



# Ireland

## BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

(see under **Education**)

## BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

In early February, a young gay couple was beaten up and stabbed in the town of Kildare. The police established that the attack was a hate crime and launched an investigation.

## DIVERSITY AND INTERSECTIONALITY

Origins Eile announced the launch of '*Tongues*', a new Black queer magazine created in association with Black Pride Ireland.

## EDUCATION

A video was posted on social media in September, featuring a group of around ten students from a Dublin private school verbally assaulting a classmate who had recently come out. The video was removed, but no official response followed.

TENI (Transgender Equality Network Ireland) and the University of Limerick launched the results of the first ever study of the post-primary school experiences of trans youth in Ireland, finding that trans and gender diverse young people feel marginalised in school, experience misnaming and misgendering, restrictive uniforms, bathroom accessibility, staff prejudice, peer bullying, barriers to sports, and a lack of support from teachers and staff. The study also found that positive reactions to someone coming out really affirmed that person in their identity and gave them a sense of self-acceptance. TENI called for training for staff and teachers, increased support services for young trans people, and a better inclusion of trans people and trans rights issues in the curriculum.

Working with BeLonG To, 18 schools stepped-up to create a safe space for LGBTI+ students in Ireland's first Safe & Supportive Schools Project – a whole-school approach to creating a fully inclusive school environment for LGBTI+ students.

## FAMILY

2020 marked the fifth anniversary of Ireland's marriage equality referendum.

The last remaining provisions of the Children and Family Relationships Act 2015 commenced on 5 May, allowing both women in a same-sex couple to be automatically recognised on their child's birth certificate. If a child was conceived before 5 May, the non-gestational mother will need to acquire a court declaration before the formal recognition. The first court

procedures took place in July, signaling the end of a legal limbo in which many families found themselves for years. Local civil society has lobbied for these changes for years.

*"We will no longer have to worry about who takes him for the remainder of his childhood vaccines. We will finally be able to get him a passport without one of us making a legal declaration that we are a sole parent to him. We will both have the assurance that we are, in every respect, his parents and that can no longer be denied to us as a family."* - Ailbhe O'Nolan, mother, to LGBT Ireland

From 5 May onwards, parents can register as 'mother', 'father' or with the gender-neutral term 'parent'.

The legislation does not provide for automatic registration for parents whose child was born out of surrogacy abroad, leaving many rainbow families behind. Minister of Health Simon Harries has shown willingness to take this step. In January, the government commissioned the Irish special rapporteur on child protection to examine the issue and propose solutions.

## FOREIGN POLICY

The town of Fermoy broke ties with its Polish twin city Nowa Deba after it declared itself an "LGBT-free zone". Towns in France, Germany, and the Netherlands did the same.

## HEALTH

Trans-specific healthcare was a debated issue during the parliamentary elections in February. Sinn Fein pledged that it would base trans healthcare on self-determination, which was criticised by a number of doctors arguing for the importance of psychiatric and psychological evaluations. Fine Gael stated they would adhere to WPATH Standards of Care.

On 30 November, the Union of Students in Ireland (USI) launched the online action #TransHealthcareNow, calling on political leaders to ensure trans and non-binary people's prompt access to healthcare services.

LGBT Ireland's helpline recorded a stark increase in calls during the pandemic. Young people, having to stay at home with hostile family members, were among those seeking help the most. Some LGBTIQI groups offered virtual community meetings on Zoom. TENI released resources on accessing trans healthcare during lockdowns.

On 24 November, civil society held a [conference](#) on LGBTI+ mental health, opened by the Minister of State for Mental Health and Older People, and highlighting the need for inclusive services, training for staff, prevention, and new legislation allowing 16 and 17-year-old young people to consent to mental health care.

HIV Ireland [launched](#) the first free HIV self-test service in the country, which delivers the test to a person's home upon request.

BeLonG To conducted a [national survey](#) on the impact of the pandemic on LGBTI+ youth, finding that 93% have been struggling with anxiety, stress or depression during COVID-19. This rate was 53% among the [general youth population](#). BeLonG To also found that over half of LGBTI+ youth (55%) struggled with suicidal ideation, 45% with self-harm, and 60% with loneliness. 53% said that their home environment was not a good place to be during COVID-19 restrictions.

*"We are fearful that the devastating mental health impact of COVID-19 on the lives of LGBTI+ youth will live long beyond the virus. Many LGBTI+ young people experience ongoing mental health challenges and as the results of our survey show, these have been exacerbated by COVID-19" - Moninne Griffith, CEO of BeLonG To.*

## HOUSING

The first ever piece of research looking specifically into LGBTI+ youth homelessness was [published](#) in September, finding that LGBTI+ youth face more complex experiences than youth in general, relating to coming out and/or transitioning, exposing them to high risk of homelessness or 'sofa surfing' and heightened vulnerability when homeless.

## HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, LGBTI organisations moved their activities online, including training, counseling, and group meetings.

## PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

Ahead of the elections in February, LGBT Ireland [prepared](#) information on where the different parties stand on LGBTIQ issues and who the most supportive MPs have been over the past years. BeLonG To launched their #VoteWithPride [manifesto](#) in January, outlining priorities the new government should work on regarding LGBTI+ youth.

The first ever LGBTQ+ club of the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA), Ireland's largest sports association, was [established](#) in November.

## POLICE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

The Garda (Irish Police Force) established the Diversity and Integration Strategy Oversight Committee, with the inclusion of LGBTI civil society, to oversee the implementation of the [Garda Diversity and Integration Strategy](#).

## SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

Cork's Sexual Health Centre [launched](#) Ireland's first community sexual health hub in September, to support young people in accessing safe and accurate sexual health information.

Ireland's Cervical Check service updated their materials to [include](#) trans men and non-binary people.



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