

Summary of the Consultations Undertaken to Inform the Development of a successor Strategy to the National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy

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9th September 2024

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Introduction

The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) sought the professional services of a facilitator to design and run a series of Public Consultations over a period of 8 to 12 weeks from the start of April to early July 2024, on priority issues/themes to support the development of a successor Strategy to the National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy. Following a competitive tendering process, they awarded the tender to Dr Grainne Healy and Dr Kathy Walsh (with the support of LGBT Ireland).

Methodology

Overview

It is envisaged that the successor to the National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy will adopt a whole of lifecycle approach in addressing the needs of LGBTIQ+ people. A robust consultation process was therefore designed to inform this approach. Two separate processes were employed; one which was open to participants aged 18 and over and a separate process involving the participation of children and young people, which was undertaken by the National Participation Office, in DCEDIY. This report refers to the consultation with those aged 18 and over.

Consultations were undertaken using four discrete methods. In person workshops, small focus groups, interviews and, through an online submission portal for both individuals and organisations. A total of 550 individuals were consulted and there were engagements with almost 50 organisations.

This report represents a summary of the consultations undertaken with key priority actions included for consideration as part of the development of a successor Strategy to the National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy. A more detailed report on the consultation process is available [here](#).

Table 1 Overall Numbers Engaging in the Consultation Process			
Individuals	Regional Workshops	116	550
	Focus Groups	64	
	Submissions	370 ¹	

¹ 416 was the total number of online submissions received. 11 of this total number were variations of duplicated returns from either individuals or organisations submissions.

Organisations	Submissions	35 ¹	59 ²
	Interviews	8	
	Departmental representation at the consultation with members of Steering Committee for the first National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy	16	

The Regional Workshops

Regional workshops were advertised via www.gov.ie, through Gay Community News (GCN) and by LGBTIQ+ support organisations around the country. Five of the six regional workshops were organised in community venues. The sixth and final workshop was held online with sign language interpreters provided. See Table 2 for details.

Location	Date	Numbers attending	LGBTIQ+ groups represented					
			Lesbian	Gay	Bisexual	Trans	Intersex	Other Queer identities
Dublin City	13 th June	20	√	√	√	√	√	√
Galway City	15 th June	10	√	√		√	√	
Cork City	17 th June	29	√	√	√	√	√	√
Dundalk	24 th June	35	√	√	√	√	√	√
Portlaoise	25 th June	10	√	√		√	√	
Online with signers	2 nd July	10	√	√		√		√

² Some larger organisations (e.g. the HSE) engaged more than once in the consultation process, with different sections of the organisation involved in different aspects of the consultation.

Online with ISL interpretation	2 nd July	12	√	√	√	√		√
Total		116						

Attendees at the workshops were divided into small groups where they were facilitated to conduct conversations about 1) Safety, 2) Health and Wellbeing, 3) Participation and Access and 4) Equality and Non-Discrimination. Each group was asked to focus on key issues of concern that needed to be addressed, actions that could be suggested to address issues most effectively and where possible to identify priority actions. The data from across the consultations was reviewed and actions were prioritised based on their ability to effect change; their ability to address the scale and depth of the concerns raised by the LGBTIQ+ community; and the relative importance of the concerns to one another, to the wider LGBTIQ+ community and to the specific groups within that community. The four themes were informed by the European Commission LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025, the review of the National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy, implementation of the LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy, and international and national research. The themes were identified in advance of the consultations. Participants also had an opportunity at the end of the workshop to raise any additional issues. The thematic structure of the workshops was validated across all sessions, as few issues were highlighted outside of these thematic areas as priority issues for consideration.

First National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy Steering Committee Workshop

An additional workshop was organised online with members of the Steering Committee for the first National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy. The group is made up of representatives of Government departments, State agencies and a range of LGBTIQ+ support organisations. This group was responsible for monitoring the implementation of the first Strategy.

Focus groups

Focus groups were organised with specific groups within the wider LGBTIQ+ community. These groups were organised with the support of a range of LGBTIQ+ specific support organisations as well as other organisations who work with these individuals.³ See Table 3 for details of the focus groups that were organised.

³ While most of these organisations are funded through various means to support their work, it is noted that a small number of the support groups and stakeholders offering support to these communities do so on an entirely voluntary basis, with no funded supports.

Table 3 Focus Group Schedule and Format		
Group	Date	Location
Migrants	11 th May	In person
Trans people	20 th June	In person
Disabled people ⁴	26 th June	Online
Older people	1 st July	Online
Intersex people	1 st July	Online
Bisexual people	4 th July	Online
Travellers and Roma	5 th July	Online
Total Number of Individuals who attended	64	

Attendance at the groups varied from 1 to 20 people, with no individuals attending the Traveller and Roma workshop. A small number of interviews were conducted with organisations working with Traveller and Roma communities in lieu of the focus group. Efforts were also made to organise a focus group with prisoners. However, a decision was ultimately made not to pursue this option given that it had the potential to expose those attending the group to unnecessary risk due to their LGBTIQ+ identity. The consultation organisers also reached out to several organisations who provide support to ex-prisoners to see if they could assist in the organisation of a focus group with ex-prisoners. However, few of the support organisations were aware of how many of the individuals they supported were members of the LGBTIQ+ community, so it was not possible to organise a group via this means.

