

Community Package – Disability and Inclusion / Raheny All Stars



Club	Raheny GAA
County	Dublin
Location	All Saints Road
Rural/ Urban	Urban
Codes	Football, Ladies Football, Hurling and Camogie
Membership (2016)	1113

Case study- Raheny All Stars

Plan

Supporting Document: Healthy Club Statement [INSERT HERE]

The idea behind the Raheny All Stars initiative is to include children with special needs into a club activity, ensuring lots of fun and enjoyment in a safe environment i.e. for children that cannot manage for various reasons in a typical team of their age. A parent of child with special needs identified this need within the area and wanted to respond appropriately. This gap was highlighted via the juvenile secretary to the Club Executive and the club were very enthusiastic and generous in their support. In order to address this need an organising group and structure was put in place which includes a Lead Co-Ordinator (Parent), Games

Promotion Office (GPO) and Juvenile Coach Co-ordinator (Club Member). They meet every 6-8 weeks and link back into the Club Executive via the club Public Relations Officer (PRO).

They have developed specific participation forms for the children which identifies their individual needs and helps with the training and development of the coaches. There are guidelines in place to ensure the children can participate in a safe and supportive environment, E.g. Give Respect, Get Respect. The Raheny All Star coaches follow best practice guidelines, ensuring Garda vetting and Child Protection are fully adhered to.

Partners

The initiative is parent led with the support of The Games Promotion Officer (GPO) who took the lead as the main coach. He also guides 18 other volunteer juvenile coaches and 5 senior coaches in this area, supported with a Juvenile coach co-ordinator. The majority of the juvenile coaches are transition year students, some are working towards their GAISCE award and will fulfil their coaching module with the club.

Partners within the club:

- Club Executive
- Games Promotion Officer
- Parents
- Senior & Juvenile Coaches
- All Star Organising Committee
- Healthy Club Committee

Partners outside the club:

- CARA (National organisation aimed at enhancing sport and physical activity opportunities for people with disabilities)
- Dublin City Council – Sports and Wellbeing Officer
- Children from local special needs school and mainstream schools
- Coaches from local secondary schools

- Blossom Ireland- a local charity that provides advice and support
- Neighbouring clubs – Raheny shared their fantastic work with other interested clubs
- Local Superval, Raheny Golf society and Men’s Senior Team (fundraisers and donations)
- Dublin GAA Health & Wellbeing Committee (chair.hwc.dublin@gaa.ie)

Activity

Raheny All Stars is a GAA ball skills initiative for boys and girls with special needs between the ages of 9yrs – 12yrs. It started as a pilot and now runs on a weekly basis for 45 mins on the club astro turf with 15 children attending the sessions. The group was deliberately kept small for the pilot to ensure that each child got 1:1 coaching each week and the needs of the children could be met. The coaches are great with the children and are very happy to come along each week to support the children, they are learning very important life skills about inclusion and are very kind to the children. During the sessions the club provide tea/coffee and a little respite for parents while they wait which has been very well received. The organising committee communicate weekly with parents and coaches via Whats App groups and issue newsletters throughout the year.



The Club

There are many positive outcomes of the Raheny All Stars initiative. It promotes inclusion in the club by providing an outlet for children that cannot attend the usual team set-up. They are learning new skills and being challenged at a level and pace that suits them, learning about commitment (having to turn up each week and listen to the coach), engaging with peers while getting out in the fresh air to exercise. The children's self-esteem needs are being met they as they are getting lots of encouragement and mostly having a lot of fun. They are part of the club and part of the community. Based on the success of the Raheny All Stars initiative more parents are enquiring about the coaching and lots of interest in the group. Minister of State for Disability issues, Finian McGrath is a big supporter of Raheny All Stars and has come to the club to see them in action. Raheny GAA intend to line this initiative up with the club's vision and continue to promote inclusion and develop this initiative further.

Quotes from parents:

"As a parent of a child with a disability, it's really great to feel part of the club and the community and somewhere we can go to as a family"

"The Raheny GAA All Stars has enhanced Amy's ability to understand and partake in structured play and help her to follow instructions"

"Our daughter Ella finds it difficult attending to clubs and social situations and this initiative is allowing for this and giving her the time and patience she needs to fully take part. She loves going and putting on her new jersey, as she sees her brother going to matches with his Raheny GAA colours, she is now part of something very important in the community and people in the community are getting to know her"