

2018 Annual Report

BeLonG To Youth Services



Supporting lesbian, gay, bisexual,
transgender, and intersex young
people in Ireland





BeLonG To Youth Services

Parliament House
13 Parliament Street
D02 P658, Ireland

Tel: +353 (0)1 670 6223
Fax: +353 (0)1 670 6219
info@belongto.org
www.belongto.org

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Dave Darcy
One Strong Arm
onestrongarm.com

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gpscolour.co.uk

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A Welcome Message from our Chairperson and CEO

2018 was a remarkable year for LGBTI+ young people and BeLonG To Youth Services with the launch of the National LGBTI+ Youth Strategy 2018-2020 in June. The journey to this launch was insightful, inspiring, and at times heart-breaking. We listened to the voices of LGBTI+ young people from across Ireland, and heard about the isolation, harassment, and bullying they experience because of who they are and who they love. The hopes and dreams of LGBTI+ young people are tied up in the pages of this Strategy, and we look forward to the Strategy coming to life through implementation of its strategic goals over the next three years.

While this offers hope for the future, we faced external challenges as an organisation and community in 2018, with a rise in hate speech internationally and subsequent experiences of homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia. We witnessed the persecution of members of the LGBTI+ community in Chechnya, increasing numbers of LGBTI+ asylum seekers and refugees fleeing their home countries, and the emergence of a dangerous rhetoric around gender identity in the UK. Closer to home, through our work with LGBTI+ young people across Ireland we see the damage caused by families, schools, and communities that are not open to or educated on LGBTI+ identities.

Our vision is a world where LGBTI+ young people are equal, safe, and valued in the diversity of their identities and experiences. As an organisation, we are deeply proud of our impact in 2018 through our youth work, advocacy, communications, fundraising, and research activities. In this report, we offer a picture of what we achieved and the challenges we faced in all these areas over the past 12 months.

As you will read in the coming pages, we are committed to good governance, fundraising practice, and transparent reporting. We were delighted to be shortlisted for a Good Governance Award in 2018. As part of our work to ensure future sustainability, we worked hard to increase our unrestricted income, exceeding our target by 7%. Thanks to our efforts and the generous support of our donors and partners, the total organisational income grew by 25%, reaching €986,430. We are now equipped to build stronger services and brighter futures for LGBTI+ young people.

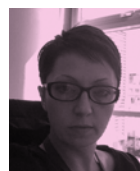
Over the past two years, as part of our 2016-2018 Strategic Plan, we focused our work around five pillars: health, safety, equality, systems, and the National LGBTI+ Youth Strategy – with the voice of young people informing all areas. 2018 offered us an opportunity to pause and reflect on our risks, challenges, and achievements. Now, we look to the future. Armed with our new three-year Strategic Plan *'Sharing the Learning'* we are dedicated to evolving and developing as an organisation, committed to a culture of learning, reflection, and evaluation.

We would like to thank the young people, staff, volunteers, board members, donors, partners, and supporters who help us as we create an Ireland where LGBTI+ young people are equal, safe, and valued. Together, we hope to make Ireland the best place in the world for LGBTI+ young people to live and thrive.

Moninne Griffith
CEO



Nikki Gallagher
Chairperson, Board of Directors



We trained **13 young people**
to be leaders through our
Peer Educator programme

We ran
104 YOUTH GROUPS
in our
Dublin Youth Service

We were instrumental in
the development of the
**NATIONAL LGBTI+
YOUTH STRATEGY**
launched in June

We supported
45
LGBTI+ youth groups
around Ireland

We offered **147 hours** of
free crisis counselling for
LGBTI+ young people
with our partners in
Pieta House

We trained
**172 SECOND-LEVEL
TEACHERS**
in LGBTI+ inclusion
and awareness

We ran
IN THE KNOW
our sexual health
programme **4 times**

WHAT WE
20

Amy Lamont, Matt Kennedy & Shane Smart
joined the team

15 of our National **Network Youth Groups**
were successfully accredited

3 brilliant
PayPal
employees
redesigned
our website

There was a
21% INCREASE
in the number of
LGBTI+ youth groups
we support nationwide

Minister
**Katherine
Zappone**
&
former President
Mary McAleese
marched with us
at Dublin Pride

We developed our
2019-2021 Strategic Plan
SHARING THE LEARNING

We launched **BETTER OUT THAN IN** our mental health
awareness campaign

We joined
YOUTH FOR YES
and supported the campaign
to Repeal the 8th Amendment

We translated key
web pages to **Polish,**
Lithuanian, French,
Arabic, and Urdu

We distributed
**3,000 Harm Reduction
and Safety Packs**
at Dublin Pride

Our opinion pieces featured in

**THE IRISH TIMES &
THE IRISH EXAMINER**

We **campaign**ed for
the inclusion of LGBTI+
in **relationship** and
sexuality education
(RSE)

We launched an
AN FOCLÓIR AITEACH,
an Irish LGBTI+ Irish dictionary
with the USI & TENI

We delivered

LGBTI+ INCLUSION TRAINING

to the **Football Association of Ireland**



We engaged in
new corporate
PARTNERSHIPS

29

GOT UP TO
18

We increased our
unrestricted
+7% **income**

WE EXPANDED OUR
wellbeing programme
to include an
Employee Assistant Programme

**WE UPDATED OUR POLICIES
& PROCEDURES TO MEET**

GDPR

We hosted the second annual
Rainbow Ball,
raising a profit of

€71,000

162,000

Students reached
through Stand Up
Awareness Week

We said goodbye to
team members
Carol-Anne O'Brien
& **Gerard Roe**

WE SUBMITTED

recommendations to the 2015
Gender Recognition Act review

WORKING GROUP

37

**FABULOUS VOLUNTEERS
SUPPORTED OUR WORK**

43%

of second-level
schools participated in
STAND UP AWARENESS WEEK

We created

5 **sexual health &
consent videos**

WE DEVELOPED COMING OUT
resources for LGBTI+
YOUTH AND PARENTS

We facilitated a
DISABILITY FOCUS GROUP
to make BeLonG To
more disability friendly

our Vision

Our Vision is a world where LGBTI+ young people are equal, safe, and valued in the diversity of their identities and experiences.

OUR Mission

Our Mission is to support LGBTI+ young people as equals to achieve our vision through youth work, changing attitudes, and research.

OUR Values

Our core values are those of **Inclusion, Integrity,** and **Respect,** in an environment of **Honesty** and **Openness.** Our purpose is to create a **Welcoming, Supportive, Safe, and Fun space for LGBTI+ young people.** We are committed to **Collaboration** and **Youth Participation.** We believe in **Solidarity and Intersectional Equality,** and our work focuses on **Human Rights** and **Social Justice.** We are dedicated to **Continuous Improvement** in everything we do.



SAFE SPACES

Our Dublin Youth Groups operate fortnightly offering four specific groups to meet the needs of LGBTI+ young people. These groups are funded through the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. Social challenges such as homelessness, unemployment, and a rise in homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic experiences, were just some of the issues that were evident in our groups in 2018. We experienced a rise in the number of young people needing specialised support in addition to the support offered in a Youth Group setting. We link in with other organisations and agencies that can meet these specific needs in relation to mental health, sexual health, and homelessness. Together we work with the young people to help them manage challenges they are experiencing.

Our framework for working with young people is a model of Critical Social Education. This means we encourage young people to think for themselves, work together, and work with us in developing our policy, campaigns, and programmes to address stigma and discrimination in society. We do this through an Equal Partnership approach. We strive to ensure that the experiences of young people informs our work, including what happens at our Youth Groups. We facilitate workshops each year on mental health, coming out, drugs and alcohol, and sexual health. The remainder of the programmes are determined by the young people, and youth leaders are trained to deliver the workshops through our Peer Education Programme.

Our Dublin Youth Groups offer safe, welcoming, fun spaces where LGBTI+ young people are supported to thrive as healthy and equal citizens.

Over 18s

Our Over 18's Group is for 18-23 year olds. The group meets fortnightly on Tuesday evenings in BeLonG To.

HIGHLIGHTS

- This group created and managed our 2018 Dublin Pride Outreach harm reduction campaign. Thanks to the support of the Gay Health Network and the HSE Sexual Health and Crisis Pregnancy Programme (SHCPP), the group created and distributed 3,000 packs to young people to reduce some of the sexual health, mental health, and drug and alcohol-related risks at Pride. The packs included condoms, information about drugs and alcohol support services available to LGBTI+ young people, along with lollipops, pens, stickers, and badges.
- The group ran a number of workshops in 2018 including sessions on minding your mental health, Pride safety, security when travelling as a trans person, and the impact of hate groups on society.

RISKS AND CHALLENGES

- The age limit for this group and our youth work at BeLonG To is 23 years. Many individuals experience a need for continued support outside of this age bracket to deal with homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia in society.
- Youth Worker Gerard Roe who facilitated this group for eight years left the organisation in June 2018.

IndividualiTy

This safe, positive, and fun space is for trans young people and those exploring their gender identity or gender expression. The group meets fortnightly on Wednesday evenings in the Office of the Ombudsman for Children.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Following a yearlong consultation process, the group created a policy position relating to legal gender recognition and submitted this to the Working Group for the review of the 2015 Gender Recognition Act.
- Seamus Byrne, an active member of the group was selected to sit on the Working Group for the review of the 2015 Gender Recognition Act.
- Two members of the group presented to the Department of Social Protection, outlining their personal experiences of being trans and discussing the impact of the current barrier to legal gender recognition for those under 18.
- The group ran a diverse range of workshops during 2018 including navigating airports, dating when you are trans, being trans in different countries, trans jealousy, and art therapy.
- The group welcomed guest speaker Sara Philips from TENI who spoke about Irish trans history.
- Transgender and non-binary young people often navigate challenging journeys and experiences relating to their bodies. Recognising this, IndividualiTy members created a body positivity and gender expression event called Transboree. The one-day event took place in December and featured guests and workshops on grooming, makeup, employment rights, and self-care.

RISKS AND CHALLENGES

- Trans young people required ongoing support outside of this group due to the lengthy waiting times many of them experience while waiting for their healthcare needs to be met.
- Safety is an ongoing issue for trans young people in their home, schools, and communities. This has a negative impact on the health and wellbeing of the young people attending our group and the level of support that they need.

