



An Roinn Leanaí  
agus Gnóthaí Óige  
Department of Children  
and Youth Affairs

# LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy 2018-2020

*LGBTI+ young people:  
visible, valued and included*

the 1990s, the number of people in the world who are illiterate has increased from 1.2 billion to 1.5 billion. The number of illiterate people in the world is expected to reach 1.8 billion by the year 2015.

There are many reasons for this increase. One of the main reasons is that the population of the world is growing rapidly. In 1990, there were about 5.3 billion people in the world. By 2015, there are expected to be about 7.5 billion people in the world.

Another reason for the increase in illiteracy is that the quality of education is poor in many developing countries. Many children do not attend school, and those who do attend often do not learn to read and write.

There are also many people who are illiterate because they are too poor to afford to go to school. In many developing countries, the cost of education is very high, and many families cannot afford to pay for their children's education.

Finally, there are many people who are illiterate because they are too busy to go to school. In many developing countries, people often have to work long hours to support their families, and they do not have time to go to school.

There are many ways to reduce the number of illiterate people in the world. One way is to improve the quality of education in developing countries. This can be done by training teachers, building schools, and providing textbooks.

Another way to reduce the number of illiterate people is to make education free for all. In many developing countries, the cost of education is a major barrier to access. If education were free, more people would be able to go to school.

Finally, there are many ways to help people who are too busy to go to school. For example, people can be taught to read and write in their own homes. This can be done by using audio and video materials.

There are many other ways to reduce the number of illiterate people in the world. The important thing is to find ways to help people who are illiterate to learn to read and write.

It is important to reduce the number of illiterate people in the world because illiteracy is a major barrier to development. People who cannot read and write are often unable to find jobs, start businesses, or improve their lives.

By reducing the number of illiterate people in the world, we can help to improve the lives of billions of people. This is one of the most important goals of the United Nations Development Programme.

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## Foreword

I am delighted to present the first *Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Intersex (LGBTI+) National Youth Strategy* in Ireland and the world. It is informed by the views of thousands of young people and those who campaign on their behalf.



This is a three-year action-oriented Strategy which recognises that young LGBTI+ people can flourish when they have consistently positive interactions with those around them and

supportive experiences in the services with which they most engage.

As a country we have taken big steps forward, starting with decriminalisation of homosexuality a quarter of a century ago. There have been many milestones, not least the passing of the Marriage Equality Referendum in 2015. This Strategy is another milestone as we move to become a country where everyone can expect equality, fairness and respect.

My sincere thanks go to the Oversight Committee which was established to oversee the development of the Strategy, representing a broad cross-sectoral grouping of relevant organisations, State Agencies and Government Departments, and expertly chaired by Una Mullally.

While the development of the Strategy has been highly consultative overall in order to gather the broadest range of views possible, it is the voices of young people that have been front and centre throughout the process.

The Youth Advisory Group, which was established to support the development of the Strategy, has ensured that it truly reflects the reality our young people face every day at home, at school and in their wider local community.

I truly hope they gained as much from their involvement in the process as those of us who worked with them and benefited from their genuine expertise, energy, creativity, and understanding of the issues faced by young people in their daily lives.

As well as their own consistently high quality contributions, the Youth Advisory Group was central in designing the consultation process, which allowed us to consult with almost 4,000 young people through workshops around the country and via an online survey.

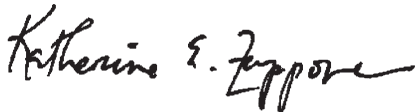
This input informed the ground-breaking findings that were presented in the Youth Consultation Report, which I launched in December 2017 at a wonderfully vibrant and youth-led event in Dublin.

The Youth Advisory Group also created a powerful short video summarising the key points of that report. It is important to note that the inspiring report, video and launch event which emerged from the widespread consultation process provided us with the findings that represent the cornerstone of this Strategy.

My most sincere thanks go to all of the young people who have participated in any way in the development of this Strategy.

And now it is over to you as relevant friends, family, educators and service providers to use the results of all this hard work to further enrich the lives of all young people in Ireland.

My Department will provide leadership on this and I, along with my officials, look forward to engaging with stakeholders over the next three years. I also look forward to engaging with the Department of Justice and Equality as they develop a National LGBTI+ Strategy for the broader population in the near future. I am truly confident that we can all work together to make Ireland the best place in the world to grow up.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katherine Z. Zappone". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial 'K' and a stylized 'Z'.

Dr Katherine Zappone TD  
*Minister for Children and Youth Affairs*

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## Introduction & Welcome

This Strategy is a world first. Ireland has an opportunity to emerge as the best country in the world in which to grow up LGBTI+, and we are very well positioned to take that challenge on and inspire other countries to follow our leadership.



The progressive legislative context of LGBTI+ rights in Ireland reflects the large social change that has occurred in this country over the past decade. Changing attitudes,

the leadership of LGBTI+ rights groups and campaigners, as well as the generosity, maturity, and compassion of the Irish people and its diaspora, have brought Ireland to a point where a Strategy such as this can exist.

2015 saw Ireland become the first country in the world to pass marriage equality by popular vote, a seismic moment, which was then followed by the Gender Recognition Act. Ireland has emerged as a global leader in LGBT rights. Many nations now look to our example for similar legislative progress.

Yet legislation is one part of a much larger machine. While legislative progress is extremely welcome, the lived experiences of LGBTI+ young people are often removed from such progress. We need to address gaps in infrastructure, supports, resources, training and funding to make this progress a reality for LGBTI+ young people across the country.

The importance of schools being spaces where LGBTI+ young people feel included, respected and safe cannot be overstated, and any barriers to making them so must be removed. While technology has enabled a generation to expand its horizons in unprecedented ways, schools remain central

to the daily lives of young people. The dominance of religious patronage in Irish schools can present challenges for LGBTI+ young people. While the Department of Education and Skills' anti-bullying guidelines are in place, the experiences of young people vary from school to school, with support structures, including initiatives such as workshops addressing LGBTI+ experiences, functioning on an ad hoc basis. We must properly address these issues, listen to young people and value their experiences as truth, celebrate schools that are leading in this area, and collaborate with all relevant entities – the Department of Education and Skills, boards of management, school administrators, religious bodies, staff, LGBTI+ rights organisations, and so on – to make Ireland the best country in the world to go to school in as an LGBTI+ young person.

This Strategy also attempts to build on, and support, the work that has been happening around this country for decades with LGBTI+ young people who found safety and support when they needed it most. Much of this work has been carried out by individuals and organisations that have struggled with limited budgets and stretched resources, yet still managed to achieve life-changing and life-saving impacts for young LGBTI+ people.

The dynamic nature of progress in LGBTI+ rights was represented in real time as this Strategy was being developed. During the development of the Strategy, the Gender Recognition Act review commenced, the Department of Education and Skills

announced a review of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE), and Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) became more widely available. These are all very welcome developments, and display how this Strategy is coming at a time when Ireland is ready to progress further.

I would like to commend the great work done by all of the young people who assisted with the development of this Strategy. Across the national consultation events, and within the Youth Advisory Group, which worked with and parallel to the Oversight Committee, their insights, enthusiasm and perspectives were invaluable. I feel proud to be part of a Government Strategy that has been developed with young people for young people. I think I speak for everyone who worked on this Strategy, when I say that the close participation of young people taught us all lessons in respect, collaboration and inclusion.

It was an honour to be the Independent Chairperson of the Oversight Committee that developed this Strategy, and I must pay tribute to the fantastic work done by my colleagues in the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, my colleagues on the Oversight Committee, in the Youth Advisory Group, and also colleagues in all Government Departments and Agencies that have engaged with this Strategy at every stage, as well as the leadership of Minister Katherine Zappone.

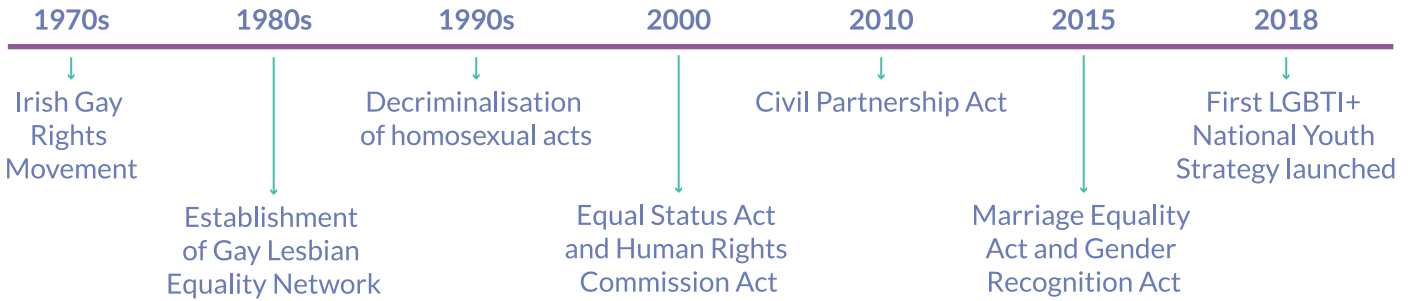
While this Strategy is a world first, it is important to highlight the fact that it is also a first for Ireland. The Strategy is ambitious, and action-focused. Crucially, it attempts to lay vital groundwork that must exist for future strategies to be developed, so that every three years, more ambitious, world-leading actions and initiatives become part of the LGBTI+ youth landscape in Ireland.



Una Mullally  
*Independent Chair*

# Executive Summary

In 2016 the Programme for Partnership Government committed to the development of the LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy. This Strategy builds on the significant progress Ireland has made for LGBTI+ young people.



## LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy Development Process



Oversight Committee



Youth Advisory Group



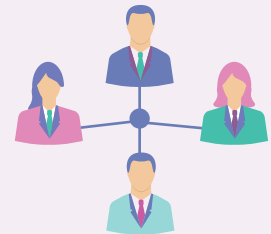
### Environmental Scan

Research Reports  
Literature  
Data & Information



### Youth Consultation

What's good about being LGBTI+?  
What are the issues?  
What needs to change?



### Stakeholder Consultation & Open Call for Written Submissions

What challenges are there?  
What opportunities exist?  
What are the key priorities?

