

PROUD SPACES

EVIDENCING SAFE AND INCLUSIVE SPACES
FOR LGBTQI+ YOUNG PEOPLE THROUGH
QUALITY YOUTH WORK PRACTICES

The Proud Spaces Project is co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union, through Ireland's National Agency for the programme, Léargas.

The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



1

CONTENTS

SECTION 1

- Development Process.....4
- Acknowledgements.....5
- Foreword.....7
- Proud Spaces Partners.....8
- Introduction.....9

SECTION 2

- Policy Framework.....11
- Literature Review.....12
- Theory of Change.....15
- ABC's of LGBTQI+.....19

SECTION 3

- LGBTQI+ Young People in Ireland.....21
- LGBTQI+ Young People in Europe.....22
- Growing Up Trans in Ireland.....23
- Growing Up Trans in Scotland.....25
- LGBTQI+ History Timeline in Ireland.....27

SECTION 4

- Establishing Best Practice in LGBTQI+ Youth Work.....29
- Proud Spaces LGBTQI+ Workshop.....33
- Workshop Results.....37

SECTION 5

- LGBTQI+ Youth Groups in Ireland.....41
- References and Resources.....43
- Support Agencies.....44
- Youth Work Ireland Member Services.....45
- Notes.....47

2

DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

This project will establish an evidence-based LGBTQI+ model of best practice for youth workers and others working with LGBTQI+ young people in Ireland and Europe.

The publication of this resource marks the completion of the first stage of the Proud Spaces project. In this stage Youth Work Ireland Laois carried out an extensive evidence review of the youth work practices, processes and activities that youth workers and young people say achieves positive outcomes.

The evidence from the research, surveys, and young peoples' workshops will inform the next phase of the project which will be the development of an evidence informed practice framework to support youth work practices with young LGBTQI+ people.

The four stages of the development process are:

- Evidence review and identify outcomes for young people.
- Develop a practice framework which will identify and implement effective, evidence-based youth work supports for young people.
- Develop a policy initiative to increase awareness on the part of policy makers of the outcomes of effective LGBTQI+ youth work.
- Develop a tool so young people can gauge their own inclusive spaces.

3

4

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Proud Spaces team would like to acknowledge the contribution and input of the following youth work organisations into the development of this resource:

Bray LGBT Youth
Canal Communities Regional Youth Service
Carlow Regional Youth Service
Clare Youth Service
Donegal Youth Service
FDYS
Goshh
In Sync Youth & Family Services
KDYS
Limerick Youth Service
Ossory Youth
Outcomers
Waterford & South Tipperary Community Youth Services
Youth Work Ireland Cavan Monaghan
Youth Work Ireland Co Longford
Youth Work Ireland Galway
Youth Work Ireland Louth
Youth Work Ireland Meath
Youth Work Ireland Midlands
Youth Work Ireland North Connaught
Youth Work Ireland Tipperary

We would also like to thank **Sam Kelly** for their work on the design and layout of this resource



5

FOREWORD

Proud Spaces is a three-year Erasmus+ funded project that seeks to evidence the positive outcomes youth work practices can and do achieve in supporting young LGBTQI+ people. The project will develop tools to support youth workers in creating safe and inclusive spaces for young LGBTQI+ people.

The situation for young LGBTQI+ people in Europe is that they do not feel secure, accepted and safe. 43% of LGBTQI+ people declared that they felt discriminated against in 2019, as compared to 37% in 2012 according to the European Commission LGBTQI+Q Equality Strategy 2020-2025.

Many jurisdictions in Europe have progressed policies and services intended to result in the inclusion of young people, however, this is not the case for all jurisdictions with some seeking to roll back progress and enact policies and legislation which seek to exclude and discriminate.

However, we believe that youth work has a significant role to play in addressing and challenging barriers to inclusion faced by young LGBTQI+ people. Amplifying youth work values such as empowerment, shared learning, policy engagement, inclusion and participation will benefit young LGBTQI+ people across Europe. This coupled with the awareness of the implementation of effective strategies for supporting human rights can assist in progressing shared European values of inclusion and diversity.

7

6

PROUD SPACES PARTNERS

ECYC is a European network of youth work and youth club organisations that practice and promote open youth work and non-formal education. With a membership of 23 organisations from 20 European countries, ECYC reaches up to 1.2 million young people. Their vision is to empower young people through open youth work and non-formal learning in order to promote democratic and civil society, and to encourage young people to be actively involved in their communities.

GrowSpace is a Polish NGO who offers day-to-day activities, including a full range of trainings, workshops and trainings for young people in formal and non formal education. Its chief expertise in relation to this programme is in relation to supporting the development of safe spaces for LGBTQI+ young people in schools. Its LGBTQI+ ranking programme widely promotes safe spaces and practices in Polish schools. In the most recent year, the programme directly engaged 22,000 people in 2,500 locations across Poland.

Youth Work Ireland is the largest youth organisation in Ireland, made up of 20 Member Youth Services and a national office. Through an Integrated Youth Services Model Youth Work Ireland provide young people with a range of services, programmes and supports, including mental health supports, resilience building, anxiety programmes, drug and alcohol supports, LGBTQI+ youth work, club development, employability programmes, counselling services, rural outreach and fun safe spaces for young people to gather.

Youth Work Ireland Laois is the only fully integrated Youth Service in County Laois. They deliver quality programmes and projects to socially disadvantaged and universal young people living or attending school in the county through youth clubs and youth groups. Youth Work Ireland Laois is committed to a planned programme of education designed for the purpose of aiding and enhancing the personal and social development of young people, through their voluntary participation, and which is complementary to their formal education or vocational education and training.

8

INTRODUCTION

Ireland has a long history of advocating and legislating for equality and inclusion and our youth work is grounded in a human rights-based approach. However, we know that the current context in Europe is that some young LGBTQI+ people do not feel secure, accepted, and safe in their communities. The Proud Spaces project will seek to address and challenge this by highlighting the work of youth organisations and youth practitioners in supporting young LGBTQI+ people to be included, to have their voices heard and to realised and achieve their potential.

Because Youth Work Ireland members, including YWI Laois, works with 76,000 young people each week, we know the benefits and outcomes that good youth work achieves. We see the impact best practices in connection, support, advocacy and empowerment have on young people. We hear the stories young people tell us about how linking in with their local youth services has changed and, in some cases, saved their lives.

Similarly, as a society Ireland has come a long way in its acceptance and inclusion of the LGBTQI+ community. Youth work has long provided young LGBTQI+ people with a safe space where they get to explore and celebrate their identity, supported by professional youth workers. Using robust research methods Proud Spaces seeks to identify the practices, processes and activities that take place in youth services that achieve positive outcomes for young LGBTQI+ people and used this evidence to develop tools to support workers across Europe, in both formal and non-formal education setting, to create their own inclusive and Proud Spaces.



9

POLICY FRAMEWORK

EUROPEAN UNION YOUTH POLICY

LGBTQI+ youth work exists within an extensive framework of policy, legislation and international agreements. The context for LGBTQI+ youth work in Europe is one in which there is a positive obligation on EU Member States to protect young people and children from all forms of discrimination, as outlined by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights. This obligation includes requirements for EU Member States to monitor the experience of discrimination of LGBTQI+ children and youth.

The EU Youth Strategy aims, in particular, to: *“Create more and equal opportunities for all young people to participate in education and in the labour market. Support the active citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity of all young people.”*

The relevance of LGBTQI+ youth work in relation to these policies is readily apparent. Youth work with LGBTQI+ young people is a bulwark against discrimination and social exclusion through working with young people to call out and fight against infringements on their basic rights. Simultaneously, it is an active agent for social inclusion, active citizenship and the creation of equal opportunities for LGBTQI++ young people.

IRISH YOUTH POLICY

Two key documents shape Irish National Policy: The LGBTQI++ National Youth Strategy 2018-2020 and the National LGBTQI++ Inclusion Strategy 2019-2021. The Youth Strategy consulted 4,000 young people who identified needs for young LGBT people such as: More safe, inclusive and exclusive spaces; More rural services and spaces; More safe spaces for young people excluded from the family home. Other policy commitments:

In 2009, a Health Service Executive (Ireland) report on the health care needs of LGBT people recommended improving access to support in communities through LGBTQI++ youth groups and peer supports. They also encouraged professionals to improve environments for LGBT youth through receptiveness, symbols, respect and acceptance.

Reach Out: The Irish Government’s National Strategy for Action on Suicide Prevention, (2005-2014) cited the necessity to “develop services, supports and information/education resources to improve mental health and reduce any increased risk of suicidal behaviour” among LGBT people.

Better Outcomes Brighter Futures, the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014 - 2020 specifically referenced young LGBT people as a vulnerable group to be supported in being active and healthy and in relation to bullying and discrimination.

UBU Youth Projects name LGBTQI+ as a target group to be engaged within their service requirements from DCEDIY. Thus, there is an expectation that this cohort will be engaged with within UBU Youth Projects. Therefore, dedicated core funding for LGBTQI+ projects from DCEDIY as a policy objective remains an unlikely prospect.

11

10

LITERATURE REVIEW

SCOPE

The scope of this literature review is focused narrowly on identifying literature describing practice in youth work with LGBTQI++ young people. Outside of the scope of this search is the large body of literature readily available through LGBTQI++ supporting youth organisations describing the needs and situation of young LGBTQI++ people. Most organisations that are members of IYGLO are involved in gathering, developing and providing evidence based research dealing with the following topics:

- The legal situation of young LGBTQI+ people;
- Supports and advice for young people in transition;
- Ethical journalism relating to LGBTQI+ people;
- Research on needs of young LGBTQI+ people;
- Best practice in supporting young LGBTQI+ people in education.

