



Engagement and Inclusivity in Gaelic Games:

An Evaluation of the **GAA For ALL** **PROGRAMME**



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings from an evaluation of the *GAA For ALL* Programme, a collaborative research effort by Ulster University and the Sport Industry Research Centre at Sheffield Hallam University. Commissioned by the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) and funded by Sport Ireland, this study examines the programme's impact, with a particular focus on participation, volunteer engagement, programme development, and facility management. It also supports the GAA's ongoing efforts to refine and enhance programme delivery, helping to increase both club and participant involvement on a regular basis.



A Commitment to Inclusivity

This evaluation aligns with **Ireland's National Sports Policy**, which prioritises inclusivity and aims to remove barriers related to **social background, disability, gender, and ethnicity**. The policy states:

“Sport must be welcoming and inclusive, offering appropriate opportunities for participation and improvement to all.”

Guided by this vision, the evaluation focuses on the effectiveness of the *GAA For ALL* Programme in increasing sports participation among individuals with **physical and learning disabilities**. The findings will assist the GAA in **optimising its approach to inclusive sports programming**, enhancing engagement, satisfaction, and support for **participants, volunteers, coaches, and caregivers**.

The GAA's Approach to Diversity and Inclusion

The **GAA Official Guide** highlights the Association's commitment to fostering a **strong sense of community across Ireland and beyond**. As part of this mission, the GAA has developed a dedicated **Inclusion and Diversity Strategy**, which promotes **equity, inclusivity, and a welcoming environment for all**.

Within this framework:

- **Inclusion means creating** *“a sense of belonging, where individuals feel comfortable being part of something they value.”*
- **Diversity is about** *“recognising and celebrating differences.”*

This commitment ensures that everyone, 'regardless of **gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, ethnicity, or disability**', feels valued and included within the Gaelic games community.

Focus of This Evaluation

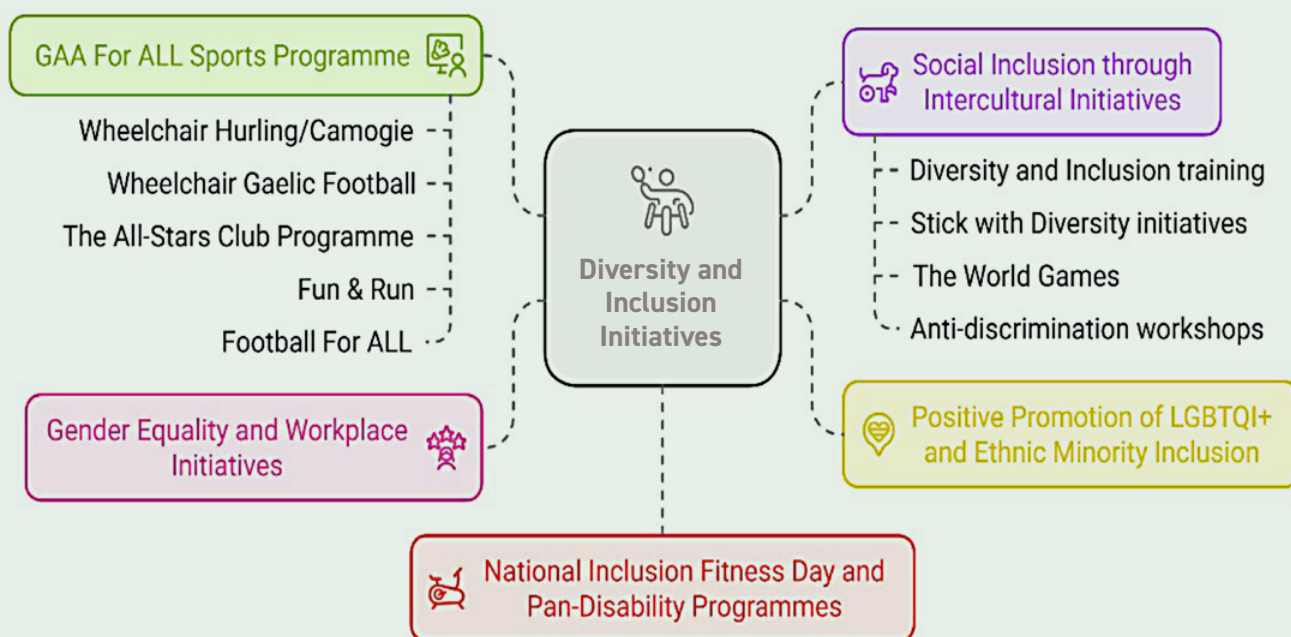
This study specifically examines the *GAA For ALL* Programme, which provides **modified Gaelic games** for participants of all ages and abilities, fostering **enjoyment, a sense of achievement, and a strong sense of community belonging**.

Historically, these initiatives were assessed primarily through **quantitative outputs**. However, this evaluation aims to provide a **deeper understanding of the programme's broader impact**, not only on participants but also on their **families, clubs, schools, and the wider community**.

By taking this comprehensive approach, the study will help shape future developments in **inclusive sports programming**, ensuring that Gaelic games continue to be accessible, welcoming, and meaningful for all.

The infographic on page 7 highlights some of the key findings from the evaluation:

Five Pillars of the GAA Diversity and Inclusion Programme



Clubs believe *GAA For ALL* is sustainable, but continued growth and development will depend on structured support, training pathways and continued investment. Smaller clubs, with less volunteer capacity, will require additional and ongoing support from the GAA.

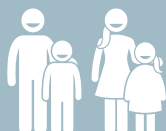


Engagement and Inclusivity in Gaelic Games:

An Evaluation of the *GAA For ALL* Programme

Mentoring and Leadership

1 in 4 of those who engaged with *GAA For ALL* has a family member with a disability



40% were motivated to engage by their clubs' need for new coaches



56% of respondents never had support from a mentor

83% now see themselves as a mentor

Training and Development

83% of respondents completed at least one training course



30% completed more than one course



55% of those engaging with *GAA For ALL* were satisfied with training and support

Progression Opportunities

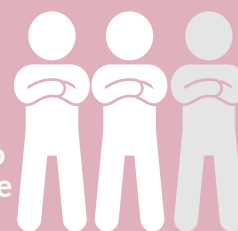
75% completed a Foundation Coaching Qualification as part of *GAA For ALL*

76% gained experience of coaching with teams within the programme

64% took the opportunity to shadow and learn from other club members

Looking to the Future

67% said they felt confident they could get more people involved in sport and physical activity thanks to their involvement with the *GAA For All* programme



Emerging Themes for Future Programme Growth and Development



Striking the right balance of approach between competition and inclusion

Developing a level of consistency of quality and structure in leadership pathways



Integration of *GAA For ALL* activities into mainstream sport and physical activity

Extending support networks and delivering improved volunteer training





METHODOLOGY

This section outlines the data collection methods used to evaluate the *GAA For ALL Programme*, employing a multi-method approach to gain a comprehensive understanding of the programme's impact and outcomes.

The evaluation methods included:

Review of Existing Data	Analysis of internal documents and programme reports provided by the GAA to understand key components and the uptake of the programme.
Online Survey	A survey distributed to a range of key stakeholders (e.g. GAA administrators, coaches and mentors, volunteers, parents/guardians) conducted between November 2023 and March 2024, to gather quantitative data on their experiences and feedback
Qualitative Interviews	In-depth interviews with key stakeholders who are involved in the development and delivery of <i>GAA For All</i> at a National, Provincial and local level, to capture deeper insights and perspectives on the programme's effectiveness and areas for improvement.

This combination of quantitative and qualitative methods created a robust foundation for evaluating the programme's outputs, outcomes, and areas for development. The insights drawn from these data sources have been integral to shaping the findings and recommendations of this evaluation.

Review of Existing Data

The research team conducted an in-depth review of internal and public-facing documents and datasets related to the planning and delivery of the *GAA For ALL* programme. This analysis served to:

Identify Key Programme Elements	Examine Public Perception	Inform Survey Design
Pinpointing the core components of the initiative and assessing its uptake by clubs across the Island of Ireland.	Reviewing press releases, media articles, and social media content produced by clubs, county boards, and the GAA to capture the overall tone and sentiment of public commentary on the programme.	Insights gained from these data sources directly influenced the structure and content of the online questionnaire, ensuring it addressed relevant themes and issues.

This comprehensive document analysis provided valuable context and helped shape the subsequent stages of the research process.



Online Survey

Following the review of existing data and in consultation with **GAA representatives**, an **online survey** was developed and distributed to **coaches actively involved in delivering the GAA For ALL Programme**. The survey was designed to align with a similar study conducted for the **Camogie Association's MNA / Hurl With Me programme**, allowing for meaningful comparisons in programme evaluation.

The response rate was significant, with **131 submissions received**. Of these, **76 provided robust and usable data**, having completed a substantial portion of the questionnaire. These responses offer **valuable insights** into the experiences, challenges, and successes of those directly engaged in the programme, forming a critical component of this evaluation.

Qualitative Conversations with Gaelic Games Stakeholders

Building on the insights gathered from the online survey, a series of **face-to-face and online interviews** were conducted with respondents from **clubs across Ireland** who agreed to participate in further research. Additionally, a **targeted group of stakeholders**, identified by the **GAA** as having a vested interest in the programme, took part in the qualitative discussions.

These interviews provided **deeper, first-hand perspectives**, allowing participants to elaborate on their experiences, challenges, and recommendations for enhancing *the GAA For ALL Programme*. The discussions were guided by key research questions, shaped by the survey findings, which are detailed in **Appendix 1**. This qualitative element enriched the evaluation by capturing the lived experiences of those directly involved in the *GAA For ALL* programme.



RESULTS

This section presents the key findings from the evaluation of the *GAA For ALL* Programme, drawing on data from existing GAA records, survey responses, and qualitative interviews with stakeholders. The results provide a comprehensive picture of the programme's reach, impact, and areas for future development.

By combining these data sources, this section highlights the strengths of the *GAA For ALL* initiative while identifying opportunities to enhance inclusivity, training, and long-term sustainability.

Existing Data

GAA data indicates that around **400 clubs** have registered with the *GAA For ALL* programme. Of these, more than **150 clubs**, from across the **three Gaelic Games Associations**, have actively participated in inclusive games activities over the past five years.

It's important to note that this figure is **cumulative**, meaning it reflects total engagement over time rather than the number of clubs currently running inclusive activities.

For further insights into inclusive initiatives within GAA clubs, the '**2023 Phase 5 Report of the Irish Life Healthy Club Programme**' provides additional details. Table 1 below outlines participation in **Inclusive Gaelic Games Activity from 2019 to 2024**.

Table 1 - Participation in Inclusive Gaelic Games Activity, 2019-24

Programme	Clubs	Participants
All Stars	63	1,272
Football For ALL	12	388
Cúl Eile inclusive summer camp	7	402

Additionally, *GAA For ALL* engagement is not yet recorded on the **GAA's Foireann database**, though plans are in place to make this information accessible to club secretaries.

The absence of routine data collection highlights a **significant gap** in the GAA's understanding of the recent growth in inclusive activities. This reinforces the importance of the primary research presented in this evaluation, which aims to provide a clearer picture of participation levels and programme impact.

