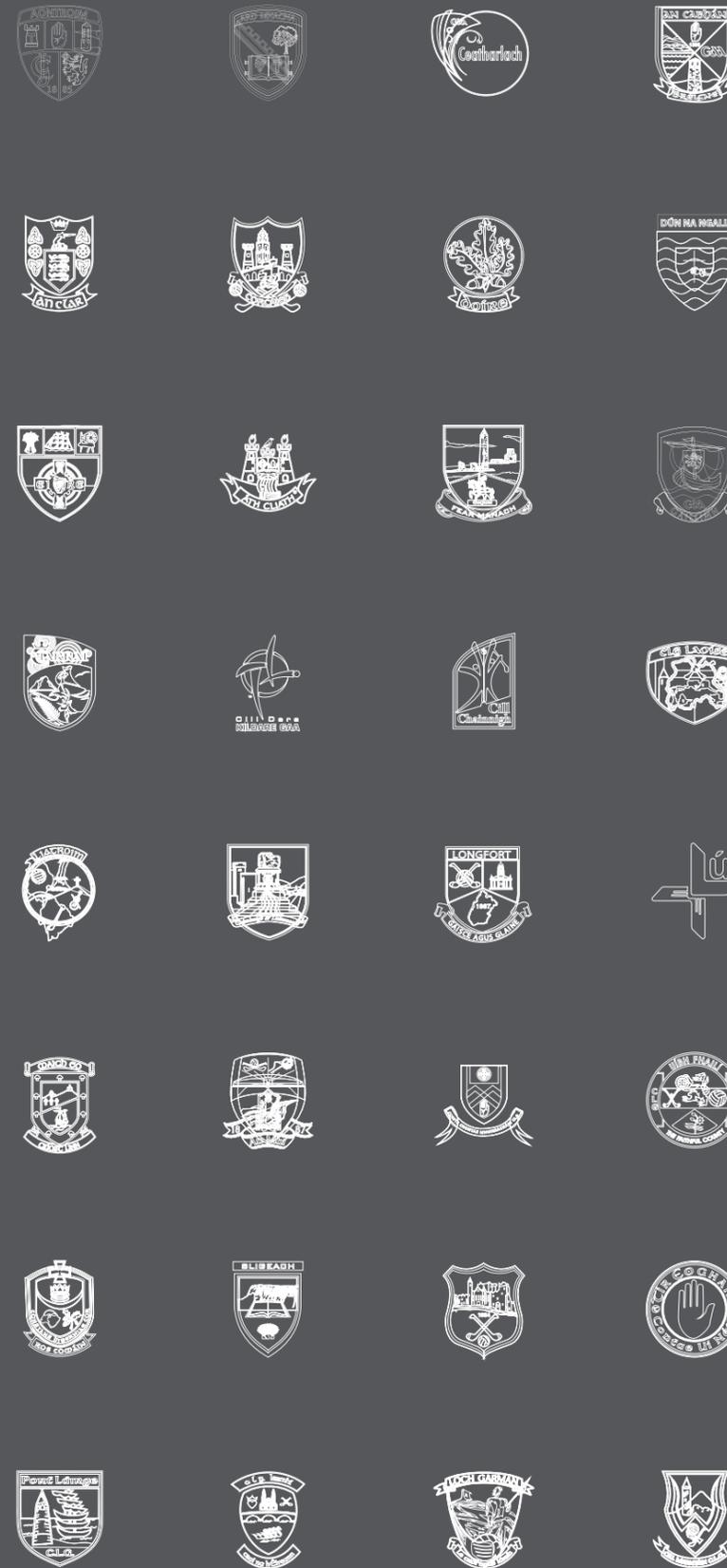
Tá an tionchar atá aige seo ar inmharthanacht na Gaeilge le feiceáil i léaráidí 7 agus 8, áit a bhfuil laghdú leanúnach le feiceáil ar líon na gcainteoirí laethúla Gaeilge sna pobail seo, chomh maith le meath ar chumas daoine sna pobail sin an Ghaeilge a labhairt.

Tacaíonn CLG leis na heagrais Ghaeilge atá ag éileamh Bheartas Náisiúnta Tithíochta don Ghaeltacht. Ba chóir go mbeadh beartas den chineál sin dírithe ar chinnteacht a thabhairt do phobail na Gaeltachta le go mbeidís in ann maireachtáil ina gceantair dhúchais féin agus leanúint orthu ag tacú le caomhnú na Gaeilge.

## Beatha teanga í a labhairt.



# County Demographic Snapshot



\*Team numbers is reflective of under 13 and above only.

# Clubs



LGFA	GAA	CAMOGIE
36	51	31



# Members



YOUTH MALE PLAYERS	5,589
YOUTH FEMALE PLAYERS	4,798
FULL MALE PLAYERS	2,818
FULL FEMALE PLAYERS	1,647
NON-PLAYERS	5,036

# Facilities



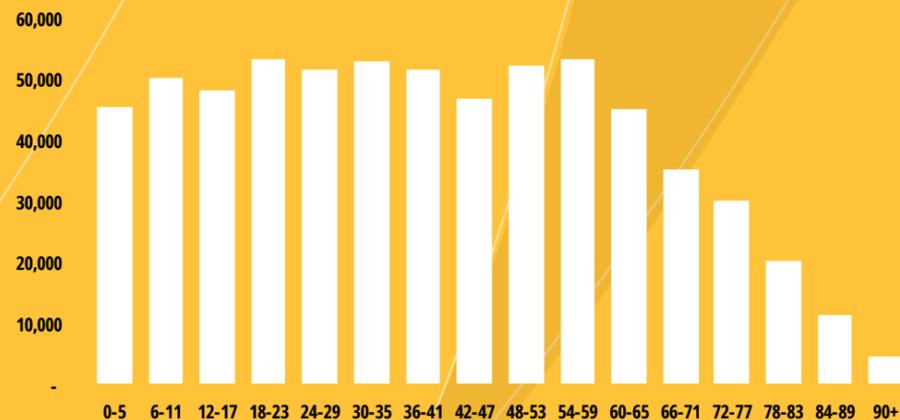
TOTAL PITCHES	117
TOTAL FLOODLIT PITCHES	12
TOTAL FULL SIZE PITCHES	72
TEAMS PER PITCH	6.3

# Teams



CAMOGIE	106
LADIES FOOTBALL	107
HURLING	105
FOOTBALL	138
TOTAL TEAMS	456

# Population

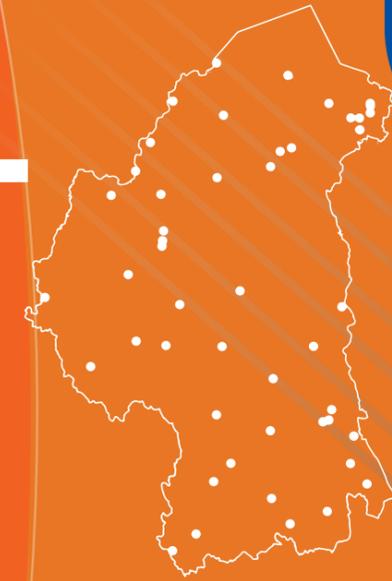


FEMALE  
**322,096**  
MALE  
**319,174**  
TOTAL  
**651,270**  
AVERAGE AGE  
**39.3**

# Clubs



LGFA	GAA	CAMOGIE
40	49	17



# Members



YOUTH MALE PLAYERS	5,752
YOUTH FEMALE PLAYERS	4,721
FULL MALE PLAYERS	2,367
FULL FEMALE PLAYERS	1,413
NON-PLAYERS	8,246

# Facilities



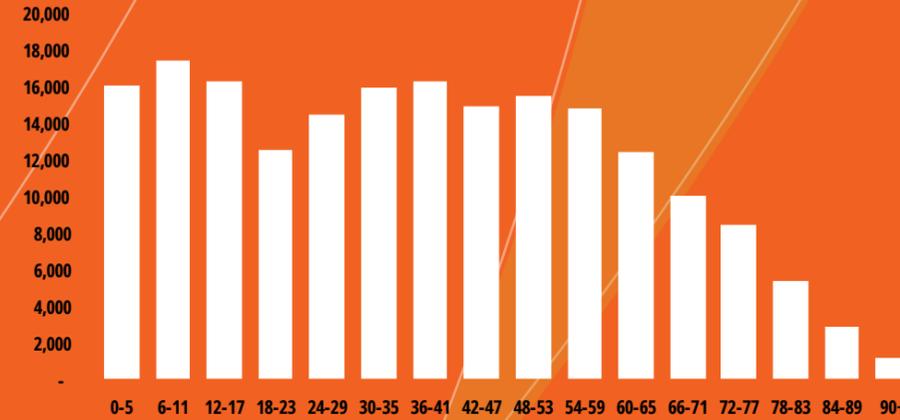
TOTAL PITCHES	120
TOTAL FLOODLIT PITCHES	31
TOTAL FULL SIZE PITCHES	74
TEAMS PER PITCH	5.1

# Teams



CAMOGIE	22
LADIES FOOTBALL	128
HURLING	23
FOOTBALL	210
TOTAL TEAMS	383

# Population



FEMALE  
**98,013**  
MALE  
**96,385**  
TOTAL  
**194,398**  
AVERAGE AGE  
**37.92**

# Clubs



LGFA	GAA	CAMOGIE
16	27	10



# Members



YOUTH MALE PLAYERS	2,624
YOUTH FEMALE PLAYERS	2,243
FULL MALE PLAYERS	1,343
FULL FEMALE PLAYERS	604
NON-PLAYERS	2,238



# Facilities



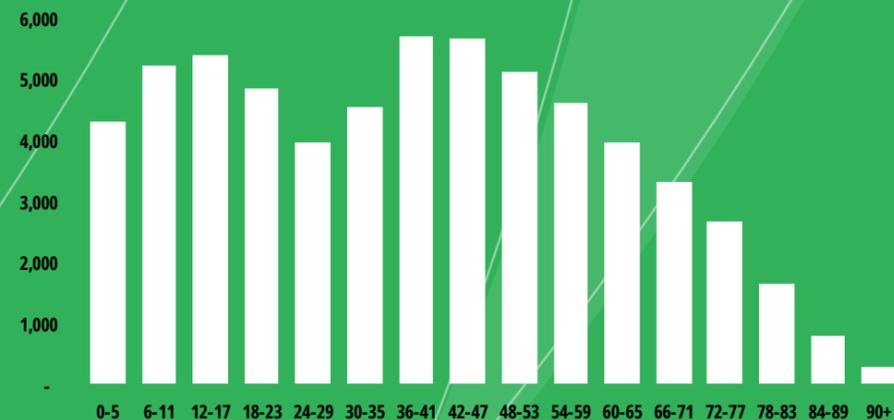
TOTAL PITCHES	61
TOTAL FLOODLIT PITCHES	21
TOTAL FULL SIZE PITCHES	41
TEAMS PER PITCH	6.2

