FOOTBALL FOR ALL

STRATEGY

2017-2020

Promoting Inclusion in Football
“Start by doing what is necessary, then do what is possible and suddenly you are doing the impossible”
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VISION STATEMENT
To enable every person in Ireland to participate in our game, to allow all involved in the game to reach their full potential, whatever level that might be, and to inspire the nation through international success at the highest level.

VALUES
RESPECT
INTEGRITY
PASSION
TEAMWORK
EXCELLENCE
CEO’S MESSAGE

The launch of the FAI’s Football For All Strategic Plan is an important milestone in the Association’s commitment to our vision of providing every person in this country with the opportunity to reach their potential in the game they love. Our sport is unique in that no matter what your ability, if you want to play football there will be an opportunity to do so.

The Football For All programme includes a variety of disciplines including Cerebral Palsy, Blind, Deaf, Powerchair, Amputee, Frame Football, and many more versions of football.

This country presently has more than 30 clubs nationwide supporting Football For All programmes and this Strategic Plan 2017-2020 is designed to foster the growth and development of Football For All programmes in all areas.

In recent times we’ve seen the development of the Blind (B1) Football team which participated for the first time at international level in recent years. This discipline has been a Paralympic sport since 2004.

Ireland’s CP team did fantastically well in 2016 to qualify for the Paralympics in Rio under the guidance of Barry Ferguson and they continue to make progress under the leadership of Paul Breen.

Limerick hosted a memorable European Nations Cup Powerchair football tournament in 2014 and that experience invigorated that format of the game in this country. It was an occasion that I thoroughly enjoyed attending.

Our national Amputee Football team continues to strive for improvement with a youth structure now coming on stream. With Chris McElligott and Simon Baker as that format’s driving force, Amputee Football has been blessed with passionate football people determined to make their mark on the international stage. Simon is now handing the reins to others to build on his brilliant work and we thank him for all that he has done to promote their cause.

Men’s Football has been one of the strongest sports in the Deaf Sports Ireland structures for many years where the Irish international side has regularly competed amongst the leading nations for many years including silver and bronze medal-winning campaigns at the European Championship and Deaflympics.

The FAI and Special Olympics Ireland have been partners since the early 1980s and that sector of the game is one where the true love of football has always brought home to me how our sport can really have a tremendous impact on people’s lives.

There are always new avenues to explore in the Football For All spectrum. Our Development Officers have held numerous Walking Football events in recent years and that has provided football once more for people who may have felt their time in the game had past them by.

With the support of a solid sponsor in the form of Tetrarch Hospitality since 2016 the FAI has been able to provide more focus on Football For All and this launch will shine a light on our aims to grow this sector of our sport in the coming years.

John Delaney
Chief Executive Officer
INTRODUCTION

The Football For All (FFA) programme was established in 2002 to promote inclusion in Irish Football communities. The integration of the Football For All programme into the infrastructure of the Football Association of Ireland (FAI) has been an outstanding success. Through the introduction of the Football For All programme there has been a large increase in the participation of people with disabilities within association football.

The following are some of the successes to date:

- In 2009 we established the Association of Irish Powerchair Football and supported the development of a national league and cup with over 70 players involved today.
- Blind Football Ireland was established in 2013 with two regional centres supporting players with visual impairments across Ireland.
- Since 2007 the programme has provided football opportunities for over 500 players from the adults services within communities.
- Football For All club programme was established in 2010 with 36 Football For All clubs nationwide attracting over 700 players with disabilities.
- The Football For All schools programme commenced in 2005 providing support to the special schools network and a pathway for its elite players to represent their country at international events.
- Frame Football is the newest format of the game developed in 2015. This provides opportunities for players who use frames to play association football.
- Kick Start 2 Recovery programme was developed in 2011 providing opportunities for service users within the HSE with mental health difficulties to re-engage with their communities through football.
- Special Olympics Ireland were a pivotal partner in the inception of the Football For All programme. Our partnership to date has provided support to over 1700 people with intellectual disabilities participating in association football.
- In partnership with Irish Streetleagues we have supported nearly a hundred players who were homeless to realise their dream of representing their country across 12 Homeless World Cups since 2005.
- 2005 saw the introduction of international players with a disability receiving recognition of their achievements through the presentation of caps.
- To date the association supports eight international disability teams.
OUR PROGRAMME PARTNERS

The success to date would not have been realised without the work and support from our partners across the disability sport sector. The underlying aim of this new Football For All Strategy is to ensure that people with disabilities are encouraged to reach their full potential, an aim that will not be realised without our strong partnerships.

