

*Report on*  
*Members' Voices*  
*on the*  
*Future of Gaelic Games in Europe*

Findings from the Online Survey Consultation 2018

---



Prepared by  
Joan O'Flynn,  
Independent Facilitator  
November 2018

## **Contents**

Introduction and Acknowledgements	3
Summary of Key Messages from the Membership of GGE	5
1. Survey Methodology	7
2. Profile of Respondents	8
3. The Games	12
4. Growth and Participation	18
5. Governance and Administration	20
6. Communications and Promotion	22

## Introduction

In June 2018, the Management Committee of Gaelic Games Europe (GGE) agreed to a process to develop a plan for the future development of Gaelic games.

An independent facilitator, Joan O'Flynn, was put in place to support this process.

A series of actions were undertaken as follows:

1. A Strategy Working Group was established, comprising members of the GGE Management Committee and members drawn from Federations or regions within Europe.
2. A European wide survey was developed and disseminated across clubs, regions and Federations of the GGE. This consultation is vital to giving voice to members' issues and to ensure that the Plan is grounded in the experience and aspiration of members. This paper presents the findings from this survey.
3. An audit of the pre-existing Strategic Plan, agreed in 2106, was undertaken to establish the range of completed and outstanding actions. Any outstanding actions can then be audited for their ongoing relevance as future priorities of the new Development Plan.
4. Baseline data on key operational areas of the GGE was established, using the end of 2017 as the baseline. The data will be useful in bring a measurable focus to priorities and action of the new Plan.
5. A series of 1:1 discussion was undertaken by the Facilitator with key respondents in Europe and Ireland (see Section 3 for consultation findings and Appendix 2). This consultation focused on getting more in-depth insights and perspectives on future strategic and immediate priorities.

This report presents the data from the membership survey reflecting people's 'real world' observations of Gaelic games in Europe.

The report was prepared in September 2018; actively considered by the Strategy Group at its workshop in October in Luxembourg to prepare a Draft Development Plan and disseminated to the GGE Management Committee (GGE MC) in November 2018.

The GGE MC agreed to share the survey findings with the GGE membership through electronic publication of this report. The report is published without the written comments of respondents to uphold the anonymity of respondents. The publication of the report is intended to:

- Share the survey findings with survey respondents and other interested parties
- Demonstrate the consideration of members' voices in the planning process for the future development of Gaelic games in Europe
- Act as a resource for the drafting of GGE Annual Implementation Plans that are aligned with the GGE Development Plan 2019-2021 and
- Act as a baseline for potential future membership surveys related to the development of Gaelic games in Europe.

Separate papers were produced on the findings from points 3, 4 and 5 above.

All papers from the consultative process were used to inform discussions and decision making on key elements of the new Development Plan of the GGE.

### Acknowledgements

Joan O'Flynn extends sincere thanks to the GGE Strategy Group who actively engaged in the survey design: Tony Bass, Matthieu Coq, Marie Thérèse Cockery and Daire Kilvehan.

Sincere thank you to everybody who supported the survey administration and dissemination; in particular Ana Rios, Matthieu Coq, Robert Henneberg who undertook survey translation to Spanish, French and German and Matthieu Coq who provided valuable technical support throughout this project.

November 2018

## Summary of Key Messages from Membership of the GGE

This section of the report provides a short overview of the key findings from the survey consultation conducted amongst GGE members during Summer 2018, in the context of the GGE drafting a new Development Plan on the future of Gaelic games in Europe.

It is provided here for convenience to give an oversight of key messages from the membership. The summary is limited to listing to the most frequently cited response to a range of survey questions. The summary should not be read as conclusive findings from the survey as, in some cases, the degree of difference between first and second or third rated responses was very marginal. The key messages below are not listed in any order of priority.

### 15 Key messages

#### Games

1. Regional club competitions (7/9/11 a side) are the most favoured.
2. 35% of respondents say they are unaware of where to learn about the playing rules.

#### Coach Education

3. 53% of respondents indicated they are unaware of how to become an accredited coach.
4. Ensuring at least one Foundation level coach in each club by 2021 is the most preferred objective of future coach education.
5. Formal coach education courses are the most favoured by respondents.

#### Referee Education

6. At least one active Referee Tutor in each country by 2021 is the most preferred objective for referee education.

#### Playing facilities

7. The aim of at least a third of clubs having a recognition agreement/relevant status with their municipality that facilitates access to municipal pitches, was the most preferred objective when people were given options re playing equipment, playing facilities and presentation of games.