Ladybirds

This group for young lesbian, bisexual, and trans (LBT) gals and their non-binary pals meets fortnightly on Thursday evenings. In 2018, the group focused on the sexual health needs of the LBT community and set out to shine a light on LBT sexual health and relationships.

HIGHLIGHTS

- With the support of Dublin City South Children and Young People's Services Committees (CYPSC) /Healthy Ireland Programme, the group created a series of short videos about topics not covered in their sex education classes in their schools, from periods to consent. The group held an event to launch the videos with special guest and LGBTI+ icon Ailbhe Smyth.
- Members of the group were interviewed and featured in 'Outitude,' a documentary charting the history of lesbian Ireland directed by Sonya Mulligan.
- The group participated in The Science Gallery's 'Intimacy' exhibition which examined the science and art of connection between human beings.
- Ladybird Emily O'Connell was Youth Editor of the 2018 *Gay Community News (GCN)* Youth Edition and wrote an article on behalf of the group discussing the sexual health needs of the LBT community.
- Grainne Kelly of St. James's Hospital GUIDE Clinic met with the group to understand how the clinic could better support the sexual health needs of the LGBTI+ community.

RISKS AND CHALLENGES

- The group identified the struggles they face accessing mainstream sexual health services. This is due to the lack of awareness and education amongst healthcare providers and educators around the sexual health needs of LBT women. This challenge inspired them to take action and tackle these barriers in 2018.

BeLonG To Sundays

Our biggest group for LGBTI+ young people aged 13-17, meets every second Sunday from 3-6pm in Outhouse, Dublin's LGBTI+ community and resource centre.

HIGHLIGHTS

- We saw an increase in the number of parents supporting their children to attend this group, often dropping them off or collecting them before and after the group.
- The group ran workshops on LGBTI+ bullying in schools, LGBTI+ invisibility, fashion, an online safety workshop, LGBTI+ history, and safety at Pride.

RISKS AND CHALLENGES

- The challenges facing this group were not internal, but rather as a result of the experiences of homophobia, transphobia, and biphobia the young people experience in their homes, schools, and communities such as bullying, isolation, and a lack of acceptance.

BE
WHO
YOU
ARE

“THROUGHOUT MY EXPERIENCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL, I DIDN'T KNOW ANYBODY WHO WAS GAY, SO I HAD NOBODY TO TURN TO”

Through coming to BeLonG To, Eoghan found a door to a wider LGBTI+ community...

“Coming to BeLonG To allows me the space to get out and be in an environment that I feel comfortable in – where there are other LGBTI+ people in the room. A couple of months ago, I was having some real trouble and it wasn't an easy time in my life. Everything was so stressful. It felt like juggling 10 things at once – it was too much. Some of the big things for me was Snapchat streaks and texting; you just feel bad if you don't text back. Social media was affecting me, so I just deleted it and said I wasn't being part of it anymore. At the time, I could speak to a Youth Workers at BeLonG To about things and they'd fully understand. There was no judgement.

In secondary school, I didn't have any friends and a lot of that was due to bullying. It was kind of like they knew I was queer before I did, so a lot of transphobic and homophobic things were said to me on a regular basis. That happened for five years on and off. The support just wasn't there for me. Every few months I would bring forward an issue and nothing happened. There just isn't enough visibility by LGBTI+ groups in schools, particularly when someone needs them the most. Throughout my experience of secondary school, I didn't know anybody who was gay, so I had nobody to turn to. There were Guidance Counsellors in school, who were very open and gave support, with pamphlets and posters, but it wasn't enough. It's very hard to be part of an education system that is actively going out of their way to deny your existence and identity. There's kind of an inner-conflict situation in schools, often because of the Catholic ethos. The fact that they can't put up a rainbow flag because they're a Catholic school, to me, that's an excuse.

Unfortunately, homophobia is still happening. Recently I was out with a friend and a group of kids called me a 'faggot'. It upset me to hear that word, because you associate that word with a hard time in your life. Looking back now I would say that things do get easier and a bit more open. During a time when I was confused, BeLonG To gave me an outlet to explore LGBTI+ culture and my identity. An organisation like this provides support, personal development and friends. I see these people as like my family now. It's a doorway to the community in a sense.”

Eoghan is 19



DONEGAL

LAOIS

LUCK OUT

DU



Donegal Youth Service
Youth Work Ireland

Youth Work Ireland
LAOIS

O.U.
Opening Up Together

TRANSFORM
YOUNG
LGBTI+ LIVES

TRANSFORM
YOUNG
LGBTI+ LIVES

TRANSFORM
YOUNG
LGBTI+ LIVES

Youth Work Ireland

Youth Work Ireland

POSSIBLE
VALUED
Included

CON- NECTING COM- MUNITIES

Our National Network programme offers information, advice, resources, accreditation, and training to Youth Groups around Ireland supporting LGBTI+ young people.



Working in partnership with national youth organisations such as Youth Work Ireland, Foróige, Crosscare, and local LGBTI+ groups, we ensure that young LGBTI+ people have access to safe spaces outside Dublin, closer to home. In 2018, we supported 45 LGBTI+ youth groups nationally, including several new group members. We were pleased to provide support to new groups in Wexford, Waterford, Mayo, Leitrim, and Cavan as they opened their doors to LGBTI+ young people and their friends in 2018. We distributed HSE funding totalling €45,000 to 12 National Network member groups, for youth work hours to ensure services were provided to LGBTI+ young people in the area. This work is made possible with funding from the HSE (formerly from the National Office of Suicide Prevention - NOSP).

Review, Refresh, Refocus

Members of the National Network came together in 2018 to review and evaluate the programme and ways of working together to ensure LGBTI+ young people are receiving the best possible support, no matter where they are in Ireland. With the expert guidance of an external facilitator, we provided a space for our National Network members to have a conversation about the work we do together and how we can improve LGBTI+ youth service accessibility for young people. This review marks an exciting new chapter for the National Network with the development of terms of reference, specific priorities, working groups, and the election of a Chairperson – Debbie O'Rourke from Waterford South Tipperary Community Youth Service.



Getting The Seal Of Approval

The BeLonG To Start Up and Accreditation process is designed to support organisations to develop safe and supportive spaces in their community for LGBTI+ young people. Accreditation is for youth services and organisations interested in building an LGBTI+ youth group that is engaging, participatory, and enhances the critical engagement and social development of young people. Some 15 groups from our National Network received accreditation status in 2018.

To achieve accreditation, a youth group must follow five core principles: be young person-centered; promote safety and well-being; encourage education and personal development of young people; provide spaces of equality, diversity, and inclusiveness; and demonstrate a commitment to quality and improvement. The process includes staff support from our National Network Coordinator and resource materials such as our Start Up and Accreditation pack. This is a handy tool designed to provide practical steps, and useful resources for starting and running an LGBTI+ youth group that meets good practice standards.

The BeLonG To National Quality Standard for LGBTI+ Youth Work has a focus on promoting and supporting LGBTI+ youth groups, which promotes raising consciousness. Youth groups typically achieve this through education programmes, recreational activities, social and political awareness projects, training, and arts/creativity programmes.

Celebrating Pride

In June, alongside our friends and partners Youth Work Ireland we celebrated Dublin Pride. Together we facilitated a large group of young people marching under the banner 'Transforming Young LGBT+ Lives' with over 400 young people. After a glorious breakfast party in the sunshine at Youth Work Ireland's headquarters on Dominic Street, we took our own private Rainbow LUAS to St Stephen's Green to join the Pride Parade. Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Katherine Zappone, TD and Former President of Ireland, Dr Mary McAleese and her family joined us as we marched for our LGBTI+ community here in Ireland, for those who don't feel safe to come out, for those whose human rights are denied, and for all of the people we have lost along the way. Pride is a time to celebrate who we are, but also a time to remember all the amazing people who have paved the way.

FAST FACTS

15 GROUPS
Awarded Accreditation in 2018

45
(2018)

Youth Groups supported by the National Network

V

37
(2017)

Youth Groups supported by the National Network

2,886 YOUNG PEOPLE

received LGBTI+ awareness training through the National Network Fund



We provide a range of support services to LGBTI+ young people to help them live happy, healthier lives.

Crisis Counselling

Our in-house crisis counselling service, offered in partnership with Pieta House, continued to provide a dedicated LGBTI+ youth counselling service free of charge for those experiencing suicide ideation or engaging in self-harm. Throughout 2018, the service operated two mornings a week and our therapists hours doubled from 10 to 20 hours per week. The ongoing challenge for this service is the need for parental consent for those under 18, which is a barrier for many young LGBTI+ people who are not 'out' to their parents and, therefore, cannot access this service. For many young people who use this service, the limit of 15 sessions offered is not enough to support their needs. During 2018, 147 hours were spent offering free crisis counselling to LGBTI+ young people, 21 hours were spent offering therapeutic assessments, five hours were dedicated to therapeutic family support, and two hours spent on critical incidents.

Monday Chats

Monday Chats is a free, weekly, one to one information and advice service for young people. There was a 50% increase in service delivery in 2018, with 150 one-on-ones provided. This service faced a challenge from July to December with an absent post in the Youth Work Team resulting in reduced capacity to deliver this service. Themes that emerged over 2018 included anxiety, suicide ideation, isolation, family issues, depression, body dysmorphia, self-harm, and online safety. We experienced an increase in the number of young people engaging in this support service leading up to Christmas.

Drug and Alcohol Service

Our dedicated Drug and Alcohol Service continued in 2018 with the provision of a safe, confidential space for LGBTI+ young people to discuss concerns around their drug and alcohol use with a Youth Worker dedicated to LGBTI+ drug and alcohol use. In July, Gerard Roe who held this role for eight years, moved on from BeLonG To. In November we welcomed Shane Smart who joined the team from CARP Killinarden Addiction Response Centre and Resilience Care Ireland. Shane's work will focus on our Drug and Alcohol Service and advocating on the new National Drug Strategy *Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery 2017-2025*.



We have a wonderful team of Volunteers and Peer Educators who dedicate their free time to supporting the lives of LGBTI+ young people.



