



HEALTHY CLUB PROJECT
FAQS



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1. What is the GAA Healthy Club Project (HCP)?

The Healthy Club project is a new way of looking at health in the context of the GAA. It features a unique partnership between the GAA and the HSE. To help it achieve in its ambition to make Ireland a healthier, happier, more connected place, it is kindly supported by Irish Life through a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) investment for three years (2015-2017).

2. What is the aim of the HCP?

The Healthy Club project aims to help GAA clubs explore how they support the holistic health of their members and the communities they serve. GAA clubs already contribute to the health and wellbeing of their members by providing opportunities to develop their physical, social, emotional, and psychological health.

The HCP aims to help GAA clubs identify what they are already doing well, identify areas where they can or would like to improve, and empower them to ensure that everyone who engages with their club benefits from the experience in a health-enhancing way, be they players, officers, coaches, parents, supporters, or members of their local community.

The healthy club model, which is based on best national and international practice, also aims to embed a healthy philosophy in a club while integrating health into the day-to-day club activities in a sustainable way. It also aims to place the local GAA club at the heart of the community, making it a beacon for health in the locale.

3. What did Phase 1 involve?

In 2013 over 60 clubs submitted an expression of interest form to take part in phase 1 of the healthy club project. A scoring system with specific criteria was used to select the participating clubs. Phase 1 involved 18 clubs, four from each province plus two mentoring clubs, and ran from March 2013 to July 2015. Clubs met provincially every 6 to 8 weeks to use operational group meetings as a platform to receive guidance, support and direction from a Healthy Club Project Co-ordinator, local HSE and LSP representatives. Each club was guided through the healthy club model which involved key working areas such as project team set up, consultation assessments, action plan development and evaluation process. Through the healthy club model the healthy club framework was implemented. The framework is broken down into the following pillars, governance, environment, partnerships and programmes. This framework offered clubs a structure that highlighted existing areas of competencies while identifying gaps and new areas to target.

Phase 1 was independently evaluated by a team from Waterford IT, which was launched on November 30th 2015. – Full report can be read and downloaded on the website.

4. What is the timeline for Phase 2?

Phase 2 will run for an 18 month cycle. The following dates have been identified as key milestones and a desirable timeframe for the commencement and completion of Phase 2.

- **November 2015:** Launch of the Healthy Club Phase 1 evaluation report and expression of interest opens to all GAA clubs who want to participate in Phase 2.
- **January 2016:** Clubs will be notified if they were selected as one of the 60 clubs participating in Phase 2. Unsuccessful clubs will also be notified.
- **February 2016:** Commencement of Phase 2 for participating clubs. An orientation day for selected clubs was held in Croke Park. This will inform the participating clubs regarding the process involved in Phase 2.



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- **June/August 2017:** Completion of Phase 2 for participating clubs.
- **December 2017:** Phase 2 evaluation report by Waterford IT.

5. What will Phase 2 involve for participating clubs?

It will involve an 18 month (February 2016 to July/August 2017) official commitment from each club to participate for the full duration of Phase 2. Upon agreement to the 'readiness to change' form the club will first establish a project team who will be the main driven force for the project within the club and wider community. Commitment will require clubs to attend a maximum of two national and two provincial orientation/development meetings over the 18 month cycle. Participating clubs are required to meet a set of criteria (Healthy Club Recognition Criteria) in order to be recognised as an official "Healthy Club". This is the minimum standard that a club needs to meet in order to be accredited. Throughout the 18 month cycle there will be an evaluation element which participating clubs will be required to adhere to, in order to capture the learnings from Phase 2.

6. What clubs are participating in Phase 2?

There are 60 clubs participating in the project, at least one from each county in Ireland representing the full GAA spectrum.