Online Survey

Table 2 provides an overview of the survey sample. Due to the **small sample size**, cross-tabulation of the results was not feasible with a high level of statistical certainty. As a result, the following analysis examines the **survey responses as a whole**, offering general insights into participant experiences and engagement with the *GAA For ALL* programme.

Table 2 - Survey Sample Characteristics

Group	%	Province	%
Female	60%	Connacht	16%
Male	40%	Leinster	49%
Disability	9%	Munster	20%
Mean Age	48	Ulster	16%

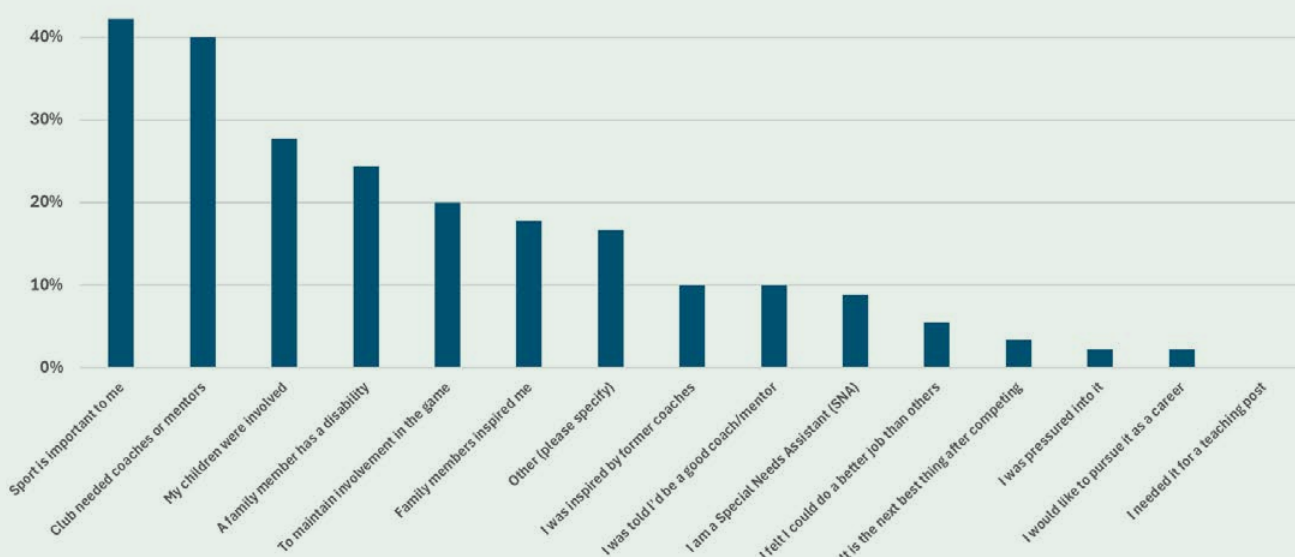


Motivations

Participants were asked about their motivation for getting involved in the *GAA for ALL* programme. Figure 1 highlights the key motivations for participating in the *GAA For ALL* programme. A significant proportion of respondents, **42%**, were intrinsically motivated by their passion for sport and its importance in their lives. Meanwhile, **40%** of coaches and mentors became involved in response to a need identified by their club, while one in five saw the programme as an opportunity to maintain their connection to Gaelic Games.

Family connections also played a crucial role in participation. **28%** of respondents engaged with the programme because their children were involved, while **24%** cited having a family member with a disability as their primary motivation. Additionally, **18%** were inspired by other family members to take part. These findings demonstrate the dual influence of personal passion for sport and a strong sense of community, highlighting the diverse reasons why individuals choose to engage with *GAA For ALL*.

Figure 1 - Motivations for Engaging with the Programme



Who Participates in GAA For ALL?

Figure 2 provides insight into the range of **physical and learning disabilities** represented among participants in the *GAA For ALL* programme. The majority of sessions, **81%**, catered for individuals with **Down's Syndrome and Autistic Spectrum Disorders**, while **60%** provided activities for those with **mild to moderate learning difficulties**. Additionally, just over **half (52%)** of sessions supported individuals with **Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)**.

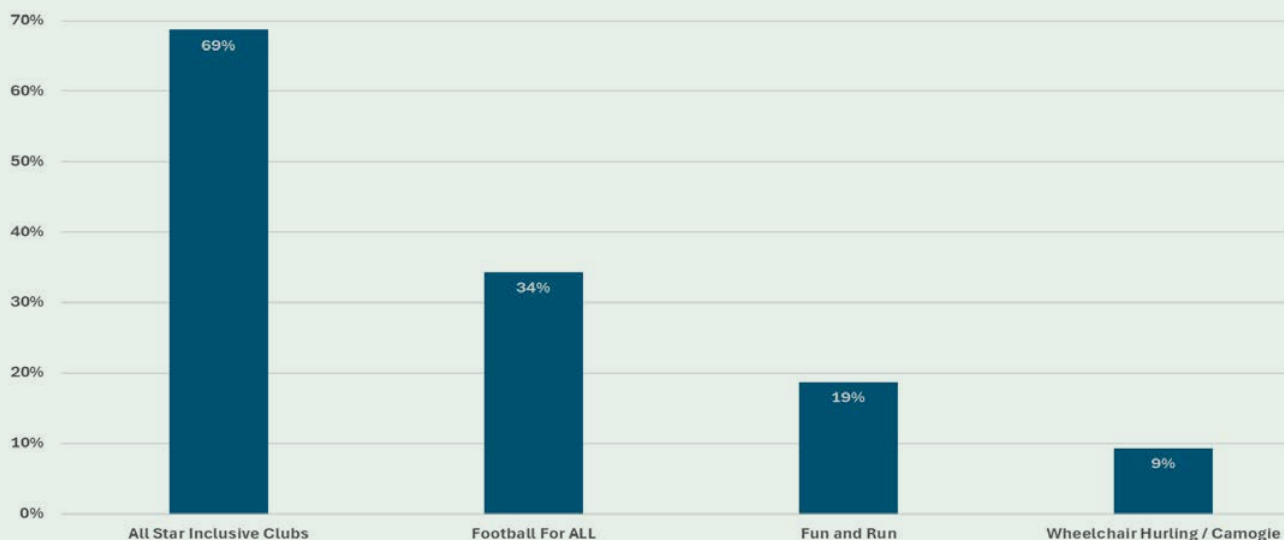
In contrast, participation among individuals with **specific physical disabilities**, excluding those associated with **Down's Syndrome**, was relatively lower. Only **24%** of coaches and mentors reported that their sessions included individuals with **cerebral palsy**, while engagement levels were even lower for those with **muscular dystrophy (11%)** and **spina bifida (6%)**. Similarly, **31%** of coaches and mentors delivered activities for individuals with **hearing impairments**, but only **16%** had experience supporting participants with **visual impairments**.

These findings highlight the programme's strong reach within **learning disability groups** while identifying potential gaps in engagement with individuals with **physical disabilities**, suggesting an opportunity to further expand inclusivity within *GAA For ALL*.

Figure 2 - Conditions Present in Games for All Participant Groups



Figure 3 - Delivery of Games for ALL Strands

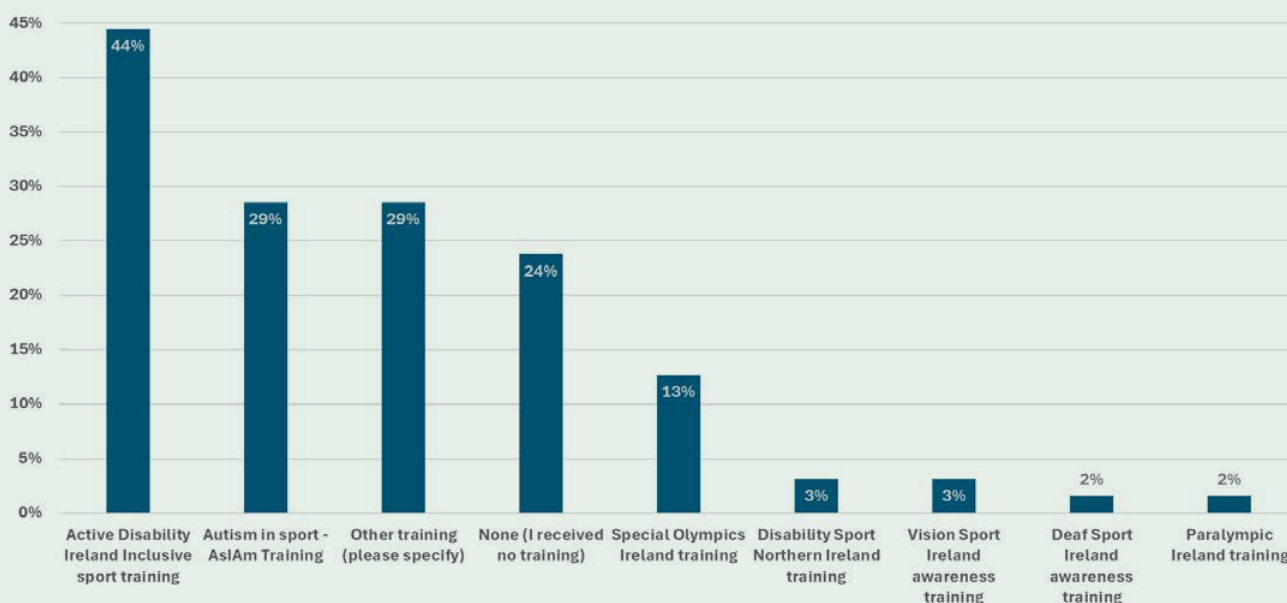


What Clubs Are Offering?

The *GAA For ALL* programme encompasses a variety of activities, with delivery varying from **club to club**. As shown in **Figure 3**, the most widely implemented initiative was the **All-Star Inclusive Clubs**, offered by **69% of participating clubs**. Additionally, **34%** of clubs provided **Football For ALL sessions**, further expanding opportunities for inclusive participation.

In contrast, **Fun and Run** was available in just **19% of clubs**, while **Wheelchair Hurling/Camogie**, which is organised on a **provincial basis**, was the least commonly delivered activity, featuring in only **9%** of clubs involved in *GAA For ALL*. These variations highlight the programme's flexibility in catering to different club capacities and community needs, while also suggesting potential areas for **broader implementation and growth**.

Figure 4 - Training Received



The Role of Training and Support in Inclusive Delivery'

More than **three-quarters** of survey respondents had participated in at least **one form of training** related to their involvement with *GAA For ALL* (Figure 4). The most common training was **inclusive sport training** provided by **Active Disability Ireland**, reflecting a strong emphasis on equipping coaches with the skills to support diverse needs.

Additionally, **29% of respondents** had completed **Autism in Sport training** through the **AslAm** charity, further enhancing their ability to cater to participants with **Autistic Spectrum Disorders**. Meanwhile, **Special Olympics Ireland** played a role in supporting the programme, providing training for **one in eight** coaches and mentors. These findings highlight the **importance of specialised training** in ensuring the effective delivery of **inclusive Gaelic games activities**.

Coaches and mentors also benefited from **training acquired through their professional careers**, with many having backgrounds in **education**. This was reflected in the proportion of respondents who had received **'Other' forms of training**, the majority of whom had participated in **safeguarding or first aid instruction**.