# Teams



CAMOGIE	52
LADIES FOOTBALL	64
HURLING	46
FOOTBALL	94
TOTAL TEAMS	256

# Population



FEMALE

31,146

MALE

30,822

TOTAL

61,968

AVERAGE AGE

38.2



# Clubs



LGFA	GAA	CAMOGIE
34	42	10



# Members



YOUTH MALE PLAYERS	4,244
YOUTH FEMALE PLAYERS	3,881
FULL MALE PLAYERS	1,853
FULL FEMALE PLAYERS	1,382
NON-PLAYERS	6,240



# Facilities



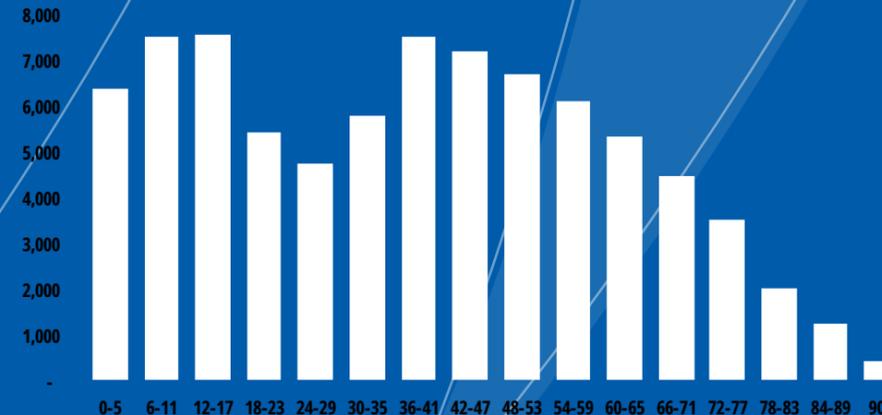
TOTAL PITCHES	116
TOTAL FLOODLIT PITCHES	31
TOTAL FULL SIZE PITCHES	71
TEAMS PER PITCH	2.8

# Teams



CAMOGIE	20
LADIES FOOTBALL	67
HURLING	5
FOOTBALL	110
TOTAL TEAMS	202

# Population



FEMALE

40,644

MALE

41,060

TOTAL

81,704

AVERAGE AGE

38.03



# Clubs



LGFA	GAA	CAMOGIE
24	53	27



# Members



YOUTH MALE PLAYERS	5,669
YOUTH FEMALE PLAYERS	4,972
FULL MALE PLAYERS	3,501
FULL FEMALE PLAYERS	1,269
NON-PLAYERS	6,826



# Facilities



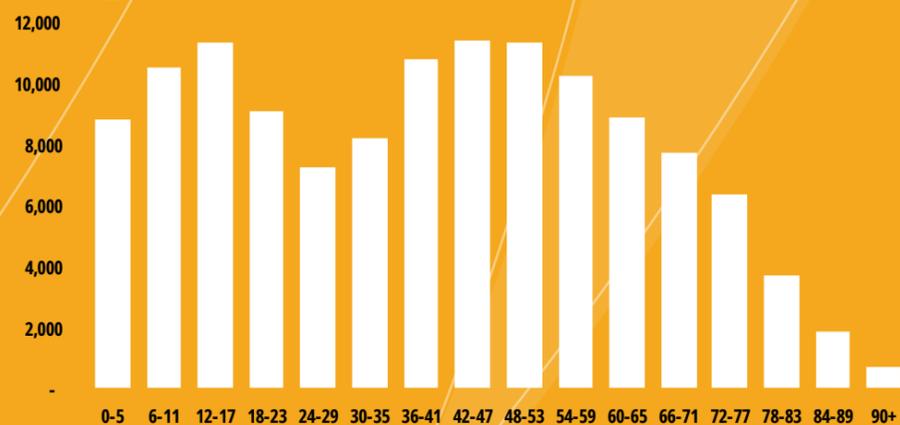
TOTAL PITCHES	135
TOTAL FLOODLIT PITCHES	20
TOTAL FULL SIZE PITCHES	88
TEAMS PER PITCH	7.9

# Teams



CAMOGIE	168
LADIES FOOTBALL	113
HURLING	230
FOOTBALL	192
TOTAL TEAMS	703

# Population



FEMALE  
**65,021**

MALE  
**62,917**

TOTAL  
**217,938**

AVERAGE AGE  
**39.5**



# Clubs



LGFA	GAA	CAMOGIE
93	151	68



# Members



YOUTH MALE PLAYERS	21,687
YOUTH FEMALE PLAYERS	19,271
FULL MALE PLAYERS	8,900
FULL FEMALE PLAYERS	4,591
NON-PLAYERS	20,180



# Facilities



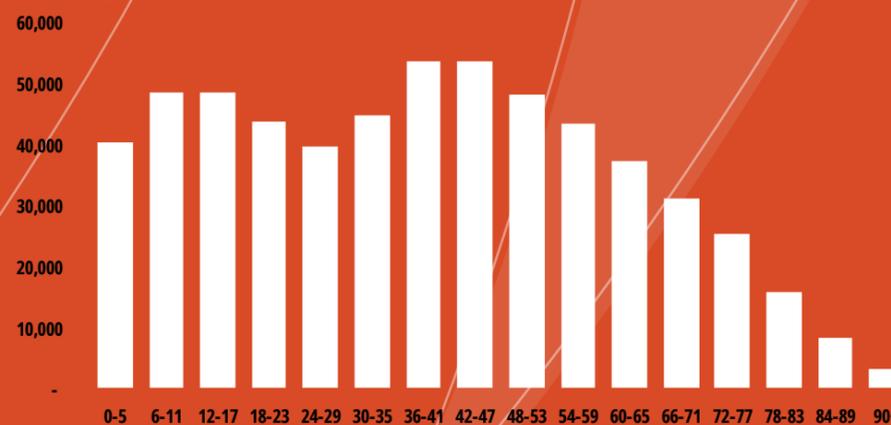
TOTAL PITCHES	404
TOTAL FLOODLIT PITCHES	77
TOTAL FULL SIZE PITCHES	309
TEAMS PER PITCH	8.7

# Teams



CAMOGIE	360
LADIES FOOTBALL	574
HURLING	703
FOOTBALL	816
TOTAL TEAMS	2,453

# Population



FEMALE  
**295,311**

MALE  
**288,845**

TOTAL  
**584,156**

AVERAGE AGE  
**38.5**



# Clubs



LGFA	GAA	CAMOGIE
30	42	22



# Members



YOUTH MALE PLAYERS	5,637
YOUTH FEMALE PLAYERS	4,478
FULL MALE PLAYERS	2,595
FULL FEMALE PLAYERS	1,195
NON-PLAYERS	7,511



# Facilities



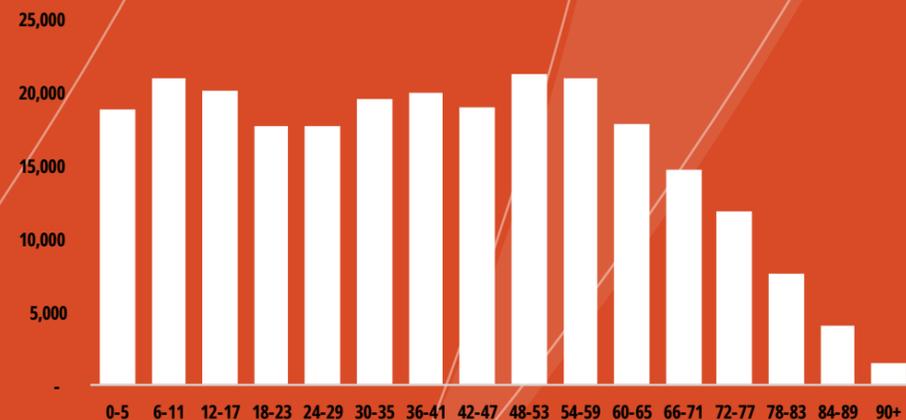
TOTAL PITCHES	139
TOTAL FLOODLIT PITCHES	34
TOTAL FULL SIZE PITCHES	74
TEAMS PER PITCH	5.6

# Teams



CAMOGIE	91
LADIES FOOTBALL	94
HURLING	45
FOOTBALL	189
TOTAL TEAMS	418

# Population



FEMALE  
**128,413**

MALE  
**124,030**

TOTAL  
**252,443**

AVERAGE AGE  
**39.2**



# Clubs



LGFA	GAA	CAMOGIE
38	40	7



# Members



YOUTH MALE PLAYERS	6,140
YOUTH FEMALE PLAYERS	4,913
FULL MALE PLAYERS	2,688
FULL FEMALE PLAYERS	1,149
NON-PLAYERS	8,635



# Facilities



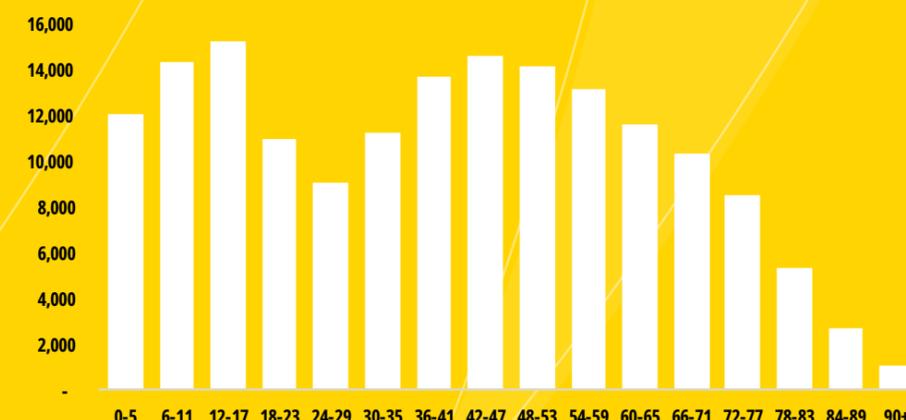
TOTAL PITCHES	107
TOTAL FLOODLIT PITCHES	12
TOTAL FULL SIZE PITCHES	61
TEAMS PER PITCH	6.5