**Challenges still remain for LGBTI+ young people today and need to be addressed**

- ▶ Discrimination, victimisation, stigmatisation and abuse
- ▶ Bullying and harrassment in schools, colleges, workplaces and the community
- ▶ Difficulties coming out to family and in their communities
- ▶ Limited understanding by professional service providers and broader society of LGBTI+ issues
- ▶ Mental, physical and sexual health challenges

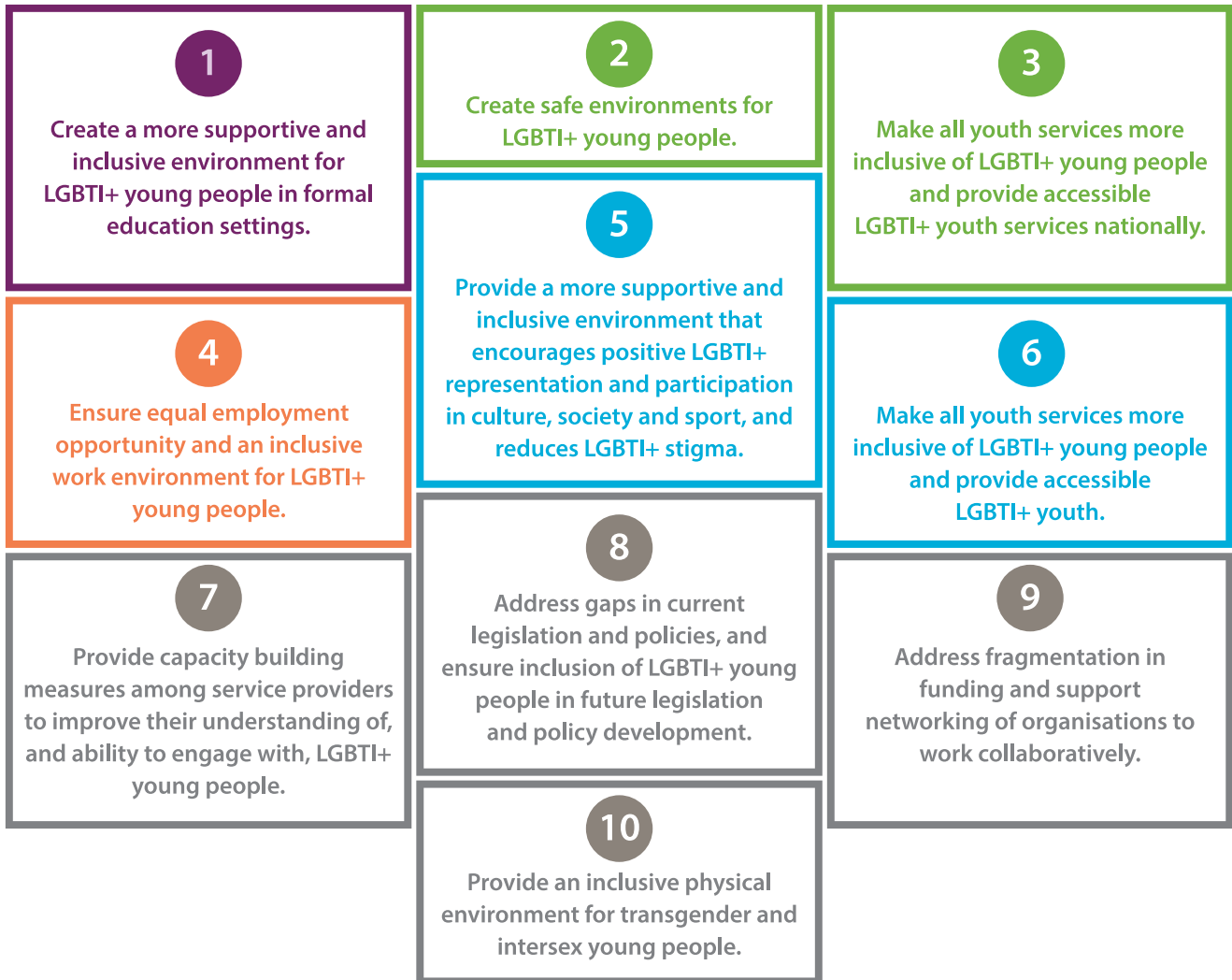
## LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy Goals





# LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy Goals and Objectives

## GOAL 1 Create a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for LGBTI+ young people



## GOAL 2 Improve the physical, mental and sexual health of LGBTI+ young people



## GOAL 3 Develop the research and data environment to better understand the lives of LGBTI+ young people



The objectives are colour-coded to indicate alignment with BOBF national outcomes or the fact that they are cross-cutting.



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## Background & Context

### Introduction

The lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI+) landscape in Ireland has transformed significantly in recent decades. Irish society is far more inclusive of the LGBTI+ community today than at any other time in Irish history, with many LGBTI+ young people living visibly happy, successful and fulfilling lives.

This changing environment stems from a number of significant positive initiatives which have taken place in Ireland in recent decades and have resulted in substantial progress and improved outcomes for LGBTI+ young people.

Recent legislative changes have advanced greater equality for the LGBTI+ community as a whole, most noticeably through the passing of the Gender Recognition Act and the Marriage Equality Act in 2015. Measures continue to be taken with a view to improving and enhancing the lives of LGBTI+ young people in Ireland.

'I'm very lucky to be alive at a time when the LGBTI+ community are loved, supported, embraced – it's fantastic!'

'The support and love from the community, being able to see older generations see what they only dreamed of for themselves come true for us younger people.'

'... the Marriage Equality Referendum was a pivotal moment in terms of wider society's acceptance of the LGBTI+ community ...'

### The Policy Context

The development of the *LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy* (the Strategy) is a key commitment for the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) as part of the 2016 Programme for Partnership Government. The Strategy seeks to ensure a cross-governmental approach to put additional measures in place to further enhance the lives of LGBTI+ young people, and address some of the key challenges they may face as part of their day-to-day lives. It is envisaged that this Strategy will make a significant contribution towards the Government's broader commitments to continue to strive for the full inclusion of LGBTI+ people in Irish society and to build a more inclusive Ireland for LGBTI+ young people.

In 2014 DCYA launched the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People, *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: The national policy framework for children & young people 2014–2020 (BOBF)*. The BOBF Framework is a whole-of-government policy that operates across all Government Departments and Agencies, and also extends to statutory and non-statutory organisations that work with, and for, children and young people.

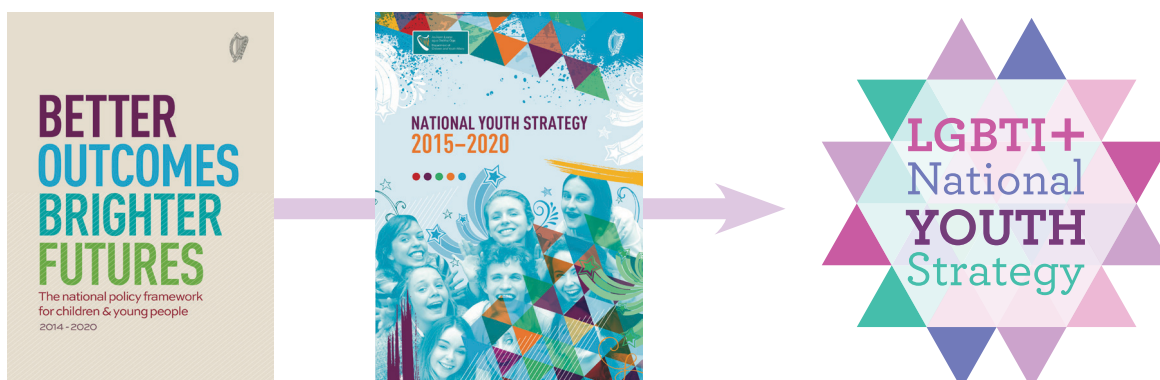
The vision of the BOBF Framework is ‘to make Ireland the best small country in the world in which to grow up and raise a family, and where the rights of all children and young people are respected, protected and fulfilled; where their voices are heard and where they are, supported to realise their maximum potential now and in the future.

The BOBF Framework identified five national outcomes for children and young people, to seek to ensure that they:

1. **Are active and healthy, with positive physical and mental wellbeing**
2. **Are achieving their full potential in all areas of learning and development**
3. **Are safe and protected from harm**
4. **Have economic security and opportunity**
5. **Are connected, respected and contributing to their world**

The *National Youth Strategy* that followed in 2015 sought to address the needs of children and young people from 10–24 years of age. Its aim is to enable all young people to realise their maximum potential by respecting their rights and hearing their voices, while protecting and supporting them as they transition from childhood to adulthood.

Despite the recent improvements in the LGBTI+ landscape in Ireland, the *National Youth Strategy 2015–2020* identified LGBTI+ young people as a specific group to be considered in the context of focused provision for marginalised young people. While their situation has improved considerably over recent years, significant challenges still remain for LGBTI+ young people today. It is on this basis that the LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy has been developed, with the aim of ensuring that LGBTI+ young people can achieve the same outcomes as all young people in Ireland.




The *LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy* sets out the goals and objectives for serving the needs of LGBTI+ people aged 10–24. The Department of Justice and Equality is also currently in the process of developing a National LGBTI+ Strategy, which will seek to address the needs of the wider LGBTI+ population. Together, both strategies should lay the foundations for a more inclusive Ireland for LGBTI+ people in the future.

## Building an Inclusive Society for LGBTI+ Young People in Ireland

As a society, we have made significant strides in recent decades towards a more inclusive LGBTI+ landscape in Ireland. From the establishment of the Irish Gay Rights Movement in the 1970s, to the eventual decriminalisation of homosexual acts in the 1990s, and ultimately the passing of the Marriage Equality Act in 2015, there has been marked progress for the LGB community. The pace of change in policy on transgender issues has been slower. However, the passing of the Gender Recognition Act in 2015 was a monumental step that has put foundations in place for greater recognition of transgender identities and rights. Intersex developments continue to remain in their infancy but it is hoped that foundations can be put in place over the life of this Strategy to support greater progress in this space in future years.

The developments to date, detailed below, have resulted in greater equality, inclusivity and celebration of the LGBTI+ community and this is something that Irish society should be extremely proud of.