Overall, those involved in *GAA For ALL* reported **high levels of satisfaction** with their training and support. **56% of coaches and mentors** were **satisfied or highly satisfied** with the **quality of training**, while **55%** felt similarly about the **support they received** (Figure 5). However, **one in five respondents** expressed dissatisfaction with the level of support available, indicating possible **gaps in provision** or a **misalignment between training and expectations**. These findings highlight both the **value of existing training** and the **need for ongoing improvements** to better equip volunteers for inclusive coaching.

The survey revealed that **fewer than half (44%)** of respondents had previously **benefited from the support of a mentor** (Figure 6). However, **engagement with *GAA For ALL*** has significantly influenced participants' roles, with **83% of respondents** now considering **themselves as mentors**.

This shift highlights the programme's impact in **empowering coaches and mentors**, fostering a culture of **peer support** and **knowledge-sharing**, which is essential for sustaining and expanding inclusive Gaelic games initiatives.

Perceived Outcomes of Training and Support

The survey results provided **clear insights** into the impact of *GAA For ALL* on coaches' **skill development** (Figure 6). A significant **86% of respondents** reported **increased confidence** as a direct result of their involvement in the programme. Similarly, coaches noted improvements in key areas such as **leadership skills (84%)**, **communication (81%)**, and **coaching/mentoring knowledge (78%)**.

Encouragingly, **85% of coaches** stated that their participation in *GAA For ALL* had **motivated them to continue coaching or mentoring**, while **78%** expressed a **desire to progress** in their coaching journey. These findings highlight the programme's **positive influence** on volunteer development, reinforcing its role in **building a skilled and committed coaching workforce** within Gaelic games.

Figure 5 - Satisfaction with Training and Support

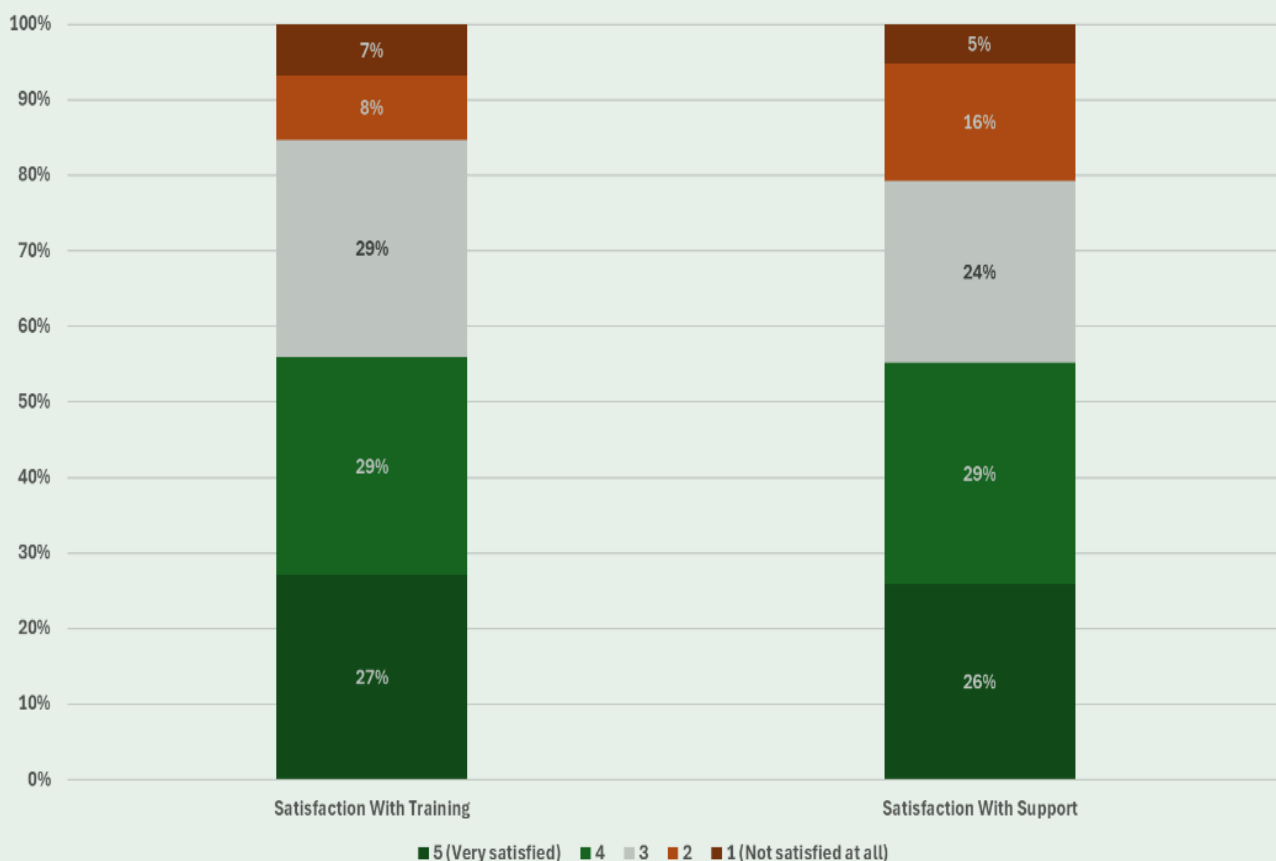


Figure 6 - Perceived Outcomes of Training and Support

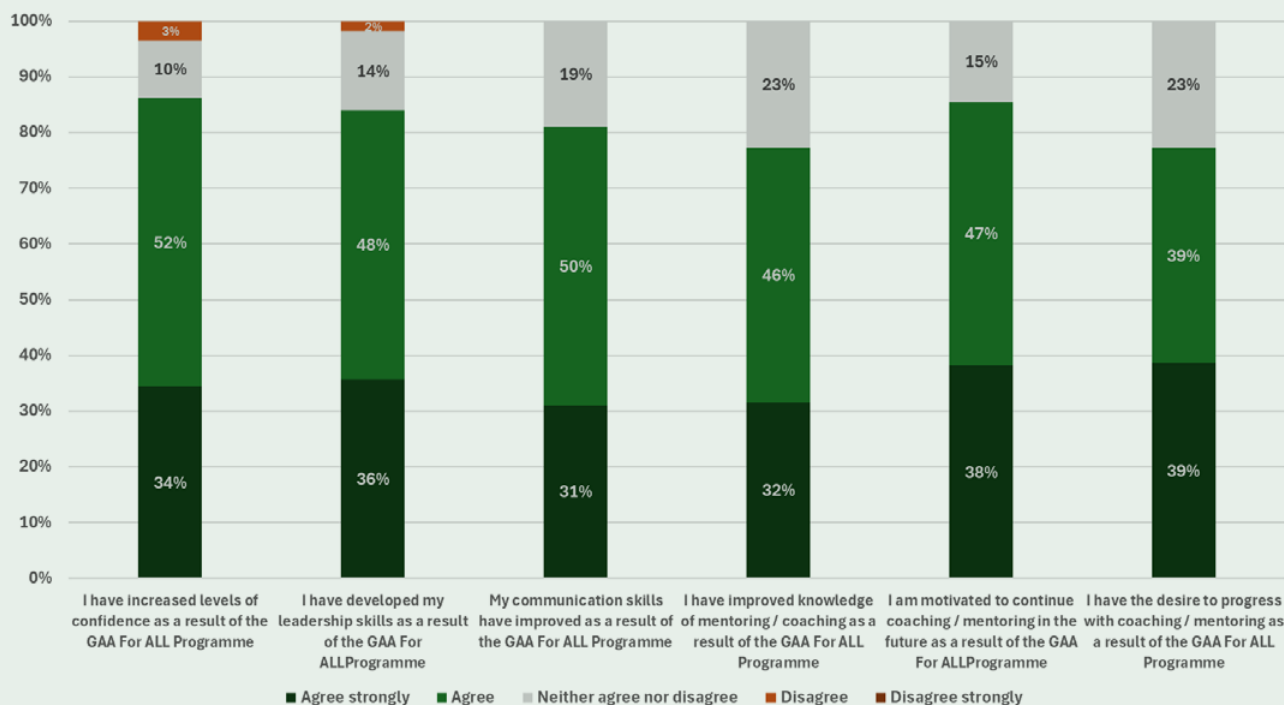
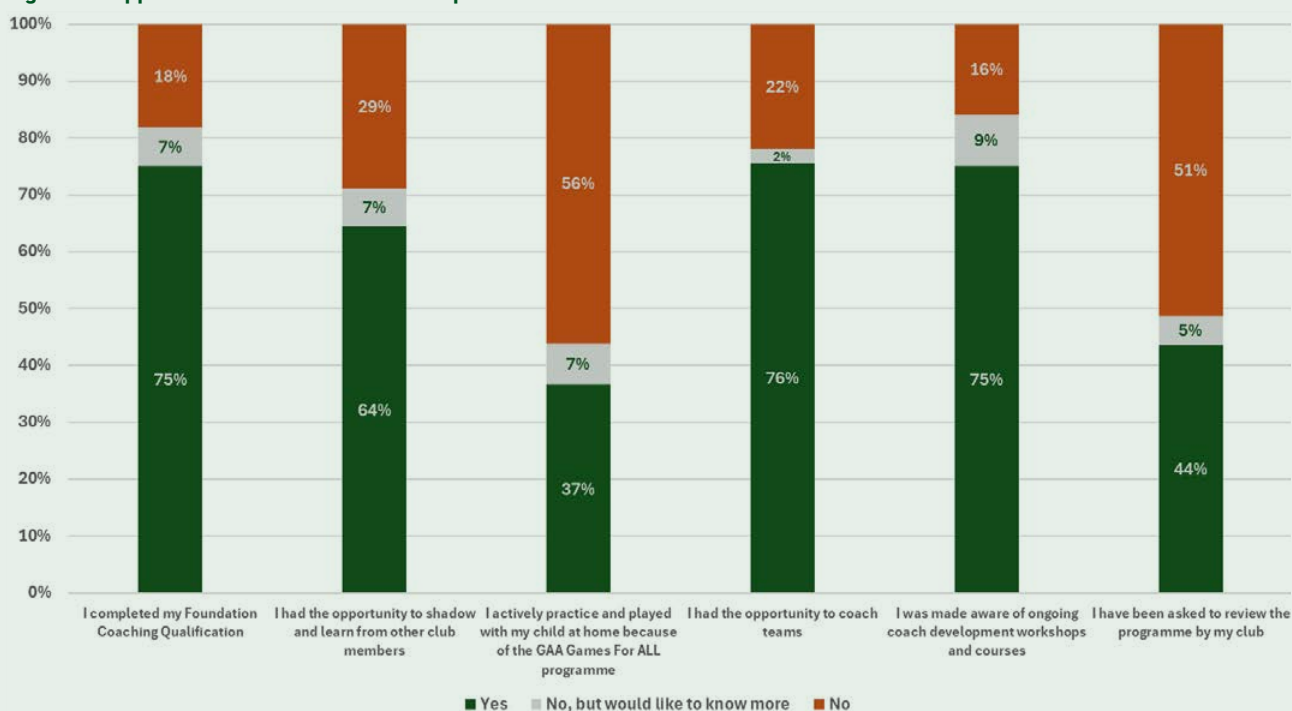


Figure 7 - Opportunities for Personal Development



Engagement with *GAA For ALL* has provided coaches with valuable opportunities for personal development, as outlined in **Figure 7**. Three-quarters of survey respondents completed their Foundation Coaching Qualification, while an equal proportion became aware of ongoing coach development workshops and courses.

