



An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,
Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige
Department of Children, Equality,
Disability, Integration and Youth

Consultation with children and young people in relation to the development of a successor to the National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy.

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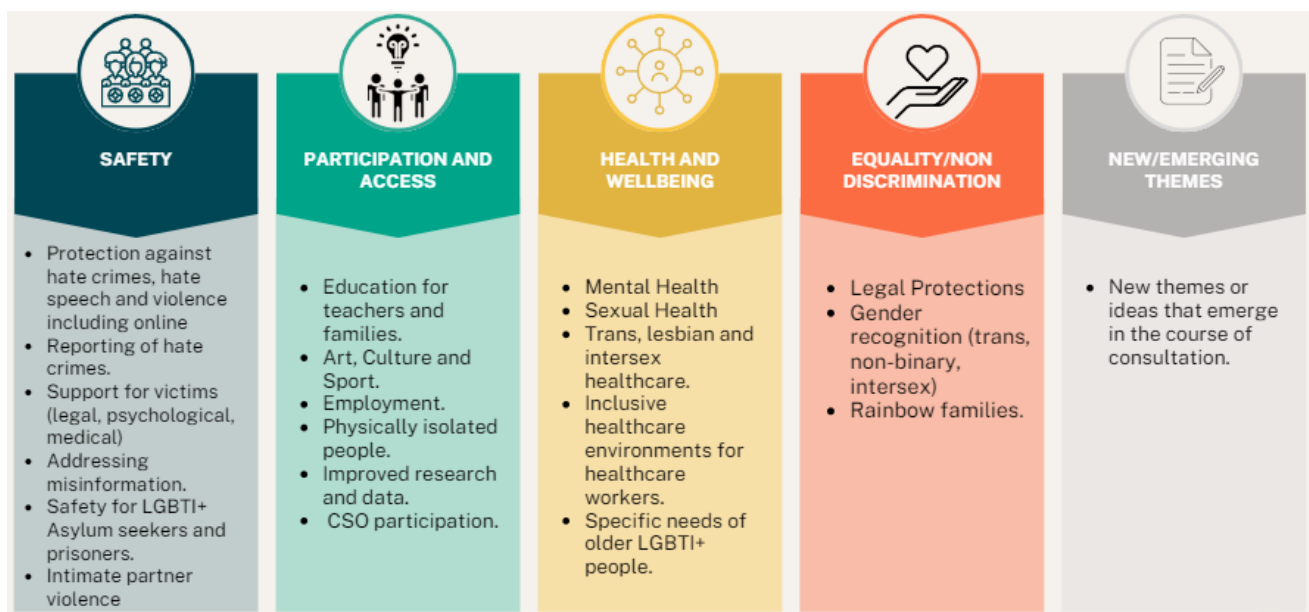
National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy Consultation

Context

The LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy was the first of its kind worldwide. It aimed to create a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment for LGBTI+ youth, to improve mental, physical and sexual health and wellbeing of LGBTI+ people and to better understand the lives of LGBTI+ young people. This Strategy concluded in 2021 and a final report on its implementation was published in June 2024. The Strategy was complemented by Ireland's first National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy in 2019. This provides a framework for identifying and addressing issues which may prevent LGBTI+ people from enjoying full equality in Irish society. It will remain in place until a successor is developed. An independent review of the Strategy was commissioned by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) in 2023 and a report on the review was published in June 2024. The review sought to determine the progress of the actions under the Strategy and to identify key priority areas for inclusion in a successor Strategy.

Purpose of the consultation

The purpose of the consultation with children and young people on the successor to the National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy was to elicit the views of children and young people and to seek a list of priorities and actions as identified by them for consideration by DECDIY in the development of the successor strategy to the National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy. The development of the successor Strategy will be informed not just by this consultation with children and young people, but also by a separate wider consultation process that was open only to those over the age of 18. Five themes were chosen for children and young people to discuss: Safety, Participation and Access, Health and Wellbeing, Equality and Discrimination and New or emerging themes. These themes emanated from the European Commission's LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025, the review of the National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy, the LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy Implementation Report and from international and national research.



These same themes were also discussed at the wider consultation process for those over the age of 18.

This report begins with a summary of the five themes, followed by a discussion of the findings within these themes. Within the discussion, direct quotations are used from the written words of the participants. The final part of this report focuses on the recommendations provided by the participants on ten topics for discussion. The report concludes with an analysis of the assembly proceedings.

Summary of main themes.

The five themes from the facilitation are presented in this table in summary along with associated sub themes and the main points from this theme.

Name of Theme	Main Points
Safety <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Hate Speech and Hate Crime Safe Spaces Bullying 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Secure legislation needs to be in place. ❖ Gardaí need specific training. ❖ Online hate speech needs to be monitored. ❖ Safe spaces need to be promoted. ❖ Public transport needs more security. ❖ Sport may not be a safe space. ❖ Rural areas need support to ensure safety. ❖ Bullying needs to be taken seriously in schools.
Health and Wellbeing <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Transgender Healthcare Access to healthcare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Transgender healthcare is inadequate. ❖ Waiting lists for transgender health care and gender clinics are too long. ❖ Information about transgender healthcare needs to be accessible and understandable. ❖ A reform of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) is needed.
Participation and Access <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Education Youth friendly opportunities Awareness Positives and Pride 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Education needs to be updated. ❖ Social, Person and Health Education (SPHE) curricula needs to be improved to include LGBTIQ+ sex education for both primary and post-primary schools. ❖ Some school practices are exclusionary. ❖ Youth friendly language will increase participation in all aspects of society. ❖ More visibility of LGBTIQ+ people and rainbow families needed in the media. ❖ LGBTIQ+ Inclusion in Irish society. ❖ The importance of 'Pride'.
Equality and Non-Discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Societal LGBTIQ+ phobia and negative narratives.

1. Negative Attitudes 2. Legal Challenges	❖ Difficulty in legal name changes on passports and other legal documents. ❖ Recognition of non-binary people on official documents. ❖ Rights for LGBTIQ+ families.
Other Relevant themes 1. Conversion Practices 2. Direct Provision 3. Support in in for Disabilities 4. Inter-generational Work	❖ Conversion practices should be banned. ❖ Abolish direct provision. ❖ Support for disabilities is needed. ❖ Inter-generational work is needed.

Theme 1: Safety

Safety: Summary.

- ❖ Secure legislation needs to be in place.
- ❖ Gardaí need training in how to spot hate crimes and support victims.
- ❖ Online hate speech needs to be monitored.
- ❖ Safe spaces need to be promoted.
- ❖ Public transport needs more security.
- ❖ Sport may not be a safe space.
- ❖ Rural areas need support to ensure safety.
- ❖ Bullying is a problem that needs to be addressed and taken seriously in schools.



