**Questionnaire**

**Protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity- Marginalisation and exclusion from socio-cultural environments**

**Ireland’s Response**

1. Key areas in which people (in your country, region or worldwide) suffer socio-cultural and economic exclusion as a result of violence and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and/or gender identity; in particular,
2. **What knowledge, including data, exists in the State planning bases in relation to socio-cultural and economic exclusion based on sexual orientation and gender identity, including levels of poverty, homelessness, education, employment, health, political participation and any other relevant social indicator?**

**Data on Sexual Health / Relationship and Sexuality Education for the LGBT+ community**

The annual Healthy Ireland Survey gives an up-to-date picture of the health of the nation, which is being used to fulfil diverse international reporting obligations and to inform policy development and implementation. Its purpose is to provide a robust and credible baseline set of data on a wide range of population health behaviours which have significant impact on individual health outcomes. However, it is not targeted towards any particular subgroup of the population and does not, therefore, gather data specifically on the LGBT+ community.

Two large scale Surveys have been undertaken with men who have sex with men (MSM), the MISI (MSM Internet Survey Ireland), 2015 and the European MSM Internet Survey (EMIS) in 2017. Both Surveys include questions regarding sexual orientation and gender identity.

Preparations are currently underway to conduct a general population survey in 2020 on the knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of sexual health and wellbeing in Ireland. A scoping study will be conducted in 2019 to inform the general population survey and a set of sexual health behavioural indicators are currently being developed.

Officials from both the Department of Health and the Health Service Executive regularly engage with the LGBT+ community to discuss matters relating to sexual health. This engagement is part of the process of implementation of the National Sexual Health Strategy, which has as its core goals that:

* everyone in Ireland will receive comprehensive and age-appropriate sexual health education/information and will have access to appropriate prevention and promotion services;
* equitable, accessible and high-quality sexual health services, which are targeted and tailored to need, will be available to everyone; and
* robust and high-quality sexual health information will be generated to underpin policy, practice, service planning and strategic monitoring.

In the area of relationship and sexuality education, there is a specific resource made available to teachers to enable them to provide appropriate education and guidance to LGBT + students, titled *Growing Up Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender.* There is also a dedicated information service and website, run by the NGO BeLongTo, which provides support and advice to LGBT+ young people.

***Promotion of inclusion and diversity through sport - the National Physical Activity Plan***

**Get Ireland Active - the National Physical Activity Plan** aims to increase physical activity among the population by 1% per annum. The Plan seeks to ensure that no group is disadvantaged and recognises that targeted interventions are required to address and overcome barriers to participation which are experienced by some people. Implementation of the NPAP includes the provision of funding for local community sporting initiatives. The promotion of inclusion is a core requirement for access to this funding.

**The Federation of Irish Sport** is the representative organisation for the National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs) and Local Sports Partnerships (LSPs) in Ireland. The FIS recently held its Annual Conference which had as its theme inclusion and diversity: speakers at the Conference included a number of high-profile sports stars from the LGBT+ community, as well as presentations on local community initiatives and sporting events which are specifically designed to include this community.

**LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy**

Ireland launched its LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy in June 2018. In advance of the publication of the strategy, almost 4000 young people from across Ireland were consulted on its development. 3882 young people from across Ireland completed an online survey and 172 young people attended one of seven consultation events, representing a cross-section of young people, including those who identified as a member of the LGBTI+ community, and those who did not.

They were asked

1. What is positive about being a young LGBTI+ person in Ireland today?
2. What issues are faced by young LGBTI+ people in Ireland today?
3. What changes would improve the lives of young LGBTI+ people?

Goal 3 of the LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy, aims to develop the research and data environment to better understand the lives of LGBTI+ young people including the following actions:

1. Conduct a commissioned landscape analysis of existing research and data as relevant to Irish LGBTI+ youth. Use this information to complete an LGBTI+ research needs analysis based on the research gaps identified.
2. Based on identified research and data gaps, develop and implement research to meet the identified gaps.
3. Commission a review of international and Irish best practice study on appropriate language and ways to ask about gender identity and sexual orientation to inform the development of best practice instrumentation for inclusion in surveys and/or Census. Participate in piloting of questions with CSO and other research bodies, as relevant.
4. Develop research into the factors that support positive mental health for LGBTI+ young people and ascertain how these positive factors can be replicated.

**LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy**

The Department of Justice & Equality is in the process of developing a National Strategy to improve the lives of the LGBTI+ citizens of Ireland. The overall aim of this strategy is to promote inclusion, protect rights and to improve quality of life and wellbeing for LGBTI+ people enabling them to participate fully in Ireland's social, economic, cultural, and political life.

Preliminary consultation has taken place with a range of stakeholders including LGBTI+ representative and community bodies, mental and sexual health practitioners, and legal experts.

The Department also facilitated a series of thematic consultation sessions with key experts and researchers to support the development of the Strategy, which concluded in February 2019 along with a written submissions process.

Targeted consultation with members of the LGBTI+ community suffering multiple discrimination and/or marginalisation also took place, with specific workshops with the Trans/Intersex community, LGBTI+ Travellers, LGBTI+ migrants and asylum seekers, and with the LGBTI+ Deaf Community.

Drafting of the Strategy will be supported by a consultative committee comprising the main LGBTI+ NGOs and advocacy groups. It is envisaged that the Strategy will be finalised in the near future.

1. **How are individuals, groups or communities differently affected, based on their sexual orientation and/or gender identity?**

It is increasingly recognised that discrimination can occur on the basis of more than one ground. A person who is discriminated against on grounds of her race might also suffer discrimination on grounds of her gender, her sexual orientation, her religion or belief, her age or her disability. Such discrimination can create cumulative disadvantage.

LGBT Migrants or LGBT members of the travelling community experience a double burden of discrimination in that sometimes they can find themselves excluded from either community on account of their multiple identity.

Research published by the National LGBT Federation (NXF), an Irish based civil society organisation, has found that over 50% of LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender) migrants living in Ireland rated their mental health negatively and that up to a fifth reported having severe or extremely severe symptoms of anxiety and depression.

54% of respondents also felt they were excluded from Irish society and up to 40% said they had experienced homophobic abuse.

The effect of double discrimination also applies to LGBTI+ persons living with disabilities. Due to complex factors including living arrangements, persons with disabilities can often be denied sexual expression. Advocacy is of great value to LGBTI+ persons with a disability. It is important to ensure that information and services provided by advocacy and support groups are accessible insofar as is possible.

**Older individuals**

It is estimated that approximately 23,396 persons aged-65 years and over (5% of the population aged 65 and over) may be lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in Ireland.

Whilst some of the challenges in ageing may be similar for all ageing populations there is a growing awareness of the specific issues faced by older LGBT people (isolation, not being out, being treated with the heteronormative assumption in health and social care services).

The Visible Lives study (Higgins et al. 2011) found that many older lesbians, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in Ireland perceive nursing homes as unwelcoming or insensitive to their healthcare needs.

Some health and social care staff assume heterosexuality and ignore LGBTI+ identities.

Older LGBTI+ individuals are often fearful that their end of life and after death wishes will not be respected by family members.

LGBTI+ people describe additional challenges in bereavement, including lack of acknowledgement of their loss, additional legal complications, exclusion of ‘chosen family’ as part of the unit of care and for some the continued shadow of HIV/AIDS.

**Rural Isolation**

LGBTI individuals living in small towns or rural areas can be very isolated for a whole variety of reasons:

* It can be difficult to meet other LGBTI+ people (for practical reasons including lack of access to transport).
* It can be difficult access information and support.
* The issue of the lack of broadband can impact on LGBTI+ people’s ability to access information.
* It can be difficult to socialise and find LGBTI+ inclusive social outlets.
* There is a lack of visibility of positive role models and LGBTI support services in rural areas
* It can be difficult to find health and social care supports and live a relatively stress-free life.
* Individuals may be wary of coming out publicly for fear of homophobia or transphobia in conservative community environments (with negative effects on health and wellbeing caused by hiding sexual orientation or gender identity).
* Rural isolation can deepen detachment. Detachment can be self-imposed but can have negative psychological impacts.
* It can be difficult to find the specific LGBTI+ health supports needed in rural areas.
* There is a lack of nuancing of services to be visible to and prepared for LGBTI callers/clients.
* There is a lack of mapping of available services in rural areas.
1. **What are the main barriers in ensuring equal access to education, health care, employment and occupation, housing and other relevant sectors?**

