



# IRELAND

## ASYLUM

In May, the Committee on Justice and Equality of the Houses of the Oireachtas (parliament) started a public consultation on the asylum process and 'Direct Provision' accommodation system in Ireland, highlighting the double isolation and marginalisation experienced by LGBTI asylum seekers. The direct provision system, established and described in 2000 as an interim measure, provides temporary housing for asylum seekers.

## EDUCATION

The National School Climate survey by BeLonG To and Columbia University, found that almost three-quarters of LGBTI teenagers feel unsafe in schools.

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) conducted a review with students, educators, parents/guardians and other stakeholders of relationship and sexuality education (RSE) in primary and post-primary schools. The NCCA's draft report recommends that RSE is grounded in the rights and needs of young people; adopts a holistic approach; consults with students regularly, and aims to integrate LGBTI+ identities and sexual health into the curriculum.

Similarly, the Oireachtas committee for education published a report and made recommendations to the Minister of Education and Skills, Joe McHugh, on RSE.

## EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

In May and June, a new nationwide, civil society campaign to highlight and address the harm caused by homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in Ireland, was launched. The "Call It Out" campaign was led by Transgender Equality Network Ireland (TENI) and the team from the Hate and Hostility Research Group at the University of Limerick.

An LGBTI+ group was established in the Houses of the Oireachtas and held its first informal meeting on 26 June, primarily to support LGBTI+ members and staff.

## FAMILY

In November, Minister for Health Simon Harris signed the commencement orders for Parts 2 & 3 of the Children and Family Relationships Act 2015, which were the last remaining provisions

of this Act to be commenced. These provisions will commence on 5 May 2020, allowing female couples who conceived their children through a registered Fertility Clinic, to both be able to register as parents. Previously, it was only the mother giving birth who was a legal parent. Parents will be able to register as 'mother', 'father' or 'parent'.

LGBT Ireland and Equality for Children continue to campaign to get legislation brought forward that will regulate for surrogacy and other donor assisted reproduction to enable other LGBTI+ families to be able legally recognised.

## FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

The Houses of the Oireachtas raised the rainbow flag at Leinster House on 29 June to mark the occasion of Dublin LGBTI+ Pride and the establishment of the LGBTI+ group (see under **Equality and non-discrimination**).

Pride 2019 in Dublin saw a divergence in the community with some individuals within an activist group called Queer Action Ireland organising Pride Alternative, a demonstration to protest the corporatisation, commodification, and reification of LGBTI+ identities by businesses, the state and the Gardaí (police service) in Pride. Queer Action Ireland is now a grassroots activist group committed to queer liberation and community organising.

The second Trans Pride parade took place in July with over 1,000 people marching. Speaking at Merrion Square, Sara R. Philips, chair of TENI, spoke about the importance of guarding against a rise of transphobia as awareness increases.

*"Now more than ever we need to be together, we need to stand together, believe in each other and have each other's backs. Most of all, fight back."* - Sara R. Philips, chair of TENI at Dublin Pride

## FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

In August, Black Pride Ireland, dedicated to the nurturing and uplifting of queer black people in Ireland, was set up. They participated at Galway Pride.

## HEALTH

The This is Me - Transgender Healthcare Campaign launched



a sit-in in the Department of Health in April, demanding a meeting with Minister of Health, Simon Harris to discuss the developments that need to be made to the accessibility of trans healthcare. Following this, This is Me founder, Noah Halpin met with Minister Harris in May, who appointed him to the steering committee created by the government and the Health Service Executive (HSE) regarding trans healthcare. TENI already have two appointees to the steering committee.

A further trans healthcare rally took place on 22 September outside the Dáil, highlighting that the current service is inadequate, with waiting times now estimated at over two years. No improvements have been made since the 2017 report of the Irish Commission for Human Rights and Equality, which stated that trans healthcare is in violation of the European Social Charter, is inadequate, and that “treatment is not guaranteed in practice.”

### LEGAL GENDER RECOGNITION

On 29 November, the Minister for Employment Affairs and Social Protection Regina Doherty published the Report on the Review of the Gender Recognition Act. Civil society welcomed the recommendations to make legal gender recognition (LGR) available to 16 and 17-year-olds on the basis of self-declaration with parental consent. However, it remains concerned that trans youth under 16 will have no access to LGR and those not identifying with binary genders will have no way to get legal recognition of their gender identity. Another review will take place of the legislation under the new recommendations in two years time.

### PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

The National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy was published by the Department of Justice on 28 November, including recommendations under Visibility and Inclusion, Equal Treatment, Health and Safety.

The Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) took part in the Dublin LGBTI+ Pride parade for the first time. A few days earlier the first openly gay Gaelic football referee, David Gough appeared on RTÉ’s The ‘The Late Late Show’ and talked about his difficult experiences in the sport. Gough made history by becoming

the first openly gay man to referee the men’s senior All Ireland football final in September.

### POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

For the first time this year, members of An Garda Síochána (police service) in uniform took part in Dublin’s LGBTI+ Pride parade. Public opinion

Over 4,000 people signed a petition in January to protest the inclusion of ‘Father Ted’ TV writer Graham Linehan in a special edition of the TV programme, ‘Prime Time’ on RTÉ, Ireland’s national broadcaster. This edition was a special programme dedicated to trans youth. Linehan had made many transphobic comments, including comparing trans activism to Nazism. A protest was also held outside RTÉ on the night of transmission. The programme went ahead as planned. RTÉ received many complaints, but made no formal comment or apology.

### SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

A PrEP HIV prevention programme came into effect on 4 November, as promised by the Minister of Health, Simon Harris.