Hate Speech and Hate Crime.

The theme of hate speech and hate crime was identified as an area of concern among the participants. This was predominantly associated with the need for secure legislation regarding hate speech and hate crime. The need for Gardaí to be trained on how to spot, report (not dismiss) hate crimes was identified as a theme. It was suggested by the participants that Gardaí need training in supporting LGBTIQ+ victims of hate crime by taking threats to LGBTIQ+ individuals seriously. If bullying happens and it is not taken seriously by those in authority, there is a loss of confidence in justice.

Participants revealed that 'being attacked is so normalised that every trans person has a story' and that 'getting shouted slurs at by random people in the street' is common. Online 'unmonitored' threats and 'negative narratives' on social media are a genuine area of concern with some websites being 'radicalisation pipelines' spreading 'misinformation' about LGBTIQ+

people. Young LGBTIQ+ people often do not know where to turn for support when they ‘are discriminated against online’.

Safe Spaces.

While it was acknowledged by participants that there are safe spaces for LGBTIQ+ people in Ireland, there is a lack of education, support, and promotion regarding those spaces. Safe spaces were identified as ‘libraries’ and ‘youth clubs’ and ‘The George’ (night club). Creating safe spaces online was also identified as a need for LGBTIQ+ young people. Some school ‘supports’ may ‘demonise the internet’ instead of focusing on techniques to make it safer. Public spaces, which should be ‘considered as safe spaces’ such as public transport were revealed to be unsafe for ‘same-sex couples’ or those who are ‘visibly LGBTIQ+’. More security is needed in these public spaces so LGBTIQ+ ‘feel safe expressing themselves in public’. Groups such as the ‘far right’ and ‘violent’ groups were an area of distress for the participants, as they have attacked safe spaces such as libraries. Participants called for the disbandment of far right groups and inclusion of these attacks in hate speech and hate crime legislation.

Sport and ‘communal activities’ were areas that participants deemed ‘unsafe’ with some sporting organisations being ‘exclusionary’ and ‘not welcoming’. A lack of inclusion in Gaeltacht spaces and Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) games was also highlighted as spaces that did not feel safe or inclusive. The lack of ‘unisex toilets’ and ‘gender-neutral bathrooms’ in public spaces were a cause of concern for the participants. Participants suggested that transgender people may not feel safe using gender specific bathrooms. Participants also identified the ‘unequal geographical access to LGBTIQ+ services’ which may leave some people in rural areas not feeling ‘safe in their hometown’ due to a ‘homophobic culture’ leading to ‘isolation of LGBTIQ+ youth’.

The importance of youth groups was also stressed by participants. Comhairle na nÓg, Foroige, Transgender Equality Network Ireland (TENI), Eco-Unesco, Spun Out, Belong To, Youth Work Ireland, The Irish Girl Guides and LGBTIQ+ specific groups in schools and communities and other youth groups were all deemed important to participants. Resources from the ‘Belong To’ organisation, the ‘Here for you’ video from Sligo Comhairle na nÓg and the SMILY (Support for young LGBTIQ+ people in Sligo and Leitrim) were highlighted as important in LGBTIQ+ young people’s lives. There is a need for more resources and promotion for youth groups, in particular youth groups in rural areas to provide adequate support to children and young people. There should also be more funding and opportunities for youth groups to collaborate.

Bullying

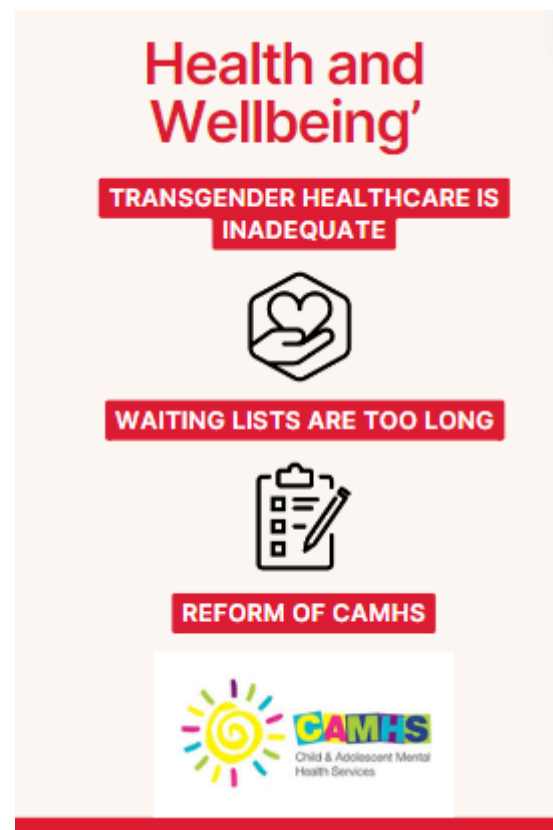
Bullying was identified as a concern for participants with the topic being raised in several spaces in the facilitation. Participants raised concerns about casual slurs being ‘thrown around’ which, participants reported was a ‘common’ experience in schools. Participants noted that some schools are ‘not great at stopping homophobia and transphobia’ and may not take LGBTIQ+ bullying ‘matters seriously’ unless the bullying is ‘physical’. Participants noted that a ‘zero-tolerance’ approach to bullying where victims are protected is needed as some young people ‘drop out of school’ or self-harm ‘because of trans/homophobic bullying’. Participants also identified cyber-bullying as a harmful experience noting that it is ‘hard to escape abuse online’.



Theme 2: Health and Wellbeing.

Health and Wellbeing: Summary.

- ❖ Transgender healthcare is not meeting the needs of transgender young people in Ireland.
- ❖ Waiting lists for transgender healthcare and gender clinics are too long.
- ❖ Information about transgender healthcare needs to be easy to access and understand.
- ❖ CAMHS needs reform: reduce waiting lists, adequately train staff, more affordable and available therapies.

