

Progress Made. Renewed Efforts Required.

A Shadow Report of Ireland's
First National LGBTI+
Inclusion Strategy

BRIEF SUMMARY
REPORT

JANUARY 2024



LGBT
IRELAND

For Inclusion
For Equality
For Everyone

Contact Details

LGBT Ireland
80 Dame Street,
Dublin 2,
D02 W312.

Email: info@lgbt.ie

Phone: (01) 6859280

RCN: 20159672

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to acknowledge the extensive engagement from the government departments, state agencies and LGBTQI+ community organisations. Their cooperation made this project possible. We would like to particularly thank Dr Chris Noone, lecturer at the University of Galway and a Board Member of NXF, for his expert advice and guidance.

About the Authors

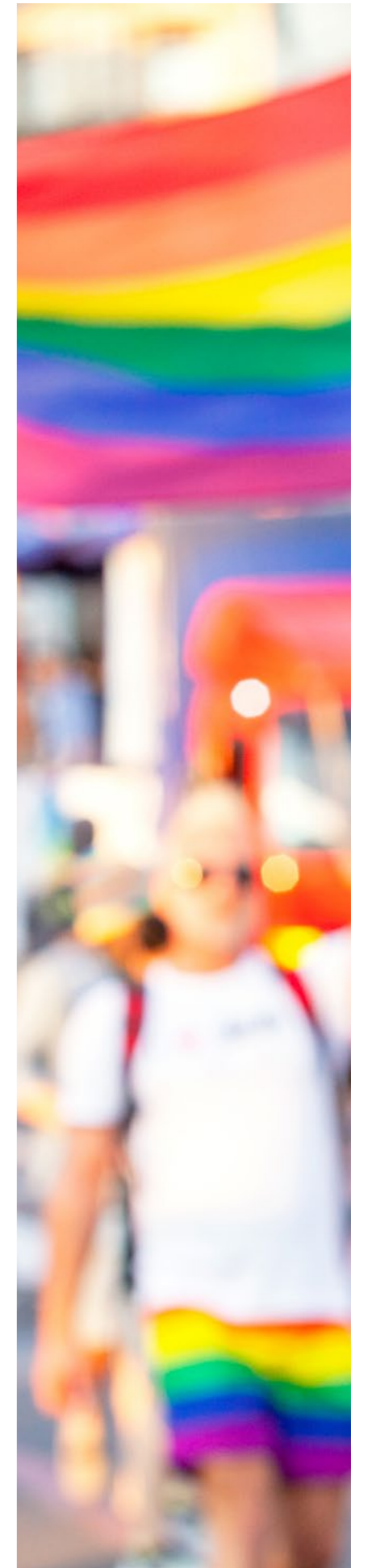
Pádraig Rice is the Policy and Research Manager with LGBT Ireland. James Morrison was a Policy Intern with LGBT Ireland.

Citation

LGBT Ireland, Progress Made. Renewed Efforts Required.
A Shadow Report of Ireland's First National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy
(Dublin: LGBT Ireland, 2024).

Full Report

A copy of the full report is available on <https://lgbt.ie/publications/>



Foreword

On behalf of LGBT Ireland, I am delighted to present this important report. The formation of the first National LGBTI+ Strategy was a milestone moment for Ireland's LGBTI+ community. After wide consultation and examination, this is our assessment of that plan.

As the title notes a lot of progress has been made since 2019, but a renewed effort is now required to fulfil the outstanding actions and to address new challenges. I hope this report will be a useful tool in the formation of the second National LGBTI+ Strategy.

Finally, I would like to thank the authors and commenters for all their work.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paula Fagan". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Paula Fagan
CEO of LGBT Ireland

Executive Summary

The formation of the National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy in 2019 was a significant step forward in the engagement between the State and LGBTI+ people in Ireland. For the first time, there was a coordinated, cross-departmental plan to respond to the unique needs and challenges of the entire LGBTI+ community.

The Strategy, which included 108 actions, was envisioned to run to 2021 but was extended to 2023, following the onset of the global COVID-19 pandemic. During this time, there was a change of government, and responsibility for the coordination of the Strategy moved from the Department of Justice to the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. These were just two of the challenges faced during the implementation period.

The shadow report seeks to measure and evaluate the impact of the Strategy from a community perspective. The formation of the report was led by LGBT Ireland with input from a wide range of stakeholders.

The contents of the report have been shaped based on feedback from various community organisations, government departments and state agencies.