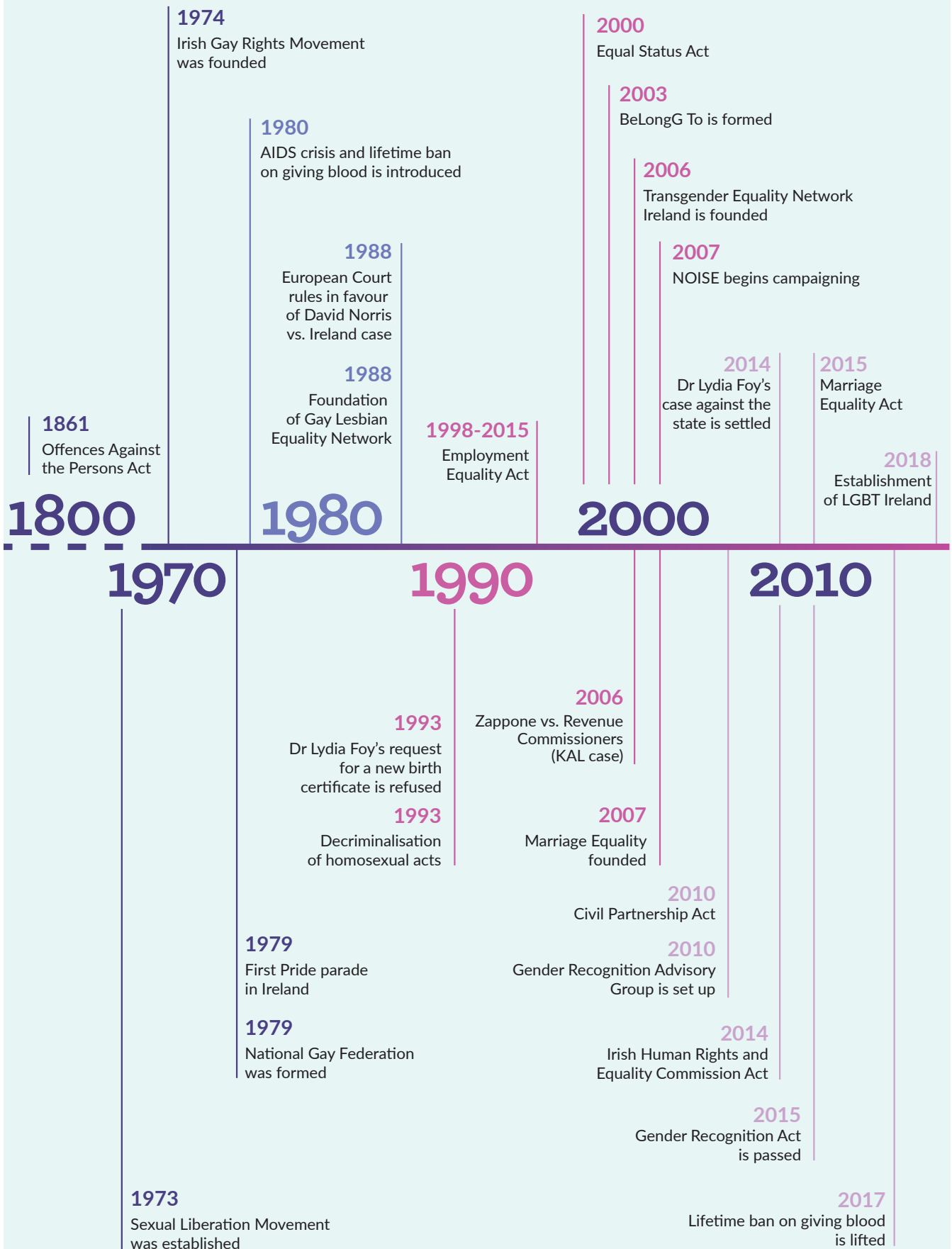
'Very grateful for where and when I was born. I have had a very positive experience in a mostly accepting society.'

'No one cares ...  
(in a good way).'

'Coming out  
was easy.'

'Being gay  
is fab.'

# LGBTI+ Timeline – Ireland



Each new milestone reached, whether small or large, has contributed to shaping an Irish society more accepting of LGBTI+ people. A number of further measures that have recently been implemented, underway at the moment, or about to commence, highlight how our national landscape continues to evolve towards a more inclusive Ireland for LGBTI+ young people. These include:

- The establishment of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission and the legal obligations on publicly funded organisations to adhere to their Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty as set out in the Irish Human Rights and Equality Act 2014.
- The development of a number of national strategies targeting at risk groups such as LGBTI+, including:
  - » *Connecting for Life: Ireland's National Strategy to Reduce Suicide 2015-2020*<sup>1</sup>
  - » *Healthy Ireland – A Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2013-2025*<sup>2</sup>
  - » *Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery – the National Drug and Alcohol Strategy 2017-2025*<sup>3</sup>
  - » *National Sexual Health Strategy 2015-2020*<sup>4</sup>
- The joint publication of the *Well-Being* mental health promotion guidelines by the Department of Health, the HSE and the Department of Education and Skills for post-primary schools<sup>5</sup> (2013) and primary schools<sup>6</sup> (2015).
- The establishment of the National Youth Mental Health Task Force in 2016 and publication of the *National Youth Mental Health Task Force Report* in 2017.<sup>7</sup>
- The publication of the *Action Plan on Bullying*<sup>8</sup> and *Anti-Bullying Procedures*, and the introduction of a national anti-bullying website – [www.tacklebullying.ie](http://www.tacklebullying.ie) – by the Department of Education and Skills, with a particular focus on promoting inclusion and tackling identity-based bullying.
- The development of a series of LGBTI+ guidance documents, resources and initiatives for primary and post-primary schools, including *Being LGBT*, *Growing Up LGBT*, *RESPECT*, *Different Families Same Love*, a variety of picture books, *Safe and Supportive Schools Toolkit* and *Stand Up! Awareness Week*.
- The enhancement of child protection legislation through the introduction of the *Children First Act 2015*.
- The publication of the *General Scheme of an Education (Parent and Student Charter) Bill 2016* by the Department of Education and Skills, in order to improve information and complaint procedures for parents and students relating to schools.
- The ongoing review of the *Gender Recognition Act 2015*.
- A 2017 Programme for Government commitment to increase the number of non-denominational schools to 400 by 2030.<sup>9</sup>

**'Some older people, such as grandparents of children who are gay, are accepting.'**

**'Under-16s not being able to change their gender marker ... Non-binary people do not exist according to the law.'**

*continued*

- The initiation of a review of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) in schools in 2018, to include content of the RSE curriculum, support materials and delivery approach.<sup>10</sup>
- The availability of anti-HIV drug Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) to purchase from pharmacies with a prescription since December 2017.
- The ongoing work of a number of organisations focused on supporting LGBTI+ young people and advocating for their rights, such as BeLonG To, Transgender Equality Network Ireland (TENI), LGBT Ireland and ShoutOut.
- The planned development of the National LGBTI+ Strategy by the Department of Justice and Equality in 2018.
- An HSE commitment to introduce an LGBTI+ Health Strategy in 2018.

'More needs to be done in schools to ensure that sex education or the inclusion of LGBTI+ is improved.'

'Legalise PrEP!'

Such ongoing developments continue to build on the milestones that we have achieved as a nation over recent decades, and to contribute to a more inclusive society for LGBTI+ young people. The progress made as part of these initiatives will complement the goals and objectives set out in this *LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy*.

## LGBTI+ Young People in Ireland today

Census 2016 informs us that one third of Ireland's population is under the age of 25 years, with 10–24 year-olds representing 18.8%<sup>11</sup> of the total population of 4.79 million. What is not known, however, is how many of these young people are LGBTI+, given that limited data collection methods exist to capture LGBTI+ information. While Census 2016 showed additional demographics in relation to gay and lesbian couples as a result of the Civil Partnership Act and the Marriage Equality Referendum, there is still no official data on transgender or non-binary people. Intersex young people are another cohort that is difficult to quantify given the complexities surrounding a clear definition of this group. Research and data-gathering mechanisms for LGBTI+ people in Ireland and internationally remain in their infancy and require substantial development.

'I wish straight people had to come out too ...'

'More support and celebration in rural areas.'

Notwithstanding the positive developments that continue to take place, the *National Youth Strategy 2015–2020* identifies lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) young people as a marginalised group in Irish society. This categorisation suggests that this group would benefit from greater support to ensure that they can achieve the same positive outcomes as all other young people. However, the provision of this support is challenging when the population cannot be easily mapped or quantified with empirical data.

In 2015 a national study was conducted of the mental health and wellbeing of LGBTI+ people living in Ireland. The findings of this *LGBTIreland Report*<sup>12</sup> suggested that the majority of participants aged 26 and over reported good self-esteem, happiness and life satisfaction as well as being very comfortable with their LGBTI+ identity. However, the study also

found that a very significant number of younger people, i.e. those aged under 25, did not experience the same levels of positive mental health and wellness as the general population.

The *LGBTIreland Report*, and other LGBTI+-related research and data sets, indicate that challenges remain for LGBTI+ young people with respect to:

- Discrimination, victimisation, stigmatisation and abuse<sup>13, 14, 15</sup>
- Bullying and harassment, particularly in the school environment<sup>16,17</sup>
- High drop-out rates in schools and colleges<sup>18</sup>
- Difficulties coming out in the workplace, particularly for transgender people<sup>19,20</sup>
- Difficulties associated with acceptance of LGBTI+ identity by families, communities and broader society<sup>21, 22</sup>
- Limited knowledge and understanding of LGBTI+ issues by mainstream service providers and professionals who encounter LGBTI+ young people<sup>23</sup>
- Gender-segregated spaces, such as single-sex schools, toilets and changing facilities, for transgender and non-binary young people<sup>24,25</sup>
- High levels of smoking, drug use and alcohol consumption<sup>26, 27, 28</sup>
- Access to adequate healthcare services and supports, particularly for transgender individuals, due to limited knowledge of healthcare staff of relevant LGBTI+ issues<sup>29,30, 31</sup>
- Poorer sexual health outcomes, including increased instances of sexually transmitted infections (STIs<sup>32</sup>), and lower levels of relevant sex education and awareness<sup>33, 34</sup>
- Mental health problems, including higher rates of severe stress, anxiety, depression, self-harm and attempted suicide<sup>35, 36</sup>
- Other physical health problems, including instances of obesity and eating disorders, which can lead to a higher risk of diabetes and heart disease<sup>37, 38, 39, 40</sup>

'I'm not out yet for fear that my family will reject me.'

'As a teenager, hiding my sexual orientation contributed to me suffering from depression and severe anxiety, which I still struggle with today.'

This list represents a high-level overview of some of the key challenges faced by LGBTI+ young people, and further context is provided in the LGBTI+ Environmental Scan document<sup>41</sup>.