VISION SPORT IRELAND / BLIND FOOTBALL IRELAND
Vision Sport Ireland has been a partner of the Football For All programme since 2005, together supporting the development of visually impaired football with a pathway from club to the international stage. In 2013 the partnership established Blind Football Ireland an association given the remit to developing blind football in Ireland. There are currently 2 regional centres and inter regional leagues with a European and World championships cycle and the game has been a Paralympic sport since 2004.

DEAF SPORTS IRELAND
Deaf Sports Ireland provide sporting opportunities for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. In 2005 the FAI’s Football For All programme partnership began to support playing opportunities in association football through schools, clubs, regional squads and a pathway for players representing their country.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS IRELAND
Special Olympics Ireland provides opportunities for players with an intellectual disability to play association football. Our partnership provides this through various competitions across Ireland with 5 & 7 a side football at local, regional and national level over a 4 year cycle. The pinnacle of this cycle concluding with the Special Olympics World Games. This partnership supports over 1,700 players with an intellectual disability to take part in regular football on a yearly basis.

IRISH SPECIAL SCHOOLS SPORTS COUNCIL
The Football For All Schools programme is run in partnership with the Irish Special Schools Sports Council which is a voluntary organisation providing sporting and cultural activities in schools for pupils with mild learning disabilities. The Irish Special Schools Sports Council operates at local, regional and national level. In 2005 the Football For All programme expanded its programme so as to facilitate playing opportunities at inter-regional and international level.

IRISH AMPUTEE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION
The Football Association of Ireland provide all amputees, people with congenital limb deficiencies and persons with restricted use of limbs, with the opportunity to play football locally, nationally and internationally through the establishment of the Irish Amputee Football Association (IAFA) in 2010. In this time the IAFA have driven the development of amputee football in Ireland through its 2 regional centres operating within the Republic of Ireland with 20 senior players and 14 youth players. The Irish Amputee squad competed in their first World Cup in 2014 in Mexico.

ASSOCIATION OF IRISH POWERCHAIR FOOTBALL
This action-packed form of football was established under the Association of Irish Powerchair Football in 2009. The game combines the skill of the wheelchair user with the speed and power of the chair itself. There are currently over 70 players participating in 8 clubs throughout Ireland. The national league has been developed to have 2 divisions and there is also a National Cup annually. An international team has represented Ireland since the World Cup in 2011 in Paris.

HSE COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH TEAMS
The Kick Start to Recovery programme was developed in 2011 in partnership with the HSE Mental Health Teams and with the support of the sports inclusion officers to bring football into the lives of those with mental health difficulties. There are currently 15 programmes providing football opportunities to over 150 participants.

FOOTBALL FOR ALL CLUBS
In 2010 the FAI Football For All programme established a network of Football For All clubs through existing FAI community clubs across Ireland. These clubs provide opportunities for children with various disabilities who may struggle to excel in the environment of underage football or who need additional supports to develop as footballers. The Football For All clubs enable these children to join and train at the club and to compete in FAI Football For All club festivals. There are currently 36 clubs nationwide supporting over 700 players training and competing regularly within the club structure.

CARA
CARA is a national organisation which provides a collaborative and partnership platform throughout Ireland to impact on enhancing sport and physical activity opportunities for people with disabilities. The FAI have been partnering with CARA since its inception and have collaborated on numerous projects across their involvement with training and education and the sports inclusion disability officers. This partnership will play a key role in the association’s ambitions to become Ireland’s first fully inclusive sports governing body.