The full report examines all 108 actions and provides an objective overview of the progress made. This is followed by subjective analysis and commentary. Each action has been assigned a grade from A – F based on the progress made. Each of the outcomes has also been assigned a score based on the average score of the actions that made up that outcome. An overall grade (C+) is an average of the score of the 108 actions. It is clear from this score and the individual assessments that significant progress has been made on a number of fronts, however, renewed efforts are needed to ensure the outstanding actions are completed.

The analysis of the report highlights the success of the public consultation that was undertaken in advance of the Strategy formation. However, it's not clear what steps were taken between the conclusion of the public consultation and the publication of the Strategy.

It also notes some of the structural flaws, including how some actions were not specific, concrete or measurable. The full report also provides a comparison between Ireland and two high performing countries in terms of LGBTI+ rights namely Denmark and Malta.

The report concludes with 10 recommendations. These call for a second National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy that takes a whole-life approach and is informed by research, public consultation and international best practice. In particular, the next Strategy should focus on intersectional issues and the needs of trans, non-binary and intersex people. Finally, the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the next Strategy must be reviewed, and a new approach should be adopted. Crucially the next Strategy needs enhanced human and financial resources to ensure all outcomes are achieved. By working together, with renewed energy and effort we can reach the collective goal of making Ireland the best place in Europe to be LGBTI+.

Outcomes Report Card

These grades are based on the extent to which the agreed actions were implemented.



Visible and Included

1	LGBTI+ people are made positively visible across all sectors of society.	C
1.1	Conduct a public awareness campaign to positively represent LGBTI+ identities and contributions to Irish society.	C
1.2	Identify key large-scale events each year to promote LGBTI+ visibility.	D
1.3	Develop and implement further actions to support the positive portrayal and representation of LGBTI+ identities in broadcast media.	E
1.4	Coordinate a series of events and communications to support positive messaging around Pride and festivals nationwide and more broadly to promote LGBTI+ visibility, awareness and expertise.	D
1.5	Explore opportunities for the appropriate inclusion of LGBTI+ lives in the curriculum as part of curriculum review at both primary and senior-cycle levels.	C
1.6	Include LGBTI+ matters in the Relationship and Sexual Education curriculum review.	A
1.7	Take account of the needs and interests of LGBTI+ people in 'libraries' collections development and acquisitions policy in line with the National Strategy for Public Libraries 2018-2022. Under the Healthy Ireland at your Library initiative compile an LGBTI+ reading list and update it on an ongoing basis and examine opportunities for the enhancement of stock to support the LGBTI+ community.	B

2	Irish workplaces are inclusive of LGBTI+ people and support them in bringing their 'authentic selves' to work.	C
2.1	Further develop and implement LGBTI+ inclusive recruitment practices across the public sector in conjunction with PAS Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.	B
2.2	Ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion is a core feature of organisational and HR strategy and subject to ongoing review.	C
2.3	Integrate diversity and inclusion perspectives into Civil Service workplace policy and practices including leadership training, PMDS, induction, and customer service training.	C
2.4	Develop a Civil and Public Service wide LGBT+ Employee and Ally Network.	D
2.5	Utilise the Corporate Social Responsibility Stakeholder Forum to advance LGBTI+ workplace inclusion amongst private sector employers, and to raise awareness of the National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy through the available Corporate Social Responsibility channels.	D
2.6	Develop an employers' toolkit for use in both the public and private sectors to promote workplace inclusion building on prior good practice such as the Diversity Champions programme.	D
2.7	Provide information and guidelines to employers to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remind them of their obligations with regards to equality and anti-discrimination laws. Advise on ways of providing a safe and supportive working environment for LGBTI+ people, particularly in relation to transgender people. 	D
2.8	Develop guidance information for transgender people to support their continued participation in the workplace, particularly during their time of transitioning.	D
2.9	Promote the wellbeing of school and centre for education personnel, including LGBTI+ personnel in the context of the implementation of the Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2018-2023.	D
2.10	To further build LGBTI+ awareness and inclusive practices amongst SMEs and micro enterprises, develop LGBTI+ information events and/or learning modules for inclusion in LEO and Enterprise Ireland Diversity & Inclusion training programmes.	B
2.11	The National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI) to develop a system of diversity certification for SMEs to independently verify that a company is 51% diverse-owned and managed. Categories of ownership under this certification scheme to include LGBTI+.	NA

