

OUTHOUSE'S PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION 2025



A call for investment and policy to sustain progress towards true equality and inclusion for LGBTQ+ people in Ireland.



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LGBTQ+ Rights in Ireland Today

Ireland has made significant strides towards achieving greater equality and inclusion of the LGBTQ+ community, with the enactment of successful referendums, progressive legislation, and public policy.

However, the LGBTQ+ community still confronts profound challenges and battles in our society. Despite remarkable strides, discrimination, harassment, and inequalities persist, casting long shadows over the lives of LGBTQ+ individuals. Mental health issues pervade, and the weight of isolation can be crushing. Poverty, homelessness, and substance misuse disproportionately affect LGBTQ+ individuals and have a substantial impact on people's day-to-day lives.

Positive policy developments include the publication of two national LGBTQ+ inclusion strategies. However, despite two national strategies, funding from the government to LGBTQ+ organisations remains sporadic and inadequate to meet the community's demand for services or the scale of resources needed to transform society. The lack of financial support has a significant impact on organisations' abilities to provide essential services and support to our LGBTQ+ communities, holding back progress for the most vulnerable and marginalised.

It is essential to recognise that addressing these issues requires a sustained effort from government and society. Collaboration between LGBTQ+ organisations and statutory bodies is crucial to ensure meaningful and longstanding change and equity for LGBTQ+ people.

Furthermore, addressing the rise of far-right groups and tackling poverty and homelessness, issues which disproportionately impact LGBTQ+ people, requires a broader societal effort. It is essential to acknowledge that these issues are interconnected and affect many marginalised communities beyond just the LGBTQ+ community.

We are witnessing a global polarisation in the debate about LGBTQ+ rights, exacerbated by the rise of far-right politics and extremism. This environment is fostering an increase in hostility and violence against LGBTQ+ individuals, making the work of civil society organisations more crucial than ever. Moreover, there is a waning interest in diversity, equity, and inclusion within multinational companies, especially those headquartered in the United States. Recent events, such as activist shareholders successfully passing motions at corporate AGMs to ban funding for LGBTQI+ inclusion work, exemplify this troubling trend. Notably, Best Buy encountered this in May 2024, and Dell narrowly avoided a similar fate in June 2024. The LGBTQI+ movement in much of the Western

world, including Ireland, is dependent on corporate funding and donations to sustain its vital support and advocacy work.

The proposed cuts to the Dutch government's development funds, which are projected to rise to €2.4 billion by 2027 will have a significant and adverse impact on the global LGBTQ+ movement. The Dutch government is the single largest donor to LGBTQ+ civil society organisations globally, and the implications of such significant funding reductions are profoundly troubling.

Failing to increase investment in LGBTQ+ support and advocacy work at such a critical juncture could undermine the progress we have collectively achieved here in Ireland and embolden those who seek to roll back our rights.

As we look to the future, it is clear that addressing our intersecting needs requires a multi-dimensional approach. More significant societal change is necessary to achieve true equity for all LGBTQ+ and marginalised people in Ireland.

About Outhouse LGBTQ+ Centre

Outhouse is the cornerstone of support for the LGBTQ+ community. We provide a safe and welcoming space for LGBTQ+ individuals to gather, connect, and find solace in a world that doesn't always understand or embrace them. We are the heartbeat of the queer community, offering vital services including social spaces, mental health support, cultural events, and much more.

We are dedicated to supporting the people, spaces, and issues important to the LGBTQ+ communities. Our vision is a future where LGBTQ+ individuals are safe, seen, and celebrated.

Our mission is to improve the quality of life for LGBTQ+ people by providing a safe space to find:

- **Connection** - discovering themselves, their people, place, and passions.
- **Community Support** - accessing information, programmes, and services.
- **Culture** - experiencing creativity, heritage, discovery, and fun.
- **Campaigns** - being part of a strong, credible, and trusted voice for LGBTQ+ communities.

We live by the values of Trust, Respect, Joy, Inclusivity, and Impact.

Underpinning our work are our commitments to equity and intersectionality.