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## The Strategic Planning Process

### Strategy Development Structures

The Department of Children and Youth Affairs put the following structures in place to enable the development of the Strategy.

An **Oversight Committee** was established to assist in overseeing the development of the Strategy, with Una Mullally as the Independent Chairperson appointed by the Minister. The committee comprised representatives from Government Departments, LGBTI+ organisations, young people and others with expertise relevant to the development of the Strategy.

In addition, a **Youth Advisory Group (YAG)** was created in order to ensure that young people remain at the heart of the strategic planning process. This initiative came from one of the transformational goals set out in the BOBF Framework: 'to listen to and involve children and young people'. Arising from this goal is the 2015 publication of the *National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making*. A key objective of this Strategy is to 'mainstream the participation of children and young people in the development of policy, legislation and research.' In line with this approach, the participation and inclusion of young people was central to the development process for the *LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy*, and their voices are embedded at the heart of the Strategy. Three members of the YAG were appointed as members of the Oversight Committee, and attended the monthly meetings. The YAG provided critical insight into the strategic planning process from the perspective of young people in Ireland.

### Stages of the Strategic Planning Process

The strategic planning process used in developing the Strategy was built around a rigorous framework to ensure that the goals and objectives of the Strategy were designed to address the priority needs of LGBTI+ young people. There were multiple layers in the process, including:

#### Phase 1: Environmental Scan

A detailed review was undertaken of the LGBTI+-related research carried out both nationally and internationally. The purpose of this review was to gain an understanding of the LGBTI+ environment and the challenges that exist within it. The review included research related to LGBTI+ people of all ages, but had a specific focus on young people where such information was available. The review was undertaken in the period from May to July 2017. This document is published separately as a supporting document to the *LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy*.

## Phase 2: Youth Consultation

The youth consultation process reached almost 4,000 young people through a combination of 1) an online survey run by SpunOut, and 2) attendance at seven youth consultation events held across the country, in Dublin (two events), Sligo, Dundalk, Galway, Waterford and Cork. The survey and the consultation events represented the views of both LGBTI+ and non-LGBTI+ young people and were a key input in the preparation of the Strategy.

The *LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy - Report of the Consultations with Young People in Ireland* was published by DCYA in December 2017 and sets out in detail the key messages from the youth consultation process.<sup>42</sup>

The consultations focused on **three** questions:

1. What is positive about being a young LGBTI+ person in Ireland today? (**Positives**)
2. What issues are faced by young LGBTI+ people in Ireland today? (**Issues**)
3. What changes would improve the lives of young LGBTI+ people? (**Changes**)

### *Positives*

The feedback suggested an increased sense of acceptance and social support for young LGBTI+ people. Of particular note were:

- Positive legal reform, including marriage equality, employment equality, equal status and gender recognition legislation
- Increased visibility and tolerance
- Support from the LGBTI+ community
- Improved resources and support for the LGBTI+ community

### *Issues*

Despite the positives, the feedback also highlighted a number of issues that continue to present challenges for LGBTI+ young people, including:

- Discrimination and stigma
- Bullying and harassment
- Lack of education on gender, sex and LGBTI+ issues
- Poor school policies
- Lack of gender-neutral bathrooms and uniforms
- Isolation and exclusion
- Generation gaps in the acceptance of LGBTI+
- Problems with parents and family members
- Poor health and wellbeing

'I have been discriminated against, marginalised, intimidated, abused and even assaulted for my sexuality by peers, strangers, business owners and family members.'

### *Changes*

A number of priority changes were identified by LGBTI+ young people, and these are outlined, under six themes, in the table below. The *LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy* seeks to advance these changes to build a more inclusive society and support better outcomes for LGBTI+ young people in Ireland.

## Theme 1: Education and training

### YOUNG PEOPLE SAID...

- Introduction of mandatory LGBTI+-inclusive education in primary and post-primary schools
- Implementation of anti-bullying policies
- Introduction of school policies on gender-neutral uniforms, gender-neutral toilets and transgender policies
- Provision of support such as Gay Straight Alliances, LGBTI+ Week, counselling, safe spaces and student staff networks
- Inclusion of gender theory and LGBTI+ history within the curriculum
- LGBTI+ and diversity training for all professionals
- Longer term actions such as removing religious patronage in schools and rethinking single-sex schools

'Some schools are very progressive and inclusive in their educational programmes regarding the LGBTI+ community.'

## Theme 2: Spaces and places

### YOUNG PEOPLE SAID...

- More alcohol-free/quiet spaces for LGBTI+ young people
- More safe spaces – inclusive and exclusive spaces within the wider community and in accessible locations
- More gender-neutral toilets and changing rooms
- More services and spaces in rural areas
- More welcoming and inclusive communities
- More safe spaces and sheltered accommodation for young people excluded from the family home

'I think doctors need better training on trans issues.'

## Theme 3: Awareness, acceptance and inclusion

### YOUNG PEOPLE SAID...

- More positive and inclusive representation in the media
- More awareness training and education across society
- Raising awareness of negative stereotypes and creating more supportive environments
- Education of the wider community on gender, sexuality and non-binary issues and use of pronouns
- Removal of discrimination in sport for transgender people

'Raise awareness of negative stereotypes and create more supportive environments.'

*continued*

#### Theme 4: Legal reform

##### YOUNG PEOPLE SAID...

- Introduction and enforcement of clear hate crime legislation
- Inclusion of non-binary within the Gender Recognition Act
- Improved gender recognition for under-18s
- Simplification of the process of changing one's name
- Removal of legal obstacles to adoption, fostering and surrogacy
- Legislation to provide gender-neutral toilets
- Introduction of more protective legislation for LGBTI+ people, e.g. make religious organisations abide by the Unfair Dismissals Act 1977–2015

#### Theme 5: Health and wellbeing

##### YOUNG PEOPLE SAID...

- More inclusive healthcare for non-binary people
- Overhaul of the transgender healthcare system
- Ensuring that all healthcare staff receive LGBTI+ awareness training
- Improving access to mental health services
- Improving sexual health services
- Removal of the requirement for parental consent to access services

#### Theme 6: The LGBTI+ community

##### YOUNG PEOPLE SAID...

- Improved LGBTI+ services for young people who are 'out' or coming out
- Autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) awareness training and ASD-friendly spaces
- More daytime and alcohol-free LGBTI+ social spaces
- Challenge stereotypes within the community
- Bridge gaps between older and younger LGBTI+ generations
- Greater cooperation within LGBTI+ groups and between all youth and community-based groups

### Phase 3: Stakeholder Consultation and Open Call for Written Submissions

Other key stakeholders were engaged through a combination of group consultations and written submissions. Approximately 90 representatives from Government Departments, State Agencies, sporting organisations, education bodies, mental health organisations, youth organisations and LGBTI+ organisations attended a major consultation event held in Farnleigh House in June 2017. In addition, 34 organisations made written submissions to the *LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy* following an open call in October 2017.

Ongoing consultation and engagement with both the Oversight Committee and the Youth Advisory Group also played a key role in the strategy development process.

#### Phase 4: Development of the LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy

The *LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy* was developed by bringing together outputs from each of the phases above, and focused on identifying precise and measurable actions and timescales for achievement of these goals and objectives.

This work resulted in the development of three goals (as set out below), 15 objectives, and 59 actions:

- 1. Create a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for LGBTI+ young people**
- 2. Improve the physical, mental and sexual health of LGBTI+ young people**
- 3. Develop the research and data environment to better understand the lives of LGBTI+ young people**

These goals are set out in more detail in the later sections of this Strategy. Each goal is individually presented and supported by some opening context that reflects the nature of the discussions among the Oversight Committee members, taking account of the feedback obtained from young people in the consultations.

In seeking to realise the goals and objectives of the *LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy*, a number of actions have been identified. These actions have been developed in alignment with other key strategies and policies in Government Departments and have been refined through a process of bi-lateral discussions and consultation with the relevant Government Departments and Agencies that will be responsible for their delivery.

Each action has been assigned an 'owner', and relevant 'partners' in delivery have also been identified. The timeline for implementation of actions has been phased across the three-year duration of the Strategy. This will allow for key enabling actions to be prioritised sooner rather than later, setting the foundation for future progress in other areas.

## Mission

Our mission is to ensure that all LGBTI+ young people are visible, valued and included.

## Vision

The *LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy* vision is aligned to the *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* vision, which strives to:

‘Make Ireland the best small country in the world in which to grow up and raise a family, and where the rights of all children and young people are respected, protected and fulfilled; where their voices are heard and where they are supported to realise their maximum potential now and in the future.’

### In addition the Strategy will:

- Improve environments and services for LGBTI+ young people
- Support better training for professionals engaging with LGBTI+ young people
- Ensure the implementation of anti-bullying policies and address anti-LGBTI+ discrimination
- Address the health and wellbeing of LGBTI+ young people
- Expand legislation to include and protect LGBTI+ young people
- Generate evidence and data to understand the lives of LGBTI+ young people

## Values

The core values that underpin this Strategy and influence how we achieve results include:

**Inclusiveness:** We advocate for a world that embraces diversity and promotes an integrated and supportive society.

**Equality:** We celebrate difference and support equal opportunity for LGBTI+ young people that enables them to achieve their potential.

**Rights:** We promote the right to be LGBTI+ in a safe environment that is free from negativity and supports freedom of expression.

**Empowerment:** We foster an environment where LGBTI+ young people are supported and encouraged to co-produce and partner on initiatives.

**Respect:** We treat all LGBTI+ young people with respect by being considerate of people's differences and choices, learning from our peers and bridging the intergenerational gap.

**Positivity:** We promote the collective expression of success among the LGBTI+ community, cheering the small wins as much as the big wins.

**Acceptance:** We encourage all LGBTI+ young people to express themselves openly and promote the recognition of people's preferences (e.g. pronouns) so that they know they will be accepted in this safe and inclusive and environment.

# Strategic Goals for 2020

Three strategic goals were identified to support the achievement of the *LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy* vision to 2020. These goals are aligned to the *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* five national outcomes and are necessarily ambitious in order to achieve a major impact for the lives and wellbeing of LGBTI+ young people in Ireland.

## GOAL 1

Create a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for LGBTI+ young people



## GOAL 2

Improve the physical, mental and sexual health of LGBTI+ young people



## GOAL 3

Develop the research and data environment to better understand the lives of LGBTI+ young people

### Colour Coding

The objectives in the following tables are colour-coded to indicate alignment with BOBF national outcomes outlined above.



