

A close-up portrait of a man with short brown hair and light stubble, looking directly at the camera. The background is a soft-focus green and yellow bokeh.

The

Out

Mag

ONLINE EDITION
PROUD BY
CHOICE

DOCUMENTING
AND
CELEBRATING
LOCAL LGBT+

PUTTING
RURAL
IRELAND ON
THE MAP

ARTIST IN
RESIDENCE



An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,
Michumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Oige
Department of Children, Equality,
Disability, Integration and Youth

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Got a local LGBT+ story? Want to write a story? Get in touch! We would love to hear from you.



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BLACKNIGHT
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CARLOW Pride



An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,
Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige
Department of Children, Equality,
Disability, Integration and Youth

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Letter from the Editor

Since our last issue, the world has kept evolving. Even though life has somewhat paused, we are still living. We are all making the best of each day, while dreaming of brighter days ahead.

The current situation we all find ourselves in can be overwhelming. It can make us feel increasingly lonely, anxious and isolated. However, you are not alone. Many of our family and friends have had to sacrifice so much the last year, it has truly made us evaluate what is important.

We are all important. From the shy person in the corner to the person who loves to sing and dance. We all have a place here, and without all of us together, the world wouldn't be the same.

We are so proud of everyone in Carlow for supporting each other during these times, and we want you to know that we are always here for you, if only to make you smile.

Read & enjoy!

John Paul & team



Why create an LGBT+ magazine for Carlow?

There are approximately 1,500 people in Carlow alone who identify as LGBT+. If you include their friends, their families and also the people who no longer live in Carlow but are interested in all things Carlovian, the number grows!

We also wanted to produce something that can showcase local LGBT+ people in a positive light. This magazine will also showcase the talents, stories and creative community that thrives in Carlow. Now we have somewhere to document it.

Imagine this magazine like a rolling history book. Our town and county has some of the most unique people.

Why wait for someone else to showcase who we are, when we have the technology, the ability and the know how to create something magical - right now!

Whats inside?

Delroy Mpofu	4
Asexuality Today	7
CoverSTORY - Barry Fitzgerald	8
Equality for Children	12
Funding & Helplines	15
Robyn Diamonds	16
Student Focus	18
Coco's Law	21
Teaching Equality	22
HIV Focus	24

BORN SURVIVOR

By Rebecca Harold

Recently I had the opportunity and honor to interview Delroy Mpofu, a 27 year old Trans man from Zimbabwe, a country where it is criminalised to be gay, a place where the LGBTQ+ community faces violence and sexual assaults daily. Delroy himself felt presenting as his true identity - male in Zimbabwe was extremely hard. In the Zimbabwe culture you are either male or female." anything outside the norm and you are seen as, "possessed and crazy. Not normal".

Arriving in Ireland age 27 in 2017 to direct provision Centre for almost a year then moved to Mosney direct provision in 2018. Left it in July 2020. An extremely difficult and challenging time of his life. Like Zimbabwe, people here didn't acknowledge or accept LGBT people. Each center has their own set of rules. In Delroy's case you were prohibited from allowing visitors to stay overnight. Making it extremely difficult to make friends outside of the centre. Indeed Delroy told me, "it can be very lonely and sad there." As hard as it was Delroy, he would present as his true gender - male, despite being forced to share a room with women regardless.

There is no mental health service available in Direct Provision, instead you are given medication. No support for what you have gone through and still going through as you live there. When people are placed in Direct Provision, it is only supposed to be for a short term, many are still there many years later.

he would live in constant fear of dying like Sylva Tukula, in Galway. In Direct provision, if your body is not claimed by your family it is not known what happens.

On his transition and finding his true identity. "At the age 6 or 7 I knew I was different." This would be confirmed as he reached puberty when he would notice other boys' chests were flat, like most boys, and had an interest in girls. At first describing himself as lesbian, later at 18/20yrs for a time seen himself as masculine lesbian. However, this did not truly fit.

It was a short stay in Amsterdam where his Pastor instructed him to look up the term "transgender," like a bolt of lightning it hit him "wow, this is me,"

Unfortunately like most Transgender people his parents or indeed his extended family would not accept or support him, with the exception of his siblings who stood by him, for which he is eternally grateful.



"I would
live in
constant
fear of
dying in
Direct
Provision"



Photo Credit - Delroy Mpotu

"Don't be afraid to be who you are!"

He would go on and make some amazing and wonderful friends at TENI's support group in Dublin. It was in the support groups here where he would learn the proper way to bind his chest and packing. Binding is where you bind your chest to create a flat chest, it is harmful and can cause difficulty in breathing. In the past Delroy would have used bandages or layer 5 sports bras on top of each other to create a flat chest.

Ireland use and outdated model of care in the treatment of Trans people, forcing Transgender individuals to undergo a growling two hours plus of psychiatric assessment in order to start medical transition.

These questions can be very invasive. Which goes against international best practice of care as laid out by WPATH (The World Professional Association for Transgender Health), World Health Organization came out a few years ago stating being Transgender is not a mental illness.

Due to the waiting list being so long, before he went through the process in Gender Services in Loughlinstown Hospital at St. Columcille's, Delroy like many was self subscribing. With the support and encouragement of his local GP he was able to purchase his hormones from the tiny amount given to him by the state for those living in Direct Provision. His GP would also take his bloods and give him a print out of the results, which his sister would later translate. Now in the care of Loughlinstown, he is extremely happy and finds staff very supportive

Currently Ireland has no surgeons to perform top surgery. Transmen are sent abroad to have surgery. Transwomen are in the same boat, and also sent overseas.

Two of Delroy's wonderful friends would help him raise the money for his top surgery In an amazing 24-hours VIA Go Fund Me website. He would then set off solo to Poland. A country where a lot of hate is faced by LGBTQ+ people. He would not recommend going alone. Finding it scary, on top of being a member of LGBTQ+, was travelling via refugee travel document.

He was treated there by DR. lembas, who was wonderful and a pleasure to deal with. Delroy was concerned about getting Keloids. Thankfully in the safe hands of Dr lembas, concerns and worries eased.



Photo Credit - Delroy Mpotu

On the subject of lockdown Delroy says, "I am an introvert and have come to realise I need other people."

Misgendering is something that sadly Trans people have to deal with on a daily basis, this is when someone addresses you in your past gender. On this Delroy said, when it happens it is "extremely hurtful, especially when said out of malice."

Delroy was in the Mental Health Service at one point, but when he moved to Dublin he was transferred to a GP instead of another mental health service. Forcing him back to the bottom of the list again.