**Health care**

Entitlement to health services in Ireland is primarily based on residency and means. Any person, regardless of nationality, gender or age, who is accepted by the Health Service Executive (HSE) as being **Ordinarily Resident in the State** is eligible to access to public services under the provisions of the Health Act 1970 (as amended). For a person to be considered ordinarily resident in the State, s/he must be able to satisfy the HSE that s/he has been resident in the State for a minimum of one year or can provide proof that s/he intends to remain in Ireland for at least one year.

The Irish Public Health System provides for two categories of eligibility for person ordinarily resident in the State, i.e. full eligibility (medical card holders) and limited eligibility (all others). Full eligibility is determined primarily by reference to income limits.

Persons with full eligibility are entitled to a range of services, including general practitioner services, prescribed drugs and medicines, all in-patient public hospital services in public wards including consultant services, all out-patient public hospital services including consultant services, dental, ophthalmic and aural services and appliances and a maternity and infant care service.

Other services such as allied healthcare professional services may be available to medical card holders. With the exception of prescribed drugs and medicines, which are subject to a €2.00 charge per prescribed item (maximum €20 per month per individual/family), these services are provided free of charge.

Persons with limited eligibility are eligible for in-patient and out-patient public hospital services including consultant services, subject to certain charges. The public hospital statutory in-patient charge is €80 in respect of each day during which a person is maintained, up to a maximum payment of €800 in any 12 consecutive months. There is also a charge of €100 for attendance at Accident & Emergency Departments unless, inter alia, the person has a referral letter from their General Practitioner.

Other services such as allied healthcare professional services may also be made available to persons with limited eligibility.

1. **Root causes and structural factors responsible for marginalisation and socio-cultural and economic exclusion, such as laws, public policies, institutional practices, organizational behaviours, and prevailing ideologies, values and beliefs?**

Gaps in equality legislation can lead to marginalisation and socio-cultural and economic exclusion. Ireland has taken steps to strengthen its equality legislation to protect individuals from discrimination.

The Employment Equality Acts 1998 – 2015 and the Equal Status Acts 2000 – 2015 prohibit discrimination on nine grounds against those in employment, seeking access to employment or participating in vocational training, and those seeking goods and services. These grounds are gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

The enforcement of the Acts is a matter for the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC), which is a statutorily independent office of the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation. Its core functions include the enforcement of employment rights and employment permits legislation, the provision of employment rights and industrial relations information, promoting compliance with employment rights and equality legislation, the provision of early resolution, mediation, adjudication, conciliation, facilitation and advisory services and the processing of employment agency and protection of young persons (employment) licences.

The Equality (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2015 amended the Employment Equality Legislation to better protect employees against discrimination in an appropriate and balanced way, while respecting religious freedoms as guaranteed in the Constitution and in international law.

The amended section 37 of the Employment Equality Act 1998 now obliges employers in religious-run schools and hospitals to show that any favourable treatment of an employee or prospective employee is limited to the religion ground and that action taken against a person is objectively justified by reference to that institution’s aim of protecting its religious ethos and that the means of achieving that aim are appropriate and necessary.

1. **State efforts to address socio-cultural and economic exclusion through legislation, policies, data gathering, and other means, for example:**
2. Destitution and poverty;
3. Current efforts by States to address bullying and exclusion of LGBT people from education, including in education curricula teacher training, measures to promote continuing education or reinsertion in education settings and vocational training;
4. Homelessness among LGBT people, particularly youth, and inclusion in shelter programs;
5. Coverage by social security and benefits, as well as public and private health insurance (Taking into account survivor’s pensions for same-sex couples, insurance coverage for gender affirming care, social housing for LGBT youth and older persons etc.);
6. Equal access to health (including through training and sensitisation of health care personnel), regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or expression;

**Equal Access to Health**

As already mentioned, the Employment Equality Acts 1998 – 2015 and the Equal Status Acts 2000 – 2015 prohibit discrimination on nine grounds against those in employment, seeking access to employment or participating in vocational training, and those seeking goods and services. These grounds are gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

In the individual pieces of legislation referred to above, equality of opportunity is promoted, and discrimination against individuals on the basis of their sexual orientation (among other characteristics), is prohibited. These principles apply equally, for individuals employed by HSE in our workplaces, and for clients of the HSE engaging with our services.