#### Club growth and development

8. The majority of respondents (81%) indicated that their club undertakes an annual recruitment drive.
9. The expansion of youth sections within clubs and a target of 33% of clubs to have youth section by 2021 was the most preferred priority for future growth and participation.

**10.** Support for existing and new clubs was the most strongly ranked as a future development priority.

### **Governance and participation**

**11.** Devolving certain activities to the regions was the most highly ranked preference on priorities for effective governance of GGE.

**12.** 52% indicated that they are not aware of the GAA rules on running a club.

**13.** Corporate donations strategies from key contacts within the GGE was the highest ranked response to questions on how to finance the future development of Gaelic games in Europe.

### **Communications and Promotion**

**14.** Club websites, social media, GGE social media and GGE website are the primary information sources on Gaelic games amongst respondents.

**15.** A multi-lingual website with weekly news postings was the most preferred priority for enhancing GGE communications.

## 1. Survey methodology

A survey of members was a key part of the consultation process to inform the new Gaelic Games Europe Development Plan. This was conducted via SurveyMonkey and administered from 17<sup>th</sup> August 2018 until Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2018, following a pilot of the survey.

The survey was posted on the social media platforms of Gaelic Games Europe and mailed directly to all club secretaries for dissemination to members and for promotion on club social media. Participants elected to complete the survey by following a link or by invitation via a Facebook, Twitter, website or email.

The survey was available in four languages - English, French, Spanish and German.

The level of engagement with the survey was benchmarked against a previous survey undertaken in 2105/16 which achieved 61 completed responses. An improved performance on this benchmark was set at a minimum target of 150 completed responses for the 2018 survey.

487 persons in total engaged with the survey.

The majority of persons (68%/334 persons) engaged with the English language version of the survey; 19%/93 persons engaged with the French version; 7%/34 persons with the German version and 5%/26 persons with the Spanish versions.

**T**he completion response rate was 62% of 487 persons who engaged with the survey. 302 respondents significantly exceeded our target by double.

There were 33 questions asked in the survey, the majority of questions were optional for respondents.

There was a range of question types. These included closed-ended questions including Likert scale questions (indicate if people agree/disagree with statements); ratings scale questions and multiple choice.

There was one open question where respondents were invited to give their thoughts on how Gaelic games could develop in Europe over the next 3-4 years. 96 respondents gave their views. To protect the anonymity of respondents, these views are not published.

## 2. Profile of respondents

### 2.1 Country of Origin of Respondents' Clubs

The 302 respondents identified their club base in the survey.

**R**espondents were based in clubs across 17 countries of Gaelic Games Europe.

The most respondents were from Germany, France, Spain and Sweden (see Table 1 below).

**Table 1: Country of origin of clubs – top four in survey**

Country	% of total respondents	Actual of total respondents
Germany	23%	69
France	21%	64
Spain	8%	23
Sweden	7%	22

The country of origin of the remaining respondents' clubs are detailed below in descending order. The actual number of respondents is shown also detailed.

- Belgium (18)
- Austria (15)
- Netherlands (14)
- Luxembourg (13)
- Finland (13)
- Switzerland (13)
- Italy (12)
- Czech Republic (9)
- Slovakia (9)
- Romania (2).

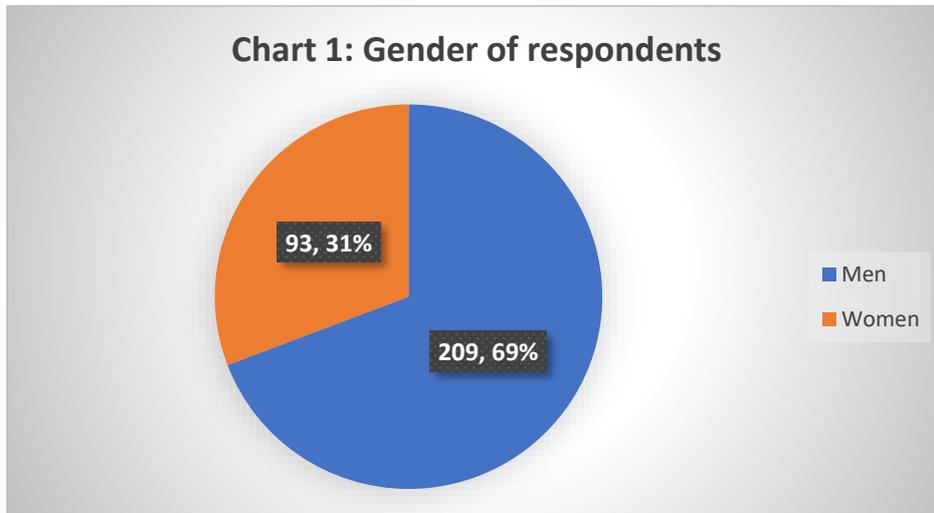
There was one respondent each from United Kingdom (Gibraltar/Channel Islands), Denmark and Norway (3).

