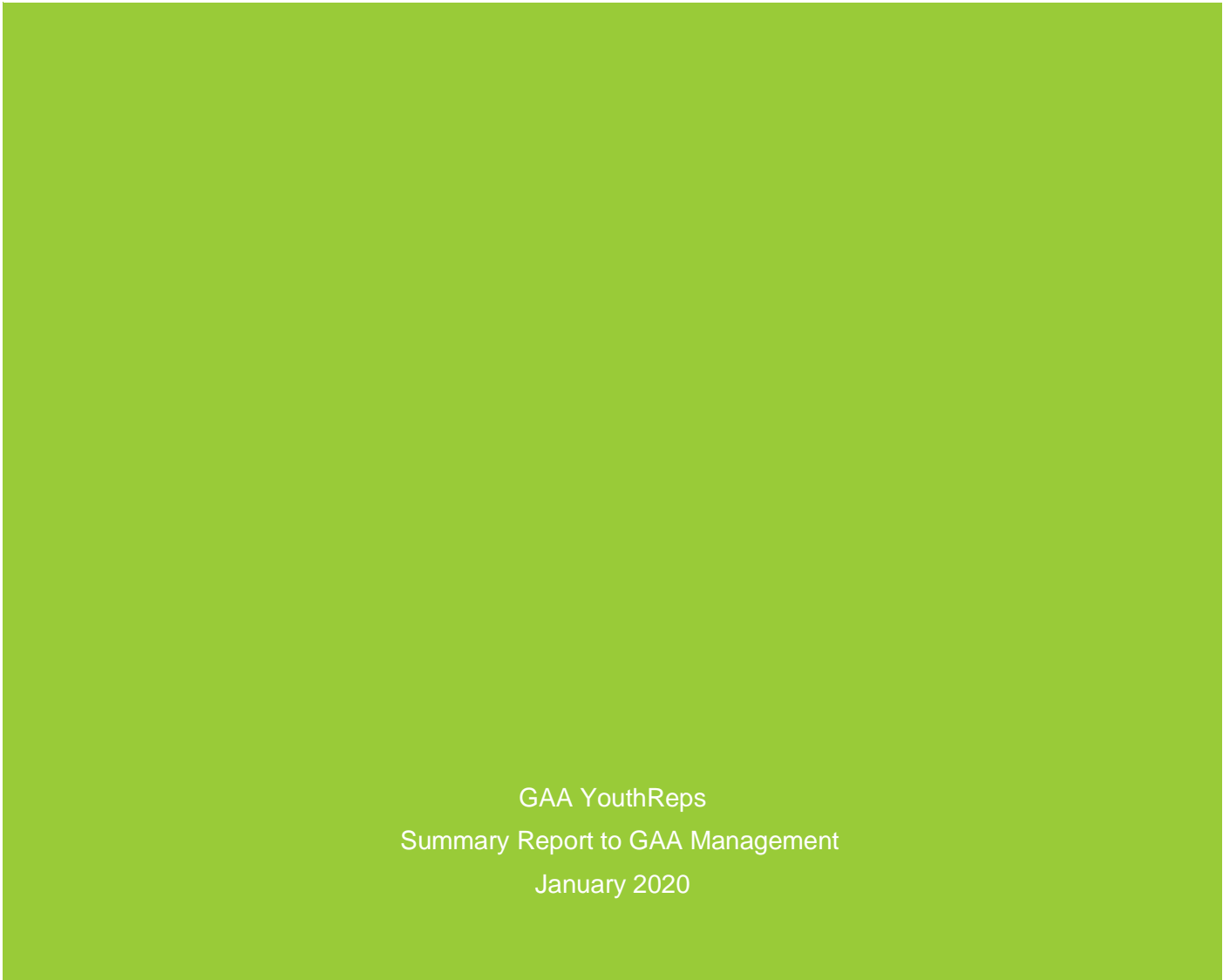




# #GAAYOUTH YOUTHREPS REPORT 2019



GAA YouthReps  
Summary Report to GAA Management  
January 2020

# #GAAyouth – YouthReps Report 2019

This Summary Report has been prepared by the GAA YouthReps with the assistance of the Youth Consultation Committee for the attention of the GAA Management Committee. The Report provides an overview of activities completed by the YouthReps in 2019; the outcomes of the 2019 #GAAyouth Forum; YouthRep Recommendations/Proposals for 2020.

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## Section 1: 2019 Activities

In January 2019, a number of the GAA YouthReps presented to a meeting of An Coiste Bainistíochta. The presentation included a series of proposals for delivery throughout 2019 and these were fully ratified by An Coiste Bainistíochta. The proposals provided the basis for the YouthRep's activities in 2019 and a status update is provided below:

Proposed Activity	Status
That a report on the 2018 #GAAyouth Forum be circulated by An Coiste Bainistíochta/Ard Chomhairle to every County for consideration and discussion at a meeting of the County Management Committee.	<p>Completed in February 2019.</p> <p>The YouthReps' report was circulated as an appendix to the minutes of Central Council.</p>
That the YouthReps be provided with an opportunity to present the report on the 2018 #GAAyouth Forum and relevant findings to the following Central Committees: Communications Committee; All Ireland Post-Primary Schools Council; National Club Committee.	<p>Partially completed.</p> <p>The Youth Reps spoke at the 2019 National Coaching Conference and stressed the need for coaches to create a positive culture for our young people, ensuring that they feel respected and encouraged to develop and grow as a member regardless of their playing ability, a key theme identified at the 2019 Youth Congress.</p> <p>The YouthReps also presented their report to the Communications Committee where they highlighted the need for the Association to better communicate with our young people through the social media platforms that young people use most often. The findings from the 2019 Forum mirror those from the 2018 Forum, specifically that the association needs to communicate better with young people.</p> <p>The failure to arrange a meeting with the All Ireland Post Primary Schools Council and National Club Committee was disappointing as key findings from the 2019 Youth Forum showed the need to promote meaningful dialogue with our youth members and to achieve a better balance for them regarding game opportunities.</p> <p>The Youth Reps have established a positive working relationship with the National Youth Consultation Committee, with both groups working together to deliver the 2019 Youth Forum and supporting each other. The Committee members acted as mentors to the YouthRep Leaders providing guidance and support for tasks.</p>
That a select number of YouthReps be invited as observers to GAA Congress 2019.	<p>Completed in February 2019.</p> <p>Áine McParland (Chairperson, YouthReps) presented to An Chomhdháil Bhliantúil and received a very positive reaction,</p>