In 2016, the Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Division was established in the HSE, within the National HR function. The HSE’s commitment in relation to supporting diversity, equality and inclusion and prohibiting discrimination, is articulated in its’ DEI Mission Statement in this regard:

“Employees of the HSE bring a range of skills, talents, diverse thinking and experience to the organisation. HSE is committed to creating a positive working environment, whereby all employees, inclusive of race, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical or mental disability, civil status or membership of the Traveller Community, and geographical location are respected, valued and can reach their full potential. We aim to develop the workforce of the HSE, which reflects the diversity of service users, and is strengthened through accommodating and valuing different perspectives, ultimately resulting in improved service-user experience”

With the HSE’s DEI Division, a strategic plan was agreed on the basis of discreet projects across the 9 characteristics comprehended by the equality legislation, including initiatives to support LGBTI+ employees in the HSE. The Health Service LGBTI+ & Allies Network was launched in June 2017 and now has more than 20 active members and several sub groups – focusing on training and awareness raising, educational and social events, ally support, research and development, and PRIDE month annually. The launch of the Network represented a milestone in the HSE’s recognition and appreciation of its diverse workforce.

The HSE celebrated a historic occasion on 30th June 2018 when employees, managers, family and friends marched in the Dublin PRIDE parade and the PRIDE flag was raised for the first time at 2 corporate HSE buildings in June 2018. Plans are currently underway to participate in PRIDE again in June of this year, and to raise PRIDE flags at other HSE buildings of significance.

HSE senior management commitment and support was pledged on formation of the Network, together with a commitment to identifying and removing any barriers to full engagement or participation, for both employees and service users, embracing fully our statutory requirements under our national equality legislation.

The establishment and resourcing of the Network also reflects HSE management’s commitment to develop the organisation as a service that welcomes ‘the whole person’ in the workplace, in line with our organisational policies on embracing diversity and supporting equality in the workplace.

The objectives of the Network are also firmly aligned with in the objectives of the HSE People Strategy and HSE Corporate Plans in “promoting diversity, inclusion and equality across the system, valuing different perspectives, depth of experience and the strengths and potential of individuals and teams”.

Further protection against discrimination in the workplace is afforded to HSE employees through the provisions of the Dignity at Work Policy, which recognise the right of all employees to be treated with dignity and respect in the workplace, and to be provided with a safe working environment, which is free from harassment of all types including sexual harassment, and bullying.

In addition, the HSE is fully committed to increasing employee awareness regarding individual and collective responsibilities under the various pieces of equality legislation, and to raising awareness

of issues relevant to our LGBTI+ workforce, and the LGBTI+ community generally, through training and awareness raising activities generally. Various training programmes are available to HSE managers and employees, which include a focus on

* human rights
* diversity, equality and inclusion
* the prohibition of discrimination
* creating workspaces and services which are free from discrimination
* and eliminating barriers to equality of opportunity and equality of outcome

The abovementioned training programmes are available through our Learning Training and Developments Divisions and through our online training platform, HSE LanD. Modules including the content referred to above are available through on First Time Manager Programme, our People Management – The Legal Framework Programme, and are also available independently where required by individual services and groups of employees.

 HSE has also engaged the specialist services of training providers where necessary, for example, training programmes delivered by the Transgender Equality Network Ireland (TENI) and other programmes developed by sector exerts in collaboration with HSE employees i.e. LGBT Ireland. Training programme content is continually reviewed in the context of formal evaluations from participants, and in line with best practice principles.

**LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy 2018 - 2020**

**Introduction**

The *LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy 2018 - 2020* was published on 29th June 2018 and is a world first. It is a key commitment for the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) as part of the 2016 Programme for Partnership Government and is making a significant contribution towards the Government's broader commitment to continue to strive for the full inclusion of LGBTI+ people in Irish society. It is a 3 year Strategy that is strongly action oriented with the mission to *ensure all LGBTI+ young people are visible, valued and included.*

A number of significant changes have taken place in Ireland in recent decades which have resulted in substantial progress and improved outcomes for LGBTI+ people. The Strategy seeks to put measures in place to address some of the remaining challenges faced by LGBTI+ young people, so as to ensure that they can achieve the same positive outcomes as all other young people.

The Strategy and its governance lie within the framework of *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: The Policy Framework for Children and Young People* and as such it contributes to the achievement of the five national outcomes for children and young people:

1. Active and healthy, with positive physical and mental wellbeing
2. Achieving their full potential in all areas of learning and development
3. Safe and protected from harm
4. Economic security and opportunity
5. Connected, respected and contributing to their world.

 **Early Implementation Measures led by DCYA and plans for Year One reporting:**

To coincide with the launch of the ***LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy 2018-2020,*** the Minister for Children & Youth Affairs announced the immediate implementation of a number of the Strategy actions in the areas of youth service provision, capacity building, awareness raising and research. The following actions were included:

***Goal 1: Create a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for LGBTI+ young people***

1. As part of fulfilling Objectives 2 and 3 of the Strategy, **funding was allocated in 2018 for immediate provision of new and additional youth service provision to address gaps and to allow a mapping of current LGBTI+ youth service provision at Education and Training Board (ETB) level to take place.** Additional services provided across the country as a result of this funding included additional LGBTI+ specific youth worker hours, workshops and seminars, establishment of transgender groups, LGBTI+ targeted sexual health programmes, LGBTI+ Awareness Week, one-to-one and group support for LGBTI+ young people, art and drama projects focusing on transgender challenges for young people and on issues around coming out, rural LGBTI+ networking events, LGBT+ Parent peer support network and trans parents information day.
2. Following the mapping exercise conducted on provision of LGBTI+ specific youth services, additional hours in 2019 will be allocated to youth services for LGBTI+ young people according to its findings.
3. As per Objective 7 of the Strategy, **funding was distributed for capacity building measures for youth, health and social service professional groups and organisations in 2018**. **39 organisations were successful in their applications for LGBTI+ Capacity Building initiatives and have received funding under the grant scheme.** This capacity building is a key action under Goal 1 of the Strategy, which is to "Create a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for LGBTI+ young people". Grants were made available for capacity building measures such as evidence-based LGBTI+ training, mentoring, coaching, CPD initiatives and guidelines targeted at professional service providers and youth services. Grants have been distributed in 16 counties to organisations including youth services, family resource centres, sexual health centres, addiction services, equality organisations, arts therapy organisations and traveller organisations. A number of national organisations are also included, such as Foroige, Youth Work Ireland, GAISCE, Focus Ireland, Irish Red Cross, Girl Guides, LGBT Ireland, BelongTo, GOSHH and the Transgender Equality Network Ireland (TENI).
4. In June 2019, a new capacity grant scheme for LGBT specific organisations will be announced for the development of further capacity building initiatives such as training, and the development of guidelines and policies for professional service providers.
5. As per **action 5(a)** the Department of Children & Youth Affairs (DCYA) ran a competition in late 2018 and early 2019 for young people up to the age of 24 to design a sticker for sports clubs, cultural bodies, arts organisations, youth groups and businesses to declare their support for diversity, inclusion and visible representation of public support for LGBTI+. In parallel with the design of the Welcome Sticker, a Charter is currently under development which will set out how organisations will self-declare their support for the values of inclusiveness, equality, rights, empowerment, respect, positivity and acceptance.

A working group co-chaired by Department of Children and Youth Affairs and Department for Justice and Equality will be established for the rollout of the recognition marker, and appropriate representation from government departments will be very welcome for this. Of particular interest is how the LGBTI Welcome Sticker can reach into rural and other hard to reach communities.