These resources, while valuable in their own contexts remain outside the scope of this review.

METHODS

An extensive review was undertaken to identify candidate documents describing youth work with LGBTQI+ young people. Searches were undertaken through:

- The Salto Youth Database;
- Council of Europe Coyote Magazine;
- Review of websites of all IYGLYO members;
- Searches of academic journals via Google Scholar;
- Web searches for terms “LGBT” and “Youth Work” ;
- Review of Erasmus+ Project Results Platform.

RESULTS

Review of LGBTQI++ Youth Work Organisation Publications:

The first finding of this extensive review is that the premise of the Proud Space project is validated. There is a substantial gap in youth work practice literature in the area of LGBTQI+ youth work. The second finding is that it is fair to say that most LGBTQI+ supporting youth organisations and even many youth work organisations are not firstly concerned with youth work practice. Their concerns for influencing professional practices are primarily in relation to influencing formal education environments and there is a substantial literature providing support for young people, parents and teachers in navigating and improving young LGBTQI+ lives in these settings.

12

LITERATURE REVIEW

LGBTQI++ youth organisations can be understood as having taken a strategic approach to supporting young LGBTQI++ people through focusing on formal education settings. Young people's lives are substantially impacted by their education experience, its where they spend most of their time and where they primarily interact with peers. This focus may explain the lack of youth work guides and manuals related to youth work with LGTBI+ people.

Notable however, are the dozens of current Erasmus+ projects focusing on LGBTQI++ youth inclusion. No project results are as of yet published for these projects, though in the near future these project should supply significant additions to literature describing LGBTQI++ youth work in Europe.

At present, there are a limited number of relevant publications that can be identified as specifically describing LGBTQI++ youth work. These are as below:

- SAJV and Milchjugend - Guide for youth group leaders on supporting LGBTQI+ peers Information on supporting peers to come out;
- FELGTBI+: Federación Estatal LGTBI+ - Guide for the accompaniment of young trans people in the spaces of Informal education;
- National Youth Council of Ireland - Access All Areas;
- Youth Work Ireland - Bi Tusa;
- Chillout - Listen up! Sharing the experiences of young lgbt+ people;
- Debbie O'Rourke - Where rural LGBTQI++ young people belong The impact of youth work on inclusion and well-being;
- YouthLink - The Impact of LGBT Youth Scotland's Digital Youth Work on Young People December 2020;
- EduDivers/AllthatChas - Manual for youth teams that promote pleasant manners and a safe coming-out;
- In Sync Youth & Family Services - KLGBTQI+ Project Research Review.

Across these documents a number of themes emerge as follows:

Theme 1. Creativity and Social Entrepreneurism

Multiple publications highlights that reaching seldom heard young people and supporting young people who may not be out to their parents are peers requires youth workers to innovate. Their practice includes efforts "to reach young LGBTQI++ young people, youth work gets creative, builds links, relationships and networks with schools, clubs and communities" (O'Rourke, 2020). This is reflected in reports on practice captured in Proud Spaces youth workers' survey which reported overcoming barriers to engagement through a number of ingenious solutions.

Theme 2. Recognising Intersectionality

Multiple publications stressed the need for youth workers to understand and consider the complexity of intersectionality and how it relates to the freedom or oppression faced by someone due to their age, sexuality, gender identity, race, ethnicity, ability, access to resources and in this case where they live.

Theme 3. Reflective Practice

Multiple publications stressed the need for reflective practice and the need to identify ones' biases and motivations both positive and negative. Youth workers must acknowledge that we all carry biases no matter what your identity or experience. This includes youth workers who have themselves experienced oppression and exclusion. As a professional youth worker one must apply critical thinking and review your experiences and biases and understand how you may be bringing these biases and experiences into your practice with young people. In this way we ensure that we honour the principles of being open and non-judgmental including not making assumptions about young people, or their identities. Further, recognising the need for regular reflection supports the commitment to taking action towards your own ongoing learning and development.

Theme 4. Appearing open and safe to all young people

Multiple publications stressed the need to communicate to all young people that you are an ally and that they are in a safe space. This can be accomplished through your language and through ensuring the service displays signs and symbols inclusive of LGBTQI++ identities. The importance of safe spaces is paramount within youth worker's and young people's accounts of effective youth work. The creation of these safe spaces is one of the first tasks of youth workers.

Theme 5. The importance of Integrated Youth Services

Discussion of service level arrangements and how organisations can support young people strategically made a single, but well supported appearance within the literature. In Sync Youth Services provided documentation of an extensive review of their provision of support for LGBTQI++ young people, including consultations and focus groups. The result was a comprehensive report on the strengths and needs of young people as well as a detailed description of how they strategically organise services to ensure young LGBTQI++ young people receive holistic supports as follows:

Ensuring the reach and impact of local projects involves operating in an Integrated Youth Service model. The Integrated Youth Service ensures that a range of services and policy objectives can be delivered by one community based youth service in a seamless manner from the point of view of the young person. The Integrated Service provides a point of access to a range of services (under one roof) so that young people have their needs addressed in a holistic and joined up way. LGBTQI+ young people are as varied in their needs and strengths as any other group of young people; meeting their needs and assisting them to achieve their aspirations requires a full range of services and opportunities. The provision of LGBTQI+ projects within a service provision setting that is deliberately planned using a holistic, area-based approach supports this full range of needs and aspirations.

Further, this area-based approach links our LGBTQI+ projects to vast local networks, offering an uncountable number of entry points and referral routes for LGBTQI+ young people. This offers more opportunities to connect for young LGBTQI+ people who are isolated and/or marginalised due to geography, social circumstances or other aspects of their identity.

Lastly, neither specialists nor general practitioners can meet all the needs of a young person on an ongoing basis, rather the combination of the two working together provides a sustainable basis of ongoing support. The Integrated Youth Services model brings other specialist providers to the process to enhance provision of support for LGBTQI+ young people (Bissett, 2020).

13

THEORY OF CHANGE

THE PROUD SPACES THEORY OF CHANGE

The Proud Spaces project involves multiple cycles of Plan, Do Review. The Theory of Change provided in this publication is a product of our first cycle of activity working together with young people and youth workers. In this cycle we began by considering the best activities to learn about LGBTQI++ youth work practice, undertook learning and research activities and are now publishing initial results in order to engage in participatory reviews and further development.

A significant product in first cycle of this process is now complete; our draft Theory of Change.

This resource will be the basis for further discussions and learning activities with young people and youth workers. Reflection on its relevance to the wider European youth work context will take place. In this way, the Theory of Change can be primarily seen as a useful conceptual model for reflection. It is a first draft and a step towards a richer and more nuanced understanding of good practice in youth work with young LGBTQI++ people.

THE THEORY OF CHANGE IS INFORMED BY:

- Theoretical evidence from youth work theory and principles;
- Interview with youth workers;
- Surveys with youth workers in Ireland and Europe;
- Consultations with young people;
- A review of policies and legislation;
- Youth work publications.

14

YOUTH WORK PRINCIPLES AND THEORIES

Youth Workers clearly frame their work in relation to the basic principles of youth work practice. LGBTQI+ youth work is youth work.

More specifically, youth workers involved in LGBTQI+ youth work include references to group and social change Collective Action. The inclusion of these principles suggests an orientation towards a critical social education model of youth work with reference to work with young LGBTQI+ people.

Some principles of youth work come to the fore and are heavily emphasised:

- LGBTQI+ young people do face more challenges;
- Acceptance, non-judgment and promotes inclusivity;
- Developing trusted relationships and reducing isolation;

This is not to say that there are not unique elements to LGBTQI+ youth work which allow it to stand as a distinct area of practice.

Provided below are a number of prominent themes that emerged in response to the question of "what is unique about LGBTQI+ youth work" that are of note.

- LGBTQI+ youth work depends on informal education;
- LGBTQI+ youth work puts the young person in the position of "expert" in LGBTQI+ lives and the youth worker as a facilitator;
- LGBTQI+ youth work features more advocacy than other youth work;
- LGBTQI+ youth work is more youth led than other youth work;
- LGBTQI+ youth work is more networked with other organisations than other youth work;
- LGBTQI+ youth work features more peer support than other youth work;
- LGBTQI+ youth work is about dedicated spaces for LGBTQI+ young people and acceptances.

15

16

THEORY OF CHANGE

CONTEXT: ASPIRATIONS / STRENGTHS / NEEDS

From evidence collected to date, we view LGBTQI+ young people as including young people from all backgrounds and have both needs and strengths as all young people do. Youth workers and young people note the following needs and strengths:

Aspirations:

- To feel safe in their community expressing themselves as LGBTQI+ young people;
- To be heard and educate others;
- To feel included and respected in their community, school and work;
- To live a life free of obstacles and to have equal outcomes in school, work and in society;
- To be effective as an advocate for themselves and other LGBTQI+ young people.

Strengths:

- Resilience
- Creativity
- Committed to equality;
- Supportive of peers;
- Leadership for change.

Needs:

All needs of young people with additional emphasis on the following:

- Counselling / mental wellbeing supports;
- Accurate sex education, health care including STI testing;
- To feel accepted experience social inclusion and empathy;
- Neurodiversity;
- To be listened to and to have voice;
- Information on rights and sign posting to services.

