

The background features five large, thick, semi-circular arcs in the colors of the rainbow: red, orange, yellow, green, and purple. These arcs are positioned around the central text, with the red arc at the top left, orange at the top center, yellow at the top right, green at the middle right, purple at the bottom left, and blue at the bottom center.

Annual Report **2021**

# For Inclusion For Equality For Everyone



**LGBT**  
IRELAND

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# Message from CEO & Chair

2021 began as 2020 had ended, dominated by the Coronavirus pandemic. As a frontline service provider, we continued to focus on providing telephone, online, and emergency face to face supports to those LGBTI+ people most impacted by the public health restrictions. Those living in Direct Provision accommodation for example, reported significant decline in their mental health during lockdown, as did older members of our community, and LGBTI+ members of the Traveller and Roma communities. As restrictions eased, our peer-to-peer support groups began once again to meet in person, and we expanded this service to provide a group for LGBTI+ people in recovery from addiction in partnership with Merchants Quay Ireland. Building on our *Older and Bolder* online community group established during lockdown, we also launched a new Telefriending service, to provide weekly support to older LGBTI+ people living alone and experiencing significant isolation and loneliness. On speaking about the need for this service, one older LGBTI+ person put it this way “I’ve said too many goodbyes and now I only want to say hello”.

We continued to run the *Is Rainbow Muid* peer support service for LGBTI+ people seeking international protection here in Ireland. This vital service supported over 130 people in 2021, with a significant increase in individual case work required due to high levels of concern for individual members mental health and suicidality, and due to serious assaults. To ensure the unique challenges facing LGBTI+ people in this system are heard and specific policy and practice developed to better support them, we also commenced research into LGBTI+ people’s experiences of the International Protection Office (IPO) interview process. This research project entitled “Believe Me or Not, But I Am Who I Am” will be completed and launched in 2022. As the terrible circumstances in Afghanistan began to unfold in July, with a heightened risk and danger for LGBTI+ Afghan, we came together with LGBTI+ and Human Rights organisations to form a small working group. This group supported the successful repatriation of 26 Gay and Trans Afghan programme refugees to Ireland and supported with finding host family accommodation. We are so grateful to all the host families that came forward and continue to provide safe and supportive homes for our Afghan friends.



Thankfully, in general, societal attitudes towards LGBTI+ people continue in a positive trajectory in Ireland with growing support for LGBTI+ inclusion in workplaces and public services. This has driven an increased demand for training in 2021, as professionals from a range of sectors and services sought to enhance their knowledge, skills and confidence to meet the needs of LGBTI+ people they work with. To meet this demand, we provided workshops and talks to over 1,450 professionals, we developed a suite of training videos for An Garda Síochána, and launched an interactive portal for our LGBT Champions working in health and social care settings. We also continued to play an active role in the National Action Group on LGBT+ Travellers & Roma, helping to grow LGBTI+ awareness and inclusion across Traveller organisations and communities, through training and awareness initiatives.

Despite increased LGBTI+ awareness and growing visibility, Ireland ranked back in 15th place in Europe for LGBTI+ equality rights and policies in the ILGA Rainbow index published in May 2021. This highlights the legislative and policy reform still needed, to achieve full equality for LGBTI+ people living here. With a 40% increase in calls to our helpline relating to violence

reflecting a rise in LGBTI+ hate crimes and hate speech more generally, the publication of the General Scheme Criminal Justice (Hate Crime) Bill 2021 was a welcome development this year. However, this vital law has not yet been passed and must be progressed with urgency in 2022. Similarly, the lack of a legal ban on conversion therapy in Ireland is of concern, leading us to establish a broad-based all-island coalition in 2021 to campaign for a legal ban of these deeply harmful practices. There are other vital legal and policy reforms needed for all members of our diverse community to be recognised and protected, not least the AHR Bill 2019, and implementation of the recommendations of the review of the Gender Recognition Act 2015.

Through much of 2021 we were working on our own strategic plan for the next five years. We consulted with the community, our volunteers, people who used our services, our partner organisations, as well as key policy makers and funders to inform this process. We are excited with the end result and look forward to publishing the plan in 2022. Moving into next year, we will continue to strive to make a positive and lasting impact on the lives of LGBTI+ people. We will campaign for legal reform that provides safety, security and inclusion for all. We will

provide training that grows awareness and understanding of the needs of our diverse community. Most of all we will be here to listen to those who need us and support them to be who they are. We would like to thank the staff, volunteers, board members, network members, donors, partners, and supporters who help us to achieve greater visibility, rights and inclusion of LGBTI+ people across Ireland. We are enormously grateful to all of you for your support and dedication to equality.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paula Fagan".

Paula Fagan  
CEO



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Orla Howard".

Orla Howard  
Chairperson

# Who we are

LGBT Ireland is a national organisation providing support services to people who identify or are considering their identity as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex or Queer person. The organisation established in 2010, when seven regional LGBT helplines joined efforts to co-ordinate the provision of high quality supports and information throughout Ireland. Informed by the issues and experiences raised through our frontline services, we also undertake extensive training and advocacy work to enhance the visibility, inclusion and rights of LGBTI+ people living in Ireland.