Two respondents identified that they were not a member of a club and one respondent identified as being from a club outside of the listed options (3).

Russia, Portugal Poland and Estonia were without respondents.

## 2.2 Gender of Respondents

Numbers and percentages are represented in the pie chart below – 93 women and 209 men.



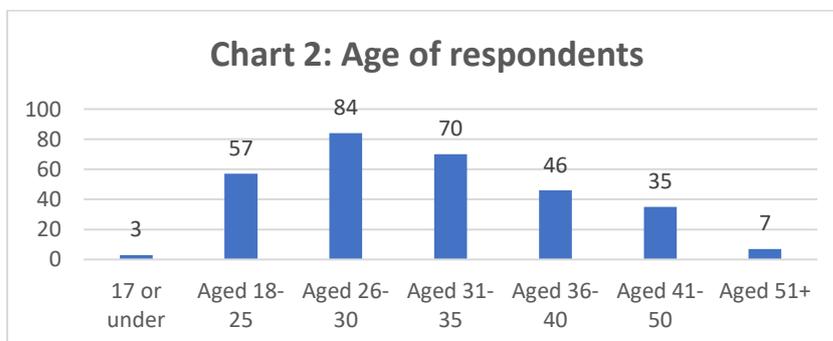
## 2.3 Age of Respondents

The majority of respondents (28%) were in the 26-30 age group, followed by those in the 31-35 age group (23%) and then those aged 18-25 (19%).

**A** Most half of respondents (47%) were aged under 30 (combining the data of those aged 18-25 is combined with those aged 26-30)

The graph overleaf details the respondent ages by age classification.

Actual numbers in each age classification is represented in the data shown.



## 2.4 Roles in Clubs

Respondents self-identified their role in the survey and could register their participation in more than one role.

**T**he overwhelming majority of respondents were players – representing 87% of total respondents.

Just over a third of respondents were club officers.

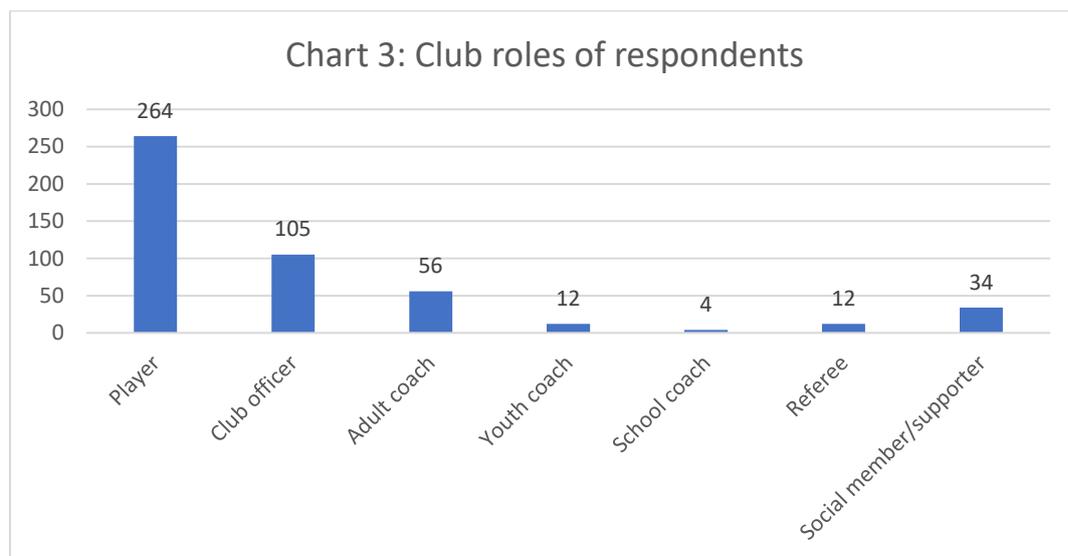
Coaches at adult, youth and/or schools levels accounted for almost a quarter of respondents.

Of these, the number coaching at adult level accounted for 18% of all respondents and 77% of all coaches.

Youth /school coaches accounted for 7% of all respondents and accounted for 23% of all coaches.

Just 4% of respondents identified as referees.

The actual numbers are represented in the chart below.