# Teams



CAMOGIE	13
LADIES FOOTBALL	151
HURLING	25
FOOTBALL	208
TOTAL TEAMS	397

# Population



FEMALE  
**84,289**

MALE  
**82,795**

TOTAL  
**167,084**

AVERAGE AGE  
**39.6**



# Clubs



LGFA	GAA	CAMOGIE
43	48	23



# Members



YOUTH MALE PLAYERS	6,834
YOUTH FEMALE PLAYERS	5,330
FULL MALE PLAYERS	2,629
FULL FEMALE PLAYERS	1,888
NON-PLAYERS	7,625



# Facilities



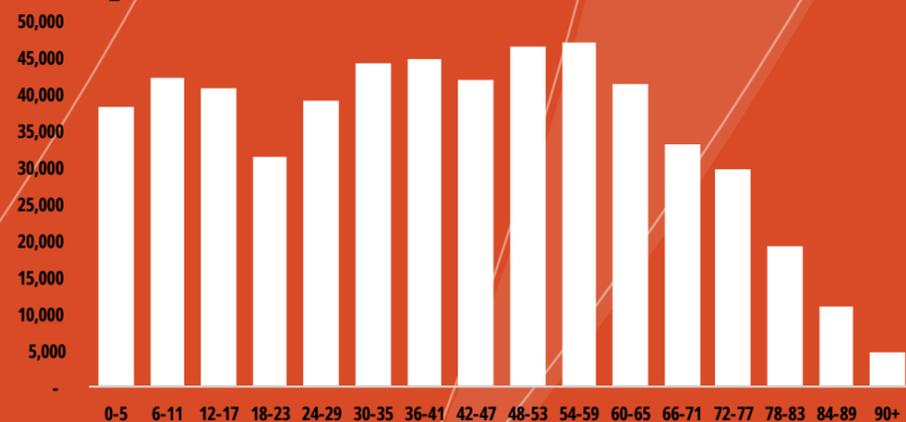
TOTAL PITCHES	144
TOTAL FLOODLIT PITCHES	33
TOTAL FULL SIZE PITCHES	89
TEAMS PER PITCH	6.6

# Teams



CAMOGIE	77
LADIES FOOTBALL	200
HURLING	62
FOOTBALL	256
TOTAL TEAMS	595

# Population



FEMALE  
**282,504**

MALE  
**270,844**

TOTAL  
**553,348**

AVERAGE AGE  
**40.9**



# Clubs



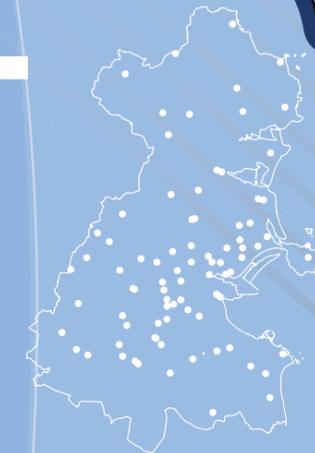
LGFA	GAA	CAMOGIE
75	84	62



# Members



YOUTH MALE PLAYERS	26,563
YOUTH FEMALE PLAYERS	23,477
FULL MALE PLAYERS	8,414
FULL FEMALE PLAYERS	5,306
NON-PLAYERS	28,778



# Facilities



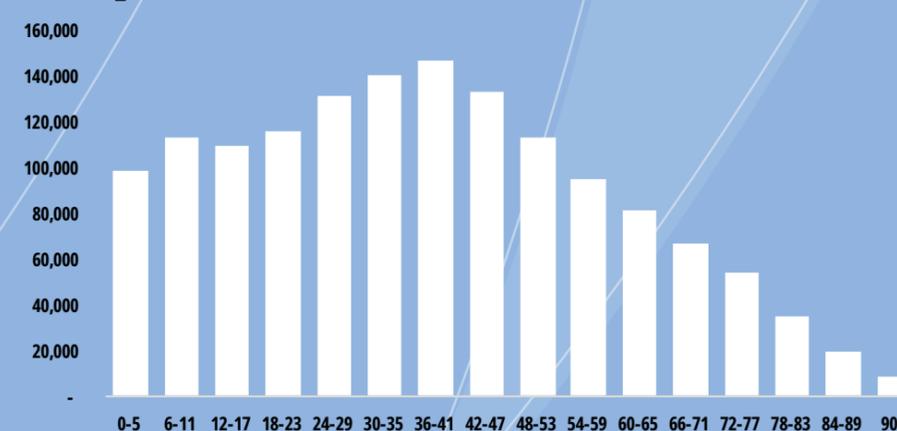
TOTAL PITCHES	412
TOTAL FLOODLIT PITCHES	31
TOTAL FULL SIZE PITCHES	218
TEAMS PER PITCH	9

# Teams



CAMOGIE	317
LADIES FOOTBALL	503
HURLING	514
FOOTBALL	629
TOTAL TEAMS	1,963

# Population



FEMALE  
**744,548**

MALE  
**713,606**

TOTAL  
**1,458,154**

AVERAGE AGE  
**37.4**



# Clubs



LGFA	GAA	CAMOGIE
20	23	0



# Members



YOUTH MALE PLAYERS	2,099
YOUTH FEMALE PLAYERS	1,627
FULL MALE PLAYERS	954
FULL FEMALE PLAYERS	434
NON-PLAYERS	2,663



# Facilities



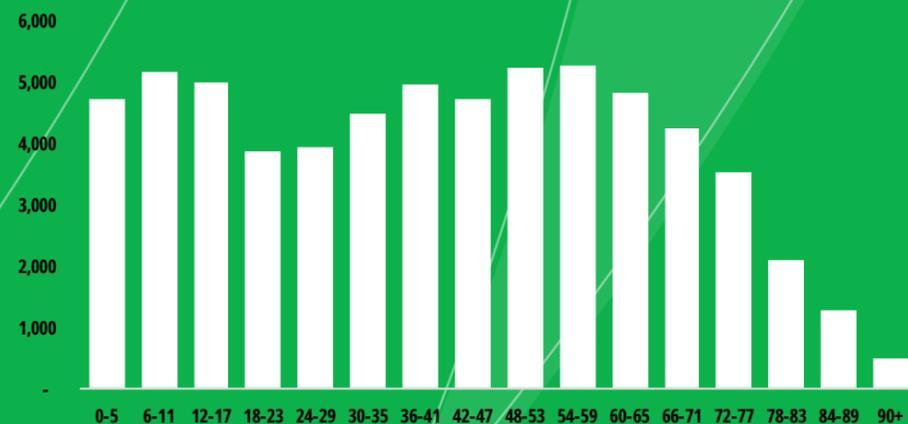
TOTAL PITCHES	53
TOTAL FLOODLIT PITCHES	13
TOTAL FULL SIZE PITCHES	32
TEAMS PER PITCH	7.3

# Teams



CAMOGIE	0
LADIES FOOTBALL	104
HURLING	17
FOOTBALL	110
TOTAL TEAMS	235

# Population



FEMALE  
**31,831**  
MALE  
**31,768**  
TOTAL  
**63,599**  
AVERAGE AGE  
**40.7**



# Clubs



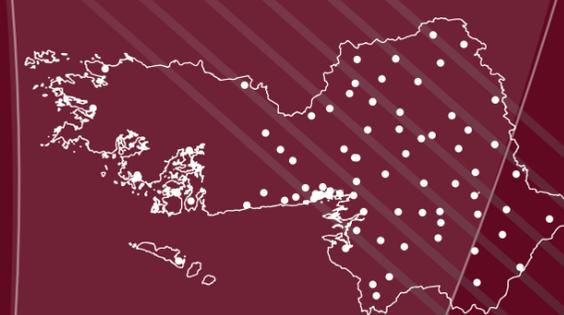
LGFA	GAA	CAMOGIE
41	80	37



# Members



YOUTH MALE PLAYERS	11,922
YOUTH FEMALE PLAYERS	10,398
FULL MALE PLAYERS	5,165
FULL FEMALE PLAYERS	2,380
NON-PLAYERS	13,071



# Facilities



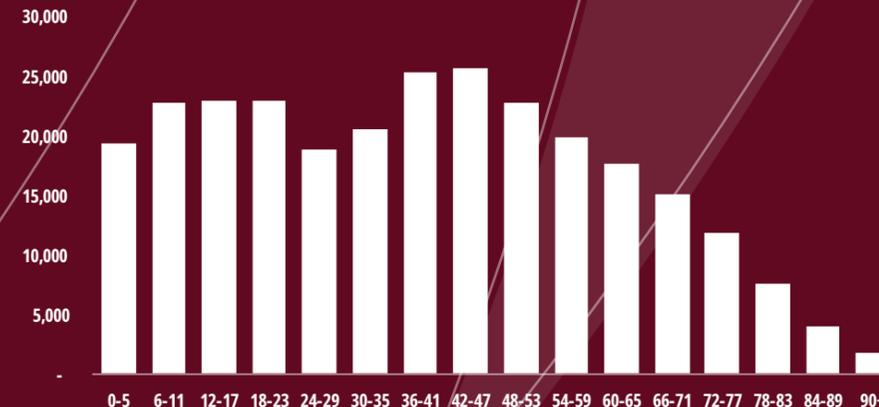
TOTAL PITCHES	226
TOTAL FLOODLIT PITCHES	42
TOTAL FULL SIZE PITCHES	139
TEAMS PER PITCH	8.7

