SOCIAL
HANDBALL

FUN - ACTIVE - SOCIAL - INCLUSIVE

CLUB PROGRAMME



SOCIAL
HANDBALL

ABOUT SOCIAL HANDBALL

Social Handball is a club and community-based participation programme designed to introduce adults to GAA Handball in a fun, welcoming and recreational environment. It is aimed particularly at beginners, people returning to physical activity, and adults who want to enjoy Handball without the pressure of formal competition.

The programme is deliberately flexible. Each club can decide what best suits its local community: a women-only group, a men-only group, or a mixed adult group. The important element is that the programme remains accessible, social and focused on participation, enjoyment and connection.

LOCAL FLEXIBILITY

Clubs know their communities best. The national framework provides a consistent ethos and structure, while clubs choose the format, timing and recruitment approach that works on the ground.

PROGRAMME VISION

- Create an accessible entry point into GAA Handball for adults of all backgrounds and abilities.
- Support adults to become more physically and socially active within their local community.
- Strengthen the connection between GAA Handball clubs and their wider communities.
- Create opportunities for participants to remain involved as players, volunteers, coaches, organisers or supporters.
- Promote lifelong participation, wellbeing, inclusion and enjoyment through GAA Handball.
- Provide a welcoming pathway for complete beginners and experienced players looking to reconnect with Handball in a fun and social environment.

GAA HANDBALL

SOCIAL HANDBALL

WHO'S IT FOR?

Social Handball is designed primarily for adult recreational participants. A club may choose one of the following delivery models:

DELIVERY MODEL	WHAT IT CAN LOOK LIKE
Women's Social Handball	A women-only group focussed on fun, activity and social connection
Men's Social Handball	A men-only recreational group for beginners, returners or adults seeking social activity.
Mixed Social Handball	A mixed adult group where this best reflects local demand and clubcapacity.

Clubs should confirm all registration, insurance and eligibility requirements with GAA Handball before launching the programme by completing and returning the required checklist form to GAA Handball.

GAA HANDBALL

SOCIAL
HANDBALL

CORE PRINCIPLES

- Participation over performance: Success is measured by people taking part, enjoying the experience and wanting to return.
- Beginner friendly: No previous Handball experience should be required.
- Fun first: Sessions should use games, simple challenges and plenty of ball contact.
- Inclusive and welcoming: Activities should be adaptable to different abilities and fitness levels.
- Social connection: Allow time for participants to interact and build relationships.
- Safe delivery: Appropriate facilities, equipment and eye protection should be used in line with GAA Handball guidance.
- Local ownership: Clubs should shape the programme around local demand while maintaining the national programme ethos.

GAA HANDBALL

SOCIAL
HANDBALL

RECOMMENDED PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

A six week introductory block is recommended as a simple starting point. One session per week of approximately 60 minutes gives participants time to learn the basics without making the initial commitment too demanding. Clubs may adapt the length or continue the group beyond six weeks where there is demand.

WEEK	THEME	FOCUS
1	Welcome to Handball	Introduction, basic rules, movement, hand-eye coordination and key strokes.
2	Strokes & Movements	Simple serving, returning and rally building games.
3	Court Awareness & Positioning	Developing an understanding of court space, positioning and movement through simple games and activities
4	Gameplay: Singles & Doubles	Applying basic skills, positioning and movement through fun and social singles and doubles games.
5	Gameplay – Just Play	Putting skills into practice through fun, relaxed games with a focus on enjoyment, participation and social interaction.
6	Social Festival / Blitz	A relaxed club or interclub event to celebrate the programme and use the skills learned.

KEEP WEEK 6 SOCIAL

The final event should celebrate participation. Clubs can use short games, doubles, team challenges and social activities. The emphasis should remain on enjoyment and connection rather than results.

GAA HANDBALL

SOCIAL
HANDBALL

SUGGESTED 60-MINUTE SESSION

TIME	SECTION	PURPOSE
0–10 min	Welcome and fun warm up	Movement, interaction and getting comfortable with the ball.
10–20 min	Skill introduction	One or two simple teaching points with demonstration
20–40 min	Skill activities	Pairs/stations with high involvement and lots of ball contact.
40–55 min	Fun games	Small–sided or conditioned games using the skill of the week.
55–60 min	Cool down & social finish	Recap, feedback and information about the next session.



SOCIAL
HANDBALL

GETTING STARTED - CLUB CHECKLIST

1. Identify local interest – Speak to members, parents, former players, local community groups and existing club networks. Decide whether a women's, men's or mixed group is most likely to work.
2. Appoint a coordinator and coach – Nominate a programme coordinator and an appropriately qualified/Garda-vetted coach in line with GAA requirements.
3. Contact GAA Handball – Register your interest and confirm current programme, registration, insurance and support requirements before participants begin.
4. Choose the venue, day and time – Select a consistent slot that is accessible and avoids obvious clashes with other local activities.
5. Prepare equipment – Have handballs, protective goggles, cones/bibs and any other coaching aids ready. Check the playing area before every session.
6. Promote locally – Use club social media, school communication platforms, local businesses, community organizations, other sports clubs and teams in the area, and word of mouth. Keep the message welcoming and make it clear that beginners and returning players are encouraged to get involved.
7. Run a taster session – A low-pressure introductory night is an effective way to build confidence and gauge demand.
8. Deliver the programme – Keep sessions simple, active, varied and enjoyable. Gather participant feedback as the block progresses.
9. Celebrate and continue – Finish with a social festival/blitz and offer a clear option for participants who want to keep playing.