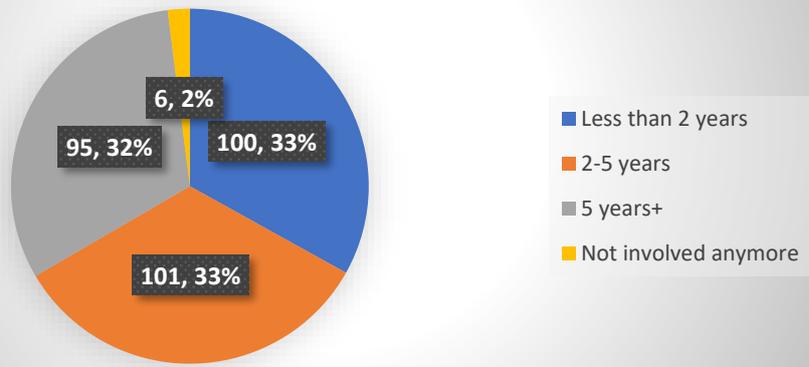


## 2.5 Duration of Involvement in Gaelic Games Europe

Two thirds of respondents were involved in Gaelic Games Europe for up to five years. A little under a third were involved for five years or more.

Numbers are percentages are detailed in the chart below.

**Chart 4: Duration of involvement in Gaelic Games Europe**



## 3. The Games

### **3.1 Games Played in Respondents' Clubs**

Football is the dominant games in clubs, as reported by respondents.

282 respondents reported that men's football is played in their club while 243 reported that ladies' football was played.

55 respondents said that youth men's football (under 17 football) is played while 52 respondents said that their club plays youth ladies' football.

152 respondents reported that hurling is played in their club while 102 reported that camogie is played.

38 respondents said that youth hurling is played while 31 respondents said youth camogie is played in their club.

23 reported that handball is played and 14 reported that rounders is played in their club.

[There were 302 respondents to this question. The responses do not necessarily total 302 as more than one answer was possible to the question.]

### **3.2 Games That Respondents Most Play or are Interested in**

Half of respondents declared that they played or were interested in men's football.

There were similar levels of involvement/interest in ladies' football (22%) and hurling (20%).

There was appreciably less declared involvement/interest in Camogie at 7% and Handball/Rounders at 1%.

### **3.3 Most Preferred Games Programmes**

The survey asked respondents to identify the type of games programme that, in their opinion, would best suit players over the next 3-4 years in Europe. Respondent were asked to rank their responses to the following options:

- Regional club competitions (7/9/11 a side) meaning games within a GGE region (Iberia, Benelux, Nordics, Central/East, North-West)
- Sub-regional/local club competitions (7/9/11 a side) meaning games within a GGE sub-region (Andalucía, Galicia, Brittany) or between a group of clubs within a smaller area.
- National club competitions (7/9/11 a side) meaning games between clubs/teams from within a single country (e.g. German or Finnish Cups).
- Nations Cup meaning games between representative teams of players selected from clubs within a single nation/country (e.g. France, Italy, Galicia)
- European club championships (15 a side)
- European club championships (7/9/11 a side).

The ranking produced the following preferences from respondents with 1 being the most preferred games programme and 6 the least preferred games programme:

**Chart 5: Ranking of games programme preferences for next 3-4 years**



Option 1 above was the most significantly preferred option and strongly led the preference rankings.

Little separated preference rankings between options 2 and 3.

Little separated preferences rankings between options 5 and 6.

### **3.4 Coaching and Coach Education**

#### *3.4.1 Coaching online resources*

A range of questions assessed respondents' use of coaching resources and their knowledge and awareness of routes into coaching.

There is a low level of use of the Official GAA E-learning portal as a coaching resource. Less than a quarter of all respondents (23%) indicated they use this. T

The GGE's own website had a lower level of usage as a coaching resource with just 14% of all respondents revealing that they have used it for this purpose.

Respondents in the Spanish language<sup>1</sup> differed from this norm as a majority of them (60%) indicated they had used the GGE website as a coach education resource.

#### *3.4.2 Accredited coach education*

There was a mixed level of familiarity with how to become an accredited coach of Gaelic games.

---

<sup>1</sup> This terminology of language groups is used for two reasons. (i) Respondents from a range of countries used French/Germany or Spanish and (ii) some respondents from France/Germany/Spain used a language other than French, German or Spanish. Use of these languages by respondents was not exclusive to people based in France/Germany/Spain.

**5** 3% of all respondents indicated that they were unaware of how to become an accredited coach.

Levels of awareness were quite different within different language groups.

For example, 60% of respondents in Spanish; 56% of respondents in German and 49% of respondents in French indicated positively their knowledge of accreditation routes. This compares to 44% of respondents in English.

**5** 5% indicated there is an active accredited coach in their club. Just under a third (32%) said they did not know if there was an active accredited coach in their club.

