
Synopsis Of Responses To The Consultation On The Proposal Of Northern Ireland Adopting The Sports Grounds Safety Authority's Guide To Safety At Sports Grounds And Departmental Response

Background to consultation

1. The Department for Communities (DfC) is responsible for the legislative framework for safety at sports grounds in Northern Ireland (NI). This includes the provision of guidance under Article 22 of the Safety of Sports Grounds (Northern Ireland) Order 2006.
2. In 2007, the Department's predecessor, the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure, provided a substantial, 275-paged, technical guide 'The Northern Ireland Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds' (NI Guide) to assist stakeholders in NI to comply with the 2006 Order. The NI Guide also provided assistance to stakeholders on meeting the requirements of the new sports grounds safety certification scheme. This NI Guide was based on the 4th edition of the Sports Grounds Safety Authority (SGSA) 'Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds' (SGSA Guide) and was produced by Sport NI's Sports Grounds Safety Advisory Unit (SGSAU) on behalf of the Department.
3. The 4th edition of the SGSA Guide was refreshed in 2008, providing additional advice on risk management, counter-terrorism and training of stewards, producing version 5. The NI Guide was not subsequently updated.
4. The SGSA is currently undertaking a major exercise to rewrite their guidance which will result in version 6. This extensive rewrite will consolidate their position on significant and important guidance on safety at sports grounds topics. The new guide will recognise and build upon the need to assess risk and develop levels of safety which are proportionate to that risk and the achievement of reasonable levels of safety for each ground.
5. As part of the rewrite, the SGSA held an informative event, on the wider definition of safety, in the Public Record Office in NI in June 2017. Consultation on version 6 of the Guide is due to take place early in 2018 with the new guide expected to be issued later in the year.

NI Consultation

6. The purpose of the NI consultation was to seek stakeholders' views on the appropriateness of adopting the SGSA new guide in place of the NI Guide; and in particular, to identify any issues this may cause. The Department's aim is to ensure that safety guidance provided for sports grounds in NI is current, exemplary and of the highest quality.
7. A list of stakeholders targeted with this consultation is provided in the Annex.
8. The consultation ran from 21 December 2017 to 14 February 2018 and contained 5 questions:

QUESTION 1:

Which safety guide do you or your organisation, currently reference when considering safety issues at sports grounds?

QUESTION 2:

Do you think NI should consider adopting the Sports Grounds Safety Authority (SGSA) Guide to Safety in Sports Grounds?

QUESTION 3:

Do you wish to raise any issues on the potential adoption of the SGSA Guide in NI?

QUESTION 4:

Do you have any concerns about safety guidance for sports grounds in NI?

QUESTION 5:

Do you wish to provide any other comments?

Consultation Replies

9. The Department acknowledges and welcomes all consultation responses and comments.
10. The Department received a total of 29 responses. The breakdown of responses was as follows:

Number	Category
17	Sports Clubs and National Governing Bodies
8	Local Government (7 District Councils)
4	Emergency Services

11. Based on the responses to Question 1, just over four-fifths (24) of the respondents indicated that they currently refer to the NI Guide when considering safety issues at sports grounds with the remaining fifth (5) currently referring to the SGSA Guide.
12. Based on the responses to Question 2, just over three-quarters (22) of respondents agreed that the Department should consider the adoption of the SGSA Guide. The rationale provided was:

- One guide would provide consistency
- Standardisation of safety guidance across all sports in NI
- NI guide is out-of-date
- SGSA are viewed as international experts in this field

One concern raised was:

- That any new guidance would need to recognise the uniqueness of NI and sports, such as, GAA and the regional differences between NI and GB

13. Of the 7 respondents that were not in favour of adoption of the SGSA guide, only 3 give a reason:

- One respondent noted that the guidance would not be applicable to their sport as it does not take place in sports grounds
- One was concerned about the relevance to local sports
- A third indicated that clubs are used to the NI Guide and the more onerous SGSA guide could close some grounds and force clubs out of business

14. In response to Question 3, 11 respondents raised issues on the potential adoption of the SGSA Guide. In addition to the concerns raised in response to Question 2, outlined in paragraphs 10 and 11 above, the following points were made:
- Need for guide to be proportionate to risk for smaller sports grounds in NI
 - Concern on the wider definition of safety and the inclusion of counter terrorism
 - Need to have an opportunity to feed into new SGSA guide
 - NI guide does not take cognisance of all safety considerations
 - Organisations are not aware of their roles and responsibilities
15. In response to Question 4, 8 respondents raised the following general concerns on safety guidance for sports grounds in NI:
- Lack of suitably qualified and/or trained persons working in district councils to oversee or enforce legislation and/or guidance
16. The responses to Question 5 (general comments) did not contain any additional observations to those already noted above.