GAA HANDBALL

SOCIAL
HANDBALL

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

PROGRAMME COORDINATOR

- Act as the main contact for the programme.
- Coordinate dates, venue access, participant communication and promotion.
- Support registration and maintain accurate participation records.
- Liaise with the club PRO and GAA Handball where required.
- Gather simple feedback and report participant numbers.

COACH

- Plan safe, enjoyable and inclusive sessions that are FUN for everyone.
- Use simple demonstrations and a small number of clear coaching points.
- Maximise activity and ball contact.
- Adapt activities to ability and confidence levels.
- Promote encouragement, fair play and a positive social environment

CLUB

- Provide a safe and appropriate playing environment.
- Support access to equipment and suitable coaching personnel.
- Promote the programme through club and community channels.
- Ensure delivery aligns with GAA policies, safeguarding, welfare and data protection requirements.

GAA HANDBALL

SOCIAL
HANDBALL

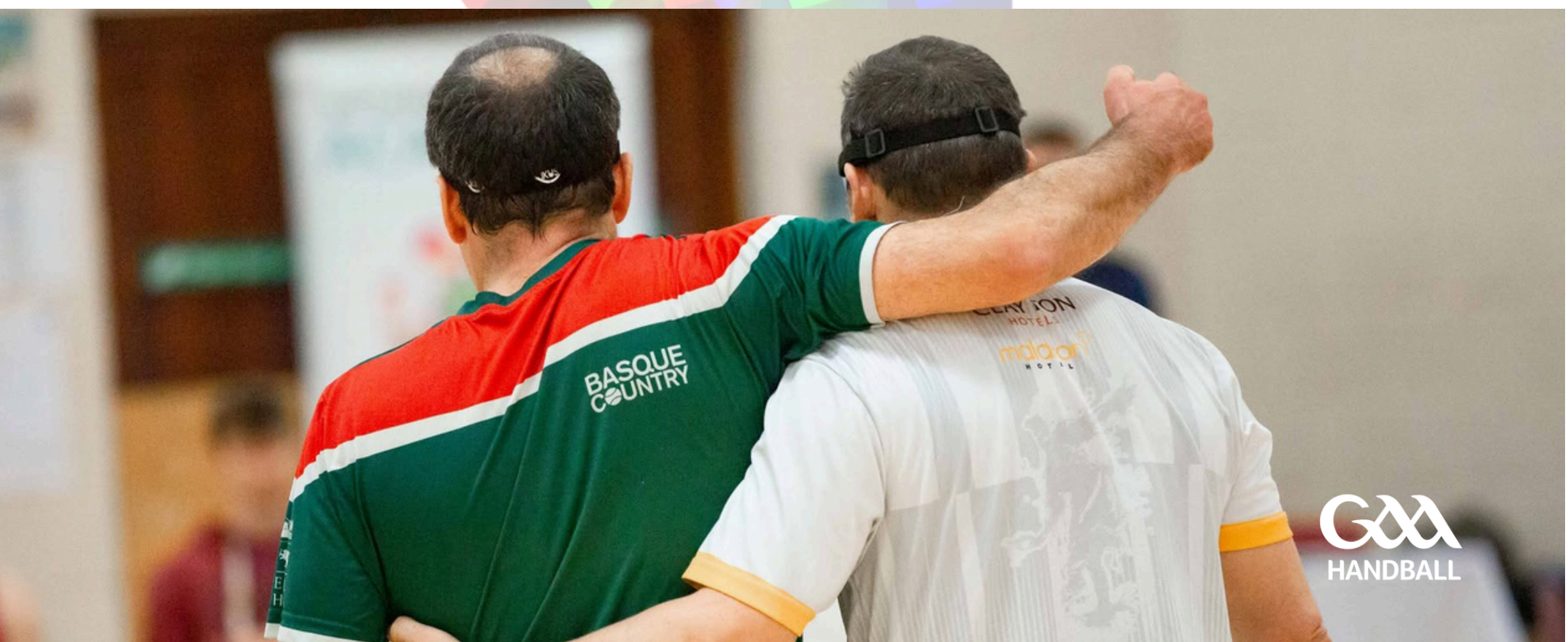
RECRUITMENT & PROMOTION

The message should feel different from a competitive recruitment campaign. Lead with enjoyment, accessibility and social connection.