On advice for other Trans people who are in Direct provision: "don't be afraid to be yourself, you are who you are. People will always talk. You gotta be yourself. The sky's not the limit (and laughing) you can go beyond the sky."

Now 30years and loving life in Sallynoggin College of Further Education, studying Advanced Social Studies including advocacy .

Delroy is extremely happy here "one of the best colleges, is so supportive, my second family. Made me the person I am today."

On what is the most exciting thing about being Trans, "excited to be me, this is me, embracing who I am. Unique in my own special way. Proud of Me."

"If the skys the
limit then you
should go
beyond the sky!"

Have you been effected by
the topics discussed in this
article? Reach out, people are
waiting to help.

24/7 Anonymous Text Support
: Text LGBTI+ to 086 1800 280



Photo Credit - Delroy Mprou

Asexuality in Carlow Today

By Jaymie Doyle

Asexuality can be viewed as a spectrum which usually ranges from little to no sexual attraction. It may be considered a sexual orientation or the lack thereof. It may also be categorized more widely to include a broad spectrum of asexual sub-identities. It is estimated that 1% of people living in Ireland are asexual, although some experts believe the numbers could be higher. That number can be translated to roughly 200 people in County Carlow alone who identify as asexual. Asexual people can sometimes be referred to as "Ace" or "Aces".

I interviewed a person from Carlow, who wishes to remain anonymous. The reason this person wants to remain anonymous is because they have close family members who do not know they are asexual. There are also still some negative misconceptions about asexual people.

Just like other people who identify as LGBT+, asexual people can also have a coming out moment. "I read about Asexuality a few years ago and glanced over it and then at my Eighteenth party, myself and my friends played a party game called "Never Have I Ever". When it was my turn, I said I was asexual out loud for the first time. Everyone was very supportive."

Asexuality includes Demisexual. Demisexual means that the person only feels sexually attracted to someone when they have an emotional bond with them. The word 'demi' means half, which can refer to being halfway between sexual and asexual. Gray Asexual (also known as Gray Ace) people who fall somewhere between asexual and sexual. They might experience sexual attraction occasionally, but more often don't feel any attraction. Asexual people can engage in the act of sex for other reasons such as aesthetic or romantic attraction, despite not feeling a sexual attraction.

Meeting other asexual people is hard. "I have not met another asexual person, I've never met anyone else." Within the asexual spectrum is a category of people who describe themselves as "Sex-Repulsed". These are individuals who have no interest in the act of sex, and may find the act of sex scary or distressing.

Other asexual categories are "Sex-Neutral" or "Sexual-Indifferent" which means they don't have that they have no strong feelings about sex. Sex-neutral asexuals are not repulsed by sex, but they also do not have any particular positive feelings about sex.

"I think doing something and feeling something are completely different. People have sex for different reasons, it is not always about sexual attraction. "Many asexual people feel assumptions are made about their sexual orientation. "First they think asexuality doesn't exist, or they can think something is wrong with you. People also can say it's just a phase. It isn't. Asexuality is a sexual orientation, just like heterosexuality, homosexuality, pansexuality and bisexuality."

"Talking about it more, and being more open about it - it can actually help break stereotypes."

Another layer to asexual people can sometimes be a romantic orientation, such as "Aromantic". This is different to a sexual orientation but can be intertwined.

Aromantic people experience little or no romantic attraction. They may prefer close friendships for example.

"I identify as aromantic asexual, and for people who don't know that - I don't feel romantic attraction at all. However, some aromantic asexual people might."

The person interviewed didn't have access to a sexual education when they were in secondary school, and they feel it could have been beneficial. "If I had sexual education in my school I would have understood myself better. Having that in schools when you're a teenager would be great. It would help normalise other sexual orientations."

When asked what was the main message you wanted people to know about asexuality, they replied "I want them to know it exists. We're not emotionalists, we can feel love but I personally don't feel romantic attraction. I love my family, my friends and my pets. We are not broke or feel emotions any less. I just don't experience sexual attraction. I think there can be stigma around asexual people. Some people may think it is a mental disorder, which is not true."

Have you been effected by the topics discussed in this article? Reach out, people are waiting to help.

Text LGBTI+ to 086 1800 280

In-Dept Artist

Barry Fitzgerald

by Robbie O'Brien



It is with great certainty that the times we are currently living in are but strange and unnerving and given how Covid-19 has overtaken our lives it would not be surprising if we were all suffering with cabin fever and Stockholm Syndrome. It has affected people in more ways than one can consider even our entertainment industry with our theatres, galleries, performance artists and directors being adversely affected.

One such creative is no other than Barry Fitzgerald, Co. Carlow native who makes work between Ireland and the UK. I interviewed Barry from the big and ever evolving city of London. He has come a long way since his younger years living in Tullow and dreaming of the bright lights. It is a lot to ask of someone to think back on what their life was like growing up in a small town in Ireland as Barry said "Do I have to go back there do I? Can I even remember back that far? It's so interesting to kind of think back to that time coming from such a big family with me being the youngest of eight children four brothers and three sisters and it was such a wonderful, big lively household in Tullow town. We call it Tullow town but over in London most of my friends would consider it a village where everyone knows everyone, but to me it was always my home town. It might sound strange but growing up there and to be whole heartily honest I had no concept I was gay until I actually moved away. Everything seemed to fall into place when I moved away from home. I think growing up it was like that classic gay stereotype where I had lots of friends who were girls and with having four brothers who were all great at all sports especially rugby left me feeling on the outside. As a family we all went to rugby on a Sunday and all of that intimated me. It is funny to look back at it now as I am not a sporty person but as I am older I am very active physically and I believe it was the masculinity and even the toxic masculinity in sport that I found very hard. I stood out like a sore thumb and even people were calling me gay even before I knew what it was. There was a lot of shame around, because of that you learn to lie to yourself."

"I did not see myself reflected positively anywhere. I remember when I was younger going down to the local pub building myself up to walk through the door and the lads in the corner would shout derogatory words and I would have to pretend I did not hear it. I knew that everyone else in the pub had heard it. Those things were really hard to hear and to be honest I moved away from home at a very young age. After I turned 18, I moved to Manchester to go to university and it was like an explosion where I saw people being openly gay which was a far cry from back home. I wanted to be a performer and went to university to study dance, drama and the arts but there were no real courses in Ireland that I wanted to do."