RESOURCES

We found that the following kinds of resources support LGBTQI+ youth work:

- Strengths of young people including capacity for peer support, empathy and social action;
- Safe youth spaces;
- Relevant and appropriate information;
- Trained youth workers with skills in youth work practice.
- Integrated Youth Services;
- Linkages to appropriate LGBTQI+ services;
- Dedicated LGBTQI+ youth work funds.

IMPACT

We understand that the impact of our LGBTQI+ youth work is to support young people holistically to achieve equality of outcomes in their lives.

OUTCOMES - SKILLS / KNOWLEDGE / ATTITUDES

Skills:

- Mental wellbeing and positive coping mechanisms for stress/anxiety;
- The 7 Skills of all youth work – confidence and agency, communication skills, planning and problem solving, relationships, resilience and determination, emotional intelligence, creativity and imagination;
- Community building, networking, liaising with other youth organisations/ non-youth organisations
- Campaigning, advocacy, analysis, social media, committee skills design research;
- Peer leadership skills including compassion and empathy for others and acting as peer supports to other young people in the project. Leadership skills, facilitation, the ability to development of programmes to empower newer young people to get actively involved to enable them to fully participate in youth work activities.

Knowledge:

- Awareness of local and national supports;
- Awareness of local and national LGBTQI+ groups and organisations;
- Awareness of LGBTQI+ identities;
- Awareness of their own agency;
- Awareness of the possibility of change;
- Awareness of the history of the LGBTQI+ community.

Attitudes:

- That they are not alone;
- They feel that their life has meaning;
- They feel that they have a voice and can be heard;
- They feel that they can be accepted and understood by peers they have a connection with;
- They feel that they can be accepted in a wider community;
- They feel that they can be safe;
- They feel that they have agency and that they have the ability to make change if they want;
- They feel that change is possible.

OUTPUTS, ACTIVITIES MECHANISMS

We found that the following kinds of activities take place in LGBTQI+ youth services:

- Safe spaces are provided;
- Peer support is facilitated;
- Coming out support is provided;
- Art therapy and creative activities;
- Holistic supports, signposting and referral via integrated youth services;
- Trans boxes;
- Personal development;
- Developmental group work, empowerment and social action;
- One to one work, listening, guidance and support.

17

ABC'S OF LGBTQI+

Allies

People who identify as cisgender (see cis below) and/or straight, and believe in social and legal equality for LGBTQI+ people. LGBTQI+ people can also be allies to each other.

Asexual

An umbrella term used for those who do not experience, or experience a very low sexual desire. Sometimes referred to as "Ace", this identity can include those who are interested in having romantic relationships, and those who are not (aromantic). Asexuality is a spectrum encompassing several identities.

Assigned at birth

Assigned at birth refers to the way in which your sex is recorded on your birth certificate. When a baby is born, they are assigned a sex based on a perfunctory examination of their anatomy. Typically, babies are either assigned female at birth (AFAB), or assigned male at birth (AMAB).

Biological Sex

A medical term used to refer to the chromosomal, hormonal and anatomical characteristics that are used to classify an individual as female or male or intersex. Often referred to as simply "sex," "physical sex," "anatomical sex," or specifically as "sex assigned at birth."

Bisexual

An emotional and/or sexual attraction to two or more genders. Another commonly used definition is a sexual attraction towards the same gender, and gender(s) different than your own. This attraction does not have to be equally split in intensity across the genders or sexes an individual may be attracted to.

Butch

A person who identifies as masculine, whether physically, mentally, or emotionally. 'Butch' is sometimes used as a derogatory term for lesbians, but it can also be claimed as an affirmative identity label.

Coming Out

This is the process of revealing your sexual orientation and/or gender identity to individuals in your life; often incorrectly thought to be a onetime event, this is a lifelong and sometimes daily process.

Cisgender

People who's gender identity aligns with their assigned sex at birth. For example, if someone was assigned male at birth (AMAB) and they identify as a man, then they are a cisgender man/cis man.

Discrimination

Discrimination means making a distinction in favour of, or against, a person based on the group, class, or category to which a person belongs.

Dyke

This refers to a lesbian or gay woman. While often used derogatorily, it is also reclaimed affirmatively by some lesbians and gay women as a positive self identity term.

FTM/MTF

Female-to-male transgender person (trans man) / male-to-female transgender person (trans woman)

Gay

An umbrella term for anyone who is sexually or romantically attracted to someone of the same gender. The definition is often used to exclusively refer to someone who is male-identified, who is romantically or sexually attracted to other male-identified individuals.

Gender Binary

The misconception that there are only two genders and that every person is one of those two.

Gender Expression

The external display of one's gender, through a combination of clothing, grooming, demeanour, social behaviour, and other factors, generally made sense of on scales of masculinity and femininity. Also referred to as "gender presentation."

Gender Identity

An individual's identification of themselves as female, male, non-binary, or another descriptor.

Gender Norms

Gender norms define what society considers male and female behaviour, and it leads to the formation of gender roles, which are the roles males and females are often expected to take in society.

Heteronormativity

The assumption, in individuals or in institutions, that everyone is heterosexual. This leads to invisibility and stigmatizing of other sexualities: when learning a woman is married, asking her what her husband's name is.

Heterosexual (Straight)

This is a sexual attraction to the opposite sex/gender. Typically this means a female/woman attracted to a male/man, and vice versa. Also known as straight.

Homophobia, Biphobia & Transphobia

Are all umbrella terms for a range of negative attitudes (e.g. fear, anger, intolerance, resentment, erasure, or discomfort) that one may have toward LGBTQI+ people. The term can also connote a fear, disgust, or dislike of being perceived as LGBTQI+. Homophobic – a word used to describe actions, behaviours, or individuals who demonstrate elements of this range of negative attitudes toward LGBTQI+ people.

Intersex

A person whose sex characteristics don't fit within the medical confines of female or male.

Lesbian

A female-identified person who is sexually and/or romantically attracted to other female identified individuals.

Non-Binary

A gender identity that does not conform to traditional binary beliefs about gender, which indicate that all individuals are exclusively either male or female.

Pansexual

Pansexuality is a sexual orientation used to describe an individual who feels they are sexually and/or romantically attracted to people regardless of gender. This is sometimes referred to as being "gender-blind".

Passing

A word used to describe trans people being able to "pass for," a member of their gender identity (regardless of sex assigned at birth) without being identified as trans.

Polyamory / Polyamorous

Refers to the practice of, desire to, or orientation towards having ethically, honest, consensually non-monogamous relationships (i.e. relationships that may include multiple partners).

Pride

Pride is an annual celebration of LGBTQI+ communities held around the world. In Ireland most of the large cities and towns have their own Pride Festival.

QPOC

Initials standing for Queer People of Colour

Queer

Historically, this was a derogatory slang term used to identify LGBTQI+ people. It has been embraced and reclaimed by the LGBTQI+ community as a symbol of pride, representing all individuals who fall out of the gender and sexuality norms. This can be an umbrella term for anyone who is not heterosexual, gender-binary and/or heteronormative.

Transgender (Trans)

A person whose gender identity does not match their assigned sex. For example, someone who was assigned female at birth who identifies as male. Transgender people may alter their bodies using hormones, surgery, both or neither.

Sexual Orientation

The sexual, emotional, and physical attraction one feels for others.

19

20

Homosexuality was only decriminalised in Ireland in 1993, but since then the small country has made some giant steps to get closer to LGBTQI+ equality. With Ireland's national LGBTQI+ organisation LGBT Ireland's bold new strategic plan aimed at making Ireland 'the best place in Europe to be LGBTQI+' and over 35 LGBTQI+ youth groups spread around the country, Ireland has moved fast in recent years in improving the lives of LGBTQI+ young people. But it shouldn't stop here, there is much more room for progress.

For instance, if you are in County Offaly, you will have never had the joy of seeing a pride parade in your county town celebrating LGBTQI+ lives. Or if you are in many parts of rural Ireland, you would have to travel over one hour to access your nearest LGBTQI+ youth group, something not easily done or possible for most LGBTQI+ young people.

The flip side however is, if you are a young person in Laois, you saw its first ever Pride celebration in 2022, with over 1000 people in attendance. Hundreds of schools and teachers now have incredible LGBTQI+ workshops from Shout Out each year and schools around the country, in even the most rural areas are taking part in Stand Up week every November.

From the Irish Government, it appears Ireland is working hard on making advances for LGBTQI+ young people, they now have an LGBTQI+ National Youth Strategy, the first of its kind in Ireland which sets out three ambitious goals and they are currently actively working on a ban of LGBTQI+ conversion therapy in 2023.

We are excited through Proud Spaces, to explore LGBTQI+ youth work practices and hear firsthand from LGBTQI+ young people and the youth workers who work with them to look at the bigger picture of being an LGBTQI+ young person in Ireland.

by Christina Fitzharris (Midlands LGBTQI+ Project)

The young LGBTQI+ community is especially vulnerable. When we think about the "youth" part of the community, we should consider teenagers between 13 and 20 in their school years. This time can be particularly difficult due to certain factors. First of all, LGBTQI+ people are a minority often exposed to the discrimination in society. Being a minor can be an additional trait that causes potential exclusion which can lead to cross discrimination (when more than one trait is concerned). Furthermore, young people are especially vulnerable due to the fact that they are in a natural process of discovering themselves. The difficulties of coming out may be not understood by heterosexual or cisgender peers. Last but not least, the education systems in many countries in the European Union are not fully prepared to support the LGBTQI+ community. Unfortunately, some problems are not solved because of lack of necessary knowledge or skills among teachers. All of these reasons contribute to the risk of mental health crises among LGBTQI+ teenagers. This risk is already higher than in the overall young population due to potential bullying or minority stress.

