

Minutes of Meeting Eleven of the National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy Committee

Venue: Webex

18 October, 2023

Present:

Minister Roderic O'Gorman	(Chair) DCEDIY
Ailsa Spindler	Gay Project
Annette Doherty	Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD)
Aongus McGrane	Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS)
Bernardine Quinn	Outcomers
Bill Foley	Gay Health Network
Breda Farrell	Department of Transport (DoT)
Breege O'Reilly	Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine (DAFM)
Brendan O'Loughlin	Department of Social Protection (DSP)
Cameron Keighron	Amach! LGBT Galway
Caroline Moran	Department of Defence (DoD)
Cillian Flynn	GOSHH
Conor King	IHREC
David Joyce	ICTU
Emer Roche	Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA)
Gerald Harty	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE)
Grainne Collins	Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY)
Jane O'Connor	Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD)
Jennifer Billings	Department of Finance (DoF)
Joseph Doyle	Health Service Executive (HSE)
Karen O'Connor	Department of Health (DoH)
Greg Dempsey	Department of Health (DoH)
Laura Cooney	Department of Justice (DoJ)

Linda Learmouth	Department of Health
Matt Kennedy	BeLonGTo Youth Services
Michelle O'Connor	Tourism Ireland
Moninne Griffith	BeLonGTo Youth Services
Oisín O'Reilly	Outhouse
Olga Maguire	National Transport Authority (NTA)
Pádraig Rice	LGBT Ireland
Paula Fagan	LGBT Ireland
Paula Kelleher	Department of Defence (DoD)
Ruairí Ferrie	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH)
Stephen O'Hare	HIV Ireland
Sylvia Shannon	Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media (DTCAGSM)
Tara Hewitt	TENI
Zbyszek Zalinski	RTÉ

In attendance

Dera McLoughlin	Mazars
Grainne McAuley	Mazars
Michael Breathnach	Mazars
Laura Magahy	Mazars
Caoimhe Doyle	Mazars

Apologies:

Ian McCarthy	Department of Education
Jordan Harel	OutWest
Margaret McCarthy	Department of Education
Ciara Sugrue	Faílte Ireland

Secretariat:

Sinéad McEvoy	DCEDIY
Louise Ward	DCEDIY
Jean McGrath	DCEDIY

Item 1. Welcome and introductory remarks

- The Minister welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked participants for attending.
- The Minister explained that members had received the traffic light report and highlighted that as it would not be a specific agenda item at the meeting as time was being devoted to a facilitated discussion with Mazars in relation to the review of the National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy (2019 – 2021).
- The Minister informed the meeting that his submission to the Central Statistics Office (CSO) as part of its consultation process for census 2027 was provided to the Department of Education as requested.
- The Minister noted the proposed amendments to the Gender Recognition Act, 2015. The Department of Social Protection has previously asked the Committee Secretariat to confirm the current status of the General Scheme of the Bill. A further update is being sought from the Committee Secretariat to fully clarify the position.
- The Minister highlighted that the meeting would finish at 11.00am to facilitate the consultation with Mazars on the review of the National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy (2019 – 2021).

Item 2. Agreement of Agenda

- It was agreed that the draft agenda was in order and it was adopted by the Steering Committee.
- Minutes from the tenth meeting of the LGBTI+ National Inclusion Strategy Steering Committee in March 2023 were previously agreed and published in August 2023.
- No items were raised under AOB by members of the Steering Committee.

Item 3. Update on 2023 LGBTI+ Community Services Funding

- Louise Ward informed the Committee that the Community Services Fund had received a high level of interest this year with an increase in the number of applications submitted. Applications have been assessed by a team of assessors within the Department. In addition, an external reviewer has evaluated the assessment process and applications. It is expected that results of the funding call will be announced shortly.

- Paula Fagan (LGBT Ireland) questioned if DCEDIY could be more specific with the announcement date for funding. The Minister stated that it was a priority to announce the results, likely within the next 2-3 weeks.
- Ailsa Spindler (Gay Project) voiced concerns over the delay and the pressure it puts on organisations to have funding spent by next year and asked if there would be any change in the end date to reflect any delays. Louise Ward responded that it is a priority to allocate funding as early as possible, and the Department is aware delays impact on projects.

Item 4. Update on DCEDIY LGBTI+ Research Programme

Grainne Collins of the DCEDIY Research and Evaluation Unit provided the group with an update on the Departments overall LGBTI+ research programme.

Recent Publications:

- LGBTI+ people living in International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS) accommodation: Best practices and lived experiences. Report published 12 September, 2023.
- DCEDIY commissioned a poll from IPSOS on attitudes towards the different equality groups, including the LGBTI+ community. A summary report was published on 29 June, 2023.

Papers in Final Stages:

- Legal Recognition of Gender for Children under 16. Research has been carried out by a team from Maynooth University and the University of Cambridge. The research team presented their findings to the Research Sub-Committee, in early October.
- Supports for the parents of LGBTI+ or LGBTI+ questioning youth in Ireland. In early October, the team presented their initial findings to the Research Sub-Committee.
- The Department has funded a research report on LGBTI+ people with a disability, using data from a health survey conducted by Trinity College Dublin. This report is nearing completion and plans are in place for it to be published early in 2024.