A slightly higher percentage (**76%**) gained **first-hand coaching experience with teams**, and **64%** took the opportunity to **shadow and learn from other club members**. However, **fewer than half** of the coaches and mentors had been **involved in reviewing their club's programme activities**, suggesting room for greater **coach input in programme development**.

Additionally, **just over a third (37%)** of respondents reported that their **engagement in GAA For ALL encouraged them to participate in activities at home with their child**, further reinforcing the **programme's impact beyond club settings**.

Participation in Broader Inclusion Initiatives

Survey participants were also asked about their participation in **coaching and inclusion-focused events** outside of their involvement with *GAA For ALL*. **Fewer than 5%** had attended the **National Coaching Conference**, and only **20%** had taken part in **National Inclusion Fitness Week** at their club. This suggests that these **national events have had minimal influence** on the delivery of *GAA For ALL*, highlighting a potential gap in engagement between broader coaching initiatives and inclusive Gaelic Games activities.

In contrast, **39% of coaches** had attended a **GAA For ALL programme at another club**, underscoring the importance of **local networks in sharing knowledge and expertise among volunteers**. Encouragingly, **83% of coaches and mentors** expressed a **willingness to attend a dedicated GAA For ALL coaching day in the future**, if organised. This strong interest reflects both the **distinct nature of the programme** and the **need for specialist skills** to effectively support participants with **physical and learning disabilities**.

The perception of **National Inclusion Fitness Week** among coaches and mentors appears **mixed** (Figure 8). While **more than half** of respondents agreed that it provided an **opportunity to attend a sports event with their family**, only **14%** felt encouraged to participate by **family members**. Additionally, **32%** viewed the event as a chance to **connect with other families**, while **41%** saw it as a **week dedicated to physical activity**.

Beyond the event itself, engagement with *GAA For ALL* had a more notable impact on fostering a **sense of community**. **Nearly two-thirds (65%)** of respondents agreed that the programme helped them feel part of a **coaching network**, and **59%** believed it effectively supported **coaching delivery within their club** (Figure 9).

However, some areas of the programme had a **more limited impact**. Only **39%** of respondents felt that *GAA For ALL* helped them **support their child's development**, which aligns with the fact that not all coaches had children with disabilities. Similarly, **40%** agreed that **online sessions** added value to the programme, though not all coaches had accessed these resources. These findings suggest that while the programme fosters **strong local networks**, there is potential to enhance engagement with **national initiatives and online learning opportunities**.

Figure 8 - National Inclusion Fitness Week

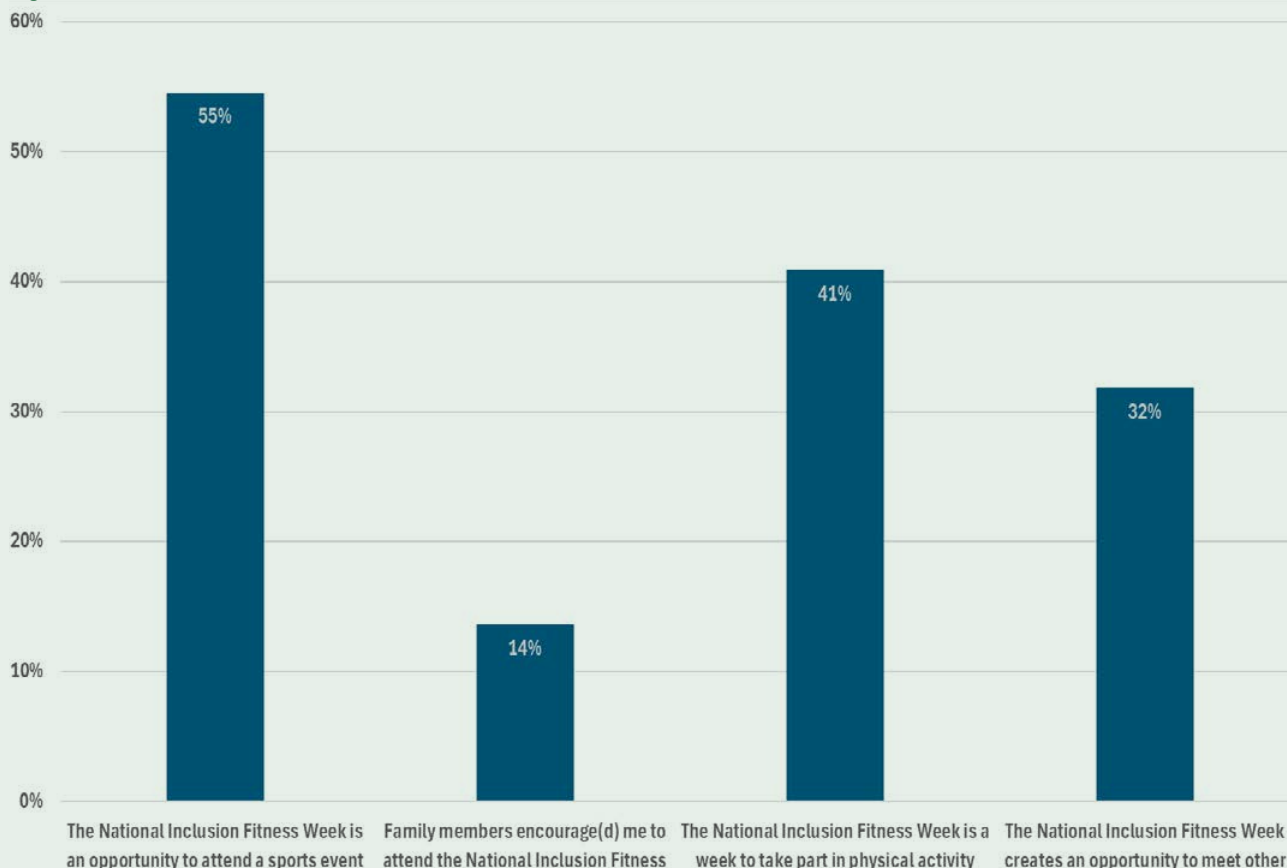
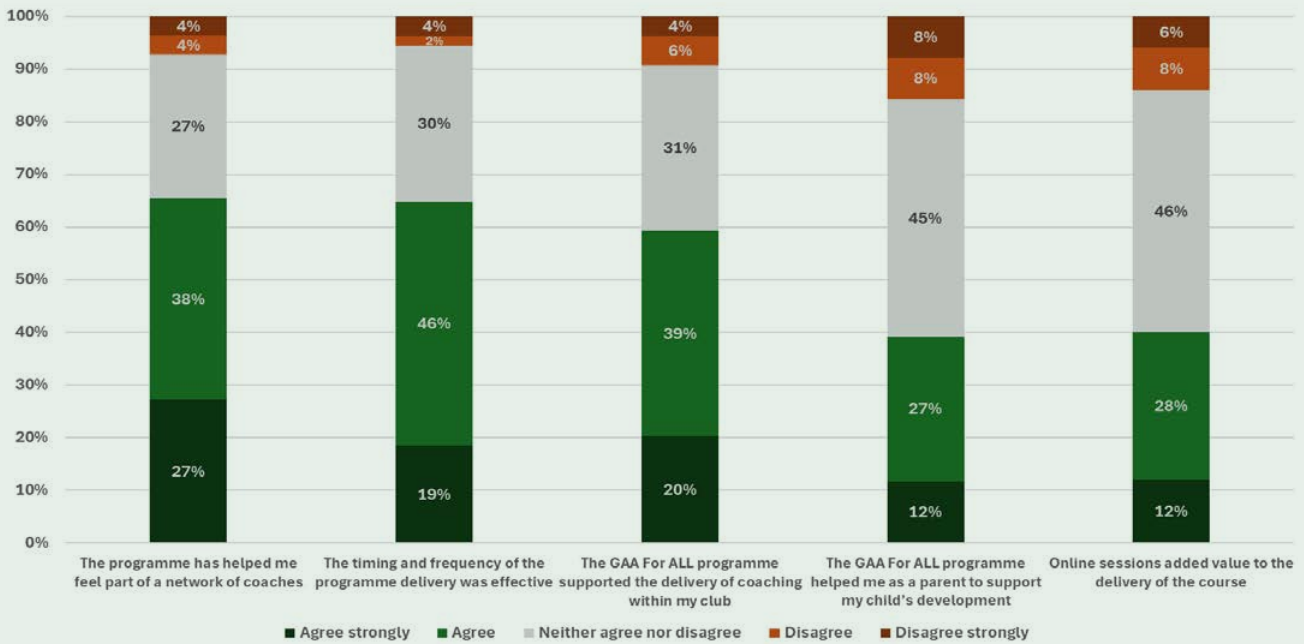


Figure 9 - Other Outcomes

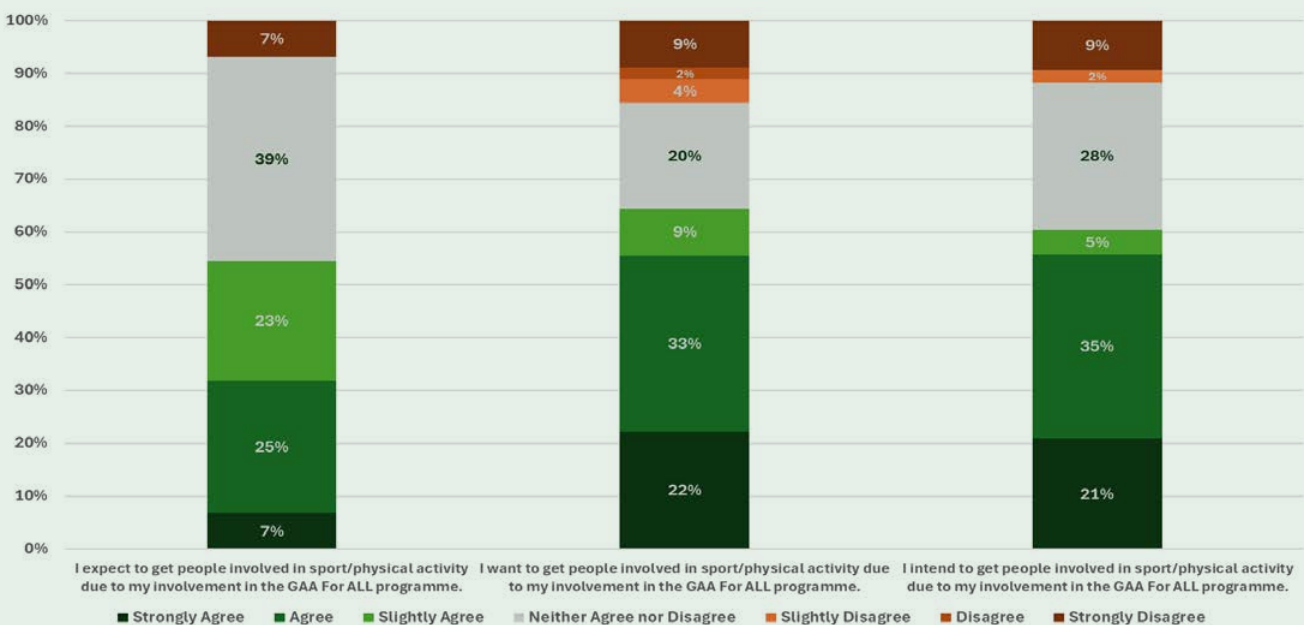


Getting Others Involved

GAA For ALL has played a role in encouraging coaches and mentors to promote participation in sport and physical activity (Figure 10). Nearly two-thirds (64%) of respondents expressed a desire to get more people involved, with 61% stating that they intend to take action to achieve this.