IRISH STREET LEAGUES
Irish Street Leagues was set up officially as an independent entity in 2005. Together with Dublin City Council, a pilot project was set up in 2004 in the inner city. This proved very successful and as a result in 2005, the league was expanded to cover the greater Dublin area and the league became affiliated to the Football Association of Ireland in its Football For All programme. The FAI have supported the development of street leagues in many urban and rural towns and cities in the intervening period.
FFA STRATEGY

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PILLAR 1
PARTICIPATION

INTRODUCTION

The foundation of any programme is its participants and those involved in non-playing roles supporting the participants to develop and reach their full potential. It is important that as an association we support all those involved at the grassroots of our game to ensure all of our players, volunteers, coaches, parents and administrators get the experience they deserve. In line with the association’s overall strategy, our focus will be on increasing opportunities to access our sport through a number of adapted formats of the game, as well as the standard formats already offered in mainstream football. This pillar will endeavour to provide all players with an equal opportunity to be part of a club, receive regular training, participate in competition and reach their full potential.

STRATEGY GOALS

1. To develop, improve and maintain opportunities for people with disabilities to access football in their communities.
2. To develop or improve competitive opportunities for players with disabilities to reach their full potential.
3. To increase the number of females with a disability involved in football in Ireland across all FFA participation programmes.
4. Develop a National Football For All registration database to capture non-club-based FFA activities through FAInet.

OUTCOMES

1. 750 new participants having registered with the FFA programme
   2. 20 new Football For All clubs established by 2020.
   3. A clear age-specific playing format for all age groups across all FFA programmes implemented.
   4. An established programme of summer camps across all FFA programmes.
2. Regular competition structures across all areas of the Football For All programmes established.
   • Agreements in place with relevant leagues to administer all FFA local and regional clubs player and team registration through FAInet.
   • All FFA competitions administered by their own competitions committees.
3. 75 new female participants involved across the Football For All programmes.
   • 8 Football For All FIFA Live Your Goals days completed across Ireland.
4. FFA national registration database designed and developed through FAInet.
   • All non-club-based participation and activity recorded on FAInet.
   • Annual growth report produced detailing all activity and participant numbers in FFA programme.
PILLAR 2
ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

As an organisation with a vision to ensure everybody has the opportunity to reach their full potential we must begin by examining our own inclusive practices and lead by example. The association’s agreement to engage with CARA on a 4 year process to become Ireland’s first accredited fully inclusive sport’s governing body will allow us to do so, ensuring that all areas of the association have an inclusive approach to their work. Development of the structures and agreements with the Football For All programme and its disability football partners will ensure effective use of funds, sustainability and transparency driven by clear operational plans year on year. An effective system for monitoring and evaluating our work will be key to the association, ensuring value for money through our Football For All funding streams and strengthen all of their future funding applications.

STRATEGY GOALS

1. To revise overall governance within the Football For All programme and the allocation of funding with all stakeholders.
2. To work with Sport Ireland and towards achieving the criteria to become one of the first NGB’s in Ireland to receive the NGB inclusive award.
3. Identify new and retain existing funding streams to support club and organisational development activities while working with external stakeholder agencies that have a mutual interest in the governance of football.
4. To establish monitoring and evaluation systems and processes that will be applied to Football For All programmes.
5. To support/facilitate the roll-out of the FFA programmes and strategy securing funding for additional human resources.
6. Work with Club and League department to create a criteria for clubs to attain a Football For All award as part of the FAI Club Mark.

OUTCOMES

1. • Formal agreements put in place between the FAI and all working stakeholders / affiliates to include expectations and responsibilities to each other.
   • Funding agreements in place where stakeholders / affiliates are in receipt of direct funding from the FAI.
   • Formal agreements in place between the FAI and all international disability squads to include expectations and responsibilities to each other.
2. • Approval received from FAI board to engage in the inclusive NGB process by 2017.
   • Working group to oversee the action plan put in place to achieve the award in 2017.
   • Sport Ireland inclusive NGB award attained by 2020.
3. • Football For All national sponsor secured covering life of the strategy.
   • Two new funding streams from external stakeholders secured to support operational plans by 2020.
4. • Review examples of monitoring and evaluations systems and processes that could be applied to all Football For All programmes completed.
   • Monitoring and evaluation system of FFA programme agreed.
   • M & E system implemented across all FFA programmes.
5. • Business case developed for new FFA Development Officer position in Connaught / Ulster by 2018.
   • Funding secured for new position by 2019.
6. • FFA club award developed and piloted by 2019.
   • 10 clubs awarded the FFA award by 2020.
INTRODUCTION