# Strategic Alignments

The actions in the Strategy have been developed in alignment with a number of strategies and policies in other Government Department, including but not limited to those listed below:

<p>Department of Education &amp; Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)</li> <li>Action Plan on Bullying 2013</li> <li><i>Further Education and Training Strategy 2014-2019</i></li> <li>Education (Parent and Student Charter) Bill 2016</li> </ul>	<p>Department of Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Healthy Ireland – A Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2013-2025</i></li> <li><i>National Sexual Health Strategy 2015-2020</i></li> <li><i>Statement of Strategy 2016 – 2019</i></li> <li><i>Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery 2017-2025</i></li> <li><i>National Youth Mental Health Task Force Report 2017</i></li> </ul>
<p>Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of the Gender Recognition Act 2015</li> </ul>	<p>National Office for Suicide Prevention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Connecting for Life Suicide Prevention Strategy 2015-2020</i></li> </ul>
<p>The Central Statistics Office (CSO)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Census 2021</li> </ul>	

**GOAL 1:****CREATE A SAFE, SUPPORTIVE AND INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR LGBTI+ YOUNG PEOPLE*****Considerations of the Oversight Committee***

The day-to-day experiences of young LGBTI+ people are improving. The safety, supportiveness and inclusivity of their environments depend on the architects of and participants in those environments. Increasing visibility of LGBTI+ people, increasing awareness of LGBTI+ rights, and attitudinal changes in society at large are creating a country that would be unrecognisable to many older LGBTI+ people in Ireland.

Young people are coming out earlier, have a diverse set of role models available to them, can access information about sexuality and relationships, and communicate with likeminded peers all around the world. The messages received from the consultation process told us about the lived experiences of young LGBTI+ people. We heard stories about supportive schools and initiatives, the contributions LGBTI+ youth groups make to young people's lives, and the value of LGBTI+ societies at third level, as well as initiatives such as Pink Training.

Collectively, the objectives and actions associated with this goal will work towards the continued improvement of safe, supportive and inclusive spaces for LGBTI+ young people in all walks of life. This Strategy envisages a future where LGBTI+ young people are widely supported and have the confidence to be themselves and actively participate in all aspects of society without fear of harassment and discrimination.

There are multiple examples of schools creating and participating in initiatives that young LGBTI+ people find hugely supportive. It is important to see what's working well and where, and build on those successes. Valuing diversity and promoting inclusion in schools has a large impact on the school body as a whole, and creates an atmosphere where LGBTI+ young people and their peers can excel and support one another.

However, the religious patronage and/or ethos of schools was cited again and again as problematic for young LGBTI+ people. They repeatedly expressed a desire for the number of non- and multi-denominational schools to be increased. In a country where a significant number of primary and post-primary schools remain under religious patronage, the impact of unsupportive attitudes towards homosexuality and transgender issues cannot be ignored. There is a reliance on a 'school-to-school' approach, where an inclusive, open and celebratory attitude towards the diversity of gender and sexual identities is driven by individuals rather than policy. That is helpful to a young LGBTI+ person only if they are in a school where that attitude prevails. Young LGBTI+ people are demanding the assurance that school does not negatively impact on them.

'Education surrounding the LGBTI+ community needs to be standardised across the education sector in order to give all students an equal education and opportunity to be informed, regardless of the religious ethos of the school.'



The capacity of schools to engage in anti-LGBTI+ bullying initiatives should also be increased, and there should be greater awareness of the damage identity-based bullying can cause, as well as how important supportive interventions are at an individual and structural level. Young people who have experienced bullying or discrimination and do not have access to supportive interventions at school are at increased risk of early school leaving. There is a close correlation between the level of educational attainment and unemployment, with unemployment levels running at approximately 70% for those who leave school early<sup>43</sup>. Schools that are leading by example should be commended and celebrated, and other schools can learn from their approach. The mechanism of genders and sexualities alliances (GSAs) and similar initiatives are of particular interest in this case.

Similarly, where young people encounter welfare and protection services, it is important that those services are sensitive to LGBTI+ issues and identities. This LGBTI+ lens is likewise important for young people accessing sexual health services, and in continuing current clinical actions in relation to HIV and STIs as well as in providing post-diagnosis support for young LGBTI+ people. Counselling services that are inclusive of LGBTI+ students in colleges and HEIs should be supported. Provisions also need to be made for young people who may be experiencing discrimination on more than one front, such as travellers, migrants and other minorities.

**'Do not forget rural LGBTQI+ youth! We are here, and our communities need to be safe for us to occupy.'**

LGBTI+ youth groups were repeatedly cited as having a hugely positive impact on the lives of young LGBTI+ people. These groups and organisations should be supported with increased funding and helped to grow their capacity.

Achieving inclusion and creating safe and supportive environments means bridging the urban/rural divide when it comes to the provision of and access to services. Young LGBTI+ people in Dublin have access to more services than those outside the capital. Young LGBTI+ people identified the potential for bridging this divide in a variety of ways; from building capacity of existing services outside of Dublin to providing transport to those services, the goal being that every LGBTI+ young person in the country has access to the services and supports they need regardless of where they live.

There are many opportunities to build on what is working well, and on recent progress in Irish society – especially regarding changing attitudes, changing behaviours, the introduction of Marriage Equality, the Gender Recognition Act and Repeal of the Eighth Amendment – and it is important to view these as connected aspects of broader social change which is improving the lives of LGBTI+ young people. When specific areas of legislation are being amended or policies updated, young LGBTI+ people should be included in the development of this work. The demonstration of vocal or visible support for LGBTI+ issues is cited as having a positive impact on the emotional wellbeing of young people, and therefore increasing visibility and visible support. As detailed in the proposed communications and awareness initiatives, this is a low-cost, high-impact mechanism for improving environments as well as driving positive social change.

**'A more progressive environment in Ireland is making it easier to come out than in past years.'**

In order to achieve this goal, we will:

<b>Objective 1</b>	Create a more supportive and inclusive environment for LGBTI+ young people in formal education settings
<b>Objective 2</b>	Create safe environments for LGBTI+ young people
<b>Objective 3</b>	Make all youth services more inclusive of LGBTI+ young people and provide accessible LGBTI+ youth services nationally
<b>Objective 4</b>	Ensure equal employment opportunity and an inclusive work environment for LGBTI+ young people
<b>Objective 5</b>	Provide a more supportive and inclusive environment that encourages positive LGBTI+ representation and participation in culture, society and sport, and reduces LGBTI+ stigma
<b>Objective 6</b>	Expand and develop supports to parents and families of LGBTI+ young people
<b>Objective 7</b>	Provide capacity building measures among service providers to improve their understanding of, and ability to engage with, LGBTI+ young people
<b>Objective 8</b>	Address gaps in current legislation and policies and ensure inclusion of LGBTI+ young people in future legislation and policy development
<b>Objective 9</b>	Address fragmentation in funding and support networking of organisations to work collaboratively
<b>Objective 10</b>	Provide an inclusive physical environment for transgender and intersex young people

These objectives will be achieved through the realisation of the following key actions:

Goal 1: Create a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for LGBTI+ young people						
Ref.	Action	Responsibility		Timeline		
		Lead	Partner	2018	2019	2020
Objective 1: Create a more supportive and inclusive environment for LGBTI+ young people in formal education settings						
1(a)	Encourage schools in the development of a whole-school policy to ensure the inclusion of LGBTI+ young people, with particular regard to exploring opportunities for the appropriate inclusion of LGBTI+ lives in the teaching curriculum as part of curriculum review at both primary and senior-cycle levels. Schools will be required to consult with parents and students on all school policies, including school uniform policy.	Department of Education and Skills	All education partners, including student representatives	✓	✓	✓
1(b)	Review and update professional development supports for teachers to take account of the LGBTI+ Youth Strategy.	Department of Education and Skills	PDST JCT	✓	✓	✓
1(c)	Conduct a thematic evaluation of SPHE (including RSE) and related culture of inclusion in schools and publish a composite report. The evaluation will address all aspects of that programme, including how issues of different types of sexuality and the different types of gender are treated.	Department of Education and Skills			✓	✓
1(d)	Maintain the high standard of LGBTI+ leadership within third level institutions.	Higher Education Institutions	USI, HEA	✓	✓	✓
1(e)	Develop and pilot a student-centred evidence-based model of peer support for LGBTI+ and their alliances within post-primary schools.	Department of Education and Skills		✓	✓	✓
1(f)	A policy template on LGBTI+ inclusion with particular emphasis on transgender and intersex will be developed for adaptation and adoption across all Further Education and Training (FET) provision services.	Education and Training Boards Ireland	FET Institutions, USI, Department of Education and Skills		✓	
1(g)	Support the provision of student-led LGBTI+-specific awareness-raising initiatives in Higher Education Institutions and Further Education and Training (FET) Institutions. Such initiatives may include provision of Pink and Purple Training.	Union of Students in Ireland Education and Training Boards Ireland	Third level institutions and FET Institutions, HEA, Department of Education and Skills, Solas	✓	✓	✓