# Teams



CAMOGIE	263
LADIES FOOTBALL	206
HURLING	327
FOOTBALL	426
TOTAL TEAMS	1,222

# Population



FEMALE  
**140,803**  
MALE  
**136,934**  
TOTAL  
**277,737**  
AVERAGE AGE  
**38.4**



# Clubs



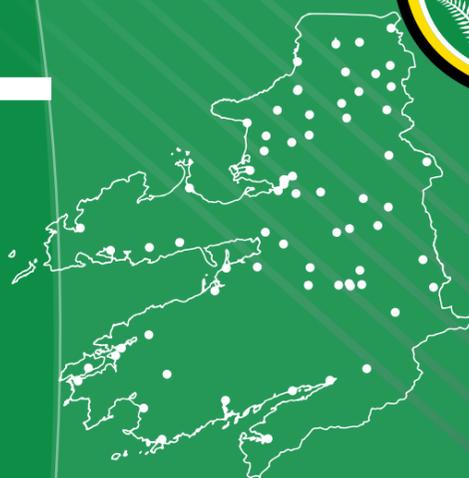
LGFA	GAA	CAMOGIE
41	70	34



# Members



YOUTH MALE PLAYERS	7,435
YOUTH FEMALE PLAYERS	5,489
FULL MALE PLAYERS	3,160
FULL FEMALE PLAYERS	1,563
NON-PLAYERS	9,947



# Facilities



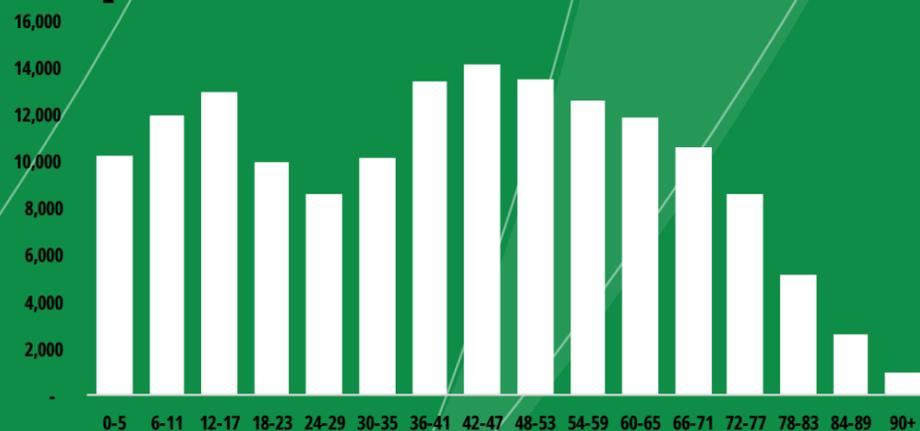
TOTAL PITCHES	164
TOTAL FLOODLIT PITCHES	52
TOTAL FULL SIZE PITCHES	92
TEAMS PER PITCH	6.1

# Teams



CAMOGIE	38
LADIES FOOTBALL	187
HURLING	62
FOOTBALL	274
TOTAL TEAMS	561

# Population



FEMALE  
**79,071**

MALE  
**77,387**

TOTAL  
**156,458**

AVERAGE AGE  
**40.98**



# Clubs



LGFA	GAA	CAMOGIE
40	49	25



Cill Dara  
KILDARE GAA

# Members



YOUTH MALE PLAYERS	9,334
YOUTH FEMALE PLAYERS	8,169
FULL MALE PLAYERS	3,398
FULL FEMALE PLAYERS	1,815
NON-PLAYERS	11,315



# Facilities



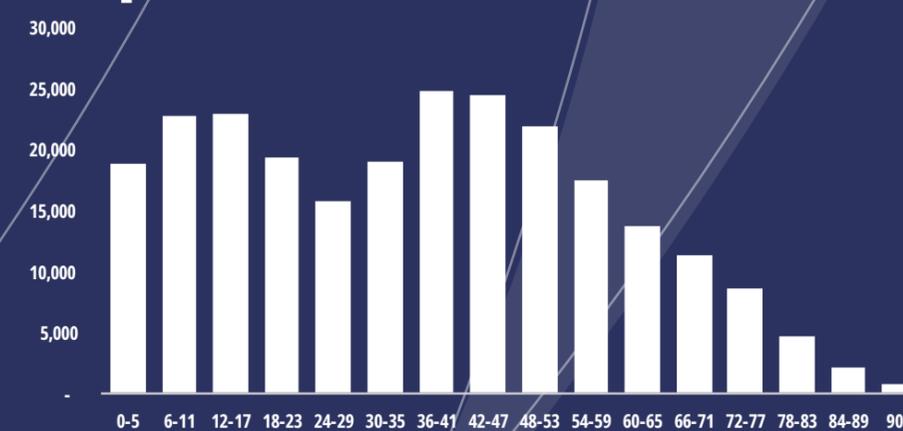
TOTAL PITCHES	178
TOTAL FLOODLIT PITCHES	52
TOTAL FULL SIZE PITCHES	108
TEAMS PER PITCH	8.3

# Teams



CAMOGIE	159
LADIES FOOTBALL	216
HURLING	148
FOOTBALL	375
TOTAL TEAMS	898

# Population



FEMALE  
**124,510**

MALE  
**123,264**

TOTAL  
**247,774**

AVERAGE AGE  
**36.4**



# Clubs



LGFA	GAA	CAMOGIE
17	41	34



# Members



YOUTH MALE PLAYERS	4,754
YOUTH FEMALE PLAYERS	4,401
FULL MALE PLAYERS	2,191
FULL FEMALE PLAYERS	1,076
NON-PLAYERS	6,575

# Facilities



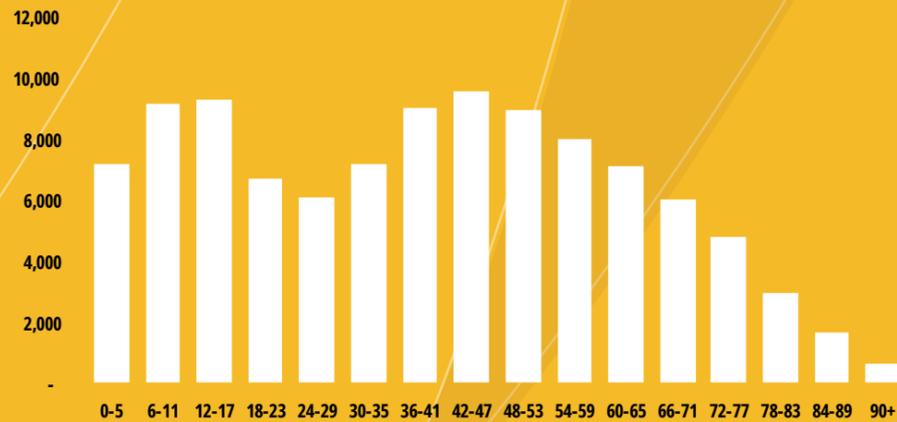
TOTAL PITCHES	118
TOTAL FLOODLIT PITCHES	15
TOTAL FULL SIZE PITCHES	72
TEAMS PER PITCH	13.1

# Teams



CAMOGIE	256
LADIES FOOTBALL	75
HURLING	387
FOOTBALL	225
TOTAL TEAMS	943

# Population



FEMALE  
**52,277**  
MALE  
**51,883**  
TOTAL  
**104,160**  
AVERAGE AGE  
**39.21**



# Clubs



LGFA	GAA	CAMOGIE
19	48	10



# Members



YOUTH MALE PLAYERS	3,975
YOUTH FEMALE PLAYERS	3,429
FULL MALE PLAYERS	2,432
FULL FEMALE PLAYERS	828
NON-PLAYERS	3,844

# Facilities



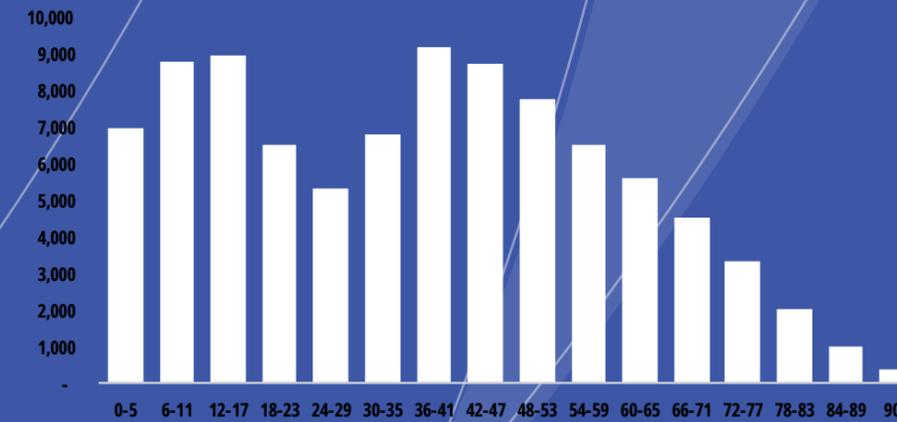
TOTAL PITCHES	132
TOTAL FLOODLIT PITCHES	28
TOTAL FULL SIZE PITCHES	78
TEAMS PER PITCH	6.9

# Teams



CAMOGIE	44
LADIES FOOTBALL	138
HURLING	128
FOOTBALL	235
TOTAL TEAMS	545

# Population



FEMALE  
**45,599**  
MALE  
**46,278**  
TOTAL  
**91,877**  
AVERAGE AGE  
**36.8**



# Clubs



LGFA | GAA | CAMOGIE  
**17** | **23** | **2**



# Members



YOUTH MALE PLAYERS **1,989**  
 YOUTH FEMALE PLAYERS **1,735**  
 FULL MALE PLAYERS **1,039**  
 FULL FEMALE PLAYERS **625**  
 NON-PLAYERS **1,995**

# Facilities



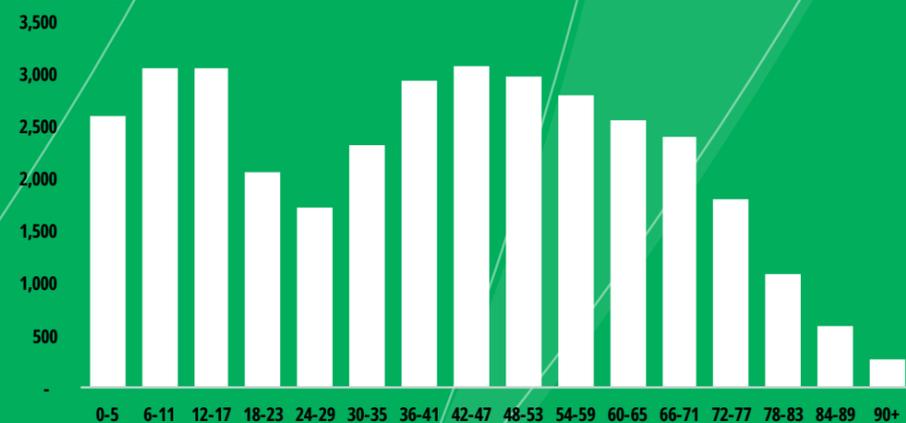
TOTAL PITCHES **48**  
 TOTAL FLOODLIT PITCHES **11**  
 TOTAL FULL SIZE PITCHES **27**  
 TEAMS PER PITCH **7**

# Teams



CAMOGIE **4**  
 LADIES FOOTBALL **68**  
 HURLING **8**  
 FOOTBALL **110**  
 TOTAL TEAMS **190**

# Population



FEMALE

**17,646**

MALE

**17,553**

TOTAL

**35,199**

AVERAGE AGE

**40.2**



# Clubs



LGFA | GAA | CAMOGIE  
**34** | **65** | **30**



# Members



YOUTH MALE PLAYERS **6,726**  
 YOUTH FEMALE PLAYERS **6,020**  
 FULL MALE PLAYERS **3,352**  
 FULL FEMALE PLAYERS **1,627**  
 NON-PLAYERS **8,103**