The education of all people involved in football in the area of disability awareness and inclusive practices is paramount to the successful implementation of this strategy. Education begins internally with the development of awareness training workshops for all existing and new staff in the association across all departments. This awareness training will then cascade down to leagues, club administrators, referees, coaches, parents and volunteers providing the association with complete process of systematically delivering awareness training to all in Irish football by 2020. In supporting the development of all players with disabilities from grassroots to international football, our coach education and referees department will design and deliver a new disability specific pathway in line with best practice from Coaching Ireland and our partners in the home nations associations. This will give our enablers, coaches and referees the ability to provide opportunities for all abilities to access football.

STRATEGY GOALS

1. Provide disability awareness training to all levels of the game including board members, staff, referees, club & league administrators.
2. Develop an approved disability football coaching pathway providing coaches with increased skill set to be inclusive.
3. Support lifelong involvement of people with disabilities in football through the establishment of pathways for people with disabilities to access coaching and referee courses.
4. Support the development of referees to improve the standard of refereeing in disability football while encouraging Irish referees to aspire to elite status in disability football competition across the different formats of the game.

OUTCOMES

1. • Referees disability awareness workshop developed and delivered to all referees.
   • Disability awareness training developed and delivered to all FAI staff and provincial administrators.
2. • PDP Disability coaching pathway designed and installed as part of the new D-Licence by end of 2018.
   • 250 coaches have completed PDP Disability 1 or 2 by 2020.
   • 3 hour disability awareness workshop designed and included in FAI Coach Education D-Licence pathway by 2019.
3. • Targeted promotion of coaching and refereeing courses to people with disabilities.
   • 30 people with disabilities have completed a coaching or refereeing course by 2020.
4. • 2 day referee training course designed for Blind, Powerchair and Amputee football.
   • Three disability referee training courses delivered.
   • Senior referee tutor for disability football appointed.
   • 6 referees appointed to international disability tournaments by 2020.
PILLAR 4
HIGH PERFORMANCE

INTRODUCTION

Since 2003 the association through the Football For All programme have supported International disability football teams across numerous areas of need, finance, gear & equipment, technical, logistics and facilities. The association now recognises eight international disability teams and the Homeless World Cup team and since 2005 this recognition has come with each player receiving an international cap every year they represent their country at a major international tournament. The new strategy will aim not only to increase the awareness of the international pathways for players with disabilities in Ireland but will look at different levels of high performance within grassroots programmes ensuring all players receive the support and opportunity to reach their full potential. This pillar aims to bring our Football For All international pathways to a level of awareness parallel with its mainstream counterpart by 2020, allowing a child with a disability to, very early in childhood, begin to aspire to play for their country and inspiring all through international success.

STRATEGY GOALS

1. Implement a disability player focused pathway providing opportunities for all players with a disability to reach their full potential from club to country.
2. Provide higher levels of competitive football for elite underage performers.
3. Develop a robust recruitment system for elite players with disabilities to support our international disability squads.
4. Embed a high performance culture within all international disability teams.
5. Increase awareness of elite disability football opportunities in Ireland.