While a slightly lower proportion (55%) felt confident in their ability to successfully engage others in physical activity, the overall findings paint a positive picture of the programme's impact. These results suggest that GAA For ALL has helped to boost coaches' confidence, strengthen their commitment to inclusion, and inspire them to actively encourage wider participation in Gaelic games.

Figure 10- Ability to Get People Involved



Similarly, Figure 11 highlights that most coaches and mentors involved in GAA For ALL anticipate positive personal outcomes from engaging participants. A significant 84% agreed that getting people involved would be "good", while 74% described it as "exciting", 77% as "enjoyable", and 76% as "pleasant".

However, only 49% of coaches felt that encouraging participation would be "convenient", with just 12% strongly agreeing. This reflects the volunteer-led nature of the GAA, where individuals must balance their commitment to the programme with other responsibilities, such as work and family life. As a result, a significant proportion of respondents (35%) remained neutral on this issue, while 17% disagreed, highlighting the ongoing challenge of sustaining volunteer engagement in inclusive sport initiatives.

Figure 11 - Effect of Getting People Involved

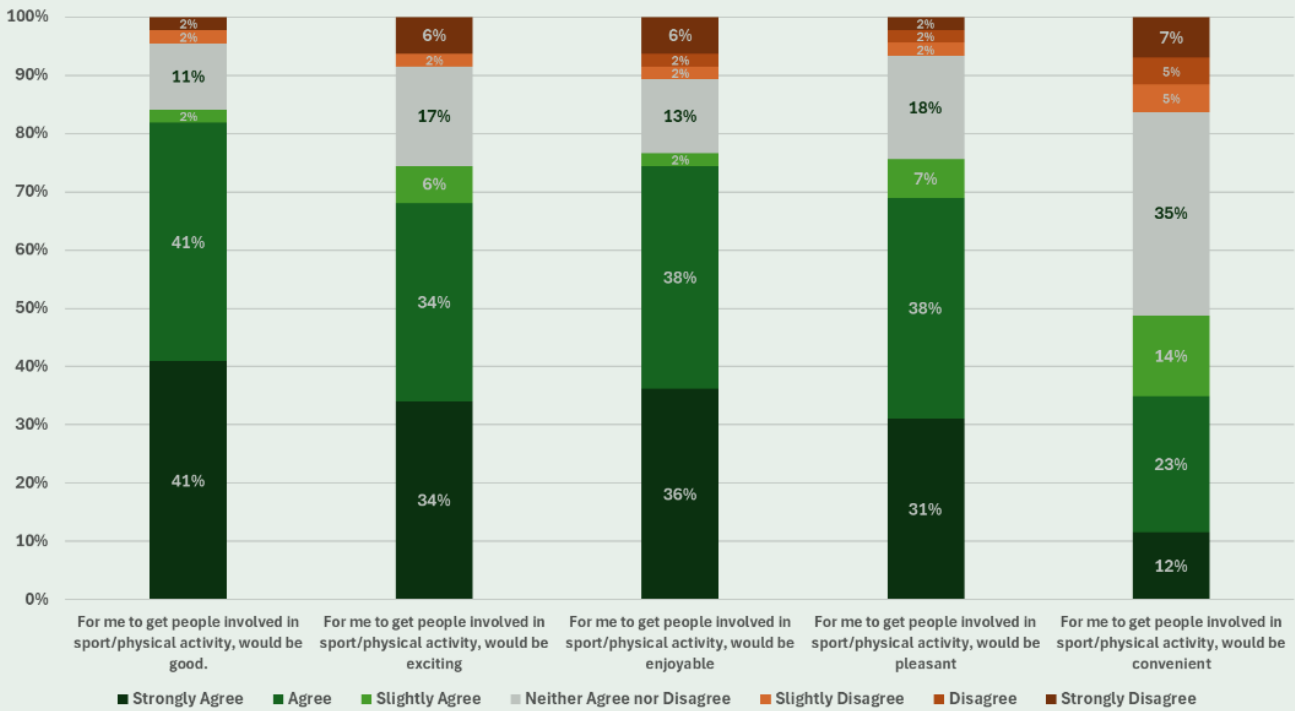
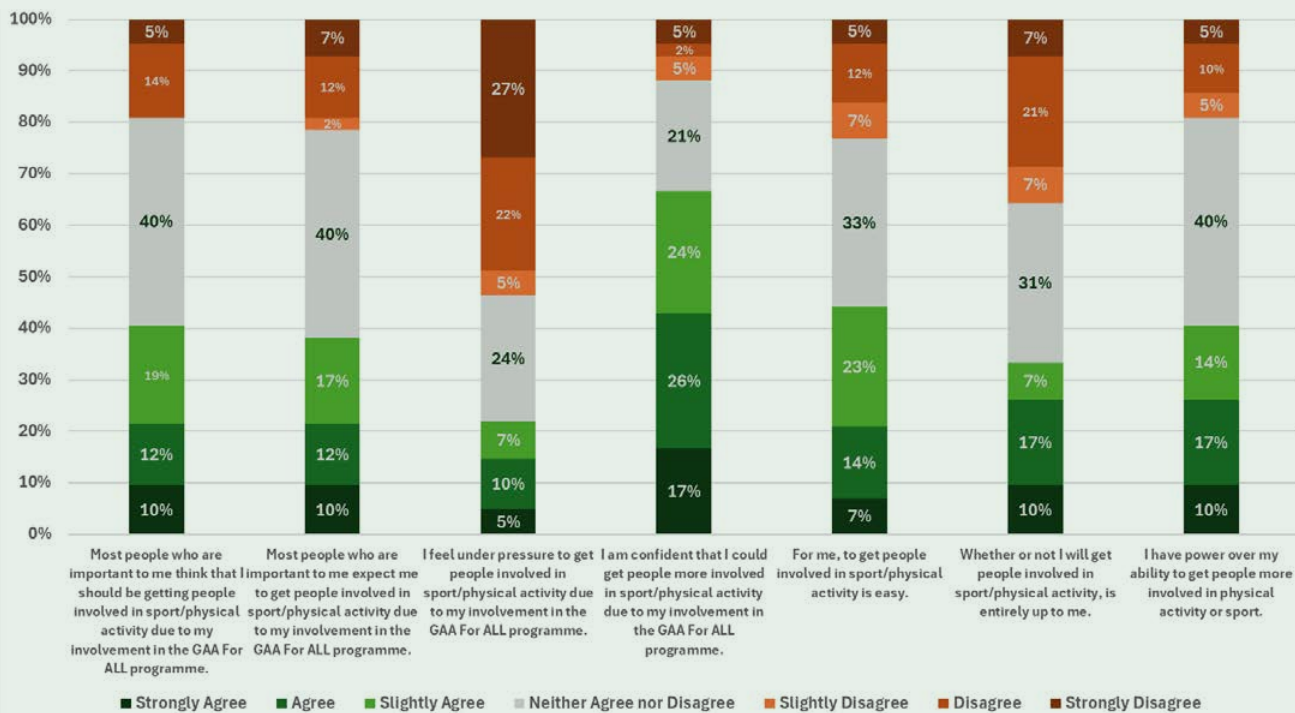


Figure 12 - Getting People Involved



Despite the enthusiasm for increasing participation, only **34%** of survey respondents felt that the ability to engage people in **sport and physical activity** was **entirely their own**, while **35% disagreed** (Figure 12). This finding likely reflects the **collegial nature of volunteering** within the GAA, where the successful delivery of **Gaelic games**, and particularly **GAA For ALL**, relies on **collective effort and shared responsibility** among volunteers, coaches, and clubs.

With the survey findings explored, we now turn to the **qualitative insights** gathered from **interviews with key stakeholders**, which provide a **deeper understanding** of their experiences, challenges, and perspectives on the **GAA For ALL** programme.

Qualitative Feedback

Following the **online survey**, researchers conducted **19 interviews** with a total of **29 individuals**, including **coaches, mentors, club volunteers, and GAA staff members**. Among the interviewees, many were **parents of children with physical or learning disabilities**, though not exclusively. Additionally, a significant proportion of those directly involved in *GAA For ALL* came from **professional backgrounds in education, health, or social care**, bringing valuable expertise to their roles.

To analyse the interviews, researchers applied **thematic analysis** as outlined by **Braun and Clarke (2006)**, identifying key **patterns and themes** within the qualitative data. **Table 3** provides a summary of the key themes identified through this analysis, along with the distribution of references under each theme, offering a clear view of the areas most frequently discussed by participants.



Table 3 - Qualitative Interview Data Coding

Theme	Sub-theme	Interviewees	References
 BALANCING COMPETITION AND INCLUSION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenging Perceptions • Adapting Coaching Approaches • A Need for Structured Support 	9	25
 INTEGRATION INTO MAINSTREAM ACTIVITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing Opportunities for Participation • Strengthening Community Atmosphere • Expanding Skills and Perspectives • Facilities and Scheduling 	9	21
 LEADERSHIP IN GAA FOR ALL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for Consistency and Structure • Recognising Leadership and Programme Development 	12	102
 SUPPORT IN DELIVERING GAA FOR ALL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal Peer Networks and the Need for a Formal Support Structure • Challenges in Coaching Adaptation and Funding Needs • Volunteer Recruitment, Training, and Capacity Building • Wider Social and Emotional Impact • Role of Special Schools 	12	122

The following sections explore these **themes in greater detail**, providing deeper insights into the **experiences, challenges, and opportunities** associated with *GAA For ALL*.



BALANCING COMPETITION AND INCLUSION

One of the key challenges faced by **coaches and mentors** in delivering *GAA For ALL* activities was finding the right balance between **competition and inclusion**. Specifically, they had to develop a **programme that remained true to Gaelic games** while ensuring it was **accessible and enjoyable for all participants**.

Surprisingly, this often meant **de-emphasising competition** and placing greater focus on **fun, participation, and personal enjoyment**. For many, the goal was to create a space where individuals could **engage with the sport on their own terms**, without the pressures of traditional competitive structures. In fact, for some coaches, the very idea of **competition** within the programme was seen as counterproductive:

“At the moment, my biggest rant is that our ‘football for all’ in our schools... is that we go to Croke Park once a year and it says ‘competition’, so only our best players from the provinces go. What we need when we bring community people together is for the GAA to really commit and give us the GDOs for the day and just put on fun games.”

Coach

This perspective reflects a broader discussion within *GAA For ALL* about how best to **adapt Gaelic games** for inclusive participation while maintaining its **core identity**.

Challenging Perceptions

Many coaches shared stories of individuals who had previously been **discouraged from participating in sport** due to negative experiences, often influenced by the **physical intensity and competitive nature** of traditional Gaelic games. In many cases, parents had also been hesitant to engage their children in the sport, fearing that **Gaelic games might be too physically demanding** for those with **physical or learning difficulties**, even when the impairments were relatively mild.