Robert Antaine Brennan shares highlights from his time as a Peer Educator...

“Being a Peer Educator in BeLonG To offered me more opportunities in a single year than I ever could have dreamed of receiving in my lifetime. I am now more confident, empathetic, and happy thanks to my year as a Peer Educator. I finally got to give back to the community that I am so proud to be a part of. I treasure every single moment that I have spent as a Peer Educator in BeLonG To, however, my proudest moment as a Peer Educator was being invited to Áras an Uachtaráin to the President’s Garden Party for Youth Empowerment. At this garden party, I got the opportunity to make a speech about why we (the LGBTI+ community) need Pride. During my speech, I received the biggest honour of my life - President Michael D. Higgins stopped and listened to my speech as he was walking by. It has been a true honour to have been a part of the Peer Educator panel. I wouldn’t trade that year for anything in the world.”



Robbie Reid describes his voluntary work with us as ‘inclusive, supportive and fantastic’...

“I got involved with BeLonG To after a call out for volunteers in November 2017. I wanted to get more involved in the community and this offered me the perfect chance to help the LGBTI+ youth of today – by sharing my life experiences to younger versions of me. I wanted to contribute to a service that I wasn’t lucky enough to be able to access when I was growing up in rural Ireland. Building positive relationships with the young people and seeing them develop into truer, stronger versions of themselves each week is truly enjoyable. I feel like I’m able to make a small difference, even if only for two hours that week, and play a part in creating that safe space where people can be their true selves, with no masks or pressures to conform to social norms.”



Aodh Quigley talks about being a Peer Educator...

“Becoming a Peer Educator was one of the highlights of my year. I facilitated lots of workshops in the Ladybirds and Over 18s groups, with the support of Youth Work Team. The training we received was invaluable. Through planning, designing, and facilitating workshops, I learned many new skills. When I first came to BeLonG To, I was greeted by a team of Peer Educators who made me feel at home within moments of my arrival. It’s been a pleasure to be part of that first experience for many new young people this year. It sounds cheesy, but I really found myself through the experiences I’ve had as a part of this team. This experience is unique, worthwhile, and confidence-building, and I’m so grateful for it.”



STANDING UP IN SCHOOLS

Stand Up Awareness Week is our annual second-level school event to encourage safe, equal, and inclusive schools for LGBTI+ young people.

Stand Up Awareness Week is a time for second level schools to take a stand against the anti-LGBTI+ bullying, harassment, and name-calling that silences many students and can result in serious mental health challenges. Since 2009, our Stand Up Awareness Week campaign has focused on increasing friendship and support of LGBTI+ students by other students and on increasing awareness of the experiences of LGBTI+ students among the entire school community. This early intervention model of LGBTI+ awareness and inclusion is the first step in creating schools that are safe, supportive, and fully inclusive of LGBTI+ students.

Stand Up Awareness Week ran from November 12-16th, 2018 with 43% of second level schools participating in the initiative, reaching over 151,000 students. This campaign is supported by the Department of Education and Skills and is endorsed by major organisations in the second-level school sector, including the National Association of Principals, the teachers' unions, guidance counsellors, and management bodies for second-level schools.

“AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THOSE STUDENTS WHO FEEL INVISIBLE & ISOLATED TO KNOW THAT THEY ARE AMONG FRIENDS”

Eamon Daly, Good Counsel College Co Wexford

Resourcing Schools

Some 1,802 Stand Up Awareness Week packs were distributed to second-level schools across Ireland in 2018. The pack included a selection of posters for schools to highlight their participation in the campaign and LGBTI+ terminology posters to support understanding and awareness of LGBTI+ related terms. Each pack contained a 12-page resource booklet with information for educators around how to support LGBTI+ students and activity ideas for Stand Up Awareness Week. One way of creating a more inclusive school environment is to incorporate LGBTI+ related content across the curriculum, as identified in the National LGBTI+ Youth Strategy. For the first time, we connected Stand Up activities to the curriculum, suggesting LGBTI+ activities across a range of subjects including History, Geography, and Business Studies. To offer additional support and skills to educators, we hosted trainings as part of the campaign, piloting a new training model (read more about this on page 24). We also collaborated with Facebook to create *End Bullying Be Kind Online*, a resource focusing on tackling LGBTI+ abuse online as part of Stand Up Awareness Week 2018.

Spreading The Message

Raising awareness and reaching as many students and school communities as possible plays an important part in this campaign. We were pleased that former Minister for Education and Skills, Richard Bruton TD joined us alongside students and teachers from Mount Temple Comprehensive School in Clontarf for a photocall to launch the campaign. We simultaneously issued a press release and launched a digital media campaign to amplify our message. Stand Up Awareness Week was featured in major national publications such as *The Sunday Times*, *Irish Independent*, and *The Irish Sun*. Additionally, we spoke to a number of regional radio stations about the importance of safe schools for LGBTI+ young people. To strengthen the impact of this campaign, we ran social campaigns across Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram focusing on demographics such as teachers, students, and BeLonG To supporters.

Challenges and Achievements

2018 was a transitional year for Stand Up Awareness Week with the departure of our Director of Advocacy, Dr. Carol-Ann O'Brien, who moved on after 10 years of developing and managing the campaign. As a result of funding, this role has been left vacant and will not be filled in 2019. An additional challenge identified in 2018 was our limited database of teachers. We recognised a risk in reaching a saturation point of engagement with our existing contacts, a challenge that we intend to address with various activities focused on database growth in 2019.

Despite these challenges, Stand Up Awareness Week was a success with additional training sessions provided, the enhancement of the resource pack, connection to the curriculum, and a successful partnership with Facebook. Some 93% of teachers we surveyed after the event revealed they would feel comfortable with having students who are lesbian, gay, or bisexual in their classrooms.

Looking forward to 2019, we can identify a number of opportunities such as engaging a working group of educators to support the campaign, the promotion of an updated Safe and Supportive Schools (SASS) Toolkit, and rolling out a new model of training, working with youth workers in the National Network training following a successful pilot project.

Reached **162,000** students through Stand Up Awareness Week

Increased number of training attendees by

207%

1,802 SCHOOLS received Stand Up Packs

66,400

people were reached on Facebook

323
STAND UP
retweets

**FAST
FACTS**

AMPLIFYING



Through our communications and media work, we develop public awareness and understanding about the specific experiences and needs of LGBTI+ young people.

Digital Rebrand

2018 began with the launch of our redesigned website, which was made possible thanks to the pro-bono and superhero efforts of our friends at PayPal - Michael Laskowski, Padraig Corcoran, and Antonio Musumeci. Working with the Communications Department, the group created a mobile friendly, easy to navigate, plain English website highlighting our key support service and resources. This redesign took over a year to complete and included syncing the site to our existing database and creating a streamlined workflow.

Thanks to the generous support of The Community Foundation of Ireland, in 2018 we translated key pieces of advice and information on our website to connect with LGBTI+ young people whose first language is not English. These resources are available in French, Polish, Lithuanian, Arabic, and Urdu. With this resource, more LGBTI+ young people will have the ability to access vital information important to their needs.

In addition to our own website, we also worked with the HSE creating sexual orientation and gender identity content for their new Sexual Wellbeing website, www.sexualwellbeing.ie

OUR MESSAGE

Media Coverage

The media coverage we receive is a key indicator of our success in engaging with the general public on the key issues affecting young LGBTI+ people. In 2018, we were featured in 90 pieces of media coverage across national and regional radio and print publications. Opinion pieces from our CEO, Moninne Griffith, were featured in *The Irish Times* and *The Irish Examiner*. Other members of the team and youth representatives represented BeLonG To in radio and print interviews throughout the year.

Coverage in 2018 related to Stand Up Awareness Week, LGBTI+ inclusive sex education, the launch of *An Foclóir Aiteach* – the LGBTI+ Irish dictionary, Dublin Pride, and Better Out Than In, our mental health campaign targeting young LGBTI+ people. In July, the Working Group of the 2015 Gender Recognition Act released their recommendations, resulting in a lot of media coverage.

Better Out Than In

The aim of this campaign was to change attitudes towards help seeking behaviour among 14 to 23-year-old LGBTI+ young people. With the support of Bank of Ireland and Thinkhouse Youth Agency, we learned why many young LGBTI+ people were not reaching out for help and in September we launched the 'Better Out Than In' campaign which ran to December. The integrated digital and media relations campaign focused on reassuring our target audience that asking for help is worth it and signposting them to LGBTI+ friendly support services. Working with LGBTI+ influencers Jackson Miloh, Leanne Woodful, Jamie O'Herlihy, and James Mitchell, we created a persuasive digital media campaign across YouTube and Instagram. The campaign generated a total PR reach of over 1 million and social impressions of over 2 million.

Social Media

As Ireland's national LGBTI+ youth organisation, we are trusted online source of accurate, up-to-date information on LGBTI+ youth issues. We increased our engagement by growing our social media platforms in 2018 and offering innovative, consistent digital content. Our Twitter audience grew to 12,500 followers. We saw a 13% increase in page likes on Facebook to 14,054. In 2018, we focused on increasing our Instagram presence and our followers grew significantly, by over 500% to 1,906. Some 66% of our audience is made up of 18 to 34-year-olds, highlighting that there is an opportunity for us to grow our social media usage to expand our reach on this youth-friendly platform.

We experienced a challenge relating to a lack of engagement with sexual health and safe sex content despite creating bright, engaging digital gifs. Exploring this issue with a number of partners in the field of sexual health, we discovered this is a common challenge and realised that the need for awareness and reach is greater than the need for likes and engagement when communicating sexual health content. Partnering with Facebook for their 'Community Hack' project was a key social media event in 2018 resulting in a reach of 496,485. Working with a team of digital experts, we created a campaign to reach and recruit the parents of LGBTI+ young people through an innovative messenger bot prepopulated with common questions and answers they may have. Other social media highlights included the #RainbowBall trending on Twitter, and our self-care social campaign aimed at LGBTI+ young people over Christmas.