# Facilities



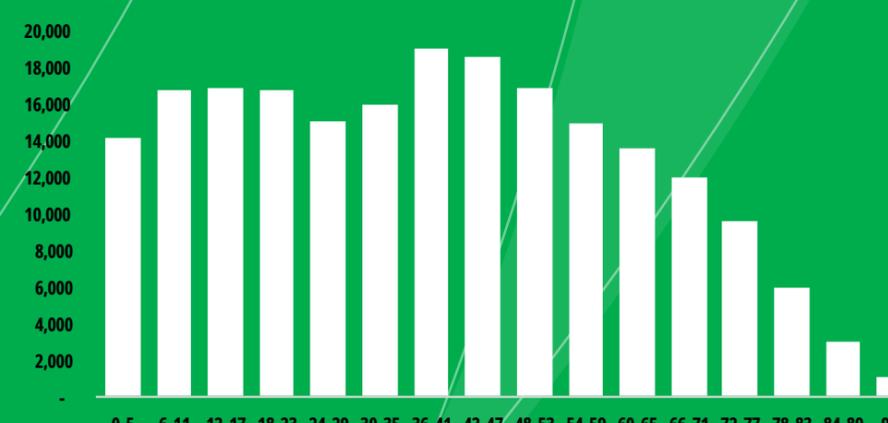
TOTAL PITCHES **176**  
 TOTAL FLOODLIT PITCHES **18**  
 TOTAL FULL SIZE PITCHES **98**  
 TEAMS PER PITCH **8.4**

# Teams



CAMOGIE **185**  
 LADIES FOOTBALL **159**  
 HURLING **241**  
 FOOTBALL **239**  
 TOTAL TEAMS **824**

# Population



FEMALE

**105,084**

MALE

**104,425**

TOTAL

**209,536**

AVERAGE AGE

**38.8**



# Clubs



LGFA	GAA	CAMOGIE
17	34	0



# Members



YOUTH MALE PLAYERS	1,949
YOUTH FEMALE PLAYERS	1,509
FULL MALE PLAYERS	1,228
FULL FEMALE PLAYERS	510
NON-PLAYERS	2,011

# Facilities



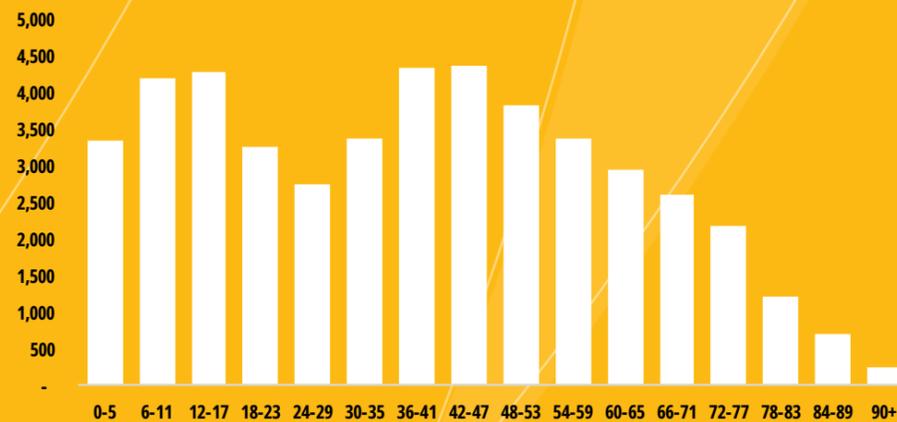
TOTAL PITCHES	60
TOTAL FLOODLIT PITCHES	16
TOTAL FULL SIZE PITCHES	34
TEAMS PER PITCH	6.8

# Teams



CAMOGIE	0
LADIES FOOTBALL	81
HURLING	19
FOOTBALL	134
TOTAL TEAMS	234

# Population



FEMALE  
**23,302**

MALE  
**23,449**

TOTAL  
**46,751**

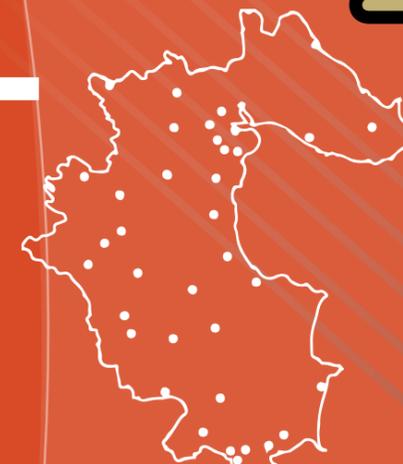
AVERAGE AGE  
**38.3**



# Clubs



LGFA	GAA	CAMOGIE
34	40	7



# Members



YOUTH MALE PLAYERS	4,718
YOUTH FEMALE PLAYERS	3,717
FULL MALE PLAYERS	2,057
FULL FEMALE PLAYERS	1,170
NON-PLAYERS	4,302

# Facilities



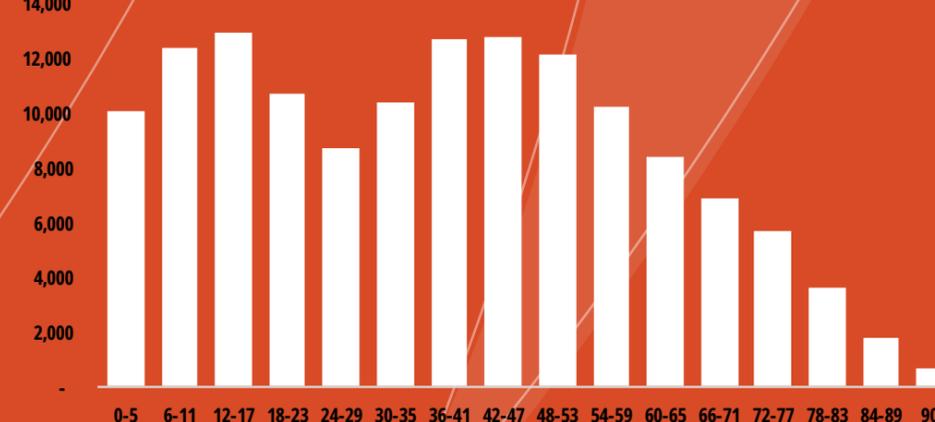
TOTAL PITCHES	98
TOTAL FLOODLIT PITCHES	32
TOTAL FULL SIZE PITCHES	58
TEAMS PER PITCH	7.1

# Teams



CAMOGIE	12
LADIES FOOTBALL	113
HURLING	21
FOOTBALL	265
TOTAL TEAMS	411

# Population



FEMALE  
**70,796**

MALE  
**68,907**

TOTAL  
**139,703**

AVERAGE AGE  
**37.6**



# Clubs



LGFA	GAA	CAMOGIE
35	53	5



# Members



YOUTH MALE PLAYERS	6,823
YOUTH FEMALE PLAYERS	5,395
FULL MALE PLAYERS	2,679
FULL FEMALE PLAYERS	1,175
NON-PLAYERS	6,135

# Facilities



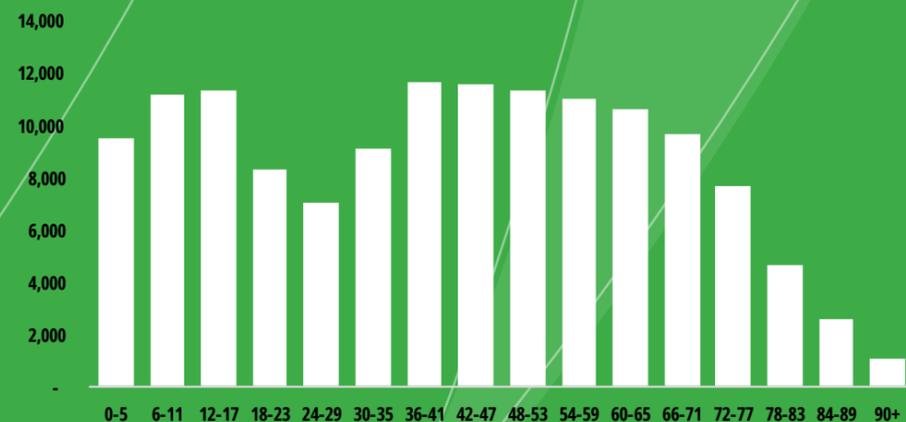
TOTAL PITCHES	130
TOTAL FLOODLIT PITCHES	30
TOTAL FULL SIZE PITCHES	82
TEAMS PER PITCH	8.6

# Teams



CAMOGIE	12
LADIES FOOTBALL	225
HURLING	51
FOOTBALL	421
TOTAL TEAMS	709

# Population



FEMALE  
**69,578**

MALE  
**68,392**

TOTAL  
**137,970**

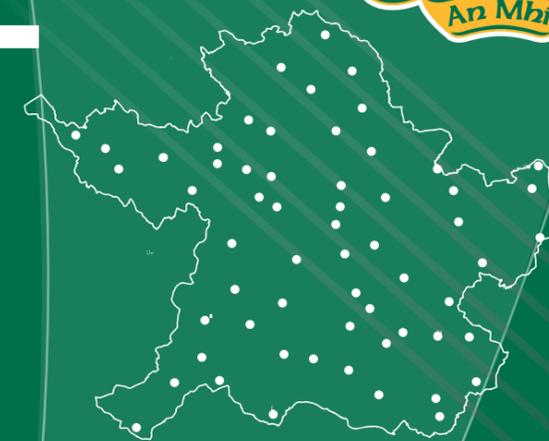
AVERAGE AGE  
**41.1**



# Clubs



LGFA	GAA	CAMOGIE
49	60	20



# Members



YOUTH MALE PLAYERS	8,917
YOUTH FEMALE PLAYERS	7,991
FULL MALE PLAYERS	3,821
FULL FEMALE PLAYERS	2,171
NON-PLAYERS	9,438

# Facilities



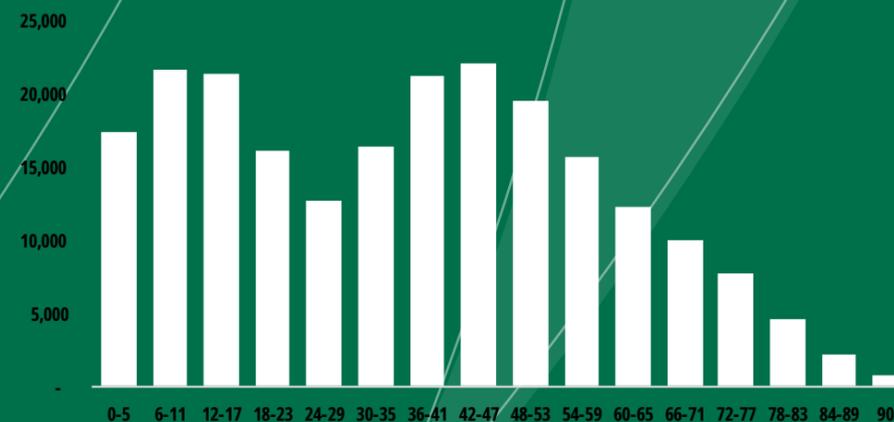
TOTAL PITCHES	161
TOTAL FLOODLIT PITCHES	42
TOTAL FULL SIZE PITCHES	102
TEAMS PER PITCH	8.4