Interviews

Consultations with the Traveller and Roma community took the form of interviews. One interview with an organisation working with Traveller and Roma communities, a second with an organisation working with the Traveller community. Further efforts to engage LGBTIQ+ Travellers and Roma with the consultation were attempted through individual interviews, however this was not successful. An interview was also conducted with a staff member from an LGBTIQ+ support organisation who had worked with an LGBTIQ+ prisoner at the invitation of a prison Social Worker. Exploratory discussions were also held with Inclusion Ireland and

⁴ We use the term 'disabled people' throughout this document. Some people prefer the term 'disabled people', and others prefer 'people with a disability'. In this instance, the consultation organisers were asked by the disabled persons support organisations to use the term 'disabled people' in preparation for this focus group. For further advice on disability language and terminology see National Disability Authority (2022) NDA Advice Paper on Disability Language and Terminology (Available here: <https://nda.ie/uploads/publications/NDA-Advice-Paper-on-Disability-Language-and-Terminology.docx>)

with the Health Service Executive (HSE) to see if it might be possible to organise a consultation with LGBTIQ+ individuals with an intellectual disability. However, this did not prove feasible.

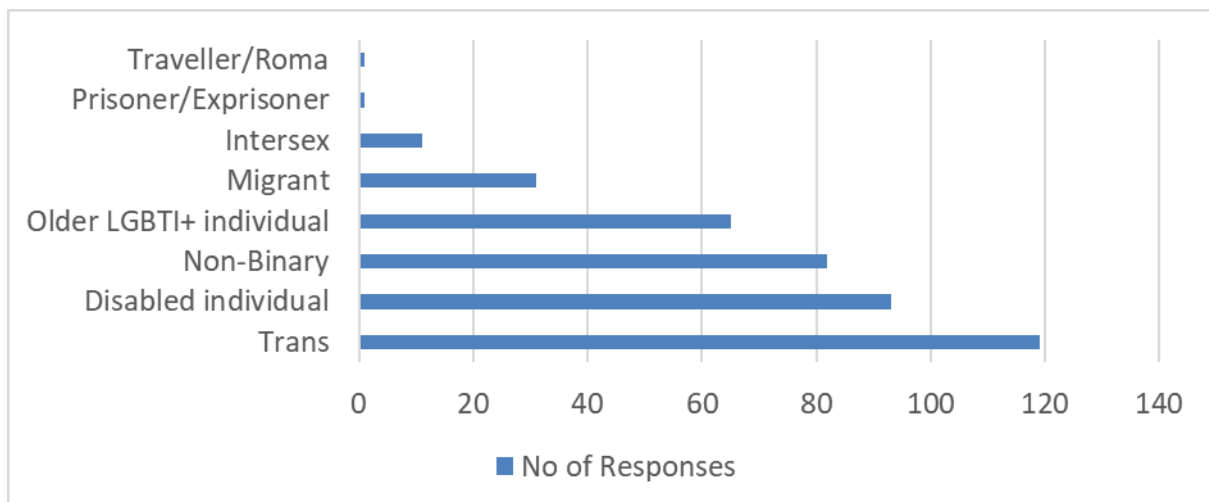
Online submissions

The online submission portal opened at the end of May 2024 and closed in early July 2024. It was promoted via www.gov.ie, by LGBTIQ+ support organisations around the country as well as at through the various in-person and online consultation events. A total of 416 submissions were received.¹

Individual submissions

Of the 370 individuals who responded, approximately 87% of the individuals chose to describe themselves were members of the LGBTIQ+ community. The remainder were either family or friends of members of the LGBTIQ+ community. Two hundred and thirty-six (236) individual respondents provided details of which LGBTIQ+ group they identified with, with some individuals falling into more than one group. For example, one individual identified themselves as a ‘disabled older trans person’, while another described themselves as a ‘non-binary migrant’ effectively demonstrating the fact that many members of the LGBTIQ+ community have multiple identities and proposed actions to include all LGBTIQ+ people may well require intersectional approaches.

Figure 1 Identities of the Individuals who made Submission via the Online Portal



Organisational submissions

Responses were received from 35 named organisations.⁵

⁵ See Appendix 1 for details of the organisations who made a submission. Intersex Ireland made two distinct submissions.

Pillar 1 Safety

All the Individuals who attended the in-person and online consultations and the majority of those who made online submissions reported experiencing increased incidences of homophobia, lesbophobia and transphobia both in their everyday lives and indeed online over the last 18 months.

The view across all the consultations was that the situation for members of the LGBTIQ+ community had become less safe than it had been in previous years. In addition, there was a clear consensus that both LGBTIQ+ individuals and the LGBTIQ+ community had become more fearful, with the rise of the far right, as well as increasing levels of misinformation being spread online and via social media. The view expressed across all the consultations was that the *'more different you looked'* the more likely you were to experience violence and discrimination. This in turn filtered down into community members' decisions about how they dressed in public and what events they went to, and with whom. For example, some of those attending the in-person events spoke about having to think more about what they wear in public, in order not to draw unwelcome attention to themselves, while others admitted that they no longer felt safe to attend a Pride parade alone, but instead made plans to travel and attend with others, which felt safer.

It was also clear from the various in-person and online consultations and submissions that relationships between many LGBTIQ+ individuals and An Garda Síochána (AGS) is marked by a significant lack of trust, which may in turn prevent people from reporting a crime. This is a significant concern in terms of the safety of the community.