Barry never seemed to let things prevent him doing the things he wanted to do. "I lived in Manchester for 3 years and made great friends and within a few months of living there I came out, before I went through the flurry of kissing every girl to try deny it but eventually the penny dropped and I knew then I was gay and as soon as I did I felt this weight lift from me, it was an incredible feeling of relief. I had a strange relationship with home in those early years especially when I would go back home I felt those feelings all over again coming back to a small rural town at that time".

"Ireland has since changed so much over the next years. It was hard in the early years growing up, some people knew and having seven siblings I didn't have the quick send out a group text to them all to make it easier plan, instead they all got the coming out story individually, by the end of it I was wrecked. It took a couple of years to eventually come out to all of my immediate family and obviously they had different reactions but they were so supportive and sometimes it takes time and I know I was very lucky as they all were so supportive to me. The last person I told was my dad and I don't know why I was so nervous in telling him. I eventually I told him over a late night whiskey, I told him and he paused for a bit, I wanted him to know before anyone else told him, as my friends and family knew and by then the whole town would probably know! So after his pause he told me that "It was a very brave thing to do and it must have taken a lot of courage and you will always be my son and I love you, knowing yourself is a great thing and no one can take that away from you"".

Photo credit - Helen Murray

"It was such a wonderful thing for him to say and for me to hear and it went a long way for our relationship with my dad. Sadly he is no long with us but since then we were able to see and respect each other as individuals, there was still that father and son relationship but with me coming out to him brought a different element to it that I was able to have a more open with him and have more deeper conversations with him and to also see him not only as my dad but also as an individual who had thoughts, feelings and dreams.

After university in Manchester, Barry decided to follow his creative career and moved to London to study drama and that was a whole other adventure. "I don't think I would have been able to have moved to London first at such a young age. Moving to Manchester first was more of a base move that gave me a taste for real city life and that built me up to move to London. Friends that I had made in Manchester Met. University became lifelong friends in that some move to London also, so I was very lucky in that kind of way and that I could be totally authentic, openly gay living in London which was amazing and I got to experience it with my friends. It is coming up on twenty years since I left Ireland and it's a long time to be living in a different country but feel attached and feel very firmly Irish, even though I could now be considered a Londoner".

"In the last few years I have had such a yearning for home and I have been making big efforts to make work back home even to make connections like with the Visual Centre for Contemporary Art and The George Bernard Shaw Theatre, which have been amazing and that has been like a big draw to me to be back home to see how things have changed so much. To hear all the stories and that even Carlow has its own Pride is amazing. But it takes individuals and the likes of people coming back home saying I want to do this and making the effort to put it all into place. I want to be part of the change and the shift in change that is sweeping over Ireland. It is great to come back home and see all the change happening and to hear all the stories is so uplifting. It brings in such a sense of pride and comradery, whether someone is gay, queer, lesbian, trans or however they identify as. Had I had that around when I was growing up it might have made things a bit easier."

"I was due to come back to Ireland for some months to work as the Artist in Residence with the Visual Centre on a show and work along with Carlow Youth Services and their LGBT+ group, a lot of my work is based within my local LGBT+ community in London due to Covid-19 things have been put on hold. I want to be able to come back when it is possible both for work connections and also personal connections."

Photo credit - Helen Murray

"Ireland has changed so dramatically since I have been away, but there is still so much work that needs to be done. It has opened up a lot, what with the referendum, equal rights etc I think it's become a more open society but there still is like a hangover or undercurrent feeling that we still have a long way to go as a community and a society but it just takes work and determination."

"Unlike learning about world history in school, I did not learn about Queer history, gay protests, gay civil rights movement and that would have made me feel proud whether it is my history or not. It needs to be taught in all secondary schools and even all aspects of sex ed, sex is not just between a man and A woman. God be the days when I was in school and the sum total of my sex education was being shown to put a condom on a cucumber."

Covid-19 has effected so much of our working lives and in Barry's case his whole industry has come to a grinding halt. "Like everyone else I have had to rearrange work, change commitments and adapt to different dates. I have been lucky that things have slowly started to come back. I work freelance so my work covers a lot of areas, making my own work, applying for funding and grants for projects, working with companies and doing teaching within the community. It is a hard juggling act but I enjoy the challenge and the opportunity. Most of the work I do and make is around Queerness, LGBT+ history and identities and I work with a company called Outbox Theatre as their 'associated artist' which is an all-LGBT+ company and we do plays or performances around certain issues and often interview people and then do a performance with an all queer cast around that person and that has grown over the last ten years."

"Carlow has changed so much since I moved away and when I come back I see so much beauty in Carlow that I didn't see before, even in the country side with me being a "rural" gay living in the big city of London I yearn for nature and the country side, when I was younger I couldn't get away fast enough I love the fact that Carlow is like the beautiful hidden gem of the south east".

What would Barry say to his younger self now? "I would say the words my Dad told me, that knowing yourself is the greatest thing that no one can take away from you".

More information on Barry's work, and the work of the other artists in residence for the VISUAL Carlow in 2021 can be found at www.visualcarlow.ie

**"knowing yourself
is the greatest
thing that no one
can take away
from you".**

Photo credit - Yasser Zadeh



Equality for Children

When will all of Ireland's Children be equal?

by Thomas Brown-Lawlor

There are dozens of LGBT+ parents in Carlow that do not have equal rights in Ireland, and nor do their children. A campaign started in 2019 now needs us all to make Equality for Children a reality in Ireland.

Ranae Von Meding and her wife Audrey have been together for 12 years. They currently reside in Dublin. In 2015 leading up to the Marriage equality act in Ireland, Ranae and Audrey knew they would want to have children, get married and have their own family, just the same as anyone else in Ireland, regardless of sexuality. They decided to do Reciprocal IVF. Audrey's eggs were used with a donor and Ranae carried the baby.

Audrey was the biological parent and Ranae was the birth Parent. As Reciprocal IVF was not allowed in Ireland at the time (only allowed from 2019), Ranae and Audrey had to travel to Spain to access fertility treatment. They got Married in early 2016 and during the summer of 2016, they heard that they would not be treated the same, as other Irish parents even though they were legally married. After getting advice from their solicitor, they found out that Ranae would be the only legal parent. Despite the fact they were married, Audrey would have no legal connection to their child.



Their child Ava was born in 2016 and both Ranae and Audrey had to accept at the time that Ranae would be the only legal parent. They thought to themselves that by the time they would have a second child, the law would have changed. In November 2018 their second child Ayra was born. The situation in Ireland had not changed.