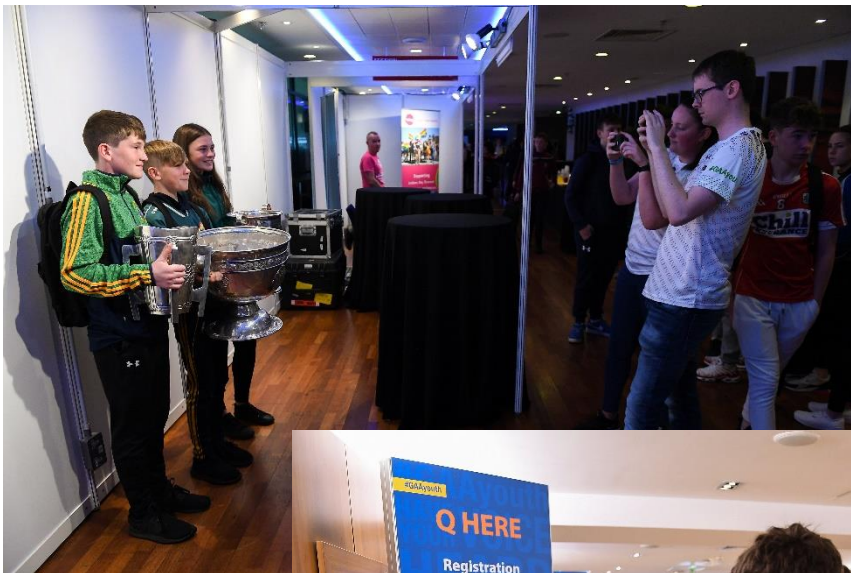
	<p>with Tipperary withdrawing Motion 35 based on the feedback given from the Youth Forum report.</p> <p>It should also be noted that having the YouthReps invited as observers to Congress 2019 provided the YouthReps and subsequently the youth of the Association an insight into how decisions are made, and how rules come into effect.</p> <p>Additionally, the Youth Reps presented their findings to Camogie Congress and to delegates at LGFA Congress.</p>
Development and communication of a youth-friendly version of the Code of Behaviour.	<p>Completed in November 2019.</p> <p>Further to guidance from the Child Safeguarding Section in Croke Park, the YouthReps were tasked with the design of a new poster promoting the GAA's Code of Behaviour to young players.</p> <p>The designs submitted by the YouthReps were integral to the production of a new poster that has been widely circulated.</p>
Pilot of a Youth Forum at Provincial level.	<p>Not completed.</p> <p>Two attempts were made to pilot a Youth Forum in at Provincial level, and both times were unsuccessful, having initially proposed a Connacht Roadshow in August and again in November.</p> <p>Despite significant support from Connacht Council, factors such as timing, playing commitments and low registration figures meant that the delivery of a Provincial Event was not viable.</p> <p>This will be re-examined in conjunction with the Youth Committee in 2020.</p>
Development of a national programme to recognise the efforts of youth volunteers and to encourage youth volunteering.	<p>On-going.</p> <p>The YouthReps conducted a review of existing youth volunteer awards across other organisations (sporting, charitable etc.) before preparing initial proposals for consideration by the Youth Committee and subsequently an Uachtarán. Further to feedback the proposals will be revised and discussed further with a view to finalising same in early 2020.</p>
Identification of steps that Counties/Clubs can take to raise awareness amongst young players of opportunities to volunteer/upskill as a volunteer.	<p>Not completed.</p> <p>This proposed activity to be reviewed by the YouthReps and Youth Committee in 2020.</p>

Examination of how technology and social media can be used effectively to gather the views of young people on matters of strategic importance.

On-going.

The Youth Reps have prepared a proposal to establish an Online Digital Repository in conjunction with the National Youth Consultation Committee. The purpose of the Online Repository is to enable young people (aged 16 – 21), who are involved in Gaelic Games, to have their say in relation to matters of strategic importance in a manner that is: age-appropriate; voluntary; safe; peer-reviewed.

A further purpose is to provide decision-makers with the opportunity to work in conjunction with the YouthReps to consult and engage with young people so that they can more readily factor young people's views and opinions into their decision-making processes



## Section 2: #GAAYouth Forum 2019

The 2019 #GAAYouth Forum took place on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> October in Croke Park. Over 400 young people (aged 12 – 21) from all across Ireland registered to attend the Forum and similar to previous years a range of different workshops for three age cohorts (12/13 year olds; 14/15 year olds; 16 -21 year olds) were delivered. Building upon 2018, a Consultation Workshop around the topic of drop-off and a Youth Congress were held as part of the 2019 Forum.

### *Consultation Workshop on Drop-Off*

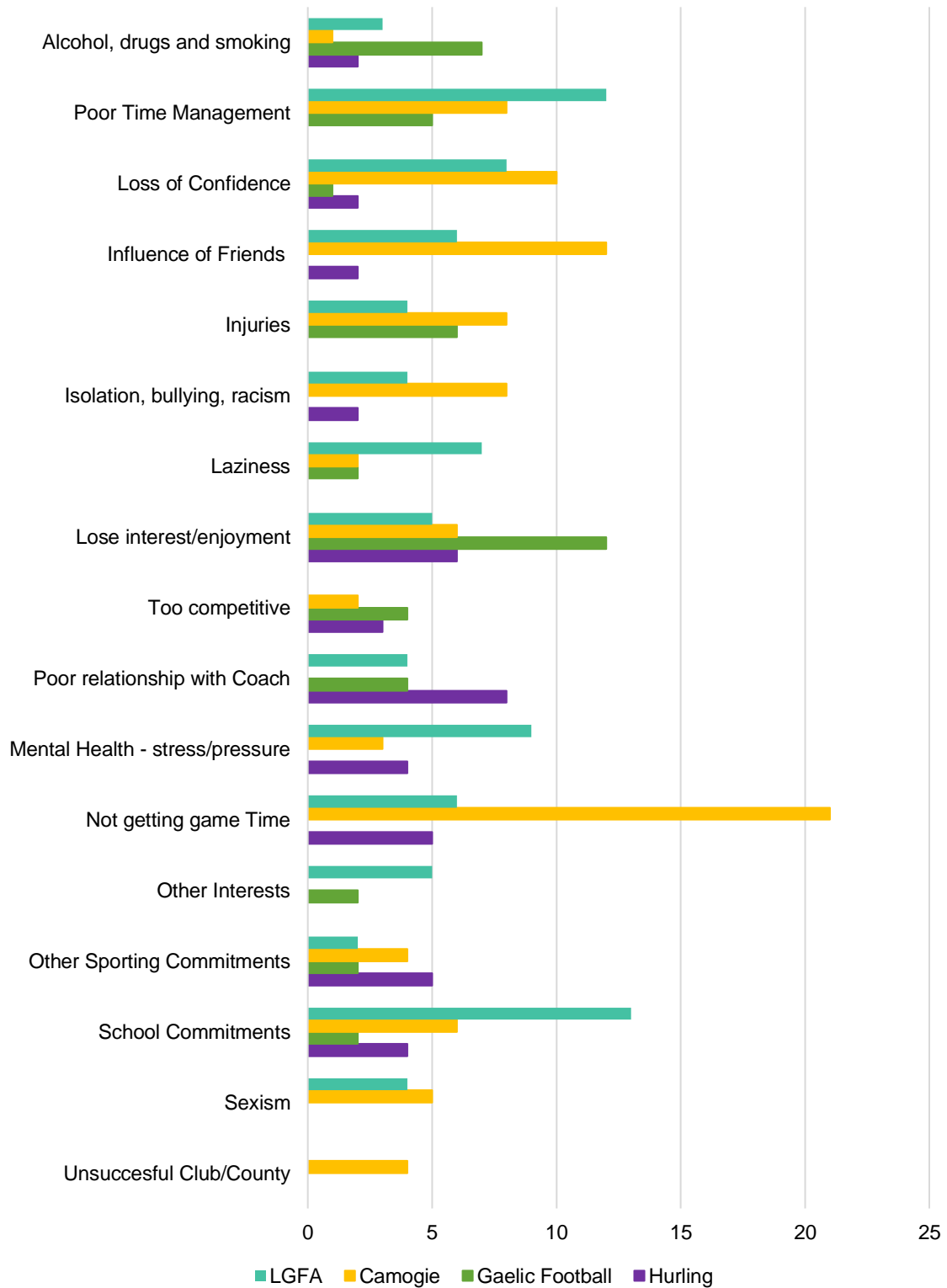
After the success of a Consultation Workshop led by the YouthReps in 2018, it was agreed by the YouthReps to schedule a further Consultation with 150+ 14/15 year olds at the 2019 Forum. At the Consultation Workshop the YouthReps acted as both presenters and table facilitators with assistance from members of the Youth Committee. The objectives of the 2019 Consultation were:

- to establish the factors that would lead a young person to stop playing Gaelic Games [to gather differentiated data based upon each code in this regard].
- to identify practical recommendations/suggestions that a teammate (young person), coach or Club could adopt to discourage young people from dropping out of Gaelic Games.
- to facilitate the sharing of ideas and brainstorming by young people.