MOST POPULAR

Page on our website: [How do I know if I'm trans?](#)

Facebook Post: [Rainbow Ball Photo Album](#)

Tweet: [Happy Stand Up Awareness Week!](#)



**WE DIDN'T KNOW
WHAT IT MEANT...**

Learning your child is trans is a life-changing moment. Glenn Pope shares his experiences of confusion and denial, followed by love and acceptance as the father of a trans child.

“The story I want to tell you starts 19 years ago. Yvonne and I had our first and only child. To have a child and become a parent is a life-changing event – a happy time, not just for the parents, but for the extended family and friends. The second question you are asked, after you have confirmed that mother and baby are fit and well, is simple and universal... did you have a boy or a girl? The answer to that question is hugely significant in our society in defining the child – the messages on the cards and balloons sent to the hospital, the colour of the clothes that will be bought for the child, the name, the colour of the room, and the gifts and toys. Yvonne and Glenn had a baby girl. Matter closed.

It is a question you never expect to have to revisit with family or friends, yet that’s exactly where Yvonne and I found ourselves some 14 years later. Our child had left us a letter and asked us not to open it until they had gone to school. We were nervous, concerned, and worried as we opened the letter. The message was simple – I am transgender.

We didn’t know what it meant. We were also relieved that it wasn’t something more serious. Yvonne sent Jay a text of love and support. It was important to be there for Jay, but it masked our own confusion. Confusion turned to denial once we found out what transgender meant. How could a child so young know they were transgender? This was surely just something picked up off the internet. It was a fad they would grow out of.

Then came acceptance. It started to make sense. Jay was never a ‘girly girl’, he was happier having revealed his true self. Then came action, the action that comes from wanting the best for your child. The basic stuff came first, such as telling family and friends – revisiting that gender question wasn’t easy. It was difficult for older relatives to understand as we couldn’t really claim to fully understand it ourselves. Then came getting the logistics of schooling, toilets, pronouns, etc. Then came understanding the new journey – transitioning to live as a boy having spent 14 years as a girl.

As the process of transitioning was progressing, we were concerned and worried about Jay’s immediate and long-term future. We were worried about stories from other parents about serious self-harm. We were worried about kids falling out of the school system, failing to get an education, having trouble getting access to the right medical professionals – the list was endless. Would a normal life be possible? An education? A job? A family? All the things a parent wishes for their child.

However hard it may have been for me and Yvonne, I cannot begin to understand how difficult this time must have been for Jay. Even with our support, it took huge courage and bravery to travel the road taken by Jay. I know he didn’t have a choice but to be himself, but for others they have not successfully made the transition to their true self.

While family is hugely important for trans kids, Jay also got great support outside the home, both in school and from BeLonG To, which was hugely influential. Going [to BeLonG To] helped Jay develop into a confident, happy young adult. He has been a peer educator, involved in the National LGBTI+ Youth Strategy, and has spoken publicly as an advocate for the trans community. His personal life experience and working closely with the team in BeLonG To has shaped his desire to give back to this community and has heavily influenced his choice of 3rd level course. I am a proud dad, confident that Jay will fulfil his full potential as his true self.”

REFUSING TO BE INVISIBLE



Through our advocacy work, we strive to ensure the experiences of LGBTI+ young people are visible in Ireland's policies, practices, and law.

National LGBTI+ Youth Strategy

We welcomed the publication of the National LGBTI+ Youth Strategy in June 2018 and want to thank Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Katherine Zappone TD for her passionate leadership ensuring this idea became a reality. We are proud that through our lobbying and advocacy work, we were instrumental in the development of this three-year strategy – a world first.



We were active participants in the Strategy's Oversight Committee and Youth Advisory Panel set up to drive the development of the Strategy and to ensure that there was a high level of youth engagement from the start of the process. Staff and young people from BeLonG To also participated in the sub-groups of the Oversight Committee and feedback in relation to the overall goals, objectives, and actions. Over the next three years, we will focus on monitoring the implementation of this Strategy to ensure that LGBTI+ young people are visible, valued, and included in schools and communities wherever they live in Ireland.

Review of the 2015 Gender Recognition Act

In November 2017 Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection, Regina Doherty TD appointed our CEO, Moninne Griffith as Chairperson of the Gender Recognition Act review Working Group. In May, the Working Group presented their report to Minister Doherty, recommending amendments to the 2015 Gender Recognition Act. These included recommendations to introduce an administrative system of legal gender recognition for non-binary people and for trans people under 18, as well as recommendations around change of name processes and costs. During the course of the review process, we worked with LGBTI+ young people to produce a submission for the Working Group. The key message of the submission focused on the reality that young trans people do not just wake up one morning and decide that they want to change their legal gender. This happens after a period of social transition, living in their preferred gender.

We supported a young person, Seamus Byrne, to participate in the Working Group and supported two other young people to speak at a meeting with Working Group members about the need for gender recognition for trans people and non-binary people under 18. What is clear from the young trans and non-binary people that we meet in our service is that having access to legal gender recognition will have a hugely positive

impact on their self-esteem, self-worth, and well-being. We hope our work will help move Ireland along this journey and that in 2019, all trans, non-binary, and intersex people will have legal recognition of their gender.

Relationship and Sexuality Education

Shame, mixed messages, and silence surround the areas of gender, sexuality, and relationships in many classrooms across Ireland. Factual, inclusive Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) and Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) can help equip young people with knowledge around sexual orientation, gender identity, consent, self-esteem, healthy relationships, and safe sex. Education can help remove the stigma shrouding LGBTI+ topics in a classroom setting. Schools and teachers need to be supported to ensure that these topics are covered with students.

In 2018, we presented a submission to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education and Skills on its review of sexual health and relationship education including contraception, consent, and related matters. We also made a submission to and participated in the National Council and Curriculum Assessment (NCCA) roundtable and stakeholder consultation. They will produce a report for the Minister of Education and Skills in April 2019.

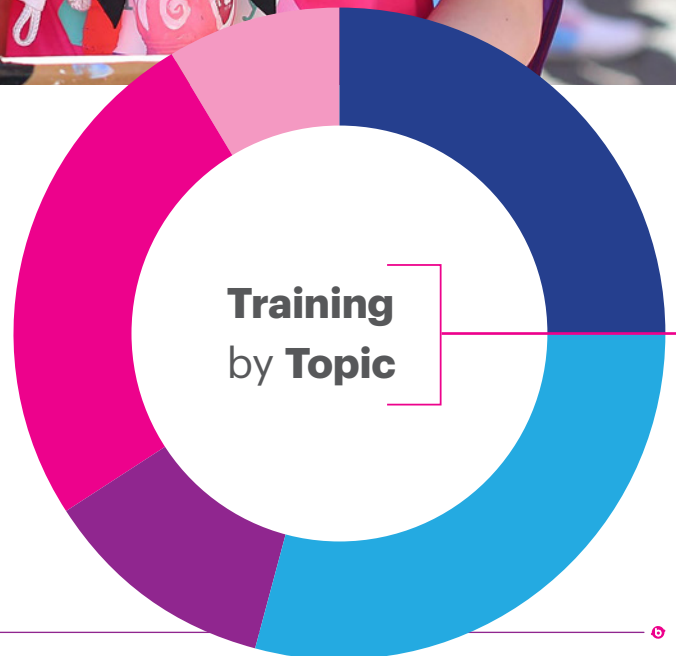
Joint Committee on the Future of Mental Health

We made a submission to the Joint Committee on the Future of Mental Health outlining issues related to LGBTI+ young people and the barriers they experience in accessing mental health services that meet their needs. Our CEO Moninne Griffith and Dylan Donohue, a young person who attends our youth service, presented to the Committee in relation to issues that LGBTI+ youth face within mental health services. The Committee's final report called for resource provision for high-risk groups including the LGBTI+ community.

EMPOWERING ALLIES



Creating a world where LGBTI+ people are included is a team effort. Through training we help professionals learn how best to support LGBTI+ young people and develop good practice in their organisations.



We work with a wide range of professionals each year to help them develop understanding, language, and skills to ensure that young LGBTI+ people can feel safe and supported in schools and can access inclusive and welcoming services. Our training focuses on key areas relating to our strategic goals, including education, mental health, social care, sexual health, and youth work. We also respond to training requests and identify areas where we can make significant change to the lives of LGBTI+ young people. For example, in 2018 we delivered LGBTI+ inclusivity training to the Football Association of Ireland (FAI) to help them on their journey to ensure football becomes an LGBTI+ friendly sport. The greatest challenge we face around training is our limited capacity as a small team to respond to the huge number of training requests that we receive, with 284 requests in 2018 alone.

Education

As part of the Stand Up Awareness Week, we offered free training sessions for those working with LGBTI+ students. These trainings were delivered to Teachers, Principals, Guidance Counsellors, Board of Management members, School Psychologists, and Education Welfare Services staff. Participants learned how LGBTI+ bullying can impact the mental health of students, how to signpost a young person to support services, terminology to ease conversations around the topic, and how to support an LGBTI+ person when they are 'coming out'. In 2018, we piloted a new 'train the trainer' model of training equipping Youth Workers from the National Network of LGBTI+ youth groups around Ireland with the skills to offer training in their local area. This broadened our reach to a host of new cities including Galway, Waterford, Limerick, Dundalk, and Kilkenny. The number of educators who received training increased from 58 to 172 as a result of this new model.

Mental Health
Education
Sexual Health
Youth Work
Other

Mental Health and Social Care

In 2018, we continued delivering our joint training programme for professionals with Jigsaw, The National Centre for Youth Mental Health. These one-day training sessions aim to provide a greater understanding and awareness of issues affecting the mental health of LGBTI+ young people, and ways to support this group. Attendees are adults who work or volunteer with organisations, groups, and agencies who provide services to young people, including LGBTI+ young people. In 2018, we delivered this training in locations across Ireland including Donegal, Roscommon, Cork, Dublin, Limerick, and Offaly. Following the workshops, there was a 34% increase in the confidence of participants to identify strategies to support LGBTI+ young people.

Sexual Health

Access to information about LGBTI+ relationships and sexual health can be limited for young people. Our 'In the Know' course offers LGBTI+ young people an opportunity to learn about self-confidence, body image, sex, STI's, and healthy relationships in a fun and relaxed setting. This free personal development course is aimed at gay and bisexual men, and trans young people from 17-23 years. During 2019, 'In the Know' ran in March, September, and December. We also facilitated a two-day introduction to the course for Youth Work students at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth in February. 'In the Know' is proudly supported by the Gay Health Network's Man2Man.ie programme and the HSE.