Ranae explains that this was the second time they had to register their child with only her as a listed parent. "Some parents would say that one of the happiest days of their lives is registering their child's birth. However, this felt like a kick in the face for us, as our children's birth certificate only has my name and a blank where Audrey's should be".

This ignited something within Ranae. She decided to start a petition and try to make a change. The Children and Family Relations Act 2015 (CRFA) was due to come into effect, in 2020 but this would only cover certain LGBTQ+ families i.e., "those who met the criteria of what the government decided was allowed". This was only a female couple who had accessed a fertility clinic in Ireland. The child would have to be born in Ireland also.



"This excludes gay fathers and mothers. Children born through surrogacy. Children conceived through a known/unknown donor and children born abroad who have LGBTQ+ parents".

Ranae's petition was sent to Simon Harris who at the time was the Minister of Health. Her petition was signed by over 20,000 people and started to get a lot of traction. The Petition asked for the CRFA to be amended, so it would include as many families as possible and to bring in more appropriate legislation to include all LGBTQ+ family types.

"I had sent letters to several ministers but had received little responses. The Minister for Justice at the time was Regina Doherty. Regina was the only minister to have agreed to meet us up to this point". When the petition reached 20,000 signatures, Ranae received a personal email from Simon Harris.

"He said that he would meet but it had to get rescheduled a few times and the date was finally set for October 2019". Ranae had started a few meetups for LGBTQ+ families in Dublin. This was where LGBTQ+ families could come together and socialise and their children could play. On the second of these meetups, it was decided that they needed to form a campaign group, work alongside other LGBTQ+ organisations and from this, 'Equality for Children' was formed. They then met Simon Harris as a fully formed organisation and 'LGBT Ireland' also joined them in the meeting.

They were able to do a few things such as protests and fundraisers but then the Covid-19 pandemic happened. All their plans had to be put on pause." During this time there was a change in the Irish Government and Simon Harris no longer held the position of Minister for Health and Regina Doherty as Minister for Justice".

Their main focus at the moment is digital events and awareness. They have been able to have a few virtual meetings with various government departments and ministers.



Photo credit: Ranae Von Meding

"Equality for Children's main focus at the moment is to raise awareness as many people around Ireland would not be aware of the inequalities that LGBTQ+ families face". They raise awareness through their Webpage, social media, political lobbying and working with organisations, to have meetings with relevant government departments so they are consulted in what decisions are made in regard to this issue. "To some people, a birth certificate is just a piece of paper and that it actually doesn't matter" but to LGBTQ+ families it affects their day-to-day lives.

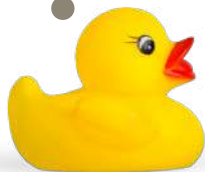
"If you take a family that has two dads or two moms and only one is considered a legal parent. That means in day-to-day life, the Parent who is a legal stranger, is not allowed to consent to any medical procedures and only the legal parent is allowed too. If the legal parent was to become ill and cannot consent. This becomes tricky as the child, then does not have a legal parent to consent for them. This generates problems for the family even down to education". Ranae explains that she had to fill out all education documents as the legal guardian and that her wife Audrey was put down as a "responsible adult", who is allowed to collect their child from preschool. Ranae continued to explain that her wife is not allowed by law to bring their two children out of the country without Ranae's permission.

"These are issues that we should not need to be worried about or think about". This also creates issues around Citizenship. "If the legal parent is from Ireland, then the child is okay regarding citizenship. If the legal parent is not from Ireland, then things become complicated. Also, if the parent who is not the legal parent, comes from another country, then their child does not get citizenship for that country either. Most parents like to pass on their nationality and this can prevent them from doing so".

"Many people around Ireland would not be aware of the inequalities that LGBTQ+ families face"



Family Interest



"These are just some of the issues relation to this topic let alone the psychological damage that is done LGBTQ+ parents and as families are not viewed as equals to other families" states Ranae.

"While heterosexual single parents can go to court to challenge birth certificate issues. LGBTQ+ families do not have that option".

Ranae explained that the Irish Constitution still sees the woman who gives birth "as the mother". This causes issues regarding surrogacy in Ireland, as under the Irish constitution the surrogate is seen as a biological parent. These are some of the issues in regard to LGBTQ+ families in Ireland and Ranae and the whole team at Equality for Children continue to raise awareness, fighting for equality for these families in Ireland. They hope to make a change so that there children will have equal rights just like any other child in Ireland.

How can you help to make all children equal?

Equality for Children are a voluntary organisation and they are always looking for new volunteers to join: <https://equalityforchildren.ie/>

You can find 'Equality for Children' and @ranaevonmeding, on all social media sites and to share their information to help raise awareness.

People can also get involved by writing to all TD's, minister's, senators, raising this as an issue and a template of this letter can be found on the Equality for Children website.

You can also donate via the Equality for Children GoFundMe page, and details of which can be found on their social media stream and on their official website.

If you are a family affected by this topic, please reach out to Equality for Children and lets make all children in Ireland equal.



Photo credit : Ranae Von Meding

The Out Mag gets funding



**Funding was
approved for two
issues in 2021**

We want to take this time to thank Roderic O'Gorman TD for giving the small community of Carlow town this opportunity.

This project will help people who may not normally get opportunities and it helps tell the stories that may never have been told. Future generations will learn from this, and we have already seen the benefits in real life due to this project's success.

We realised early on when we created The Out Mag that it would have a huge impact rurally for marginalised and isolated LGBT+ people.

The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth set aside €6000 for Carlow Pride Festival to create issue 3 and 4. With the fourth issue being printed and published.

You are not alone.

There are services to help. You have someone to talk to. A real person, who understands.

Here are some local and national numbers. Always remember you are never alone. Many of us have been helped by the following services.

Local

CARLOW REGIONAL YOUTH SERVICE

Tel 059 9130476

Email reception@carlowys.ie

MUI (MY UNIQUE INDIVIDUALITY)

Tel 082 2722379 / 059 9133714

FOLLAINE COUNSELLING

Call or text 085 2780307

National

BELONG 2

Tel 01 6706223

www.belongto.org

TENI (TRANSGENDER EQUALITY NETWORK IRELAND)

Tel 01 8733575

www.teni.ie

SAMARITANS

24 hour free phone 116 123

24 response email jo@samaritans.ie

LGBT KILKENNY

Tel 1890 929 539

Email info@lgbt.ie

Help is there.