The main research regarding inclusive education systems in the European Union were both undertaken by IGLYO. The latest update in 2022 shows to what extent the education systems in Europe are responding to the problems of youth LGBTQI+ communities. It should be mentioned however that the report is based only on legal solutions and therefore it does not reflect entirely, for instance, the attitudes in society and atmospheres in particular schools. Key findings of the report show the huge difference between many countries in the E.U. Only 6 of them provide most of the measures recommended by IGLYO. These are Luxembourg, Malta, The Netherlands, Norway, Portugal and Sweden. 2 countries in the E.U. have failed to implement any measure concerning LGBTQI+ inclusive education (Latvia and Poland) and 2 have unfortunately implemented legislation that goes against the right to education of LGBTQI+ learners (Hungary and Latvia). Moreover, the same countries have also adopted anti-propaganda laws and policies that make it impossible for learners to receive inclusive content in schools.

In general, the situation in Europe marks significant progress in terms of LGBTQI+ inclusive education as 67% of Member States have at least implemented anti-discrimination laws or action plans. Despite that, other solutions or practices remain unused. The openness and inclusiveness of schools and education systems across the Member States is rising over past years. Awareness of problems of young LGBTQI+ people is the first step to making a larger change. The legal situation and acceptance in society are two main aspects needed for true inclusiveness. The E.U. has a strong role in enhancing equality in this field. Although education is not a proper competence of E.U. institutions, there are many actions to be taken.

by Dominik Kuc (Growspace)

GROWING UP TRANS IN IRELAND

by Sam Kelly

It's a weird experience to spend a big part of your life looking at certain groups from the outside only to later discover you're a part of it - or to discover something about yourself that you didn't even know existed. The concept of being "transgender" was almost non-existent in my brain or in my environment growing up (thanks, catholic school system and non-existent representation) but I was no less trans, even if I couldn't put my finger on it yet.

I didn't feel like anything was different as a child - I played with whatever toys I wanted, I didn't feel confined to gender roles, and I was lucky enough to try out all the things both boys and girls get to do without limitation. It was only when I hit puberty that a sense of dread crept in. When I started to develop, I went from being an outgoing child to a quiet, miserable teenager in a stifling school system. I knew something was wrong but didn't know what, and even when I learned about trans people, it took a while to connect the dots. In the absence of actual information about what it means to be trans, I made my own uninformed assumptions that just slowed me down in discovering myself. I assumed that I couldn't possibly be trans, even if I felt the same discomfort - surely they know from birth, right?

I finally had a breakthrough at 16 when I heard from actual trans men like me, without any bias or sensationalism from outsiders. It resonated so much that it made me review everything I'd felt for years, and when I finally came to terms with it, I eventually worked up the courage to come out to my loved ones and start presenting male. This came with a whole new set of obstacles. Growing up in rural Ireland is an isolating enough experience if you're in any way different, let alone transgender. The rumour spread like wildfire in my rural school. To be queer in the midlands of Ireland as a teen was like being an alien from outer space. Reactions ranged from genuine curiosity to outright hostility. It's a tough space to navigate and no less tough when you don't have any armour yet - it took me a long time to figure out who I was and how to build up that confidence, which leaves you very vulnerable to having how you see yourself warped by others. I distinctly remember being 16 and reading about the death of Leelah Alcorn, the amount of hate crimes, the horrible weight that other people like me have to live with just for being, well, like me. Being trans in a place that won't accept the existence of trans people changes how you approach almost everything.

When you're a young trans person, you notice everything because you have to. You look at every person for some sign of what they really think and ask yourself in every room "Am I safe here? Am I safe with you?". It messes with your head at a time when your only worry should be teenage drama and exams.

You instead spend that time in fight or flight mode with almost everyone, constantly scanning for signs of allyship. I was lucky enough to have a small set of close friends and a partner who didn't even bat an eye when I came out, and who supported me wholeheartedly through everything. Still, I was suffocating in my small community, and there was no love lost when I left.

When I turned 18, I got to leave my rural community and go to Cork to attend college. Being in a city where I had no history offered a blank slate, which was a huge relief to a newly out trans person. Nobody knew me as who I was before, no knowledge of my deadname, so for the first time in my life, I got to just be me! I returned to being the outgoing, life-loving, goofy person I hadn't known since I was a child. I got involved in LGBTQI+ groups, made new friends, and started testosterone. University is the first place I'd ever casually been asked "what are your pronouns?" and it caught me so off guard, I had to actually think about my answer - it was the first time I didn't feel like I had to justify my gender. I was just accepted, and taken at my word. One frustrating constant along the way was dealing with the HSE. Coming out was climbing out of the frying pan and trans healthcare in Ireland was the fire. I was lucky enough to be on the waiting list from the moment I turned 18 and had to wait several years on a list that has gotten exponentially worse in the years since. I was even luckier in that I had a supportive family and a job that allowed me to scrape together enough money to access private healthcare while I waited. In the time it took me to reach the top of the NGS waiting list and finally be treated, I finished my leaving cert and earned a bachelor's degree. These waitlist times have only gotten worse since then.

In my final year of my bachelors, Covid hit and I returned to the midlands. The one good thing that came out of lockdown is I finally got to have top surgery - my self-esteem and mental health had improved in leaps and bounds since coming out and especially since starting HRT, but top surgery is what finally truly made me feel free. My body felt like mine again - a feeling I hadn't had since before puberty. The first time I sat on the bus and felt the fabric of my t-shirt against my bare skin, no binder in-between, was one of the best feelings I will ever have. It was monumental for me and I still have moments of sheer gratefulness for it all.

Not long after, I started volunteering with Midlands LGBTQI+ Project. I was frustrated as a teenager with how isolating the area was and when I found out there was a new charity trying to make a difference here, I had to join. I fell back in love with my home and decided I'd help to change it. Now, I finally have good memories of being queer in rural Ireland, and the delight of knowing there's a vibrant community there of folk like me. It's amazing the changes that can be made if a few people are determined enough to join forces together and change it. I hope the next trans teenager in my area to come out has the chance to be a part of the same wonderful community I've watched bloom here - and that as they grow, they get the opportunity to help make it even better, just like I had.

GROWING UP TRANS IN SCOTLAND

by Theo Thomson

Up until the age of 12, I grew up on a remote island called Eigg (yes, pronounced like egg). At the time, I had no idea that I was trans or even that being trans was a possibility. There were some hints that were generally brushed off as being a "tomboy" or related to most of my friends being boys and I always had a sense of wrongness but for the most part I just did "regular" kid stuff like climbing trees. Then, in classic socially awkward 2010s teen fashion, my trans awakening came from tumblr. By this point I'd moved just across the water to Mallaig, a wee coastal village, and was attending high school. I'd only ever heard of gay people before, being transgender was a totally foreign concept to me and indeed to the rest of the village when I was the first person to come out as trans there (that I'm aware of anyway).

Coming out wasn't fun, it took a lot of convincing to get family on board even if they're super supportive now and my coming out to everyone was a bit forced. My Mum told the school staff and suddenly it was everywhere- one teacher told her daughter/my friend before I could, suddenly friends were getting texts asking if I was coming back to school as a boy. It was a really stressful time and the school didn't really have the experience to handle it even though they tried- not changing my name/gender in the system, trying to get me to use separate toilets to everyone else. On the plus side, I got my own room on school trips and never had to do PE again!

Like most small towns, gossip was a big pastime and the rumour mill was having a great time. Not much was said to my face but there was the odd comment and people I'd never spoken to before coming up to me and discussing it with me. I think wee, rural places have a reputation for being unaccepting but for the most part I really didn't find this to be true.

I remember going back to Eigg and a guy who I'd grown up knowing well, who drove the school bus, who'd let me hitch a ride on the back of his quadbike, was completely ignoring me. I was pretty devastated until later in the day when I was sitting in the Tearoom (which moonlighted as a pub) and he sat down beside me, pished, and slapped my back so hard I think I got a handshaped bruise. He told me he was proud of me for being who I am and revealed that his wife had told him not to speak to me out of fear that he'd say the wrong thing.

This sentiment was pretty common I found. Of course there was the genuine transphobia but generally most of the time it was just ignorance or worrying about saying the wrong thing. I think the most malicious part of my experience however was the healthcare, or lack thereof I should say. After multiple therapists telling me they'd referred me and then not doing so, I was finally only on the 13 month waiting list for the young person's gender clinic at 15. (Tell any trans teen today that that was the wait just six years ago and they'll be gobsmacked- the service the service currently has a four plus year waiting list.) Every single one of those three diagnosing appointments was unbearably uncomfortable- being asked to rate my body parts, very in depth details of my sex life or lack thereof, why I didn't know I was trans from the moment I could form thoughts. I could go on and on about the inadequacies of the UK's approach to trans healthcare but for the sake of brevity I was eventually diagnosed with gender dysphoria and transsexualism.

Then began my two year long battle to start hormone replacement therapy. As far as I'm aware, the usual process goes diagnosis, potential fertility preservation, endocrinologist, hormones. Unfortunately for me though, I'd never had a period, which should seem like a blessing for a trans man but the doctor refused to prescribe me testosterone until the cause was found. (Later on, an amazing doctor in another service disputed this and prescribed it for me. I am so thankful that this doctor took me and other trans people at our word and trusted us.) After multiple ultrasounds, two physical exams, one chromosome test and an MRI, the cause was finally revealed- I had a condition called MRKH meaning I'd been born without a uterus.