Youth Work

Offering training to Youth Workers nationwide helps them to support the needs of LGBTI+ young people who engage in their services. We use a Critical Social Education model of youth work to address the inequalities that exist in society that adversely impact LGBTI+ young people. Youth work under this model involves the Youth Worker striving towards equal partnership and a space where young people share responsibility and decision making. In 2018, we provided training for Youth Workers in locations across Ireland including Mayo, Waterford, and Wexford. In October, we offered a two-day training and wellbeing day event for Youth Workers from our National Network. The event offered the group a space to come together, discuss shared experiences, and learn from one another. As part of the event, Youth Workers engaged in an interactive training session on supporting trans and non-binary young people. The group also received resilience training exploring self-care and new approaches to supporting one's self when working in a caring profession.

SUPPORTING SUSTAINABILITY

Our work is not possible without generous donations from individuals, organisations, and groups who care. This support allows us to continue to do what we do best – supporting LGBTI+ young people.



In 2018, with the help of our supporters and donors, we experienced another year of financial growth helping us build sustainability for the services and supports we provide for young people. Our unrestricted fundraising target for the year was €218,000 which we exceeded by 7% raising €232,510 in unrestricted income. The total organisational income grew by 25% to reach €986,430. This income generation will allow us to make strategic investments in training provision, measuring outcomes and impact, and in improving operational efficiency. These will position the organisation to meet increased demand for training from Educators, Youth Workers, and Health and Social Care, enabling them to better meet the needs of LGBTI+ young people.

Our signature fundraising event, The Rainbow Ball, returned for the second time. Net income from the event rose 34% raising €71,000 towards our unrestricted income target. Successes in 2018 place the organisation in a stronger financial position as it enters 2019.

Community Fundraising

2018 was a great year for community fundraising with a huge array of events, from sponsored outdoor activities to Christmas jumper days. Thanks to the dedication of our generous supporters, €50,062 was raised. Brown Bag Films hosted a bake sale and raised an incredible €1,035, our friends in Deloitte dressed in denim for a day, collecting a fantastic €1,800, and €324 was raised by Drag and Draw, an innovative event where attendees learn how to draw drag queens. The profits raised from art class were donated to our work. We are incredibly grateful to our dedicated and supportive community fundraisers. Not only do they raise vital funds for young LGBTI+ people, but they play a hugely important role in sharing details of our services to a wider range of people who may need it.



Corporate Partnerships

We established connections with 29 new corporate partners in 2018, delivering over 20 workshops and hosting 45 different companies at the annual Rainbow Ball. We were once again selected by HSBC as one of their causes to support in 2018 with a donation of €8,000. We also secured a grant of \$20,000 from the Adobe Foundation. We were thrilled to have been selected as the recipients of a €5,800 grant voted upon by the Trustees of the TJX Foundation. As a result of these partnerships, we have been able to continue our training programs, secure a National LGBTI+ Youth Strategy, review Gender Recognition legislation, and provide support everyday to LGBTI+ young people. Tesco sold colourful, rainbow t-shirts in stores all over Ireland during Pride month, promoting our services and raising €4,998.68 for LGBTI+ young people. Our friends at Salesforce spent two days painting our offices, brightening the youth space and our staff room –a big thanks to the OUTforce volunteers from Salesforce.

Rainbow Ball

In November we hosted the second annual Rainbow Ball raising €71,000 for vital LGBTI+ youth support services. Celebrities, corporate partners, and allies came together for the sold-out event in the Ballsbridge Hotel to support LGBTI+ young people, presented by Róisín Ingle of *The Irish Times*.

The 2018 event, sponsored by Aviva, The Coca-Cola Company, Marks & Spencer, Slack, Dalata Hotel Group, Irish Life, Intel, and Microsoft was attended by 530 people. Funds raised from the Rainbow Ball support Stand Up Awareness Week, our campaign in second-level schools tackling anti-LGBTI+ bullying reaching over 162,000 students annually. The event would not have been possible without our dedicated committee of volunteers: Val Quinn, Darina Brennan, Laura Stopforth, John MacNamara, and Callum McBreen.

LOOKING BACK at 2018

2018 was an exciting year for us with the launch of the National LGBTI+ Youth Strategy and the publication of the Gender Recognition Act Review Report. Our achievements over these 12 months align with our 2016-2018 Strategic Plan which draws to a close this year. This plan identifies health, safety, equality, systems, and the LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy as our key pillars of work, with the voice of young people informing all of these areas.

Health

- Ran 104 youth groups in our Dublin Youth Service
- Supported 45 LGBTI+ youth groups nationwide
- Expanded the hours of our crisis counselling service with our partners at Pieta House
- Highlighted mental health issues and barriers experienced by LGBTI+ young people in our submission to the Joint Committee on the Future of Mental Health

Safety

- Reached 612,000 second-level students through Stand Up Awareness Week
- 43% of schools participated in Stand Up Awareness Week
- Trained 707 professionals around LGBTI+ issues
- 2,886 young people received LGBTI+ awareness training through the National Network Fund
- Engaged a team of 37 volunteers to support our work in our Dublin frontline services

Equality

- Submitted recommendations for the introduction of a simple, administrative procedure for legal gender recognition for under 18s to the 2015 Gender Recognition Act review Working Group
- Campaigned for the inclusion of LGBTI+ in relationship and sexuality education through our work with the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Education and Skills and the National Council and Curriculum Assessment consultation on sexual health
- Marched with 400+ LGBTI+ young people from across Ireland at Dublin Pride

Systems

- Updated our privacy and data protection protocols to ensure compliance with best practice and GDPR requirements
- Expanded our staff wellbeing programme to include an Employee Assistance Program
- Launched our new website, built by three dedicated volunteers from PayPal
- Design and planning commenced for the implementation of a Holistic Outcome Measurement and Engagement System (HOMES) to capture detailed data
- Developed a new Strategic Plan for the period 2019–2021

Fundraising

- 7% growth in unrestricted income in 2018
- Total income increased by 25%
- Increased our donor retention rates by 43%
- 161 new supporters joined us in advancing our mission
- Engaged 29 new corporate partnerships
- Hosted the second annual Rainbow Ball raising a profit of €71,000

LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy

- The world's first LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy 2018-2020 was launched in June 2018. We played an instrumental role in the development of this strategy which focuses on creating an Ireland where LGBTI+ young people feel visible, valued and included

LOOKING FORWARD

Armed with our new Strategic Plan - Sharing the Learning - for the next three years, we are looking to the future. During 2018, we collaborated with team members, young people, National Network partners, and stakeholders to create our 2019-2021 Strategic Plan. We are dedicated to a culture of learning, reflection, and evaluation that supports us to continuously improve and develop as an organisation. We will share what we learn and how we do it with our partners, supporters, and stakeholders across Ireland so that LGBTI+ young people are supported in their homes, schools, communities, and workplaces. Our 2019-2021 Strategic Plan identifies five strategic goals that we will focus our work plans and objectives on for the next three years. We know that our mission is ambitious, and we can't do this alone. Working in partnership with relevant organisations from the LGBTI+, youth work, mental and sexual health, and human rights fields will enable us to enhance our services and practices, so that we as a society, can meet the needs of LGBTI+ young people so they are visible, valued, and included as promised in the *National LGBTI+ Youth Strategy*.

Goal #1

Organisational Development & Learning

Goal: A sustainable, professional learning organisation with skilled staff and volunteers, and robust systems working to achieve our vision.

Objective: Develop an action research model of practice which informs our fundraising, governance, communications, and youth work.

Impact: A sustainable organisation delivering our mission to support LGBTI+ young people through youth work, changing attitudes, and research.



Goal #2

Youth Work Matters

Goal: LGBTI+ young people are safe and supported through a quality youth work service led by equal partnership with young people.

Objective: Document our best practice model of youth work, while utilising research for evidence-based policy.

Impact: A sustainable model of youth work practice and policy change informed by the voices of LGBTI+ young people.

Goal #3

Building Safe Spaces

Goal: A strong, expanding network of accredited national network of LGBTI+ youth groups.

Objective: Expand consistent models of practice, training, and accreditation in collaboration with the National Network and our youth work partners.

Impact: A standardised model of LGBTI+ youth work and best practice across our National Network of youth groups.

Goal #4

Empowering Allies

Goal: To train and educate professionals, services, and organisations engaging with young LGBTI+ people.

Objective: Creation and provision of a suite of training and development resources for professionals engaged with LGBTI+ young people.

Impact: LGBTI+ young people are met by a growing number of professionals, services, and organisations trained and certified to meet and support their needs.

Goal #5

Campaigning for Change

Goal: Champion the voice of LGBTI+ young people through advocacy and engagement to create an Ireland where LGBTI+ young people are equal, safe, and valued.

Objective: Strengthen engagement with national policy and public sector agencies to engage the voice of LGBTI+ young people in policy positions.

Impact: Promote focused policy engagement ensuring delivery on national strategies related to the wellbeing of LGBTI+ young people in Ireland e.g. National LGBTI+ Youth Strategy 2018-2020.

Structure, Governance & Management

BeLonG To Youth Services Limited is registered in Ireland as a company Limited by Guarantee, and not having a share capital incorporated in the Republic of Ireland under the Companies Act 2014. The company does not have a share capital and consequently the liability of the members is limited, subject to an undertaking of each member to contribute to the net assets or liabilities of the company on winding up such amounts as may be required not exceeding €1.

The company was set up under a Memorandum of Association which established the objects and powers of the charitable company and is governed by a Constitution and is managed by a Board of Directors. The Articles of Association and Constitution were last amended by a unanimous written resolution of the company members on 6th September 2017.

The objectives for which BeLonG To Youth Services is established as per the Memorandum of Association are as follows:

- to advance the well-being of the community at large by the provision of support and services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT+) young people and families in need; and
- to advance the well-being of the community at large by the promotion and advancement of the well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT+) young people and their families whose lives have been affected by homophobia, social exclusion, discrimination or other disadvantages, by fostering a culture of inclusiveness, equality, and human rights.