At the start of the Consultation the young people were divided based upon the code they play or preferred code. Subsequently, a ‘think-pair-share’ exercise was conducted to gather the participant’s thoughts on why a young player might walk away from playing Gaelic Games. After all the participants placed their post-its on the walls of the room, a smaller group volunteered to group the thoughts captured on the post-it’s into ‘categories’. The ‘categories’ – differentiated on foot of code – are set out in the graphic below.



## Reasons for Drop-Off



Feedback from the post-its included:



After the ‘think-pair-share’ exercise the participants engaged in an exercise using placemats that covered the round tables at which they were sitting. The placemat enabled the young players to discuss and jot down their ideas in relation to three key headings:

1. If one of your teammates was thinking of quitting... what might you do to encourage him/her not to quit?
2. If one of your teammates was thinking of quitting... what could your Coach do to stop him/her from dropping-off?
3. If one of your teammates was thinking of quitting... what could your Club do to keep them involved?

The YouthReps facilitated discussions at each table and encouraged the participants to share and debate their ideas before jotting them down on the placemats under the relevant headings. At the end of the exercise every participant received three ‘sticky dots’ which they used to vote for what they considered to be the best recommendation under each heading. Full recommendations are set out in Appendix I.

#### What can players do to keep teammates involved?

It was interesting to see what the youth thought they themselves could do to help keep a teammate playing. The standout from the consultation was the simplicity of the comments; *“make sure to talk to people at training”*, be sure to *“invite/include those at risk into your friendship group”*, and perhaps the most powerful of them all, *“Tell them that they are good”*.

The power of encouragement was another theme that emerged from the discussions, with the delegates placing a high degree of importance on their peers encouraging them to stay involved. An interesting trend was the suggestion that the importance of the Club and the wider GAA should be



highlighted more to young players, including the benefits and opportunities that come with staying involved in the GAA, as well as outlining the downsides of quitting - losing friends, becoming unfit etc.

Offering support, checking if those at risk are okay and helping improve their skills were all factors that the delegates felt would help keep youngsters involved, with one comment summing it up, *“Talk, encourage...be nice”*. The empathy displayed gives great hope for the future of the association. It’s a stark reminder, that in an era of large teenage drop-off in sport, that we should not overlook the basics of inclusivity and positive feedback.

#### What can coaches do to keep players involved?

A seminal part of the consultation for anyone involved in coaching young players, was the delegates opinions on what coaches could do to help prevent player drop-off. First and foremost, increased game time was seen as paramount. While this may seem obvious, it was interesting to hear that the delegates, all of whom are still playing, felt that coaches should emphasis game time for all ahead of winning.

Variety in training was another theme that emerged, with many of the young players asking coaches to change up their training methods, *“Don’t do the same thing every week at training”*. There was also some discussion around training and match times, with the delegates asking that consideration be given towards school times. Equality was another key requirement asked of coaches, *“Treat players fairly, give equal game time...help them achieve”*. Coaches having favourites, perceived or otherwise, was seen to be an issue.

Perhaps the most striking ask of the delegates was that coaches should talk more to their players. Giving positive and constructive feedback was considered key as well as talking to players about their skill development. Consultation with players was seen as a key element, *“Ask players what they think of the training session...take their opinion into consideration”*. Again, a very simple message, but one that could be invaluable to a coach.

#### What can Clubs do to keep their young players involved?

Finally, the youth delegates were asked what the Clubs could do to help prevent drop-off. Again, equality came to the fore. Equal opportunities emerged on several fronts, with a strong focus on differentiating between male and female teams within a Club, *“Don’t discriminate between the boys and the girls’ teams”*.

Showing the pathway through the Club was talked about extensively, with suggestions of *“getting county/senior players to talk to teams about their journey through the club as a young player”*. Other suggestions included offering more opportunities to play, extra teams, friendly leagues and organising training/fixtures at times that suit the players.

The main theme to emerge was that of being engaged by the Club. Many felt the Club should actively engage those who have quit (or are thinking about quitting) and listen to why they feel they need to quit, *“figure out why players are quitting...talk to them”*. This could help the Club address any issues and implement change to assist players in continuing within the Club. Again, a simple message came through, *“The club needs to tell you how important you are...and how you’re needed in the club”*.

### Youth Congress

The second aspect of engagement at the #GAAYOUTH Forum 2019 was the ‘Youth Congress’ with more than 120 of the 16 – 21 year olds, who were at the Forum.

The items discussed at the Youth Congress were proposed by the YouthReps and supplemented with additional items from the Youth Committee, Uachtarán CLG as well as the Camogie Association and LGFA.

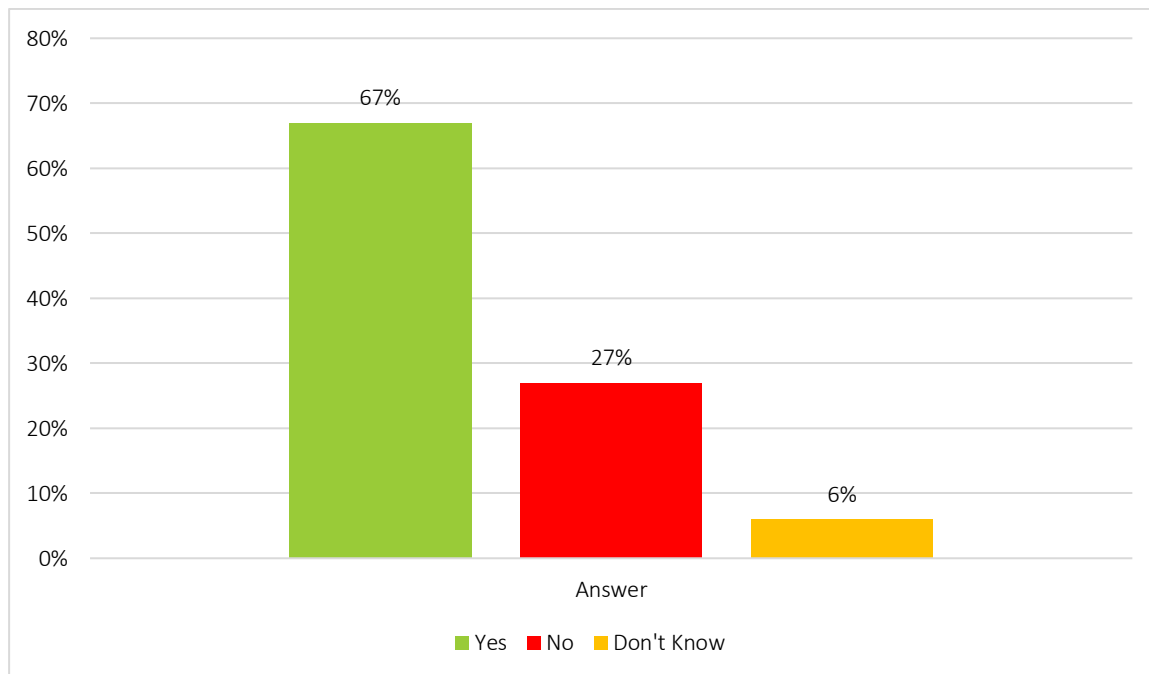
The Youth Congress was chaired by Diarmuid Cahill (Chairperson, GAA Youth Committee) and attended by John Horan (Uachtarán CLG), Kathleen Woods (Uachtarán, An Cumann Camógaíochta) and Marie Hickey (Uachtarán, Cumann Peile na mBan). The presence of the three Presidents was vital in terms of the credibility and integrity of the Youth Congress and greatly appreciated by the YouthReps.

Some of the items discussed proceeded to a vote using electronic voting devices while others did not, however, for all items the YouthReps acted as table facilitators and took notes of the discussions at each table. Voting was conducted using the same devices as are present at GAA Congress. The results of voting as well as feedback transcribed from the round-table discussions is available as an Appendix to this Report (see Appendix II).