13% said their club did not have an active accredited coach.

When analysed across language groups, English speaking respondents had less awareness of accredited coaches at club level compared to other language groups. There was a 50:50 split here with 50% being aware and 50% being unaware if there was an active accredited coach in the club.

This compares to 79% positive awareness amongst German speaking respondents; 62% amongst Spanish speaking respondents and 61% among French speaking respondents.

#### *3.4.3 Future coaching priorities for the GGE*

The survey sought opinion on what should be coach education objectives by the end of 2021. Five options were ranked in order of preference.

The objective of ensuring at least one Foundation level coach in each club by 2021 was the overwhelming preference of respondents.

In the context of there being limited resources (time, money and coach tutors), the option of active accredited coach working with a cluster of clubs, either three or five clubs, was also posed.

At least one shared Foundation level coach shared between 3 clubs and a Level 1 coach shared between 3 clubs were the next highest preferences (with a small difference in their ranking levels).

The option of sharing Foundation or Level 1 coaches between clusters of 5 clubs were the least favoured options. The chart overleaf illustrates the rankings of all respondents to this question.

## Chart 6: Ranking of preferences re targets for active accredited club coaches



Opinions were also canvassed for preferred methods of coach education. People were asked to rank their preferences for:

- Formal education courses in each region/country with accreditation on completion
- Theme based workshops focussed on skills or game-based scenarios (for example goalkeeping, positional play, correct warm up etc)
- Programme of continuous learning development events in each region/country with emphasis on practical and theoretical sessions for existing coaches
- E-learning and web-based interactive coaching resources in various languages.

The four options above were ranked as follows with options 1 and 2 appreciably more favoured than 3 and 4.

1. Formal education courses
2. Theme based workshops
3. E-learning and web-based education
4. Continuous learning development events.

Amongst French speaking respondents, options 3 and 4 were reversed. They indicated a marginally stronger preference for a programme of continuous learning events over E-learning approaches.

### 3.4.5 Learning about the playing rules

The majority of respondents (65%) are aware of where they could learn about the playing rules.

**3** 5% indicated that they are unaware of where they can learn about the playing rules.

The context for this finding is the very high level of participant response to the survey by players (87%) and coaches (almost 25%).

### 3.5 Refereeing and Referee Recruitment, Mentoring and Education

**J**ust over half of all respondents (56%) said there is an accredited referee in their club across any code.

A fifth said their club do not have an accredited referee.

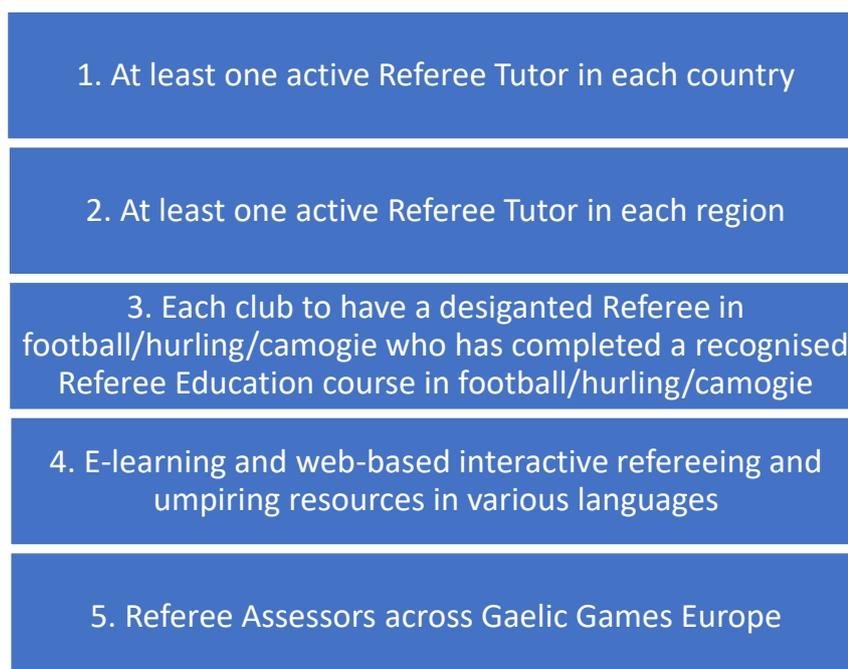
Just of a quarter said that they did not know if there is an accredited referee at their club.

#### 3.5.1 Future refereeing priorities

The survey sought opinion on what should be referee mentoring and education objectives by the end of 2021. Respondents ranked five options in order of preference as outlined in the Chart below.