# Teams



CAMOGIE	78
LADIES FOOTBALL	302
HURLING	312
FOOTBALL	348
TOTAL TEAMS	860

# Population



FEMALE  
**110,838**

MALE  
**109,988**

TOTAL  
**220,826**

AVERAGE AGE  
**36.3**



# Clubs



LGFA	GAA	CAMOGIE
24	32	4



# Members



YOUTH MALE PLAYERS	3,747
YOUTH FEMALE PLAYERS	3,175
FULL MALE PLAYERS	1,528
FULL FEMALE PLAYERS	895
NON-PLAYERS	4,707

# Facilities



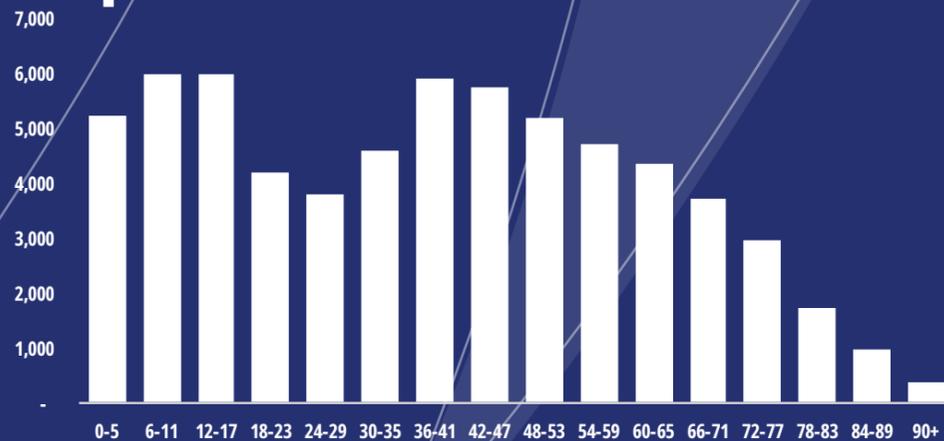
TOTAL PITCHES	90
TOTAL FLOODLIT PITCHES	27
TOTAL FULL SIZE PITCHES	57
TEAMS PER PITCH	5.8

# Teams



CAMOGIE	12
LADIES FOOTBALL	128
HURLING	21
FOOTBALL	171
TOTAL TEAMS	331

# Population



FEMALE  
**32,394**

MALE  
**32,894**

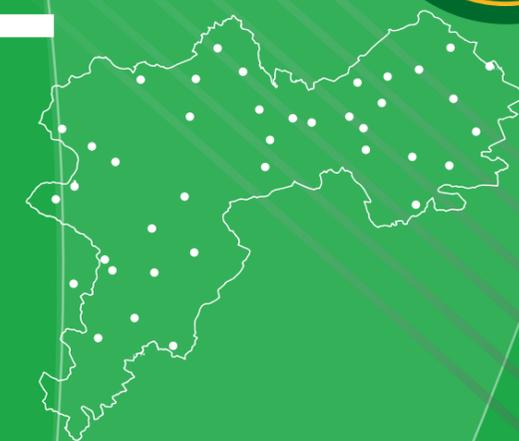
TOTAL  
**65,288**

AVERAGE AGE  
**38.2**

# Clubs



LGFA	GAA	CAMOGIE
13	41	16



# Members



YOUTH MALE PLAYERS	3,439
YOUTH FEMALE PLAYERS	3,117
FULL MALE PLAYERS	2,476
FULL FEMALE PLAYERS	694
NON-PLAYERS	3,974

# Facilities



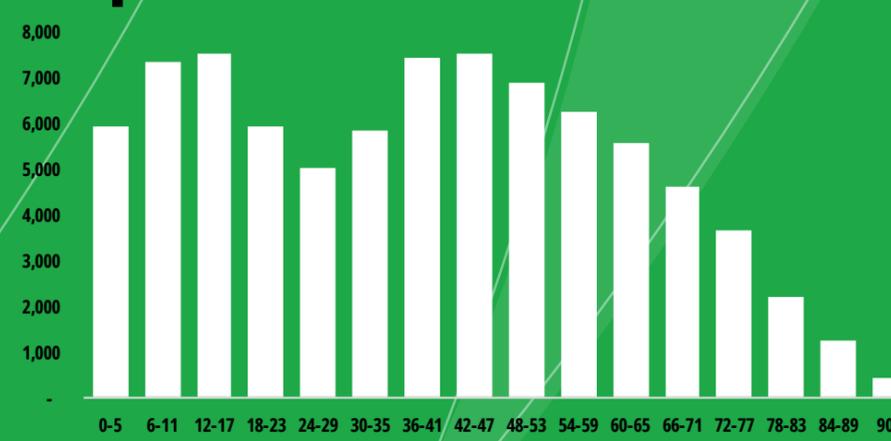
TOTAL PITCHES	95
TOTAL FLOODLIT PITCHES	24
TOTAL FULL SIZE PITCHES	64
TEAMS PER PITCH	5.8

# Teams



CAMOGIE	88
LADIES FOOTBALL	56
HURLING	116
FOOTBALL	115
TOTAL TEAMS	375

# Population



FEMALE  
**41,522**

MALE  
**41,628**

TOTAL  
**83,150**

AVERAGE AGE  
**38.4**

# Clubs



LGFA	GAA	CAMOGIE
25	32	8

# Members



YOUTH MALE PLAYERS	3,299
YOUTH FEMALE PLAYERS	2,928
FULL MALE PLAYERS	1,574
FULL FEMALE PLAYERS	784
NON-PLAYERS	3,337



# Facilities



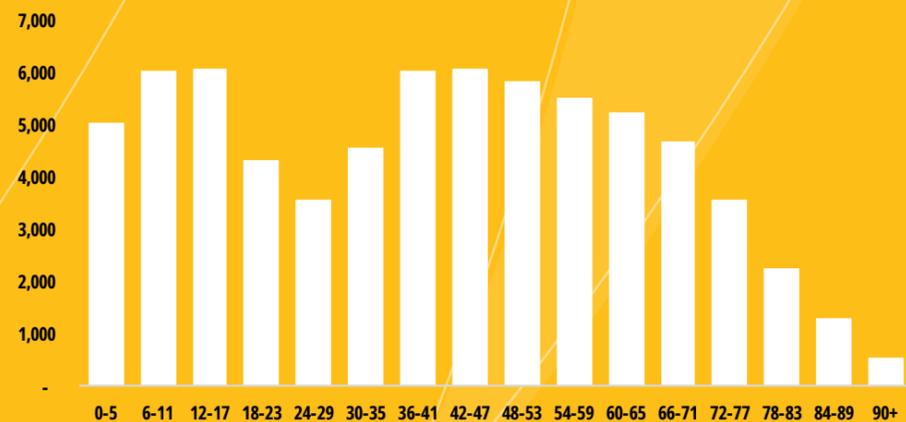
TOTAL PITCHES	86
TOTAL FLOODLIT PITCHES	18
TOTAL FULL SIZE PITCHES	52
TEAMS PER PITCH	7.4

# Teams



CAMOGIE	47
LADIES FOOTBALL	119
HURLING	34
FOOTBALL	187
TOTAL TEAMS	387

# Population



FEMALE  
**35,089**

MALE  
**35,170**

TOTAL  
**70,529**

AVERAGE AGE  
**40.2**



# Clubs



LGFA	GAA	CAMOGIE
20	25	3

# Members



YOUTH MALE PLAYERS	3,059
YOUTH FEMALE PLAYERS	2,374
FULL MALE PLAYERS	1,178
FULL FEMALE PLAYERS	652
NON-PLAYERS	1,950



# Facilities



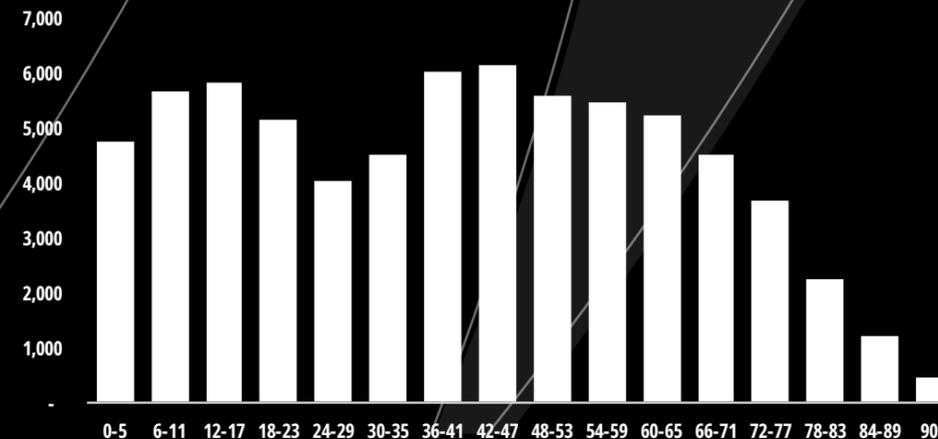
TOTAL PITCHES	74
TOTAL FLOODLIT PITCHES	12
TOTAL FULL SIZE PITCHES	38
TEAMS PER PITCH	7.3

# Teams



CAMOGIE	2
LADIES FOOTBALL	102
HURLING	33
FOOTBALL	144
TOTAL TEAMS	281

# Population



FEMALE  
**35,669**

MALE  
**34,529**

TOTAL  
**70,198**

AVERAGE AGE  
**40.2**



# Clubs



LGFA	GAA	CAMOGIE
40	71	38



# Members



YOUTH MALE PLAYERS	7,349
YOUTH FEMALE PLAYERS	6,352
FULL MALE PLAYERS	4,131
FULL FEMALE PLAYERS	1,798
NON-PLAYERS	7,809

# Facilities



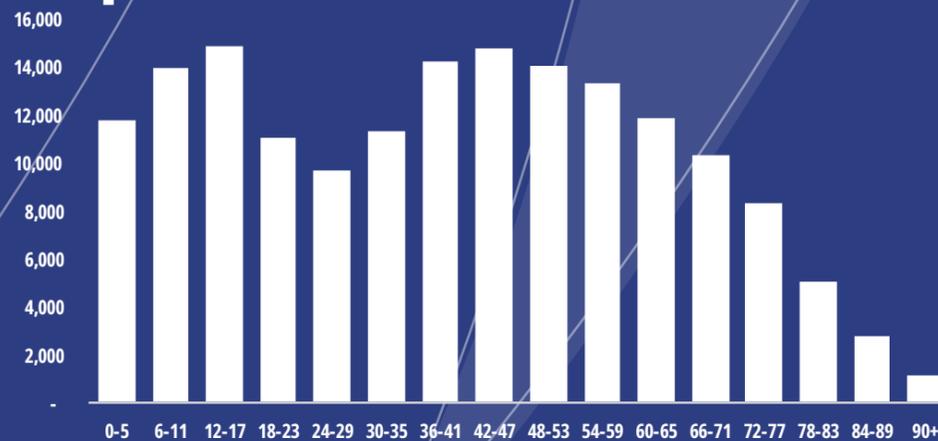
TOTAL PITCHES	209
TOTAL FLOODLIT PITCHES	35
TOTAL FULL SIZE PITCHES	116
TEAMS PER PITCH	10.7

# Teams



CAMOGIE	189
LADIES FOOTBALL	214
HURLING	451
FOOTBALL	386
TOTAL TEAMS	1,240

# Population



FEMALE  
**84,256**

MALE  
**83,639**

TOTAL  
**167,895**

AVERAGE AGE  
**39.8**



# Clubs



LGFA	GAA	CAMOGIE
40	54	14



# Members



YOUTH MALE PLAYERS	6,067
YOUTH FEMALE PLAYERS	4,559
FULL MALE PLAYERS	2,787
FULL FEMALE PLAYERS	1,313
NON-PLAYERS	10,298

# Facilities



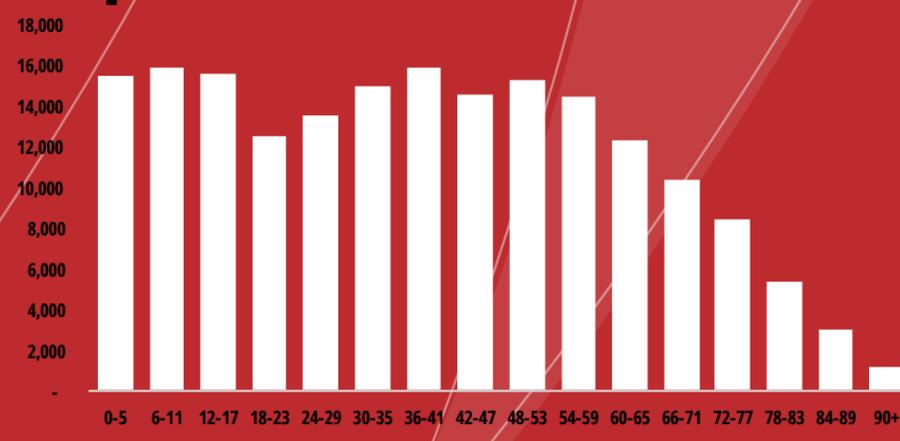
TOTAL PITCHES	155
TOTAL FLOODLIT PITCHES	39
TOTAL FULL SIZE PITCHES	102
TEAMS PER PITCH	4.7

# Teams



CAMOGIE	37
LADIES FOOTBALL	156
HURLING	27
FOOTBALL	268
TOTAL TEAMS	488

# Population



FEMALE  
**94,267**

MALE  
**94,138**

TOTAL  
**188,405**

AVERAGE AGE  
**38.4**



# Clubs



LGFA	GAA	CAMOGIE
24	52	22



# Members



YOUTH MALE PLAYERS	4,456
YOUTH FEMALE PLAYERS	3,820
FULL MALE PLAYERS	2,563
FULL FEMALE PLAYERS	967
NON-PLAYERS	3,978



# Facilities



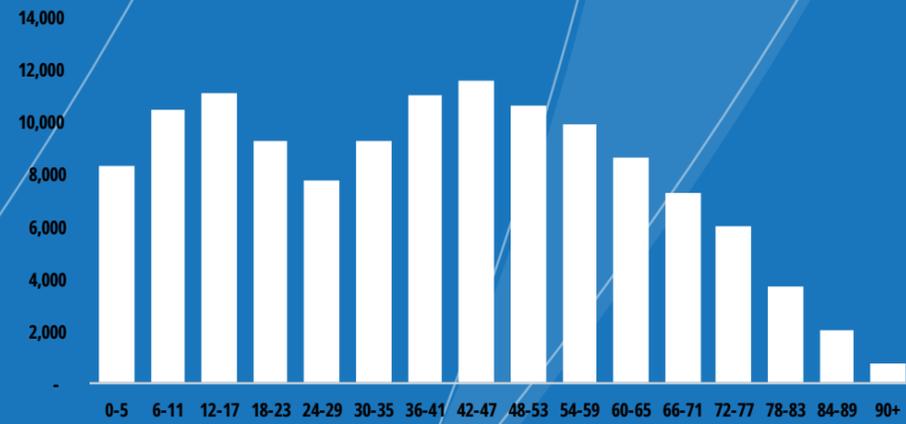
TOTAL PITCHES	118
TOTAL FLOODLIT PITCHES	16
TOTAL FULL SIZE PITCHES	71
TEAMS PER PITCH	10.5

# Teams



CAMOGIE	132
LADIES FOOTBALL	140
HURLING	257
FOOTBALL	219
TOTAL TEAMS	748

# Population



FEMALE  
**64,268**  
MALE  
**63,095**  
TOTAL  
**127,363**  
AVERAGE AGE  
**39.5**



# Clubs



LGFA	GAA	CAMOGIE
29	46	15



# Members



YOUTH MALE PLAYERS	4,390
YOUTH FEMALE PLAYERS	3,847
FULL MALE PLAYERS	2,041
FULL FEMALE PLAYERS	1,135
NON-PLAYERS	4,656



# Facilities



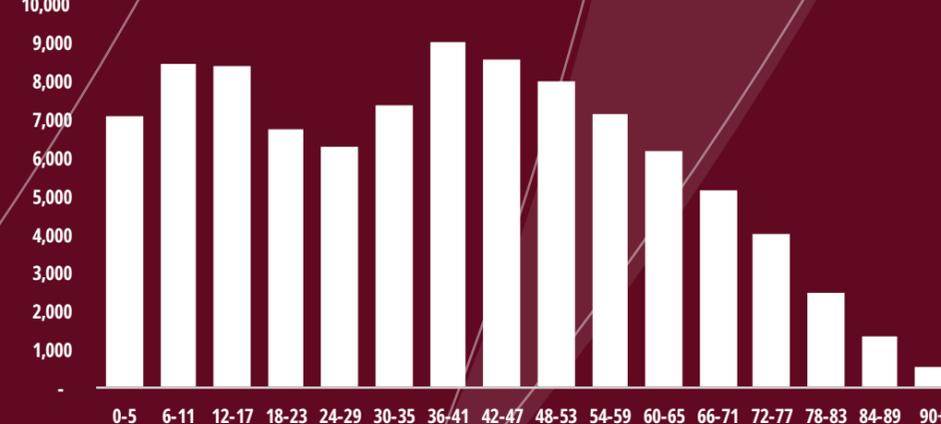
TOTAL PITCHES	123
TOTAL FLOODLIT PITCHES	31
TOTAL FULL SIZE PITCHES	76
TEAMS PER PITCH	5.1

# Teams



CAMOGIE	50
LADIES FOOTBALL	126
HURLING	69
FOOTBALL	147
TOTAL TEAMS	392

# Population



FEMALE  
**48,500**  
MALE  
**47,721**  
TOTAL  
**96,221**  
AVERAGE AGE  
**38.1**



# Clubs



LGFA	GAA	CAMOGIE
38	48	41



# Members



YOUTH MALE PLAYERS	6,027
YOUTH FEMALE PLAYERS	5,497
FULL MALE PLAYERS	2,958
FULL FEMALE PLAYERS	1,592
NON-PLAYERS	4,812



# Facilities



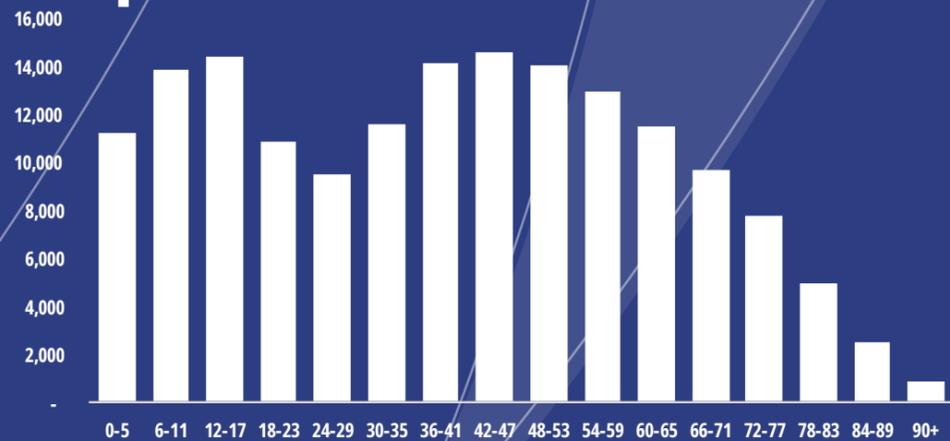
TOTAL PITCHES	162
TOTAL FLOODLIT PITCHES	28
TOTAL FULL SIZE PITCHES	104
TEAMS PER PITCH	8.02

