

PRESS RELEASE

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Game Changer calls on more men to join the team tackling domestic, sexual, and gender-based violence

New survey findings published today to launch Phase Two of the Game Changer project, a partnership between Gaelic Games, Ruhama and White Ribbon Ireland, reveal the importance of engaging men and boys in combatting gender-based violence

Eighty-seven per cent of people in Ireland believe men have an important role to play in combatting gender-based inequality and violence. 41 per cent of women aged 18-34 in Ireland have experienced either sexual harassment, unsolicited sexual remarks, or felt a threat of gender-based intimidation or violence when taking part in sports or physical exercise. In other settings, 77 per cent of 18-34-year-old women in Ireland have experienced being 'cat called' in the street; 70 per cent have been unwantedly stared or looked at in a sexually suggestive way by a stranger; 31 per cent have been stalked or followed; and 26 per cent have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace.

These are among the findings of a new nationally representative Red C survey of men and women in the Republic of Ireland published today (10.03.25) to mark the launch of the second phase of the **Game Changer** project that aims to raise awareness and action through sport to tackle domestic, sexual and gender-based violence (DSGBV) in Ireland.

Gender gap in what constitutes sexual harassment

The survey found that men in Ireland are less likely than women to view certain behaviours, including 'cat calling', being sent unsolicited sexual images, and being subject to unwanted sexual gestures or comments as rising to the level of sexual harassment, with this gap most pronounced amongst young men aged 18-34.*

Further insights show that most Irish people have a low tolerance of sexual harassment, with 84 per cent feeling confident enough to intervene if they witness sexual harassment and 76 per cent claiming they would personally intervene. However, the findings also show that a small proportion of younger men, aged 18-34, view harassment as a private matter (30 per cent), feel too awkward to intervene (29 per cent), or are less likely to see intervening as an obligation (17 per cent).

Impact of sexual harassment on women

The survey also reveals the impact of sexual harassment on women who have experienced it in sports or physical exercise settings. 45 per cent of women who train regularly take a wide variety of precautions, such as not exercising at night (17 per cent), keeping their phone to hand (15%), not exercising alone (9 per cent) and covering up in regard to what they wear (5 per cent), with a smaller number (4 per cent) reporting that they bring along something that could be used as a weapon. 85 per cent of people believe that harassment and gender-based discrimination in sports has a negative impact on female athletes' performance.

The survey indicates that an overwhelming majority of people in Ireland support action by sports clubs and organisations, with 94 per cent agreeing that sports clubs and facilities should be safe spaces for women and girls, free from sexual and gender-based intimidation and violence. Eighty-nine per cent agree that sporting organisations have an important role in combatting gender-based inequality and violence in society.

Announcing the second phase of Game Changer today (10.03.25), **Colin Regan, community and health manager with the GAA, Barbara Condon, CEO of Ruhama, and Sean Cooke of White Ribbon Ireland**, said: “Game Changer was created to help harness the power of Gaelic Games to address the insidious issue of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence in Ireland. This research reinforces the importance of what is a unique collaboration in an Irish sporting context.

“The Gaelic Games family acknowledges we are not subject matter experts in this field, and we will continue to be guided by White Ribbon Ireland and Ruhama as we move into the next phase of Game Changer. Phase Two entails a suite of e-learning content that will target audiences within our memberships, including players, coaches and officers, as well as a public awareness raising campaign.

“Work is also continuing on related rule, policy, and procedural frameworks within Gaelic Games, and we’re delighted to see almost universal support for the adult safeguarding motion passed at GAA congress last month. Replicate motions will be debated at LGFA (Ladies Gaelic Football Association) and Camogie congresses in the coming weeks.”

Dr Stephanie O’Keefe, CEO of Cuan, said: “This ambitious initiative has the potential to bridge the gap between national policy and real-life progress on the ground, building safe spaces for women, girls and boys in sport. Leadership at national and grassroots level is essential in responding to the threat of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence as well as challenging the social and cultural norms that drive these behaviours. This initiative is a game-changer and we are committed to its enduring success.”

For more information on **Game Changer** see <https://learning.gaa.ie/gamechanger>.

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Notes to Editor

- Barbara Condon, CEO of Ruhama; Colin Regan, GAA community and health manager; Sean Cooke from White Ribbon Ireland; and Dr Stephanie O’Keefe, CEO of Cuan, are available for media interviews.

***Data for the quoted finding**

*Thirty per cent of 18-34-year-old men regard ‘cat calling’ as harmful compared with 59 per cent of women in the same age group; 60 per cent of them regard being sent unsolicited

sexual images as harmful compared with 81 per cent of 18-34-year-old women; and 68 per cent regard being subject to unwanted sexual gestures or comments as harmful compared with 85 per cent of women in the same age group.

About the Red C survey

The Red C survey was completed among a nationally representative sample of n=1,004 Republic of Ireland adults aged 18+ with an equal match of males and females. Fieldwork took place from the 14th-21st November 2024.

About Game Changer

Game Changer is a three-year collaborative project between **Ruhama**, **White Ribbon Ireland**, and the **GAA**, supported by the **Ladies Gaelic Football** and **Camogie Associations**, supported and funded by **Cuan**. Launched in November 2024, the project will deliver a number of initiatives and will work with Gaelic Games to:

- Challenge the societal culture of sexual violence, including sharing of pornography, intimate image abuse and sexual exploitation.
- Encourage behaviours that support values of gender equality and respect; and build confidence, opportunity and 'sense of place' for women and girls.
- Encourage men and boys to engage in active allyship to eradicate gender-based violence in our society.
- Support the challenging and disclosure of abusive behaviours.
- Raise awareness of the harms and consequences of human trafficking for sexual exploitation.

For more information on Game Changer visit: <https://learning.gaa.ie/gamechanger>

About Ruhama

Ruhama has been supporting women impacted by prostitution and human trafficking since 1989 and witnesses daily the profound trauma experienced by women who have been sexually exploited. Ruhama provides a diverse range of holistic supports including counselling and trauma therapy. Ruhama actively works on both national and international levels to influence policy and legislation to protect and support women impacted by sexual exploitation and gender-based violence. Ruhama recently won Charity of the Year 2024 at the Charities Institute Ireland Charity Excellence Awards.

About White Ribbon Ireland

White Ribbon Ireland, managed by the Men's Development Network, encourages and mobilises men and boys to take action to end violence against women and girls and gender-based violence by actively participating in awareness-raising and capacity-building programmes. It works collaboratively with various stakeholders, including schools, workplaces and community groups, to foster a culture of respect, safety and equality.

About the GAA

The GAA is Ireland's leading sporting and community association and works closely with its sister associations, the LGFA and Camogie, in all it does. Gaelic Games' unique contribution to community development, health promotion and social cohesion is recognised across

Europe, with a recent independent recent social return on investment of the Irish Life GAA Healthy Clubs Programme alone highlighting a €50m p.a. contribution to the health and wellbeing of the nation. The GAA's role as a lead partner in Game Changer is an extension of that work and contribution to Irish society.

About Cuan

Cuan is a statutory agency under the remit of the Department of Justice dedicated to tackling and reducing domestic, sexual and gender-based violence (DSGBV).