

STARTING A FENCING CLUB DOCUMENT

Below are areas of discovery you may need to consider when starting a new fencing club

RESEARCH: Are there any similar clubs already up and running in your local area?

Before you start to create your fencing club, do you know if there are any clubs already set up in your area? Check the Fencing Ireland website to find out! If there is, how are you going to make your club stand out from the crowd? Could you approach the existing club, join forces and offer an additional service or offer to the local community? In addition, a simple google or social media search of fencing clubs in your area will uncover any other potential gaps in the market.

DEMAND: Have you established if there is the need to set up a new fencing club?

So, there is a gap in the market for your new fencing club. How do you know there are people in your community that want to participate in fencing and in particular at your club? First things first, could you recruit any friends or relatives? You may gather interest by utilising social media marketing or contact local media to promote the sessions. You can connect with your Local Sport Partnerships and NGB.

INSIGHT: How do you know you the club is want your members want?

When you are creating your club, it's vital that you base your decisions around what your current or potential members want! Having a club that does not meet the needs of its community will only result in the loss of members. When you are first raising the awareness of the club, ask potential members what they want from the club i.e. beginner's sessions that focus on fitness goals, or women/girl only sessions. Once you have established your club, continually review member satisfaction through questions and surveys.

VISION: What are your vision and goals? What would club like to achieve?

When you have gathered some insight into what you is needed in your area. You will need to be clear on the type of club you would like to create. Do you want to be an open, inclusive club that offers a variety of sessions to varying of ability or are you a performance club looking to cater for more talented members? Be clear about what your members may want from the club as this can alter the clubs vision. The purpose of your club should be clear and transparent within your club's constitution.

PEOPLE: Do you have enough volunteers and coaches to help you run the club?

Who is going to help you run the club on a day-to-day basis? You will need to recruit a committee of people (parents and/or members) who will help you manage the clubs with governance, finance, social media and administration.

Do you have a least one coach with a minimum a level 1 coaching to lead the sessions?

POLICY: What documents do you have in place to ensure the health, safety and welfare of your members?

You will need to consider the health, safety and welfare of your club members and the volunteers that help run your club. You will need to create policies for health and safety, safeguarding etc.. More details in this booklet [Safeguarding and club policies guide.pdf](#)

FACILITIES: What facilities do you need to undertake your activities?

You will need to find a suitable venue to host your club's sessions. Are there local leisure centres, village or school halls that can be the base of your club? Facility hire can be a huge financial burden on a club's finances; however, you must consider the type of hall and ensure it fits in with your club type. Too small and the club may lose members, too large and the cost will be too high. Long term, you may enter contract negotiations with a facility to guarantee the price and availability for a substantial number of years.

FINANCE: How is the club going to be funded?

Do you have ideas to raise money and a plan to manage your funds? How will you set your membership fees? **Could you apply for any funding to help you establish the club or purchase equipment?** Your finances need to be affordable for members whilst keeping in mind your outgoings such as facility hire, coaching fees and equipment maintenance. Now would be a good time to set a budget for the next 12 – 18 months to understand what you will spend and how much income you will need to cover those costs. If you get this right from the start, it will support the long-term sustainability for your club.

AWARENESS: How are you going to raise awareness of your club

How are you going to raise awareness of your club to increase your membership? You've established the need for your club and are now well on the way to creating policies, setting rules and securing the support of volunteers. Now you need to raise the profile of your club. Again, social media is a cost effective platform, you can also connect with your Local Sport Partnerships, and County Councils. There may be local community projects you can partner with, or run a demonstration day or Swashbuckler course in your local primary and secondary schools?

SUPPORT: Where else can you find support

How else will the club seek support? What other options are available to ask for help and advice? Firstly, you can always come to Fencing Ireland (dfoley@fencingireland.net) for any questions you may have. Again Your Local Sport Partnership and local authority will have a sports arm that can support you with several questions and guidance.

IMPACT: How is your club going to benefit your local community and members?

A final aspect of your club is to think about the positives impact your club will have on the local community. By creating the club, you will be providing your community the opportunity to become more active and part of a team. You will be providing people with access to the sport of fencing which will help grow the sport. Celebrate your success and share the positive impacts your club has the society and the sport! Record and measure the number of people that attend the club on a weekly basis and encourage them to continue their fencing journey.