For the purpose of this report, selected voting outcomes relating to items that were discussed and traverse topics such as Games Programmes, Communication and Substance Use.

### Games Programme

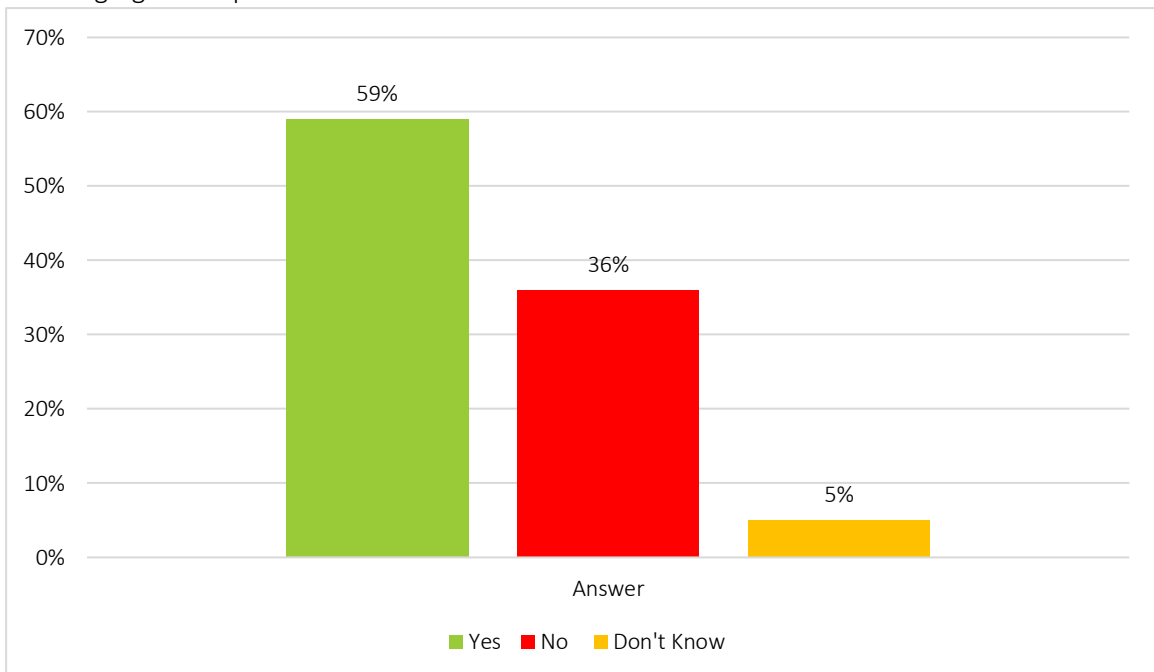
- Do you think there should be a tiered Championship Competition for Inter-County Minor Football (male)?



Comments on this Item	
YES	NO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More of a chance to improve.</li> <li>• Should also apply for females.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No – Dublin - would have an even easier path to the Final.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, Counties such as Kilkenny who would be hurling dominant counties struggle to compete in the championship at the moment. Due to this there has been an increased drop-off in such counties, which doesn't augur well for the future of the GAA.</li> <li>• Yes – because its fairer on weaker teams.</li> <li>• Yes – Louth – would be a longer season for weaker Counties.</li> <li>• It would give some Counties more of a chance.</li> <li>• Yes – but only if all teams start at the same level and then are tiered because teams change yearly.</li> <li>• Yes – lose interest if they don't win and are knocked out quickly.</li> <li>• Yes – smaller teams/counties might be encouraged to work harder.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No – where just one tier then every team can develop their skills.</li> <li>• No – teams would not improve.</li> <li>• No – get better by playing against better counties.</li> </ul>
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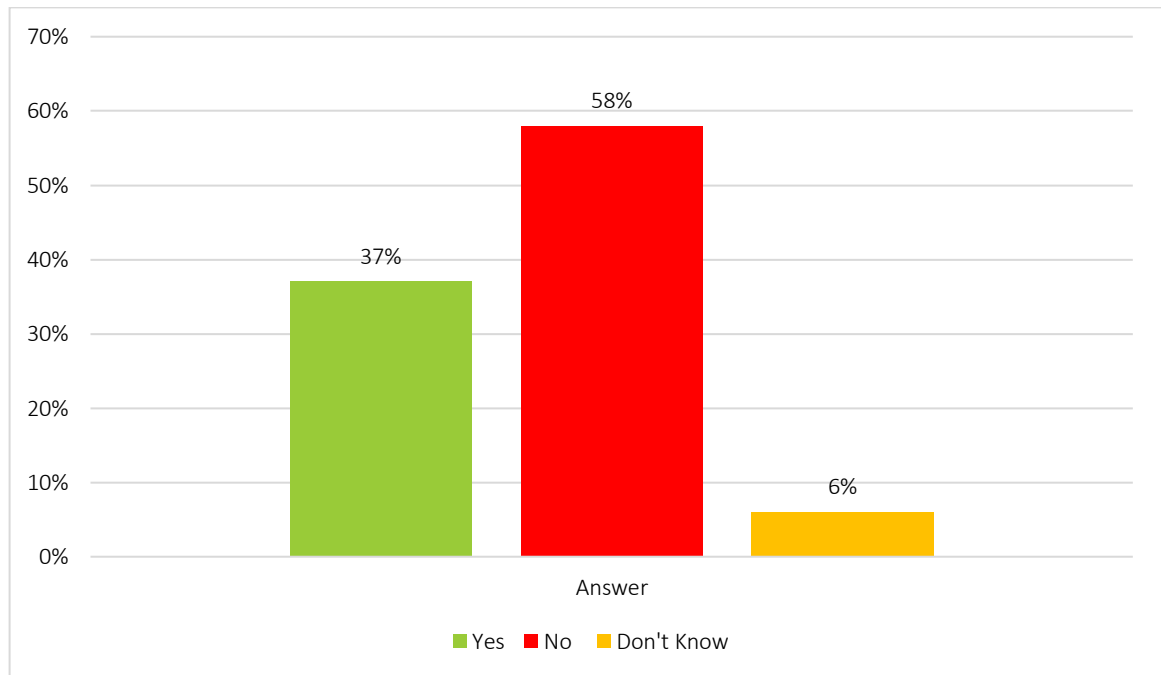
➤ Do you think that an 'Interchange' (unlimited and rolling substitutions) system should be introduced for all age-grades up to U.17?



Comments on this Item	
YES	NO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes – think that introducing 'interchange' would result in players continuing playing as they get older as it would increase the amount of game time people get.</li> <li>• Yes - would also mean that subs could get on quicker as this has been a problem in</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No - smaller clubs lose out as they may only have 15 and opposition may have subs to bring on and then you will have fresher legs on the field.</li> <li>• No – smaller teams would struggle as they don't have as many subs as larger teams,</li> </ul>

<p>many of our Clubs. It often occurs that a player is asked to warm up and don't end up being brought on as the ball doesn't 'go out of play' – this could also end up with people dropping off.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes – because everyone gets a game and if someone gets injured and you've used all your subs they have to stay on.</li> <li>• Yes – everybody gets a chance.</li> <li>• Keeps players playing as weaker players still get a chance.</li> <li>• Yes – enables everyone to get a game. Could stop drop-off as less people would quit due to a 'lack of games'.</li> <li>• Yes – not everyone is getting a game.</li> <li>• Yes – more game time = less drop-off. Fresher legs causes an increase in standards and increases injury prevention.</li> </ul>	<p>who could put on all their subs and have a massive fitness advantage.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No - in small clubs its harder to have subs. Maybe try up to U.15s to start.</li> <li>• No – afraid smaller clubs would not benefit from this.</li> <li>• No – smaller clubs at a disadvantage.</li> </ul>
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➤ Do you think that the first Inter-County age-grade should be increased from U.17 to U.19 for Gaelic Football and Hurling?

