

Three overlapping triangles in shades of pink, purple, and teal.

Sustainability Toolkit

The HiiT Squash Programme for Women, funded by Sport Ireland's Dormant Accounts Fund, aims to grow participation among women in squash clubs across Ireland. To maximise its impact and ensure long-term success, it is essential for clubs to consider how to make the programme self-sustainable once the initial funding period ends. This toolkit provides practical strategies, templates, and best practices to help your club transition from grant funding to independent sustainability.

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Membership transition strategies

One of the most effective ways to sustain the HiiT Squash Programme is by converting participants into long-term members.

- **Onboarding pathway:** Create a clear path for participants from the HiiT programme to full club membership, with incentives such as discounted membership rates for the first year or part thereof.
- **Open Day events:** Host open days during or after the HiiT programme to showcase club facilities and activities.
- **Buddy system:** Match new participants with current members for social and game-based support.

Pay-to-Play Sessions

Introducing “Pay-to-Play” options allows for ongoing participation without full membership:

- **Weekly HiiT Sessions:** Continue running weekly HiiT sessions for a nominal fee (€5–€10 per session).
- **Block bookings:** Offer discounted rates for those who sign up for 4–6 sessions at a time.
- **Themed events:** Organise themed squash nights (e.g., “Ladies Night”; “Bring a Friend Night”) to encourage drop-in participation.

Community sponsorship

Engaging local businesses can provide a steady stream of support:

- **Local business partnerships:** Approach local fitness stores, cafes, and sports shops for sponsorship. Offer them branding opportunities at events or on promotional materials.
- **Community grants:** Explore local council grants for sports development or women’s fitness initiatives.
- **Mutual promotions:** Partner with community groups, women’s networks, and local gyms to cross-promote activities.

Fundraising initiatives

Raising funds through community events can help offset costs:

- **Charity tournaments:** Organise charity events where entry fees support the HiiT programme.
- **Raffle nights:** Host social gatherings with raffles that include local business sponsored prizes.
- **Club social events:** Plan themed social events such as BBQ nights or coffee mornings where proceeds support the programme.

Developing in-house volunteer coaches

To further sustain the programme, clubs can invest in developing volunteer coaches to support beginners and junior players:

- **Coach development pathways:** Create opportunities for current members to train as volunteer coaches through Squash Ireland's coaching courses. These are occasionally subsidised for potential female coaches – look out for updates.
- **Mentorship programmes:** Pair new volunteer coaches with experienced coaches for guidance.
- **Volunteer recognition:** Celebrate the contributions of volunteer coaches through club events and awards.
- **Target groups:** Focus on recruiting parents, senior members, and enthusiastic players who want to contribute back to the sport.

This approach not only supports the HiiT Programme but also strengthens the club's coaching capacity for junior and beginner sessions.

Marketing and promotion

A strong marketing approach will help maintain momentum:

- **Targeted social media campaigns:** Use social media to target local women's groups and fitness communities.
- **Newsletters and email blasts:** Regularly update past participants and club members on upcoming HiiT sessions.
- **Community outreach:** Promote at local events, community centres, and gyms.

Monitoring and evaluation

Tracking the success and engagement levels of your HiiT Squash Programme helps in its sustainability:

- **Attendance tracking:** Monitor session attendance to identify growth or drop-off rates. Reach out to those who are absent, showing support.
- **Feedback forms:** Collect participant feedback after each programme to identify areas for improvement.
- **Annual review:** Evaluate the programme's sustainability plan each year and adjust as needed.