3	Public spaces are safe and welcoming of LGBTI+ people.	D
3.1	Take measures to ensure the availability of suitable diversity training for civil service staff in customer facing roles.	C
3.2	Coordinate the roll out of a public recognition marker denoting LGBTI+ friendly service provision, particularly in rural and other hard to reach communities.	D
3.3	Take practical measures to increase the availability of non-gendered toilets in public buildings.	D
4	Better information is available on the population and needs of LGBTI+ people in Ireland to support the development of effective policy.	B
4.1	Develop and implement an LGBTI+ research programme based on gaps and priorities identified in consultation with LGBTI+ NGOs and the landscape analysis of existing research and data commissioned by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.	A
4.2	Address LGBTI+ data gaps in tandem with the work being done to advance data mapping and use in the Migrant Integration Strategy.	D
4.3	Establish a baseline of public attitudes and acceptance of LGBTI+ identities through a National Survey.	A
4.4	Ensure that disaggregated data on the LGBTI+ population and their needs is collected in national surveys where relevant, and consider the inclusion of a question on sexual orientation/gender identity in the 2026 census.	C
5	Public policy is inclusive of LGBTI+ perspectives and avoids heteronormative assumptions.	D
5.1	Utilise the Equality and Human Rights Public Sector Duty to take account of LGBTI+ considerations in the development or review of public sector policy, to be informed by targeted consultation where necessary.	D
6	Community supports are more widely available to LGBTI+ people.	C
6.1	Undertake a digital mapping of LGBTI+ community services and funding, which takes into account multiple intersectional factors with a view to addressing gaps.	D
6.2	Increase funding for LGBTI+ community services to ensure existing LGBTI+ services are sustainable and that funding is available to develop additional services, based on the gaps identified in the mapping exercise.	B

6.3	Take measures to ensure that existing community infrastructure is inclusive and welcoming to LGBTI+ people and consider the provision of pop-up LGBTI+ services.	C
6.4	Implement [Action 6 of] the National Sports Policy 2018-2027 in a manner that is inclusive of LGBTI+ people.	E
6.5	As part of the ongoing objective of improving understanding of the landscape of sport in Ireland and to foster better evidence-based decision making, investigate the possibility of using the Irish Sports Monitor to assess levels of active and social participation (volunteering, club membership and attendance at sporting events) in sport among the LGBTI+ community and issues related to such participation.	B
6.6	Engage with existing networks within the farming sector to promote LGBTI+ inclusion and to combat rural isolation.	D
7	The positive contribution of the LGBTI+ community to Irish arts, culture and sport is highlighted and the history of the LGBTI+ movement preserved.	C
7.1	Ensure that our cultural institutions proactively foster engagement with the LGBTI+ community and encourage national cultural institutions to make a significant contribution to collecting, interpreting and making available.	A
7.2	Support the creation of an LGBTI+ history and culture research think tank to pool knowledge and resources in this area, providing support and guidance.	D
7.3	Use the Business to Arts programme to fund LGBTI+ artists and promote positive visibility.	C
7.4	Support a nation-wide week-long LGBTI+ History and Culture Festival in 2020.	D
8	Ireland is recognised as an LGBTI+ friendly tourist destination.	C
8.1	Integrate LGBTI+ perspectives into Fáilte Ireland's 'Service Excellence' training provision for tourism providers and into any upcoming review of policy or standards.	B
8.2	Address LGBTI+ inclusion in the finalisation of Fáilte Ireland's Festival Development Strategy.	C
8.3	Raise the profile of, and explore initiatives and opportunities to, promote Ireland further as an LGBTI+ friendly destination.	C

Treated Equally



9	LGBTI+ people are aware of the supports and redress mechanisms available to them where discrimination has occurred.	A
9.1	Through an information campaign, raise awareness of the role of the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) in dealing with complaints of discrimination under the Equal Status Acts and the Employment Equality Acts.	B
9.2	Provide tailored legal advice and advocacy to LGBTI+ people via a specialised legal advice clinic.	A
10	Equality legislation provides explicit protection to transgender, gender non-conforming and intersex people.	C
10.1	Review the Employment Equality and Equal Status Acts to ensure that transgender, non-conforming and intersex people have explicit protection within the equality grounds.	
11	Same sex parents are treated equally to opposite sex parents before the law.	A
11.1	Commence Parts 2 & 3 of the Children and Family Relationships Act 2015.	A
11.2	Commence Rules of Court to allow a declaration of parentage under section 21 or 22 of the Children and Family Relationships Act 2015.	A
11.3	Commence outstanding sections of Adoption (Amendment) Act 2017 relating to donor-conceived children.	A
11.4	Commence outstanding sections of Children and Family Relationships Act 2015.	A
11.5	Develop a targeted information campaign for the LGBTI+ community on the provisions contained in the Children and Family Relationships Act 2015, and what they mean for same sex parents and those planning parenthood.	A