Directors

BeLonG To Youth Services is governed by a Board of Directors with a maximum number of 10 people. All Board members work in a voluntary capacity and do not receive any remuneration as required by the provisions of the Charities Act, 2009. They are entitled to reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses in the discharge of their functions as Directors. In 2018, the total amount of vouched expenses paid to the Board of Directors was €390.40 (2017: €823)

Unless otherwise stated the following have served as Directors for the entire period during 2018.

Board Members	Attendance for 2018	Skills Area
Nikki Gallagher (Chair)	6/7	Sector Knowledge, PR and Communications, Government and Public Services
Ciaran McKinney (Vice Chair)	7/7	Sector Knowledge, Fundraising, Organisational Development
Maria Afontsenko (Treasurer)	3/7	Sector Knowledge, Financial, Accounting Standards, Risk Management
Dominic Hannigan	5/7	Sector Knowledge, Government and Public Services, Strategic Planning, Policy
Maurice Devlin	1/1	Sector Knowledge, Policy and Research
Lucy Ní Raghail	7/7	Human Resources, Employment Law
Liz Harper	5/7	Sector Knowledge, Safeguarding and Child Protection
Kery Mulally	3/7	Sector Knowledge, Fundraising

The Board appointed Oisín O'Reilly as Company Secretary. Oisín is a senior staff member and not a Director of the company.

Structure, Governance & Management

The Directors met seven times during 2018. The Board has an attendance policy and the Chair is responsible for its implementation. This policy allows for Board members to take a leave of absence as dictated by their personal circumstances. Maurice Devlin took a leave of absence during 2018. Staff members are routinely invited to attend Board meetings to take part in discussions on strategic priorities relevant to their areas of responsibility.

The Board is supported by a committee structure which deals with specific aspects of the company's business. There were four standing organisations in 2018. The CEO, Moninne Griffith, and the Company Secretary, Oisín O'Reilly were in attendance at all of these subcommittees. Each subcommittee is governed by terms of reference specifying the scope of their competences and any delegated authorities. The subcommittees are:

- Finance, Audit, and Risk
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Governance and Nomination
- Human Resources and Remuneration

Independent external members have been appointed to both the Governance and Nomination committee and the Safeguarding and Child Protection committee.

Selection and Induction of Board Members

The Board of Directors is a body of elected and co-opted individuals (Board Members) who jointly oversee and govern the activities of the organisation. Board Members are selected on the basis of their skills and any identified skill gaps on the Board.

Board induction occurs as soon as possible after an individual has been selected to join the Board. In all cases this is scheduled to take place in advance of their first meeting. Induction is the responsibility of the Company Secretary in collaboration with the CEO and Chairperson of the Board. The training includes a face-to-face meeting covering the role and aims of the organisation, governance structures, core activities, history, and successes.

Also covered is an introduction as to how the Board functions, as well as the role and responsibilities of becoming a member of the Board. A new Director also receives an induction pack which will include at a minimum the: Constitution, Governance Handbook, Strategic Plan, minutes and the Board Book from previous Board meetings, organisational financial procedures and policies manual, Staff Handbook, and audited accounts from the previous year.

The Board engaged in its yearly review process in April 2018. This comprised both an annual Board skills audit and a Board effectiveness review. The results of both alongside the meeting attendance log were used by the Board to carry out its annual assessment of its performance. Areas identified for further strengthening Board effectiveness included strengthening the succession planning for Board members and improving the quality and timeliness of the circulation of Board meeting paper and materials.

Governance

The Board of Directors is committed to achieving the highest standards of governance. The organisation is at an advanced stage of adopting the Type -C Governance Code for the Community, Voluntary and Charitable Sector in Ireland. The Code has now been superseded by the publication of a new Charities Governance Code by the Charities Regulator. The Board has decided to review compliance with the New Code and to proceed with its implementation and will report on compliance with the Code to the Regulator as required on an annual basis. The organisation was short-listed for a Good Governance Award in 2018.

BeLoNG To Youth Services has completed the process of adopting the Statement of Guiding Principles for Fundraising (ICTR) now merged with Fundraising Ireland to form Charities Institute Ireland (CII) and fully complies with the principles set out in the statement and is undergoing a benchmarking process against the new Guidelines for Charitable Organisations on Fundraising from the public issues by the Charities Regulator in 2017.

During 2018, the Board invested significantly in ensuring compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Expert advisory services were used to review the organisations technical and operational arrangements to ensure privacy and security of all data (including personal and sensitive personal data). Significant time was spent in policy and procedural development, ICT security, and staff training to enhance systems and processes to ensure compliance with the requirements of the GDPR.

The Board revised the Company's Governance Handbook in February 2018. The handbook sets out the organisation's governance policies, procedures, and practices to ensure the organisation adopts transparent decision-making to direct its resources and exercise power in an effective and accountable way.

Structure, Governance & Management

Decision Making

The Board has the following matters specifically reserved for its decision:

- The company's Strategic Plans and annual operating budgets;
- Projects outside the scope of the Strategic Plan;
- Business acquisition and disposals;
- Litigation;
- Appointment/ removal of Members of the Company;
- Co-option of individuals to be Directors of the Company;
- Appointment/ removal of Subcommittee Chairs and Members;
- Appointment/ removal of the CEO;
- Appointment/ removal of the Auditors;
- Approval of borrowing/ finance facilities;
- Approval of Contracts with a term exceeding one year or a financial liability on BeLonG To exceeding €15k;
- Approval of changes in accounting or financial procedure;
- Approval of the annual accounts and Annual Report; and
- Annual Review of Risk and Internal Control.

The Board delegates authority on certain duties and responsibilities to sign legal documents, contracts for services and funding contracts to the CEO. The day-to-day management of the organisation is also delegated to the CEO and staff. This includes contributing to and the implementation of the Strategic Plan; leading, recruiting, and managing staff; managing the organisation and its finances effectively and efficiently; consulting and linking with stakeholders; representing BeLonG To; contributing to national policy development affecting LGBTI+ young people; and, developing mechanisms for involving young people in the work of the organisation.

Reporting

The CEO reports directly to the Board. Board agendas are planned in advance between the Chair, CEO, and Company Secretary. In 2018 a Board of Directors planner tool was used showing the full projected business of the Board throughout the year. A report is prepared quarterly for the Board and submitted in advance of the meeting for Board members to review. Organisation information systems have been established to ensure that Board reports contain accurate and relevant information. The Board report follows a prescribed format linking organisational activity, impact, and outputs to the key strategic objectives agreed by the Board.

Management accounts are prepared on a monthly basis and include an analysis of the budget and actual position of the organisations income and expenditure as approved by the Board. Variances are calculated and explained. Trend analysis and projections are included together with comparative analysis to the prior year. Key issues are identified with sufficient explanation.

Principal Risks and Uncertainties

BeLonG To Youth Services uses its Risk Register to monitor and mitigate risks arising across the full range of its activities. The key risks and uncertainties facing the Company, as identified by the Board are: maintaining sufficient funding, ensuring adequate operational controls, and ensuring strong governance.

Funding: In common with other companies operating in Ireland in the charitable sector, BeLonG To Youth Services is dependent on voluntary income, donations, and grant income from state organisations. The Board is of the opinion that the Company is well positioned to manage the costs of running the Company, in spite of the risks presented by the impact of Brexit on the economy and the potential expiration of a significant core state grant in mid-2019.

Brexit: The Board has undertaken a detailed risk assessment and planned measures to mitigate the impact of Brexit on the organisation, and on our beneficiaries, LGBTI+ young people.

Structure, Governance & Management

Financial and Related Control Risks: The organisation mitigates its financial and related control risks as follows:

- It continually monitors the level of activity, prepares and monitors its budgets, targets, and projections;
- Internal control risks are minimised by the implementation of financial policies and procedures which controls the authorisation of all transactions and projects;
- It has a policy to build its reserves to equal three months operating costs by 2021, which allows the company to meet its statutory obligations.
- The company has developed a Strategic Plan which will allow for the diversification of future funding and activities;
- It closely monitors emerging changes to regulations and legislation on an ongoing basis;
- It has minimal currency risk and credit risk.
- The company has no interest rate risk due to the fact that the company has no borrowings.

Child Protection and Safeguarding: The safeguarding and protection of the welfare and wellbeing of children accessing services at BeLonG To is of paramount importance. The organisation has adopted a Child Safeguarding Statement in line with its obligations under the Children First Act, 2015. The organisation has taken steps including recruitment practices, vetting of all staff and volunteers, and ongoing training to ensure a safe environment for children accessing our services.

Directors' Interests: The organisation has a conflict of interest and loyalty policy in place, which is reviewed regularly. A register of Directors interests is kept at the registered address of the company. None of the Directors had a material interest at any time during the year ended 31st December 2018, in any contracts of significance in relation to the business of the company.

The Directors are aware of the key risks to which the company is exposed, in particular those related to the operations and finances of the company and are satisfied that there are appropriate systems in place to address these risks. At a governance level, potential risks relate to maintaining sufficient skills. At an operational level, risks relate to potentially poor business planning, health, safety and ICT risks. At a human level, they relate to ensuring the charity is sufficiently staffed to avoid staff burnout. At a financial level potential risks relate to budgetary control and retaining sufficient funding to deliver core activities.

Compliance Statement: BeLonG To Youth Services is committed to complying with the Statement for Guiding Principles for Fundraising and has formally discussed and adopted the Statement at a meeting of the Board of Directors on February 4, 2014. We have considered the Statement, and believe we meet the standards it sets out. The organisation has a Donor Charter which is consistent with the Statement, a copy of which is available on our website.

Staff, Volunteers & Management

The average number of persons employed by the organisation during the year was as follows:

	2018	2017
Administrative	3	3
Fundraising	1	1
Programming	10	9
	14	13

The aggregate payroll costs incurred during the year were:

	€	€
	2018	2017
Wages and Salaries	453,111	421,914
Social Insurance Costs	47,872	44,406
	500,983	466,320

Salary Bands

Numbers of staff employed by the organisation within each band:

	2018	2017
€50,000 - €60,000	2	2
€60,001 - €70,000	-	1
€70,000+	1	-

Remuneration includes salaries and any benefits in kind.