For a while, I tried to find out more about MRKH on Google or in online groups specifically for it but found them to be very hyper-feminised - what seemed like the unnecessary use of "women and girls" in every other sentence, lots of "it makes you no less of a woman!" and "you're just as much of a woman as anyone else!". Which is true for you know, women, which I'm not, so it made it a very uncomfortable read. I found more comfort in the online intersex community, a lot of whom had similar experiences to me being treated by doctors and other people.

Now I'm living in Glasgow, almost three years on hormones, a year and a half after top surgery and really happy. I like the anonymity of Glasgow- I'm no longer "the transgender one" like I was in a small area. Sure, I have been on the follow up waitlist for 2.5 years now - but I feel way more confident, have friends and a boyfriend, which I never could have accomplished as an anxious, self conscious teen so I don't mind the wait this time.

25

LGBTQI+ RIGHTS TIMELINE IN IRELAND

19
74 Irish Gay Rights Movement Founded

19
79 Ireland's first Pride Week

19
80 Aids crisis and lifetime ban on giving blood

19
82 Murder of Declan Flynn in Dublin

19
83 Ireland's first Pride Parade

19
88 European Court rules in favour of David Norris Vs Ireland case

19
93 Decriminalisation of homosexual acts

19
93 Dr Lydia Foy's request for a new birth cert is refused

19
93 LGBT people allowed to serve openly in the military

19
98 Employment Equality Act

20
00 Equal Status Act

20
10 Civil Partnership Act

20
11 First openly LGBT TDs elected to the Dáil

20
14 Dr Lydia Foy's case against the State is settled

20
14 Irish Human Rights & Equality Commission Act

20
15 Marriage Equality Act

20
15 Gender Recognition Act

20
17 Lifetime ban on giving blood is lifted

20
17 Joint adoption by same sex couples

20
20 Northern Ireland legalised same-sex marriage

20
21 Same-sex couples recognised as co-parents from birth

20
22 Hate Speech law includes gender identity

2023

27

28

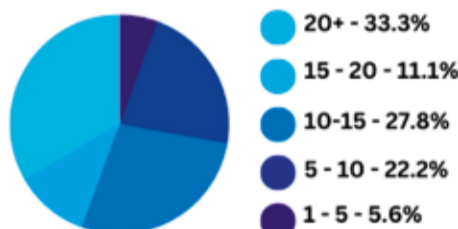
ESTABLISHING BEST PRACTICE IN LGBTQI+ YOUTH WORK

SERVICES WHO TOOK PART IN THIS SURVEY

- Canal Communities Regional Youth Service
- CDYS Youth Work Ireland
- FDYS Youth Work Ireland
- In Sync Youth and Family Services
- Ossory Youth Services
- Youth Work Ireland Co. Longford
- Youth Work Ireland Meath
- Youth Work Ireland North Connacht
- Carlow Regional Youth Services
- Donegal Youth Service
- KDYS
- Limerick Youth Service
- Waterford and South Tipperary Youth
- Youth Work Ireland Galway
- Youth Work Ireland Midlands
- Youth Work Ireland Tipperary



NUMBER OF LGBTQI+ GROUPS IN EACH SERVICE



AVERAGE ATTENDANCE IN LGBTQI+ GROUPS

NEEDS, STRENGTHS AND ASPIRATIONS OF THE PEOPLE ATTENDING LGBTQI+ YOUTH GROUPS:

The youth workers identified many of the above however the themes that were apparent across all groups included:

NEEDS

- Access to inclusive health care;
- Counselling;
- Support for neuro diversity;
- LGBTQI+ Sexual Education;
- To feel accepted;
- To be listened to;
- Information on rights and sign posting to services.

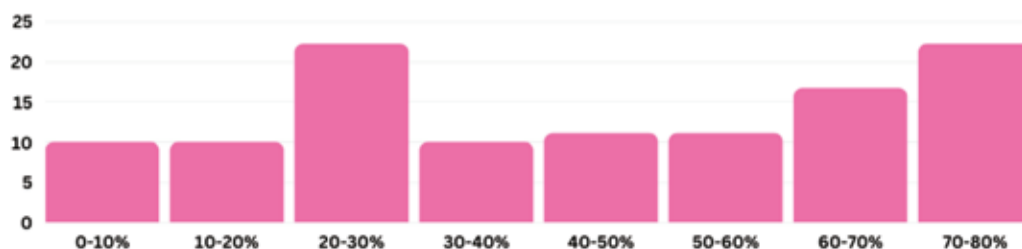
STRENGTHS

- Peer Support;
- Resilient;
- Leadership skills;
- Driven to instigate positive change;
- Committed to equality.

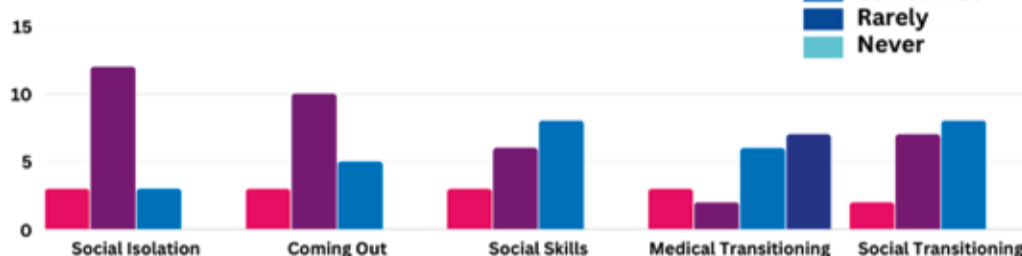
ASPIRATIONS

- To educate others;
- To have a strong LGBTQI+ community around them;
- To build inclusive schools and communities;
- To have a safe home environment;
- To live freely.

PERCENTAGE OF YOUNG PEOPLE ATTENDING LGBTQI+ YOUTH GROUPS THAT HAVE ADDITIONAL NEEDS:



THE NEEDS EMERGING FROM LGBTQI+ GROUPS:



WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS TO YOUNG PEOPLE ATTENDING LGBTQI+ GROUPS?

We received a huge amount of reasons why young people found it difficult to or were not able to attend LGBTQI+ groups. We have narrowed it down to the four that were universal to all groups across the country:

1. Homophobia/Transphobia;
2. Transportation (especially in rural counties);
3. Not being out/ Fear of being outed;
4. Social Anxiety.

OVERCOMING BARRIERS AND MAKING GROUPS ACCESSIBLE:

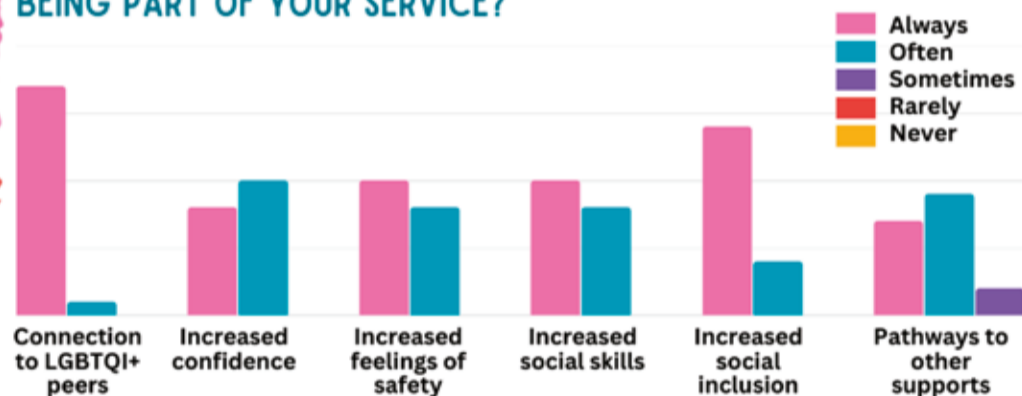
Along with the four main barriers identified above the youth workers identified many other barriers to young people attending groups, and to counteract it, an incredible amount of strategies and techniques they use to overcome them.

These included:

- Providing transport for young people that need it;
- Parental consent forms for a general youth service and not mentioning LGBTQI+ groups;
- Meeting with young people 1:1 to ease anxiety before joining a group;
- Designing activities for the group with the young people;
- Having 1:1 slots available for support throughout the year;
- Supporting the group in other areas such as homework, referrals to other groups and services, career advice.

ESTABLISHING BEST PRACTICE IN LGBTQI+ YOUTH WORK

WHAT OUTCOMES DO LGBTQI+ YOUNG PEOPLE GAIN FROM BEING PART OF YOUR SERVICE?



In an open text box youth workers also identified the following outcomes and skills young people are equipped with from attending their LGBTQI+ youth groups:

- Awareness of local and national supports;
- Awareness of local and national LGBTQI+ groups and organisations;
- Awareness of LGBTQI+ identities;
- Awareness of their own agency;
- Learning about LGBTQI+ History;
- Positive coping mechanisms for stress / anxiety;
- Planning and problem solving skills;
- Community building and networking;
- Campaigning and Advocacy skills;
- Peer leadership training.

CHANGES OF ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS FROM LGBTQI+ YOUNG PEOPLE ATTENDING LGBTQI+ YOUTH GROUPS?