What we do





## Our services

LGBT Ireland provides confidential and non-judgemental listening, support and information by phone, online, and face to face.



Our services are accessed by LGBTI+ people, their family members, and a host of professionals who contact us for support and information on a range of issues relating to sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.

The services we provide are:

- The National LGBT Helpline: 1890 929 539
- Online chat support
- Peer to peer support groups

In partnership with TENI we run the Transgender Family Support Line, which is a confidential support and information helpline for family members of people who are Transgender or gender non-conforming. All the volunteers on the support line have a family member who is Transgender or gender non-conforming.



All our services operate to LGBT Ireland's national quality standard, which includes an extensive training programme and vetting procedures for all volunteers.

# Training and education

LGBT Ireland provides training and education programmes to a range of public, voluntary, community and private services.

A total of 1473 people were trained across priority sectors of mental health services; health and social care services; community services; third level student support services; and public sector services.

The pandemic increased demand for internal training as our services continued to operate online.

legal reform is still needed and to achieve equality for all LGBTI+ families remains a key advocacy priority for 2022.

Intersectional discrimination continues to impact many members of the LGBTI+ community, therefore much of our work sought to effect legal and policy change for vulnerable populations within our community.

Keeping LGBTI+ equality matters on the political and policy makers agenda is crucial and we engaged extensively with decision makers, progressing key policy actions through the National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy.

# Advocacy

Informed by the issues and experiences raised in our frontline services, LGBT Ireland advocates for the equality and inclusion of all LGBTI+ people living in Ireland.

In 2021, our work to achieve legal recognition for all LGBTI+ families continued as we formed a new coalition with other groups working toward the same goal. Much

Statistics from  
our support  
services for  
2021



# A snapshot of support provided

Helpline and online chat service responded to

1765

contacts.

339

people were supported through email.

127,366

people visiting our website [lgbt.ie](http://lgbt.ie)

Total of

2104

support calls, chats and emails responded to in 2021.

We ran

6

targeted peer support groups in 2021, attended by

294

people.  
Learn more about peer support

Our online community for older members of the LGBTI+ community, called Older and Bolder now boasts

299

members.

Our new older persons Telefriending service began in October 2021 with

7

older persons supported in its first 2 months of operation.

LGBT Ireland partnered with Turn2Me.ie to provide 24/7 mental health support, individual and couples counselling and peer support groups for members of the LGBTI+ community.

Learn more about [Turn2Me.ie](http://Turn2Me.ie)

# National LGBT Helpline and online chat support

The National LGBT Helpline is run through a network of trained volunteers based in six local helplines across the country. They are in Cork, Galway, Mayo, Kilkenny, Dundalk and Dublin. It operates 30 hours a week, 7 days a week.

We have 55+ volunteers nationwide who come from all walks of life, with one thing in common, we all identify as LGBTI+ and want to give something back to our community.

In 2021, the National LGBT Helpline responded to 885 helpline calls. Volunteers answered the most calls in April, July and August 2021 with the month of January generally being a quieter month.

## Frontline Services - Call Topics

People mostly contacted our frontline services for support in relation to:

- Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation
- Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation
- General Listening and Conversation
- Access to information about local and national LGBTI+ services
- Issues related to navigating and managing relationships
- Miscellaneous issues where the call topics might not have been clear

## Helpline Topics



### Hang-Up Calls

We received a total of 292 hang-up calls from people who may have been uncertain about speaking to a volunteer. We know that it can take a number of repeat calls and chats to the helpline for people to speak with a volunteer or until they feel ready to ask for support.

### Location of our Callers/Chatters

Of those callers who shared their location with us, there were 6 main geographical locations with the majority of our callers/chatters being from Dublin, Cork as well as Galway, Mayo, Limerick and Carlow.

### Calls related to Violence

In 2021, we received 21 calls related to violence. Most of these calls were from community members based in Dublin calling in relation to sexual violence, homophobia and bullying.

We have noted a significant increase in calls in relation to violence to our helpline, for example 15 calls were recorded in 2020 with just 5 calls recorded in 2019.

## Our Online Chat Service

Our volunteers responded to 880 online chats from LGBTI+ people at home and abroad. Contacts to our online chat service related mostly to general listening and conversation, questions related to sexuality, support for coming out, transgender and gender identity support as well as information related to local and national LGBTI+ services.

## International Chats

The number of international chats steadily increased in 2021, we received a total of 30 international chats, many of which related to issues of immigration, people seeking international refuge, support related to sexuality and signposting to additional services both at home and abroad.

We heard from international chatters based in the UK, United States, Venezuela, Trinidad and Tobago, Zimbabwe, United Arab Emirates, Somalia, Pakistan, Palestine, India, Egypt, Algeria, Poland, Spain, Canada and Australia.

## Positive Experiences of our Volunteers

Our volunteers received very positive feedback for their steadfast support. In circumstances where we were unable to provide relevant support, volunteers could signpost to other support services, social and community groups as well as LGBTI+ Resource Centres.