The need to prioritise the education and provision of Referee Tutor at regional and country level are the strongest priorities.

**Chart 7: Ranking of priorities re refereeing, referee education and development**



French and Spanish language respondents prioritised the availability of referee assessors over the availability of E-learning resources.

### **3.6 Playing equipment, playing facilities and presentation of games**

The survey sought opinion on what standards should be in place by the end of 2021 regarding playing equipment, playing facilities and presentation of games. Five options were given and respondents had to rank most to least important.

The rankings, based on all respondent preferences are as following, ranked in priority order:

#### **Chart 8: Preference re standards for equipment, facilities and games' presentation**

1. At least a third of clubs should have a recognition agreement/relevant status with their municipality that facilitates access to municipal pitches
2. All clubs should have access to actual GAA goalposts or other posts suitably adapted as required by GGE regulations
3. All clubs should have established ways of having an adequate supply of playing equipment (e.g footballs, mouthguards, hurleys, sliotars, helmets)
4. All clubs should have proper pitchmarkings and/or flags/markers on pitch lines etc.
5. At least a third of clubs should own or be able to lease a mobile scoreboard(s)

There was almost a negligible difference in the ranking of 1 and 2 above overall (0.2 of a difference) which suggests a very strong consensus on the top two priorities.

There were however some variations which are worth noting.

English language respondents ranked goalposts as their strongest ranking following by playing equipment and municipal recognition.

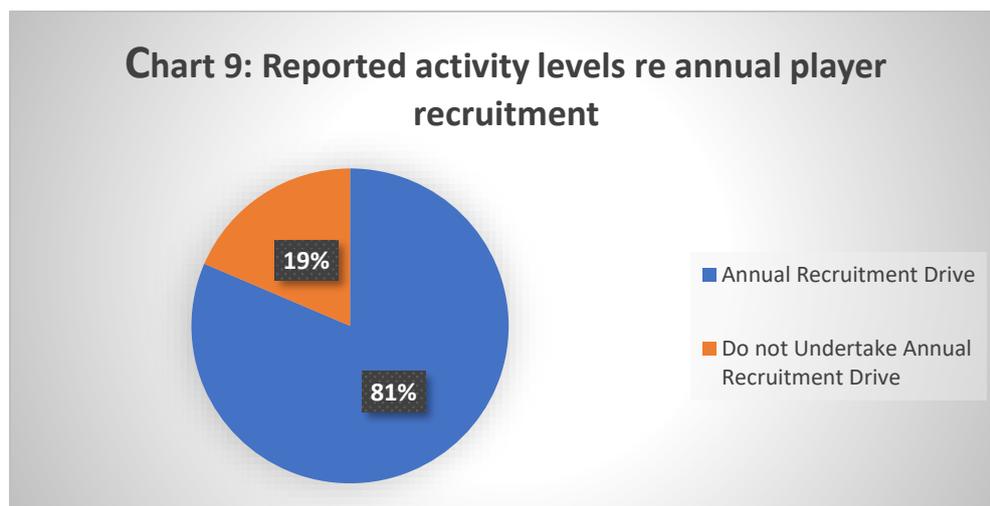
French language respondents ranked playing equipment as their most important ranking with municipal recognition and goalposts coming in second and third.

## 4. Growth and participation

### 4.1 Club Growth

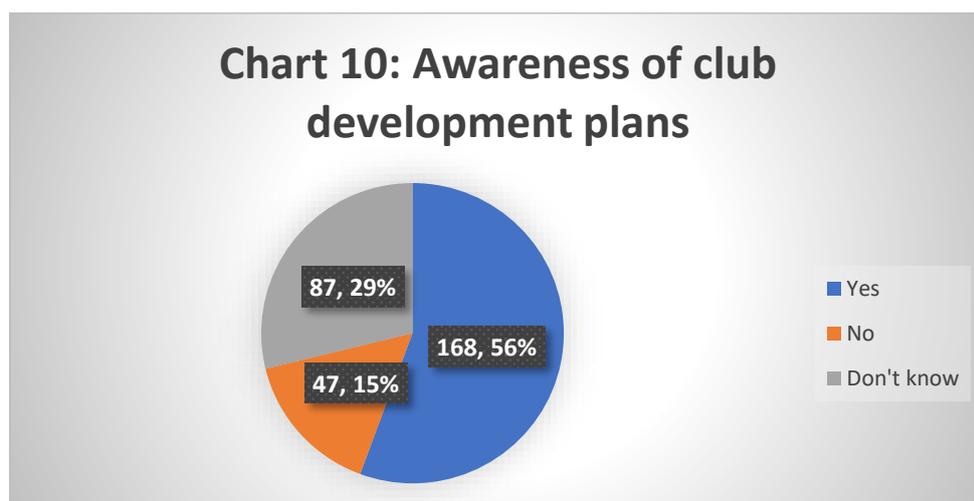
Clubs appear to be active on an annual basis in the local recruitment of new players.