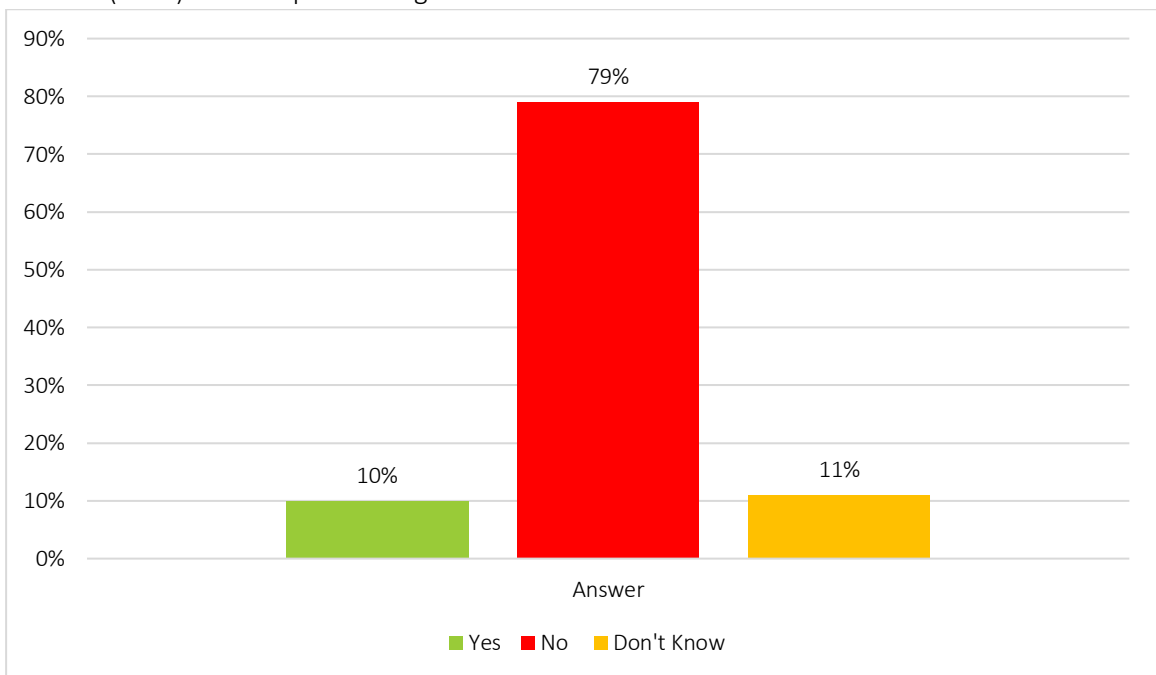


Comments on this Item	
YES	NO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes – because it will prepare you for playing at a higher level and allows people to play underage for longer.</li> <li>• Yes - You would feel a lot of pressure if you're only U.17.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No - U.19 is where many people start college and they may not be able to fully focus on their sport as opposed to U.17 where players may have a lot more free time.</li> <li>• No – a lot now doing Leaving Cert at U.19.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes – gives you something to look forward to after the Leaving Certificate year.</li> <li>• Yes – it gives people more a chance to make the senior team in their Club and County.</li> <li>• Yes – could prevent drop-off rates.</li> <li>• Yes – the gap between U.17 and Senior is too big.</li> <li>• Yes – players will get more time with Club.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No – something for young people to work to.</li> <li>• No – U.17 is a good experience.</li> <li>• No – college grade, people will find it hard to make it back home for training.</li> <li>• No – it only changed a few years ago – give it time.</li> </ul>
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Communication & Consultation with Young Players

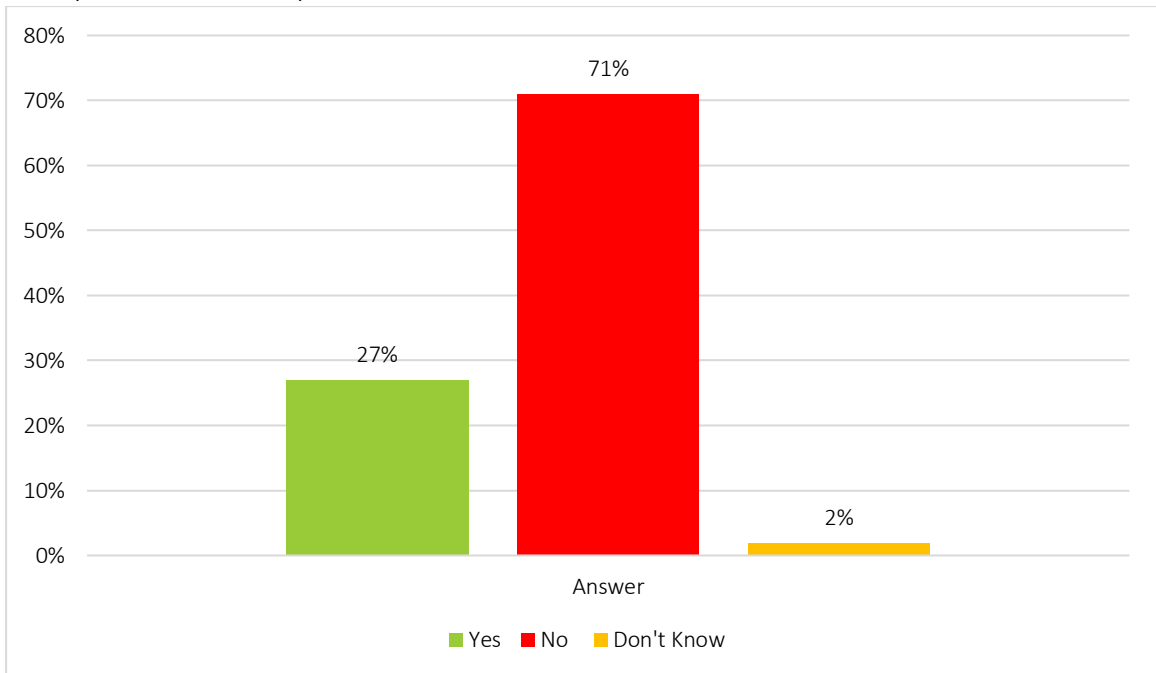
➤ Do you think that young players are aware of the recent Playing Rule Changes made to Gaelic Football (male) at GAA Special Congress?



Comments on this Item	
YES	NO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes – saw it on facebook but not told in training or matches.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No - other than the prospect of Tier 2 football there wasn't a lot of knowledge on the recent changes made to Gaelic Football.</li> <li>• No - don't think a lot of younger players have been made aware.</li> <li>• No – not promoted enough on social media.</li> <li>• No - could have been better publicised through the channels that young players use.</li> <li>• No - every player should have to do a course.</li> </ul>