1. DCYA participation unit completed a consultation with young people with the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment on the reform of Relationships and Sexuality Education in the curriculum.

***Goal 3 - develop research and data environment to better understand the lives of LGBTI+ young people***

1. As per action 15(a) a call to tender for a research project to undertake a **landscape analysis of the existing research and data relevant to the Strategy**. The tender was awarded to Professor Saoirse Nic Gabhann in the HBSC Ireland Team in Health Promotion Research Centre, School of Health Sciences, National University of Ireland Galway.

**Governance and Implementation:**

1. A Youth Advisory Group has been established to recruit a broader Youth Forum to ensure the voice of young people remains central to the Strategy implementation process.
2. In Q3 2019, a report on cross government progress on implementation will be compiled. This will be presented at an implementation forum for government partners and stakeholders, to review progress.
3. DCYA officials are participating on a working group chaired by the Department for Justice and Equality for the development of the National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy. Joint actions between DCYA and DJE include research actions and rollout of the LGBTI+ Welcome Sticker.
4. During the Strategy development process, DCYA engaged with a wide range of Government Departments and State Agencies in order to define the actions required to realise the Strategy's goals and objectives and ensure that they were developed in alignment with other key strategies and policies. At the end of 2018, DCYA reminded all lead actors responsible for implementing actions to consider their commitments in the Strategy in the context of their business planning process for 2019 and to recognise that some budgetary provision may be required to support the delivery of their actions.

**Next Steps**

**Actions planned for 2019 are:**

1. In Q3 of 2019 an Annual Report on Implementation will be prepared by DCYA.
2. In September of 2019 DCYA will host an Annual Implementation Forum on the LGBTI+ Youth Strategy for launch at the Annual Form as committed to in the Strategy.
3. A working group will be co-hosted between DCYA and DJE to provide a rollout strategy for the Welcome Sticker (or recognition marker) for distribution to sports clubs, cultural bodies, arts organisations, youth groups and businesses to declare their support for diversity, inclusion and visible representation of public support for LGBTI+.

**Actions planned for 2020 are:**

1. DCYA will commence work on developing a leadership programme for young LGBTI+ leaders and potential leaders.
2. DCYA will develop a biennial national event to publicly celebrate LGBTI+ young people and young leaders.
3. DCYA will commence work on developing research into the factors that support positive mental health for LGBTI+ young people and ascertain how these positive factors can be replicated.
4. DCYA will establish a framework for research to enhance the quality of LGBTI+ data and commission research following from the findings of a commissioned landscape analysis and identification of research needs.

In addition to the National LGBTI+ Youth Strategy, young LGBTI+ people are also supported through the Department of Education & Skills Action Plan on Bullying, which outlines 12 action points to help prevent and tackle bullying in schools, including the development of guidelines for policy makers in relation to LGBT identity and homophobic bullying. The Department has also introduced a national anti-bullying website - [www.tacklebullying.ie](http://www.tacklebullying.ie) – with a particular focus on promoting inclusion and tackling identity-based bullying.

**National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy**

As mentioned above (see question 1), the Department of Justice & Equality is in the process of developing a National Strategy to improve the lives of the LGBTI+ citizens of Ireland. The overall aim of this strategy is to promote inclusion, protect rights and to improve quality of life and wellbeing for LGBTI+ people enabling them to participate fully in Ireland's social, economic, cultural, and political life.

Preliminary consultation has taken place with a range of stakeholders including LGBTI+ representative and community bodies, mental and sexual health practitioners, and legal experts.

A series of thematic consultation sessions facilitated by key LGBTI+ experts and researchers (Dr Grainne Healy, Ms Denise Charlton and Dr Kathy Walsh) to support the development of the Strategy concluded just last week (01 February 2019) along with a written submissions process which received 26 written submissions.

The Department also engaged in targeted consultation with members of the LGBTI+ community whose voices it wished to amplify. Accordingly, specific workshops have been held with the Trans/Intersex community, with LGBTI+ Travellers, with LGBTI+ migrants and asylum seekers, and with the LGBTI+ Deaf Community.

Through the regional consultations, the targeted workshops, a thorough review of the literature, preliminary consultations, and the written submission process a number of key areas and themes to address in the Strategy were identified. The most prominent and recurring of these themes are:

* Hate Crime,
* LGBTI+ awareness raising for professionals / challenging inherent heteronormativity,
* Rural isolation and issues affecting aging LGBTI+ people,
* Workplace inclusion,
* Outstanding equality issues surrounding LGBTI+ families and parenting,
* Access to healthcare for Trans people.

The Strategy will take a whole of Government approach to improving outcomes for LGBTI+ people in Ireland. Accordingly, consultation with other Government Departments is a key feature of the strategic development process.

Drafting of the Strategy will be supported by a consultative committee comprising the main LGBTI+ NGOs and advocacy groups. It is envisaged that the Strategy will be finalised in the near future.

1. **Complaints mechanisms available and accessible to LGBT people facing discrimination.**

Irish equality legislation has – in the main – nine protected grounds which are gender, civil status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion, race (including nationality, skin colour and ethnic origin) and membership of the Irish Traveller Community.

The Employment Equality Acts provide protection on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender in relation to access to employment, promotions, dismissals, pay, conditions of employment and harassment. The legislation does not explicitly have a ground of gender identity but the gender ground has been used to provide protection in cases involving discrimination and/or harassment in relation to transgender persons.

This ensures some measure of consideration for the possible heightened vulnerability of most LGBTI+ groups

The embedding and promotion of this multi ground legislative framework over some two decades has heightened general awareness of diversity within the protected grounds and a range of public and civil society initiatives that reflect that.

As mentioned above, the enforcement of the Acts is a matter for the WRC (see question 2).

1. **Actions to ensure socio-cultural and economic inclusion based on sexual orientation and gender identity in measures undertaken to ensure implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals at the national and regional levels.**

In 2015 Ireland was the first country in the world to legalise marriage equality by way of popular vote, through a referendum which introduced the 34th Amendment of the Constitution of Ireland. Ireland has also developed a LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy, as referenced above. Furthermore, plans are underway to develop a National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy for all ages. The Gender Recognition Act 2015 provides that a person can apply for a Gender Recognition Certificate in order to have their preferred gender recognised by the Irish State. The Gender Recognition Act allows all individuals over the age of 18 to self-declare their own gender identity [SDG 10.2].

1. **Actions taken to raise public awareness and sensitisation on issues of sexual orientation and gender identity, in order to promote the meaningful socio-cultural and economic inclusion of LGBT people.**

Objective 1 of the LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy 2018-2020 (see question 3 for more detail) is to create a more supportive and inclusive environment for LGBTI+ young people in formal education settings. The actions in this goal include supporting the provision of student led LGBTI+ specific awareness raising initiatives in Higher Education Institutions and Further Education & Training Institutions. Such initiatives may include provision of Pink and Purple Training.

The overall aim of the National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy, currently being developed by the Department of Justice and Equality, will be to improve the lives of LGBTI+ persons in Ireland, to foster inclusion, awareness and visibility.

1. **Services provided by civil society to excluded and marginalised LGBT people.**

As mentioned above, see question 3, as part of achieving objective 7 of the **LGBTI+ Youth Strategy**, funding was distributed for capacity building measures for youth, health and social service professional groups and organisations in 2018. 39 organisations were successful in their applications for LGBTI+ Capacity Building initiatives and have received funding under the grant scheme. This capacity building is a key action under Goal 1 of the Strategy, which is to "Create a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for LGBTI+ young people". Grants were made available for capacity building measures such as evidence-based LGBTI+ training, mentoring, coaching, CPD initiatives and guidelines targeted at professional service providers and youth services. Grants have been distributed in 16 counties to organisations including youth services, family resource centres, sexual health centres, addiction services, equality organisations, arts therapy organisations and traveller organisations. A number of national organisations are also included, such as Foróige, Youth Work Ireland, GAISCE, Focus Ireland, Irish Red Cross, Girl Guides, LGBT Ireland, BelongTo, GOSHH and the Transgender Equality Network Ireland (TENI).