The overwhelming majority (81%) of respondents indicated that their club undertakes an annual recruitment drive. [Note: chart below does not mean the 81% of clubs undertake an annual recruitment drive as there may be more than one respondent per club who participated in the survey].



When it came to awareness of whether clubs have a plan to grow and get stronger, the majority of respondents (56%) indicated that they were aware of such a club plan.

[Note: chart below does not mean the 56% of clubs have a development plan - there may be more than one respondent per club who participated in the survey].



## **4.2 GGE Priorities for Growth and Participation**

The survey asked two questions about future growth, participation and games development priorities for the GGE by 2021.

Respondents were asked to rank five possible development options into priority order from the most important to the least important.

The findings from the first question, which focussed on growth of Gaelic sports across young people, in schools, universities and clubs are detailed below.

**T**he top priority from respondents was the expansion of youth sections within clubs and for a target of 33% of clubs to have a youth section by 2021.

This was followed by support for the organisation of a regular European Youth Tournament.

This was closely followed by support for the production of a Club Development resource for new and existing clubs that would downloadable from the GGE website in a number of languages, as the third favoured option.

The development of games in the third level education sector was a little less favoured.

**T**he option of ensuring that each region has a schools' programme by 2021 was considered the least important option.

The following is the priority ranking given to topics in the second question related to growth, participation and games development with 1. as the priority considered most important by 2021 and 5. the least important.

### **Chart 11: Respondent rankings on priorities to end of 2021**



There was very strong consensus on priority one while little separated preferences for priority 2 and 3. The other priorities around support for club administrators and tournament procedures were ranked appreciably lower than the top three.

## 5. Governance and administration

The survey included two questions on GGE governance and administration.

The first of these focussed on options on how monies could be sourced to invest in the development of Gaelic games in Europe by the end of 2021. Five options were presented and respondent preferences are highlighted in Chart 12 below with 1 considered the most important and 5 the least important.

### Chart 12: Respondent rankings on financing the future development of Gaelic games in Europe by the end of 2021

1. Corporate donations strategy from key contacts within GGE
2. Contribution from each club to GGE Games Development Fund based on club membership levels (and taking account of average income levels in each country)
3. Specific fundraising for specific projects e.g. crowd funding/closed raffles/merchandising at key events
4. Fixed contribution from each club to GGE Games Development Fund
5. Establishment of Gaelic Games Europe Supporters Club comprising people from commercial sector and others, with specific fundraising target to be met

The top three options were very closely ranked with little separating option 1 and option 3.

The second question related to how the governance of GGE could be more effective by the end of 2021. Six options were provided and respondents were asked to rank them in order of importance with 1. the most important and 6. the least important. The overall rankings are detailed in Chart 13. Little separated the two most highly ranked options. Little also separated the two lowest ranked options.

### Chart 13: Respondent rankings on more effective governance of GGE by end of 2021

1. GGE devolve certain activities to regions (e.g. membership registration, fixtures and games development)
2. The composition of the GGE Management Committee have representation from every region
3. The roles/relationships between regions and the GGE Management Committee be clear, understandable and communicated to clubs
4. All clubs required to have at least one delegate at the GGE Annual Convention
5. The venue for GGE Annual Convention rotate around the regions
6. The GGE Management Committee have regular formal dialogue with each region

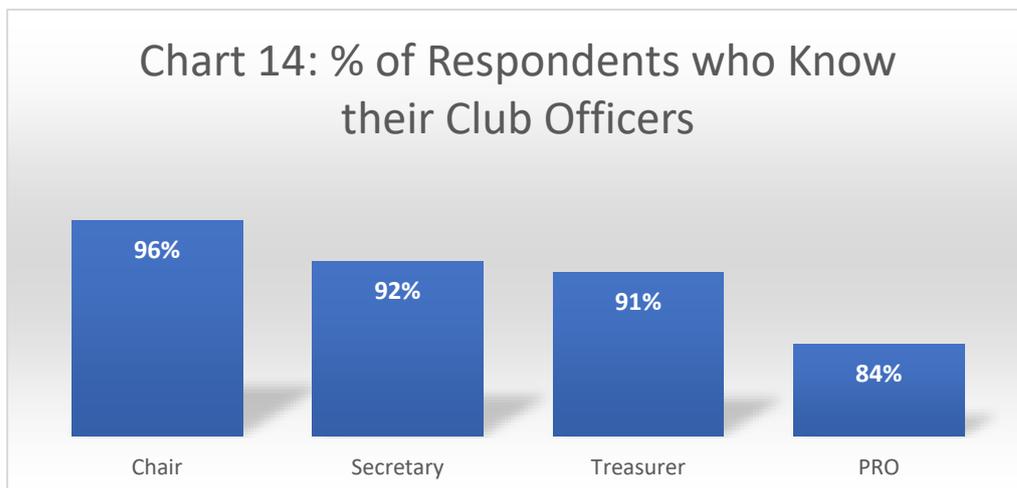
### 5.1 Club governance and administration