*continued*

Goal 1: Create a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for LGBTI+ young people						
Ref.	Action	Responsibility		Timeline		
		Lead	Partner	2018	2019	2020
<b>Objective 2: Create safe environments for LGBTI+ young people</b>						
2(a)	Commence implementation of recommendations of the Garda Síochána Inspectorate to reinstate the role of LGBTI+ liaison officer to An Garda Síochána. There should be a minimum of two trained LGBTI+ liaison officers in each Garda Division.	An Garda Síochána	NGO and youth sector partners	✓	✓	✓
2(b)	Joint Policing Committees to consult and engage with LGBTI+ organisations and to include actions to address LGBTI+ issues in their plans.	Joint Policing Committees	Policing Authority, An Garda Síochána, LGMA, Public Participation Networks, Local Authorities and Comhairlí na nÓg	✓	✓	✓
2(c)	Enable collection of data on LGBTI+-related crimes through the PULSE system to advance data collection regarding LGBTI+-related crimes.	An Garda Síochána	Department of Justice and Equality	✓	✓	✓
2(d)	Advance data collection regarding LGBTI+-related crimes.	An Garda Síochána Garda Síochána Analysis Service	Department of Justice and Equality, CSO	✓	✓	✓
2(e)	<p>Work with relevant State Agencies to ensure that compliance criteria and standards are developed and implemented for reception centres and accommodation centres for persons seeking or granted international protection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement measures to ensure these centres are inclusive of LGBTI+ young people, with particular consideration of transgender issues.</li> <li>• Provide support relating to homophobic and transphobic allegations made by refugees/asylum seekers in these centres.</li> <li>• Provision of support to those who may have experienced or report homophobic or transphobic bullying or harassment in their country of origin.</li> </ul>	Department of Justice and Equality (including IPO and IPAT)	Accommodation centre managers and staff Tusla (for unaccompanied minors)	✓	✓	✓

continued

Goal 1: Create a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for LGBTI+ young people						
Ref.	Action	Responsibility		Timeline		
		Lead	Partner	2018	2019	2020
2(f)	Map existing LGBTI+ youth services and groups and increase the awareness of these services and consider increasing the provision of non-alcoholic safe spaces which are inclusive of LGBTI+ young people.	Department of Children and Youth Affairs Education and Training Boards Ireland	Department of Rural and Community Development, all youth services, including private providers and youth cafés, and recreation providers, Local Authorities	✓	✓	
Objective 3: Make all youth services more inclusive of LGBTI+ young people and provide accessible LGBTI+ youth services nationally						
3(a)	Ensure all youth services in receipt of public funding have a policy on the inclusion of LGBTI+ young people.	Department of Children and Youth Affairs	National Youth Council of Ireland	✓	✓	✓
3(b)	Address gaps in provision, with particular reference to access to services and groups in rural areas.	Department of Children and Youth Affairs	CYPSC, relevant NGOs and youth sector	✓	✓	✓
Objective 4: Ensure equal employment opportunity and an inclusive work environment for LGBTI+ young people						
4(a)	Provide information and guidelines to employers to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remind them of their obligations with regards to equality and anti-discrimination laws.</li> <li>Advise on ways of providing a safe and supportive working environment for LGBTI+ people, particularly in relation to transgender people.</li> </ul>	Department of Justice and Equality	NGO and youth sector partners, Irish Congress of Trade Unions, Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation, WRC		✓	✓
4(b)	Develop guidance information for transgender young people to support their continued participation in the workplace, particularly during their time of transitioning.	Department of Justice and Equality	NGO and youth sector partners, Irish Congress of Trade Unions, Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation, WRC		✓	✓
4(c)	Develop and distribute Further Education & Training information aimed at LGBTI+ young people who may have left school early to ensure they can avail of opportunities that facilitate them re-integrating back into school, progressing within Further Education & Training and/or into and within the workplace.	Education and Training Boards Ireland	Department of Education and Skills, Solas, NGO and youth sector partners	✓	✓	✓

continued

Goal 1: Create a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for LGBTI+ young people						
Ref.	Action	Responsibility		Timeline		
		Lead	Partner	2018	2019	2020
<b>Objective 5: Provide a more supportive and inclusive environment that encourages positive LGBTI+ representation and participation in culture, society and sport, and reduces LGBTI+ stigma</b>						
5(a)	Develop a public recognition marker for sports clubs, cultural bodies, arts organisations, youth groups and businesses to declare their support for diversity, inclusion and visible representation of public support for LGBTI+.	Department of Children and Youth Affairs Department of Justice and Equality	NGO and youth sector partners, businesses, youth organisations, IBEC/ISME, educational institutions, ICTU, Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, sports bodies, arts organisations and youth sector (NYCI)	✓	✓	✓
5(b)	Develop policy and guidelines, based on international best practice, to support the inclusion of LGBTI+ young people in sport. These should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A mechanism to support continued participation of LGBTI+ young people in sport at all levels.</li> <li>• Guidance on supporting progression of LGBTI+ people to participate at advanced/professional levels.</li> <li>• Particular reference to the inclusion of transgender and intersex young people in sporting activities.</li> </ul>	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport	Sport Ireland, National Governing Bodies of sport and LGBTI+ sports organisations	✓	✓	✓
5(c)	Develop a communications campaign to promote diversity, provide information and raise awareness of LGBTI+ resources and promote help-seeking behaviour. This will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting the diversity that exists within families beyond the traditional family stereotype.</li> <li>• Encouraging LGBTI+ young people to look after their mental health, reducing stigma and eliminating taboos on mental health.</li> <li>• Portraying positive images of LGBTI+ people that normalise LGBTI+ and challenge negative stereotypes.</li> <li>• Developing intra-community awareness campaigns.</li> <li>• Highlighting positive representation of LGBTI+ people in sport, culture and society.</li> </ul>	Department of Children and Youth Affairs	Tusla, HSE, NYCI, relevant NGO and youth sector partners, Sport Ireland	✓	✓	✓

continued

Goal 1: Create a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for LGBTI+ young people						
Ref.	Action	Responsibility		Timeline		
		Lead	Partner	2018	2019	2020
5(d)	Develop a leadership programme for young LGBTI+ leaders and potential leaders.	Department of Children and Youth Affairs	NGO and youth sector partners, businesses, youth organisations, IBEC/ISME, educational institutions, ICTU, sports bodies, arts organisations	✓	✓	✓
5(e)	Develop a biennial national event to publicly celebrate LGBTI+ young people and young leaders.	Department of Children and Youth Affairs	NGO and youth sector partners		✓	
5(f)	Publish the annual data on complaints that have been made under the BAI code of programme standards, which requires that broadcasters must have respect for persons and groups in society.	Broadcasting Authority of Ireland	Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment	✓	✓	✓
5(g)	Develop programmes to address intra-community identity-based stigma and discrimination within the LGBTI+ community.	NGOs		✓	✓	✓
Objective 6: Expand and develop supports to parents and families of LGBTI+ young people						
6(a)	Provide parents and families with access to both online and off-line resources and information, to support children and young people in their families as they come out, including specific transgender health pathways.	Tusla, Health Service Executive	NGO and youth sector partners, Family Resource Centres	✓	✓	✓
Objective 7: Provide capacity building measures among service providers to improve their understanding of, and ability to engage with, LGBTI+ young people						
7(a)	<p>Implement evidence-based LGBTI+ training, CPD initiatives and guidelines targeted at professional service providers and youth services, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School principals, teachers, guidance counsellors, boards of management, school inspectors, NEPS Educational Psychologists</li> <li>School Completion Programme and Education Welfare Service</li> <li>Family Resource Centres</li> <li>Health and social care professionals</li> <li>An Garda Síochána</li> <li>Judiciary and legal services</li> <li>Youth services and youth helpline personnel</li> <li>Traveller service providers</li> <li>Disability service providers</li> </ul>	<p>Department of Justice and Equality</p> <p>Department of Children and Youth Affairs</p> <p>Department of Education and Skills</p> <p>Health Service Executive</p> <p>Tusla</p>	All relevant Departments/ Agencies and NGO and youth sector partners	✓	✓	✓

continued

Goal 1: Create a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for LGBTI+ young people						
Ref.	Action	Responsibility		Timeline		
		Lead	Partner	2018	2019	2020
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homeless service providers</li> <li>• Addiction counsellors and facilities</li> <li>• Employers</li> <li>• Sports bodies</li> </ul> Training and guidance should include a particular focus on trans- and gender-related issues.					
7(b)	Provide information relating to European funding opportunities as they arise to support LGBTI+ initiatives.	Léargas	Department of Children and Youth Affairs	✓	✓	✓
7(c)	Provide specific prevention initiatives for LGBTI+ identity-based bullying in schools.	Department of Education and Skills	All education partners, NGOs (for example, ShoutOut)	✓	✓	✓
Objective 8: Address gaps in current legislation and policies and ensure inclusion of LGBTI+ young people in future legislation and policy development						
8(a)	Consider the nine grounds of discrimination outlined in the Equal Status Act and Employment Equality Act to establish if sufficient protection is afforded to transgender young people	Department of Justice and Equality	Employers' bodies	✓	✓	✓
8(b)	Prohibit the promotion or practice of conversion therapy by health professionals in Ireland.	Department of Health	Health professional regulatory bodies, Irish Medical Council, CORU (Health and Social Care Regulator), NMBI (Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland)	✓	✓	
8(c)	Review current legislation to identify if any gaps exist in the areas of hate crime and hate speech. Where gaps exist, they should be corrected.	Department of Justice and Equality		✓	✓	

continued



Goal 1: Create a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for LGBTI+ young people						
Ref.	Action	Responsibility		Timeline		
		Lead	Partner	2018	2019	2020
8(d)	Commence Children and Family Relationships Act 2015, specifically Parts 2, 3 and 9.	Department of Health Department of Justice and Equality	Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection	✓	✓	
8(e)	Recommendations arising from the review of the Gender Recognition Act 2015 in relation to gender recognition for people who are non-binary or (for people under age 18) should be advanced as quickly as possible.	Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection		✓	✓	✓
<b>Objective 9: Address fragmentation in funding and support networking of organisations to work collaboratively</b>						
9(a)	Ensure a coordinated approach to the delivery of effective LGBTI+ services and funding of services for young people through inter-agency cooperation.	Department of Children and Youth Affairs	NYCI, NGO and youth sector partners, ETBI, CYPSC, LCDCs, HSE	✓	✓	✓
9(b)	Hold an annual implementation forum to review progress in implementation.	Department of Children and Youth Affairs		✓	✓	✓
<b>Objective 10: Provide an inclusive physical environment for transgender and intersex young people</b>						
10(a)	Review the feasibility of including a provision for gender-neutral/single stall bathrooms and changing rooms in the design guidelines for schools.	Department of Education and Skills		✓	✓	✓
10(b)	Commence consultations on how to achieve universal design gender-neutral sanitary facilities in both new and existing buildings to which the public have access.	Department of Children and Youth Affairs Department of Justice and Equality Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government	Centre for Excellence in Universal Design in the National Disability Authority, Office of Public Works, HSE Estates	✓	✓	✓

**GOAL 2:****IMPROVE THE PHYSICAL, MENTAL AND SEXUAL HEALTH OF LGBTI+ YOUNG PEOPLE***Considerations of the Oversight Committee*

As a society, we are increasingly aware of the physical, mental, and sexual health of LGBTI+ young people, and with this growing awareness comes opportunities to name and address the challenges in these areas that are more pronounced for LGBTI+ young people.

The announcement in April that the Department of Education and Skills will review the relationships and Sexuality Education programme (RSE) in schools is another development occurring during the formulation of this Strategy. It is a very welcome one, especially the inclusion of 'LGBTQ+ matters' cited in that announcement.