## Quotes from our Service Users:

*"My volunteer was amazing... really helped me a lot and I will remember them forever... absolutely lovely person and very supportive and made me feel good about myself."*

*"They were really friendly and helpful and I felt so much calmer after talking to them".*

*"Had a lovely chat with LGBTI+ volunteer, lovely person to talk to - excellent in fact".*



**LGBT  
IRELAND**

LGBT.ie  
LGBT Support Line  
1800 929 539

### Total Volunteer Hours

Our tribe of LGBTI+ Volunteers are devoted to supporting and giving back to the LGBTI+ Community. Volunteers come from all walks of life and from all around Ireland including Dublin, Cork, Galway, Kilkenny, Mayo, Galway and Dundalk. Volunteers gave a total of 753 hours to the helpline and online chat service in 2021 so that we can provide support 30 hours per week, 7 days a week, 362 days a year.

### Partnership with the Samaritans

Outside of our normal operating hours, the National LGBT Helpline has been supported by our partnership with the Samaritans on freephone 116-123 when callers need support 24/7, day or night.

## Transgender Family Support Line service

The Transgender Family Support Line in association with Transgender Equality Network Ireland (TENI) has been providing this service since March 2018 and celebrated 3 years in operation in March, 2021.

The Transgender Family Support Line is a confidential support and information helpline for individuals and family members of people who are Transgender or gender non-conforming. All the volunteers on this support line have a family member who is transgender or gender non-conforming.

In 2021, volunteers answered a total of 125 calls based on a twice weekly operation every Tuesday (10am-12pm) and Sunday (6pm-9pm).





## Types of Calls to the Transgender Family Support Line

Calls to the Transgender Family Support Line related to general listening/conversation, family members supporting trans individuals who are trying to navigate the health system in Ireland as well as those who are on waiting lists. The service sign-posts to community and social groups including referrals to the Transgender Equality Network Ireland (TENI) for additional services such as parent and young person peer support.

## LGBT Ireland peer support groups

In 2021, 294 people attended our online and in-person monthly peer support groups.

A group setting can offer people an opportunity to explore their feelings in a safe and supportive environment, reduce social isolation while building self-esteem. Enquiries relating to mutual online support and community services continued to grow in 2021 with the ongoing pandemic impacting opportunities to meet in person.



We provided 6 core Peer Support Groups:

- First Out for Gay/Bi Men
- First Out for LGBTI+ Women
- Married Women's Group
- Straight Spouses Group
- Is Rainbow Muid for LGBTI+ people seeking International Protection in Ireland in collaboration with Irish Refugee Council
- LGBTI+ Recovery and Addiction Support in collaboration with Merchants Quay Ireland (MQI)



### Partnership with MyMind

In 2021, LGBT Ireland continued our partnership with MyMind and the National Office for Suicide Prevention through the Connecting for Life initiative to provide free face-to-face and online counselling and psychotherapy to the LGBTI+ community. In 2021, a total of 22 people availed of free counselling and psychotherapy sessions.



### Partnership with Turn2Me.ie

LGBT Ireland continued our partnership with Turn2Me.ie. Turn2Me is a high-quality, safe, anonymous, and confidential space for community members to gain support for their mental health online.

In 2021, Turn2Me.ie were able to provide LGBTI+ community members with 6 free counselling sessions for adults and couples.



### LGBT+ Midlands Steering Committee

LGBT Ireland participated on the Midlands LGBT+ Steering Committee to assist with the forming of the Midlands LGBT+ Project in February 2021 which offers support for LGBTI+ adults in Laois, Offaly, Kildare and surrounding areas. The project has gone from strength to strength and has made a positive impact for LGBTI+ people in the midlands offering ongoing adult support and social groups, schools training and workshops.



## LGBTI+ Telefriending Service - Launched October 2021

On International Older Persons Day, October 1st 2021, LGBT Ireland launched the LGBTI+ Telefriending Service which provides a weekly supportive call to an older LGBTI+ person from a friendly volunteer for conversation, connection and to reduce loneliness and isolation. We received self-referrals, referrals from social workers, community development workers, friends and family. Volunteers call once per week, which provides a positive experience both for the older person and the volunteer.