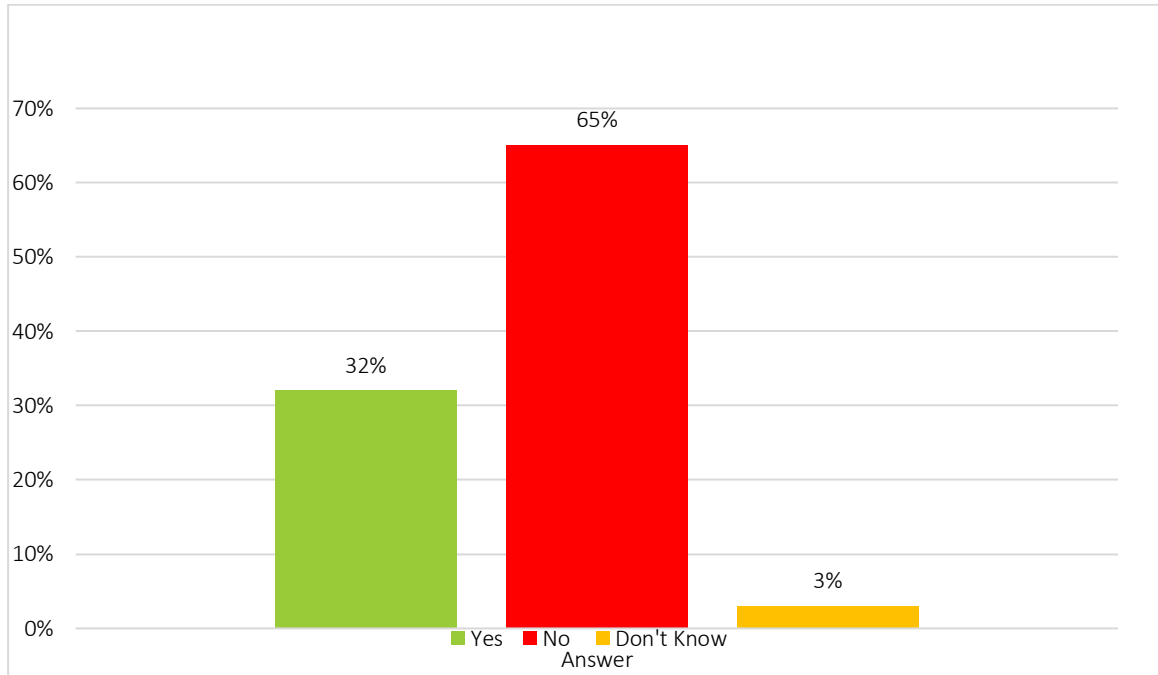
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Players should be informed by their coaches of these new rules at the start of the season but to reiterate these rules the referees of Gaelic football should be given time at the beginning of the games to make sure both teams understand.</li> <li>• No – need ads on social media informing us of these rules. Should be added to the like of Instagram and snapchat stories.</li> <li>• No - a lot of clubs and coaches might know but players don't.</li> </ul>
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➤ Have you ever attended your Club AGM?



Comments on this Item	
YES	NO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes – some clubs are making committees younger.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No - not for young players.</li> <li>• No - not told about it, it's older people's thing.</li> <li>• No - think it's a conscious effort to keep young people out.</li> <li>• No - our parents are texted about it but not us.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>

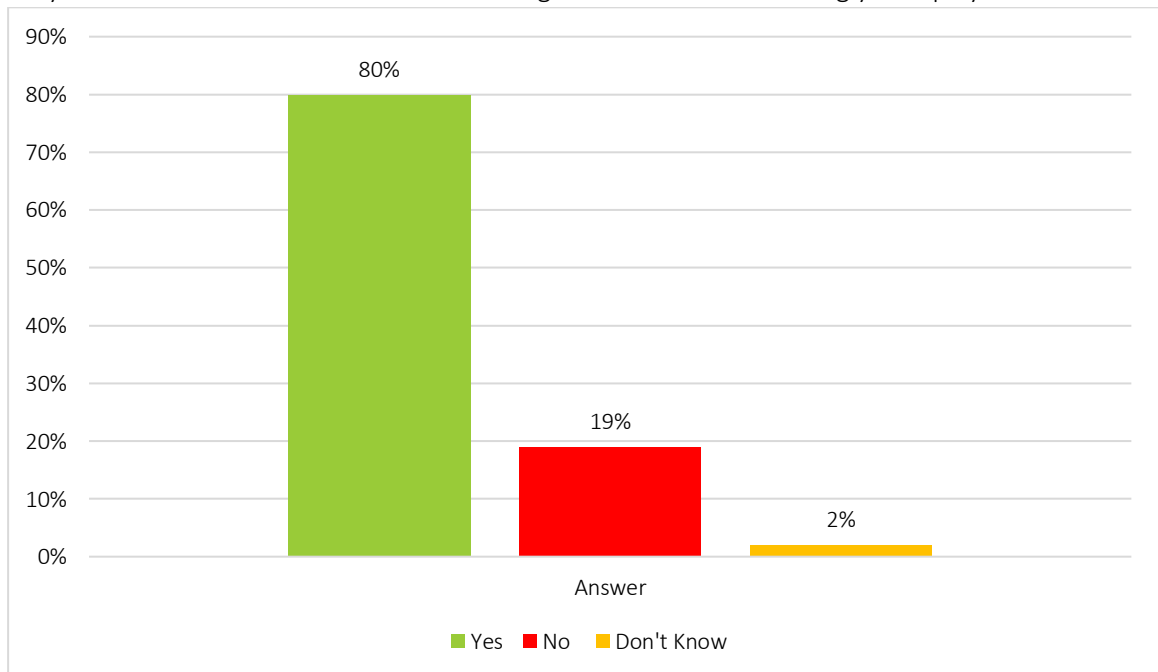
➤ Do you know that all members over 16 are entitled to attend their Club AGM?



Comments on this Item	
YES	NO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes – why wouldn't they be!</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No – did not know this.</li> </ul>

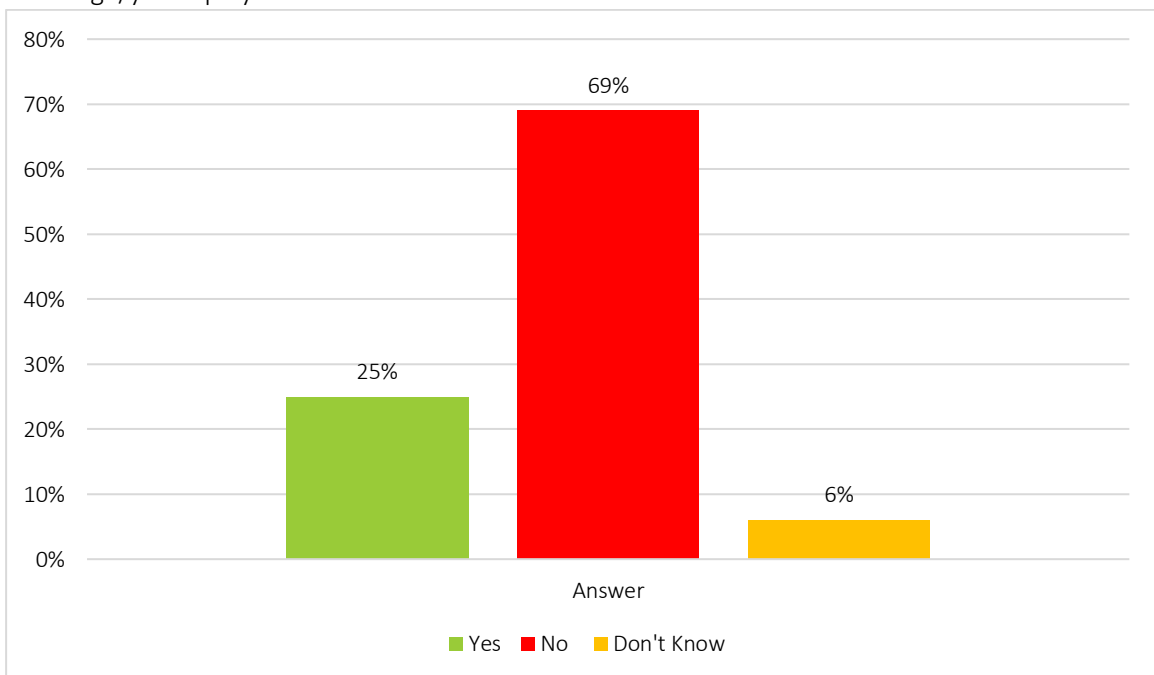
### Substance Use

➤ Do you think that there is a culture of drinking too much alcohol among youth players?