Club Name	County	Province
Mount Leinster Rangers GAA Club	Carlow	Leinster
Clara GAA Club	Kilkenny	Leinster
Dromard GAA Club	Longford	Leinster
Castletown Liam Mellows GAA Club	Wexford	Leinster
St. John's Volunteers GAA Club*	Wexford	Leinster
St. Kevin's GAA Club	Louth	Leinster
Bray Emmets GAA Club	Wicklow	Leinster
Annacurra GAA Club*	Wicklow	Leinster
St. Loman's Mullingar GAA Club	Westmeath	Leinster
Ballynacgarry GAA Club	Westmeath	Leinster
Tubber GAA Club	Offaly	Leinster
Clonad GAA Club	Laois	Leinster
Kilmacud Crokes GAA Club	Dublin	Leinster
Raheny GAA Club	Dublin	Leinster
Good Counsel GAA Club	Dublin	Leinster
Craobh Chiarain GAA Club	Dublin	Leinster
Thomas Davis GAA Club*	Dublin	Leinster
Castlemitchell GAA Club	Kildare	Leinster
Kiltale GAA Club	Meath	Leinster
St. Colmcille's GAA Club*	Meath	Leinster



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Club Name	County	Province
Killeagh GAA Club	Cork	Munster
Castlehaven GAA Club	Cork	Munster
St. Finbarr's Hurling & Football Club*	Cork	Munster
Midleton GAA Club*	Cork	Munster
JK Bracken's GAA Club	Tipperary	Munster
Fr. Sheehy GAA Club	Tipperary	Munster
Nenagh Éire Óg GAA Club*	Tipperary	Munster
Na Piarasigh GAA Club	Limerick	Munster
Mungret's St. Pauls GAA Club*	Limerick	Munster
Parteen GAA Club	Clare	Munster
Tralee Parnell's Hurling Club	Kerry	Munster
Beaufort GAA Club*	Kerry	Munster
Brickey Rangers	Waterford	Munster

Club Name	County	Province
An Cáislean Glas Cumann Naomh Padraig GAA Club	Tyrone	Ulster
Omagh, St. Enda's GAA Club	Tyrone	Ulster
Gaeil Truicha (Emyvale) GAA Club	Monaghan	Ulster
St. Tiernach's, Clones GAA Club	Monaghan	Ulster
Castleblayney Faughs GAA Club*	Monaghan	Ulster
Derrygonnelly Harps GAA Club	Fermanagh	Ulster
Erne Gaels GAC Belleek GAA Club	Fermanagh	Ulster
Cumann Chluain Daimh (Clonduff) GAA Club	Down	Ulster
St. Peter's Warrenpoint GAA Club*	Down	Ulster
St. Johns Drumnaquoile GAA Club*	Down	Ulster
Michael Davitt GAA Club	Derry	Ulster
Killygarry GAA Club	Cavan	Ulster
Cavan Gaels GAA Club	Cavan	Ulster
St Joseph's Glenavy GAA Club	Antrim	Ulster
St. Mary's Rasharkin GAA Club*	Antrim	Ulster
Naomh Mochua Derrynoose GAA Club	Armagh	Ulster
Culloville Blues GAA Club*	Armagh	Ulster
St Mary's, Convoy GAA Club	Donegal	Ulster
Naomh Muire, Kincasslagh GAA Club	Donegal	Ulster



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Club Name	County	Province
Ballindeereen GAA Club	Galway	Connaught
Melvin Gaels GAA Club	Leitrim	Connaught
Aghamore GAA Club	Mayo	Connaught
Achill GAA Club	Mayo	Connaught
St. Michael's GAA Club	Sligo	Connaught
Eastern Harps GAA Club*	Sligo	Connaught
St. Aidan's GAA Club	Roscommon	Connaught
Oran GAA Club*	Roscommon	Connaught

7. How were Phase 2 be clubs selected?

Initially Phase 2 clubs were asked to submit an expression of interest form which aimed to get an overview of what clubs are already doing in the space of health and wellbeing, what capacity the club has to do more work in this space and why the club wants to get involved in the Healthy Club project or clubs who haven't had the opportunity to get involved yet. A scoring system was used to identify clubs who are most suitable for the project considering the above points but also considering the demographics of the club and the geographical location ensuring there is one Phase 2 Healthy Club in each county. Phase 1 clubs automatically continued in the project meaning that there is a total of 60 active Healthy Clubs in total.

8. What are the plans for Phase 3?

Phase 2 of the Healthy Club project will be completed in the summer months 2017 and the independent evaluation report by WIT will be published in December 2017 offering further recommendations and learnings. Further Phases will then open on a cyclical basis in 2018 and interested clubs will be invited to apply via the Healthy Club online portal.