Summary of substansive Consultation Responses

17. There were 29 responses to the consultation. 22 of those 29 responses were in favour of consideration being given to the adoption of the SGSA guide. The main reasons were:

- To ensure the guidance to be applied was consistent, standardised and up to date for all sports grounds in NI
- It removes misunderstandings due to the existence of 2 guides
- The SGSA are the leading authority in this field and NI could benefit from their international expertise

18. There were 4 main concerns raised through the consultation on the proposal to consider the adoption of the SGSA guide. These were:

- On the widening of the definition of safety
- The need to recognise the uniqueness of NI sport grounds including various sports, such as, GAA

- The requirement for SGSA to enable NI to feed into the SGSA version 6 guide consultation
- The need for a proportionate risk methodology to be applied for smaller sports grounds.

19. Following the results of the consultation, the Department carried out a screening exercise and is satisfied that if the decision is taken to adopt the SGSA guide this will not lead to any discriminatory or negative differential impact.

Departmental Response to Substantive Consultation Responses

20. The Department notes that the majority of the consultation responses highlighted significant reasons to support the adoption of the SGSA Guide to replace the NI Guide. These reasons are detailed in paragraph 17.
- The SGSA has advised that the new SGSA guide will not be sport specific, rather, it will cover all sports.
 - If the decision is taken to adopt the SGSA Guide the SGSA has agreed to fully consult with NI stakeholders prior to the launch of version 6
 - The SGSA has advised that it already operates a proportionate risk methodology for smaller venues
21. The consultation did not expose any substantial reasons to prevent the Department's consideration of the adoption of the SGSA Guide in NI. Taking each of the 4 main concerns raised, as detailed in paragraph 18, in turn the Department would advise the following:
- It is appropriate for NI safety at sports grounds guidance to reflect best international practice through the expansion of the definition of safety to take into account counter terrorism. The recent incidents that have occurred in England and Europe provide a sound rationale for taking this approach
22. The consultation has demonstrated clearly that the majority of respondents would, subject to consultation on version 6, be in favour of the SGSA guide being adopted for use in NI.

List of Consultees for Safety at Sports Grounds Consultation

A variety of groups/organisations, including, district councils; emergency services; sport governing bodies; local architects; and others were consulted with as part of this process as follows –

District Councils

- Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council
- Ards and North Down Borough Council
- Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council
- Belfast City Council
- Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council
- Derry City and Strabane District Council
- Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
- Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council
- Mid and East Antrim Borough Council
- Mid-Ulster District Council
- Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

Emergency Services

- Northern Ireland Ambulance Service
- Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service
- Police Service NI

Sports Governing Bodies

- GAA County Boards
- Ulster Rugby
- Northern Ireland Football League
- NI Aikido Association
- Ulster Coarse Fishing Federation
- Ulster Angling Federation Ltd
- GB Archery
- Irish Football Association
- Athletics NI
- Ulster Branch Badminton Union of Ireland
- Basketball NI
- GB Boccia Federation
- Irish Bowls Federation
- Irish Athletic Boxing Association
- Canoeing Association of Ireland
- Speleological Union of Ireland
- Cricket Ireland
- Dancesport NI
- UK Dodgeball Association Ltd
- Horse Sport Ireland
- Northern Ireland Fencing Union
- Fitness Northern Ireland
- Northern Ireland Association of Aeromodellers
- Ulster Flying Club
- Ulster Council GAA