Youth workers felt that the young people attending their service had increased feelings of the following:

- They are not alone;
- Their life has meaning and purpose;
- Their voice can be heard;
- They can be accepted and understood by their peers;
- They can be accepted in their wider community;
- They can be safe;
- They have agency and an ability to be changemakers;
- That change is possible.

TRAINING

Youth workers identified the following areas where they felt they need more training in to maximise the support they could give to LGBTQI+ young people:

- Trans awareness training;
- LGBTQI+ Sexual health training;
- Supporting neurodivergent LGBTQI+ young people;
- LGBTQI+ legislation and inclusive policies.

BEST PRACTICE OF WORKING WITH LGBTQI+ YOUNG PEOPLE:

YOUTH WORKERS WERE ASKED TO EXPLAIN THEIR THEORIES AND BELIEFS AND THE PRINCIPLES THEY WORK ON WHILE WORKING WITH LGBTQI+ YOUNG PEOPLE AND LGBTQI+ YOUTH GROUPS:

PRINCIPLES:

- Youth work principles;
- Confidentiality is of utmost importance in LGBTQI+ youth work;
- Person centred approach;
- Using outside expert facilitators for issue specific workshops.
- Youth led;
- Implement theories such as Thompson's PCS and Laura Lundy's model of participation;
- Creating safe spaces;
- Non judgemental.

ANTI DISCRIMINATION AND SOLIDARITY

WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT LGBTQI+ YOUTH WORK:

- LGBTQI+ youth work relies on informal education;
- LGBTQI+ youth work puts the young person in the position of "expert" in LGBTQI+ lives and the youth worker as a facilitator;
- LGBTQI+ youth work features more advocacy than other youth work;
- LGBTQI+ youth work is more youth led than general youth work;
- LGBTQI+ youth work is more networked with other organisations than general youth work;
- LGBTQI+ youth work features more peer support than general youth work;
- LGBTQI+ youth work is about dedicated safe spaces.

THE TEAM AT PROUD SPACES WOULD LIKE TO EXTEND A HUGE THANK YOU TO ALL YOUTH WORKERS WHO TOOK THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS SURVEY.

PROUD SPACES LGBTQI+ WORKSHOP

This workshop has been developed to aid youth workers and youth groups in establishing their Proud Spaces. It has been designed to be youth led and has different options for participation so the group can decide what option or multiple options they choose. Before beginning the youth worker or leader should explain that the exercises are used to find out what spaces they feel safe in, how they would improve spaces to make them proud and how we can make more Proud Spaces for them.

MY PROUD SPACE

ACTIVITY 1

Time: 1 hour

Equipment Needed: camera or smart phone

- Together the group should take turns in videoing one another asking questions to establish their Proud Spaces, asking the question "What is/are your proud space(s)?"
- The group together works on making a video from all of their clips to have a series of their existing Proud Spaces. This can be done on iMovie, Vimeo or many different free apps.

ACTIVITY 2

Time: 45 mins

Equipment Needed: Markers/ pens and paper/ printed blank house

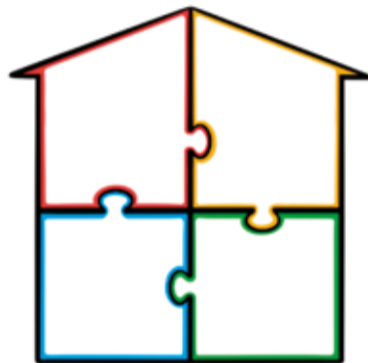
- Split the group into four. Give each of the groups one of the following questions and ask them to discuss for ten minutes and then present to the wider group.

QUESTION 1- WHAT IS A PROUD SPACE TO YOU?

QUESTION 2- WHAT MAKES YOUR YOUTH GROUP/ SPACE PROUD?

QUESTION 3- HOW ARE YOU MADE TO FEEL PROUD IN THIS SPACE?

QUESTION 4- WHAT DOES THE GROUP/ ORGANISATION DO TO MAKE THIS SPACE MORE INCLUSIVE AND PROUD FOR LGBTQI+ YOUNG PEOPLE?



BLOCKS AND BARRIERS TO PROUD SPACES

ACTIVITY 1

Time: 15 mins

Equipment Needed: Space to move around

- A moving debate asking the following questions with an area for agree, disagree and unsure:

QUESTION 1 - I FEEL PROUD IN THIS SPACE?

QUESTION 2 - ITS EASY FOR ME TO ACCESS LOTS OF PROUD SPACES?

QUESTION 3 - I FEEL REPRESENTED IN THIS YOUTH ORGANISATION?

QUESTION 4 - I FEEL LIKE MY VOICE IS HEARD AND ACTED UPON IN THIS SPACE?

QUESTION 5 - I FEEL SAFE AND SUPPORTED IN THIS PROUD SPACE?

ACTIVITY 2

Time: 45 mins

Equipment Needed: Pen and paper and/or laptop/computer

- This activity requires the group to brainstorm together on identifying some spaces in their lives and the barriers to making them safe. This could be their youth group, sports club and school. It can be done in small or big groups.
- Once the spaces and barriers are identified the group will identify ways of removing these barriers e.g. staff training, gender neutral toilets.
- The group is then encouraged to pen a letter together to the spaces outlining some areas they would love to see changes made to make it more LGBTQI+ inclusive, what they are and how they could achieve the changes.



PROUD SPACES LGBTQI+ WORKSHOP

MY DREAM PROUD SPACE

ACTIVITY 1

Time: 30-45 mins

Equipment Needed: Arts and crafts materials, magazines, newspapers.

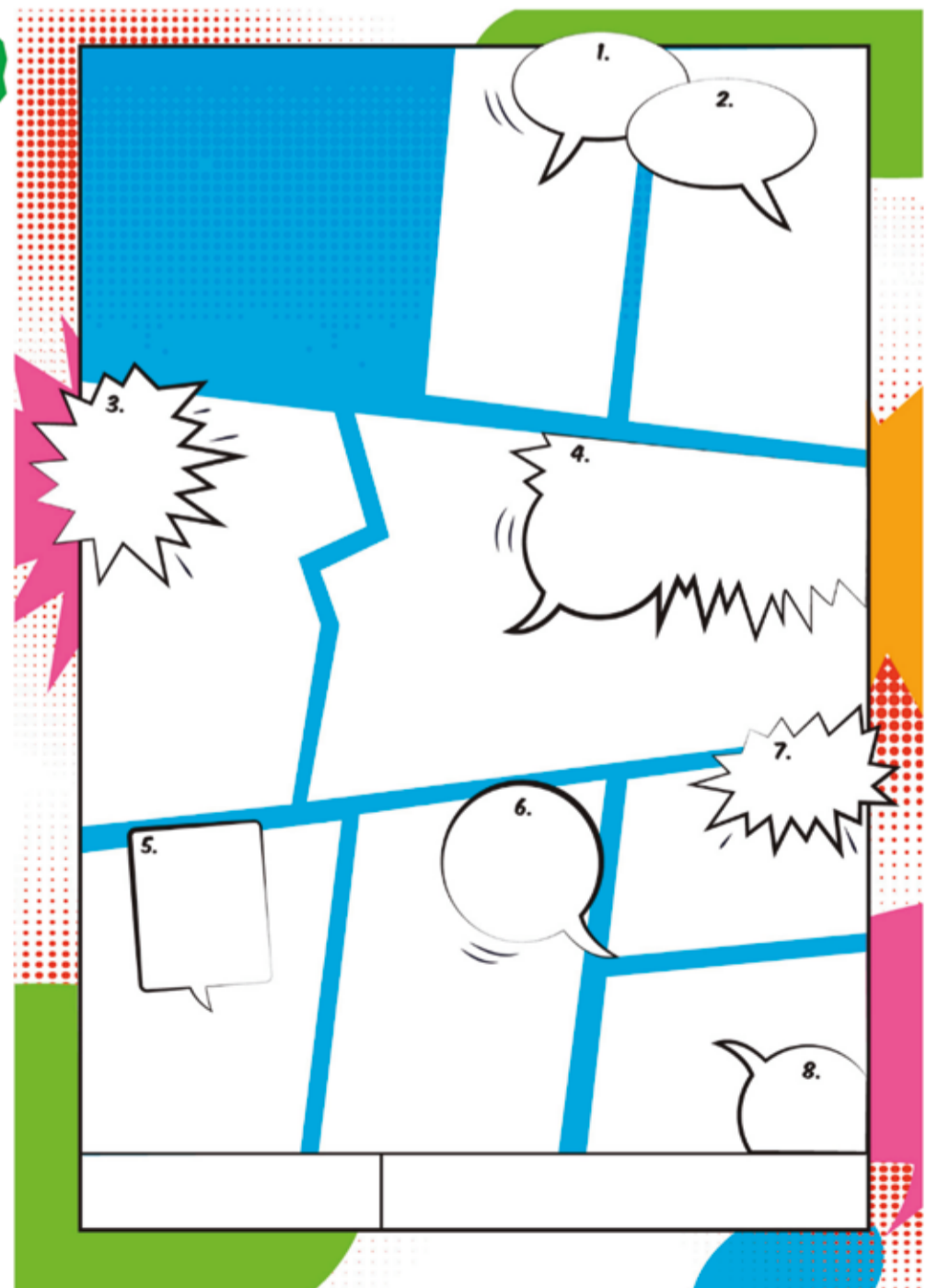
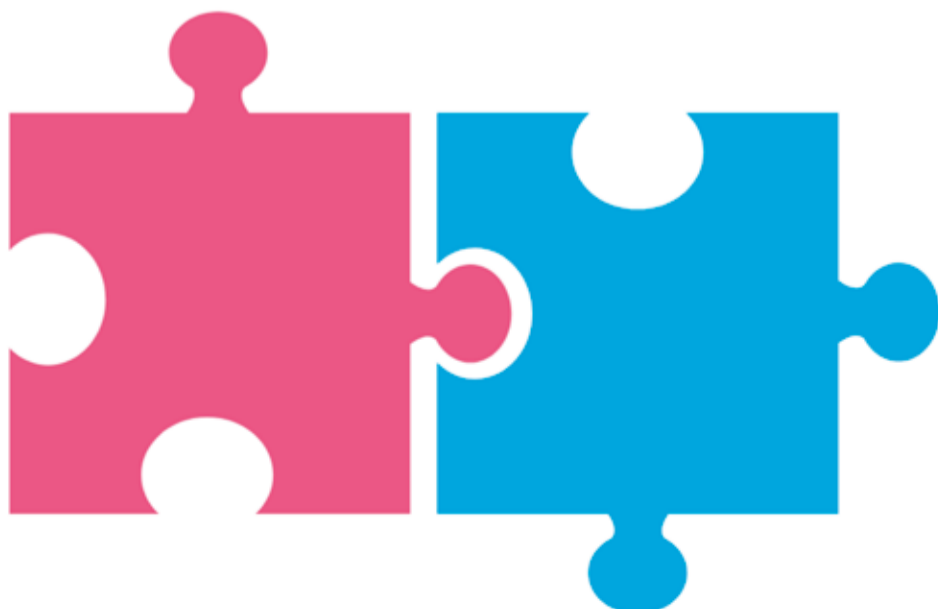
- Question to young people - What does your dream Proud Space look like?
- In groups or individually, ask them to make a collage depicting their dream proud space.

ACTIVITY 2

Time: 20 mins

Equipment Needed: Fill in the template on the next page.

- Ask the group individually or in pairs to fill in the below template with eight unique things about their dream Proud Space e.g. it has a pride flag, I feel safe to dress in the gender I desire.



WHAT IS A PROUD SPACE TO YOU?

A SPACE WITH OTHERS WHO UNDERSTAND US

A SPACE WHERE WE CAN FEEL FREE AND HAPPY

A SPACE WHERE EVERYONE IS INCLUDED

A SPACE WHERE WE ARE LISTENED TO SOMEWHERE WE CAN BE OURSELVES

SOMEWHERE WE CAN DRESS AS WE WANT WITHOUT JUDGEMENT

SOMEWHERE DIVERSITY IS CELEBRATED

HOW ARE YOU MADE TO FEEL PROUD IN THIS SPACE?

VISUAL REPRESENTATIVES LIKE PRIDE FLAGS

EVERYONE IS LISTENED TO

STAFF MEMBERS ARE KIND AND UNDERSTANDING

THE SPACE FEELS PHYSICALLY SAFE FROM THREATS

OTHER PEOPLE IN THE GROUP HAVE SIMILAR LIVED EXPERIENCES

PEOPLE LISTEN AND RESPECT OUR PRONOUNS

I DON'T NEED TO HIDE MY IDENTITY

SUPPORTIVE STAFF

WE ARE LISTENED TO

THERE ARE OTHER PEOPLE JUST LIKE ME

PEOPLE ARE ENCOURAGED TO BE THEMSELVES

MY PRONOUNS ARE RESPECTED

WE ARE ACCEPTED AS WE ARE WITHOUT JUDGEMENT OR QUESTIONS

WHAT MAKES YOUR YOUTH GROUP / SPACE PROUD?

FACILITATE LEARNING ABOUT LGBTQI+ TOPICS

THEY ENSURE WE FEEL SAFE AND RESPECTED IN THEIR SPACE

THEY LINK US UP WITH OTHER LGBTQI+ GROUPS

WE CAN DESIGN AND PLAN THE SESSIONS

THEY HAVE LGBTQI+ POSITIVE STAFF

ORGANISING LGBTQI+ EVENTS AND TRIPS

THE ORGANISATIONS ARE OPEN ABOUT SUPPORTING LGBTQI+ ISSUES

WHAT DOES THE GROUP / ORGANISATION DO TO MAKE THIS SPACE MORE INCLUSIVE AND PROUD FOR LGBTQI+ YOUNG PEOPLE?

PART 2 - BARRIERS TO PROUD SPACES

BARRIERS

1. Transport to groups;
2. Social anxiety about attending groups;
3. Lack of groups in rural locations;
4. Parents beliefs;
5. Finding out about LGBTQI+ groups and resources;
6. Physical accessibility in the spaces;
7. Afraid of people finding out I attend an LGBTQI+ group;
8. Unsupportive peers;
9. Unsupportive school environment;
10. Lack of changing rooms and gender neutral toilets;
11. Fear for safety;
12. Fear of transphobia.

"I DON'T FEEL LIKE I NEED TO HIDE MY QUEERNESS."

OVERCOMING BARRIERS

1. Mandatory LGBTQI+ training for teachers;
2. Parents training/ support group;
3. Advertising the group as widely as possible;
4. Help with transport to groups;
5. More groups in rural locations;
6. 1:1's with youth workers before joining a group;
7. Changing rooms and gender neutral toilets;
8. Not advertising specific date and time of group for safety;
9. Funding for spaces to become physically accessible;
10. LGBTQI+ workshops in schools to educate peers.

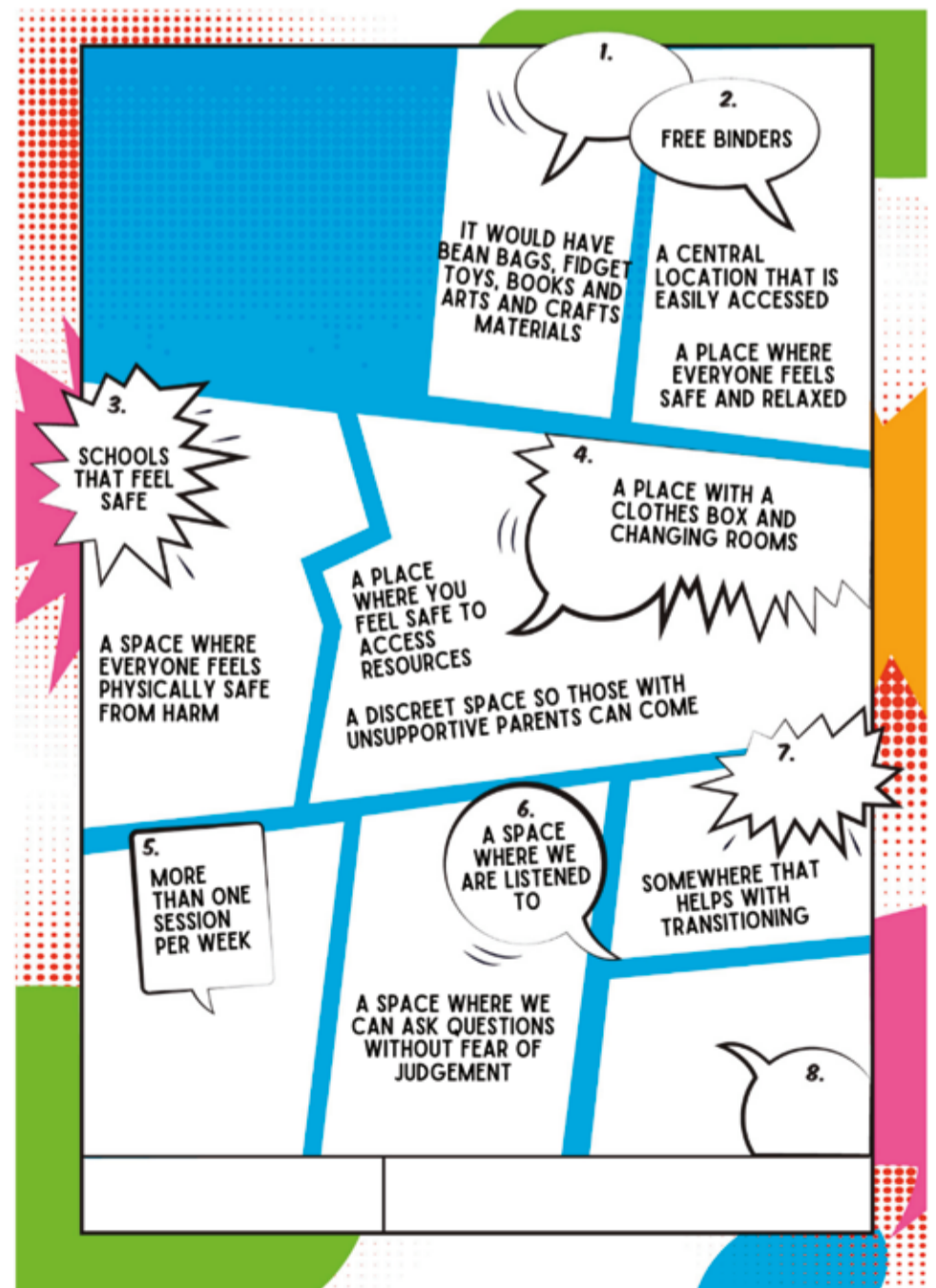
"I FEEL COMFORTED AND SAFE IN HERE, IT'S LIKE MY HOME."

