

<b>Report on</b>	Department for Communities Stakeholder Questionnaire on Safety at Sports Grounds Guidance in Northern Ireland
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Fiona McClements
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Fiona McClements

<b>Is this report restricted for confidential business?</b>	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	X

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To present for agreement a Mid Ulster District Council response to the Department for Communities' questionnaire on safety at sports ground guidance , response due 14 February .
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	<p>In 2007 the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (the precursor to the Department for Communities) provided a substantial technical guide '<i>The Northern Ireland Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds</i>' to assist stakeholders in Northern Ireland (NI) to comply with the <i>Safety of Sports Grounds (Northern Ireland) Order 2006</i>. The guide, at that time, also assisted stakeholders on meeting the requirements of the new sports grounds safety certification scheme. This NI 'Red Guide' as it is commonly known was based on the 4th edition of the SGSA 'Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds' and was produced by Sport NI's Sports Grounds Safety Advisory Unit (SGSAU) on behalf of the Department.</p> <p>The SGSA guide was refreshed in 2008, providing additional advice on risk management, counter terrorism and training of stewards, producing version 5. The NI 'red guide' has not to date been updated to include any of this revised guidance.</p> <p>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. The new guide will recognise and build upon the need to assess risk and develop levels of safety that are proportionate to the risk and the achievement of reasonable levels of safety for each ground. As part of the rewrite, the SGSA held an initial consultation event on the wider definition of safety in the Public Record Office NI in June 2017. The new revised guide is likely to be issued later in 2018.</p> <p>The Department for Communities (DfC) is now seeking views from relevant stakeholders on the appropriateness of Northern Ireland (NI) adopting the Sports Grounds Safety Authority (SGSA) 'Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds'. Opinions are being sought via an online questionnaire that is open for submissions by stakeholders until 5pm on 14 February 2018, after which (DfC) will fully consider the views of respondents on the proposal before making any decision. When a decision has been reached, DfC will publish a final report indicating that decision.</p> <p>The proposal of adopting the SGSA new guide is to ensure that safety guidance for sports grounds in NI is current, exemplary and of the highest quality. The Department is keen to</p>

	<p>hear stakeholders' views on the appropriateness of this proposal; and in particular to identify any issues. If NI stakeholders support the adoption of the SGSA guide then the SGSA will include NI in the wider consultation planned for 2018 prior to the launch of version 6 of their guide.</p>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p>The existing NI red guide is substantially out of date and does not reflect the current SGSA risk based approach. The main reasons why the new SGSA guide should be welcomed in NI are set out below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SGSA is recognised internationally as a leading global body in the provision of safety at sports grounds advice. In the past, it has provided support and expertise to the organisers of many high profile events such as the 2012 London Olympic Games, Euro 2012 (Poland &amp; Ukraine) and the 2016 Rio Olympic Games.</li> <li>• Version 6 will reflect the many changes in the design and management of sports grounds. It will also cover dealing with threats to sports grounds that have become more common in recent years. At its core will remain the founding principle of being a means to establish a safe capacity for sports grounds.</li> <li>• The recent service level agreement between the SGSA and Sport NI to provide safety advice and guidance to all stakeholders in NI would support the adoption of the SGSA guide. From 1 November 2017, the SGSA assumed responsibility for carrying out the advisory and overseeing functions previously undertaken by the SGSAU of Sport NI, with that unit now responsible for managing this arrangement.</li> <li>• The SGSA produces a suite of documents that underpin the main guide. These documents, which are revised as circumstances dictate, would also be made available to NI stakeholders.</li> <li>• A key aspect of the new SGSA guide is that it will be internationally recognised and sport neutral, allowing it to be used for any sport.</li> <li>• Any existing confusion for NI stakeholders due to the existence of two guides would be removed.</li> <li>• The requirements of any new version of the guide is only applicable to new builds and <b>will not be applied retrospectively to any existing sports grounds</b>. This means that any sports grounds within MUDC such as those currently designated or those going through the safety certification process associated with Regulated Stands can be reassured that compliance will continue to be assessed against the requirements of the current NI Guide to Safety in Sports Grounds (i.e. The NI Red Guide).</li> </ul> <p>It is recommended that Council supports the adoption of the revised SGSA Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds in NI as it is an opportunity to align Northern Ireland guidance with best practice developments and improvements in safety design and management that are already in place for sports grounds in GB. As the requirements of the revised guide do not apply retrospectively, there will be no significant impact on the operation of existing sports grounds within Northern Ireland, but any new grounds proposed will however benefit from the improvements and innovations in safe design.</p> <p>A draft response to the DfC questionnaire is attached for members consideration .</p>

<b>4.0</b>	<b>Other Considerations</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b><u>Financial &amp; Human Resources Implications</u></b> Financial: N/A Human: N/A
<b>4.2</b>	<b><u>Equality and Good Relations Implications</u></b> N/A
<b>4.3</b>	<b><u>Risk Management Implications</u></b> N/A
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Recommendation(s)</b>
5.1	It is recommended that Council supports the adoption of the revised SGSA Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds in NI and forward attached response to the Department for Communities consultation .
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
6.1	DfC Questionnaire and MUDC Draft Questionnaire Response on Safety at Sports Grounds Guidance in Northern Ireland.