9. Why should a club get involved?

The learnings from Phase 1 provides evident based rationale on why a club should get involved in Phase 2. Even though clubs met and overcame challenges along the way such as funding, club capacity and communication the positive impact the project had on fully committed clubs was ground breaking. Over the duration of the project membership numbers increased while there was also improvements on the overall health promotion orientation of clubs. Specific domains relating to club policy, practice and both the physical and cultural environment were all improved. Both club and community representatives remarked on the positive impact the HCP had on their attitudes to health, as well as on engagement with club activities and health behaviours. Building on from Phase 1 into Phase 2 clubs will be provided with best practice health promotion criteria, opportunity to link the local community with the club and get professional advice from local HSE and LSP representatives. They will also get exclusive access to health promoting resources and in some cases additional opportunities to open up funding avenues. By setting a place for health promotion in club activities the club are developing a positive environment for the next generation to come.

10. What are the benefits and opportunities for Healthy Clubs?

From the evaluation of Phase 1 of the Healthy Clubs Project the following benefits and opportunities were cited as:

- Exclusive access to Healthy Club resources



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- Increase in membership
- Improvements in the health promoting activities of clubs specifically with club policy, practice and the club environment (both physical and cultural).
- Changes in attitudes towards health for the better
- Better engagement with club activities
- Opening up funding avenues
- Better opportunity to link the local community with club activities
- Sense of achievement
- Set a positive example
- Networking opportunities
- Recognition as the first clubs in Ireland to be accredited as “Healthy Clubs”
- Part of a groundbreaking project, first of its kind in Europe.

11. What supports are available to clubs involved in the HCP?

A broad number of supports, including elements of the GAA, the Health Service, and partners, are available to Healthy Clubs. Each stakeholder brings different elements of support to the table and at different stages some supports will become more evident than others when required.

12. What supports are available from the GAA?

- Support from the GAA’s County, Provincial and National Health & Wellbeing Committees
- The Healthy Club Project Co-ordinator and Community & Health Department staff
- Healthy Club Steering Committee
- Experience of Phase 1 participating clubs
- Your Club and County executive committees
- Your Healthy Club Project team (should ideally contain between 4 to 8 members)
- Healthy Club resources

13. What supports are available from the Department of Health/Health Service Executive/Public Health Agency?

- Health Promotion staff and resources within the HSE/Department of Health, including the National Office of Suicide Prevention and mental health department
- Public Health Agency staff and resources (supporting clubs in Northern Ireland)

14. What supports are available from the National Sporting Bodies?

- Sport Ireland and the Local Sports Partnerships network (26 counties) and Sport Northern Ireland (6 counties)
- Access to professional advice and guidance when required

15. What supports are available from the Official GAA Partners & Charities?

- 2015 charities were Diabetes Ireland, Special Olympics Ireland, White Ribbon Ireland



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- Partners include Samaritans, Irish Blood Transfusion Service, Movember

16. What supports are available from locally identified partners?

- These depend on the demographic and geographic location of the club. Please see the Phase 1 evaluation report to get examples from phase 1 participating clubs.

17. What challenges can/ might clubs involved in the HCP face?

As with all new projects, the Healthy Club Project is not without its challenges. Some of the challenges outlined in Phase 1 included:

- **Club capacity:** some Phase 1 clubs found it difficult to recruit personnel for their project teams and at times a lot of work fell onto the shoulders of just one person. The clubs that excelled had an active project team.
- **Communication:** some Phase 1 clubs encountered difficulties in communicating with stakeholders, particularly with the clubs executive committee.
- **Buy in:** from the club executive committee: some Phase 1 clubs found that without the backing of their club executive committee, it was difficult to carry out some Healthy Club activities.
- **Funding:** as most of the Healthy Club Project work was self-funded, some had a limited scope and reach.

18. What commitment is required from clubs involved in the HCP?

GAA Healthy Clubs are committed to supporting the health and well-being of their members and the communities they serve. For Phase 2 of the Healthy Club Project this is an 18 month commitment. The Healthy Club Community will promote a club environment that is welcoming and supportive of all and works in partnership to ensure that health and wellbeing are values that underpin its philosophy and day-to-day activities.