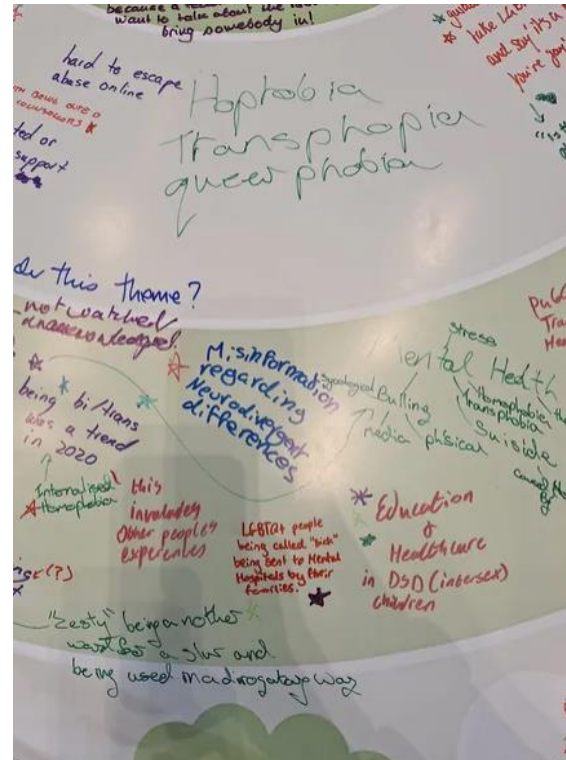


Transgender Healthcare

It was identified that transgender healthcare including hormones and surgery, is not accessible and the waiting times for appointments can reach four years or more. Participants explained that hormone replacement therapy (HRT) should not be something that has to be fought for as it leads to some LGBTIQ+ young people seeking HRT online from unknown sources, possibly placing themselves at risk. According to participants, some transgender people seek surgery outside of Ireland, which may be risky also. Participants would welcome more gender clinics as a measure to address the long waiting lists and support transgender young people. Transgender men need better access to period products. LGBTIQ+ healthcare should not be at the behest of 'any one' medical individual.

Access to Mental Healthcare

Participants advised that supports for LGBTIQ+ young people need to be more readily available and easily accessible. The children and young people in this consultation noted that information about LGBTIQ+ healthcare is poorly communicated and is 'overly formal and bureaucratic' making it difficult to understand. Participants suggested that transgender health training needs to be provided to medical professionals as a stigma exists regarding LGBTIQ+ healthcare. It was put forward by participants that the lack of healthcare is 'putting trans people at risk' and 'damaging their mental health'. Participants acknowledged that LGBTIQ+ individuals are 'more likely to be depressed or have other mental health problems'.



Reform of CAMHS

The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) was identified as being inadequate as waiting lists are 'ridiculously long' with some people being 'taken off waiting lists' as their needs are not perceived to be severe enough. CAMHS was associated by the participants as the one organisation that everyone is referred to regardless of individual needs and it needs reform.

Theme 3: Participation and Access.

Participation and Access: Summary.

- ❖ Education needs to be updated.
- ❖ SPHE needs to be improved to include LGBTIQ+ sex education for both primary and post-primary schools.
- ❖ Some school practices are exclusionary.
- ❖ Youth friendly language will increase participation.
- ❖ More visibility of LGBTIQ+ people and rainbow families needed in the media.
- ❖ LGBTIQ+ Inclusion in Irish society.
- ❖ The importance of 'Pride'.



The largest theme drawn from the facilitation was the theme of education. While it was acknowledged that there are safe education spaces, there were many areas identified that could be improved. Education was referred to as being 'out of date' and 'Victorian' with 'out of date books' and 'teaching'. Schools were identified as places of 'inequality' that lacked 'inclusion' and 'opportunity'. According to participants, adults in education spaces can let their personal beliefs get in the way and may dismiss LGBTIQ+ issues by saying 'it's a phase' or suggesting that 'something is going on at home'.

Participants noted that as there is a general lack of education about LGBTIQ+ struggles, which can intensify transgender/homophobia, it was suggested that this could be covered in Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE). In the opinion of the children and young people involved in this consultation, SPHE course could be updated to be more inclusive of LGBTIQ+ sex education as it currently focuses on 'cis-gender relationships'. Participants indicated that SPHE should be a space to educate about transgender people, sexual health, LGBTIQ+ health and wellbeing, gender identity, terminology and language, media literacy, online safety, discriminatory and hurtful behaviours and intersex education. While SPHE is subject to inspection under the Department of the Inspectorate, participants in this consultation feel it

should be more thoroughly inspected. Based on participants' experience in schools they don't feel it is being inspected enough and is being side-lined as a study class. Some participants called for SPHE to be made compulsory which indicates that while it is a compulsory subject, it may not be treated with the same importance as other examination subjects. It was identified that teacher training and resources are needed as some teachers and students may feel 'uncomfortable talking about queer topics and issues in schools'. Participants felt that religious schools may also pose a challenge for a SPHE space that is inclusive of LGBTIQ+ issues. The children and young people in this consultation acknowledged that 'Belong To' have resources to support schools in their SPHE curriculum. Participants also pointed out that there is room for 'education on past [LGBTIQ+] discrimination' which could educate people about the history of LGBTIQ+ people in Ireland. Participants thought that education which is based on 'real experiences' could have the potential to be transformative. It was suggested that speakers who are trained in facilitating these sessions would be welcomed as they could take the pressure off teachers. It was also suggested that SPHE should be broadened to cover primary school children's education as there is no 'queer education' at present.

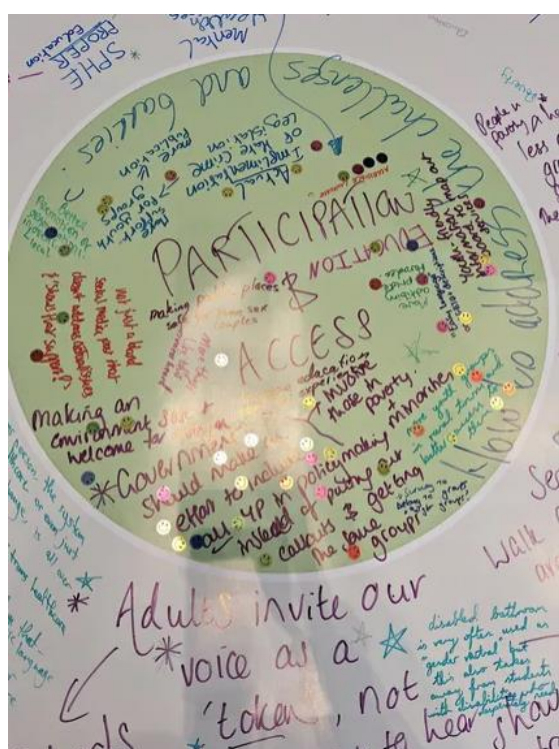
In addition to SPHE there were other issues of concern raised around the education experience of LGBTIQ+ young people. According to participants there are some 'unnecessary school rules' that 'hinder LGBTIQ+ people from being themselves'. Participants felt that the school uniform inhibits LGBTIQ+ students from 'expressing themselves' and forces students to wear a uniform that 'conforms with their gender at birth'. Participants raised the issue that separate uniforms that highlight gender are discriminatory to LGBTIQ+ young people. Children and young people involved in this consultation identified single-sex schools as exclusionary because transgender young people may not be allowed to attend, which limits their right to education. The lack of unisex or gender-neutral bathrooms for transgender or non-binary students was raised as an issue. Participants claimed that in their experience, it is often the 'disabled bathroom' that is offered as a gender-neutral bathroom but this 'takes away from students with disabilities who desperately need them'. Participants noted that there can be a lack of inclusion in sports where boys and girls are 'split up' or 'segregated' and this causes issues for some LGBTIQ+ students. Participants noted that the 'heavy religious presence' in schools can be 'smothering', 'suffocating' and 'overwhelming'.