### Initial Quotes About the Telefriending Service

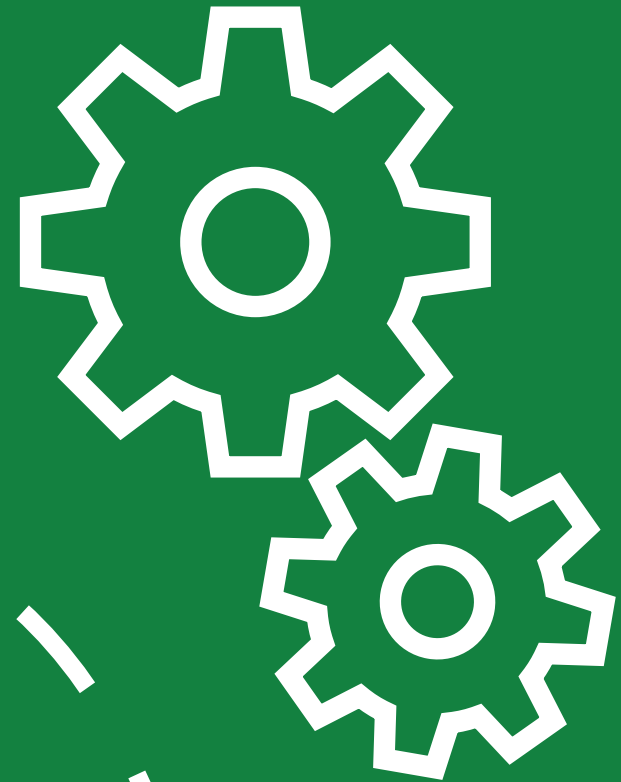
*"My Telefriend is very open, friendly and very inspiring in life"*

*"With no friends or family support, I sometimes get very lonely",*

*"I've said too many goodbyes and I only want to say hello".*

*"Our calls go really well, I really enjoy our conversations"*

Training

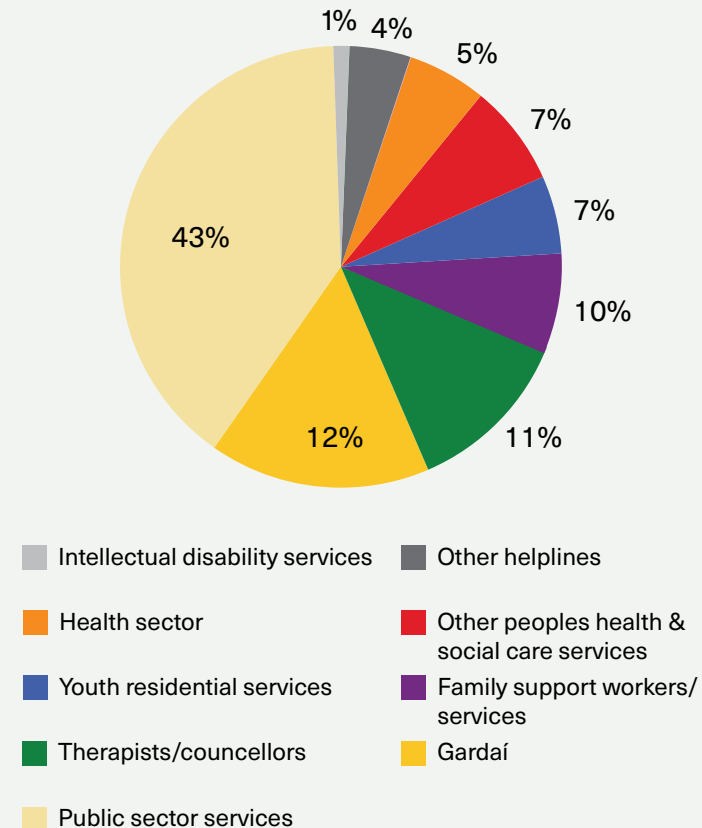


# Training to support LGBTI+ inclusion

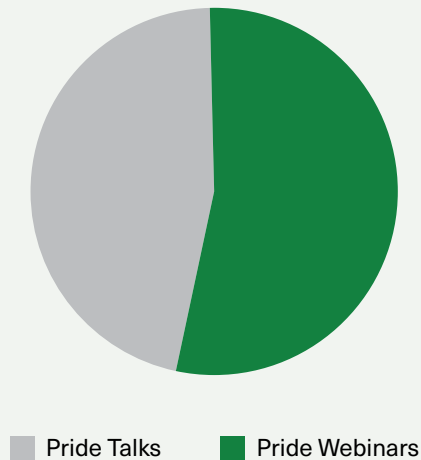
## External Training

During 2021 the Training team in LGBT Ireland grew with an additional valuable part-time role. The increased capacity enabled the team to respond to more training requests than ever before with a wide range of services engaged. A total of 1473 people participated in training and awareness talks with LGBT Ireland. 810 completed our half-day training, while 663 attended either our 60-minute Pride Talks or INMO/LGBT Ireland annual Pride webinar, this year entitled Building an LGBTI+ Inclusive Healthcare System Together from Curriculum Reform to Community Practice - Issues and Solutions.

External Training - Pie Chart 1  
Total trained 1473



### Awareness Raising Talks - Total Participants 663



Strategic priorities continue to be mental health services, general health services, public services (libraries, government departments, local employment services, local partnerships etc), family resources centres, youth residential services and older people's services.

2021 saw the training team continue to deepen its training partnerships with My Mind, INMO and An Gardaí Siochana (AGS).

As part of our strategic work with AGS and playing our part to support the successful implementation of the Garda Diversity & Integration Strategy 2019-2021, the LGBT Ireland training team, as part of the sectoral Garda Working group, created a series of 9 training videos specifically addressing the experiences and issues for our community as they think about engaging with AGS, now available for use by the sectoral organisations in their respective training work with AGS across the country.