11.6	Introduce legislation on Assisted Human Reproduction (AHR) which will be available to people irrespective of gender, marital status or sexual orientation subject to the provisions of the legislation, on an equal and non-discriminatory basis.	D
11.7	Bring forward legislative proposals to provide for adoptive leave and benefit for male same sex adoptive couples.	A
12	Transgender people are supported and administrative processes are streamlined while maintaining a person's privacy.	B
12.1	Make a report to each House of the Oireachtas of the findings on the review of the Gender Recognition Act 2015 and of the conclusions drawn from the findings.	A
12.2	Ensure that each relevant Department/Government body examines how, once a Gender Recognition Certificate is obtained, administrative processes can be streamlined, improving interconnection between Departments, and reducing costs for replacement of official documents, while maintaining a person's privacy.	C
13	Supports are provided to those at higher risk of multiple discrimination and double marginalisation including LGBTI+ older people, migrants, Travellers, people with disabilities and LGBTI+ prisoners.	C
13.1	Design and implement programmes and measures to address intersectional discrimination in partnership with NGOs and target communities.	E
13.2	Ensure that the rights and diversity of LGBTI+ service users are respected and promoted as part of the National Quality Standards Framework for homeless services.	A
13.3	Develop a placement and accommodation policy to reflect and build upon existing good practice in the accommodation of vulnerable prisoners including LGBTI+ people.	D
13.4	Provide LGBTI+ awareness and sensitivity training to staff, including RPOs, general training to all staff as part of CPD and targeted training to particular Officers, where an operational need exist.	C
13.5	Consider the provision of 'in-reach' LGBTI+ community supports, peer supports, and provision of LGBTI+ informational/recreational literature.	B

Healthy



14	Healthcare providers and practitioners are trained to understand the identities and needs of their LGBTI+ patients and to avoid making heteronormative assumptions.	B
14.1	Promote the uptake of the e-learning LGBTI+ training module as part of the Health Service's eLearning and Development portal (HSELand) under the Sexual Health Promotion Training Strategy. Include the module in the HSE's staff induction programme and make it available for hosting on other platforms as appropriate.	B
14.2	Implement sexual health promotion training for professionals in the youth and other sectors, those working with at risk-groups, and for parents.	B
14.3	Provide LGBTI+ awareness training to staff working in mental health services nationally.	B
14.4	Support the co-production of guidance and training materials aimed at health and social care professionals working in older persons' services to ensure they are equipped with the knowledge, skills and confidence to meet the needs of older LGBTI+ people in their care.	B
15	Health policy takes consideration of the needs of all population groups including the LGBTI+ community.	B
15.1	Update the National Sexual Health Strategy in 2020 and include the needs of the LGBTI+ community.	C
15.2	Implement the universal, gender neutral, HPV vaccination programme.	A
15.3	Include consideration of the needs of different population groups including the LGBTI+ community in the development of standards for STI services.	D
15.4	Keep the restrictions on blood donations from men who have sex with men under review to ensure that they are in line with international best practice.	A
15.5	Under the National Drug Strategy, 'Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery – a health led response to drug and alcohol use in Ireland 2017-2025', improve the capacity of services to accommodate the needs of people who use drugs and alcohol from specific communities including the LGBTI+ community.	D

