Club Manual
The Alcohol and Substance Abuse Prevention Programme
www.gaa.ie
Alcohol and other drug problems have become more common in Ireland in recent years than many people would have thought possible just a short time ago. Most communities, whether urban or rural now find themselves having to deal with problems caused by the increased use of alcohol and other drugs and these problems often have knock-on effects for GAA clubs.

Rather than ignore this change in Irish society and say it has nothing to do with us, the GAA has put in place a comprehensive response to help keep our members safe from the negative effects of alcohol and other drugs.

The Alcohol & Substance Abuse Prevention (ASAP) Programme is a joint venture by the GAA and the Health Service Executive that aims to reduce the harm being caused by alcohol and other drugs. The ASAP Programme is primarily about PREVENTING alcohol and other drug problems from taking hold in our clubs.

The aim of this section is to explain what the ASAP Programme is all about, why we need it in our clubs and how to implement it so that it works to maximum effect.
The vast majority of GAA clubs do not have to deal with alcohol or other drug problems on any given day. Some people may question why the GAA has this initiative in place and believe it is something best not spoken about in case it might lead to experimentation and with alcohol or other drugs, especially amongst our younger members.

While it is not the GAA’s job to sort out Ireland’s social problems, we are the largest community organisation in the country and as such we come across these issues and are playing our part in resolving them.

The ASAP Programme is our way of responding to alcohol and other drug related problems in a Club setting. Clubs that implement the ASAP Programme will be able to prevent problems from occurring, educate members about the issues and respond appropriately should a problem arise.

1. Preventing problems
There is widespread agreement among professionals in the field of substance abuse prevention that the best way to prevent problems from occurring is to have clear guidelines about what is acceptable behaviour. To this end every Club is required to develop a Club Drug & Alcohol Policy which sets out their plan to deal with alcohol and other drug related issues.

2. Educating members
Many of us have not had much experience in dealing with alcohol or other drug problems and feel unsure how best to approach this subject. This is where education can help us raise our knowledge and confidence levels. The ASAP Programme is linked in with professional drug and alcohol agencies throughout the country who provide education on these issues in clubs for adults and young people.

3. Responding appropriately
On the occasion that a problem does occur, clubs will be offered every possible support through the network of ASAP County, Provincial and National Officers in conjunction with professional services where necessary.

“As the largest community organisation in the country and we are playing our part in resolving these issues.”
In order to implement the ASAP Programme properly, every Club should appoint an ASAP Club Officer to coordinate the program locally. Ideally, this person will be someone who is well-regarded in their Club by adults and young people alike and is interested in getting involved in the ASAP Programme. He or she is not expected to be an expert in the area but should be someone who is willing to learn about the issues involved.

**Role of ASAP Club Officer**

The ASAP Club Officer is central to the success of the ASAP Programme and as such will be offered all the necessary help and guidance by their ASAP County Officer and by the National Office. The work of the ASAP Club Officer can be likened to that of a coordinator who is responsible for bringing people together to work on a common goal.

The ASAP Club Officer is expected to...

- Be the contact person between the Club and the ASAP County Officer.
- Link in with local drug and alcohol agencies as required.
- Be fully familiar with the ASAP Manual, DVD and Website.
- Coordinate the development of a Club Drug & Alcohol Policy as laid out in the ASAP Manual.

The ASAP Club Officer is NOT expected to...

- Be ‘holier than thou’.
- Police how people drink.
- Be the ‘Club social worker/counsellor’ etc.

The rollout of the ASAP Programme is not the sole responsibility of the Club Officer. All Club members need to work to ensure its success.
Put simply, a Club Drug & Alcohol Policy is a written statement of what the Club intends to do about alcohol and other drug related issues. This policy will then act as the basis for all further Club activities regarding alcohol and other drugs.

It does not have to be very elaborate or complicated and both the ASAP Manual and website on www.gaa.ie/asap shows how to do this. A sample copy is provided in the appendix.