BeLonG To's CEO, Moninne Griffith, is paid €70,960 per year (2017: €67,917). She receives no additional benefits.

Remuneration paid to key management staff at the organisation in 2018 amounted to €138,682 (2017: €131,635) key management staff includes the CEO (full-time), Head of Operations and Fundraising (full-time), and the Youth Work Manager (part-time).

The management team oversees the day-to-day operations of the organisation and report to the board at regular intervals. The management team possess a wealth of leadership, financial/ fundraising, advocacy, and service/ programme delivery experience. The management team structure was clarified during a routine HR review during 2018.

A staff handbook is in place which covers terms and conditions of employment, this is subject to regular review. A review of role profiles, grading, and remuneration was carried out in 2018, a number of organisational policies were updated as a result of this review.

Staff, Volunteers & Management

Staff in 2018

Moninne Griffith	CEO	
Oisín O'Reilly	Head of Operations and Fundraising, Company Secretary	
Gillian Brien	Youth Work Manager	
Suzanne Handley	Finance Manager	
Dr. Carol-Anne O'Brien	Director of Advocacy	Resigned Aug 18
John Duffy	National Network Manager	
Sinéad Keane	Communications Manager	
Lisa McKenny	Senior Youth Worker	
Gerard Roe	Drug and Alcohol Youth Worker	Resigned Aug 18
Shane Smart	Drug and Alcohol Youth Worker	
Eve Kerton	Fundraising Officer	
J Alexander Briggs	Finance and Administrative Assistant	
Amy Lamont	Salesforce Administrator	
Glenn Keating	Volunteer Coordinator	
Sean Frayne	Youth Activities Coordinator	
Tiffany Fitzgerald Brosnan	Fundraising and Administration Officer	Resigned Dec 18
Matt Kennedy	Policy and Research Intern	
Cathy Lee	Communications Intern	
Clive Ivory	Student on Placement, Maynooth University	
Kate Cummins	Student on Placement, Maynooth University	
Peyton Babbe	Student on Placement, Chapman University, USA	
Jenny Russ	Student on Placement, Emory University, USA	

Staff Training and Professional Development

The organisation operates a further education scheme for staff members and actively encourages continuing professional development of the team. Participating staff members may be entitled to paid or unpaid day's leave to attend approved courses of study or to sit exams and contributions to course costs. All courses relate to identified organisational needs and are dealt with on a case-by-case basis. During 2018, three members of staff availed of the scheme, two members of staff completed Leadership Development Courses, and one member of staff completed a certification in Charity Law, Trusteeship, and Governance.

Staff Wellbeing

During 2018, a number of staff wellbeing initiatives were rolled out including introducing an Employee Assistance Programme to which all staff have access.

Volunteering

In mid-2017 a volunteering program was set up to enhance the capacity of the organisation. A Volunteer Coordinator was employed on a part-time basis, two days per week, to recruit, train, support, and manage volunteers. In 2018, there were 37 active volunteers who volunteered a total of 1,469 hours to the organisation.

Using the Volunteer Investment and Value Audit tool (VIVA) for every €1 we spend on volunteers, we get back €2.63 in the value of the work they do. The tool calculates volunteer value by linking volunteer roles to the economic cost of employing staff to perform the functions and dividing that value by the total organisational expenditure on the volunteer program. Volunteers are supported through a group supervision process and have access to external support should the need arise.

Financial Overview 2018

Financial Results

The financial results for the year which ended 31st December 2018 are set out on pages 38 – 48.

These results show a net surplus of €23,075 (2017: surplus €30,956).

Income totalled €986,430 up 25% on 2017 (2017: €792,225). Total resources expended amounted to €963,355 (2017: €761,269).

The income for the year also includes benefit in kind which was received in 2018 to the value of €85,658; towards the Rainbow Ball, computer costs, programme costs, and legal and professional fees.

In 2018 we continued to increase the scale and impact of our services, while being cognisant of maintaining the quality of our work. The growth came from maximising the use of existing resources and a significant increase in expenditure of 26.5% to €963,335.

Primary investments related to increasing the range and scope of services and supports offered to LGBTI+ young people, including the development of two online campaigns; one targeting parents and another targeting LGBTI+ young people. We also invested in the creation of a new suite of training programmes for professionals working with LGBTI+ young people and in the development of HOMES (the Holistic Outcome Measure and Engagement System).

Our unrestricted fundraised income saw significant growth of 9.5% to €239,947 (2017: €219,083). Exceptional growth was recorded in corporate fundraising up 165% (exclusive of sponsorship) and reasonable year on year growth of 33% in regular/committed giving.

Income Diversification

The organisation completed its income diversification strategy in 2018; state funding was reduced to 64.7% of total income, while the target set was to 70%. The strategy will be maintained over the course of the Strategic Plan 2019–2021. We will continue to focus a significant part of our fundraising investment on corporate giving and local/ community fundraising while making strategic investments in regular and committed giving to generate returns over the next three to five years.

Reserves Policy

BeLonG To Youth Services has set a reserves policy in place to ensure that the charity's core activities could continue during a period of unforeseen difficulty. This takes account of the cost of making staff redundant in an emergency situation, risks associated with variances in planned income versus expenditure, and the charity's contractual commitments. The Directors have established a target of building reserves equal to three months operating costs held in a readily realisable form. The reserve threshold is advised by the Finance, Audit, and Risk Committee and planned contributions to the reserves are set during the annual budget process.

The CEO together with the Finance, Audit, and Risk Committee monitors the reserves monthly through the review of the organisations balance sheets. The unrestricted cash reserves at year end 2018 were €104,158. Given that overall expenditure amounted to €963,355 this meant the organisation remained outside its reserve policy for the year. Unrestricted reserves were increased by €23,075 during 2018 (2017: €30,956) in line with the organisations stated aim of building the reserves to equal three months of operating cost. It is expected that the reserves will reach the target of €240,839 at the end of 2021 based on current projections.

Financial Overview 2018

Grant Recipients

The Mental Health Directorate in the HSE provides funding on an annual basis to BeLonG To Youth Services to operate a small grants scheme to support the establishment and ongoing running of LGBTI+ youth groups across the country.

The scheme is open to all members of Belong To Youth Services National Network of LGBTI+ youth groups and an application process is in place. In 2018, the total amount of funding disbursed through the scheme was €45,000 (2017: €45,000).

Recipient	2018	2017
Crosscare (Bray Youth Services)	2,250	2,250
Youth Work Ireland Cork	6,125	6,125
Crosscare (East Wicklow Youth Services)	2,200	2,265
Donegal Youth Service CLG	8,000	8,000
FDYS	3,504	3,500
Foróige (Gateway Youth Project)	3,632	3,659
Kerry Diocesan Youth Service	2,121	2,033
Kildare Youth Services Ltd.	4,000	4,000
North Connaught Youth Services	2,190	2,190
GOSHH	4,500	4,500
Youth Work Ireland Galway	4,478	4,478
Youth Work Ireland Tipperary	2,000	2,000
Ossory Youth Service	-	-
Total	€45,000	€45,000

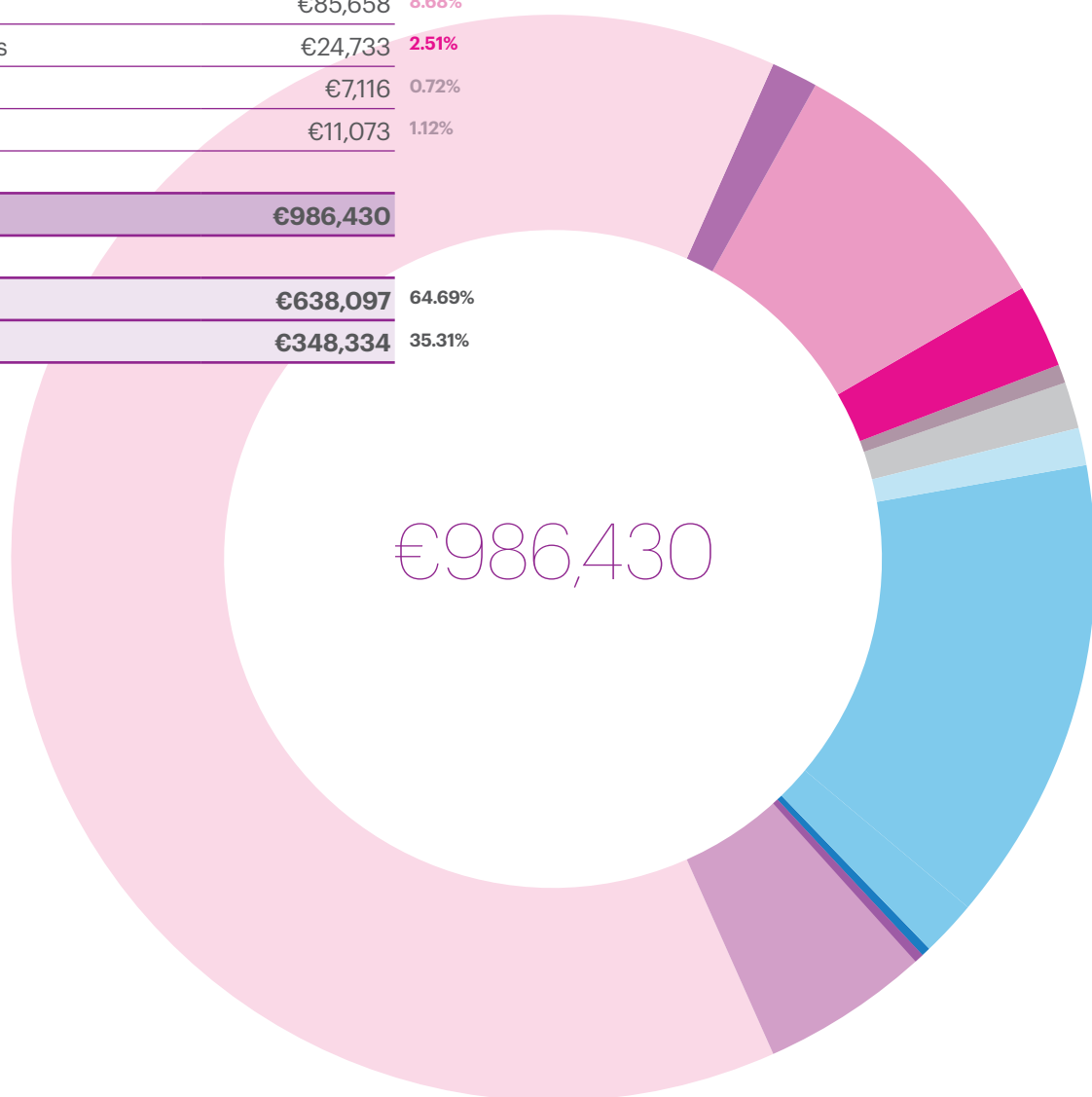
Income Streams 2018

Major Donors	€0	0.00%
Regular/ Committed	€13,173	1.34%
Corporate	€136,147	13.80%
Corporate Sponsorship	€17,461	1.77%
Trusts/ Foundations	€1,204	0.12%
Selling Something	€0	0.00%
Direct Marketing/ Fundraising Appeal	€1,707	0.17%
Local/ Community Fundraising	€50,062	5.08%
Central Government Grants	€626,578	63.52%
Government Grants (others)	€11,519	1.17%
Benefits In Kind	€85,658	8.68%
Training Income/ Programs	€24,733	2.51%
Other Grants	€7,116	0.72%
Other	€11,073	1.12%