Participation in all aspects of society

Children and young people involved in this consultation welcomed the opportunity to participate in 'consultations like this' so that their opinions could be heard. Participants

acknowledged that if government action is taken, it will help ‘include LGBTIQ+ people fully in society’. Participants noted that using youth friendly language would attract more young people to the conversation and by communicating effectively it will help the participation of young people in decision-making. The promotion of participation opportunities for young people needs to be more prevalent; while the use of posters and/or social media to include those from marginalised areas, such as those in poverty, those in minority groups or those who do not have English as a first language were identified as key methods to include people. It was noted that participation should not solely include children and young people who are already active in youth groups. Participants identified the need for LGBTIQ+ groups for older age groups but warned about tokenistic behaviours to simply make organisations ‘look more progressive’. ‘Government should make an effort to include all young people in policy making instead of putting out callouts and getting the same groups, including participants from ‘Belong To’¹ or other youth LGBT groups . Participants expressed the need for more representation of LGBTIQ+ people in ‘politics, social media, newspapers, and magazines’ to ‘break stereotypes’.

Awareness



Participants in this consultation highlighted the need for awareness of LGBTIQ+ people in Ireland as it could continue to improve society’s acceptance. This awareness could be focused on the importance of ‘using correct pronouns’, the ‘visibility of intersex in the media’, an ‘emphasis on gender euphoria rather than gender dysphoria’, the ‘misrepresentation of queer people in the media’ or even addressing the prevalence of ‘transphobic or homophobic content in media’. It was noted as important that public awareness campaigns not to be shallow by just ‘sticking on a rainbow flag and calling it a day’ to appear ‘progressive’. This

¹ Belong To is a national service and advocacy organisation with and for LGBTQ+ children and young people.

awareness would make it less likely that LGBTIQ+ people would be 'labelled' or 'put in a box' or would be 'forced to use labels to fit and conform'. The prominence of

LGBTIQ+ role models and public figures would help in the awareness of the LGBTIQ+ community.

The Importance of Pride

Participants highlighted areas of positivity in Irish society such as the Thirty-fourth Amendment of the Constitution (Marriage Equality) Act 2015, decriminalisation of same-sex relationships, support in the media, many LGBTIQ+ friendly spaces, 'government actions to include LGBTIQ+ in society', and the presence of 'LGBTIQ+ role models and public figures' in Irish society. The importance of the 'Pride Parade', 'Pride

month/week' and 'Pride events' was emphasised. The Pride parade was identified as a 'safe family event'. The prevalence of Pride events all over the country and simply living in a country where 'Pride flags fly safely' was acknowledged by participants.

Theme 4: Equality and Non-Discrimination

Equality and Non-Discrimination: Summary.

- ❖ Societal LGBTIQ+ phobia and negative narratives are damaging.
- ❖ Name changing on legal documents is difficult.
- ❖ Recognition of non-binary people on official documents.
- ❖ Rights for LGBTIQ+ families.



Negative attitudes

Negative attitudes from some sections of Irish society were exposed as areas of anxiety for participants. According to participants, conservative members of society may possess conscious and/or unconscious biases. These biases may result in societal transphobia and homophobia expressed in person and online are damaging to the LGBTIQ+ community. Children and young people involved in this consultation noted that phobia of the LGBTIQ+ community can present as undermining LGBTIQ+ problems by thinking that 'there are no more problems' beyond equal marriage. Participants viewed equal marriage as an importance acknowledgement of basic human rights, but that one act alone does not alleviate the issues within the LGBTIQ+ community. It was suggested that transgender phobia can be exacerbated by persistent negative attitudes regarding transgender surgeries which are deeply invasive of LGBTIQ+ experiences. There was a call from participants for society to stop using 'sexuality as a label', stop using stereotypes to dictate whether people are 'really trans/gay' and stop scrutinising LGBTIQ+ people who are in the public eye. Participants put forward the argument that employers should seek to 'employ gay and trans people' and be genuine about inclusion

and not just 'box ticking'. Religion in Irish society came forward as a problematic domain where more acceptance is needed, with participants noting that some conservative religious people 'weaponise faith' to spread homophobic views.

Legal Challenges

Three main areas of legal challenge were revealed through the facilitation: the difficulty in legally changing a name on official documents, the recognition of non-binary and intersex people and the legalities surrounding the rights of LGBTIQ+ parents.

The 'system for name changing is not plainly and clearly explained' and the need for both 'parent's permission [to change a name] is unnecessary' according to participants. The need for more accessible information to assist LGBTIQ+ people through this legal issue was an area of concern for participants. Children and young people involved in this consultation suggested that on official forms 'sex and gender should be separated' and there should be a 'recognition of DSD (intersex) people' or a 'non-binary option' on forms and certifications and not 'just male or female'. According to participants many transgender people are forced to 'out themselves in legal settings as their gender is not legally recognised and this can be scary'. Finally, participants noted that there is more protection needed for LGBTIQ+ families, by recognising both partners as equals, extending paternity leave and protecting LGBTIQ+ children who are living in 'harmful family dynamics'.

Theme 5: Other Relevant Themes

Other Relevant themes: Summary.

- ❖ Conversion practices should be banned.
- ❖ Abolish direct provision.
- ❖ Support for disabilities is needed.
- ❖ Inter-generational work is needed.

Conversion Practices

Another area of concern generated by data from the facilitation was the practice of conversion practices in Ireland. It was suggested that all conversion practices should be illegal. Participants felt that conversion practices are ‘dehumanising’ and damaging to LGBTIQ+ people and should be discontinued with immediate effect.

In feedback sessions after the consultation, participants explained that without legislation to ban the practices associated with conversion practices, people may feel insecure.



Direct Provision, Disabilities, and Inter-generational Work

Participants noted the need to abolish direct provision as it is not a safe space ‘especially for LGBTIQ+ people’. In addition to this, participants acknowledged the need to support LGBTIQ+ people with disabilities, and LGBTIQ+ people in nursing homes in Ireland. Finally, participants highlighted a need for inter-generational work as there is a divide between the younger and older generations when it came to LGBTIQ+ issues.