Enhancing the Safety of LGBTI+ People

Enact and Enforce Hate Crime Legislation

- Prioritise the enactment, and enforcement of comprehensive hate crime laws accompanied by a holistic action plan against hate crimes that includes a reformed policy response encompassing restorative justice practices, a public awareness/ information campaign and wrap-around supports for victims to protect LGBTQ+ individuals from targeted violence and discrimination.

Investment cost €0.75m

Ban Conversion Practices

- Implement a ban on conversion practices to safeguard LGBTQ+ individuals from these harmful and unethical practices and provide wrap-around support for victims to recover from the trauma.

Investment cost €0.10m

Training and Trust-Building with Gardaí

- Establish mandatory, comprehensive training programmes for Gardaí on LGBTQ+ issues, hate crime, and intersectional identities, focusing on building trust and ensuring that law enforcement responses are informed, respectful, and supportive.

Investment cost €1m

Ensuring the Participation and Access of LGBTI+ People

Accessible LGBTQ+ Community Spaces

- Fund the expansion of LGBTQ+ community spaces such as Outhouse LGBTQ+ Centre to ensure capacity to cope with the growing demand and deliver universal accessibility ensuring inclusivity for all members of the LGBTQ+ community, including those with disabilities.

Investment cost: €50m

Multi-Annual and Increased Funding

- Introduce multi-annual funding models, in addition to an overall increase in financial support for LGBTQ+ support and advocacy organisations to ensure sustainability and capacity to meet growing demand and address the disparity in investment between the LGBTQ+ sector and other sectors supported by the state.

Investment cost: €5m

Community Development

- Prioritise initiatives that promote integration and intersectionality within the LGBTQ+ community, particularly for marginalised groups such as queer people of colour, LGBTQ+ migrants, Travellers, and Roma. Ringfence investment in community development projects that support these diverse identities separately to ensure their inclusion in all aspects of society.

Investment cost: €0.75m

Ensuring the Health and Wellbeing of LGBTI+ People

Trans Healthcare

- Develop and implement a robust, accessible, and comprehensive model of care for trans individuals in line with the WPATH standards in consultation with trans and gender non-conforming people. Scale investment in the new model of Trans healthcare to enable a streamlined process for obtaining gender-affirming care and increased availability of knowledgeable healthcare providers at the primary care level.

Investment cost: €1.5m

Mental Health Services

- Prioritise the expansion of public mental health and social care support services specifically for LGBTQ+ individuals, including increasing the number of trained counsellors and social care workers available nationwide.

Investment cost: €1m

Healthcare Staff Training

- Mandate comprehensive initial qualification and ongoing CPD training for all healthcare professionals on LGBTQ+ issues. This training should cover the unique health needs and challenges faced by LGBTQ+ individuals and promote a respectful, understanding approach to care that challenges assumptions and unconscious bias.

Investment cost: €1.5m

Ensuring LGBTI+ People are Treated Equally and not Discriminated Against

Amendments to Existing Acts

- The Equal Status Act and the Employment Equality Act need to be amended to explicitly include explicit protections based on sex characteristics, gender expression, gender identity, anti-body status, and socio-economic class. A public information and awareness campaign should follow to educate the public on these new protected grounds.

Investment cost: €0.5m

Minimum Sentencing and Restorative Justice Programmes

- Introduce minimum sentencing guidelines for violent crimes to ensure justice is visibly served. An emphasis should be placed on restorative justice programmes within affected communities for individuals convicted of hate crimes and hate speech to promote rehabilitation and understanding.

Investment cost: €1m

Education and Awareness in Society

- Launch comprehensive education and awareness campaigns to promote understanding, respect, and inclusion of LGBTQ+ individuals in society. These campaigns should be ongoing and target all age groups, starting from pre-school and into adulthood.

Investment cost: €1m

Taking an International Leadership Role

- Appointing a Special Envoy for LGBTQ+ Rights is a strategic and morally imperative step for Ireland. It will leverage our historical leadership, counter global polarisation, enhance our international brand, and protect the rights of LGBTQ+ individuals worldwide.

Investment cost: €0.5m

Cost of Proposed Actions

Total costed Budget proposals: €65.1m

Capital Spending: €50m

Current Spending: €15.1m

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