Total	€986,430
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State Funding	€638,097	64.69%
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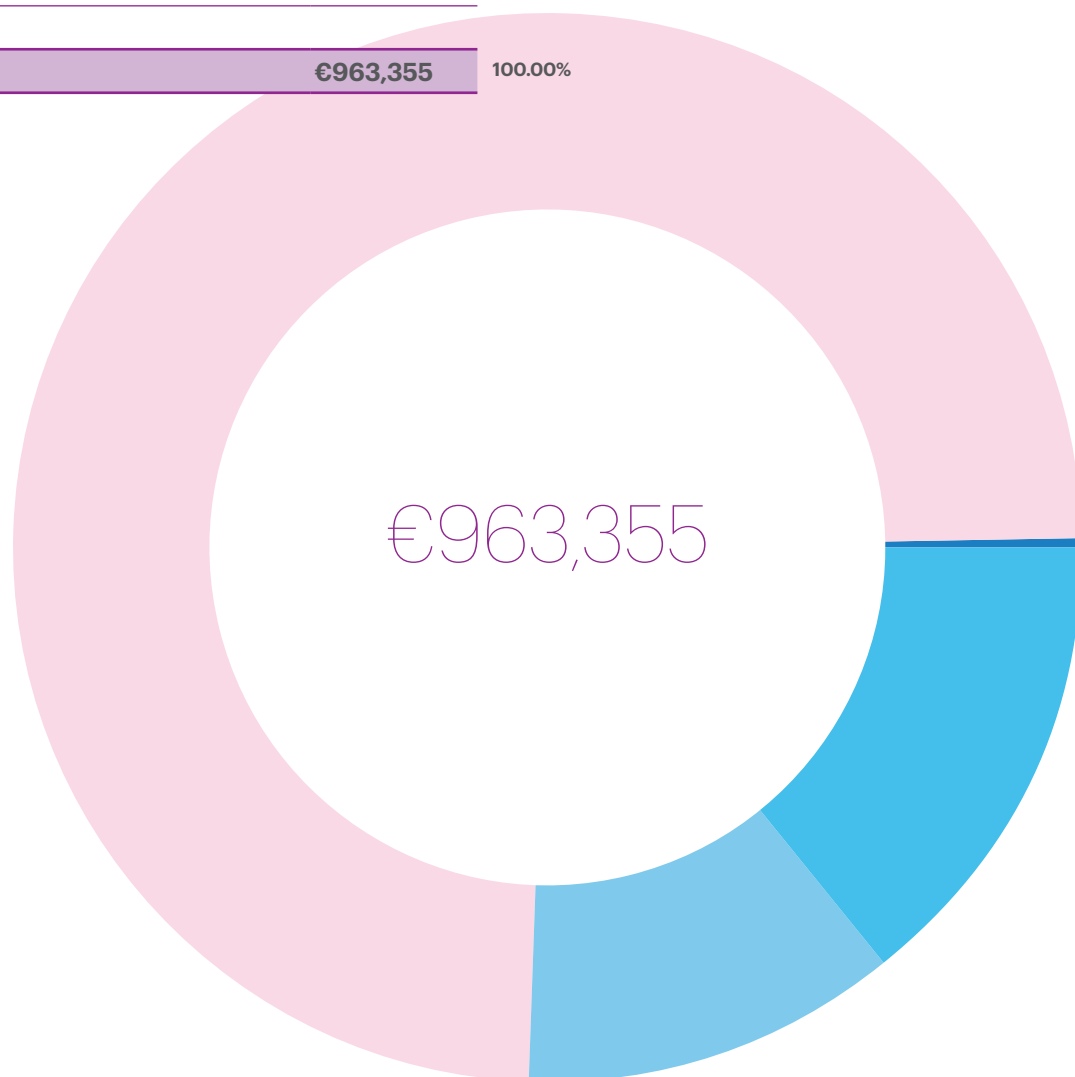
Fundraising	€348,334	35.31%
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Resources Expended 2018

Investment in Future Income	€138,799	14.41%
Eliminating Homophobia and Transphobia	€107,504	11.16%
Supporting LGBT+ Young People and their Families	€716,662	74.39%
Other	€390	0.04%

Total	€963,355	100.00%
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Statement of Financial Activities 2018

Year Ended 31st December 2018	<i>Restricted Funds 2018</i>	<i>Unrestricted Funds 2018</i>	<i>Total Funds 2018</i>	<i>Total Funds 2017</i>
	€	€	€	€
Incoming Resources				
Voluntary Income	-	232,510	232,510	217,460
Charitable Activities	657,837	85,658	743,495	573,142
Other Trading Activities	-	10,425	10,425	1,623
Total Incoming Resources	657,837	328,593	986,430	792,225
Resources Expended				
Cost of Voluntary Income	-	(138,799)	(138,799)	(141,198)
Charitable Activities	(768,495)	(47,836)	(816,331)	(619,248)
Other Expenses	-	(8,225)	(8,225)	(823)
Total Resources Expended	(768,495)	(194,860)	(963,355)	(761,269)
Net Outgoing Resources Before Transfers	(110,658)	133,733	23,075	30,956
Transfers	108,839	(108,839)	-	-
Transfers Between Funds	(1,819)	24,894	23,075	30,956

The statement of financial activities has been prepared on the basis that all operations are continuing operations.

There are no recognised gains and losses other than those passing through the statement of financial activities.

A detailed breakdown of the above items is included in the supplementary information part of the notes to the financial statements.

The cost of voluntary income includes the apportioned fundraising salary costs.

Comparative figures have been reclassified on the same basis as current year figures.

Balance Sheet 2018

31st December 2018	2018	2017
	€	€
Fixed Assets		
Intangible Assets	4,789	7,062
Tangible Assets	9,020	8,036
	13,809	15,098
Current Assets		
Debtors	56,723	36,909
Cash at bank and in hand	133,008	128,919
	189,731	165,828
Creditor: amounts falling due within one year	<u>(99,382)</u>	<u>(99,843)</u>
Net Current Assets	<u>90,349</u>	<u>65,985</u>
Total assets less current liabilities	104,158	81,083
Net Assets	104,158	81,083
Contingency Reserve Fund		
Restricted Funds	-	1,819
Unrestricted Funds	104,158	79,264
Funds of the Charity	104,158	81,083

Statement of Changes in Funds

Year Ended 31st December 2018	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total
	€	€	€
At 1st January 2017	48,308	1,819	50,127
Surplus/ (deficit) for the year	30,956	-	30,956
Total comprehensive income for the year	30,956	-	30,956
At 31st December 2017	79,264	1,819	81,083
Surplus/ (deficit) for the year	24,894	(1,819)	23,075
Total comprehensive income for the year	24,894	(1,819)	23,075
At 31st December 2018	104,158	-	104,158

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Directors on the 27th of March 2019. A full copy of the statements is available on www.belongto.org

We are grateful to our funders for their support in 2018.

Thank you for helping to change and save the lives of LGBTI+ young people.



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



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



Comhairle Cathrach Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City Council



- | | | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Accenture | Coca-Cola | KPMG | State Street |
| Aer Lingus | Dropbox | Marks and Spencer | Tesco Ireland |
| A&L Goodbody | Event Ease | Mason Hayes and Curran | Tesla Taxi's |
| Adobe | Evershed Sutherland | Matheson | The Cupcake Bloke |
| AIB | EY | McCann Fitzgerald | The Dalata Hotel Group |
| Airbnb | Facebook | MCD | The Generator Hostel |
| Akina | Fenergo | Microsoft | Smithfield |
| Ancestry Ireland | Fidelity | Mount Temple School | The Outing |
| An Post | Google | National Treasury | The Silver Lining |
| Arthur Cox | Grant Thornton | Management Agency | Thinkhouse Youth Agency |
| Aviva Insurance | House of Akina | Northern Trust | Twitter |
| Bank of Ireland | HSBC | PayPal | Ulster Bank |
| Bristol-Myers Squibb | Intertrust | Pennys/ Primark | Vodafone |
| Byrne Wallace | Irish Life | Proctor and Gamble | William Fry |
| Canada Life | Intel | Salesforce | |
| Cloud 9 | ISS | Slack | |
| CPL | KBC Bank | Sodexo Ireland | |



We are proud to be shortlisted for the 2018 Good Governance Awards, which recognises adherence to good governance practice.



**BeLonG To has made
me feel better in my
own skin.**

**Coming here has shown
me that there are
people just like me and
I can talk to them
without fear.**

Charities Registration Number: 20059798

Supporting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual &
Trans Young People in Ireland



BeLonG To Youth Services
13 Parliament St
Dublin 2

www.belongto.org
info@belongto.org
01 670 6223

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