- Ulster Gliding Club
 - Goalball UK
 - Northern District Irish Ladies Golf Union, NI Region
 - Golfing Union of Ireland, Ulster Branch
 - Ulster Hockey
 - Northern Ireland Ju Jitsu Association
 - Northern Ireland Judo Federation
 - Northern Ireland Karate Board
 - Royal Life Saving Society
 - 2&4-Wheel Motorsport Steering Group
 - Mountaineering Council of Ireland
 - Netball Northern Ireland
 - Irish Olympic Handball Association
 - Parkour UK
 - Ulster Council, Racquetball Association of Ireland
 - Ulster Federation of Rambling Clubs
 - British Roller Sports Federation
 - Rowing Ireland, Ulster Branch
 - Rugby League Ireland
 - Irish Rugby Football Union
 - Royal Yachting Association (NIC)
 - Royal Scottish Country Dancing Society
 - Northern Ireland Federation of Shooting Sports
 - Ulster Squash
 - British Sub Aqua Club
 - Irish Surfing Association
 - Swim Ulster Ltd
 - Table Tennis Ulster
 - Taekwondo Association of Northern Ireland
 - Northern Ireland Ten Pin Bowling Federation
 - Triathlon Ireland
 - UK Ultimate
 - Northern Ireland Volleyball Association
 - Irish Water and Wakeboard Ski Federation
 - British Weight Lifting
 - Northern Ireland Wrestling Association
 - Yoga Fellowship of Northern Ireland
- Others**
- St John's Ambulance
 - Pro Paramedics
 - BUFC
 - Order of Malta
 - Eventsec
 - NIFOSA
 - Northern Ireland District Council Safety of Sports Grounds Lead Officers Group
 - Chief Leisure Officers Association
- Local Architects**
- Blamphin + Associates
 - The Boyd Partnership
 - Bryson Architects
 - C60 Design Architects + Town Planners
 - Consarc Design Group Ltd
 - Dempsey Architects
 - Doherty Architects
 - DON Architects Ltd
 - Gregory Architects
 - Hall Black Douglas

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- Hall McKnight Architects
 - Hamilton Architects
 - HLM
 - Hughes McMichael
 - JNP Architects
 - Kennedy Fitzgerald Architects LLP
 - Kriterion Conservation Architects
 - McAdam Design
 - McGaw Architects
 - McGonigle McGrath
 - Martin McKernan Chartered Architects
 - McLean & Forte Partnership
 - Neil Mathews Architects
 - Noteman McKee Architects
 - Ostick + Williams
 - Robert McIlwaine LLP
 - Harry Rolston Architect Ltd
 - RPP Architects Ltd
 - WDR & RT Taggart
 - White Ink Architects
 - Clarke and Whiteman Architects
 - Bell Architects
 - Glenn Massey Architect Ltd
 - Knox and Clayton
 - McCreedy Architects
 - R Robinson & Sons Ltd Chartered Architects & Civil Engineers
 - Warwick Stewart Architects
 - da architects ltd
 - DSC Architects Ltd
 - Fletcher Architects (NI) Ltd
 - McCreanor & Co Architects
 - Tate Stevenson Architects Ltd
 - Waddington McClure Architects
 - BGA Architects Ltd
 - Alan Cook Architects Ltd
 - Bernard Dinsmore Chartered Architect
 - Blue Clarity Architecture Ltd
 - Farrell Kelly Associates
 - Fletcher Architects (NI) Ltd
 - Gerry Hamill Chartered Architect
 - Hutcheson Irvine Partnership
 - McAdam Stewart Architects
 - JL O'Hagan & Co. Ltd
 - RE Quinn Architects Ltd
 - David Wilson RIBA Chartered Architects
 - Keys & Monaghan Architects Ltd
 - ADMS Ltd Architects
 - ASI Architects Ltd
 - Patrick Bradley Architects
 - Caroline Dickson Architects CA
 - Farren Architects
 - GM Design Associates Ltd
 - W&M Given Architects
 - Hamilton Architects
 - The Harbour Studio
 - Kriterion Conservation Architects
 - Manor Architects Ltd
 - RPP Architects Ltd
 - Tracey Architects
 - Clarman Partnership Ltd
 - Colm Donaghy Chartered Architect
 - HBK Architects
 - Michael Herron Architects
 - McCarter Hamill Architects
 - Teague & Sally
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