Drag Superstar

Robyn

DIAMONDS

By Ciaran Rea



Aaron Deery is better known nationally as Robyn Diamond, the incredibly talented drag artist from Derry in Northern Ireland. Robyn made a huge impact on our television sets in 2018 as she performed and got through to the semi-finals of Ireland's Got Talent. She is known locally as the host of Carlow's first ever LGBT+ night in 2019.

The performer you see today on your television screen is somewhat different than the person who grew up in Derry many years ago. "My childhood was a very different one to the typical childhood. At the age of 6 I knew I wanted to be a performer and I was very blessed to be given a fantastic and supportive mother who put me into singing, acting, piano, and violin lessons, that let me excel and grow musically. I was always very different from all the other kids. I loved to dress up and perform and play with Barbie's while the other kids played football etc. etc. but that is the same story for a lot of drag queens! Back then however, I did feel like I was the only boy in the world who felt this way and I felt very different from everyone else- but I'm glad that these traits have never left me and helped me become the person I am today and meet other people with similar childhood experiences!"

Robyn loved to act and sing. "I would enter every local talent competition, she sang in choirs and always showed up to her lessons right on time and ready to go- it was an escapism for me and my ultimate passion in her childhood. 'I knew I wanted to be in entertainment since I can remember. I'm happy to have always had the qualities of self-discipline, drive, and motivation in me since I was young. Robyn had a flair for art and would spend hours drawing and sketching in her room!"

"Anything creative was a go-to for me. Robyn's school life was a weird one for her. 'I actually adored Primary school and was a star pupil with great academic potential. 'I went to a secondary school then where I was bullied a lot for being different than the other boys"

Robyn was obsessed with Britney Spears and had her locker covered in pictures with her which made a lot of the kids mean- also 'I was very musical and theatrical and hated sports so I think the other boys knew I was different and chose to pick on me for that. "I always stayed myself through it, and just tried to keep my head high, I'm glad I did because I suppose that's led me here!"

Robyn came out at the age of 16. "I was actually in America at the time and came out to my mother and my aunt. They were very supportive and accepting which was a huge weight off my shoulders. I really thought in my mind I wouldn't be accepted but looking back now I just think that I had absolutely nothing to fear because my family are genuine, open minded people and love me no matter what I am or what I do. It's funny actually mum said "YOU'RE GAY?" But you have pictures of Britney Spears all over your room?"

"It felt a lot of freedom and power just from doing drag for the first time, it was a very surreal feeling that I got hooked on I suppose".

Robyn was on Ireland's Got Talent back in 2019. She got to meet her idol - Michelle Visage. "I also knew it would be an incredible platform to catapult myself into the Irish scene because I am from Derry which has a little to no drag scene so getting noticed and booked was quite difficult for me beforehand. I knew Ireland's Got Talent would be my chance to change that and show everyone what I can do, and thank God it did".

"It was a surreal moment for me. I'm still proud of myself for how far I made it on the show and what I did with my time there. Robyn got to meet some incredible people while on the show. " being celebrated on national television for who I am."

"It also exposed me to a lot of people and opportunities that came for me afterwards were endless. It really did change my life and I am eternally grateful for the experience. I still get a lot of messages from people saying that I have inspired them and helped them and that's what I am on this earth to do!"

"Meeting Michelle Visage was so special. I actually met her in the hallway while filming something before the audition and I was starstruck!" After the live show Robyn got to meet Michelle. She gave me some advice and words that I'll keep in my heart forever! She was very beautiful and a genuine person who has time for everyone. Which I admire a lot. She is also super tiny which I was not expecting!"

Robyn came to Carlow back in 2019 for Carlow's first ever LGBT+ night in Scragg's. She was the drag act for Carlow Pride Festivals first fundraiser. Robyn blew the audience away with her incredibly colourful performances, costume changes and quirky humour. Her stage presence has star quality which paired with her incredible drag costumes and looks made for a spectacular never seen before in Carlow.

"I adored coming to Carlow for the first pride party! I met some incredible people. The Carlow LGBTQ+ committee are literally some of the friendliest and sweetest people I've ever met- and I have met a lot of people in my time! They have so much passion and joy for what they do! It's so good to still be in contact with them now! They're just beautiful in every way. Carlow is quite small, and so is Derry but I honestly can say hand on heart that Carlow has a better gay scene than Derry does! I would like to change that someday and make Derry a place with a more connected LGBTQ+ community, it seems a lot of people have packed up and moved to bigger places, which I can't blame them for. I love Derry, it's my hometown and it's a beautiful place with many wonderful characters. There is a lot of love and a sense of community in Derry."

So what does the future hold for Robyn? "I have learned to take life day by day because you just ever know what is going to happen, especially with the pandemic happening. It has definitely made me change my perspective on life and how it works- but it's all a learning process and I try to stay as positive as I can. However, if you told me ten years ago I'd be doing what I do today I would never have believed you. So the future looks good for me right now. I like the unknown aspect to the unknown as well! I have been very blessed so far in life and although there have been some bumps on the road it has never stopped me. I'm very headstrong, self aware and determined. So I'm going to just "stay me", motivated and work hard towards my ultimate goal in life, which is to be as free as I can be and genuinely happy, while hopefully inspiring other people to do the same!"

I asked Robyn if she could have dinner with someone who would it be? "Britney Spears hands down!" Britney, if you are reading this, please take her up on the offer of dinner!

Drag Superstar



"I have learned to take life day by day because you just ever know what is going to happen"

A look at student life in-dept

By Sally McDonald

I chatted with Lauren Humphries, a student in the college, about doing an on the LGBT+ in Carlow IT. We decided that she would ask who else would like to be involved and she put me in touch with three other members of the LGBT+. We decided that since we could not meet up, during the pandemic, that I would send Lauren and the other three girls, Zoe Walsh, Bethanay Dobson and Alex Porter, a list of questions and they would return them to me.

I had filled them in on my background and how I got involved with Carlow LGBTI+ and the Carlow Pride Festival Committee. I telephoned each of us while writing the article and discussed their responses. They are a very hard-working, and articulate group and I only wish we could have met up face to face! Hopefully, when it is safe to do so, we will!

Lauren Humphries



Lauren lives near Baltinglass, Co Wicklow and is twenty-one years old. She is a big music and animal fan, she has a three year old Labrador, called Daisy. She says that everyone she meets, gets told all about Daisy!

Lauren is studying Law in Carlow IT. She has been involved in and with the LGBT+ Committee in Carlow IT for the last three years and was President of the society in 2018. She really enjoyed this role, as it allowed her to try things she had never done before and she gained a lot of confidence from it.