Recommendations

In the final part of the facilitation, the groups split into 5, each group at their own table. These groups selected the two most important topics which were voted on participants by using sticky dots. These topics were then discussed so that the participants could provide recommendations. To structure this section of the facilitation, the recommendations were split into three questions:

- (i) What are the challenges and barriers in relation to this recommendation?
- (ii) What is the recommendation to overcome the challenges and barriers?
- (iii) How can the government measure the success of this recommendation? What does success look like?

Each table discussed two recommendations, giving each one a separate title. To give context or to further explain, brackets have been added to the words of the participants. Following each recommendation is an interpretation given by the report writer to provide context and elucidate meaning from the words of the participants. This was checked with Youth Advisory Group participants to ensure that what was being interpreted was correct. The ten recommendations given were:

Table 1 Recommendation 1	Conversion Practices should be illegal
Table 1 Recommendation 2	Education [could be more inclusive]
Table 2 Recommendation 1	Including children and young people in policy making
Table 2 Recommendation 2	More access to youth groups in rural areas
Table 3 Recommendation 1	CAMHS needs reform
Table 3 Recommendation 2	SPHE needs to be more inclusive
Table 4 Recommendation 1	More education for older people (teachers and parents)
Table 4 Recommendation 2	Equal recognition for partners in LGBTIQ+ relationships
Table 5 Recommendation 1	Non-binary recognition and name changes on passport
Table 5 Recommendation 2	Inter-generational work

Table 1: Recommendation 1: Conversion Practices should be illegal

What are the challenges and barriers?

- ✓ People believing that it works
- ✓ Parents believing that what they are doing is in God's name
- ✓ Parents dehumanising their children

<p>What is the recommendation to overcome the challenges and barriers?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Make conversion practices illegal; if the practices are legal it brings insecurity ✓ Aim legislation to protect children and young people rather than punishing adults ✓ Lower the voting age to allow young people to have a say in matters that affect them
<p>How can the government measure the success of this recommendation? What does success look like?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Conversion practices would be illegalSet fines and jail times for conversion practices if they stay open and for parents to who force their kids to go.

Recommendation 1 from table 1 presented the challenges that adults may believe that conversion practices work. Parents may believe that sending young people to conversion practices might align with their religious beliefs. The practice is dehumanising for people according to the participants. Participants expressed that making conversion practices illegal would bring more security to LGBTIQ+ children and young people. Participants also suggested that in creating legislation around this, government bodies should focus on protecting the rights of the young person, rather than punishing adults. When asked about what success would look like, participants conveyed that if the practices were illegal then those who break the law should be punished accordingly.

Table 1: Recommendation 2: Education [could be more inclusive].

<p>What are the challenges and barriers?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ No education on LGBTIQ+ people in primary school ✓ Teachers letting their personal (religious) beliefs getting in the way ✓ Misrepresentation of LGBTIQ+ people in the media ✓ Adult's resistance in changing their mindset
<p>What is the recommendation to overcome the challenges and barriers?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Update SPHE books ✓ Mandatory education for primary schools ✓ A warning or message shown on social media material that are biased or hateful

- ✓ LGBTIQ+ support groups in schools
- ✓ Use preferred pronouns in schools
- ✓ Create LGBTIQ+ Policies
- ✓ Listen to LGBTIQ+ Students
- ✓ Celebrate diversity with an LGBTIQ+ inclusion week

How can the government measure the success of this recommendation? What does success look like?

- ✓ Every school has a LGBTQ+ week
- ✓ No more weaponising religion as an excuse for homophobia
- ✓ Less hate crimes due to less homophobia
- ✓ Annual survey to make sure that the course [courses] keeps improving

For recommendation 2, table one selected the broad topic of education with the main thrust of this discussion centred around inclusion. Barriers and challenges were identified in the lack of LGBTIQ+ education in primary school and the personal beliefs of teachers preventing LGBTIQ+ education in school. Participants also included that a barrier to LGBTIQ+ education was the misinformation and misrepresentation of LGBTIQ+ in the media. This has led to the resistance of some adults in changing their mindset towards LGBTIQ+ issues and people. There were a number of recommendations for education settings such as updating SPHE textbooks, LGBTIQ+ support groups in schools, LGBTIQ+ policies in schools, using preferred pronouns in schools, listening to LGBTIQ+ young people in schools and celebrating diversity with an LGBTIQ+ inclusion week. Participants recommended making LGBTIQ+ education mandatory in primary schools. Participants also recommended that warning labels on social media material that might be biased or hateful may help educate outside of the classroom. For measuring success, participants thought that if the recommendations were followed, it could lead to less homophobia. They also suggested that a national survey of students could be carried out to ensure that there is a constant update of the education of LGBTIQ+ in SPHE.

Table 2: Recommendation 1: Including children and young people in policy making.

What are the challenges and barriers?

- ✓ Minorities don't have the opportunity to get involved (poverty, rural, limited education and non-fluent English speakers).

What is the recommendation to overcome the challenges and barriers?

- ✓ Policy making should include diversity/minorities/those living in poverty etc. as they are often not discussed or involved.

How can the government measure the success of this recommendation? What does success look like?

- ✓ Demographic monitored to ensure diversity and variety in youth consultations
- ✓ Increased meaningful participation from diverse groups across Ireland
- ✓ More publicity regarding events and opportunities
- ✓ Government youth specific advisory panel not solely focused on groups like Belong To or Foróige.

Table 2 focused on including children and young people in policy making. Participants noted that minorities may find it difficult to get involved. Extra supports should be made to encourage minorities to be present when policy affects them. Including a diverse range of people in policy making will result in more meaningful participation. Participants also recommended that there be more publicity regarding participation opportunities which engage with a wide number of organisations and not focusing on organisations that are already active.

Table 2: Recommendation 2: More access to Youth Groups in Rural Areas

What are the challenges and barriers?

- ✓ Funding for youth groups
- ✓ Transport to/from youth groups
- ✓ Lack of awareness of youth groups

What is the recommendation to overcome the challenges and barriers?

- ✓ Remove the barriers – Transport, lack of awareness, accessibility and provide more funding for services and information.

How can the government measure the success of this recommendation? What does success look like?

- ✓ Increased operation and participation in rural areas
- ✓ Increased coverage of youth-based issues in rural areas coming to light
- ✓ Mapping out and monitor improvements in potential youth groups in the future
- ✓ Buildings that have their own safe spaces such as Big Picture, Scout Halls, 'Dublin Go Building' in rural areas.