A number of questions were also asked to establish some a of governance and administration at club levels.

**5** 2% of all respondents indicated that they are not aware of the GAA rules about running a club.

**6** 1% of all respondents indicated that they are aware of where to find the GAA rules for reference purposes.

Club chairperson, secretaries, treasurers and PROs are all very well known, as indicated by all respondents.

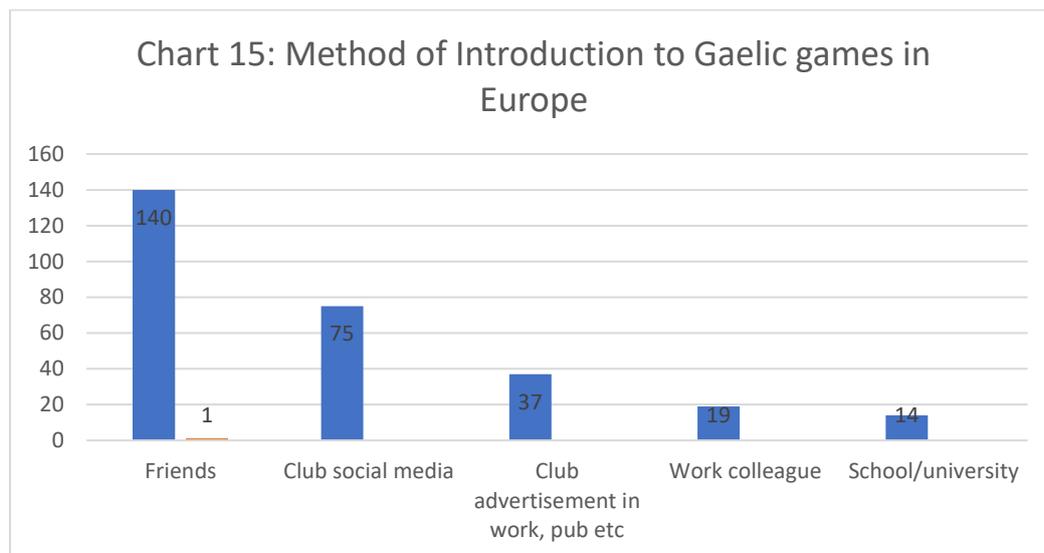


## 6. Communications and Promotion

### 6.1 Methods of Introduction to Gaelic Games

To promote the games as widely as possible, it is important to establish how people are introduced to the games.

Survey responses indicate that the majority of people are introduced to the games through friends. This method is twice as popular as the next most common method - which is people finding out about the games through club social media (Facebook, Instagram, twitter etc). Figures below represent actual number of respondents for each.



### 6.2 Most Commonly Used Information Sources about Gaelic Games

From a select list, respondents were asked to indicate which information source they use as their primary information source about Gaelic games.

Local sources such as club websites/social media, GGE social media and GGE website, in that order, were significantly more used as a primary information source, than other sources.

### 6.3 Primary Working Languages for GGE

From a select list, respondents were asked what should be the primary working languages for the GGE (more than one response was allowed). The rank order of language preferences is:

1. English – which was 3.5 times more than the next preference French. English finished well ahead in each language group of respondents.
2. French - which was 2.5 times ahead of
3. Spanish – which was a just a little ahead of
4. German. A small cohort identified 'Other' as a preferred primary working language.

#### **6.4 Communications content and Capacity Building**

From a select range of options, respondents indicated their preferences for what types of content they considered to be most important and also their preference for building up the capacity of communicators at club level.

The rankings are detailed below; the top three were close in the rankings with the top two quite close.

#### **Chart 16: Communications content and capacity building**

1. A multi-lingual website with weekly news postings (website in at least 3 languages)
2. A weekly output on relevant social media platforms about Gaelic games fixtures, results, development and news
3. A fixtures and results section on the GGE website should be a priority
4. An annual upskilling workshop for club PROs and club teams, on social media communications should be rolled out by GGE via webinar