The LGBTIQ+ support organisations (quoting the An Garda Síochána (AGS) – 2022 Hate Crime Data⁶) noted a 29% increase in reported hate crimes and hate related (non-crime) incidents, with sexual orientation (22%) the second most prevalent discriminatory motive (behind race at 32%) and nationality (21%). They also noted that hate motives were increasingly evident in a range of incidents in 2022, the largest percentage being public order (30%), minor assaults (20%), assault causing harm (9%) and criminal damage (8%). Concerns about safety were seen to affect all the different LGBTIQ+ groups and all ages with Belong To

⁶ An Garda Síochána (2022) Hate Crime Data and Related Discriminatory Motives (Available here: <https://www.garda.ie/en/about-us/our-departments/office-of-corporate-communications/press-releases/2023/march/an-garda-siochana-2022-hate-crime-data-and-related-discriminatory-motives.html> accessed 24th July 2024)

Youth Services and others quoting recent research⁷, which found that young LGBTIQ+ people were also experiencing violence and abuse and feeling unsafe both in public and, perhaps even more worryingly, in the school environment.

Safety not surprisingly, was identified as an area of major concern in all the various consultations and particularly within the individual online submissions and the LGBTIQ+ support organisation submissions. Those attending the consultations were pleased to see that it was being considered as a key pillar of the new strategy, as addressing safety concerns among the LGBTIQ+ community was seen as key to supporting the inclusion of the community in wider societal activities. Initiatives that were identified as working well across all the consultations included: The establishment of Coimisiún na Meán in relation to regulating hate speech online, as well as the specific recognition of the LGBTIQ+ community within the Third National Domestic Sexual and Gender Based Violence Strategy. Other positive initiatives identified included work done by the National Transport Authority in support of LGBTIQ+ safety on public transport, and examples of the establishment of positive working relationships between An Garda Síochána and LGBTIQ+ support organisations in several locations around the country.

The key concerns across the consultations related to; the rise of the far right and linked to this, the rise in levels of on street violence, as well as online intimidation and targeting of LGBTIQ+ people. Across all the submissions and the consultations, the issue of an individual's safety was linked to their physical identity and their presenting identity with a strong perception among the community that the more an individual presents as visibly queer, the more likely they are to experience violence and discrimination, with some groups (e.g. trans and intersex people) identified as more vulnerable than others by most of the consultees. The priority actions included in this section were the ones most frequently identified by consultees. See Table 2 for details.

⁷Higgins A., Downes C., O'Sullivan K., de Vries J., Molloy R., Monahan M., Keogh B., Doyle L., Begley T., & Corcoran P. (2024) *Being LGBTIQ+ in Ireland: The National Study on the Mental Health and Wellbeing of the LGBTIQ+ Communities in Ireland*. Dublin: Trinity College Dublin (Available here: <https://www.belongto.org/app/uploads/2024/04/FINAL-Being-LGBTQI-in-Ireland-Full-Report.pdf>)

Higgins A., Downes C., O'Sullivan K., de Vries J., Molloy R., Monahan M., Keogh B., Doyle L., Begley T., & Corcoran P. (2024) *Being LGBTIQ+ in Ireland: The National Study on the Mental Health and Wellbeing of the LGBTIQ+ Communities in Ireland*. Dublin: Trinity College Dublin (Available here: <https://www.belongto.org/app/uploads/2024/04/FINAL-Being-LGBTQI-in-Ireland-Full-Report.pdf>)

Pizmony-Levy, O. (2022). *The 2022 Irish National School Climate Survey Report*. Research Report. Global Observatory of LGBTQ+ Education and Advocacy. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University (Available here: <https://www.belongto.org/app/uploads/2023/07/2022-School-Climate-Survey-Full-Report.pdf>)

Table 4 Headline Priority Actions to Address Safety

<p>1. Misinformation (Hate crime legislation is dealt with under Pillar 4)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Resource and equip the Press Ombudsman, Comisiún na Meán and the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland respectively, to challenge misinformation and ensure national standards are maintained.- Introduce effective regulation of social media platforms with more stringent regulation and control of algorithms (not just guidelines) with stronger enforcement of hate speech regulations by all social media companies. Introduce significant consequences for those who commit these offences.- Counteract anti-LGBTIQ+ narratives through positive messaging. Specifically implement a public awareness campaign to address misinformation in relation intersex and transgender people.
<p>2. Domestic Sexual and Gender based Violence (DSGBV)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Increase awareness among the LGBTIQ+ community of the specialist DSGBV Support organisations that operate locally and ensure the community is aware that these services are independent of the state.- Provide staff and volunteers working in Domestic Abuse Refuges/Services and Rape Crisis Centres with training in relation to sensitivities where domestic abuse and/or sexual violence occurs within same-sex relationships.
<p>3. Safety in public spaces, night-time economy and LGBTIQ spaces</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Ensure better protection for customer-facing public services staff and particularly library staff.- Develop and deliver LGBTIQ+ bystander training (like that developed by University College Cork in relation to DSGBV) for bus/taxi drivers and others working in the night-time economy to support them to be able to intervene to call out and stop homophobic behaviour.- Introduce grants to assist LGBTIQ+ organisations, as well as organisations that support LGBTIQ+ individuals to improve their security infrastructure.
<p>4. Relationship with An Garda Síochána (AGS)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Undertake a campaign targeting the LGBTIQ+ community, which details how to report a crime. This campaign needs to tell people how and to whom to report to in plain English.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop mandatory comprehensive and ongoing Continuous Professional Development (CPD) training programmes for Gardaí on LGBTIQ+ issues, hate crime, and intersectional identities, focusing on building trust and ensuring that law enforcement responses are informed, respectful, and supportive. Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this training. - Reconvene the Garda National Diversity and Integration Forum (following structural reform) to enable dialogue between An Garda Síochána and civil society organisations representing LGBTIQ+ communities. - Incorporate a requirement for LGBTIQ+ community representatives to be members of Local Community Safety Partnerships (LCSPs) to ensure that the specific safety needs and concerns of LGBTIQ+ individuals are addressed at a local level.
5. Training for greater safety for LGBTIQ+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure specialist support organisations' input (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex) is sought and embedded into the development and delivery of LGBTIQ+ awareness training.
Specific concerns for/of particular groups	
6. Migrants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure the gender identity and sexual orientation of International Protection Applicants is considered in relation to their placement in Emergency Accommodation and Direct Provision. - Provide training around issues of gender identity and sexual orientation of International Protection Applicants for Emergency Accommodation and Direct Provision managers, including development of and training on policies on zero tolerance of homophobia. Monitor and evaluate the impact of this training on residents in the centres, including LGBTIQ+ and other vulnerable and marginalised residents. - Provide LGBTIQ+ organisations with access to International Protection Accommodation Service (IPAS) centres and adequate resourcing to enable them to engage with and provide supports to LGBTIQ+ applicants.