15.6	Ensure, through the Foundation Programme in Sexual Health Promotion for professionals, that a holistic, person centred approach to sexual health, covering all genders as well as risk factors is adopted, thereby ensuring that the needs of lesbian and bisexual women are appropriately addressed.	A
16	Sexual health services are adequately resourced and available throughout Ireland including in rural locations.	B
16.1	Fund the HPV vaccine rollout plan in line with NIAC policy, including funding for vaccine nurses in 2019 and 2020.	A
16.2	Develop and provide Sexual Health Advisor training for nurses across public STI/HIV services, student health services, prison and addiction services and primary care.	D
16.3	Establish a Health Advisors' network to support the role of sexual health advisors.	A
16.4	Work with public STI clinics to identify and implement solutions to enhance efficiencies, thus improving capacity within current resources particularly in relation to reducing waiting lists, increasing walk-in availability and patient care pathways (e.g. self-taken screening for asymptomatic patients)	B
16.5	Incorporate a clinical information and guidelines section on STI testing and management for health care professionals on www.sexualwellbeing.ie .	B
16.6	Update information annually on the management of genital infections for GPs through the HSE antibiotic prescribing website.	B
17	The LGBTI+ community, particularly the MSM population of Ireland are made aware of the risks of contracting HIV and other STIs and of the importance of regular testing.	A
17.1	Deliver targeted outreach sexual health programmes and campaigns to at risk groups.	A
17.2	Promote sexual health and 'safer sex' public advertising campaigns to encourage sexually active adults to have safer sex, and include advice on contraception and the prevention of sexually transmitted infections.	B
17.3	Expand condom distribution services, with initial focus targeting those most at risk.	A
17.4	Expand community HIV testing to populations at higher risk for HIV, mainly MSM and migrants, through NGO partners.	B

17.5	Advance the establishment of an MSM Health Committee in 2019 by the Sexual Health and Crisis pregnancy Programme (SHCPP) and targeted campaigns and messages through website and social media.	A
17.6	Continue to promote and adapt key social media, community and social venue messages for STI testing/condom usage through www.Man2Man.ie .	A
17.7	Develop and implement national campaigns around prevention of HIV and other STIs such as RespectProtect on Twitter and Man2Man website.	A
17.8	Conclude the study of the readiness of public STI clinics to implement pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) in line with the Standards for Service Delivery of HIV PrEP to clarify capacity and resource requirements across public STI services in Ireland and inform resource allocation.	A
17.9	Complete the plan for the delivery of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) nationally following a positive recommendation arising from the HIQA health technology assessment.	B
18	People living with HIV in Ireland are supported and not stigmatised.	C
18.1	Develop a HIV stigma campaign with a strong focus at the city level for the cities that sign up to the fast-track cities initiative. The aim of the national stigma campaign will be to raise awareness around HIV transmission, the effectiveness of HIV treatment for people living with HIV to live a healthy life as well as prevent onward transmission, and to promote HIV testing, so that people living with undiagnosed HIV can be linked into treatment services promptly.	C
19	People wishing to transition their gender have timely access to treatment that accords with international best practice.	F
19.1	Recruit additional specialised staff in this area including endocrinologists, social workers, speech and language therapists, senior psychologists, clinical nurse specialists, and administrative support officers.	F
19.2	Continue to develop transgender health services for children and adults in Ireland with a clear transition pathway from child to adult services.	F
19.3	Develop a seamless and integrated service for those people who present to the Irish health service with gender identity issues through the time limited Gender Identity Steering Committee. Chaired by the Clinical Lead in Mental Health, the Steering Committee has defined terms of reference, a time frame within which it will operate and clear reporting relationships, and its membership includes experts in the area, representatives from paediatric services, adult services (both endocrinology and psychiatry), advocacy groups and service users.	F
19.4	Provide clear guidelines to health practitioners on referral pathways for trans young people and their families to specialised services.	F

20 Better data is available on the prevalence of intersex conditions in Ireland and consideration given to appropriate clinical governance in the context of international evidence and guidelines.

20.1 Conduct a scoping exercise on Intersex conditions in Ireland to determine and document prevalence, current practice, clinical governance and compare against international evidence and guidelines. This scoping exercise will include key recommendations which may include the establishment of an expert working group to develop clinical guidelines.

Safe and Supported



21 Ireland has strong legislation and supports in place to combat hate crime and encourages people to report it.

21.1	Bring forward legislative proposals to ensure that incitement to hatred and hate crimes against LGBTI+ people are adequately addressed in our laws.	C
21.2	Update the Garda Pulse system to include a "Hate Crime" tag and subcategories including sexual orientation and gender identity.	A
21.3	Implement a fully functioning on-line system for reporting hate crime.	A
21.4	Significantly increase reporting of hate crimes to An Garda Síochána by members of the LGBTI+ community owing to the more open relationship that has been developed.	B
21.5	Commence the publication of statistics for recorded incidents of hate crime.	A

22 LGBTI+ victims of crime are appropriately supported and included in mainstream service provision underpinned by formalised consultation structures with An Garda Síochána and other relevant agencies. B