A MASSIVE THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING LGBTQI+ GROUPS AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE WORKSHOPS AND ALLOWED US TO LOOK AT THEIR RESULTS:

FDYS ORBIT LGBT GROUP
CHILLOUT
KDYS LISTOWEL
CO LONGFORD YOUTH SERVICE
GOSHH

YWI ATHLONE
BREAKOUT DONEGAL
BLUEBELL YOUTH PROJECT
YWI MEATH
OUTCOMERS

PART 3 - MY DREAM PROUD SPACE



LGBTQI+ YOUTH GROUPS IN IRELAND

CARLOW

My Unique Individuality (MUI)
Carlow Regional Youth Service
www.carlowrys.com

CAVAN AND MONAGHAN

LGBT Youth Cavan
Focus Family Resource Centre
www.focusfrc.com
Cavan & Monaghan Rainbow Youth
www.camry.ie

CORK

Skittles LGBTQI++
CDYS Youth Work Ireland
www.cdys.ie

CLARE

Allies LGBTQI++ Youth Group
Clare Youth Service
www.facebook.com/ClareYouthService

DONEGAL

BreakOUT
Donegal Youth Service
www.donegalyouthservice.ie

DUBLIN

Individuality
Belong To
www.belongto.org
O.U.T.
Finglas Youth Resource Centre
www.fyrc.ie
Tallaght LGBT
Foroige
www.foroige.ie

Allsorts

Talk About Youth Service (D2)
www.standrews.ie

GALWAY

shOUT
Youth Work Ireland Galway
www.shout.ie

KERRY

Kerry Youth Pride
KDYS
www.kdys.ie

KILDARE

KLGBT
In Sync Youth & Family Services
www.insync.ie

KILKENNY

OpenDoor Youth Project
Ossory Youth
www.ossoryyouth.com

LAOIS

LuckOUT
Youth Work Ireland Laois
www.ywilaois.com

Midlands LGBTQI+ Project
www.midlandslgbtproject.com

LEITRIM

SMILY
Youth Work Ireland Nth Connaught
www.ncycs.ie

LIMERICK

The Q's
Gender Autonomy GOSHH
www.goshh.ie

Lava Java
Limerick Youth Service
www.limerickyouthservice.com

GenderWise
GOSHH
www.goshh.ie

LONGFORD

WYLD
Youth Work Ireland Longford
www.lcrl.ie

LOUTH

AIM Youth Group
Dundalk Outcomers
www.outcomers.org

MAYO

Cairde
www.foroige.ie

MEATH

Navan LGBT Group
Youth Work Ireland Meath
www.youthworkirelandmeath.ie

MONAGHAN

LGBT + Ally Group
Youth Work Ireland Cavan Monaghan
www.ywimonaghan.ie

Cavan and Monaghan Rainbow Youth
www.camry.ie

SLIGO

SMILY
Youth Work Ireland North Connaught
www.ncycs.ie

TIPPERARY

OUTstanding
Youth Work Ireland Tipperary
www.youthworktipperary.ie

WATERFORD

ChillOUT
Gender Blender Waterford & Sth. Tipperary CYS
www.wstcys.ie

WESTMEATH

LGBT Youth Clubs
Youth Work Ireland Midlands
www.youthworkmidlands.org

WEXFORD

Wexford LGBT Youth Group
FDYS Youth Work Ireland
www.fdys.ie

Gorey LGBT Youth Group
Gorey Youth Needs
www.gyng.ie

LGBT New Ross
Youth New Ross
www.ynr.ie

WICKLOW

Bray LGBT Youth & Friends
Bray Youth Service
www.crosscare.ie

41

42

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

SUPPORT AGENCIES

Mullally, U. et al (2018) LGBTQI++ National Youth Strategy. Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration, and Youth.

(2019) National LGBTQI++ Inclusion Strategy 2019-2021. Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration, and Youth.

Gleeson, C. et. al (2009) LGBT Health: Towards Meeting the Health Care Needs of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender People. Health Service Executive.

Chambers, D. et. al (2005) Reach Out: The Irish Government's National Strategy for Action on Suicide Prevention (2005.2014). Health Service Executive.

(2019) Better Outcomes Brighter Futures, the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014 - 2020. Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

Barron, M., Stephens, A. (2012) Access All Areas: A Diversity Toolkit for the Youth Work Sector. National Youth Council of Ireland, Chapter 3.

Bowen, N. (2019) Needs Analysis of Young People Identifying as LGBT* in Co. Tipperary, Ireland. Youth Work Ireland Tipperary.

Belong To
www.belongto.org

Shout Out
www.shoutout.ie

LGBT Ireland
www.lgbt.ie

Midlands LGBTQI+ Project
www.midlandslgbtproject.com

Youth Work Ireland
www.youth.ie

Outcomers
www.outcomers.org

Outwest
www.outwest.ie

LINC
www.linc.ie

Gay Project
www.gayproject.ie

Outhouse
www.outhouse.ie

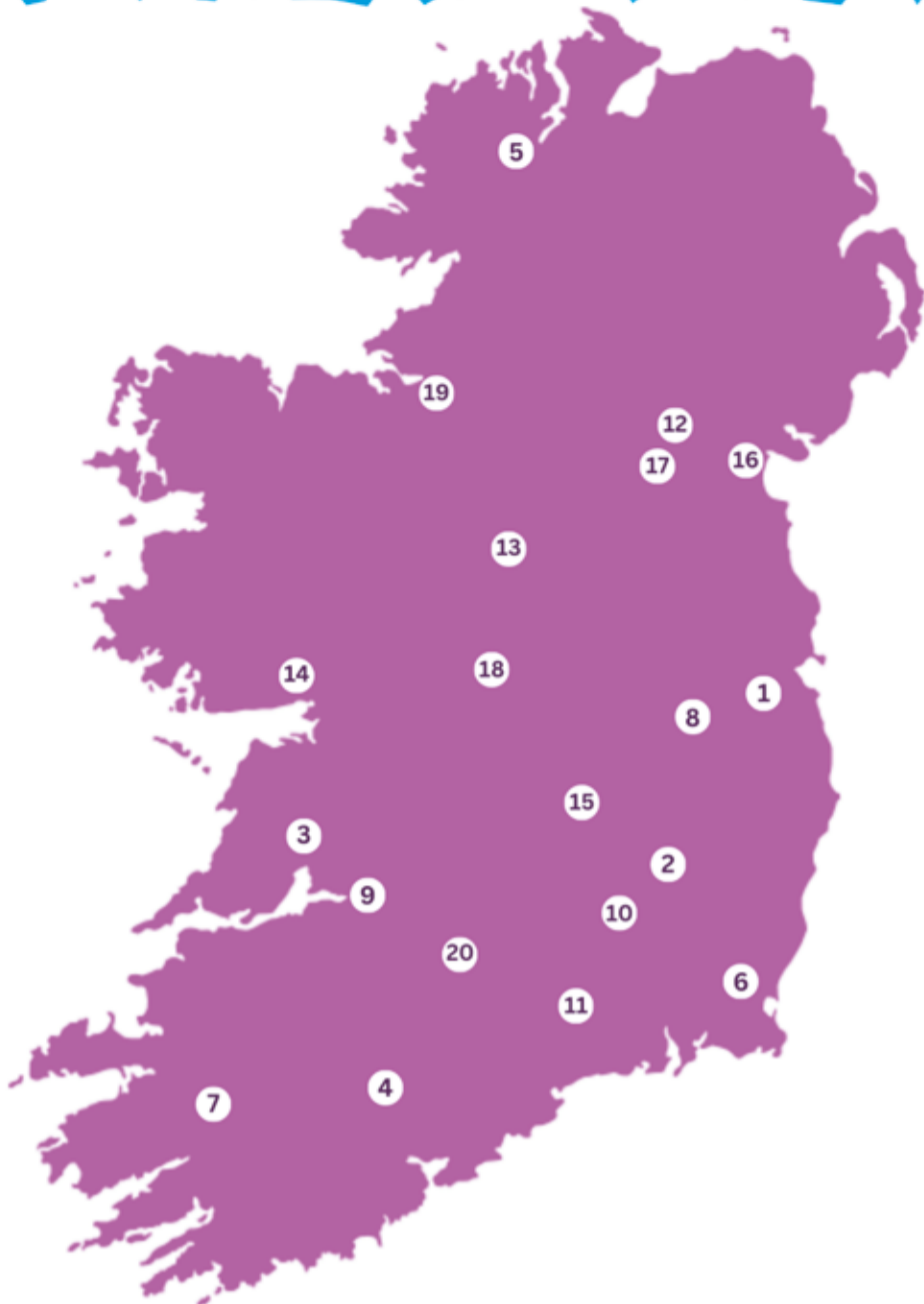
TENI
www.teni.ie

GOSHH
www.goshh.ie

43

44

YOUTH WORK IRELAND MEMBER SERVICES



1 Canal Communities Regional Youth Service

2 Carlow Regional Youth Service

3 Clare Youth Service

4 CDYS Youth Work Ireland

5 Donegal Youth Service

6 FDYS Youth Work Ireland

7 KDYS

8 In Sync Youth & Family Services

9 Limerick Youth Service

10 Ossory Youth

11 Waterford & South Tipperary Community Youth Service

12 Youth Work Ireland Cavan Monaghan

13 Youth Work Ireland Co. Longford

14 Youth Work Ireland Galway

15 Youth Work Ireland Laois

16 Youth Work Ireland Louth

17 Youth Work Ireland Meath

18 Youth Work Ireland Midlands

19 Youth Work Ireland North Connaught

20 Youth Work Ireland Tipperary

NOTES