7. Prisoners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Irish Prison Service to ratify policies which accommodate LGBTIQ+ prisoners, and trans prisoners' safely.⁸
8. Traveller and Roma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resource Traveller organisations sufficiently to enable them to increase the supports available to LGBTIQ+ Traveller and Roma individuals and their families, thereby creating the conditions for more open discussions around LGBTIQ+ identity within the Traveller and Roma communities (Both as a prioritisation of safety and of health and wellbeing). - Develop joint LGBTIQ+ and Traveller awareness training for mainstream statutory services (covering health, education, social welfare) to enable appropriate support for individual LGBTIQ+ Travellers.

⁸ Office of the Inspector of Prisons (2021) COVID-19 Thematic Inspection of Limerick Prison

Pillar 2 Health and Well-being

Most individuals who attended the in person and online consultations, and many of the individuals and organisations who made online submissions reported experiencing challenges associated with accessing both the general and the LGBTIQ+ specific health and wellbeing services and supports they required. This section mainly focuses on exploring LGBTIQ+ specific health needs, although some reference is made to challenges related to accessing wider general health services.

Areas that were seen by the majority of those involved in the consultations as working well in relation to health and wellbeing included: access to vaccines, access to home STI testing as well as expansion of the community sexual health information programmes. Some individuals also reported very positive engagements with their GPs and GP practice nurses. The LGBT Champions Programme was identified as a positive development in the provision of care for older LGBTIQ+ people, while numerous individuals reported that finding and engaging with a local LGBTIQ+ support organisation was a valuable support in relation to their overall wellbeing. Finally, the growth in autism awareness generally, and the growing recognition of the prevalence of high levels of autism within the LGBTIQ+ community was also seen as a very positive development.

The LGBTIQ+ support organisations who made submissions highlighted the fact that members of the LGBTIQ+ community have worse health outcomes than members of the cis-gender community, with higher rates of some cancers within the LGBTIQ+ community. These organisations also highlighted the lack of LGBTIQ+ patient voices being included or sought in relation to ongoing health services provision and reform. Among individual members of the community who attended the consultations and who made submissions there was a strong view that the LGBTIQ+ experience of healthcare had worsened since the development of the first LGBTIQ+ Inclusion Strategy.

There was a general recognition across the consultations that mental health services are under resourced and under pressure. It was also widely recognised that members of the LGBTIQ+ community can be fearful to open up about their mental health due to the stigma and fear of blaming their mental health issues on being LGBTIQ+. Individuals attending the consultations also drew attention to the fact that often, when they do finally get to a mental health professional, the professional does not know 'how to deal' with or provide care to LGBTIQ+ people, and all too often assume being LGBTIQ+ is the problem, when it is not. According to the submissions and inputs of various LGBTIQ+ support organisations to the

consultations the lack of mental health resources means that individuals with complex mental health care issues are increasingly looking to the LGBTIQ+ organisations for support/s.

Key concerns consultees highlighted in relation to accessing to high quality LGBTIQ+ specific healthcare supports that conform with international standards included: the need for training and awareness among health professionals and care staff in relation to LGBTIQ+ specific health issues, access to appropriate mental health supports; as well as dealing with the challenges of being HIV positive and concerns related to substance abuse. Concern was expressed that the roll out of Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) had stalled.

Interestingly, the healthcare issue most frequently identified across all the consultations by members of the trans community and members all the other LGBTIQ+ groups was the issue of trans healthcare. The fact that Ireland has been identified⁹ as having the worst healthcare for transgender people among the 27 EU member-states and that the National Gender Service (NGS) does not currently abide by the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) global health guidelines for trans healthcare in relation to the application of an informed consent model were frequently cited by LGBTIQ+ support organisations. Long waiting lists to access these services were another key concern.

Key intersex community concerns related to the provision of specialist health care for the intersex community, the ending of unnecessary surgeries for intersex babies, as well the provision of better mental healthcare and the development of an appropriate mechanism to bring intersex persons with lived experience together with health care professionals to enhance the health care provision for the intersex community.