## LGBT Champions Training Programme

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic made clear the necessity for a well-developed, co-ordinated, and integrated approach to older people's care and throughout 2021 LGBT Ireland grew its efforts to ensure the LGBTI+ community remained a priority across the spectrum of services vital for positive aging.

Continuing with the successful online format launched in 2020 a total of 54 Community, Health and Social Care Professionals working in older people's services attended one of the 8 online LGBT Champions

Workshops held in 2021. This brought the number of LGBT Champions trained since the foundation of the programme to 176, impacting over 100 services ranging from acute hospitals and primary care centres to older people's advocacy organisations and residential care settings.

Now four years since the inception of the LGBT Champions Training Programme LGBT Ireland commissioned an independent evaluation in November 2021 to ascertain if the Programme was achieving its desired outcome of transforming the care experience of older LGBTI+ people to one of inclusion, equality, respect and dignity.

This evaluation found that the training was unequivocally encouraging changes to take place with a survey of LGBT Champions demonstrating that 95% had achieved improvements in inclusivity measures within their services. Examining this impact, the most common actions included staff LGBTI+ awareness training, updating, and amending policies and paperwork to ensure more inclusive language and increased visible inclusivity.

Throughout 2021 LGBT Ireland continued to offer professional development opportunities to our LGBT Champions to continue to learn and grow through a series of network events facilitating network development, and focusing on topics which would enable LGBT Champions

deepen their understanding of the needs of older members of the LGBTI+ Community.

In addition to the LGBT Champions programme, we continued to engage with key stakeholders through a series of information events, workshops and seminars during the year. In June we held a 'Marginalised Ageing and Inclusive Systems' event in collaboration with the Irish Gerontological Society and moderated the Brighter OUTcomes: Health & Wellbeing panel focused on older members of the LGBTI+ community during Cork Pride in September.

Throughout the year our Thursday online 'coffee and chat' event continued in the LGBT Older and Bolder Online Group, offering a space to build connections and community. Informed by members of this group LGBT Ireland strove to offer a platform to older LGBTI+ people to assert their own needs and speak for themselves.

On International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia in May we launched Invisible threads an 8-part podcast series sharing powerful stories of 8 older members of the LGBTI+ community as they open up about their experience living as LGBTI+ person in Ireland. The series received widespread media coverage and was selected as one of the best new Irish podcasts of the year by the Irish Examiner who noted the bravery of the 8 participants.

# Internal Training



Our frontline support services are at the heart of everything we do. These services depend on the willingness and commitment of members of our community to step up to volunteer, complete training and take their place on the services roster. Our volunteers continue to engage in on-going training throughout their service. During 2021 30 new helpline volunteers were trained and 55 engaged

in the annual Volunteer Conference the key on-going training event in our calendar year.

## INMO / LGBT Ireland webinar

Building on the success of our inaugural LGBT Ireland/ INMO conference, we were delighted to work closely once again with Steven Pitman, INMO Head of Education and Professional Development to host the 2021 conference, themed *Building an LGBTI+ Inclusive Healthcare System Together from Curriculum Reform to Community Practice - Issues and Solutions*.

Due to covid restrictions the conference was held online over half a day. We were encouraged to see participation of key actors in the health sector such as Stephen Donnelly, TD, Minister for Health, Paul Reid, CEO, HSE and Phil Ni Sheaghda, General Secretary, INMO.



The free half day conference, hosted three key panel discussions; Why LGBTI+ Inclusive Care Matters; Inclusive Nursing & Midwifery Curriculum as a Pathway to Inclusive Patient Care; Inclusive Workplace Culture as the Pathway to Inclusive Patient Care and was well attended by health and social care professionals across the health spectrum.

## National Volunteer Annual Conference 2021

In October 2021, LGBT Ireland held its sixth annual National Volunteer Conference in a virtual format with over 55 volunteers and local coordinators on the day.

Hosting the conference for a second year online, volunteers took centre stage as topics and break out rooms were provided to give opportunity for personal and collective reflection. The well attended conference offered speakers across a wide range of topics and skills including sexual health, gender identity from various perspectives including an emphasis on volunteer self-care and resilience, issues highlighted for discussion

through our Annual Volunteer Survey. Speakers included colleagues and representatives from Lesbians in Cork (LINC), the University of Sydney, Cervical Cancer Research, Insight Matters, Amnesty International and BeLongTo. All speakers offered volunteers best practices, tips and helpful advice for dealing with the most challenging contacts.

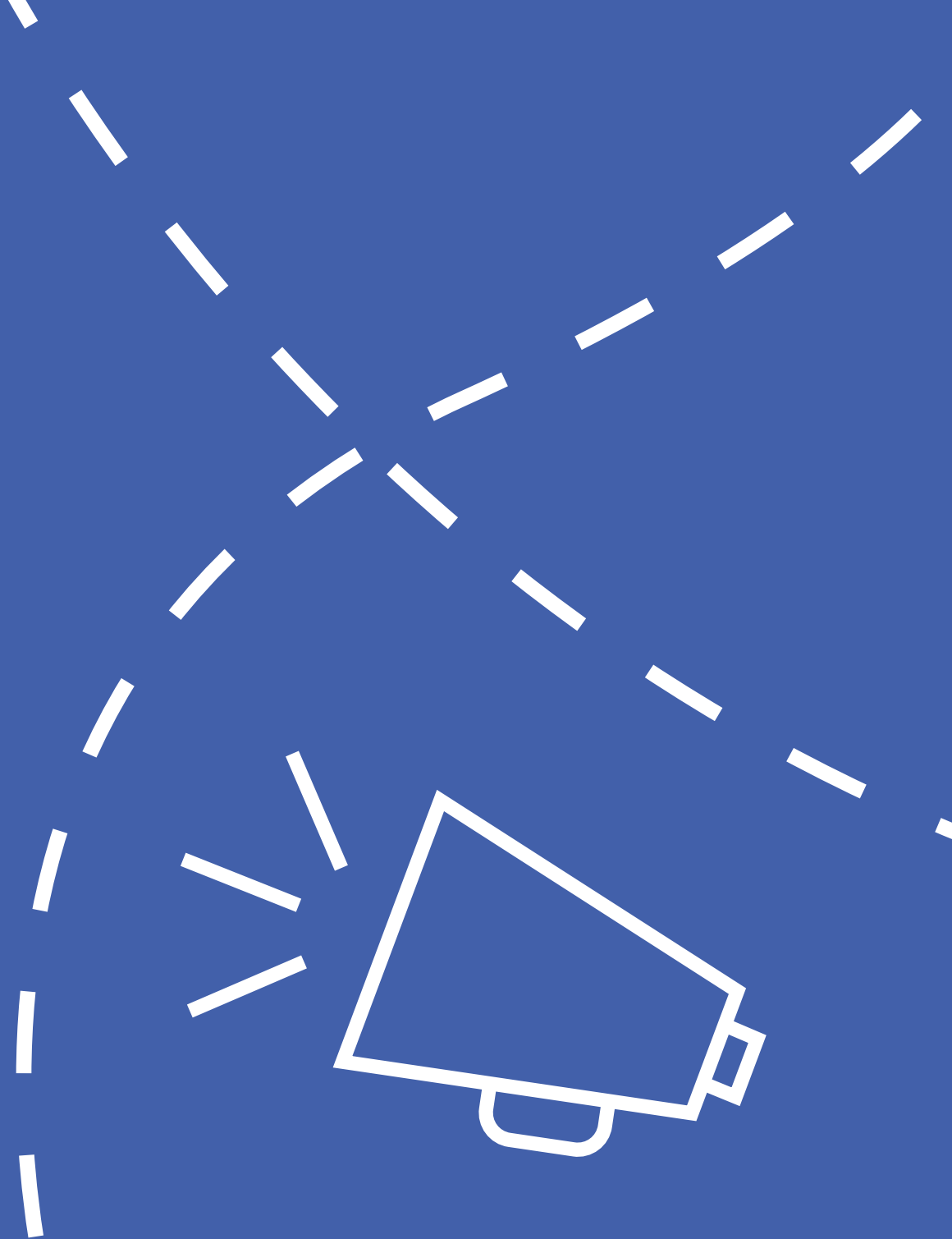


LGBT Ireland & INMO Pride Webinar

**Building an LGBTI+ Inclusive Healthcare System Together**  
from Curriculum Reform to Community Practice - Issues and Solutions

**Friday, 25th June 2021 from 11.00am to 2.00pm**

Advocacy



# Advocacy



## LGBT+ Travellers & Roma

LGBT Ireland is an active member of the National LGBTI+ Traveller & Roma Action Group. During 2021, as part of the National Action Group and various subgroups, we attended 33 group meetings. The ongoing determination and commitment of Action Group members led to our most exciting year to date with some important breakthroughs in our work.



Coimisiún na hÉireann  
um Chearta an Duine  
agus Comhionannas  
Irish Human Rights and  
Equality Commission

This project is supported  
under the Irish Human  
Rights and Equality  
Commission Grant Scheme

In June 2021 LGBT Ireland, on behalf of the National Action Group, was successful in securing an IHREC research grant and a smaller Bank of Ireland Begin Together grant to fund the first ever peer research into LGBT+ Traveller & Roma experiences called “Unveiling inequality experiences of LGBT+ Travellers & Roma”- Peer Research Project 2021-2022. The research began in September and its methods include Focus Group Discussions as well as a quantitative survey. The final report will be launched on National Coming Out Day 2022 and will make key recommendations on the types of support interventions LGBTI+ Travellers & Roma need so that they can live safer, healthier and happier lives embracing and celebrating all of their identities.

As part of Traveller Pride Week 2021 the National Action Group successfully applied for a small grant to produce and launch a Supporting Someone Coming Out guide for Traveller and Roma services. The guide was launched at an online event on 10th October and had a strong attendance by those working in Traveller services, mental health services as well as other State and community & voluntary sector agencies.