However, *GAA For ALL* provided an opportunity to **reshape these perceptions** by adapting the sport to be **more inclusive and accessible**. For many participants, this was their **first real experience of inclusion and equality** within a sporting environment. The impact extended beyond the players themselves, **positively affecting their parents, carers, and even the coaches and mentors** involved.

“They get a chance to feel equal to everybody in mainstream schools and everybody that has the physical and intellectual ability to play GAA as a main sport. So, if there was no space for them, they’d never get a chance to feel what it’s like to be part of a community. The benefits of being part of a community are huge—social interaction increases, self-confidence grows, identity strengthens, and now they feel part of something. They feel accepted, as opposed to standing outside the fence looking into the club. They are now part of the club.”

Charitable Partner Representative

This perspective highlights the **transformative power of inclusion**, reinforcing the idea that **Gaelic games can be a space for everyone**, regardless of ability.



Adapting Coaching Approaches

The **qualitative interviews** revealed that some coaches initially experienced **nervousness and uncertainty** about adapting their coaching to meet the needs of *GAA For ALL* participants. This was particularly evident in relation to the **physicality of Gaelic Football and Hurling**, even in the **modified formats** developed as part of the programme. Many coaches were **concerned about how best to approach inclusion** without compromising player safety or **overly restricting the natural flow of the game**.

However, in practice, these fears were **rarely justified**. Participants often **embraced the physical elements of the sport** and **wanted to be treated like any other player**, reinforcing the importance of **respect, challenge, and authenticity in coaching**.

“So, he went in very hard, pushed them a lot, and was expecting them not to want him after—but actually, they did want him back to coach. They commented that he was one of the first people to treat them as they wanted to be, regardless of disability.”

Club Games For ALL Co-ordinator

“I mean, when we first started off with wheelchair hurling, you know, everyone was treating them like China dolls—but my goodness, they smash into each other and everything.”

Club Coach

These reflections highlight how **assumptions about participants’ abilities** can sometimes lead to **overprotective approaches**, which may not always be necessary. The feedback from coaches suggests that **providing equal opportunities to engage fully in the sport—while ensuring appropriate adaptations—enhances both participation and enjoyment** for players.

A Need for Structured Support

At a fundamental level, many interviewees expressed an expectation that the **GAA would have established structured formats** for delivering *GAA For ALL* before its rollout, rather than allowing the programme to **develop organically at the club level**. As a result, some coaches felt they **lacked clear guidance and support**, leading to **uncertainty and hesitation** in how best to deliver inclusive activities.

“I would say the main barrier is the lack of knowledge and expertise, and there is a fear factor. There are a lot of people out there who have been coaching for 10, 20 years. But once you mention the word ‘disabilities,’ fear descends on them basically.”

Club Games For ALL Co-ordinator

At the **local level**, the success of *GAA For ALL* is heavily dependent on **volunteers**, many of whom have some familiarity with **inclusive practices** from their professional backgrounds. However, a **significant proportion** do not, highlighting that **working with disabled individuals requires specific skills and expertise**. The future growth of the programme will **rely on attracting and retaining volunteers** who possess the **right skills, attitude, and confidence** to deliver inclusive coaching.

“But if you’re going to make it a better service, then there needs to be more people on the ground. And I know we’re a volunteer-led organisation, and it’d be great if we could identify volunteers in the community to go and do that type of work. But it’s specialist work, and not all volunteers are cut out to do it.”

Provincial Council Representative

Given the **unique needs of each participant**, it is inevitable that **programme delivery will vary between clubs**. One of the key learning points from *GAA For ALL* is that **no two participants are alike**, meaning that **coaching and support must be tailored** to individual needs.

“Different children need different support. Some of them need an SNA with them. Some of them don’t need an SNA, but they need coaches with them. ... And those coaches need senior coaches to keep shape on the activities. The different player profiles need different levels of support.”

Club Games For ALL Co-ordinator





INTEGRATION INTO MAINSTREAM ACTIVITIES

One of the most significant achievements of *GAA For ALL* is the progress made in **integrating players with physical and learning disabilities** into mainstream clubs. Interviews with club representatives highlighted multiple examples of individuals who were once on the sidelines as enthusiastic supporters of their club's senior teams but, through *GAA For ALL*, found a way to actively participate as players.

Providing Opportunities for Participation

The programme has given these individuals a **more prominent role within their clubs**, allowing them to **express their passion for Gaelic games through physical participation**. For some, this was their **first-ever opportunity** to take part in sport, and in many cases, it has had a **transformative impact** on their quality of life and the **community around them**.

"I really believe that every kid who comes to a club needs to be attached to a mainstream club, because putting all the children with a disability on one side of the pitch for one hour is not inclusive. That's exclusion. So, I really believe that every kid needs to be attached to a mainstream club."

Parent Volunteer

Achieving full integration remains a **work in progress**. While some players with **physical and learning disabilities** have been successfully included in **mainstream teams and competitions**, this is not always possible. **Wheelchair users and ambulant players**, for example, require different forms of adaptation, and in some cases, a **single playing format may not be practical**.

Strengthening Community Atmosphere

Nevertheless, the **sense of inclusion and acceptance** that *GAA For ALL* fosters has **positively influenced** the wider Gaelic games community. Some clubs have reported that younger mainstream players have begun **interacting naturally** with *GAA For ALL* participants, strengthening the **community atmosphere** within clubs.

"So, all the younger kids up to 12 are there, but we run it at slightly different times. Academy finishes before our session, but at the end of the Academy, a lot of them come to our section of the pitch because we're kind of the bright, colourful section and we aren't the competitive section. They organically come over, kick a ball, and interact with our kids. There's a real positive vibe within the club when that happens. We've also brought in other volunteers who wouldn't normally come in to volunteer with the GAA. From our point of view, that's been hugely successful."

Parent Volunteer





Expanding Skills and Perspectives

Coaches and match officials engaging with *GAA For ALL* have also reported **unexpected personal benefits**. Many coaches, working with individuals with disabilities for the first time, have been **challenged to adapt their coaching techniques**, leading to an **expanded skill set and a new perspective on inclusion in sport**.

“Some say it’s the best part of their week. I’ve come across a lot of people who are in high-end professional careers who don’t feel they’re making a huge contribution to society. But being involved in the All Stars programme gives them that feeling of making a difference. They leave on a Friday evening in a much better space, and for some of them, it’s their favourite part of the week.”

Charitable Partner Representative

Ensuring Visibility and Inclusion

A key challenge in sustaining *GAA For ALL* within mainstream clubs is **securing equal access to facilities and training slots**. Clubs often prioritise **facilities for competitive teams** whose membership fees contribute to running costs. However, some clubs have **successfully integrated *GAA For ALL* into their regular schedule**, ensuring visibility and equal status within the club community.

“In fairness to them, the club has assigned us a slot at 6:00 PM on a Friday evening—the same time as all the other underage coaching activity in the club. So, we are prioritised for the use of that facility, and if we are there alongside everybody else, we’re completely visible. Sometimes it’s difficult to show that All Stars is part of the community, but if we’re there at the same time as everyone else and not just on a wet Monday night when nobody else wants the pitch, then we’re being prioritised and truly included.”

Parent Volunteer



LEADERSHIP IN GAA FOR ALL

When *GAA For ALL* was first established under the Healthy Clubs programme, it was seen as a **natural fit**, with the primary goal of improving the physical and mental well-being of individuals with physical and learning disabilities through participation in Gaelic games. However, as the programme has grown, so too have the expectations of participants and their carers. Simply providing a venue, facilitators, and equipment is no longer enough, there is now a demand for greater structure, skill development, and clear progression pathways.

From the **GAA's perspective**, there is a growing recognition that **coaching practices and skill development programmes tailored to *GAA For ALL*** need further development. This has led some within the Association to question whether the programme's current **alignment with Healthy Clubs** is still the most appropriate fit.

"I think one of the challenges at the minute is this emergence of health and wellness within the association and what they see their role as. I just think they need to leave coaching and games development to coaching and games development, and not health and wellness. Just because someone has a disability doesn't mean they're unhealthy. You know, so they should sit within coaching and games."

Provincial Council Representative

Need for Consistency and Structure

A lack of **standardised coaching and activity formats** has led to **significant variations** in how *GAA For ALL* is delivered at different clubs. With increasing participation levels, the need for **consistency and structure** is becoming **more urgent**.

"It's completely ad hoc. What's happening in one club is totally unrelated to what's happening in another club, and that's the biggest problem. Like, All Stars has grown now to a level that I would argue Croke Park is not aware of. I don't believe Croke Park knows how many clubs are doing All Stars."

Provincial Council Representative

Some clubs have **integrated structured coaching elements**, ensuring that participants **develop fundamental Gaelic games skills**, while others continue to focus **primarily on sensory and free play**. This inconsistency highlights the need for **clearer guidance from the GAA on programme structure, coaching content, and long-term development pathways**.

"We run our All Stars programme the same as any other team in the club. We teach the hop, solo, and handpass skills and play matches modified to suit the needs of the kids. From speaking with other coaches around [the county], we've found that this isn't how other clubs run their programs, as they focus more on sensory and free play."

*Club *GAA For ALL* Co-ordinator*

Recognising Leadership and Programme Development

The **GAA's lead officer for *GAA For ALL*** was widely praised by interviewees for her **dedication and impact** on the programme's development. Many stakeholders felt that her role should be **further supported and resourced** to allow for the **continued growth and professionalisation** of the initiative.

"Well, now that you say, [the GAA lead] is just one person, she's massive. She's like, she's huge. She's our main point of contact, to be honest with you, yeah. I look at it this way—after [the GAA lead], it's not the GAA, it's the sports partnership. I actually know who to turn to."

*Club *GAA For ALL* Co-ordinator*





SUPPORT IN DELIVERING GAA FOR ALL

As a **volunteer-led initiative**, *GAA For ALL* relies on club representatives to drive its **delivery and success**. However, many volunteers **expect the GAA to take a stronger leadership role** in providing **guidance, training, and resources** to support them in running the programme. Some club representatives expressed frustration at having to **figure out the programme's delivery on their own**, highlighting the need for a **more structured approach to support and development**.

"This [All Stars] succeeds because people like us make it work. The GAA outside of All Stars succeeds because the GAA makes it work. The GAA does not back this in a way that makes it work. It's lacking an overarching structure where funding models are there. There's a need for clarity around how that's going to happen... But people like me and [my colleague] are making All Stars work."

Club GAA For ALL Co-ordinator

Informal Peer Networks and the Need for a Formal Support Structure

As *GAA For ALL* expands, informal **networks of coaches** have developed **organically through personal connections**, enabling knowledge-sharing at the local level. While beneficial, these **peer networks have limitations** in terms of **scale, reach, and consistency**. Many club coaches have highlighted the need for a **more formal structure**—particularly for **handling parental concerns, programme delivery, and troubleshooting challenges**.

"I feel a lot of it is left to me. If there are concerns or worries, I'd love to be able to ring someone at Croke Park and ask, 'Oh, this happened—what should I have done?' Or 'I have this issue with the parents—what should I say?'"

Club Coach

Challenges in Coaching Adaptation and Funding Needs

A key challenge facing clubs is the **lack of agreed formats** for coaching individuals with **different abilities, physical disabilities, and learning disabilities**. Some **larger clubs** have been able to **draw on volunteers with expertise in disability sports coaching**, often linked to **professional backgrounds in teaching or health and social care**. Others have had to **rely on external specialists**, but **financial constraints** make this an unsustainable approach.