OUTCOMES

1. Diagram depicting player development pathways for each specific disability designed and published.
2. One international club pan disability tournament hosted in Ireland by 2020.
3. A representative team structure across different formats of the game identified and delivered.
4. Two national communications of the international disability player opportunities with FAI affiliates and relevant departments through social media per year.
5. Three FAI disability talent days completed.
6. International disability team head coaches group established to support their development.
7. International team plans submitted to Football For All National Coordinator each year from 2018.
8. International heads of agreement in place with all disability NGB’s and the FAI where applicable.
10. Run disability football week in conjunction with International tournament.
PILLAR 5
COMMUNICATIONS & PROMOTION

INTRODUCTION

The programmes, opportunities and truly inspirational stories derived from the Football For All programme must be made known to the Irish football family and wider public. This pillar will look at the area of promotion through support from our communications department with a strong emphasis on a consistent message and development of a strong Football For All abilities brand.

STRATEGY GOALS

1. Communications plan developed annually to ensure that Football For All activities are communicated effectively across all media types.
2. Complete redesign of Football For All pages on FAI website.
3. Create brand identity for the Football For All programme.
4. Professional profiles of all international teams and individual players to be used at all opportunities of exposure.
5. Commission a documentary series on the Football For All programme and the FAI’s approach to inclusion as a whole organisation.

OUTCOMES

1. Quarterly meetings between FFA Coordinator and Communications Manager per year completed.
2. Calendar of events published every year from 2018.
3. Effective communication procedures established between the FAI communications department and FFA stakeholders where needed.
4. Role of FAI development officers in promoting and communicating FFA activity in their areas established.
5. Football For All programme ambassador has attended two planned events per year.
6. FAI FFA website pages redeveloped to clearly illustrate the various initiatives run by FFA, regular stream of news & feature articles, new videos, course information & schedules and contact information.
7. Logos, social media headers, templates, literature, and video icons redesigned.
8. Bi-annual ezine for FFA programme designed and produced.
9. FFA social media accounts established.
10. Specific programme ambassadors appointed to core programmes (FFA Club, Amputee, Blind, Powerchair, Schools and Coach Education)
11. All FFA international team players and management have their headshots, group photos & feature shots taken.
12. Recording of a six-part documentary series that focuses on personalities from various FFA programmes and looks into FAI’s inclusive approach to its sport and organisation completed.
IMPLEMENTATION & OPERATIONS

The Statement of Strategy highlights the strategic direction that the FAI is aiming towards for the next four years. It indicates clear priorities through each of the five pillars and sets out some challenging goals for the association and the Football For All programme. In order for these to be realised, a detailed implementation plan will be put into place to oversee and monitor the progress throughout this time period. This will consist of the breakdown of the strategy into annual operation plans developed and implemented by the Strategy Implementation Committee and monitored by a Strategy Steering Committee.

STRATEGY STEERING COMMITTEE

The Steering Committee is responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of the Football For All (FFA) strategy, defining and realising benefits, and monitoring risks, quality and timelines. In addition, the FFA Steering Committee is to monitor and advise on the promotion, development, education, associated with the FAI FFA programme. The composition and terms of reference for this Committee has been approved by the Board.

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

A Strategy Implementation Committee will oversee the development and implementation of operational plans to realise the strategic goals as set out in the Statement of Strategy. The Committee will be chaired by the Grassroots Director and contain the following staff members; Football For All National Coordinator and Head of Partnerships and Strategy. The composition and terms of reference for this Committee has been approved by the Board. This committee will meet on a quarterly basis to monitor the progress of the operational plans in line with the Statement of Strategy.

RESOURCES

The planning process will require detailed examination of the financial, human and technological resources required to facilitate achievement of the goals within the Statement of Strategy. These resources will be assessed and monitored by the Implementation Committee to ensure the effective budgetary management of the total resources required.

OPERATIONAL PLANS

Annual operational plans are to be developed to contribute to the achievement of the Association’s Statement of Strategy. Details of the operational plans will include the development of:

- Specific operational activities aligned to the key goals.
- Key performance indicators to measure organisational performance against the strategic goals.
- Detailed timescales and milestone setting for each key goal.
- Identification of information flows and communications requirements.
- Specific revenue and expenditure estimates for each task associated with the key goals.

Operational plans are the framework for departmental and individual objectives which provide the foundation of performance management within the association. In order to achieve these objectives the Association adopts a calendar approach to performance planning. Clear time requirements are placed on managers to complete objectives and conduct performance reviews.