This is achieved through the introduction of policies, activities, partners and changes to the physical and cultural environment of the club.

Phase 2 clubs will also commit to engage with the evaluation team who will be working to assess the impact of the Healthy Club project. A formal commitment from participating club executives to support the club's efforts in the project is required.

19. What does the evaluation of Phase 2 involve?

Throughout the 18 month cycle participating clubs will be required to engage with the evaluation team. The evaluation activity is required to capture the impact of the project on club activities and the general community. Elements may include assessment forms, engagement in focus groups and be open to club visits to get an observation perspective of the HC project in action. For the purpose of the Phase 2 evaluation the team from WIT will focus specifically on 3 areas; healthy eating; community development and physical activity.

20. What is the workload on clubs involved in the HCP?

The workload is largely directed by a club's capacity. The aim is not to try and achieve too much, but to implement simple changes that can have a lasting positive effect on a club's approach to health and wellbeing. Each club is required to focus on at least two areas of work within the club and/or community in order to meet the Healthy Club Recognition Criteria. The criteria outlines the actions that must be undertaken in order to achieve Healthy Club



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accreditation at the end of the 18 months of Phase 2. This criteria is outlined under the criteria download page on the website. (Much of this will be achieved naturally by engaging in the project).

As well as this, clubs will also be expected to submit progress reports quarterly. This reporting will be in a simple format using an online portal to reduce the workload that generating these reports entails.

21. How will Healthy Clubs be recognised?

Recognition will be granted by meeting a list of criteria that has been drafted for clubs to complete by the end of the 18 months of Phase 2 of the Healthy Clubs Project. These criteria are centered around putting healthy club structures in place, adopting healthy policies, adopting healthy club action plans, creating a healthy environment, engaging with partners and making health promoting programmes available to club members and the wider community. In line with the Healthy Club framework, the criteria are broken down into four areas, planning, partnerships, activities and the club environment. Clubs will be asked to meet criteria in each of these areas. There will also be opportunities for national recognition for the Phase 2 Healthy Clubs.

22. How might the Healthy Club Project affect club finances?

- In Phase 1, the majority of activities carried out as part of the Healthy Club Project were cost neutral by engaging with local partners who can supply goods and services to clubs free of charge or at a reduced rate.
- Some Phase 1 clubs successfully sought grant aid for larger projects.
- With Irish Life having made a large Community Social Responsibility investment at a national level, this sets a precedent for clubs to seek out local businesses for this type of engagement on a smaller scale. In Phase 1 some clubs increased commercial interest to fund some of their activities due to partaking in the HCP.

23. What can clubs not selected for Phase 2 do?

Those clubs that are not selected to participate in Phase 2 of the Healthy Club Project are encouraged to continue their work in the area of health and wellbeing and resources will be made available to them on www.gaa.ie/community, through the County Health and Wellbeing Committees and through GAA Networks to help them in this space. Following the end of Phase 2, there will be an opportunity for all clubs to reapply to take part in the next Phase of the project.

Clubs who are not officially involved in the project can begin their Healthy Club journey by following the simple steps below:

- Appointing a Club Health & Wellbeing Officer
- Contacting their County Health & Wellbeing Committee to avail of the two- hour GAA Health & Wellbeing training module provided (chair.hwc.COUNTY@gaa.ie). Upon receiving the training the Club Health & Wellbeing Officer will receive a Club Health & Wellbeing training workbook which they can use as a further support tool to guide them on fulfilling their role.
- Setting up a Health & Wellbeing project team within the club to support the Club Health & Wellbeing Officer

By simply following these actions a club has taken important steps on the road to becoming an official Healthy Club. Take a look at the Healthy Club Criteria Section to get an idea of what is required in order to be recognised as an official "Healthy Club". By using this as a guide clubs can be well on their way towards becoming a Healthy Club when applications for Phase 3 open up again in 2018.



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24. Where can you get more information?

If you have any further questions about the Healthy Club Project then please contact Colin Regan, GAA's Community & Health Manager, on colin.regan@gaa.ie or 01 8658674.