The ideal long-term solution would be to **develop in-house capacity within clubs**, ensuring that **coaches are equipped** with the necessary skills to deliver the programme effectively.

Beyond coaching and development, clubs require **funding for equipment, pitch access, and specialist facilities**. Certain elements of *GAA For ALL*, such as **Wheelchair Hurling/Camogie**, require **significant financial investment**, and without additional funding, the costs could become **prohibitive for clubs**.

"Now, the wheelchair side of it is quite expensive to run. If you head off to Munster for an interprovincial game and you're booking hotels for the night, and you're looking for disability-accessible rooms, it becomes quite costly. We have been very lucky to have funding from a donor for many years, but we're still talking about at least £3,000 for accommodation and probably another £4,000 in expenses and travel per tournament."

Provincial Council Representative



Volunteer Recruitment, Training, and Capacity Building

A major area of development identified by clubs is **building volunteer capacity**, both in **numbers** and in **skills development**. While having **willing volunteers** is crucial, it is equally important that they have a **clear understanding of how to support individuals with physical and learning disabilities**.

Many current volunteers **became involved due to personal connections**, often **supporting a close family member**. While this has helped build a strong foundation, the programme's **long-term success** will depend on **attracting and training a broader volunteer base**.

“A big first question I’m always asked by volunteers is: ‘Will I be able to do it?’ You know, they’re nervous. We could have several workshops in the GAA for mainstream sport all across the country to upskill coaches on children with additional needs. We could do webinars on autism, dyspraxia, attention deficit disorder—just little tools, little tricks to help coaches manage different needs. There are loads of educators out there who are experts in that field.”

Charitable Partner Representative

Wider Social and Emotional Impact

Beyond physical activity, *GAA For ALL* has had a **substantial impact** on participants' **mental well-being, communication skills, and social engagement**. Coaches and parents observed that **children involved in the programme** have shown:

- Improved behaviour and motivation in school.
- Increased confidence in social settings.
- Expanded friendship circles through club involvement.

This **positive impact** extends to **carers and parents**, who **benefit from informal support networks** that develop naturally through club interactions.

“If you have a child with additional needs and your neighbour’s child doesn’t, you don’t always have that connection. But when parents meet at GAA For ALL, they develop relationships with people who are going through similar challenges. Their children train together, they connect, and they build a support system. This programme brings people into the community who otherwise might not have been involved”.

Club Coach

The Role of Special Schools

For many families, *GAA For ALL* represents their **first experience of Gaelic games and community sport**. Their continued engagement is a direct result of **positive experiences**, reinforcing the importance of **strong volunteer support structures**.

For the programme to **grow sustainably**, some stakeholders believe **greater outreach is needed**—particularly in **special schools** where children with additional needs may have **limited access to physical activity opportunities**.

“We would love to see more coaches. I’d love to see coaches going into special schools and providing a programme there. If you were to ask me what one thing the GAA could do, I’d say: go to special schools across the country and give them some support with that.”

Charitable Partner Representative

CONCLUSION

This concluding section reflects on the key challenges and opportunities associated with the *GAA For ALL* programme. It highlights the importance of structured pathways, sustained support, and clear leadership from the GAA to foster long-term success.

By addressing current gaps in delivery and ensuring consistent standards across clubs, the GAA can **enhance the programme's impact and strengthen its alignment with broader inclusion and development goals** for Gaelic games.

Since its establishment, *GAA For ALL* has provided **a vital opportunity for individuals with physical and learning disabilities to participate in Gaelic Games**. The programme has positively influenced **players, coaches, and volunteers**, strengthened community connections and promoting inclusivity within clubs. However, **the absence of standardised structures** has led to **variation in programme delivery**, with some clubs operating in isolation due to a lack of formal guidance and support.

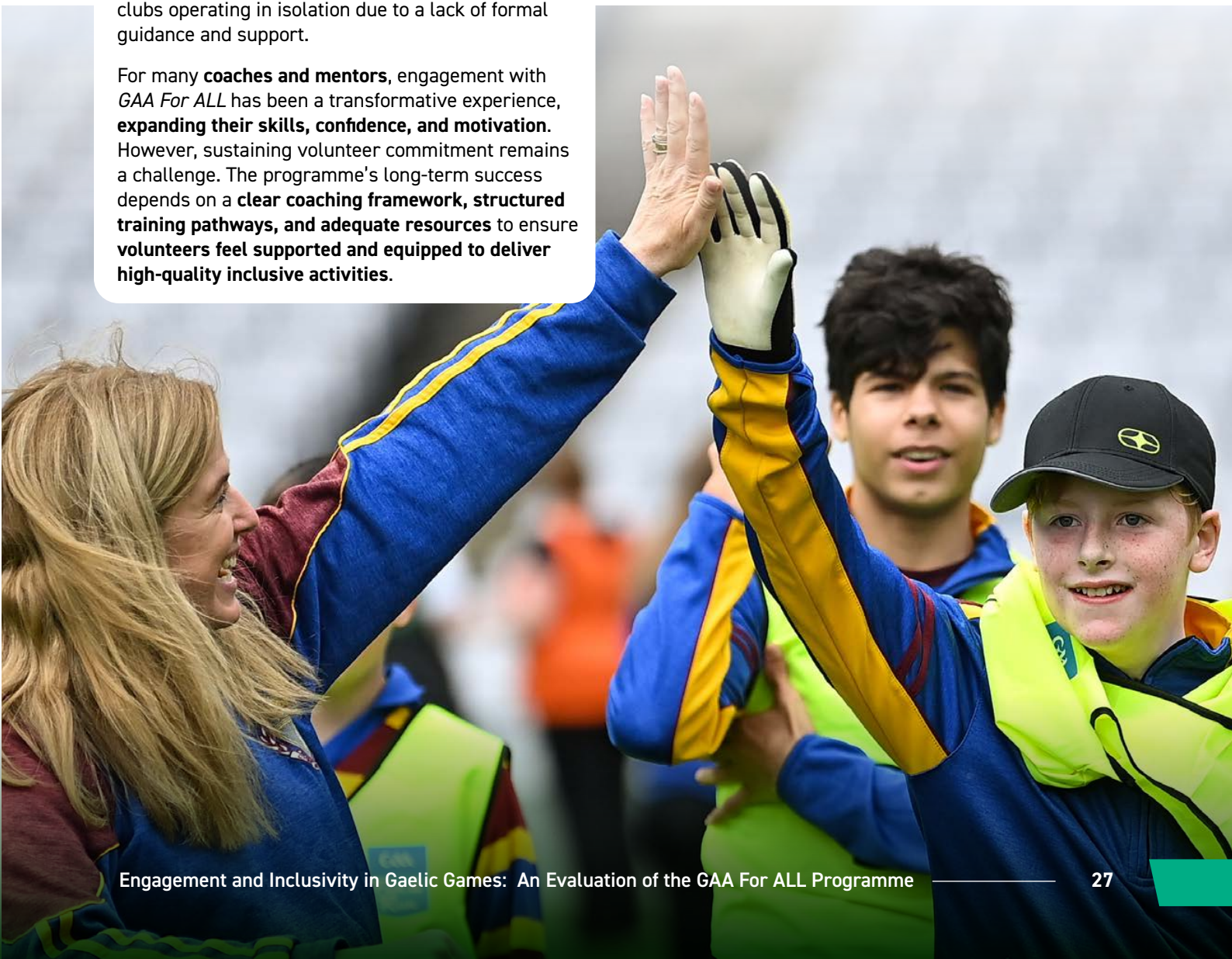
For many **coaches and mentors**, engagement with *GAA For ALL* has been a transformative experience, **expanding their skills, confidence, and motivation**. However, sustaining volunteer commitment remains a challenge. The programme's long-term success depends on a **clear coaching framework, structured training pathways, and adequate resources** to ensure **volunteers feel supported and equipped to deliver high-quality inclusive activities**.

The GAA's Role in Strengthening the Programme

To **maximise the reach and impact of *GAA For ALL***, the GAA must provide:

1. A clearly defined **structure and purpose** for the programme
2. **Standardised training and development** opportunities for coaches and mentors
3. **Stronger leadership and ongoing support** at club, county, and provincial levels
4. A **long-term strategy** for funding, facilities, and specialist coaching provision

By strengthening these key areas, *GAA For ALL* **can continue to grow, creating a more inclusive and sustainable model for participation in Gaelic games**. The commitment of **clubs, volunteers, and the wider GAA community** has been instrumental in the programme's success to date, and with enhanced leadership and strategic development, **the programme's long-term future looks promising**.



SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

This section summarises the key findings from the evaluation of the *GAA For ALL* programme, integrating quantitative survey data with qualitative insights from participant interviews. The findings highlight the programme's successes, challenges, and areas for improvement, offering a comprehensive understanding of its impact on coaches, mentors, and the wider Gaelic games community.

Quantitative Survey

Family Motivation

Coaches were primarily motivated to engage with *GAA For ALL* to support family members with disabilities.

Common Conditions

The most frequently identified conditions among participants were **Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)** and **Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)**.

Most Popular Activities

All Star Inclusive Clubs were the most commonly delivered initiative, provided by **69% of participating clubs**.

Mentorship Development

Fewer than half of the surveyed coaches had **previously had a mentor**, but **83% now consider themselves mentors**, highlighting the programme's role in fostering leadership.

Training and Development

More than **three-quarters** of all coaches involved undertook **training specific to their role** in *GAA For ALL*.

Satisfaction with Support

Coaches expressed **high levels of satisfaction** with their **training and support**, particularly regarding their **skill development**.



Growth of Coaching Networks

The development of **local coaching networks** was recognised as a **positive outcome** of *GAA For ALL*.

Confidence in Inclusion

Participation in *GAA For ALL* increased coaches' **confidence in supporting and involving people with disabilities** in sport and physical activity.

Independent Engagement

Coaches largely felt that their **decision to engage** with *GAA For ALL* was **self-driven** but acknowledged a **reliance on other coaches for support and guidance**.

Opportunities for Personal Development

Most coaches involved in *GAA For ALL* took advantage of **further learning and coaching opportunities**.

Reliance on Local Networks

Coaches relied more on **local support networks** rather than engaging with **national workshops and events**.

Limited Engagement with National Inclusion Fitness Week

While recognising its value, only a **small proportion of coaches actively participated** in **National Inclusion Fitness Week**.



Qualitative Themes

Balancing Competition and Inclusion

Coaches recognised the need to **de-emphasise competition** in certain activities to **create an inclusive atmosphere**. However, some expressed **nervousness** about **how best to implement this** while maintaining the identity of Gaelic games.

Progress in Integration

GAA For ALL has made significant strides in integrating **participants with physical and learning disabilities** into **GAA clubs**. However, **inconsistencies in capacity and capability** have limited its **wider implementation**.

Importance of Leadership

The **leadership of the GAA** is **crucial** for ensuring the **continued success and consistency** of **GAA For ALL**. While **staff are well-regarded**, club representatives emphasised the **need for structured activity formats** to provide **greater consistency** in programme delivery.