In December 2021 the National Action Group began its work on its second LGBT+ Traveller & Roma Calendar 2022 following the great success of the 2021 calendar.

## LGBT+ people seeking international protection in Ireland- asylum seekers and refugees



Throughout 2021 LGBT Ireland continued its frontline support and advocacy work to LGBTI+ people coming to seek international protection in Ireland. Is Rainbow Muid (IRM), LGBT Ireland's bespoke peer support group, held 19 peer support meetings throughout 2021 with 133 attendances by LGBTI+ people living in Direct Provision or those recently moved out. From May meetings reverted to in-person very enthusiastically once inter-county travel restrictions were lifted, however due to the concerning Omicron wave emerging in November, the last meetings of the year were once again held online. During 2021 individual case work was necessitated arising from a high level of concern for individuals' mental health and suicidality; serious assaults; including worrying breaches of professional standards and procedures.

The 2 to 3 year wait time for the official determining International Protection Office (IPO) interview contributes greatly to the anxiety and stress endured by LGBTI+ people seeking international protection in Ireland. The pandemic severely impacted wait times as interviews were suspended for a period of months. LGBTI+ people stress about the questions they will be asked about their sexuality and identity and worry if they will be believed. LGBT Ireland secured a grant from St Stephen's Green Trust to research LGBTI+ people's experiences of these interviews. The research project is entitled "Believe Me or Not, But I Am Who I Am" and will be completed and launched in 2022.

On World Refugee Day 20th June, LGBT Ireland and IRM focused its action on the negative mental health impact living in Direct Provision has on LGBTI+ people. A powerful animation was launched with personal experiences and professional concerns highlighted during the launch event. Both the animation and the launch event can be viewed on our website- <https://lgbt.ie/lgbt-ireland-marks-world-refugee-day-with-animation-launch-and-webinar/>

The terrible circumstances which befell Afghanistan in 2021 had a heightened risk and danger for LGBTI+ Afghans. LGBT Ireland, as part of a small working group, supported the successful repatriation to Ireland as programme refugees of 26 gay and Trans Afghans and supported with host family accommodation.

In December 2021 LGBT Ireland was delighted to expand its team for this growing area of work with the appointment of a part-time key worker, funded through the LGBTI+ Community Services Scheme, as part of the National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy.

### **LGBTI+ Rights within the EU**

With concerning rollbacks on LGBTI+ rights happening in EU countries such as Hungary and Poland, LGBT Ireland worked to highlight our concerns and potential wider impacts if EU countries regress on human rights issues. LGBT Ireland engaged with international NGO's, Government Ministers, Members of European Parliament and relevant Embassy staff, including holding a demonstration outside of the Hungarian Embassy in protest of their ban on the "portrayal and the promotion of gender identity different from sex at birth, the change of sex and homosexuality" for persons under 18.

## **Legal and policy reform**

### **LGBTI+ Family Rights**

LGBT Ireland hosted an important webinar, Legal Recognition of Parent-Child Relationships in LGBTI+ Parent Families: Understanding the Barriers and Proposals for Reform to coincide with International Childrens Day. During this webinar, a new research report, LGBTI+ Parent Families in Ireland: Legal Recognition of Parent-Child Relationships authored by Dr Lydia Bracken was launched.

### **Hate speech and hate crime**

Incidences of hate speech and hate crime against our community continues to increase. Leading on the LGBTI+ sectoral working group focused on improving policing and victim support for our community, we worked alongside the Garda Diversity Unit to deliver an official An Garda Siochana online portal for the recording of hate crimes. Our campaigning for effective legislation to combat incitement to hatred and hate crimes continued across 2021 and delivery of same is core to our advocacy work.

## **Ban Conversion Practices Campaign**

LGBT Ireland in partnership with The Rainbow Project NI secured a one-year funded part-time position for a Campaign Officer to co-ordinate the campaign which has been ongoing to achieve full ban on conversion practices north and south. Eleven meetings with relevant organisations and agencies took place in the last two months of 2021 as well as regular correspondence with stakeholders and others.

## **Protection for LGBTI+ people seeking international protection here in Ireland**

LGBT Ireland continues to bring true life stories and impacts to the relevant politicians and officials to effect positive policy change. In June 2021 Minister O' Gorman, responsible for IPAS, equality, integration and the successful implementation of the White Paper, announced a specific LGBTI+ IPAS Operational Policy. Further submissions were made and LGBT Ireland continues to monitor the implementation of this important policy.

# **Building Partnerships**

During 2021 LGBT Ireland built on existing partnerships and created new ones. Working across multiple sectors and interests, LGBT Ireland is a partner organisation/participant of

## **Traveller and Roma Action Group**

The National Action Group for LGBT+ Traveller and Roma Rights was formed in 2016, to advance greater awareness, understanding and inclusion of LGBT+ Travellers and Roma.