Other concerns related to the extent and nature of disability within the LGBTIQ+ community, as well as the various challenges faced by disabled LGBTIQ+ individuals in terms of accessing a range of LGBTIQ+ specific and other wider health supports. Older LGBTIQ+ people had concerns in relation to access to LGBTIQ+ friendly care in residential settings. The key health and wellbeing concerns of bisexual people consulted were linked to the fact that bisexuality is too often confused with promiscuity and the assumption of heterosexuality by health professionals and those working in the healthcare sector. LGBTIQ+ migrants were most exercised about their ability to access primary care and to access LGBTIQ+ specific health care in a timely fashion. Prisoners' concerns were linked to the negative health impacts of

⁹ Adams, N. and Ganesan, D. (2023) *The State of Trans-Specific Healthcare in the EU: Looking Beyond the Trans Health Map 2022*. Transgender Europe (TGEU) (Available here: <https://www.tgeu.org/files/uploads/2023/11/TGEU-Trans-Health-Map-Report.pdf>)

solitary incarceration, the need for confidentiality in relation to accessing LGBTIQ+ specific health care, as well as a need for a multiagency approach to supporting LGBTIQ+ prisoners. See Table 5 for details of the actions that were identified as priority areas of action.

Table 5 Headline Priority Actions to Address Health and Wellbeing	
1. Addressing Mental Health supports for the LGBTIQ+ community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Enhance and increase access to LGBTIQ+ mental health support for adults and young people and address the stigma felt by LGBTIQ+ individuals in mental health services by providing more specialised HSE counsellors trained to work with LGBTIQ+ people. Make this service accessible in the Irish Sign language. – Provide mental health supports within LGBTIQ+ community spaces for LGBTIQ+ individuals to seek supports in spaces they consider to be safe. – Compile a directory of LGBTIQ+ friendly counselling services. – Provide psychological support for LGBTIQ+ children and their parents, including supports for trans and non-binary people that supports and affirms an individual's gender identity.
2. Inclusive healthcare system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Make the healthcare system more inclusive through the provision of an ongoing programme of LGBTIQ+ awareness training for GPs, health care professionals and health care staff as part of their foundation training but also as a part of continuous professional development. – Support the ongoing review, development and enhancement of LGBTIQ+ specific health and support services with the involvement of both LGBTIQ+ individuals and their representative organisations.
3. Trans healthcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Reform and replacement of the current system of trans healthcare provision with a system that is gender affirming and based on an informed consent model that includes GP care and that conforms with the best practice World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) guidelines.
4. Accessibility of sexual health services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Establish a sexual health website specifically for the LGBTIQ+ community, ensure the content is available in Irish and other relevant languages and is of the same quality as the content in English; ensure sexual health clinics are accessible and

	<p>inclusive of all LGBTIQ+ people, and broaden the provision of and access to Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP).</p>
<p>Specific concerns for/of particular groups</p>	
<p>5. Non-binary and Intersex people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Recognise non-binary individuals as a distinct group with specific health needs. – Create distinct and separate medical pathways for intersex people-informed by their lived experience and developed in cooperation with representatives from the intersex community. – Create a forum for medical practitioners and intersex support organisations/activists to work together to enhance understanding of intersex variations
<p>6. Disabled people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Provide timely access to neurodivergence assessments within the public health system. – Develop a publicly available code of conduct / standards as to what LGBTIQ+ people can expect from disability services/home help. – Breakdown the barriers to accessing mental health service faced by autistic and disabled LGBTIQ+ people, including training more LGBTIQ+ friendly sign language interpreters.
<p>7. Older people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Roll out the LGBT Ireland Care Champions Programme nationally. – Create an LGBTIQ+ friendly nursing home mark of inclusion.
<p>8. Bisexual people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Develop a reporting mechanism for bisexual people to report microaggressions in the health and care system
<p>9. Migrants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Provide easier access to medical cards as the gateway to public and primary care services for migrants in International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS).
<p>10. Traveller and Roma</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Roll out anti-racism awareness training across all health services to ensure LGBTIQ+ Travellers and Roma can access services safely, ensuring all mainstream health services (general health, mental health, sexual health) offer a safe and welcoming space for LGBTIQ+ Travellers and Roma.

Pillar 3 Participation and Access

Participation and access were identified as critically important issues across the consultations and submissions. Consultees identified a range of positive developments that had happened over the last number of years including, the increased visibility of LGBTIQ+ people across society, and the high-quality specialist LGBTIQ+ supports available in several mainly urban locations. The development of partnerships between these organisations and other NGO's and in some cases State agencies from local development organisations and the Gardai to relationships with departments including the Department of Justice and Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) were also identified as positive developments. Some significant progress was also evidenced in relation to increased awareness of LGBTIQ+ identities in various educational curricula, with more work to be done. Participants at the consultations also reported that LGBTIQ+ individuals are more visible in the workplace. Several useful research studies were also conducted, which shone a light on the ongoing needs and issues for LGBTIQ+ people. Some positive developments were also evidenced in relation to sports, arts and culture.

The consultations uncovered a significant number of gaps and concerns that included the need for more LGBTIQ+ awareness events throughout the year, as well as the need for the inclusion of LGBTIQ+ individuals who both meet heteronormative ideas of 'LGBTIQness' and those who do not. Numerous concerns were raised in relation to the nature and extent of funding available to support LGBTIQ+ support organisations and the need for the specialist LGBTIQ+ support organisations to have a distinct line of multi-annual funding. Specific LGBTIQ+ groups were keen to ensure that their community would receive funding for a specialist support organisation.