The positive changes in attitudes and education that Irish society has undergone when it comes to the celebration, inclusion and support of LGBTI+ people are essential to the wellbeing of LGBTI+ young people, and were acknowledged throughout the consultation process. As a country, we should be proud to be a world leader on LGBTI+ rights, as such progress has a profound impact not just on LGBTI+ young people specifically, but on us all as a society.

However, during the consultation process, young people highlighted a number of challenges relating to the health and wellbeing of LGBTI+ young people. These challenges largely related to difficulties accessing appropriate services and treatments. Also highlighted was a frustration regarding the sometimes limited knowledge and understanding of LGBTI+ issues by healthcare personnel, and a limited availability of relevant LGBTI+ health information. These challenges associated with health and wellbeing were a common theme across all cohorts of LGBTI+ young people. They were particularly highlighted by transgender and non-binary young people, as well as emerging conversations around intersex young people. Similar challenges are identified in existing research and surveying of the LGBTI+ population with regards to physical, mental and sexual health.

**'I have been lucky, but every LGBTI+ person I know has suffered mental health issues.'**

The objectives and actions associated with this goal are focused on supporting the identification, tailoring and implementation of health services and initiatives that support the health and wellbeing of LGBTI+ young people and promote positive lifestyle choices.

**'Counselling should be available for everyone for prevention of depression ... There should be trained counsellors in schools (not guidance counsellors).'**

The mental health challenges young LGBTI+ people face are often the product of broader social attitudes, and so it is acknowledged implicitly throughout this Strategy that changing attitudes of non-LGBTI+ people towards LGBTI+ people through awareness and education improves the lived experiences of LGBTI+ young people themselves. We need to ensure that any LGBTI+ young person who is experiencing challenges with their mental health has the proper supports they require, and encounters informed and respectful health care professionals. Work is ongoing, building on the recommendations of the Youth Mental Health Task Force.

'I feel sexual health is very much brushed under the carpet when it comes to LGBT people.'

It is also important to point out the different requirements within the LGBTI+ population. Transgender young people in particular have different needs, including healthcare needs, to their LGB siblings. This is something that emerged strongly from the consultation process.

Like many issues relevant to this Strategy, the landscape of sexual health has changed since the Strategy development began. In reaction to the alarming rate of new HIV infections in Ireland, provisions have been made for the availability of PrEP. This Strategy calls for an increase of access to and availability of the drug through the HSE, as well as access in rural areas from GPs. In wider society in Ireland, discourse around the issue of consent has increased, yet the LGBTI+ lens has largely been absent from this conversation. It is important when we are talking about sexual health, relationships and consent that LGBTI+ young people's experiences – and information tailored to them – is included. Although there are specific sexual health needs for the LGBTI+ community, particularly amongst men who have sex with men, healthy, respectful relationships should be the experience of all young people who choose to be in relationships, or have sexual partners, regardless of their gender expression or sexual identity. That said, the frequent emphasis on male sexual health should not overshadow the sexual health needs of young lesbian and bisexual women, which are often missing from the conversation.

With regards to sexual health education it is important for LGBTI+ experiences to be incorporated, and this goes for sexual health services too.

'More signposting to services.'

In order to achieve this goal, we will:

- Objective 11** Respond effectively to the mental health needs of LGBTI+ young people
- Objective 12** Strengthen sexual health services and education to respond to the needs of LGBTI+ young people, including in the area of sexual consent
- Objective 13** Improve the physical and mental health of transgender young people
- Objective 14** Improve the understanding of, and the response to, the physical and mental health needs of intersex young people

These objectives will be achieved through the realisation of the following key actions:

Goal 2: Improve the physical, mental and sexual health of LGBTI+ young people						
Ref.	Action	Responsibility		Timeline		
		Lead	Partner	2018	2019	2020
<b>Objective 11: Respond effectively to the mental health needs of LGBTI+ young people</b>						
11(a)	Implement the recommendations from the Pathfinder and Youth Mental Health Task Force including the introduction of same day referrals and consideration of age of consent for access to mental health services and supports.	Department of Health	CAMHS, HSE	✓	✓	✓
11(b)	Develop targeted early intervention initiatives and services to reduce the risk of mental health problems for LGBTI+ young people, including suicide and self-harm.	Department of Health	DCYA, HSE	✓	✓	✓
<b>Objective 12: Strengthen sexual health services and education to respond to the needs of LGBTI+ young people, including in the area of sexual consent</b>						
12(a)	In line with the <i>National Sexual Health Strategy</i> , improve accessibility of sexual health services to LGBTI+ young people, including HIV/STI diagnosis and treatment, and immunisation services; consideration of reduction of the age of consent for sexual health services to 16 years.	Health Service Executive	Department of Health, LGBTI+ NGOs	✓	✓	✓
12(b)	Improve accessibility and availability of HIV prevention strategies including PrEP and PEP in line with the <i>National Sexual Health Strategy</i> .	Health Service Executive	Department of Health	✓	✓	✓
12(c)	Continue to include issues of gender identity and sexual orientation in the National 10 Day Foundation Programme in Sexual Health Promotion and ensure its delivery.	Health Service Executive	Department of Health, SHCPP	✓	✓	✓
12(d)	Ensure that the education and information made available relating to sexual health, sexual consent and coercion, and sexual violence, includes LGBTI+ experiences and also provides LGBTI+-specific education and awareness, including but not limited to men who have sex with men.	Health Service Executive	Department of Education and Skills	✓	✓	✓
12(e)	Ensure that in implementing the recommendations from a strategic review of communications for sexual health, the needs of young LGBTI+ people are included and, in particular, relevant information and awareness campaigns specific to men who have sex with men.	Health Service Executive	Department of Health, LGBTI+ NGOs and youth sector partners	✓	✓	✓

continued

Goal 2: Improve the physical, mental and sexual health of LGBTI+ young people						
Ref.	Action	Responsibility		Timeline		
		Lead	Partner	2018	2019	2020
12(f)	Review and clarify international best practice on the issue of blood donation from men who have sex with men.	Department of Health	IBTS	✓	✓	✓
12(g)	Ensure equal treatment for LGBTI+ people under the proposed assisted human reproduction legislation.	Department of Health		✓	✓	✓
Objective 13: Improve the physical and mental health of transgender young people						
13(a)	Ensure appropriate resources are available in order that the HSE Service Development model of care is implemented and accessible to support trans young people. These services should include the provision of appropriate mental health services at primary and specialist services.	Department of Health	HSE, Tusla	✓	✓	✓
13(b)	Develop a policy to ensure all health programmes take account of young people who have transitioned, e.g. immunisation programmes (HPV) in line with WPATH or other appropriate professional transgender health guidelines.	Department of Health	HSE	✓	✓	✓
13(c)	Provide clear guidelines to health practitioners on referral pathways for trans young people and their families to specialised services.	Health Service Executive		✓	✓	✓
13(d)	Work with parents and young people seeking to access healthcare outside the state under the provisions of the Cross Border Directive and Treatment Abroad Scheme to ensure the available options for access to care are communicated effectively.	Health Service Executive		✓	✓	✓
Objective 14: Improve the understanding of, and the response to, the physical and mental health needs of intersex young people						
14(a)	Establish a working group on intersex healthcare for children and young people with a view to considering how Resolution 2191/2017 Council of Europe and other relevant health care recommendations can be taken account of in healthcare provision in Ireland.	Department of Health	Department of Children and Youth Affairs, HSE, Tusla	✓	✓	✓

**GOAL 3:****DEVELOP THE RESEARCH AND DATA ENVIRONMENT TO  
BETTER UNDERSTAND THE LIVES OF LGBTI+ YOUNG PEOPLE*****Considerations of the Oversight Committee***

Across the board, awareness and knowledge of young LGBTI+ lives is increasing. The courage young people show in coming out and expressing their true selves, and the associated increased visibility of young LGBTI+ people, is to be commended. It's now time for research and data to reflect the diversity in our society.

One of the challenges of developing this Strategy lay in the limited availability of Irish-specific data, statistics and quantitative research relating to young LGBTI+ people in Ireland and, more broadly, the general LGBTI+ population in Ireland. Consultations, surveys, and so on, collate information from population samples, yet at a fundamental level, the challenges of measuring the LGBTI+ population remain. The Central Statistics Office (CSO) measures civil partnerships and same-sex marriages, and we should examine the role the Census may have in measuring the LGBTI+ population, although we understand the limitations of this tool for measuring such a population.

Another challenge with measuring a young LGBTI+ population is how the population is dependent on self-identifying, which is a process different for every individual and occurs at different stages of life. An individual who does not identify as LGBTI+ at one stage may identify as LGBTI+ at another stage. Identity is fluid in many ways, not least in recent years where sexuality and identity expressions that were previously lesser known have emerged and are increasingly diverse, particularly amongst young people. This creates challenges in measuring population as there is a tendency to narrow the field of categorisation, which perhaps fails to capture – or worse, risks minimising or making invisible – the complex spectrum of sexuality and gender identity within the population.

Research and evaluation metrics should be included in programme and intervention design to facilitate collecting evidence and measuring the impact of these initiatives on young people's lives.

While the infrastructure of this Strategy itself, and the *Report of the consultations with Young People in Ireland*, offers a good insight into the lives of LGBTI+ young people, the limited availability of data relating to LGBTI+ people in Ireland was evident at all stages of the strategy development; during the environmental analysis, throughout the consultation process, and during Oversight Committee and Youth Advisory Group discussions regarding specific issues and actions. The reliance on limited data and surveys, as well a tendency for the LGBTI+ sector to refer to British or American data where Irish data is not available, hinders a strategic assessment of the LGBTI+ population's needs and the development of appropriate responses.