Lauren is currently one of the Arts and Events Officers, along with Zoe Walsh. They have been organising talks and interactive events that they can do for the society. Being part of the society, definitely made her college experience more wholesome! She made new friends, got engaged, learned so much and ultimately gained more confidence.

Student Focus

I asked Lauren what was her goal for the college, regarding LGBT+ issues. She thinks Carlow IT is doing an excellent job, in terms of LGBT+ issues and inclusion. The recently launched Gender Expression Policy, which aims to promote diversity and inclusion among staff and students, as well as advancing gender equality within academia, will have a positive impact on LGBT+ staff and students alike, in the years to come. There are many supports available for our LGBT+ students, such as the Welfare Officer, Alex Porter, and the counselling service. The campus has many gender neutral and accessible toilets. Overall, she thinks the College is doing an incredible job and the students know that if there are any issues, or if the Society needs any assistance, the Students Union will always be on hand, to support and help them.

I asked Lauren where did she see their movement going in the future and she said that in terms of the LGBT+ Society, within the College, she thinks that the main goal is to maintain the safe space that the Society is....a place where people can be and explore themselves, make friends, play games, relax and know that they are always welcome. Another goal would be to create a network with other Colleges and wider LGBT+ societies and organisations, like Carlow Pride. They are still a developing society in many ways, but they have lots of other societies to look up to and work towards.

Expanding the society within the College, is another major goal. They would like to welcome more people and allies, who want to make friends and feel part of something.

Lauren said that post pandemic, they would like to expand their presence on the campus to encourage more people to join their group and to host more events. In terms of change for the wider LGBT+ movement, she has seen a lot of positive change in the last few years, both here and abroad, but there are still many things to change....the position on LGBT+ rights differs around the world. She really hopes that there is a future, where being gay will not be a crime and where LGBT+ couples can have the same rights as heterosexual couples. In Ireland, we still do not have equality for same-sex parents. Many same-sex couples can only register one parent's name on the birth certificate of their child, so essentially, the other parent is a stranger to the child, in the hands of the law! This brings up all kinds of issues in terms of guardianship, etc

Student Focus

Lauren would also like to see more LGBT+ education within schools, children should not have to go to the Internet to learn about their different sexuality. She thinks that there should be more LGBT+ representative within the media, both on and off screen and would like to see more diversity and intersectionality. It would have meant a lot to her to have a gay character in a major television show, or a film. The media has come a long way in terms of representation, but there is still some way to go, in terms of who plays the LGBT+ characters and who is hired to write the stories. She says that there has been a lot of positive change in the last few years, she only hopes that this will continue and that LGBT+ people will feel less stigmatised.

I asked Lauren how many LGBT+ members have them in Carlow IT and she said about 30-40. Numbers fluctuate and it is harder to engage with them this year, because of the pandemic and all their activities moved online.

Lauren hopes to qualify as a solicitor, in the future, she is thinking of doing a Masters next year and completing her FEI.



Alex is from Ballymurphy, Co Carlow. She is 24 and a law graduate in Carlow IT. She has been an active member of the LGBT+ society in the College for the past four years and is the Student Welfare Officer there.

I asked Alex what her goals were for the College, regarding LGBT+ issues. She said that she had lots of goals, prior to Covid, which included 'Rainbow' evenings, meetings with other LGBT+ societies around Ireland, providing training for both members of the community and allies (Pink training took place last October) and offering continuous support to the members of the community.

She would like to see some changes for LGBT+ people. More visibility in the media, and more awareness on LGBT+ issues, such as mental health and estrangement from families.

I asked Alex where does she see the movement going in future years and she said she hopes to see increased transgender rights, louder and prouder Pride parades, and a bigger and more inclusive community.

She is not sure about her future career goals, but says it will most definitely be equality and human rights related!

Bethanay Dobson



Bethanay is from Fenagh, Co Carlow. She is 20 and is in her final year in Law, in Carlow IT. She is a huge music and book lover. She has been involved with the LGBT+ Committee since she started in the College. She was the Public Relations Officer and in second year, she was one of the Events / Fundraising Officers, with Lauren. This year, she is Vice-President. She is also in the Law Society and the ELSA (European Law Society Association)

Bethanay says that her main goal for the College is acknowledging LGBTQ issues and she thinks that the College has taken some very positive steps towards this. A Gender Expression Policy was introduced, it aims to promote diversity and inclusion among staff and students, as well as advancing gender equality among academia. She believes this is a very good step and has the potential to have a positive impact. The College also has many gender neutral and accessible toilets. The Welfare Officer in the College, has been very supportive of the LGBTQ+ Society.

The biggest change that Bethanay would like to see, is that being LGBTQ+ in all places around the world is legal. It is very important that LGBT+ couples have the same rights as heterosexual couples. She also would like if there had been more LGBTQ+ characters in films and tv shows when she was younger and she hopes that there will be in the future. She thinks more education in the schools would be beneficial. Mainly in the area of sex education, as it is rarely, if ever, spoken about and she believes it is important information for young LGBTQ people, or those questioning, to know.

Bethanay hopes that the College will continue to head in a positive upward direction. They have such an inclusive and safe feeling space in the society currently and she hopes that it continues and expands in the future.

Her main goal for the society is for it to continue to grow and provide that welcoming space for all incoming students. She would really like for them to expand and network with other colleges and organisations to create an inclusive environment for any LGBTQ person who may need it, regardless of where they are in Ireland.

Zoe Walsh



Zoe is from Fenagh, Co Carlow and is 21 years old. She is in her 3rd year in Carlow IT and is studying TV and Media Production. She is constantly finding creative ways to incorporate LGBT+ issues into her projects, as they mean a great deal to her and her lecturers always say to cover the things that you are passionate about! She joined the LGBT+ in her first year in the College and has been one ever since. She is currently the Events and Fundraiser Officer, with Lauren Humphries and had that role in First year also. She went for it again this year, despite everything being online as she felt that the role was very important, as she needs to still plan online events, to keep in touch with the members and to try and keep everyone connected during the last few months.

Zoe says that Carlow IT are doing a fantastic job in terms of LGBT+ issues and providing services for the LGBT+ community. She hopes they will keep it up. She also hopes that they will be able to spread more awareness and education around LGBT+ issues, despite college being online this year. This includes the committee in their society working together to bring in speakers, such as John Paul Payne, Chairman Of the Pride Festival Committee and the 'Out Mag' to talk about different topics, regarding the LGBT+ community. She also aims to bring in more speakers who can talk about transgender issues and educate people on trans and non-binary issues.