When discussing the challenges and barriers to youth groups in rural areas, table 2 noted that funding, transport and awareness were inhibitors. However, if funding was available to address these challenges there would be increased participation, more coverage to support young people in these areas. Participants cited spaces that could be used for youth groups.

Table 3: Recommendation 1: CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) needs reform

What are the challenges and barriers?

- ✓ Dropping people when they reach 18
- ✓ Waiting list too long
- ✓ Staff need appropriate training
- ✓ Bigger budget
- ✓ Mental Healthcare needs to be affordable

What is the recommendation to overcome the challenges and barriers?

- ✓ Support young people until 25 years including LGBTIQ+ people and people with disabilities
- ✓ Bigger budget to increase training, staff and resources
- ✓ Recognise that people can be LGBTQ+ and autistic
- ✓ Referral to Youth Groups

How can the government measure the success of this recommendation? What does success look like?

- ✓ Research and statistics made public
- ✓ Increase beds for young people
- ✓ Supports for young people until 25 years
- ✓ More people using services
- ✓ Fewer suicides of young people
- ✓ More success stories

- ✓ Easier access for resources
- ✓ Better mental health
- ✓ Education increase
- ✓ Refer young people to youth groups

Table three discussed the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) and how this service is in need of reform. Table three recognised that aspects such as increased funding and training for staff were needed. Participants noted that waiting lists for services are too long. There was also a challenge as CAMHS services stop at 18 and it was suggested that the service should be extended to include those up to 25 years. Another suggestion was to refer young people to youth groups. In measuring the success of the recommendations, participants noted that if more people were using the services there would be fewer suicides, better mental health and more success stories.

Table 3: Recommendation 2: SPHE (Social, Personal and Health Education) needs to be more inclusive.

What are the challenges and barriers?

- ✓ People don't want to talk about it
- ✓ Catholic/religious schools
- ✓ Lack of training for teachers
- ✓ Push back from political actors
- ✓ Lack of resources

What is the recommendation to overcome the challenges and barriers?

- ✓ Train teachers
- ✓ Make it compulsory
- ✓ More substantial part of curriculum
- ✓ Primary schools should teach about LGBTIQ+
- ✓ Access to resources

How can the government measure the success of this recommendation? What does success look like?

- ✓ Less sexually transmitted diseases
- ✓ Increase in training
- ✓ Increase in budget
- ✓ Research attitudes
- ✓ All schools include is as part of the curriculum
- ✓ Inspect standard of education.

Table 3 also discussed Social, Personal and Health Education and expressed the need for this subject to be more inclusive. Participants recognised that it is a challenge as people may not want to talk about SPHE and that sensitive subjects can be a challenge to speak freely about in religious schools. In the lived experiences of participants, they noted that some teachers may not be adequately trained or have resources to teach the subject and called for inspections to investigate the standard of teaching and learning. Participants noted that it should be a more substantial part of the curriculum and stated that it should be compulsory, perhaps not realising that it is a compulsory part of the curriculum to Junior Cycle. Participants also noted the importance of SPHE in the primary curriculum. If these recommendations were adhered to, participants conveyed that there would be less sexually transmitted diseases.

Table 4: Recommendation 1: More education for older people (namely parents and teachers)

What are the challenges and barriers?

- ✓ People unwilling to change or participate
- ✓ Training right people with correct qualifications
- ✓ Support groups and inclusion training
- ✓ Information sessions to be mandatory
- ✓ Reduce being forcefully outed
- ✓ Inter-generational groups specifically to reduce the separation of thoughts

What is the recommendation to overcome the challenges and barriers?

- ✓ Training as some adults don't have enough knowledge on LGBTIQ+ matters
- ✓ Support information sessions and inter-generational groups
- ✓ Reports should be written for every hate crime/ discrimination action; they should be taken seriously and not dismissed

How can the government measure the success of this recommendation? What does success look like?

- ✓ Less reports of hate crime and discrimination
- ✓ The issue isn't arising
- ✓ Surveys for general population / focus groups and LGBTIQ+ groups
- ✓ Mandated training sessions (workplace)
- ✓ Support groups and programmes available
- ✓ Certificate for training/ qualification
- ✓ Departments for equality and diversity to include regulation

Table 4 focused on the need for education for older people, namely parents and teachers. Participants deemed that people may be unwilling to take part and it may be difficult to train people to educate on LGBTIQ+ subjects. Participants suggested that information sessions for adults should be mandatory and also put forward creating inter-generational groups so generations could work together. If older people were educated about LGBTIQ+ people there would be less hate crime. Participants suggested that surveys and focus groups for the general population may gauge if the inter-generational groups affect LGBTIQ+ education knowledge levels.

Table 4: Recommendation 2: Equal recognition for partners in LGBTIQ+ relationships
<p>What are the challenges and barriers?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The will ✓ The guardianship plays into 'parent' ✓ Assumptions/ stereotypes ✓ Too much focus on biology rather than a 'fit' parent ✓ Both parents in LGBTIQ+ relationships should be present on the birth certificate
<p>What is the recommendation to overcome the challenges and barriers?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ New legislation/ referendum/ constitution ✓ Guardianship laws on LGBTIQ+ specific ✓ Normalise rainbow families in the media and support through education
<p>How can the government measure the success of this recommendation? What does success look like?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ LGBTIQ+ recognised families/ parents/ guardianship ✓ Changing the law/ constitution ✓ Adoption rates increase

Table 4 also discussed the importance of recognising both parents as equal partners in an LGBTIQ+ relationship. There was concern over the will, but this was not expanded upon. Participants called for both parents' names to be present on the birth certificate. Participants recommended that there should be new legislation regarding guardianship and noted the

importance of normalising rainbow families in the media. Participants thought that this would help in the acceptance of LGBTIQ+ families in society and that adoptions would increase.

Table 5: Recommendation 1: Non-binary recognition and name changes on passport

What are the challenges and barriers?

- ✓ No non-binary option on passport
- ✓ Permission from both parents needed for passport name changes
- ✓ Challenging to make changes to your passport if under 18
- ✓ Language and access to information barriers
- ✓ Cost of making changes to passport, Transport and solicitor's fees

What is the recommendation to overcome the challenges and barriers?

- ✓ Adding a non-binary option for the gender of a passport
- ✓ Permission from one parent to make passport changes until the age of 16
- ✓ No parental permission needed after 16
- ✓ More accessible passport altering process
- ✓ More accessible information on how to go about making changes

How can the government measure the success of this recommendation? What does success look like?

- ✓ Non-binary option available on passport in 3-4 years
- ✓ Less complex process and language around passport changes
- ✓ Permission of one parent or guardian required for name change of a young person under 16.
- ✓ Young people should be allowed autonomy over their own name from 16 onwards; no guardian or parent consent.