Continuing Work:

- Understanding Ageing in the LGBTI+ Population. Contract still in negotiation.
- A contract has been awarded for allyship research.

Other research:

- The Central Statistics Office (CSO) Sexual Violence Survey 2022 was published during the summer.

- Being LGBTQI+ in Ireland: The national study of the mental health and wellbeing of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer and intersex people in Ireland. The survey is currently progressing.
- The ESRI is doing a piece of work for the Health Service Executive (HSE) Health and Wellbeing unit using the Growing Up in Ireland (GUI) research material. There are three work packages - one on pornography use and its consequences; one on timing of sexual initiation; and one on sexual behaviour, which focuses on 20 year olds.
- Grainne Collins spoke about the CSO considering the inclusion of an LGBTI+ question on the next census. **Action:** The Minister requested that Grainne update his office on her engagement with the CSO regarding the inclusion of questions on gender identity, sexual orientation and variation of sex characteristics.

Item 5. Presentation by LGBT Ireland on Draft Shadow Report

- The Minister noted when introducing this agenda item, that this was a civil society led initiative, and separate from the independent review of the National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy, which is being conducted by Mazars on behalf of his Department.
- Pádraig Rice, Policy and Research Manager with LGBT Ireland, shared a nine slide presentation on the Shadow Report of Ireland's first National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy. The presentation detailed the current context of LGBTQI+ human rights in Ireland, the reasoning behind the drafting of the report, analysis and recommendations.
- Emer Roche (DFA) communicated that DFA would be happy to work with LGBT Ireland to raise awareness of the Emigrant Support Programme with the LGBTI+ diaspora groups.
- Zbyszek Zalinski (RTE) queried whether the Shadow Report been shared with all members. Jean McGrath replied that the Shadow Report been circulated to reporting Government Departments.
- Pádraig Rice thanked Government Departments for providing comments and said that the report had been updated to reflect the feedback received.
- Pádraig Rice indicated that LGBT Ireland would be happy to receive any final comments on the latest version of the report by Wednesday, 1 November, 2023.
- **Action:** Secretariat to circulate the updated Shadow Report to Government Departments.
- A final version of the report will be published in early December, 2023.

Item 6. Update on review of the National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy

- Jean McGrath (DCEDIY) provided an update on the review of the National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy. After a competitive process, Mazars were contracted to conduct an independent review of the strategy. The purpose of the strategy is twofold;
 1. To determine what has been achieved/not achieved under the National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy,
 2. To identify key priority areas for inclusion in the successor National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy.
- Committee members received a stakeholder survey from Mazars on 28 September, with a deadline of 16 October for completion. Jean McGrath encouraged any members who had not yet completed the survey to please do so. Mazars agreed to extend the deadline to Monday, 23 October.
- Jean McGrath highlighted that Mazars may contact Committee members independently should they require additional information.
- Mazars will also be conducting desk based research and reviewing best practices across other jurisdictions.
- A draft report from Mazars will be available later this year.
- **Action:** Jean McGrath detailed that a core self-selected group of eight Committee members will be required to review this report and provide feedback. She asked that Committee members consider if this is something they could do and to make contact with the Secretariat before the end of October, if they would like to take part. It is envisaged the group will be comprised of four Government Departments, three LGBTI+ organisations and one other independent body.
- The final report will be available in early 2024 before a wider consultation takes place with the intention of supporting the development of a new Strategy.
- Sinéad McEvoy (DCEDIY) reiterated the importance of the Committee members' participation and engagement in the review process and also stressed that the current Strategy would remain live until the successor strategy is developed.

Item 6. AOB

- The Minister updated the Committee on the Legislation to Prohibit Conversion Practices in Ireland. Officials from the Department have been working closely with the Office of the Attorney General to progress the drafting of the General Scheme. The Minister expects to be in a position to submit the General Scheme to Cabinet and Pre-Legislative Scrutiny (PLS) before the end of the year.

- Moninne Griffith (BeLongTo) queried if an update had been received on the Gender Recognition Act and the proposed amendments to the Act from the Oireachtas Committee. The Minister highlighted that he had raised this at the beginning of the meeting and requested Brendan O'Loughlin (DSP) to seek further information.

Action: Brendan O'Loughlin to seek clarification re status of the Act and to update the Committee at the next meeting.

- Moninne Griffith (BeLongTo) queried the status re waiting lists for HSE transgender health services for children and young people. Joseph Doyle (HSE) informed the meeting that he was aware that direct correspondence has been issued to families on waiting lists.

Action: The Minister requested the HSE to provide a full update on transgender services for adults and children be provided at the next meeting. Joseph Doyle suggested that he would request a representative of the Office of Chief Clinical Officer to attend the next Steering Committee meeting to provide the requested update.

Item 7. Thank you and close

- The Minister thanked Committee members for attending and staying online for the consultation with Mazars. The Minister looked forward to seeing all members at the next meeting.