## **Questionnaire on Safety at Sports Grounds Guidance in Northern Ireland**

### **Introduction**

The Department for Communities welcomes comments on the appropriateness of Northern Ireland (NI) adopting the Sports Grounds Safety Authority (SGSA) '*Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds*'. We want to ascertain and collate the views of relevant stakeholders on this proposal.

This questionnaire will be available for a period of 8 weeks from 21 December to 5pm on 14 February. The questionnaire has been sent to those stated in the document included in the related section. This questionnaire is on-line and responses will be received automatically once submitted by the respondent.

Following the 8 week period, the Department will fully consider the views of respondents on the proposal before making any decision.

When a decision has been reached the Department will publish a final report indicating that decision. This report will include a summary of responses, and will detail how any issues raised have been considered and, where appropriate, any action that has been taken as a result.

### **Background**

In 2007 the Department, (the precursor to the Department for Communities being the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure), provided a substantial technical guide '*The Northern Ireland Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds*' (275 pages) to assist stakeholders in NI to comply with the Safety of Sports Grounds (Northern Ireland) Order 2006. The guide, at that time, also provided assistance to stakeholders on meeting the requirements of the new sports grounds safety certification scheme. This NI guide was based on the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the SGSA '*Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds*' and was produced by Sport NI's Sports Grounds Safety Advisory Unit (SGSAU) on behalf of the Department.

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 has not been updated to include this revised guidance.

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. The new guide will recognise and build upon the need to assess risk and develop levels of safety which are proportionate to the risk and the achievement of reasonable levels of safety for each ground. As part of the rewrite the SGSA held an initial consultation event, on the wider definition of safety, in the Public Record Office NI earlier this year in June. Further consultation is due to take place early in 2018 with the new guide expected to be issued later in the year.

## Rationale for Questionnaire

The NI guide is substantially out of date and additionally does not reflect the current SGSA risk based approach. The Department is therefore exploring the appropriateness of NI adopting the new SGSA guide. The following paragraphs highlight the main reasons why the Department is considering this approach.

- The SGSA is recognised internationally as a leading global body in the provision of safety at sports grounds advice. In the past it has provided support and expertise to the organisers of many high profile events such as the 2012 London Olympic Games, Euro 2012 (Poland & Ukraine) and the 2016 Rio Olympic Games.
- Version 6 will reflect the many changes in the design and management of sports grounds. It will also cover dealing with threats to sports grounds which have become more common in recent years. At its core will remain the founding principle of being a means to establish a safe capacity for sports grounds.
- The recent service level agreement between the SGSA and Sport NI to provide safety advice and guidance to all stakeholders in NI would support the adoption of the SGSA guide. From 1 November the SGSA assumed responsibility for carrying out the advisory and overseeing functions previously undertaken by the SGSAU of Sport NI, with that unit now responsible for managing this arrangement.
- The SGSA produces a suite of documents that underpin the main guide. These documents, which are revised as circumstances dictate, would also be made available to NI stakeholders.
- A key aspect of the new SGSA guide is that it will be internationally recognised and sport neutral, allowing it to be used for any sport.
- Any existing confusion for NI stakeholders due to the existence of two guides would be removed.

## Summary

The proposal of adopting the SGSA new guide is to ensure that safety guidance for sports grounds in NI is current, exemplary and of the highest quality. The Department is keen to hear stakeholders' views on the appropriateness of this proposal; and in particular to identify any issues.

If there is support for the adoption of the SGSA guide from NI stakeholders then arrangements will be made for SGSA to fully include NI in the wider consultation planned for early next year, prior to the launch of version 6 of their guide.

## **Draft MUDC Questionnaire Responses**

### **On Safety at Sports Grounds Guidance in Northern Ireland**

**Question 1: Which safety guide do you, or your organisation, most frequently reference when considering safety issues at sports grounds?**

The Northern Ireland Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds

☒

Sports Grounds Safety Authority (SGSA) Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds

☐

**Question 2: Do you think NI should consider adopting the Sports Grounds Safety Authority (SGSA) guide to Safety in Sports Grounds?**

Answer: YES

**If your answer to question 2 was 'Yes' please state your rationale for this answer:**

The adoption of the revised SGSA is welcome as it is an opportunity to align Northern Ireland guidance with best practice developments and improvements in safety design and management that are already in place for sports grounds in GB. As the requirements of the revised guide do not apply retrospectively, there will be no significant impact on the operation of existing sports grounds within Northern Ireland, but any new grounds proposed will however benefit from the improvements and innovations in safe design.

**Question 3: Do you wish to raise any issues on the potential adoption of the SGSA guide in NI?**

Answer: NO

**Please provide details of any issues on the potential adoption of the SGSA guide in NI that you wish to raise:**

Not Applicable

**Question 4: Do you have any concerns about safety guidance for sports grounds in NI?**

Answer: NO

**Please provide details of any concerns about safety guidance for sports grounds in NI that you wish to raise:**

Not Applicable

**Additional information - Please provide any other comments below.**

Mid Ulster District Council welcomes the consultation and supports any improvement to the standard of safety within sports grounds that is realised from the introduction of a revised guide for relevant stakeholders.

If you have any queries relating to this questionnaire please contact:

Lizanne Kennedy  
Sports & Lottery Branch  
Level 7, Causeway Exchange  
1-7 Bedford Street,  
Belfast  
BT2 7EG  
Telephone: 02890515270

E-mail: [sportsgroundssurvey.communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:sportsgroundssurvey.communities-ni.gov.uk)