Table 5 discussed changing names and the recognition of non-binary people on legal documents. There is a difficulty in receiving permission from both parents in order for a young person to change their name on a passport. The information about name changing is not youth friendly and the cost of solicitor's fees to do so is another barrier. Participants suggested that a non-binary option should be present on legal documents in 3-4 years' time and that people over 16 should be able to make changes to their documentation without the consent of parents. Participants also called for the process to be more youth friendly.

Table 5: Recommendation 2: Inter-generational Work

What are the challenges and barriers?

- ✓ Inter-generational divide – older generations find it difficult to understand the younger generation due to different ways of growing up, culture and their own families.

What is the recommendation to overcome the challenges and barriers?

- ✓ Have workshops where generations from around Ireland meet and talk, teach and learn about difference and find a common ground of respect.

How can the government measure the success of this recommendation? What does success look like?

- ✓ Funding for the inter-generational workshops
- ✓ Create designated spaces for the workshops
- ✓ Volunteer opportunities for LGBTIQ+ people in spaces for elderly people.

Finally, Table 5 discussed the importance of inter-generational work as there is a divide in society between older and younger people having very different experiences. Participants suggested that having inter-generational workshops where people could meet and talk and find a common ground, would be welcomed. To make this happen, funding, space and volunteers need to be made available.

Consultation Proceedings

The Youth Advisory Group and the consultation participants were aged between 13 and 18 years and represented different youth groups from around the country. The next section examines how the Youth Advisory Group and participants in the consultation were selected and details the discussions that took place in meetings in June and July 2024. Following this, the final section assesses the consultation through the lens of the Lundy Model of Child Participation.

Youth Advisory Group

A Youth Advisory Group (YAG) consisting of 10 people aged 16 to 18 years were recruited from organisations associated with DCEDIY. The YAG was identified through an email to various

organisations, inviting adults to nominate one young person who may be interested in joining the YAG. Online meetings with the YAG took place on June 11th and June 24th 2024 to explore their views on themes for the development to the successor to the National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy and to pilot the National Participation Office (NPO)'s methods and activities for the consultation. In these online sessions, youth participants were informed about child safeguarding and were introduced to the Lundy model of Child Participation. Youth participants were given the background to the National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy and the reason for the consultation and themes that would be discussed. Participants were advised that everything that was said in the consultation would be taken into consideration and that the information would be discussed with other relevant government departments in the process to develop a successor Strategy. YAG participants were given the opportunity to pilot the world café method on two of the five themes. YAG participants reported that the anonymity given and the ability to discuss matters in small groups was welcome.

Consultation

To participate in this consultation, children and young people could be nominated and supported by their Comhairle na nÓg or other nominating organisation. The ration of places for both the YAG and the consultation were discussed and determined by the National Participation Office, DECDIY in conjunction with the LGBTI+ Policy Unit. It was decided that 40% of the places would be assigned to Comhairle na nÓg and 60% to the other youth organisations on DCEDIY's mailing list. A total of 35 spaces were available for participants to join the consultation. The one-day consultation consisted of 5 young people aged 13-15 years and 22 young people aged 16-18 years of which 5 were members of the YAG. In the consultation those aged 13-15 were placed at a separate table to the older participants so that age appropriate topics could be discussed. Facilitators were briefed to monitor the discussion so that the younger participants could contribute in a safe and age appropriate way. Consultation participants were invited to participate in a briefing meeting on July 8th where the agenda for the consultation was explained. Participants contributed to the session by suggesting how the graffiti poster should be arranged, to include a line between the positives and negatives associated with being a LGBTIQ+ young person in Ireland. Participants suggested that questions be less vague and rather than asking 'What are the positives in living in Ireland as an LGBTIQ+ person?' the question would be phrased as 'What is Ireland doing well for LGBTIQ+ people?' and 'What are the challenges that LGBTIQ+ people face in Ireland today?'. The world café style of facilitation was discussed with participants where small group discussions take place to guide problem solving on an issue. One person in the group is the facilitator and

guides the short session, while the other members contribute. After an agreed amount of time has passed, the facilitator at the table remains, but the other participants go to another table to discuss another matter. The facilitator can present the findings from the participants at the end of the session. Participants will vote by using sticky dots on matters that are of most concern to them. The top two issues will be further discussed to tease out solutions and recommendations for the Strategy.

The consultation took place on July 12th in the offices of the DCEDIY in Dublin. Consultation participants were reminded of the purpose of the consultation and were invited to take part in icebreaker activities to ease them into the discussions. The first activity was a Graffiti Poster where youth participants were invited to draw or write their opinions in response to three prompts: What does Ireland do well for LGBTIQ+ young people? What is life like for LGBTIQ+ young people in Ireland today? What are the challenges that exist in Ireland today for LGBTIQ+ young people? The purpose of this activity was to better understand the lives of LGBTIQ+ young people by giving a broad reaction to the prompts. This activity was followed by a discussion of the 5 themes which were discussed at each table in a World Café style, presented in this report.

The Lundy Model of Child Participation

The Lundy model conceptualises Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN1989) and suggests that in the implementation of the right to voice on matters that concern children and young people, that space, voice, audience and influence must be considered.

Space

The space for the views of children and young people to be heard on the development of a successor to the National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy was provided and supported in a number of ways. Firstly, the Youth Advisory group met on two separate occasions to plan and co-design the Assembly. During these planning meetings, the YAG were informed about safeguarding and were introduced to the background of the consultation, along with the themes that would be discussed on the consultation day. In these planning sessions, the YAG member's input was taken on board regarding questions, methods of participation and sequencing of the activities on the day of the consultation. YAG members were invited to serve as Master of Ceremonies (MC) of the consultation. Prior to the consultation, all participants were invited to a briefing session where more input was taken from participants regarding the themes and questions to be used on the consultation day. All questions and themes were shared with youth participants ahead of the consultation and opportunities given to contribute to amending or clarifying

questions within the themes. In every session, icebreakers were used to ease participants into the situation, and trained facilitators used child friendly language to explain clearly all aspects in relation to the consultation. Participants were given an opportunity to rate their experiences and all participants expressed that they felt comfortable and safe giving their opinions giving a rating of 4 stars (23%) or 5 stars (77%).