- 22.1 Provide updated training to members of An Garda Síochána on issues affecting the LGBTI+ community. **B**
- 22.2 Ensure that there are open channels of communication between members of the LGBTI+ community and specially trained members of An Garda Síochána. **B**
- 22.3 Incorporate LGBTI+ focused considerations in the implementation of the Second National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence. **A**

23 LGBTI+ asylum seekers are supported and treated sensitively within the International Protection Process and Direct Provision System. B

- 23.1 Develop a broad LGBTI+ policy, including a transgender accommodation policy, to promote equality, take account of self-determined identity and to ensure that the safety and wellbeing of all residents is promoted. **C**
- 23.2 Finalise and adopt the national standards for accommodation offered to people in the protection process. **C**
- 23.3 Continue to work with the UNHCR to:
 - Monitor/Review the handling of applications relating to sexual orientation and/or gender identity within the International Protection Process
 - As part of ongoing training programmes, ensure updated LGBTI+ cultural competence training is rolled out to staff working within the International Protection Office (IPO).**A**

24 The practice of conversion therapy in Ireland is investigated and followed up with appropriate counter measures. B

- 24.1 In the context of the commitment in the LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy regarding the promotion or practice of conversion therapy, continue research to establish the extent to which the practice is occurring in Ireland and review international best practice in responding which will also include legislative responses in other countries. **A**
- 24.2 Informed by the findings of the above research, develop an appropriate package of measures for implementation in response. **C**

25 Ireland continues to raise the issue of LGBTI+ rights at an international level and supports Human Rights Defenders and civil society groups in embassies and overseas missions. A

- 25.1 Continue to integrate the promotion and protection of the rights of LGBTI+ individuals into Ireland's foreign policy. **A**
- 25.2 Support the promotion of LGBTI+ rights in our multilateral work at the UN, EU and regional organisations such as the Council of Europe and the OSCE including support for resolutions, statements and events that promote the rights of LGBTI+ people. **A**
- 25.3 Support engagement with human rights and civil society organisations working globally and in partner countries to promote and protect the rights of LGBTI+ people. **A**
- 25.4 Support outreach to LGBTI+ members of our diaspora through funding initiatives such as the Emigrant Support Programme. **C**

26 LGBTI+ people can travel in safety and confidence. B

- 26.1 Continue to provide training for transport operators and taxi drivers that includes an LGBTI+ awareness and sensitivity component. **C**
- 26.2 Continue to promote equality policies and complaints mechanisms amongst the travelling public. **B**
- 26.4 Enhance data collection on equality / discrimination complaints by transport operators. **B**
- 26.4 Continue to provide travel advice and information for Irish citizens when travelling abroad, particularly to countries where laws and attitudes to LGBTI+ issues may affect safety and ease of travel. **A**

Overall Grade C+

Recommendations

1. There should be a new National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy from 2024-2029 with a midpoint review in early 2027.
2. The next Strategy should take a whole-life approach. That is, the next Strategy should consider dividing actions up in part on the basis of age with specific actions for LGBTI+ young people, adults and older people.
3. A new public LGBTI+ consultation should take place to identify the needs of the community. There should be increased transparency on how the issues raised in this process are translated into the final Strategy used by the government. Additional resources should be allocated to the strategy formation process in line with the National LGBTI+ Youth Strategy.
4. In developing the Strategy, more attention should be paid to international best practices, using the examples of Malta, Iceland, and elsewhere as a road map to LGBTI+ progress in Ireland.
5. Each proposed action in the next Strategy should be specific, concrete, measurable, and achievable. The Strategy should also be evidence-based.
6. Given the needs of trans, non-binary and intersex people, significant focus and resources should be allocated to improving outcomes for these communities.
7. Certain intersectional gaps within the community should be addressed with the seriousness they deserve, particularly the disabled LGBTI+ community, LGBTI+ Travellers and Roma, and LGBTI+ migrants and asylum seekers.
8. Care should be taken to align the actions in the next Strategy with existing government commitments, existing action plans, and other inclusion strategies.
9. The ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the next Strategy must be reviewed, and a new approach should be adopted. This could include subgroups that include NGOs, experts, departments and other key delivery stakeholders such as SHCPP and NOSP.
10. Adequate resources (human and financial) must be provided to ensure the next National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy is fully implemented.



Community
Foundation
Ireland



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland