

FDYS LGBTI+ YOUTH STRATEGY

2020 - 2024



WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE SAID

Being LGBTI+ and part of the community is a positive statement. A statement that we are not all painted with the same brush and we don't all have to be the same

I think being part of the LGBTI+ Community allows people to feel more included and welcomed

I think more medical and information resources need to be published regarding the LGBTI+ Community. I have not found anything online about the cost of transitioning

FDYS taking part in PRIDE for the first time showed young LGBTI+ people that they are a huge support to LGBTI+ community

More awareness around transphobia and biphobia. I think in sexual education provided in schools should include LGBTI+ history and mental health awareness regarding the LGBTI+ Community as LGBTI+ people are at a higher risk of developing mental health problems

More education to the wider population on LGBTI+ issues is needed

More parent supports are needed!

I think more emphasis on LGBTI+ relationships and sexual health in schools is needed and not just a focus on 'boy and girl' relationships

There are still many stereotypical and prejudicial opinions in Ireland today that need to be addressed before we are fully equal

Something as simple as having posters on a wall or a flag can help LGBTI+ people feel safe/comfortable

Groups give us the confidence to come out and unafraid to express our individuality and sexuality/gender identity

The majority of people think that since same-sex marriage was passed in 2015, that there is no discrimination against LGBTI+ people, but this is not always the case

With LGBTI+ people becoming more accepted it creates an environment that allows people to come out and be who they are without fear of being judged. As the years go on, the community of people who don't accept the LGBTI+ community is becoming smaller and smaller allowing the LGBTI+ Community to stand tall with pride!

People need to be educated, knowledge is power! And it helps people understand. We cannot expect people to understand us, accept unless they are educated! Homophobia is not intentional, it's a lack of awareness and education regarding the LGBTI+ Community

Having community that a person can identify comfortably with helps combat the isolation many LGBTI+ people may feel, this community can offer a platform through which we can discuss common problems

Being part of an LGBTI+ support group allows people to feel valued and like they are not outsiders and form lasting friendships

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LGBTI+ TERMINOLOGY

You will see these terms pop up throughout this strategy, and throughout life! Let's learn more about the LGBTI+ Lingo out there and educate ourselves on the different sexual orientations and gender identities that you may hear before we begin.

LGBTI+: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex people. The plus sign includes people with other sexual orientations and gender identities.

Sexual Orientations: This is a term used to describe someone's emotional, romantic and sexual attraction to other people.

Gender Identity: A person's deeply felt internal identity as male, female, or another identity such as non-binary. A person's gender identity is separate to their sexual orientation.

Lesbian: Women who may be attracted to other women.

Gay: Someone attracted to people of same gender.

Bisexual: Someone who is attracted to more than one gender. Example both men and women.

Heterosexual: Someone attracted to someone of the opposite gender.

Asexual: People with little or no sexual attraction to others.

Pansexual: An individual who may be attracted to any person, regardless of their sex/gender identity.

Queer: Some people use this terms as an alternative to LGBTI+. It is not embraced by all LGBTI+ people, so ask before you use it.

Coming Out: The process of realising and understanding your sexual orientation and gender identity and disclosing this to others.

Gender Expression: How people portray their gender through clothes, hair, voice, mannerisms.

Transgender: When a person's sex assigned at birth (male/female) does not match their gender identity, they may call themselves trans/ transgender as their sex and gender identity do not match. People often use the terms sex and gender interchangeably, and when a sex is assigned at birth, a gender is assumed.

Transition: A process in which trans people begin to live as the gender with which they identify, rather than the sex they were given at birth.

Non-binary: An umbrella term for gender identities that fall outside the gender binary of male or female. This includes individuals whose gender identity is neither exclusively male nor female, a combination of male and female or between or beyond genders. Similar to the usage of transgender, people under the non-binary umbrella may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms.

Gender Fluid: Individuals that experience different gender identities at different times. Can be multiple gender identities at once, then switch to no gender at all or move between single gender identities.

Intersex: An umbrella term used to describe a wide range of natural bodily variations that do not fit the typical binary notions of male and female bodies. Some intersex variations are visible at birth, others at puberty and some are not visible at all.

We acknowledge with thanks from various sources



The most common age someone realises their sexual orientation/ gender identity is 12. The most common age of telling someone for the first time is 16 and people usually tell a friend first!
(LGBTIreland Report, 2016)

Educating yourself on the different terminology is one step to becoming an LGBTI+ Ally! An Ally is someone who is a friend, advocate or activist for The LGBTI+ Community.

If you are unsure of an LGBTI+ term or what pronoun to use for someone, just ask! (he/him, she/her, they/them)

LGBTIreland's #Ally2Ally Campaign in June explains how to be an LGBTI+ Ally, which we promoted here in FDYS on social media and within our youth groups in the lead up to PRIDE in Dublin! We have many allies here in FDYS within all youth groups!



Come Out as an Ally

- Actively listen
- Show support: online • college • work sport • home
- Mention our services to an LGBT friend: Helpline • Peer Groups • Instant Messaging
- Respect people's pronouns
- Educate yourself about the LGBTQ+ community



WHAT WE DO AT FDYS

OUR MISSION

'FDYS works with young people and adults in County Wexford to support them in realising their full potential and to encourage them to take control of their own lives'

FDYS works with young people and adults in County Wexford to encourage them to take control of their own lives and to reach their full potential. This is applicable across the multiple projects FDYS runs, including the LGBTI+ Youth Project. Our work is done in partnership with young people as opposed to for young people (Staunton, 1996), ensuring their voices are heard and rights are respected and is young-person centred.

We encourage young people to reach a state of holistic well-being by balancing the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual development. All of our work is young-person centred, encourages well-being and promotes equality, diversity and inclusiveness through the provision of quality youth work.

Our work with young people throughout Wexford is a planned, systemic, non-formal educational process, through which we work with voluntarily participating young people and adults as per the definition outlined in the Youth Work Act (2001).

All work across FDYS' projects aligns with Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures (BOBF) (2014-2020), which envisions five national outcomes to be met for young people and is cornerstone to the work across the board within FDYS.

BOBF outlines an ambitious mission and vision for young people in Ireland, which informs and is testimony to the work done with young people here in FDYS.

"Our vision is for Ireland to be one of the best countries to grow up and raise a family, where the rights of all children and young people are respected, protected and fulfilled, where their voices are heard and where they are supported to realise their maximum potential now and in the future" (BOBF, 2014)

Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures 5 National Outcomes

ACTIVE &
HEALTHY,
PHYSICAL &
MENTAL
WELLBEING

ACHIEVING
FULL POTENTIAL
IN ALL AREAS OF
LEARNING &
DEVELOPMENT

SAFE &
PROTECTED
FROM HARM

ECONOMIC
SECURITY &
OPPORTUNITY

CONNECTED,
RESPECTED &
CONTRIBUTING



LGBTI+ Youth Support

FDYS have run an LGBTI+ Youth Support Group with young people aged 14-24 over the last seven years. It has evolved into a youth group that was initially separate and distinct to a group which is now integrated within the senior youth café in the Cloister Youth Space. The existence of the LGBTI+ group within a senior youth group contributes towards the normalisation of being LGBTI+ and acts as a method of informal education to young people who do not identify as LGBTI+. This ensures any stigma or stereotyping is challenged in a safe environment and therefore helps to decrease any discrimination towards the LGBTI+ community. The youth group is inclusive of all and acts primarily as a safe space for young LGBTI+ people to express themselves and their individuality in a safe, supportive and non-judgemental space, like all projects within FDYS. We offer a one to one support and information service for any young person who wants to further discuss their LGBTI+ identity, or if they are questioning such. To meet Emma on a one to one basis, call 053 9123262 or email emma.whitty@fdys.ie. In January 2020, we will be starting an LGBTI+ youth group in FDYS in Enniscorthy on a Wednesday afternoon. Call us for more details on this! We look forward to meeting lots of new young people in 2020..

FDYS run a variety of projects and programmes that respond to the diverse needs of young people and community throughout County Wexford. These include, but are not limited to:

- Youth Clubs**
- Counselling Service**
- Cloister Youth Café**
- Childcare Services**
- LGBTI+ Youth Support**
- Roma Project**
- Music Project**
- Young Women's Project**
- Risk and Resilience**
- Gorey Community Youth Project**
- Youth Information**
- Bridgetown Community Youth Project**
- Enniscorthy Community Youth Project**
- Slaney Garda Diversion Project**
- Bunclody Youth Project**
- Detached New Ross**
- Traveller Men's Health Programme**
- Shambles Youth drop-in New Ross**

See www.f dys.ie for information on all listed services

"I come in here with worries but know I will leave with those worries gone"

"It is a space where I don't feel judged and can just be me"

"Welcoming and Inclusive is how I would describe our group and space here"

"The other people I met here are so supportive and on our side"

"I feel valued & accepted when I come here"

INTRODUCTION & WELCOME

DCYA'S launch of the world's first LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy in 2018 was indeed a welcomed development on a national level and also to FDYS Youth Services. It again marked a significant milestone in Irish LGBTI+ history following the same-sex marriage referendum and passing of the Gender Recognition Act in 2015 and further reinforced the progressive steps toward an envisioned Ireland being the 'best country for LGBTI+ people to grow up in' (National LGBTI+ Youth Strategy, 2018).

It is a three year strategy primarily focused on three goals containing 15 objectives and 59 actions, all of which came from the voices and responses of thousands of young people across Ireland. The strategy endeavours to put measures in place to address some of the remaining challenges still faced by the LGBTI+ Community. This is to ensure the attainment of the same positive outcomes as the general youth population as identified by Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures (2014-2020). This strategy and its future governance lies within the framework of BOBF and will therefore contribute to the achievement of the five national outcomes for young people on a national level.

'No-one in this country should feel isolated, discriminated against or bullied - yet that is a reality for some younger members of the LGBTI+ Community' commented Minister Katherine Zappone on the launch of the strategy in 2018. The remaining challenges for the LGBTI+ Community as outlined in the LGBTI+ youth strategy include discrimination, bullying both in and outside of formal educational settings, difficulties in coming out to friends and families, lack of awareness amongst service providers as to the specific needs of the LGBTI+ community and mental, physical and sexual health challenges. The LGBTI+ community were identified in the National Youth Strategy (2015-2020) as a specific group to be considered in focused provision for marginalised young people, to enable them to 'realise

their maximum potential by respecting their rights and hearing their voices'. Hence, from consultations with young people on the positives, challenges and changes needed within the LGBTI+ community, three main goals were identified to be met by 2020:

1. Create a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for LGBTI+ young people
2. Improve the physical, mental and sexual health of LGBTI+ young people
3. Develop the research and data environment to better understand the lives of LGBTI+ young people

Of these three main goals, 15 main objectives were identified. FDYS is committed to contributing towards the outlined goals being reached and so within this commitment, an FDYS LGBTI+ Youth Strategy has been composed. This strategy involved consultations with young people across County Wexford, with the LGBTI+ groups within FDYS, outside FDYS, non LGBTI+ young people and those who work with young people. The involvement of all consultees was to ensure the vision of FDYS LGBTI+ group was utilized, that it is inclusive of all and the voices of all were heard, and their rights' respected, as per the National Youth Strategy (2015-2020). The responses from these consultations prioritised objectives from the 15 identified within the National Strategy to depict the most important to young people. The objectives outlined on the following page were identified and prioritised from the responses gathered.



OBJECTIVES

1. Expand and develop supports to parents and families of young LGBTI+ young people **(connected and respected)**
2. Respond effectively to the mental health needs of LGBTI+ young people **(active and healthy)**
3. Provide capacity building measures to service providers to improve their understanding of, and ability to engage with young LGBTI+ young people.
4. Strengthen sexual health services and education to respond to the needs of LGBTI+ young people **(active and healthy)**
5. Create a supportive and inclusive environment for LGBTI+ young people in formal education settings **(achieving in all areas of learning and development)**

The FDYS LGBTI+ Youth Strategy therefore forms its basis in the following way:

BETTER OUTCOMES, BRIGHTER FUTURES

The national policy framework
for children & young people
2014 - 2020

LGBTI+ NATIONAL YOUTH STRATEGY

LGBTI+ young people:
visible, valued and included
2018 - 2020

NATIONAL YOUTH STRATEGY

2015 - 2020

FDYS LGBTI+ YOUTH STRATEGY

2020 - 2024



A Word of Thanks

Thank you to Josephine Kielthy for her assistance in consulting with young people for the development of this strategy and to all young people, projects and workers who kindly gave their time and voice to make this strategy a reality. Thank you to the management team in FDYS, who enthusiastically supported the development of this strategy and acted as a continued form of support and encouragement throughout. I hope the next four years see the continuation of the hard work and dedication towards meeting the goals and objectives outlined in this document and to help Ireland to be one of the best countries to grow up being LGBTI+.

- **Emma Whitty** FDYS LGBT+ Project Worker

OBJECTIVE ONE

Expand and Develop Supports to Parents and Families of LGBTI+ Young People

BOBF - Connected and Respected and Contributing to their World

Our first strategic priority is to expand and develop supports to parents and families of LGBTI+ young people. The LGBTIreland Report (2016) emphasises the average age for a young person to realise their sexual orientation or gender identity is 12, and the average age to come out is 16-17. Young people generally come out to their friends first before telling parents or family members. 1 in 4 of those who had come out, had not come out to their parents. Knowing young people would be accepted by their parents or families was identified by young people as a key factor to encourage them to come out earlier, ensuring they are supported earlier on in the process.

THE STRATEGIC ACTIONS OF OBJECTIVE ONE

1.1

FDYS will ensure that any resources designed specifically for parents of young LGBTI+ people will be made available through services such as youth information, social media and FDYS webpage. Resources such as 'Coming Out; a guide for parents' will be made available to parents when making referrals for their children to the LGBTI+ service and on landmark days such as 'International Coming out Day', where information and educational literature and tips, not excluding parents and families will be made available through the LGBTI+ section of the FDYS website.

1.2

Reaching out to more parents at events across all projects through collaboration, such as the event day for Youth Clubs will be a priority. Raising more awareness through other projects outside of the LGBTI+ specific project through talks, workshops and information days will ensure a wider range of parents and families are reached, which will result in parents and families being aware of the support service and worker available should they come to a situation where their child is coming out, questioning or struggling with their sexual orientation or gender

identity. Informing parents and equipping them with the relevant information will ensure they and their children are empowered to make decisions as to which service will best suit them and their child and create a resiliency through being aware of where to go if support is required. Through the development and delivery of LGBTI+ specific training to professionals/schools/workers or parents and families, information and resources on specific support available to parents and families will be included as it is estimated that 10% of the population is LGBTI+ (Barron and Stephens, 2012) hence it is likely that delivery of training will reach parents/ families of young LGBTI+ people.

1.3

When a parent/family member is making a referral for their child or a young person, the LGBTI+ worker will establish and maintain a relationship with them, offer them supports and services specific to them and allow a platform for questions to be asked and answered or referrals to be made if needed.

1.4

When working with young transgender people or young people thinking about transitioning or questioning their gender identity, it is important that if their parents are aware, that specific supports regarding gender identity, transitioning and family support services are shared, such as the Gender Identity Family Support Line and accessible information and services are provided, such as those available through www.teni.ie. FDYS will establish a clear and accessible directory of services specifically for parents and families of young LGBTI+ young people in the form of an information booklet, where local and national services are all condensed into one document, ensuring ease of access to support services for young people and their parents. This is due to feedback from the consultations that there is lack of availability of support services for transgender young people and their families, and there is a general difficulty in finding information on practical tips and information around transitioning, also emphasised in the Rainbow Report (2015).

Respond effectively to the mental health needs of young LGBTI+ young people

BOBF - Active and Healthy, mental, physical and sexual health

OBJECTIVE TWO

Our second strategic priority identified by consultations and responses from young people is to respond effectively to the mental health needs of young LGBTI+ young people. LGBTI+ young people have been identified as a minority group with specific focus required to ensure the same positive outcomes are achieved as the general youth population (National Youth Strategy 2015-2020; National LGBTI+ Youth Strategy 2018-2020). BOBF (2014-2020) identifies young LGBTI+ people as a vulnerable group; inequalities need to be tackled for vulnerable groups for them to reach their full potential. Research on the mental health and well-being of young LGBTI+ people identifies they are 2 times more likely to self-harm, 3 times more likely to have attempted suicide and 4 times more likely to suffer from anxiety and depression in comparison to the general youth population (Dooley and Fitzgerald, 2012). Transgender and bisexual people are at a higher risk of negative mental health outcomes than lesbian, gay and intersex young people. 56% of LGBTI+ youth choose not to worry their parents or friends about mental health issues, with 49% reluctant to open up about mental health difficulties due to perceived expectations that they should feel happy in a post-marriage referendum Ireland (Better out than In, 2018).

THE STRATEGIC ACTIONS OF OBJECTIVE TWO

2.1

The LGBTI+ worker in FDYS, in collaboration with other projects such as Youth Information, will develop an updatable referral pathways document, which will outline mental health services and supports available in the local community, to include helplines, texting services and online supports for young people. They can be distributed to young LGBTI+ people and their families/ parents and also other workers and organisations who may be in contact with LGBTI+ young people. The development of such a resource allows for the organisation to

connect with the community and proactively link in with other professionals outside of the organisation when specialised support is required. This will include names of the organisation, contact details, average waiting times for appointments, costs and details of what the service can offer.

2.2

FDYS will continue to offer 1;1 supports for LGBTI+ young people, in addition to the specific youth group that takes place at same time weekly. The allocation of 1:1 support will be re-named as information, support and referral service, with the development of objective 2.1, where more practical information on available services will be distributed and effective referrals made. The 1:1 service with young people allows a safe, non-judgemental and confidential space for young LGBTI+ young people to express themselves and their feelings and allows the opportunity for strengths of the young person to be identified, to enable them to realise what strengths, resources and support networks they have and to effectively utilise such. We will continue to identify young LGBTI+ people by their strengths and be solution focused, as opposed to identifying them by their problems or deficits.

2.3

We will continue to promote positive mental health within the organisation for all young people, and continue to build on young people's strengths through a variety of activities. The LGBTI+ group are proactively involved in the International Suicide Prevention Day that takes place every September, and is a platform for opening discussions around mental health and combating the stigma surrounding seeking help and speaking out about mental health issues when they arise. Events around the topic of mental health, such as International Suicide Prevention Day also provides a platform for young people to showcase their talents and reminding them of their own talents and in doing this, reminding young people that despite their sexuality and gender identity a valid and important component of them as a person, it is a small part of defining them and

OBJECTIVE TWO CONTINUED

there are other important parts that make up their identity. This allows the increase of self-esteem and confidence building with young people, enabling them to reach their full potential. The LGBTI+ group is now integrated within a senior drop in, which allows the development of meaningful relationships with others, social skills and help battle the feelings of loneliness, isolation and exclusion can sometimes be a reality for LGBTI+ people. It also provides a platform for other young people in the group who do not identify

as LGBTI+ to learn about LGBTI+ relevant issues and helps to create a culture of acceptance, understanding and compassion for the LGBTI+ community, as well as further normalising being LGBTI+ in a society that is consistently progressive in such. A continuation and increase in collaboration with other projects will be a key priority to enhance this and is being carried out by having regular events with the involvement of other youth projects, such as Summer fun days, BBQ events, the annual sleepover event and now, PRIDE.

OBJECTIVE THREE

Provide capacity building measures to service providers to improve their understanding of, and ability to engage with young LGBTI+ young people

The Rainbow Report (2015) and National LGBTI+ Youth Strategy (2018-2020) identified the need for capacity building measures for health service providers and other professionals who may engage with LGBTI+ people to develop and increase awareness and understanding of the specific needs of the LGBTI+ Community. The LGBTIreland Report (2016) identified the barriers to accessing services was a lack of awareness amongst professionals of LGBTI+ identities and the correct terminology and language to use.

of health specific services, such as youth workers. Workers within FDYS have the opportunity to take part in this training annually and will continue to have this opportunity when the need is identified. This ensures that all workers across all projects have an awareness of LGBTI+ issues, terminology and allows a safe space for questions to be asked and attitudes to be explored. The LGBTI+ worker will continue to identify the need for this training by ensuring open communication with workers in all projects, as all project workers are likely to be working with young LGBTI+ people without even knowing such. It is therefore important that workers are equipped with the knowledge and skills to effectively respond to the needs of young people who are exploring/coming to terms with their sexuality or gender identity.

THE STRATEGIC ACTIONS OF OBJECTIVE THREE

3.1

The LGBTI+ Worker is part of the regional HSE LGBTI+ Health Steering Group for the South East. HSE Social Inclusion supports the development and implementation of appropriate health initiatives that enhance healthcare delivery to ensure equality of healthcare outcomes for vulnerable groups in society, such as the LGBTI+ Community. They do this through a number of partnerships with government departments and voluntary organisations, such as FDYS. As part of this steering group, the LGBTI+ worker co-facilitates LGB Awareness training to health service providers across the south east to help remedy the findings in the above reports. This training is also responsive to requests for training outside

3.2

Through cluster meetings with other projects, which provides a platform to collaborate with other projects within the organisation, training needs can be identified, topics explored and questions answered. This is also a useful opportunity to provide updated LGBTI+ resources, research and training opportunities for all staff, such as LGBTI+ mental health campaigns and resources like the 'Better Out than In' campaign. This is a campaign run by BeLonG To, to encourage young LGBTI+ people to speak out about their mental health. The LGBTI+ worker will therefore ensure that at such meetings, resources from national organisations and relevant research

OBJECTIVE THREE CONTINUED

are distributed and materials such as those for Stand Up Week are made available to all workers to display in their projects. It can also be a space where workshop snippets can be delivered if needed and workers are comfortable and confident if a young person approaches them with LGBTI+ related issues.

3.3

FDYS staff have been and will continue to be given the opportunity to receive the Trans Awareness Training, delivered by TENI (Transgender Equality Network Ireland). Staff received this training in January 2019 and staff employed since this, or those who wish to attend again, will be given the opportunity in 2020. This, coupled with the LGBTI+ Awareness training ensures staff are equipped with a wide variety of skills, information and awareness to

ensure LGBTI+ young people's needs are effectively responded to, to ensure they can reach their full potential and the five national outcomes under BOBF are as attainable for LGBTI+ young people as they are for the general youth population. Specific focus will be given to the trans community as they are 'amongst the most vulnerable members of Irish Society and experience high levels of marginalisation' (TENI, 2019). Resources and publications such as 'Young and Trans in Rural Ireland' provided by Youth Work Ireland have been distributed to all project staff, accompanied with Trans awareness posters to display in projects to raise awareness and further develop knowledge and skills in this area. Similar resources will continue to be made available to all staff via e-mail, social media, FDYS Webpage and meetings.

Strengthen Sexual Health Services & Education to Respond to the needs of LGBTI+ Young People

BOBF - Active and Healthy, mental, physical and sexual health

OBJECTIVE FOUR

Our fourth strategic priority focuses on the topic of sexual health for the LGBTI+ community. The focus for FDYS will primarily be emphasised on the continuation of sexual health information provided in an informal capacity as opposed to strengthening sexual health services. This emerged as a topic requiring specific attention, as young people feel there is lack of provision of inclusive sexual health education and information in other settings, but feel that youth services, such as FDYS, are spaces where young people feel confident and comfortable exploring sexual health topics. Therefore, we will ensure the continuation of this and strengthen the provision of sexual health information within the organisation, equipping and empowering young people with information to allow them to make their own decisions and take control of their own lives.

THE STRATEGIC ACTIONS OF OBJECTIVE FOUR

4.1

In September 2019, staff within FDYS will be given the opportunity to engage in sexual health

training specifically designed for youth workers or professionals who engage with people at particular risk of negative sexual health outcomes. This three day 'Let's Talk about Safer Sex' training programme will be delivered by HIV Ireland in FDYS and will equip workers with the knowledge, tools and awareness to enhance sexual health programmes delivered to young people within the organisation. This will be of particular benefit when working with LGBTI+ young people, in particular trans young people, who are 'hugely excluded and misunderstood by mainstream health services, particularly sexual health services' (LGBT Ireland, 2018). It will also be valuable to the LGB community, who are at a particular risk of developing poorer sexual health outcomes for reasons including the assumption that certain people within the community do not have specific sexual health needs (LGBT Health Report, 2010).

4.2

The LGBTI+ Project has developed and will maintain links with sexual health organisations such as HIV Ireland, where informative sexual health resources are made available. Resources like these ensure they can be distributed to Youth Information

OBJECTIVE FOUR CONTINUED

within FDYS and other projects where young people can reach out to accessible sexual health information tailored to their needs.

4.3

In the development of information and referral resources for young people, parents and their families (see objective 2), nationwide and local contact details of sexual health services and information centres will be included. This ensures a more accessible method of obtaining information for young LGBTI+ people and their families who may or

may not be aware of such services. The plan is to make contact with a variety of organisations to establish clear referral pathways for people wishing to access their services, and the promotion of the LGBTI+ group available in Wexford to these organisations, so those concerned have a clear understanding of where these services are located and how to access them. This will then compliment and enhance the quality of the work during group and 1:1 sessions to ensure young people are referred to services that can further meet the needs they may have.

OBJECTIVE FIVE

Support the creation of supportive and inclusive environments for LGBTI+ young people in formal education settings

BOBF - Achieving in all areas of learning and development

Our fifth strategic priority that emerged from the consultations with young people was to 'create a supportive and inclusive environment for LGBTI+ young people in formal education settings'. It is important to remember here that under the statutory definition of youth work, our work is to complement young people's formal, academic or vocational education and training (Youth Work Act, 2001) and youth workers are 'informal educators' where the work takes place outside the formal education system (Rossiter, 1987). The below objectives are intended to continue the development and maintenance of good working relationships with formal educational settings to primarily act as a support that is external and complimentary to schools, teachers and young people, and to act as a point of referral for the same, not to work within school/vocational or academic environments.

THE STRATEGIC ACTIONS OF OBJECTIVE FIVE

5.1

Continue in the distribution of promotional literature and FDYS LGBTI+ posters and contact/ information cards to schools and vocational colleges around the county that wish to have them on display in their schools. This will ensure students, teachers and parents are aware of the service

available to them and have a point of contact as an external support if required. The LGBTIreland Report (2016) identified having LGBTI+ posters visible in an environment helps young people to come out and feel comfortable in doing so. 'Visibility offers inspiration and hope to LGBTI+ individuals who can feel isolated and disconnected as a result of their sexual orientation or gender identity' (Better Out Than In, 2018).

5.2

Continue to encourage schools to take part in the annual Stand Up Awareness week, a second level school event to encourage safe, equal and inclusive school environments to LGBTI+ young people run by BeLongTo. The FDYS LGBTI+ Worker will continue to attend training with Belong To Youth Services in order to deliver training to teachers outside of school hours as part of this annual event, which is supported by the Department of Education and Skills. Packs are distributed to second level schools across Ireland, accompanied with resources for educators on how to support LGBTI+ students. The training delivered to educators ensures an increased awareness on how to support LGBTI+ students, with 93% of teachers surveyed following the training in 2018 feeling comfortable in supporting an LGBTI+ young person in their school (BelongTo, 2018). A component of the training delivered to staff involves signposting young people to support services, such

OBJECTIVE FIVE CONTINUED

as FDYS. As of 2019, the LGBTI+ project worker in FDYS will take part in delivering this training with National Network members of BelongTo to ensure a wide range of schooling staff are reached across as many counties as possible, including Wexford. Offering youth workers training skills and tools to deliver this helps them to support the needs of LGBTI+ young people who engage in their services, utilising a Critical Social Education model of youth work to address the inequalities that exist in society and adversely affect LGBTI+ young people.

5.3

The LGBTI+ worker in FDYS will continue to deliver the 'Just Be You' programme to targeted schools who request this training programme each year. This programme is composed of four training sessions for interested teachers, and four sessions for school students in transition/ 5th year of second level education. The primary focus of this will be to

raise awareness on LGBTI+ issues, supporting those coming out, and tackling the rate of anti-LGBTI+ bullying that can occur in second level education. This was highlighted in the Supporting LGBT Lives (2009) study and LGBTIreland Report (2016), which indicated only 20% of LGBTI+ people felt like they belonged in their school environment.

5.4

FDYS will commit to contacting schools in order to ensure staff are aware of the LGBTI+ youth service available in Wexford. Contact details to include phone number, e-mail address and project details to act as a point of referral external to schools, to ensure teachers/staff can support the young person and refer to the project worker if required. This will compliment objective 5.1 in the distribution of posters/information leaflets and promotion on social media and the FDYS webpage.

1 Expand and Develop Supports to Parents and Families of LGBTI Young People

BOBF - Connected and Respected and Contributing to their World

2 Respond effectively to the mental health needs of young LGBTI+ young people

BOBF - Active and Healthy; mental, physical and sexual health

3 Provide capacity building measures to service providers to improve their understanding of, and ability to engage with young LGBTI+ young people

4 Strengthen Sexual Health Services & Education to Respond to the needs of LGBTI+ Young People

BOBF - Active and Healthy; mental, physical and sexual health

5 Support the creation of supportive and inclusive environments for LGBTI+ young people in formal education settings'

BOBF - Achieving in all areas of learning and development



FDYS GOES TO PRIDE 2019

On the 29th June, 2019, 15 young people across all FDYS Projects and project workers took their very first trip to the Dublin Pride Parade. Young people were warmly welcomed to BeLonG To and Youth Work Ireland's free breakfast event before taking our place to march in the Parade with over 520 other young people from youth organisations across Ireland! Young people got the chance to meet and engage with other young people, workers and met Leo Varadkar at the breakfast event. We then proudly marched with over 500 young people in Dublin from O'Connell Street to Merrion Square, where the family friendly Pride Village party commenced.

The group enthusiastically responded to the suggestion of attending Pride for the first time as an organisation and all young people involved made immense effort to prepare for the day. The invitation was extended to all young people across all FDYS projects to ensure inclusivity of all and to show support to the LGBTI+ community from their allies! The preparation involved allowed opportunities for learning and development in areas such as pride history, where it derived from, learning about other

less known sexual orientations and gender identities, discussions initiated around staying safe at such an event and how to respond to potential anti LGBTI+ protestors on the day, as well as choosing and designing their own pride flags to bring with them on the day. It provided opportunities for young people to form friendships and ensure they felt safe, connected and respected for who they are.

The event and lead up to it meant that all young people involved immersed themselves in all things Pride and have since developed their own 'Pride Wall' in our LGBTI+ Friendly youth space as a reflective piece on the enjoyment of the day. The Pride Wall includes photos from their favourite components of the event, accompanied with their own positive messages about what attending Pride meant for them. The majority of young people have expressed that marching in the parade gave them a sense of belonging, without fear of judgement and discrimination and where they could express themselves freely in an accepting and open minded environment. We all look forward to attending next year and seeing everyone dressed in bright colours!





The rationale behind attending such an event ensured outcomes from both BOBF and the LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy were met, and was evident that this was a success in the feedback and reflections from the young people. FDYS, as outlined above in our objectives from the prioritised objectives in the National LGBTI+ Youth Strategy are committed over the next three years to continue to 'respond effectively to the mental health needs of LGBTI+ young people' and attending Pride has evidently contributed to this objective and will continue to do so. It also ensured that the following outcomes from BOBF were met:



ACHIEVING

ACTIVE & HEALTHY

SAFE

CONNECTED & RESPECTED

As outlined in the LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy, the outcomes of this event ensures the overall goals 1 and 2 are contributed to in ensuring inclusive and supportive environments for LGBTI+ young people and improving the physical, mental and sexual health of young LGBTI+ young people.



LGBTI+ & MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS

The Rainbow Report (2015), highlighted a lack of awareness amongst the LGBTI+ Community as to what supports were available both within their local communities and on a national level. This has fortunately been addressed by FDYS with the SECH LGBTI+ Steering Group in the form of the recent LGBT South East Regional Fact File (2018), which details local LGBTI+ and drug misuse support services available across Carlow, Kilkenny, Wexford, Waterford and South Tipperary. As previously demonstrated, FDYS commit to expanding and developing supports for parents and families of LGBTI+ young people and

responding effectively to the mental health needs of LGBTI+ young people. Promoting and informing young people, their parents and families on available support networks/resources will ensure the empowerment of people in taking control of their own lives by equipping them with information they may need in order to do this. The below support services combine websites, 24 helplines and instant messaging services, to ensure accessibility for all young people and parents/families to suit their potential needs at any given time.

Local LGBTI+ Support Services for Young People in Wexford

FDYS

Contact: Emma Whitty

053 912 3262
emma.whitty@fdys.ie
www.fdys.ie/youth-services
Francis Street, Co. Wexford

GOREY YOUTH NEEDS

Contact: Wendy Kearney

053 942 2611
wendy.kearney@gyng.ie
www.gyng.ie
Mary Lane, Gorey

YOUTH NEW ROSS, LGBTI+ GROUP

Contact: Catherine Nolan

089 439 7202
catherine@ynr.ie
Bullawn, Bowling Green

GOREY ADULTS TRANS SUPPORT GROUP

goreyts@gmail.com
@GoreyTransSupportGroup

USEFUL WEBSITES

www.spunout.ie
www.reachout.com
www.fdys.ie
www.youthworkireland.ie



National LGBTI+ Support Services & Helplines



LGBTI+ Helpline: 1890 929 539 / www.lgbt.ie

Trans Support Shift: Sundays 6pm - 9pm
Tuesdays 10am - 12pm

Gender Identity Family Support Line: 01 907 3707

 www.lgbt.ie/instant-messaging-support-service



Urgent Support:
www.teni.ie/resources/urgent-support


Helpline: 1890 929 539

 www.teni.ie/resources/support/



 info@lovingouroutkids.org

 www.lovingouroutkids.org

 087 253 7699



This is a National Organisation supporting LGBTI+ young people in Ireland; providing a wide variety of supports such as youth groups, one to one counselling service in collaboration with Pieta House, the development of LGBTI+ resources for young people, parents, families, schools and youth services. They provide training to youth workers on topics such as mental health, LGBTI+ Awareness and sexual health. They also run the Annual STANDUP! Week - an awareness campaign on anti-LGBTI+ bullying in Schools. Alcohol/drug specific services, one to one information and referral support are available in the Dublin area.

 www.belongto.org

 info@belongto.org

 01 670 6223

Mental Health Supports



Helpline: 1800 80 4848

Support Group in Wexford Town:
www.aware.ie/support/support-groups/wexford/

 www.aware.ie

 supportmail@aware.ie



24/7 helpline: 116 123

Make an Appointment in Waterford: 051 872 114

 joe@samaritans.ie



24/7 helpline: 1800 247 247

Texting Service: text HELP to 51444


Free Counselling Service in Wexford: 053 912 787

 www.pieta.ie



Free Counselling Service in Wexford

Ages: 13 - 25 years old

 053 912 3262

OUR LGBTI+ GROUP

We asked our young people to describe their experiences in FDYS LGBTI+ Group and here are some of the things they had to say.



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FDYS LGBTI+ YOUTH STRATEGY

2020 - 2024



We work with young people and adults in Co Wexford to support them in realising their full potential. We encourage young people to achieve a state of personal holistic well-being by balancing the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual.

Our work is young person centred, encourages well-being, promotes equality, diversity and inclusiveness through the provision of quality youth work and takes place in a safe and trusting environment.

Our non-formal education process is delivered through youth work programmes, youth and community support services, childcare and supports for volunteers.



FDYS CLG

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