Voice

The five themes in this consultation: (i) Safety, (ii) Health and Wellbeing, (iii) Participation and Access, (iv) Equality and Non-Discrimination and (v) Other relevant themes were discussed by participants at the consultation. The facilitation started by reminding participants of the agenda and then used an icebreaker to ease participants into the consultation. The first activity posed a broad question regarding the positives and challenges of being a young LGBTIQ+ person in Ireland today. Next, participants were separated into five groups, one per theme and a World Café style discussion took place. 'Voices' in this case were recorded through participants writing or drawing their main points on the poster. Then participants were invited to vote on the most important aspects within the theme by planning a sticky dot on the poster. In the digital evaluation distributed on the day, 81% of participants rated 5 stars in response to contributing their opinions, while 15% rated this at 4 stars and 4% rated this at 3 stars. When participants were asked in the evaluation if there were informed and supported in giving their opinions, 73% of participants rated this at 5 stars with 27% rating this at 4 stars. When asked about having enough time to give opinions in a way that was chosen by them, 39% rated this at 5 stars, 54% at 4 stars and 7% rated this at 3 stars. In the feedback sessions after the consultation, participants noted that the report of the consultation was clear, accessible and it gave a good overview of what was discussed.

Audience

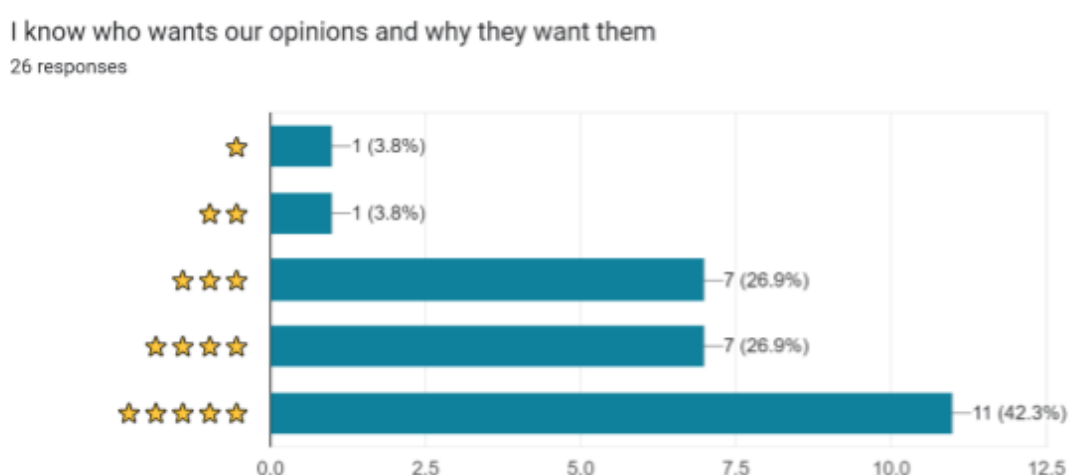
In this consultation and in the pre-consultation meeting, the adult audience were open to listening and responding to children and young people with regard to the design and wording of questions. The consultation was a key element in the broader discussion on the National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy. In preparatory sessions, participants were clearly informed about the purpose, the expectations and the volunteer aspect. The report was based on the written words on each of the posters regarding the themes and direct quotations have been used to honour the responses of the participants. Participants were invited to complete an evaluation form assessing their experiences from the consultation day providing suggestions and anonymous reactions to the facilitation. In the evaluation of the facilitation, 42% of participants

were sure of who wanted their opinions and why they wanted them, rating the question at 5 stars, while others seemed less certain rating 4 stars (26%), 3 stars (26%), 2 stars (3%) and 1 star (3%). A first draft of the report was sent to the participants and aspects of the consultation were clarified such as their views on conversion practices and who they were referring to when they cited ‘older people’.

Influence

Recommendations and observations from the consultation will inform DCEDIY’s discussion with other government departments and agencies as it will work to develop a successor to the National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy. While the purpose of the consultation was communicated to participants in the YAG meetings, the briefing meeting and on the day of the consultation, the evaluation of the consultation reveals that there were some uncertainties regarding the consultation.

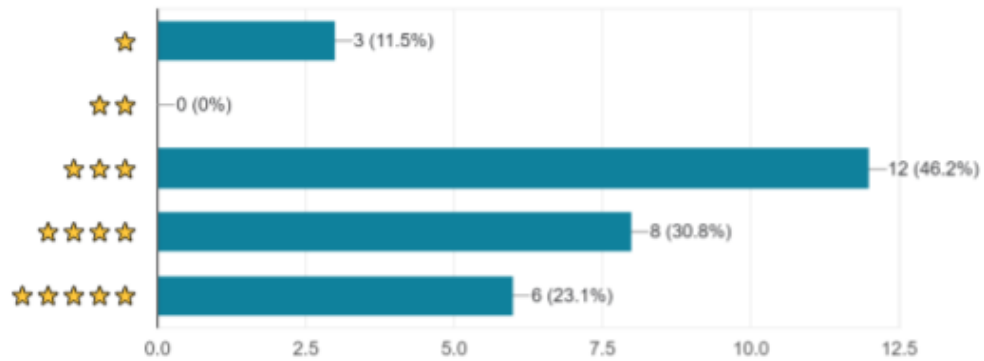
When asked in the online anonymous evaluation to rate their response to the sentence ‘I know who wants our opinions and why they want them’, participants seemed unsure with 42.3% rating their response at 5 stars, 26.9% at 3 and 4 stars respectively and 3.8% rating their response at 2 and 1 stars respectively as illustrated in the screen shot below.



This uncertainty was repeated in the final question in the evaluation when participants were invited to rate their response to the phrase ‘I think our opinions will be taken seriously’. The majority of respondents placed this answer at 3 stars (46.2%) followed by 4 stars (30.8%), 5 stars (23.1%) and 1 star (11.5%) as shown in the screenshot below.

I think our opinions will be taken seriously

26 responses



When asked about these responses in the feedback sessions following the consultation, participants explained that some of the goals in the previous Strategy were not met, so this will affect the level of perceived influence in this consultation. In addition, there are many challenges in the LGBTIQ+ community that are difficult to overcome and the participants questioned whether these suggestions would become concrete actions visible in their everyday lives.

Appendix 1:

Glossary of Acronyms and Terms.

CAMHS	Child and adolescent mental health service
Comhairle na nÓg	Youth Councils in Ireland
DCEDIY	Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
Eco-Unesco	Environmental and Educational Youth Organisation
Foróige	National Youth Organisation
DSD	Variations or differences of sex development
GAA	Gaelic Athletic Association
HRT	Hormone Replacement Therapy
IGG	Irish Girl Guides
NPO	National Participation Office
SPHE	Social, Personal and Health Education
Spun Out	Youth Information Website
SMILY	LGBTIQ+ Youth Group in Sligo and Leitrim
TENI	Transgender Equality Network Ireland
YWI	Youthwork Ireland