Zoe would like more education to be given to allies of the community and people within the community, particularly the trans community. She is currently working on a documentary about trans people in Ireland, with a fellow classmate and is hoping to highlight the experiences that trans people go through in Ireland. She hopes it will spread more awareness of trans and non-binary people and other smaller communities under the LGBT+ umbrella. She also wants more support systems and awareness of existing supports for all areas of the community.

I asked Zoe where she saw her movement in years to come? She said that in terms of the LGBT+ and the community, she envisages a continuation of support and creating a safe space for all members to feel comfortable in themselves and to be able to express who they are. Overall, she hopes to see more media representation and aspects of the LGBT+ being represented and treated less, as this new strange thing and more as something that is normal and accepted, just as being straight or cisgender is.

Zoe also thinks that the way her college and other colleges are going, that they can expect more training and talks on LGBT+ topics and normalising talking about these issues at any given time, not just during Pride month, or specific dates or events.

Their society numbers fluctuate and it is harder to keep track when it is online, attendance and members of any society is a lot different, but they still do have meetings every week and try to engage with their members, as much as possible.

My last question to Zoe was what she intended to do when she finishes her course? She said she wants to do her Masters in TV and Media, so that she can eventually teach, but she thinks she will wait for a couple of years and first try to get into the film industry. She is also considering possibly running to be a Vice President in the Students Union, first.....either in Welfare and Equality, or Communication and Events.

She thinks it would be a fun job to have and sage could help with LGBT+ issues along with other issues that are just as important!

Coco's Law: Winning the fight to criminalise online bullying and harassment.

By Ryan Shannon

Technology is a wonderful and exciting thing. When the internet first became available for public use in 1991, no one would have ever imagined how much it has grown today. But by using the internet to bring us all closer together with social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat and Instagram, the platforms that have allowed users to make anonymous accounts or leave anonymous messages on people's pages has become rife with online bullying and harassment.

An anti-bullying expert said that cyber bullying rates among Irish children are among the highest in the EU. There has also been a 20 percent increase in online victimization during lockdown. Some online articles have claimed that the rise in online bullying can be attributed to children being bored and having nothing to do. Cyber bullying is one of the hardest types of bullying to avoid, especially during the school years as it's seen as cool and trendy to be using certain apps, especially those that allow you to leave anonymous comments on people's posts.

The anonymity that is given by the internet has also allowed many people or groups to target people of the LGBT+ community. Many people who identify as LGBT+ have experience homophobic bullying or harassment online, either receiving it directly or seeing images or memes using homophobic jokes being shared. This leads to many people who have yet to come out feeling that they will be targeted if they do.



Jackie Fox, the mother of Nicole Fox Fenlon, started the fight to criminalise online bullying and harassment after her daughter committed suicide at the age of 21 after over 3 years of online abuse. After going to the gardaí to bring those who harassed her daughter to justice, Jackie was told that online bullying was not a criminal offence in Ireland, thus beginning the journey of Cocos law.

Jackie held protests and marches in Dublin and had numerous meetings in the Dáil with many different parties to highlight the need for this kind of legislation. After her online petition reached 39,165 signatures, she was able to get in contact with Brendan Howlin, a Labour Party TD, who drafted a law called the harmful harassment communications act, more commonly known as Coco's Law.

In December 2020, the bill passed the final stages of the Seanad. This is an amazing achievement by Jackie Fox and this new law will help protect generations of children, teenagers and adults from online bullying and harassment.

Have you been effected by the topics discussed in this article? Reach out, people are waiting to help. If you the subject to online harassment in any form, contact your local Garda station.

Teaching Equality

By Tadhg Griffin

Ireland's journey to achieve complete equality has accelerated greatly in the last 30 years. All thanks to the brave members of our society who raised their voice, and spoke their truth.

Cork native Conor O'Laoghaire, or Múinteoir Conchobhar as I knew him, taught in Carlow for many years and was one of the founding members of the INTO LGBT teachers group. An organisation that has not only paved the way for Irish LGBT teachers rights but LGBT education itself.

Mr. O'Laoghaire set sail into his profession in 1992 and while the grip of traditional fire and brimstone Catholicism was starting to wane, he was still in the voyaging through the turbulent and unforgiving waters of pre-decriminalisation Ireland.

"I certainly knew I was gay, but it was a different country, a cold country for gay people. There was the Employment Equality Act of 1998. It was carefully worded, by the Minister of Education at the time. You had the nine points of equality and these were enshrined in law. However, Section 37 made it perfectly feasible for an institution with a religious ethos to fire somebody on the grounds of their not being in keeping with this religious ethos. So if you want to translate that into my situation, it meant being gay and being employed by a Catholic institution".

"It was like the sword of Damocles hanging over me".

An ancient Greek tale of a sword dangling over Damocles by a single strand of horse hair. It symbolises omnipresent danger. Both Mr. O'Laoghaire and his close friend and fellow stolen Cork man Ger Twomey, used this analogy to describe the burdensome fear they endured daily as the threatening shadow of section 37 loomed over them.

Even though Mr. Twomey explains "that exemption of the Equality Act was never used and has never been used by the church to dismiss a teacher, it was still there". "In other words, keep your mouth shut, say nothing and we're not going to use this against you. Anecdotally, I have known people who were passed over for promotion because it was known that they were gay or lesbian".

Mr. O'Laoghaire provides a respectful context to the church's views. "People are very quick to condemn the Catholic Church and the Protestant churches as well for their stance on LGBT issues. But this was endemic in society. It was all of society. We weren't as enlightened then about many, many social issues as we are now".

Mr. O'Laoghaire and Mr. Twomey soon began to question why nothing was being done by their union to protect them from section 37 of the Employment Equality Act. Mr. O'Laoghaire recalls his feelings on the matter, "Something needed to be done about this and we were kind of wondering, was there going to be support for us?".

Not long after that, in the back of the INTO monthly magazine "Tuairiscáin", one advertisement read: Are you interested in forming an LGB group? "As it was at the time, we didn't have a whole pile of letters."

Soon after, both men were attending the first gathering of the LGBT Teachers group. "Normally when meetings happen for groups under the umbrella of the INTO, they occur in the INTO head offices in parliament place. And these people in attendance were very, very strong and very determined people. But we were too nervous to go into the head offices. So they provided a room in Jewry's hotel and we had a brandy before we went in there to settle the nerves".

"We went on and we formed the INTO LGBT Teachers Group, and we never had a meeting where there wasn't willing representation from the top brass of the INTO. They were hugely supportive. That year we were marching in Pride, under the INTO banner. There were 12 of us members along with friends and allies. And that provided a huge succour and support for us".