In order to achieve this goal, we will:

**Objective 15** Enhance the quality of LGBTI+ data and commission research to ensure evidence-informed policy and service delivery

This objective will be achieved through the realisation of the following key actions:

Goal 3: Develop the research and data environment to better understand the lives of LGBTI+ young people						
Ref.	Action	Responsibility		Timeline		
		Lead	Partner	2018	2019	2020
Objective 15: Enhance the quality of LGBTI+ data and commission research to ensure evidence-informed policy and service delivery						
15(a)	Conduct a commissioned landscape analysis of existing research and data as relevant to Irish LGBTI+ youth. Use this information to complete an LGBTI+ research needs analysis based on the research gaps identified.	Department of Children and Youth Affairs	HRB/IRC	✓	✓	
15(b)	Based on identified research and data gaps, develop and implement research to meet the identified gaps.	Department of Children and Youth Affairs	HRB/IRC		✓	✓
15(c)	Include LGBTI+ matters in the review of Relationships and Sexuality Education	Department of Education and Skills		✓	✓	✓
15(d)	Commission a review of international and Irish best practice study on appropriate language and ways to ask about gender identity and sexual orientation to inform the development of best practice instrumentation for inclusion in surveys and/or Census. Participate in piloting of questions with CSO and other research bodies, as relevant.	Department of Children and Youth Affairs	CSO, other relevant research bodies		✓	✓
15(e)	Maintain, develop and enhance the Irish Queer Archive.	Department of Culture, Heritage and Gaeltacht National Library of Ireland		✓	✓	✓
15(f)	Develop research into the factors that support positive mental health for LGBTI+ young people and ascertain how these positive factors can be replicated.	Department of Children and Youth Affairs			✓	✓
15(g)	Explore Growing Up in Ireland Wave 3 data that captures sexual orientation and other relevant information.	Department of Children and Youth Affairs			✓	

## Governance & Implementation

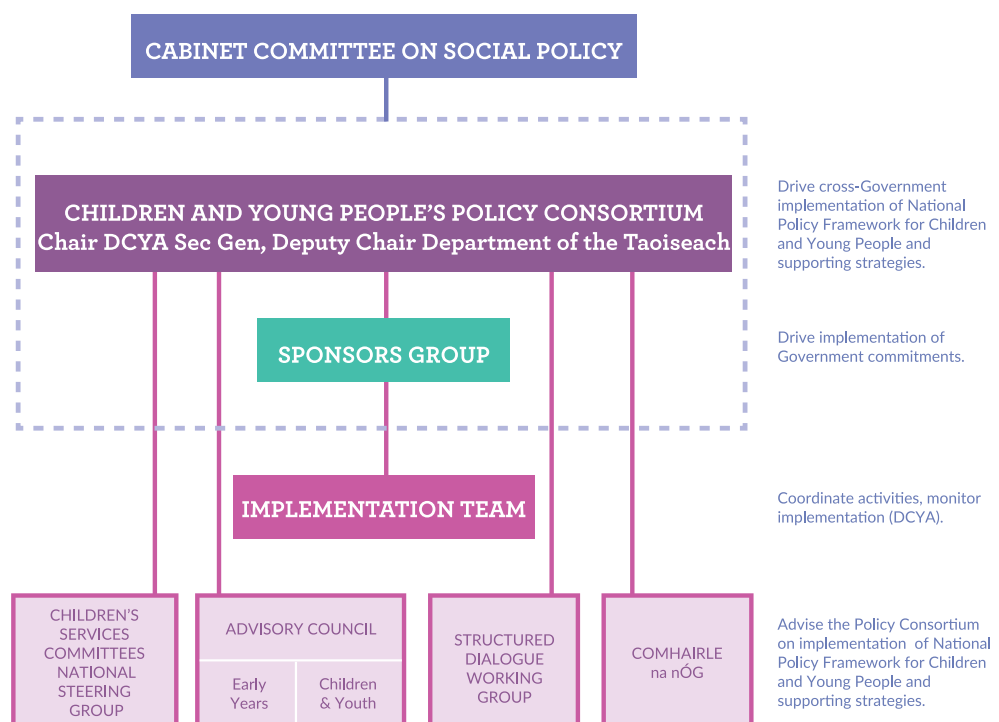
### Strategic Implementation & Governance

Successful implementation of the *LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy* requires significant collaboration and engagement between a number of Government Departments, State Agencies and non-governmental organisations in order to ensure that LGBTI+ young people can achieve the same positive outcomes as all young people.

A number of actions will be dependent on the provision of funding and resources, and indeed on the completion of other actions. Such dependencies have been recognised where possible. Furthermore, it will be necessary for a number of actions to dovetail with work that is taking place elsewhere, and therefore the strategic alignment of these actions with other national strategies, initiatives and developments has been considered to ensure that synergies can be achieved.

### Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures Implementation Framework

The *LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy* was developed by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs in the context of the overall *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* (BOBF) Framework. Reflecting the cross-government remit of the BOBF Framework, comprehensive structures have been established to drive implementation. These same structures have been used to support implementation of constituent strategies that sit within the Framework, including the *National Youth Strategy 2015–2020*. It is intended that implementation of the *LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy* will also feed into the BOBF implementation structures.





The BOBF Framework has established a Children and Young People’s Policy Consortium, whose role is to oversee and drive the effective implementation of BOBF and its constituent strategies across Departments, Agencies and sectors. The Consortium includes representation from various Government Departments and Agencies, and expertise from a range of sectors focused on working with children and young people. The work of the Consortium is enabled by the following supporting structures:

- **Sponsors Group:** Comprising the Lead Department for each of the five BOBF National Outcomes, and a sponsor for the BOBF Transformational Goals.
- **Implementation Team:** Established within the DCYA to project manage implementation and coordinate activities and work relating to the implementation of BOBF.
- **Children and Young People’s Services Committees (CYPSC) National Steering Group:** Supports the link between national and local implementation infrastructures to ensure effective interagency working.
- **Advisory Council:** Harnesses expertise and experience from the community and voluntary sectors, from academia, and from independent experts who have specific experience in working with and for children and young people.
- **EU Structured Dialogue Working Group:** Provides a national participation and consultation process whereby young people aged 15–25 years can feed into European youth policy.
- **Comhairle na nÓg National Executive:** The national participation structure for young people aged 12–18 years.

### Governance of the *LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy*

Using the overall BOBF Implementation Framework, the following additional measures are intended to support implementation of the *LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy*:

1. Leadership and coordination of implementation for the Strategy will come from DCYA. Timelines and KPIs will be established and agreed for each of the actions included in the implementation plan.
2. An annual implementation forum will be held to review progress in implementation in June of each year.
3. A representative of the current Oversight Committee will be nominated to the Advisory Council with a specific remit to represent the relevant issues from the Strategy in the broader BOBF context.
4. A Youth Forum, to ensure the voice of young people remains central to the Strategy implementation process, will be put in place.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1 – List of Acronyms

The following list provides an overview of acronyms used throughout this document:

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BeLonG To	BeLonG To Youth Services
BOBF	<i>Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures</i>
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CSO	Central Statistics Office
CYPSC	Children and Young People’s Services Committees
DCYA	Department of Children and Youth Affairs
DES	Department of Education and Skills
ETBI	Education and Training Boards Ireland
FETs	Further Education and Training Institutions
GLEN	Gay and Lesbian Equality Network
GSA	Genders and Sexualities Alliance
HEA	Higher Education Authority
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HPV	Human Papillomavirus
HRB	Health Research Board
HSE	Health Service Executive
IBEC	Irish Business and Employers Confederation
IBTS	Irish Blood Transfusion Service
IPAT	International Protection Appeals Tribunal
IHREC	Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission
IPO	International Protection Office
IRC	Irish Research Council
ISME	Irish Small and Medium Enterprise Association
JCT	Junior Cycle for Teachers

KPI	Key Performance Indicator
L & D	Learning and Development
LCDCs	Local Community Development Committees
LGMA	Local Government Management Agency
LGB	Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
LGBTI+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex
NEPS	National Educational Psychological Service
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NYCI	National Youth Council of Ireland
PDST	Professional Development Service for Teachers
PEP	Post-Exposure Prophylaxis
PrEP	Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (HIV prevention strategy)
RSE	Relationships and Sexuality Education
SHCPP	Sexual Health and Crisis Pregnancy Programme
SPHE	Social, Personal and Health Education
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
TENI	Transgender Equality Network Ireland
Trans	Transgender
USI	Union of Students in Ireland
WPATH	World Professional Association for Transgender Health
WRC	Workplace Relations Commission
YAG	Youth Advisory Group

## Appendix 2 – LGBTI+ Glossary of Terms

**Gender expression:** How someone presents their gender externally, for example through clothes, appearance and behaviour.

**Gender identity:** Someone's internal perception of their gender – how they feel inside about their gender.

**Intersex:** A term used to describe people born with physical or biological sex characteristics that do not fit the typical definitions for male or female bodies.

**Non-binary:** Gender identities that are not exclusively masculine or feminine.

**Sexual orientation:** Refers to the attraction people feel towards others based on their gender.

**Transgender:** An umbrella term for anyone whose gender identity or gender expression is different from the biological sex they were assigned at birth.

**Trans:** A commonly used shorthand version of transgender.

**Transitioning:** The process of transitioning from one sex or gender to another. This can be done by dressing in different clothes, changing the way you talk, using make up, changing your hair, changing your name, taking hormones, or surgery. Transitioning does not always involve all of these steps and is ultimately up to how an individual feels about it themselves.

**Trans-man:** A person who was assigned a female sex at birth, who now identifies as a man.

**Trans-woman:** A person who was assigned a male sex at birth, who now identifies as a woman.

## Appendix 3 – Members of the Oversight Committee

Una Mullally (Independent Chair)

Olive McGovern, Department of Children and Youth Affairs

Mary Robb, Department of Children and Youth Affairs

Gavan O’Leary, Department of Education and Skills (alternate: Grainne Morrissey). Replaced by Neville Kenny

Michael Duffy, Department of Justice and Equality (alternate: Adam Egan). Replaced by Caroline Mellows

Diane Nurse, Health Service Executive

Cormac Quinlan, Tusla (alternate: Nerilee Ceatha)

Mary Cunningham, National Youth Council of Ireland

Síona Cahill, Union of Students in Ireland

Una May, Sport Ireland (alternate: Bernie Priestley)

Fiona Dunne, Irish Congress of Trade Unions

Moninne Griffith, BeLonG To

Catherine Cross, Transgender Equality Network Ireland

Paula Fagan, LGBT Helpline/LGBT Ireland

Ayrton Kelly, Youth Advisory Group Member

Imelda Morrissey, Youth Advisory Group Member

Ruan Walsh, Youth Advisory Group Member

Assisted by Mazars Ireland: Brendan Waters, Gráinne McAuley and Laura O’Neill

## Appendix 4 – Members of the Youth Advisory Group

Séamus Byrne

Lesley Fitzpatrick

Chelsea Gibson

Amy Hunter

Ayrton Kelly

Tara Kileen

Katie McCabe

Martin McDonagh

Imelda Morrissey

James Murray

Jayson Pope

Niamh Scully

Ruan Walsh

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