The Club Drug & Alcohol Policy can be developed by clubs individually or by a cluster of neighbouring clubs. For maximum effect, the policy should be developed by following these steps:

- Establish a sub-committee to develop the policy using a mix of adults and young people.
- Study relevant resources on the ASAP Website, Manual and DVD.
- Consider the alcohol and other drug problems in the local area and discuss what problems are most likely to come up in the Club.
- Prepare a draft policy for the Club and invite feedback from others.
- Finalise and launch the policy to let everyone know what your Club is doing.
- Review the policy at least once a year and after every time it is used.

The final content of all Club Drug & Alcohol policies will need to be agreed in advance with the ASAP County Officer prior to being implemented and a copy sent to the ASAP National Office.

The Club Drug and Alcohol Policy is another way of demonstrating to our members how good health and wellbeing is central to the GAA lifestyle and it sets the tone for what sort of behaviour is acceptable in our clubs.

By implementing the ASAP Programme in our clubs we are helping to prevent problems from occurring in the first instance and equipping ourselves to deal with them if they do. That’s good news for everyone in the community.

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3: How to develop a Club Drug & Alcohol Policy
Cumann Lúthchleas Gael are committed as part of their overall philosophy to ‘discourage the misuse of drugs, alcohol and tobacco on the basis that they are incompatible with a healthy approach to sporting activity’

Club believe that we need to work towards creating a safe and healthy Club environment where members can develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to cope with alcohol and other drug related issues.

All Club members, officials, coaches and volunteers as part of this Club shall follow the law when it comes to illegal drugs, alcohol and tobacco and shall display leadership and good example, particularly when dealing with underage members. This policy shall apply to all users of the Club buildings and grounds.

**Definition of Drugs:**

For the purpose of this policy the term “drug” shall include all mood altering substances, both legal and illegal and involve substances such as:

- Alcohol
- Tobacco
- “Over the counter” medicines such as paracetamol, anti-histamines, cough medicines etc.
- Prescribed drugs such as antibiotics, inhalers, painkillers etc.
- Volatile substances such as aerosols, glues, petrol, cigarette lighter fuels etc.
- Controlled drugs such as cannabis, ecstasy, amphetamines, magic mushrooms, cocaine, etc.
- Performance enhancing drugs as outlined by the World Anti-Doping Agency.

**Aims and Objectives:**

The aim of this policy is to ensure that all Club members are kept safe from drug-related harm when involved in Club activities.

Our objectives are...

- To develop a consistent approach to drug-related issues.
- To develop ways to address drug-related issues in the Club.
- To establish clear procedures for managing drug-related incidents.
List of Actions (these are recommended and others can be inserted as required)

The Chairperson and Executive of the Club shall adopt and discharge actions from following list as appropriate to the resources of the Club.

- The cup shall not be filled with alcohol during celebrations.
- Coaches and Club Officials shall not smoke or drink alcohol while representing their Club at matches or training sessions.
- Cigarettes shall not be sold in the clubhouse.
- Medal ceremonies shall not be held in pubs.
- Under 18's shall not be brought to pubs on the way home from matches, outings or training sessions.
- Alcohol shall not be served at functions for players aged under 18 years of age.
- Alcohol advertisements shall be phased out on Club jerseys.

All persons associated with our Club can help prevent drug-related harm from occurring during Club activities.

The following roles are recommended (insert other recommendations as required).

**Club Members**
- Will be aware of the details of and adhere to Club Drug and Alcohol Policy.

**Parents and Guardians**
- Support the Club in the development and implementation of this policy, including procedures for handling incidents of suspected drug misuse.

**Coaches**
- Will be aware of the possibility of drug misuse among players and work with the A.S.A.P. Club Officer, Club Chairman and Executives with the aim of preventing harm.

**A.S.A.P. Club Officer**
- The A.S.A.P. Club Officer is responsible for overseeing the development, implementation and evaluation of this policy in conjunction with the Club Chairperson and Executive.
- The A.S.A.P. Club Officer shall have good knowledge of the local drug, alcohol and health promotion services in order to assist the Club in organising prevention, education and response activities as such needs arise.
- The A.S.A.P. Club Officer is [Name] Phone no. [Phone number]
Club Chairperson (or Nominee)

- All relevant information, paraphernalia or suspected substances found or received, shall be forwarded to the Club Chairperson who shall consult with the necessary parties before taking relevant action based upon this policy. In the event of the Chairperson not being available to discharge these duties, the responsibility will then automatically fall to the Vice Chairperson or Secretary or other nominated person.