The issue of homophobia and transphobia in sports was an area of particular concern for some consultees. For other consultees the issue was the limited nature of the funding available for LGBTIQ+ arts and cultural celebrations. Numerous challenges were also identified in relation to education, with work to be done with teachers, school and college staff and parents to better support LGBTIQ+ students at all levels. Harassment of LGBTIQ+ individuals in the workplace was also seen to be an area of work that needed to be tackled. Concerns were also raised in relation to housing and accommodation provision for individuals made homeless because of their LGBTIQ+ identity. The fact that LGBTIQ+ individuals are a hidden sub-population in official data was also identified as an issue. The consultees identified various actions designed to tackle both the general and the very specific concerns identified, and the priority actions areas are detailed in Table 6.

Table 6 Headline Priority Actions to Address Participation and Access

<p>1. Visibility</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Expand the number and nature of LGBTIQ+ events throughout the year to promote and increase visibility (i.e., not just Pride in June). – Develop and implement targeted initiatives to improve attitudes and reduce discrimination against all underrepresented and marginalised groups within the LGBTIQ+ community, including bisexual people, transgender people, and non-binary people, who continue to face more negative attitudes. Raise awareness of the recognition of intersex variation as a variation of physical characteristics and ensure asexual and aromantic people are included in efforts to advance LGBTIQ+ inclusion. – Ensure there are gender neutral toilets in public buildings and public spaces. – Provide training and awareness for all frontline staff in statutory service providing bodies (whether in health, education, justice services, education etc). – Implement the actions outlined in the first national LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy to improve intersectional outcomes.
<p>2. Language</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Public services should ensure that official forms and any paperwork use gender neutral language to ensure inclusivity.
<p>3. LGBTIQ+ specific supports</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ring fenced and multi annual funding are needed for specialist LGBTIQ+ sector organisations, ensuring a strong, stable network of fully staffed and resourced LGBTIQ+ organisations that can provide support, social outlets, community development, outreach, training and capacity building across the country in each county. A capital investment programme should be established to invest in LGBTIQ+ community infrastructure and to assist LGBTIQ+ organisations ensure their premises are fully accessible.¹⁰ – LGBTIQ+ organisations need to work together to tackle inter-community stigma and discrimination and provide more support

¹⁰ The Arts Council ringfences a portion of annual funding for festivals and institutions specifically for accessibility measures e.g. interpretation. Something similar could be done for LGBTIQ+ organisations.

	for LGBTIQ+ groups including migrants, disabled people and Travellers and Roma.
4. Sport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Review the guidelines of all sports bodies to ensure LGBTIQ+ inclusion in sport in line with international best practice such as in countries like Canada. Train volunteers and sports professionals on how to address homophobic abuse. Tackle misinformation regarding inclusion of trans people in sports. – Ensure sports facilities are LGBTIQ+ inclusive/ friendly and where possible include family changing rooms. – Provide opportunities for LGBTIQ+ specific sports events and activities.
5. Art / Culture (Media is dealt with under Pillar 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Continued support for initiatives to encourage LGBTIQ+ participation in Arts and Culture. – Libraries to be protected and provided with necessary support to enable them to fulfil their essential functions. – Celebrate the 10-year anniversary of Marriage Equality. – Ensure that LGBTIQ+ events are inclusive (including the provision of Irish Sign Language interpreters). There is a model for this with the Arts Council, who are now ringfencing access funding within their events funding programmes.
6. Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ensure all educational curricula from early years to higher level education includes representations of the different groups within the LGBTIQ+ community with schools required to teach about all aspects of the community in an age-appropriate way (including LGBTIQ+ histories as part of history curricula and other relevant curricula to include topics of sexual orientation and gender identity). – LGBTIQ+ inclusion training for teachers, through continuing professional development and initial teacher education, to ensure that these curricula are taught in full. Provision of teacher training to support the rollout of the Cineáltas anti-bullying plan. Additional training is also required for all school staff on supporting LGBTIQ+ students within the school environment including autistic LGBTIQ+ students. It was noted that some of this work could be achieved through increased investment in Belong To's LGBTIQ+ Quality Mark. At a national level, develop

	<p>and introduce mandatory guidance, policies and practices that support LGBTIQ+ students to affirm their identities, including the specific needs of trans, non-binary people, and autistic LGBTIQ+ people.</p>
7. Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Widely disseminate an employers’ toolkit/guidelines for use in both public and private sectors to promote LGBTIQ+ workplace inclusion including the specific needs of trans and non-binary people. – Develop and deliver LGBTIQ+ awareness and inclusion training in organisations to ensure that staff from the LGBTIQ+ community can bring their authentic self to the workplace without fear of discrimination and introduce an accreditation/ re-accreditation process within organisations to ensure that LGBTIQ+ perspectives are included.
8. Research and strategy development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Continue the work of the First National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy research sub-committee to undertake research, informed by community needs and identified gaps with a focus on the diversity of LGBTIQ+ identities (e.g. trans and intersex people, Travellers, migrant community, the needs of LGBTIQ+ people with intellectual disabilities, drivers of homophobia and biphobia), and using the principles of co-design processes to ensure the meaningful inclusion of the LGBTIQ+ people in the research process. – Census 2027 to include a broader range of questions relating to gender, sex characteristics, and sexual orientation. – Improve the quantity and quality of the LGBTIQ+ data collected by homeless services to show the extent of the problem of homelessness amongst the community. – Undertake a specific national LGBTIQ+ survey every few years, to provide a snapshot of how LGBTIQ+ people are performing in comparison to the rest of the population. – Investigate the use of Applied Behaviour Analysis, and its experience for those questioning their gender identity.
9. Future thinking in relation to the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Expand support for All Island LGBTIQ+ dialogue and community building, ensuring the voices of LGBTIQ+ people are heard in the process.