- Use simple language: “No experience needed”, “Come and try”, “Fun, active and social”.
- Promote through club members and parents, former players, local workplaces, community groups and Local Sports Partnerships.
- Use short videos and photos showing beginners enjoying Handball rather than only elite competition.
- Encourage participants to bring a friend, personal invitations are often more effective than general advertising.
- Where appropriate, offer a taster night before the full programme begins.

SAMPLE PROMOTIONAL MESSAGE – Make Generic Poster

Try Social Handball at [Club Name]. A fun, beginner–friendly way to get active, learn a new game and meet people. No previous Handball experience needed. [Day / Time / Venue / Contact].



SOCIAL HANDBALL

EQUIPMENT & FACILITIES

- A suitable Handball court or safe wall space appropriate to the activities being delivered.
- Handballs suitable for beginner/social participants.
- Protective goggles/eye protection in line with GAA Handball guidance.
- Cones, bibs and simple markers for games and stations.
- First-aid access and normal club emergency procedures.
- A welcoming social space, where available, for tea/coffee or informal interaction after sessions.

Need Equipment? Visit gaahandball.ie for further information on Handball equipment and resources.

REGISTRATION, INSURANCE & GOVERNANCE

All clubs should follow the current GAA Handball requirements for participant registration, insurance, safeguarding, welfare and data protection.

- Confirm programme registration requirements with GAA Handball before launch.
- Ensure participants are appropriately registered and insured before ongoing participation.
- Use appropriate club processes for collecting and storing participant information.
- Follow GAA safeguarding, welfare, Garda vetting and data-protection requirements.
- Record attendance and participant numbers so programme growth can be measured accurately.

GAA HANDBALL

SOCIAL
HANDBALL

SOCIAL FESTIVAL / BLITZ

A social festival gives participants a positive goal at the end of the introductory block and creates a reason to connect with neighbouring clubs. It should be participation-led and suitable for beginners.

- Short singles and doubles games.
- Team-based skill challenges.
- Rotating opponents so participants meet new people.
- No emphasis on rankings or formal competition.
- Music, refreshments or a social element where practical.
- Group photo and positive promotion of the programme, subject to appropriate consent.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER 6 WEEKS

The six-week block should be viewed as the beginning of a participation pathway rather than a stand-alone event. Depending on local interest, clubs can:

- Continue a weekly or fortnightly Social Handball session.
- Link with nearby clubs for regular social evenings.
- Enter future Social Handball festivals where appropriate.
- Offer participants a pathway into standard club membership or competitive Handball if they choose.
- Encourage participants to become volunteers, coaches, coordinators or supporters.
- Run a new beginner block to bring additional people into the programme.

GAA HANDBALL

SOCIAL
HANDBALL

MEASURING SUCCESS

Keep evaluation simple and consistent. Clubs should be able to report:

Measure	Example
Participants	Number who attend the first session and number completing the block.
Profile	Men / women / mixed group and broad age profile where appropriate.
Retention	Number continuing after the introductory programme.
Club growth	Number becoming club members or remaining involved in another role.
Experience	Short participant satisfaction/feedback questions.
Number of clubs running Social Handball and number of social festivals delivered.	Number of clubs running Social Handball and number of social festivals delivered.

GAA HANDBALL

SOCIAL
HANDBALL

SIMPLE PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

- How would you rate your overall experience? (1–5)
- Did you feel the programme was welcoming and suitable for beginners? (Yes / No)
- What did you enjoy most?
- Would you continue playing Social Handball? (Yes / Maybe / No)
- Would you recommend the programme to a friend? (Yes / No)
- What could we improve?

Please Send Feedback to nevin.odonnell.handball@gaa.ie

SOCIAL HANDBALL

ONE GAME, DIFFERENT LOCAL FORMATS. WOMEN, MEN OR MIXED GROUPS CLUBS CHOOSE WHAT WORKS BEST FOR THEIR COMMUNITY. THE NATIONAL AIM IS THE SAME EVERYWHERE: MAKE HANDBALL EASY TO TRY, ENJOYABLE TO PLAY AND WELCOMING ENOUGH THAT PEOPLE WANT TO COME BACK.

GAA HANDBALL

SOCIAL
HANDBALL

PARTICIPANT SIGN-IN & ATTENDANCE RECORD

Club:		County:	
Programme Coordinator:		Coach:	
Venue:		Date:	

No.	Name	Address	Mobile Number	Signature
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				
15				

CLUB REQUIREMENTS – REGISTRATION, INSURANCE & GOVERNANCE

To operate Social Handball under the relevant GAA Insurance arrangements, clubs must complete the required programme registration process with GAA Handball before launch; confirm that the programme coach holds the minimum required coaching qualification and meets applicable GAA requirements; complete and return the Social Handball-specific club checklist; ensure participants are appropriately registered and insured; and maintain accurate registration and attendance records for each session.

Clubs must ensure that all Social Handball activities are delivered in accordance with current GAA safety procedures and data protection requirements.