Education programme about drugs and alcohol

Club shall arrange for a drug education programme for members, players, parents etc as appropriate. This drug education programme may include the promotion of Club policy, provision of literature, workshops or information sessions provided by personnel from local drug, alcohol or health promotion services.

- The Club A.S.A.P. Officer, in conjunction with the Club Chairperson, shall make arrangements with local drug, alcohol or health promotion services to provide drug education annually for adults associated with the Club.
- The Club A.S.A.P. Officer, in conjunction with the Club Chairperson, shall make arrangements with local drug, alcohol or health promotion services to provide age appropriate drug education annually for young people associated with the Club.

Protocol for dealing with drug misuse

Club shall endeavour to respond to all drug-related incidents in a firm but fair manner, with due respect for the safety and welfare of individuals involved, other members of the Club and the wider community and shall also fulfil any legal obligations that might apply.

Outline of Restrictions

- The misuse or supply of drugs is viewed as unacceptable by Club and members or officials are prohibited from presenting themselves for Club duties while under the influence of a drug. Breaches of these restrictions are punishable by warnings, suspensions and expulsions as deemed appropriate.

Reporting of Incidents

Alleged or confirmed incidents in breach of this policy shall be referred to the Club Chairperson.

Recording of Information

Information regarding alleged or confirmed incidents in breach of this policy shall be recorded in writing. The recording of factual information is preferable and all opinions shall be stated as such. Responses to cases shall also be recorded in this way. Only in confirmed cases shall names of individuals be recorded.

Confidentiality

While it is not possible to guarantee, every effort shall be made to respect confidentiality.
Involving Parents/Guardians

Incidents involving any person under 18 years of age will require their parents/guardians to be informed. Parents/guardians shall be invited to discuss what has happened and shall be informed of any course of action to be taken by the Club. The Club Chairperson shall nominate a person to inform parents/guardians in each case.

Garda Síochána/PSNI Involvement

Incidents that involve the illegal supply of drugs shall require Garda Síochána/PSNI involvement. In all other drug-related incidents, each case shall be considered on an individual basis and the decision shall rest with the Club Chairperson as to whether or not the Garda Síochána/PSNI are involved.

Search

The Club Chairperson retains the right to direct a search of any part of Club property if there is reasonable cause to believe a substance in breach of this policy is contained therein. Two officials of the Club shall conduct the search. Club Officials are not allowed to search an individual or their personal property. Where there is reasonable cause to believe a person has in their possession a substance in breach of this policy, they shall be asked to volunteer the substance. If they refuse, the Garda Síochána/PSNI may be called in to conduct a search.

Disposing of suspected illegal substances

If a suspected illegal substance is found on Club property it shall be brought to the attention of the Club Chairperson. The substance shall be stored securely and the Club Chairperson shall then decide whether the Garda Síochána/PSNI should be called to collect it, or whether it should be disposed of. Any disposal of suspected illegal substances shall be recorded and witnessed by two officials. At no time shall a suspected illegal substance be removed from Club property without the knowledge of the Garda Síochána/PSNI.

Availability, use and storage of solvents and gases

Many solvent based products have the potential to be abused (e.g. deodorants, paints, thinners, cleaning fluids etc). All solvent based materials and gases shall be stored securely and safely away from public access.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy is in force at all times and during all activities conducted under the aegis of Cumann Lúthchleas Gael. This policy shall be evaluated annually and after every drug-related incident. This policy shall come into effect on ________________ and shall be reviewed annually thereafter by the A.S.A.P. Club Officer in conjunction with the Club Chairperson and Executive.

Signed ___________________________ Date ________________
Club Chairperson

Signed ___________________________ Date ________________
A.S.A.P. Club Officer
6: Appendix 2

ASAP Programme Resources - See www.gaa.ie/asap