Resource Disparities Between Clubs

Larger clubs with **more volunteers** and **stronger financial resources** can hire **specialist coaches** and provide **better facilities**. However, the **financial costs of specialised equipment, coaching, and accommodation** can be a barrier for many clubs.

Organic Growth of Support Networks

Local **support networks** have developed **informally**, but many **volunteers face barriers**—such as **balancing commitments, lack of formal guidance, and financial constraints**—which may limit their **continued engagement**.

Sustainability of the Programme

While interviewees generally **believe that clubs have the capacity to sustain GAA For ALL in the short to medium term**, the **long-term sustainability** of the programme will depend on **structured support, training pathways, and continued investment**.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

This section presents key policy implications and strategic recommendations based on the evaluation of the *GAA For ALL* programme. Drawing on both quantitative and qualitative findings, it highlights areas for improvement and offers actionable steps to enhance programme delivery, foster inclusivity, and ensure long-term sustainability. These recommendations aim to strengthen the *GAA For ALL* initiative, support volunteer engagement, and align the programme with broader strategic objectives for Gaelic games and inclusion in sport.

Table 4: Policy implications and recommendations from 'Quantitative' results

Theme	Enhance Family and Community Engagement
Policy Implications	<i>Family involvement is a significant motivator for participation, yet the data indicates that only a minority of coaches and mentors have disabled children, and overall engagement in national events is low.</i>
Recommendations	<p>Strengthen Family Outreach: Develop targeted initiatives to increase awareness and participation among families with disabled children. This could include family-focused events or workshops.</p> <p>Promote Community Events: Increase promotion and accessibility of national events like the National Coaching & Games Development Conference and GAA National Inclusion Fitness Day to foster a sense of community and shared purpose.</p>
Theme	Expand and Diversify Training Programmes
Policy Implications	<i>While most coaches have received training, there is a notable proportion of coaches who feel unsupported, and the existing training may not cover all aspects of inclusivity.</i>
Recommendations	<p>Comprehensive Training Modules: Introduce more specialised training modules, focusing on underrepresented conditions (e.g., visual impairments, muscular dystrophy) to ensure all disabilities are adequately supported.</p> <p>Continuous Professional Development: Establish ongoing professional development opportunities, such as refresher courses and advanced workshops, to keep coaches updated on best practices.</p>
Theme	Increase Accessibility of Physical Disability Programmes
Policy Implications	<i>The participation of individuals with specific physical disabilities is lower compared to those with learning disabilities.</i>
Recommendations	<p>Targeted Recruitment: Launch targeted recruitment campaigns to engage participants with physical disabilities, particularly in areas like wheelchair hurling and camogie.</p> <p>Strengthen Networks: Formalise peer networks through county, provincial or national forums to promote knowledge-sharing and ongoing support for coaches and mentors.</p>

Theme	Facilitate Coach and Volunteer Retention through enhanced mentorship and support systems
Policy Implications	<p><i>Coaches and mentors are volunteers who must balance their involvement with other commitments, leading to potential burnout or attrition.</i></p> <p><i>Although many coaches have taken on mentoring roles, less than half had initially benefitted from mentorship themselves.</i></p>
Recommendations	<p>Flexible Engagement Models:</p> <p>Introduce more flexible engagement models that allow coaches to contribute in ways that fit their schedules, such as through short-term or event-based volunteering.</p> <p>Recognition and Incentives:</p> <p>Implement a system of recognition (e.g., awards, public acknowledgments) and incentives (e.g., small stipends, free training) to reward and retain committed volunteers.</p>
Theme	Enhance Data Collection and Feedback Mechanisms
Policy Implications	<i>While the survey provides valuable insights, gaps remain in understanding the full scope of participant needs and programme effectiveness.</i>
Recommendations	<p>Routine Collection of Monitoring Data:</p> <p>Integrate participation data collection into the Foireann system to improve the quality of programme monitoring information.</p> <p>Regular Surveys and Feedback:</p> <p>Conduct regular surveys to gather feedback from coaches, participants, and their families. Use this data to continually refine and improve the programme.</p> <p>Case Studies and Best Practices:</p> <p>Document and share successful case studies and best practices from different clubs to inspire and guide others.</p> <p>Mentorship Programmes:</p> <p>Implement a formal mentorship programme that pairs experienced mentors with new coaches to provide consistent guidance and support.</p> <p>Peer Support Networks:</p> <p>Create local and regional peer support networks where coaches can share experiences, challenges, and solutions.</p> <p>Resource-sharing Initiatives:</p> <p>Develop resource-sharing policies that allow clubs to pool equipment and expertise, reducing the financial burden on individual clubs and promoting collaboration.</p>
Theme	Monitoring and Evaluation
Policy Implications	<p><i>Ongoing monitoring and evaluation are essential to ensure that the GAA For ALL programme continues to meet the needs of participants and evolves based on feedback and changing circumstances.</i></p> <p><i>Policies should include mechanisms for regular assessment and reporting on the programme's outcomes.</i></p>
Recommendations	<p>Regular Reviews:</p> <p>Implement regular reviews of the GAA For ALL programme to assess its effectiveness, identify areas for improvement, and ensure that it meets its objectives. These audits should include feedback from participants, coaches, and volunteers.</p> <p>Evidence Based Policy Adjustments:</p> <p>Use the data collected from programme evaluations to make informed adjustments to policies and practices, ensuring that the programme remains responsive to the needs of its participants.</p>

Table 5: Policy implications and recommendations from 'Qualitative' results

Theme	Inclusion and Competition
Policy Implications	<p><i>The tension between maintaining the competitive nature of Gaelic games and ensuring inclusivity for participants with disabilities needs to be addressed at a policy level.</i></p> <p><i>Policies should promote an inclusive environment where competition is balanced with participation and personal development.</i></p>
Recommendations	<p>Define an Inclusive Competition Framework: Develop a policy framework that allows for tiered levels of competition within the GAA For ALL programme, catering to different abilities. This could involve creating separate competitive divisions or emphasising non-competitive, fun-focused events.</p> <p>Guidance for Coaches: Introduce guidelines that help coaches balance competition and inclusion, ensuring that all participants can engage meaningfully without the pressure of high-stakes competition.</p>
Theme	Integration of Players with Disabilities
Policy Implications	<p><i>Successful integration of players with disabilities into mainstream clubs requires consistent policies that ensure equitable access and participation across all clubs.</i></p> <p><i>Integration should be supported by policies that provide clear guidelines and resources for clubs to adapt their activities to accommodate diverse needs.</i></p>
Recommendations	<p>Integration Policies: Implement standardised policies across all clubs that mandate the inclusion of players with disabilities in regular club activities. These policies should outline best practices for integrating players with different needs.</p> <p>Incentives for Inclusive Practices: Introduce incentives for clubs that demonstrate successful integration of players with disabilities, such as additional funding or recognition through awards.</p>
Theme	Leadership and Governance
Policy Implications	<p><i>The variability in the implementation of the GAA For ALL programme across different clubs/counties highlights the need for stronger leadership and governance.</i></p> <p><i>There is a need for a centralised approach to ensure consistency in coaching practices and the standardisation of game formats.</i></p> <p><i>The GAA has a significant role to play in communicating the successes of the programme to date and potential for future growth.</i></p>
Recommendations	<p>Centralised Programme Governance: Establish a centralised governance structure within the GAA to oversee the GAA For ALL programme. This could involve creating a dedicated leadership team responsible for developing and enforcing policies, providing support to clubs, and monitoring program outcomes.</p> <p>Standardised Training and Development: Develop a standardised training programme for coaches and volunteers that focuses on the specific needs of the GAA For ALL participants. This training should be mandatory and regularly updated.</p> <p>Communication: Develop public relations messaging which recognises the importance of Gaelic games offerings in the sphere of disability sport and physical activity.</p>



Theme	Support Clubs and Volunteers with Sustainable Funding and Resource Allocation
Policy Implications	<p><i>The sustainability of the GAA For ALL programme is heavily reliant on volunteers, yet there is a significant need for more structured support and resources to empower them.</i></p> <p><i>Policies should ensure that volunteers are adequately supported in terms of training, resources, and guidance.</i></p> <p><i>The financial sustainability of the GAA For ALL programme is crucial, particularly as it expands. Without adequate funding, the programme risks being unsustainable in the long term.</i></p> <p><i>Policies should prioritise the allocation of resources to ensure that all clubs can participate in and sustain the programme.</i></p>
Recommendations	<p>Formalised Support Networks: Create formalised support networks for volunteers, including regional coordinators, regular training sessions, and a dedicated helpline or online platform for advice and support.</p> <p>Allocation of Funding and Resources to Clubs: Develop policies that allocate specific funding to clubs for the GAA For ALL programme. This funding should cover training, equipment, facilities, and other necessary resources to ensure the programme's success.</p> <p>Long-term Funding Strategies: Implement long-term funding strategies that include seeking government grants (North and South), partnerships with businesses, and community fundraising initiatives. Establish a dedicated fund within the GAA for the GAA For ALL programme.</p>

NEXT STEPS

These policy recommendations provide a clear roadmap for enhancing the impact, inclusivity, and sustainability of *GAA For ALL*.

The programme has made significant strides in fostering inclusion, but addressing challenges related to competition, resource allocation, and volunteer engagement is essential for maximising its long-term success. With the right policies in place, *GAA For ALL* can continue to grow, empowering communities and enriching the lives of participants across Ireland.

By strengthening leadership, standardising training, expanding community outreach, and securing long-term funding, the GAA can ensure that all individuals, regardless of ability, have equal opportunities to participate in Gaelic games.





Appendix 1 – Qualitative Interview Question Schedule

QUESTIONS

Ice-breaker: To get things started, tell us a bit about yourself

- 1) **What do you enjoy most about being involved in Gaelic games?**
 - a. Fun, Enjoyment
 - b. Friendship
- 2) **How did you get involved in the design, development and/or implementation of the GAA For ALL programme?**
 - a. I was asked by a senior official and/or member of staff
 - b. I volunteered my time/input
- 3) **Why did you decide to get involved?**
 - a. Gaelic Games are something that I'm extremely passionate about
 - b. Something needed to be done to address the area
 - c. Funding and support was available.
- 4) **In your opinion, why was the GAA For ALL programme needed?**
 - It's an area of work that needs urgent attention by the Association.
- 5) **Did you consider any relevant evidence and/or information that supported the need for the GAA For ALL programme?**
 - a. If so, can you summarise what this looked like? – e.g., membership/participation data, research reports, policy papers from staff?
- 6) **From your perspective, what was the overall aim, objectives and desired outputs and outcomes of the GAA For ALL programme? How were these discussed and agreed?**
 - Planning workshop with staff, volunteers etc
 - Programme information prepared by staff for consideration/approval
- 7) **How would you describe the support you received from the Association to design, develop and/or implement the GAA For ALL programme?**
 - Did you receive any specific training on policy and programme design, development and/or implementation?
- 8) **What would you consider to be the key challenges that you had to face when designing, developing and/or implementing the GAA For ALL programme?**
 - a. Lack of support
 - b. Lack of training in policy and programme design/development etc
 - c. Not enough time to consider relevant/related evidence/data
 - d. Lack of a monitoring, measurement and reporting framework



Engagement and Inclusivity in Gaelic Games:

An Evaluation of the **GAA For ALL** **PROGRAMME**



SPÓRT ÉIREANN
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