Once the group was formed they could go onto achieving their primary goal which was to represent LGBT Teachers in the workplace and to amend the 1998 Employment Equality Act.

Mr. O'Laoghaire acknowledges, "There was a general recognition that it should never have been included. It was the minister for education at the time who had included it. And it was generally accepted by anybody who was involved, that it was mealy-mouthed and it was mean of him to have included that, there was no need for it".



"There was no great push against us. I know the churches had looked to retain it, but they looked for many things that they didn't get. And I think it came from the ministers own personal prejudices. But bear in mind, again, the guy was coming from his own society, Ireland was a different society at the time. It wasn't the Ireland of equality". The amendment was noted in the 2013 Equality Bill and was successfully passed through the Seanad on December 2nd 2015. 194 days after the marriage equality referendum. Solidifying the INTO LGBT Teachers group as a champion of Irish egalitarianism.

Having achieved job security for LGBT teachers around the country. The focus turned to educating the children of Ireland on the LGBT community.

While some may argue that children aren't ready to know about same sex relationships or it might harm their innocence in some way, the "Different Families; Same Love" competition founded by the INTO tries to break this assumption by showing cuboid families of all walks of life, same sex parents, single parents, racially diverse families and heteronormative families all enjoying a day in the park together.

Mr O'Laoghaire said about this initiative and LGBT education, "I believe that if we try to sweep something under the carpet that we're making another of it. That's exactly the opposite of what we're trying to do. We're trying to take away the stigma of the other. You have so many different types of families in so many different types of relationships. Then why would we focus on one type of relationship? In everyday life, in society and in the workplace they will be dealing with people who do not fit that more traditional type of relationship. So we're preparing them for life. We're not training them to get married. That's not the idea behind it.

We teach the functions of the body and we teach about sexual relations in fifth and sixth class in primary school. And that shouldn't just be geared towards one section of society, that should be across the board."

Mr. Twomey made clear the significance of a protective policy for LGBT education;

"I wouldn't go off on my own [teaching] it without having a policy within the school. Once it's part of a policy that is ratified by a board of management and sent out to the parent association, then there are no grounds for objections. Teachers should not go off on their own promoting their own agenda whatever agenda it is, there has to be a policy within the school and that has to come from the top".

On reflection, Mr O'Laoghaire contemplates if a positive introduction and education of the LGBT community could have affected his life;

"I spent my 20s hiding my sexuality and trying to deny something that was very, very, very natural to me. So, yeah, it would have. I would have realised my own potential a lot sooner. I still haven't realised my potential. I will realise my potential the day I leave this earthly coil, we're always learning. But it just kind of feels that I went off on a tangent in my twenties and I didn't develop what I should have been developing. If I had the support from formal education to teach me that this was ok or that my education wasn't always biased towards heteronormative relations, I think that would have had a profound impact on my early years in life. Even personally I think it would give me a lot more confidence in myself as well. So what I have now and whatever confidence I now have in myself was hard fought really. Ultimately, the inclusive atmosphere and nature of my own school insured that when it was time for me to live openly as a gay man I felt supported".

What does the future hold for the INTO LGBT Teachers group?

"Maintaining our presence, and maintaining our visibility constantly. Being vigilant incase there's any lapse but I don't see that there would be. We need to represent ourselves. There are hundreds of different groups within the INTO all with their own unique identities. And this is an identity that we need to persevere in and that we need to cherish. We need to ensure that it continues to be cherished and continues to be made visible".

With thanks to Conchobhar O'Laoghaire (Below left), Ger Twomey (Below right) and the INTO LGBT Teachers Group.



Photo Credit: Conchobhar O'Laoghaire



Photo Credit: Ger Twomey



Lets end the stigma, together.

Myth: You can get HIV from kissing, using the same cups, plates, knives, forks etc. as someone with HIV.

Fact: This is NOT TRUE.

Even though there is a tiny bit of HIV in saliva/spit there is not enough to pass on to someone else.

Myth: You can get HIV from a toilet seat.

Fact: This is NOT TRUE

HIV doesn't survive on surfaces like toilet seats.

Myth: It's only the needle/spike that passes on HIV. If you don't share needles/spikes then you can't get HIV.

Fact: This is NOT TRUE.

HIV can be passed on from sharing any part of the works (any drug use paraphernalia) needle, syringe, spoon, filter, water etc. Another interesting fact is that even though HIV can die within seconds of coming in contact with the air, it can live for days/weeks within the barrel of a syringe.

Myth: If you have HIV that means you have AIDS.

Fact: This is NOT TRUE

HIV and AIDS are not the same thing. HIV is a virus that attacks the immune system. AIDS is a term used by doctors to describe the damage done to the immune system by HIV. Many people with HIV these days will never get AIDS because the treatment keeps their immune system healthy and the viral load so low.

Myth: You would definitely feel sick if you had HIV.

Fact: This is NOT TRUE

Some people get a short flu like illness when they first get HIV but most people don't feel sick at all. It can take many years for some people with HIV to feel sick but their immune system is becoming weaker. Getting on treatment early can keep your immune system strong and stop you getting sick.

Due to the evolving Coronavirus (COVID-19) situation, there are continuing restrictions to public sexual health services.

This includes restrictions, and some closures, to HIV and STI testing and PrEP clinics.

Treatment clinics for HIV, STIs and Hepatitis are operating at some level and individual clinics will contact people who are currently receiving treatment and/or have appointments to inform you whether to attend your appointment or not, and when and how to get your medication.

Some STI testing clinics, while closed, may provide services in the case of emergencies. If you have symptoms, don't ignore them. Contact your nearest clinic and leave a detailed message with your name and contact telephone number so that a staff member can call you back. You can also contact your GP who may provide STI testing services.

PEP is still available during these restrictions. If you have had a recent exposure to HIV, it is important to take urgent action. Contact your nearest Hospital Emergency Department where PEP is available or contact your local sexual health clinic.

What is PEP for HIV?

Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) is an emergency course of medication that aims to prevent HIV acquisition following a recent sexual, or needle-stick, exposure to HIV.

How does PEP work?

PEP is a 28 day course of anti-HIV medication that can prevent HIV establishing itself in a person's bloodstream. It must be taken within 72 hours (3 days) of the possible exposure to HIV.



All the information contained on this page is with thanks to HIV Ireland. More information about HIV, and how you can help, support or end stigma around HIV is available on their website: www.hivireland.ie