Comments on this Item	
YES	NO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes – when young players are playing with senior players, when celebrating they are influenced by alcohol and club bars will serve them.</li> <li>• Yes – when a team is knocked out of championship they are almost expected to drink.</li> <li>• Yes – pressure to drink.</li> <li>• Yes – you see players who were in the Final missing school after it.</li> <li>• Yes - Minors look up to the Senior team and do the same.</li> <li>• Yes - think there should be less of a link between GAA and drinking. Players should be made aware of the effects of over-drinking.</li> <li>• Yes – Ladies from smaller clubs are asked to play for Adult teams – big age gaps – celebrations can revolve around drinking.</li> <li>• Yes – not just GAA, a societal thing.</li> <li>• Yes - can't expect players to constantly switch between just school and GAA – have to have a social aspect and it's the social life.</li> <li>• Yes - it's hard to be the only one on your team that doesn't drink – peer pressure.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No – think this culture is not present among youth players. The questions says 'too much' and we think that sport/GAA takes these teenagers away from alcohol – think the only time youth players really indulge in this culture is when they win and this is understandable as they are celebrating and the season is over.</li> </ul>

➤ Do you think that drug use (recreational drug use in a social setting) is an issue among underage/youth players?





Comments on this Item	
YES	NO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes – more of a problem with boy’s teams.</li> <li>• Yes – mixed opinions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No – think that being involved in GAA does keep players away from drugs due to their love of the sport. The pressure of drugs isn’t really on players as the main cause of taking drugs is peer pressure and this is unlikely if you are among your friends who are also interested in improving their game and don’t take drugs.</li> <li>• No – sport keeps them away.</li> <li>• No - don’t really think so. The people who take drugs most likely aren’t involved in GAA and have nothing to do.</li> <li>• No - drink is more for celebrating, drugs aren’t accepted.</li> <li>• No - is in the area but not with players.</li> <li>• No - not as big a problem as alcohol.</li> <li>• No - People on drugs typically drop out of sport.</li> <li>• No - Club tends to keep you out of trouble and teammates support each other.</li> </ul>



### Section 3: YouthRep Recommendations/Proposals for 2020

Having regard for the activities proposed as part of the previous report as well as the feedback from the #GAAYouth Forum 2019 the YouthReps have prepared a number of recommendations for consideration by An Coiste Bainistíochta and Ard Chomhairle.

#### *Recommendation #1: Improved Communication*

That this report be circulated on behalf of An Coiste Bainistíochta/Ard Chomhairle to every County for consideration and discussion at a meeting of the County Management Committee.

That the YouthReps be provided with an opportunity to present this report and relevant findings to the Central Committees they feel will benefit the most, in addition to presenting to LGFA and Camogie Management Committees respectively.

That a number of YouthReps (no fewer than one per Province) be invited as observers to GAA Congress 2020 so that they can report on this subsequently at the #GAAYouth Forum 2020.

#### *Recommendation #2: Improved Consultation*

That the YouthReps work together with Counties and Provinces to deliver Roadshows throughout the year which educate and empower young people and ensure that they have their say on GAA issues that matter to them.

That the proposals for an online depository be reviewed and discussed by the relevant stakeholders, in particular the IT and Communication Departments in Croke Park, with a view to finalising them in early 2020, so that we can increase the number of ways in which YouthReps, Counties, Provinces and Central Committees consult with young people (see Appendix III).

#### *Recommendation #3: Improved Engagement*

That the proposals for Gradam na nÓg (Youth Volunteering Award) be revised and discussed with a view to finalising them in early 2020.

The YouthReps along with the Youth Consultation Committee identify steps that Counties/Clubs can take to raise awareness amongst young members of opportunities to volunteer/upskill as a volunteer.

That young people be included and involved in the planning, preparation and possibly delivery of the Association's next Strategic Plan.



## Section 4: Conclusion

We would like to thank John Horan, Uachtarán CLG and Tom Ryan, Ard Stiúrthóir CLG, for the on-going support that they provide to the YouthReps. We would also like to thank the LGFA and Camogie Association for collaborating with us and providing the YouthReps with an opportunity to attend their Congresses.

Many thanks also to the Youth Committee, who have provided significant advice, guidance and mentorship to the YouthReps in 2019. A particular thank you as well to all the speakers and exhibitors at the 2019 #GAAYouth Forum.

The YouthReps are committed to working to ensure that our peers feel valued, respected and listened to at Club, County and National level. Every year we are learning new approaches and piloting ideas to see how best to maximise engagement with other young people.

Le meas,

Áine McParland (Cathaoirleach – Ard Mhacha) agus Christina Bradshaw (Runaí - Ceatharlach) ar son GAA YouthReps 2019:

Anna McCaffery (Aontroim)  
Brian Rogers (Aontroim)  
Áine Doyle (Ard Mhacha)  
Aisling Walls (An Cabhán)  
Alana O'Brien (An Cabhán)  
Michael Smollen (An Cabhán)  
Laura Fennell (An Clár)  
Áine O'Neill (Corcaigh)  
Amy O'Neill (Corcaigh)  
Niamh O'Leary (Corcaigh)  
Naoise Marron (Corcaigh)  
Tommie Carroll (Corcaigh)  
Brooklyn Flanagan (An Dún)  
Cormac Curtis (Áth Cliath)  
Emma Meyler (Áth Cliath)  
Eoghan Gately (Áth Cliath)  
Louise Coen (Gaillimh)  
Paul Fahy (Gaillimh)  
Leanne Hanafin (Ciarraí)  
Aoife Kane (Cill Dara)  
Joe Leydon (Cill Cainnigh)  
Matt Rossiter (Cill Cainnigh)  
Kerri Halpenny (An Lú)  
Paul Barrett (Maigh Eo)  
Aoibhe Barrins (Sligeach)  
Sheona Lleydon (Sligeach)  
Muireann Nic Corcráin (Loch Garmán)  
Shauna Kelly (Cill Mhantáin)

## Appendix I: Recommendations from the Consultation on Drop-Off

### PLAYER - What might you do to keep a teammate involved?

*Make sure they have people to talk to in training. Invite/include them in your friendship group;  
Tell them they are good  
Encourage team mates to go training  
Team bonding  
Encourage teammates to stay  
Explain that they might become unhealthy if they quit  
Show them opportunities that exist when you get older and stay involved in GAA  
Talk, encourage, be nice – show the fun side  
Improve their skills or fitness by practicing with them  
Check if they're okay  
Practice with them to improve their skills  
Explain that you'll make friends for life through the Club  
Don't put pressure on them off the pitch  
Tell them you are there to support them  
Tell them it would be a loss of talent  
Tell them the downsides of quitting – lose friends, become unfit etc.  
Help them to practice*

### COACH - What might a coach do to keep a player involved?

*Don't do the same thing every week at training  
Make sure they're getting game time  
Training and matches might need to be at a better time  
Start everyone in 'friendlies'  
Ask players what they think of the training session – take the opportunity to take their opinion into consideration  
Give constructive criticism only  
Equality  
Ask why they're leaving  
Talk to them about the good aspects of their game and the reasons not to drop out  
Reassure them that they are a valuable player  
Treat players fairly, give equal game time and help them achieve  
Stop favouritism  
Roll substitutions of the team – put on more subs  
Vary trainings  
Give them more confidence and encouragement  
Ask them why they started and are they still playing for the same reasons  
Motivate them and try to include them more if they're socially awkward  
Talk about why he/she is considering giving up  
Ensure a good balance of competitiveness versus fun  
Make it feel like being involved is worth something  
Encourage them not to compare themselves to others because everyone is different  
Help them improve their skills  
Make the sessions more fun and enjoyable  
Give them more game time  
Be considerate of training times versus school commitments*

## CLUB - What might a Club do to keep a player involved?

*Try not to exclude anyone*

*If a Club have extra players they could start a B team in order to give players a better opportunity to get more game time*

*Don't discriminate between the boys and girls' teams – provide equal opportunities*

*Have a Club rule – if you don't go training, you don't get played*

*Talk to the players*

*Get County Players to come and talk to teams about their stories and how they got on as a young player*

*A Club needs to tell players how good they are and how they're needed in the Club*

*Don't favour one gender over another*

*Listen to the players*

*Figure out why players are quitting – talk to them*

*Re-organise training to best suit players*

*Create more of an open environment for all*

*Address the problem and attempt to fix it*

*Organise days to introduce new players to the sport*

*Find out the reasons for players quitting and address needs*

*Get senior players to talk to younger players*

*Talk to the people that are thinking of leaving*

*Have a competitive league and a friendly league*

*Team building*

*Discuss fixtures and training in advance*

## Appendix II: Youth Congress Results

1. Do you think that there should be a tiered Championship Competition for Inter-County Minor Football (male)?  
Yes – 67%; No – 27%; Don't Know – 6%
2. Do you think that the first Inter-County age-grade should be increased to U.19 instead of U.17 for Gaelic Football and Hurling?  
Yes – 37%; No – 58%; Don't Know – 6%
3. Should the rules of Camogie and LGFA be amended to allow for more contact?  
Yes – 97%; No – 2%; Don't Know – 1%
4. Do you think that an 'Interchange' system should be introduced for all age- grades up to U.17?  
Yes – 59%; No – 36%; Don't Know – 5%
5. Do you think that young players are aware of the recent Playing Rule Changes made to Gaelic Football (male) at GAA Special Congress?  
Yes – 10%; No – 79%; Don't Know – 11%
6. Do you think that there is a culture of drinking too much alcohol among youth players?  
Yes – 80%; No – 19%; Don't Know – 2%
7. Do you think that drug use (recreational drug use by GAA members in a social setting) is an issue among underage/youth players?  
Yes – 25%; No – 69%; Don't Know – 6%
8. Do you think that drug use (recreational drug use by GAA members in a social setting) is an issue among Adult players?  
Yes – 25%; No – 61%; Don't Know – 14%
9. Do you think that drug use (performance enhancing drug use by players) is an issue among underage/youth players?  
Yes – 12%; No – 80%; Don't Know – 8%
10. Do you think that drug use (performance enhancing drug use by players) is an issue among Adult players?  
Yes – 35%; No – 48%; Don't Know – 17%
11. Have you ever attended your Club AGM?  
Yes – 27%; No – 71%; Don't Know – 2%
12. Did you know that all members over 16 are entitled to attend their Club AGM?  
Yes – 32%; No – 65%; Don't Know – 3%
13. Do you or have you ever done a gym programme?  
Yes – 79%; No – 21%; Don't Know – 0%
14. Do you feel that gym programmes benefit your playing game?  
Yes – 81%; No – 14%; Don't Know – 5%

## Appendix III: ‘Have your Voice Heard’ – Online Repository

*We listen and respect the views of all”*

- GAA Core Values

*“To examine of how technology and social media can be used effectively to gather the views of young people on matters of strategic importance”*

- #GAAyouth Action Plan 2019

### Proposal:

The YouthReps will establish a ‘Have Your Voice Heard’ Online Repository with the support of the GAA, LGFA and Camogie.

The purpose of the Online Repository is to enable young people (aged 16 – 21), who are involved in Gaelic Games, to have their say in relation to matters of strategic importance in a manner that is: age-appropriate; voluntary; safe; peer-reviewed.

A further purpose is to provide decision-makers with the opportunity to work in conjunction with the YouthReps to consult and engage with young people so that they can more readily factor young people’s views and opinions into their decision-making processes.

### Operation:

#### Registration

As part of an online registration process young people will be asked to provide the following personal data: name, age, gender, county, codes they play (where applicable), email address. Furthermore, they will be asked to express an interest in:

- Receiving quarterly updates via email about the work of the YouthReps (Yes/No);
- Participating in online survey/s (Yes/No);
- Attending focus group/s (Yes/No);
- Attending workshop/s (Yes/No);
- Attending Youth Forum/s (Yes/No).

The registrants can express an interest in as many or as few aspects as they choose. They can change their preference at any point subsequently. They can also opt out at any point subsequently.

The information provided by the registrants will be held by the YouthReps and will be used to contact and consult with registered young people as necessary and appropriate.

The YouthReps will promote and encourage registration to the ‘Have Your Voice Heard’ Online Repository through a promotional campaign that will run for an agreed period on an annual basis with the support of the GAA, LGFA and Camogie.

#### Consultation & Engagement

Any activities conducted through the Online Repository or arising from same will be in line with best practice in consulting and engaging with young people i.e. the Lundy Model as endorsed by the Department of Children & Youth Affairs.

As such, the YouthReps will be the arbiters of the frequency and methodology of the consultation and engagement. The YouthReps may either:

- initiate and conduct a consultation/engagement that aligns to their Programme of Work; or

- work with another Unit (Club, County Board, LGFA etc.) to initiate and conduct a consultation/engagement.

For instance, a Central Committee may have prepared an online survey and request that it be issued to those who have registered to participate in online surveys via the Repository. In such a scenario the Committee will be asked to collaborate with the YouthReps to make sure the survey meets best practice requirements e.g. is the language used youth-friendly, will the questions make sense to the respondents etc. Once both parties are happy with the survey the YouthReps will record that the request is approved and will then issue the online survey to those who have registered to participate in online surveys. The YouthReps will review the responses received and provide the data to the Committee.

A further example may arise where a County Board wishes to convene a focus group to discuss a new 3-year Strategic Plan. The County Board will be asked to collaborate with the YouthReps on the methodology around the focus group with a view to sharing ideas and ensuring the focus group is in line with best practice. Once both parties are happy with the methodology the YouthReps will record that the request is approved. The invitation to attend the focus group will then issue to the young people from the YouthReps on behalf of that specific County. The invitation to attend the focus group will not issue to young people outside of that County or those who have not registered to attend focus groups.

### Regulation

The Online Repository will be operated by young people (YouthReps) for young people. The YouthRep Chairperson, Secretary and the full-time servicing officer for the Youth Committee will be the only persons with access to the Online Repository.

The functionality of the Online Repository will be delivered through the GAA's existing licence with Microsoft Office 365 i.e. a dedicated account (specific email address with associated OneDrive including Microsoft Forms) and will not give rise to any additional costs.

The Online Repository will be fully compliant with GDPR requirements. The personal data contained in the Online Repository will not be shared with any other party. Furthermore, the GAA Data Protection Officer will recommend further best practice guidelines as appropriate e.g. all information relating to the processing of personal data within the Repository will be communicated to registrants in age-appropriate language, all online surveys will be anonymised, a review meeting with the YouthReps Chair and Secretary as well as the servicing officer of the Online Repository will be held on an annual basis etc.

Registrants to the Online Repository will be advised that they may opt out of the Repository at any stage and their data will not be held beyond this point. The option to opt-out and the mechanisms for same will also be communicated to all registrants on each communication sent to them. Upon reaching the age of 22 years, registrants will be automatically removed from the Online Repository in order to maintain the integrity of same.

### Rationale

- ✓ Encourage consultation and engagement on matters of strategic importance with an age cohort that are under-represented in decision-making at Club, County, Provincial and National level;
- ✓ Provide for consultation and engagement in a cost-effective and time-efficient manner;
- ✓ Further enhance the role and responsibilities of the YouthReps – create stronger links with the County Boards and Central Committees as well as developing leadership capabilities;
- ✓ Enhance recognition that the Association is committed to listening to the views of young people;



- ✓ Further develop cooperation and collaboration between the three organisations in the area of youth consultation and engagement;
- ✓ Create awareness among decision-makers of the theory and practice of youth consultation and engagement i.e. develop a learning environment.