# Teams



CAMOGIE	171
LADIES FOOTBALL	203
HURLING	232
FOOTBALL	230
TOTAL TEAMS	836

# Population



FEMALE

83,142

MALE

80,777

TOTAL

163,919

AVERAGE AGE

39.45



# Clubs



LGFA	GAA	CAMOGIE
29	37	15



# Members



YOUTH MALE PLAYERS	4,317
YOUTH FEMALE PLAYERS	4,204
FULL MALE PLAYERS	2,081
FULL FEMALE PLAYERS	1,248
NON-PLAYERS	3,030



# Facilities



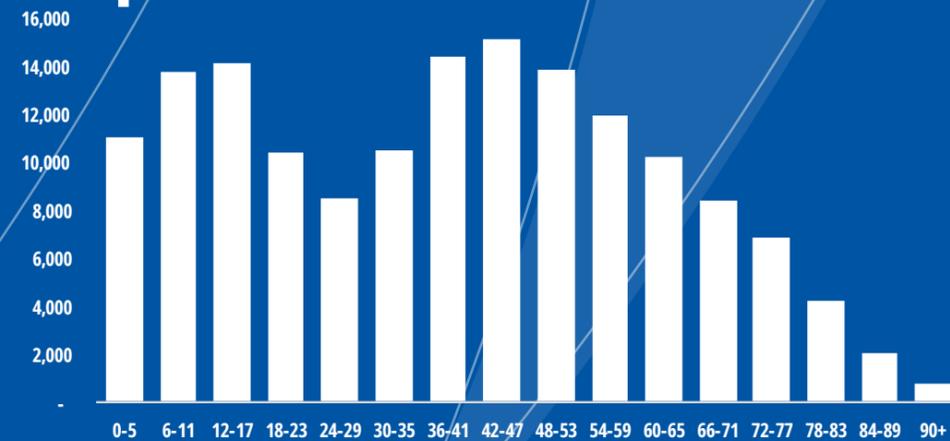
TOTAL PITCHES	96
TOTAL FLOODLIT PITCHES	32
TOTAL FULL SIZE PITCHES	57
TEAMS PER PITCH	8.4

# Teams



CAMOGIE	143
LADIES FOOTBALL	95
HURLING	66
FOOTBALL	175
TOTAL TEAMS	479

# Population



FEMALE

79,287

MALE

76,564

TOTAL

155,851

AVERAGE AGE

38.6



# Conclusion

Ireland's demographic evolution presents both a challenge and an opportunity for the Gaelic Athletic Association. As this report has shown, the shifting balance between urban growth and rural decline is reshaping the communities in which Gaelic games are played, supported, and sustained. The GAA now faces a pivotal moment: to respond proactively, strategically, and inclusively to these changes, or risk losing its foundational role in Irish life.

The findings of this report underscore the urgency of placing demographic insight at the heart of the Association's planning and decision-making. The risks of inaction—club closures, volunteer burnout, declining participation, and structural imbalance—are real and immediate. Yet, the potential for renewal is equally powerful. By embracing evidence-informed strategies, reforming internal structures, and engaging meaningfully with external partners, the GAA can ensure that demographic change becomes a catalyst for growth rather than a source of strain.

This report sets out a clear framework for action: redefining club models, adapting competition formats, strengthening governance, and investing in inclusive games development. It also calls for deeper collaboration with government, local authorities, and community organisations to align planning, infrastructure, and policy with the needs of GAA units across the island.

The next phase of this work will involve translating these proposals into practice—through pilot initiatives, county-level implementation, and ongoing monitoring. The National Demographics Committee will continue to support this process, ensuring that the Association remains responsive, resilient, and rooted in the communities it serves.

In a changing Ireland, the GAA must adapt to thrive. This report is both a call to action and a roadmap for renewal—ensuring that Gaelic games remain a vibrant, inclusive, and enduring part of Irish identity for generations to come.





# Appendices

## National Demographics Committee Terms of Reference

The purpose of the National Demographics Committee is to monitor and evaluate the impact of demographic issues on Participation, Retention, and Performance across Gaelic games. They work to ensure that the Association’s policies and practices are reflective of current and future demographic changes across the Association.

The Committee shall make recommendations to the Central Council on appropriate matters.

### Committee Background

The need for a demographics committee arises from several key factors related to understanding and responding effectively to population dynamics and demographic shifts. Over the last 50 years, there have been several reports that have identified the impact of demographics shifts on Association activities. Such reports, as well as those of various national committees, demonstrate the imperative to understand, anticipate, and respond effectively to demographic changes. By leveraging demographic insights, the GAA can foster inclusive development, improve the provision of Gaelic games, and create resilient dynamic clubs and communities.

### Committee Vision and Terms of Reference

Our vision is a sustainable community-based and volunteer-led Association where as many as possible, participate in Gaelic games and culture, for as long as possible.

Terms of Reference

- To enable as many as possible to participate in Gaelic games and culture
- To provide for the sustainable development of Gaelic games, and
- For the GAA to retain and maintain our preeminent position in the community and in Irish society.

### Responsibilities

The Demographics Committee will play a vital role in understanding population dynamics, informing decision-making processes, and promoting evidence-based policies that support the sustainable participation and development of clubs across the Association. The Committee will be responsible for supporting Counties in understanding the demographic issues at play as well as identifying and proposing innovative solutions to support a sustainable model for Gaelic games, including:

- Defining demographic issues as they pertain to rural and urban areas separately.
- Identify mechanisms and propose means to support rural clubs experiencing depopulation.
- Examine potential amendments to Official Guide / County Bye-Laws/Association policies to assist clubs.
- Explore creative approaches to assist expanding urban areas in catering for vast playing numbers.
- Explore ways to facilitate and encourage rural players to continue playing with their Home Clubs
- Engage with, and support the work of, County Demographics Officers in developing County specific proposals to address demographic issues.

## Work of the Committee

The committee adopted a structured, evidence-informed methodology grounded in comprehensive data analysis, wide stakeholder engagement, and the integration of existing research and Association knowledge. This approach ensured that our findings and recommendations are informed, inclusive, and aligned with the needs of the Gaelic games community.

### 1. Data Collection and Analysis

A foundational element of the committee’s work was the systematic collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data. This process involved both internal and external data. This included:

- **National Census Data** We incorporated demographic data from the 2021 Northern Ireland Census (NISRA) and 2022 Census of the Republic of Ireland (CSO) to map population changes, age profiles, urban/rural distribution, and regional growth trends.
- **Sectoral Data Sources** We reviewed health and education data from the respective government departments to understand broader societal trends affecting participation and community engagement.
- **Membership Data** Foireann membership records were analysed to assess participation levels, club activity, and demographic representation across the GAA, LGFA, and Camogie Associations.
- **Club Facilities Audit** An audit of existing club facilities was undertaken through a survey of club officers. The number and range of facilities owned by and accessed by clubs across the Association was identified.

### 2. Engagement with National and European Agencies

To ensure public policy and demographic insight was accurately reflected, we held consultations with key government and non-government bodies, including:

<b>Central Statistics Office (CSO)</b>	Dara Calleary T.D., Minister for Social Protection, Minister for Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht
<b>Sport Ireland</b>	Jerry Buttimer T.D., Minister of State with responsibility for Community Development and Charities, Minister of State with responsibility for Rural Transport
<b>Office of the Planning Regulator</b>	Members of the European Parliament
<b>National Economic and Social Council</b>	The Committee of the Regions
<b>Teagasc</b>	Irish Regions European Office
<b>Tailte Éireann (formerly Ordnance Survey Ireland)</b>	The Northern Ireland Executive Office in Brussels

<b>The Irish Farmers Association</b>	Permanent Representation of Ireland to the European Union
<b>Western Development Commission</b>	Department of Education
<b>Catholic Primary School Management Association</b>	Department for the Economy
<b>Catholic Church</b>	Social Enterprise Republic of Ireland (SERI)

These engagements ensured that the analysis was informed by national planning frameworks, sport participation strategies, educational trends, and spatial and land-use data.

### 3. Consultation with Academic Experts

Recognising the importance of independent expertise, the committee engaged with academic researchers, notably the Department of Economics at University College Cork. Their input contributed to:

- Socioeconomic modelling
- Interpretation of demographic data
- Assessment of long-term participation trends`

This step enhanced the analytical rigour of the committee’s work and validated key findings.

### 4. Internal GAA Stakeholder Engagement

Parallel to external engagement, the committee conducted structured discussions with internal GAA bodies and committees, ensuring organisational cohesion and shared understanding. Engagements included:

- An Coiste Bainistíochta (GAA)
- National Infrastructure Committee
- Árd Comhairle (GAA)
- Standing Committee on the Playing Rules
- Ladies Gaelic Football Association (LGFA)
- Rules Advisory Committee
- Camogie Association
- Games Development Committee
- Hurling Development Committee
- Development CCC
- Planning and Training Committee

This process provided insight into operational realities such as fixtures planning, facility needs, grassroots development, and cross-code alignment.

### 5. Provincial, County, and Club-Level Feedback

To ground the analysis in lived experience, the committee carried out extensive engagement across GAA structures. This included:

- Provincial Councils
- County Demographics Officers
- County Committees and Clubs

These sessions informed the committee of local challenges, regional inequalities, facility pressures, and successful interventions. The feedback helped ensure recommendations are relevant, actionable, and responsive to diverse contexts.

### 6. Review of Previous Work

To avoid duplication and build on existing institutional knowledge, the committee reviewed prior strategic outputs, including the Report of the Urban/Rural Committee (2018-2021), Enhancing Community Identity: the GAA Strategic Review (2002), the McNamee Report (1971), and several GAA strategic plans, including the GAA Strategic Vision and Action Plan 2009-2015, the GAA Strategic Plan 2015 – 2017, Fís Shoiléir 2021, and Aontas 2026 - Towards One GAA for All.

Insights from previous work were incorporated into this process, ensuring continuity and organisational learning.

## County Demographics Officers

Connacht	
County	Officer
Galway	Ted Larkin
Leitrim	Declan Bohan
Mayo	Micheal McKenzie
Roscommon	Pat Compton
Sligo	Joan Mullen

Munster	
County	Officer
Clare	Neill O'Brien
Cork	Eoghan O'Connor
Kerry	Michael Murphy
Limerick	Jimmy Feane
Tipperary	Laurenz Egan
Waterford	Pat Casey

Leinster	
County	Officer
Carlow	Margaret Doyle
Dublin	Brendan Waters
Kildare	Syl Merrins
Kilkenny	Seamus Knox
Laois	Adrainne McCarthy
Longford	Eamonn Brennan
Louth	Declan Byrne
Meath	Ruth Chambers
Offaly	Paul Rouse
Westmeath	Donie Malone
Wexford	George Hussey
Wicklow	Olive Farrell

Ulster	
County	Officer
Antrim	Michael McKay
Armagh	Paul McArdle
Cavan	Paddy Sheanon
Derry	Sean Devlin
Donegal	Eamonn Murphy
Down	Mark Hollywood
Fermanagh	Feargal O'Connor
Monaghan	Garrett Coyle
Tyrone	Gerard Bradley





WHERE WE ALL BELONG