Island of Ireland	
Specific concerns for/of particular groups	
10. Bisexual people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Provide more spaces for the bisexual community to meet particularly outside of Dublin.
11. Inclusion of people with autism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Promote greater awareness, understanding and empathy for autistic communities within the broader LGBTIQ+ community and LGBTIQ+ services. Ensure autistic people and the LGBTIQ+ community are represented in all consultative forums and processes which affect them.
12. Older people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Provide more support and safe meeting places for older LGBTIQ+ individuals. – Find ways to consult and engage with older LGBTIQ+ individuals, including developing a New National Positive Aging Strategy that includes consideration of the needs of older LGBTIQ+ individuals.
13. Prisoners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Develop specific resources and services for LGBTIQ+ prisoners, involving the ‘in-reach’ of LGBTIQ+ organisations – and where these services already exist in certain prisons, expand and roll them out across the prison service.
14. Travellers and Roma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Recognise LGBTIQ+ Travellers as a vulnerable group of individuals who may require additional and tailored employment, education and housing supports as they come out as LGBTIQ+. – Continue to provide anti-racism training for LGBTIQ+ organisations and develop good practice guidelines tailored for engaging with the Traveller community.

Pillar 4 Equality and Non-Discrimination

Participants across the consultations reported that Ireland had made some progress in promoting and advancing LGBTIQ+ rights, with the publication of the First LGBTIQ+ National Youth Strategy and the first National LGBTIQ+ Inclusion strategy. Positive initiatives recognised across the consultations included the introduction and development of various pieces of legislation, longer sentencing periods in the courts for violence against the LGBTIQ+ community, the work of the Workplace Relations Commission, the ready availability of Gender Recognition Certificates as well as the work being done at national level to support LGBTIQ+ rights globally.

Notwithstanding this progress, in 2024 International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA) Europe¹¹ ranked Ireland 14th in the European Union in terms of human rights and policy protections. This ranking is linked to the absence of laws, which particularly impact the LGBTIQ+ community such as hate crimes, conversion therapy, the provision of more protection in areas such as gender recognition, and in employment and social inclusion.

Concerns identified across the consultations include delays in the advancements of and amendments to various pieces of legislation including the Criminal Justice (Incitement to Violence or Hatred and Hate Offences) Bill 2022; the Gender Recognition Act, the Equal Status Act, the Employment Equality Act, the Assisted Human Reproduction Act and the Children and Family Relationships Act; the banning of conversion therapy; the banning of non-consensual operations on intersex babies and delays in the establishment of a disregard scheme to expunge historical convictions made against gay and bisexual men in Ireland. Concerns were also raised about the need for equal access for LGBTIQ+ families to In vitro fertilisation (IVF) changes to the International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS) system. Consultees identified a range of actions designed to tackle these concerns. There were differing views in relation to the introduction of hate crime legislation. See Table 7 for details of the actions prioritised under this Pillar.

¹¹ ILGA-Europe is an independent, international non-governmental umbrella organisation uniting over 700 organisations from 54 countries across Europe and Central Asia.

Table 7 Headline Priority Actions to Address Equality and Non-Discrimination

<p>1. Enhance access to justice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ensure key LGBTIQ+ related legislation is accompanied by the development of accessible, easy to read plain English guides, helping readers understand what is intended by the proposed legislation. – Fund Free Legal Advice Centres (FLAC) to support LGBTIQ+ people to challenge discriminatory practices and legislation. – Develop a legal website and legal information service specifically for the LGBTIQ+ community to provide access to helpful information resources. – Create an LGBTIQ+ legal fund through the Legal Aid Board or other suitable body, so that individuals can apply seeking assistance in covering their legal costs to challenge discrimination. – Ensure that the diversity of lived experiences of LGBTIQ+ individuals inform the design and implementation of legislation and policy relevant to the community through co-design.
<p>2. Hate Crime Legislation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Enact hate crime legislation inclusive of all LGBTIQ+ groups and accompanied by a National Action Plan on Hate Crime that includes education and prevention measures, to ensure the prosecution of individuals who incite hatred. – Undertake work with the court services and the judiciary regarding sentencing in relation to LGBTIQ+ hate crimes. This includes crimes against advocates of LGBTIQ+ rights and the introduction of harsher sentencing powers and minimum sentencing guidelines in relation to hate crime/s. – Equip An Garda Síochána with the knowledge and skills to better handle hate-related incidents effectively and empathetically. – Introduce restorative justice programmes within affected communities for individuals convicted of hate crimes and hate speech to promote rehabilitation and understanding.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Fund dedicated victim support services for LGBTIQ+ victims of crime ensuring LGBTIQ+ people are supported at each stage of engaging with the criminal justice system.
3. Conversion Therapy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Legislate to ban conversion practices especially in therapeutic spaces (with no exemptions).
4 Review of the Gender Recognition Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Implement remaining recommendations from the 2018 review of the Gender Recognition Act for non-binary and young people in consultation with the transgender community.
5 Review the Equality Acts (Equal Status Act and Employment Equality Act)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Complete and publish the Review of the Equality Acts and based on this review develop and provide resources and guidance for employers, service providers, schools, sporting organisations, and other relevant bodies. – Update and expand the Equality Acts to include protections based on sex characteristics, gender expression, gender identity and socio-economic class. A public information and awareness campaign should follow to educate the public on these new protected grounds.
6. Disregard of Convictions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Act on the report of the Disregard of Convictions for Certain Qualifying Offences Related to Consensual Sexual Activity between Men and expunge convictions which took place prior to the change in the law.
7. Public Sector Duty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Introduce more meaningful and measurable requirements for reporting under public sector duty requirements and ensure all public bodies have a policy on LGBTIQ+ inclusion (similar to the requirement to have a Child Safeguarding policy).
8. Equality Proof all National Strategies from an LGBTIQ+ perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ensure all national strategies, policies and action plans are equality-proofed to ensure the representation and inclusion of vulnerable, marginalised and/or underrepresented communities, including LGBTIQ+ people.
9. Ireland's Role Internationally on LGBTIQ+ Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Establish a Special Envoy for LGBTIQ+ rights whose role it is to promote rights, protections, and non-discrimination for LGBTIQ+ people globally, supported by a dedicated team and an annual budget.
10. Rainbow Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Amend the Assisted Human Reproduction Act and Children and Family Relationships Act to ensure equality for children of

	<p>LGBTIQ+ people and ensure full legal recognition for all LGBTIQ+ parents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Provide equal access to publicly funded IVF scheme. – Make provision for timely and affordable retrospective updating/editing of documents following gender recognition of parent/s (children’s birth certificates, marriage certificates, driving licences, etc). – Remove the barriers to adoption and fostering for disabled people.
11. Marriage Equality Recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Legislate for marriage recognition for non-binary people. – Remove joint means testing in relation to spousal support for individuals in receipt of disability allowance.
12. Non-consensual operations on intersex babies and children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ban non-consensual operations on intersex babies and children.
13. Changes to the IPAS system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Introduce legal protections for trans and nonbinary people within the Internal Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS) system specifically regarding a right to be placed in spaces congruent with their identity. – Provide Immigration Services and IPAS with LGBTIQ+ awareness training including training on understanding of why LGBTIQ+ disclosure can happen slowly. – Ensure the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) conducts publicly reported inspections of all IPAS centres and introduce an ongoing independent complaints system within the IPAS system.
Specific concerns for/of particular groups	
14. Disabled people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ratify the Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCPRD).

Conclusions

The facilitated consultations, which engaged with 550 individuals and almost 50 organisations were supplemented with over four hundred submissions and yielded rich data. A detailed report of these discussions and online submissions is available [here](#).

The consultations identified several key areas for action that will be used to inform the work of Government in developing the new whole of life cycle successor National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy. Some of the key areas identified included the following:

- **Safety:** Key issues raised included, the need to address misinformation in relation to LGBTIQ+ people, to improve relationships between the LGBTIQ+ community and An Garda Síochána, to enhance awareness of DSGBV within the LGBTIQ community and to improve safety for LGBTIQ people in public spaces.
- **Health and Wellbeing:** Key issues prioritised by the LGBTIQ+ community included addressing mental health supports for the LGBTIQ+ community, a move to a more LGBTIQ+ inclusive healthcare system, the provision of trans healthcare in line with best practice guidelines, and the increased roll out of sexual health services.
- **Participation and Access:** Key issues raised included the need for improved visibility and inclusion measures for LGBTIQ+ people in education, employment, sports, arts and culture; along with improved funding supports for LGBTIQ+ services and better data and research on the needs of LGBTIQ+ people.
- **Equality and Non-Discrimination:** The consultations raised several key legislative priorities including issues related to gender recognition, conversion therapy, hate crime/hate speech, equality legislation, recognition of LGBTIQ+ families, and non-consensual surgeries on intersex children.

In addition, the consultation with the Steering Committee, who review the implementation of the actions contained in the National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy, highlighted the need for the Second Strategy to incorporate a stronger outcomes focused approach, a transparent reporting and implementation structure, with achievable actions, clear performance indicators and a robust monitoring system to ensure full and effective implementation of the successor Strategy.

Appendix 1 Organisations who made submissions

1. Age Friendly Ireland Shared Service | Meath County Council
2. Amach! LGBT+ Galway
3. Alzheimer Society of Ireland
4. As I Am
5. Belong To – LGBTQ+ Youth Ireland
6. Common Knowledge Centre for Sustainable Living (CLG) / Queer Sheds
7. Cork City Council
8. Cork Education Training Board
9. Conradh na Gaeilge
10. End of Life Care Programme at St James's Hospital
11. Galway City Community Network
12. Gender Rebels Cork
13. HSE Community Healthcare West Older Persons Service (OPS)
14. National Disability Authority
15. Nursing Homes Ireland
16. Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation
17. Intersex Ireland
18. Irish Cancer Society
19. Irish Penal Reform Trust
20. Irish Hospice Foundation
21. LGBT Staff Network, University College Cork
22. LGBT Ireland
23. LINC - Advocating for Lesbian and Bisexual Women in Ireland
24. Ombudsman for Children's Office
25. Outhouse LGBTQ+ Centre
26. Queer Asian Pride Ireland
27. Rehab Group
28. Safe Space
29. Sexual Health Centre (Cork)
30. ShoutOut
31. Shannon Family Resource Centre
32. St Francis Hospice Dublin
33. Transgender Equality Network
34. Trinity College Dublin Students' Union
35. University College Cork Student's Union