## **LGBTI+ Sectoral Working Group on Garda Diversity and Integration**

Following a national dialogue day with An Garda Síochána in March 2020, the LGBTI+ Sectoral Working group was established to ensure that LGBTI+ organisations from around the country meet regularly to discuss policing issues affecting our community. The primary objective of this group is to inform the implementation of the Garda Diversity and Integration Strategy. Through regular meetings and collective advocacy the group aims to ensure that

Garda policy and practice, and victim support services, are aware, inclusive and supportive of the diverse identities, needs, and challenges facing members of the LGBTI+ community.

### **Assisted Human Reproduction (AHR) Coalition**

The Assisted Human Reproduction (AHR) Coalition was formed in 2020 is made up of not-for-profit organisations and groups whose members are affected by the lack of legislation around AHR in Ireland. The primary objective of the AHR Coalition is to inform the development of laws or policies pertaining to Assisted Human Reproduction (AHR) from the perspective of the best interests and welfare of the children conceived through AHR, and the human rights and equality of their intended parents and families.

### **Trans Equality Together Coalition**

The Trans Equality Together coalition formation work began in 2021 and is working to create an Ireland where trans and non-binary people are equal, safe and valued. The coalition is led by three leading national organisations working to promote LGBTQ+ rights in Ireland: TENI, LGBT Ireland and BeLonGTo. The coalition is set to formally launch in 2022 and expand membership to broad

base of LGBTI+, Human Rights, and other Civil Society organisations across Ireland.

### **Ban Conversion Practices Steering group**

The Steering Group comprises of representatives of national LGBTI+ advocacy groups such as LGBT Ireland, NXF, the Anti-Conversion Therapy Coalition, BeLonGTo, TENI, Neuropride and MPOWER as well as regional groups who have been active in this area, GOSHH, GayProject, Midlands LGBT+ and LINC including professional bodies such as the Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy. The group is working to achieve a full ban on conversion practices on the island of Ireland.

### **Coalition Against Hate Crime Ireland (CAHC)**

LGBT Ireland is a proud member of the Coalition Against Hate Crime Ireland (CAHC), a civil society coalition whose members represent groups commonly targeted in hate crimes. The coalition includes Minority Ethnic Groups, religious minorities, LGBTQI communities, people with disabilities, and others, as well as academics and researchers working to advance the aims and objectives of the Steering Group. CAHC is chaired by the Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL).

# Political engagement

During 2021, the political focus remained on the response to the continuing pandemic and the associated health and economic impacts, therefore it was a priority for LGBT Ireland to ensure a spotlight was kept on tackling discrimination, stigma and inequality faced by LGBTI+ people.

The LGBTI+ National Inclusion Strategy 2019-2021 contained over 100 actions to be implemented, and LGBT Ireland consistently monitored the progress on these agreed actions. With the completion of some actions delayed by the impact by the Covid-19 pandemic, LGBT Ireland secured an extension of the Strategy delivery date and a commitment to a new Strategy upon completion of the current one.

## Ministerial meetings

Despite the ongoing challenges presented by meeting restrictions, LGBT Ireland engaged with various Ministers throughout 2021 ensuring the LGBTI+ perspective was prioritised during the political and legislative processes on issues such as legal parental protections for same sex families, the LGBTI+

Community in Direct Provision, delivery of the National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy and Hate Speech and Hate Crime legislation.

## Submissions and Publications

[Family Friendly and Inclusive Parliament LGBT Ireland submission](#)

[LGBT Ireland UPR Submission 2021 DCEDIY](#)

[IHREC Strategy Statement 2022-2024 Submission](#)

[Minorities Accessing Justice, LGBT Ireland Submission to Oireachtas Joint Committee on Justice](#)

[Submission on Criminal Justice \(Hate Crime\) Bill 2021](#)



# Acknowledgements



## Staff and Board

As well as our wonderful volunteer team, LGBT Ireland consists of our staff team and Board of Directors.

In 2021, the staff team was made up of our CEO, Senior Training and Advocacy Coordinator, Champions Programme Coordinator, Services Development Coordinator, Administrative Officer and part time Trainer. All staff reported to the CEO, with the CEO reporting to the Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors expanded in 2021 to ten members. All of the Directors have a wealth of skills and experience including delivering frontline services, law reform, governance, and strategic communications. The Board met 5 times in 2021.

## Network member organisations

To our amazing network member organisations: Gay Project, LINC, Outcomers, Outwest, LGBT Kilkenny, LGBT Dublin and AMACH LGBT! we are enormously grateful to you for your dedication to supporting the LGBTI+ community and to supporting us.

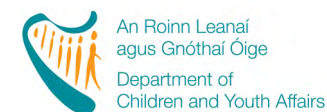


## Our funders

LGBT Ireland are very grateful to the funders who have supported our work this year. We could not have continued to deliver and grow our services, training and advocacy initiatives without your help. Thanks to POBAL, HSE's National Office of Suicide Prevention, Social Innovation Fund, HSE Sexual Health and Crisis Pregnancy Programme, Department of Justice and Equality, Department of Children and Youth Affairs, The Community Foundation for Ireland, St Stephens Green Trust, PayPal and Adobe.

## Our financial statements 2021

[Click here](#) to view our financial statements 2021.



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