Annual Report 2024





Here You Belong Here

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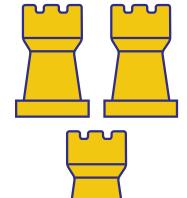
Our Impact in 2024

LGBTQ+
youth groups
supported
nationwide

450 parents supported directly through our Family Support Service



youth services received the Rainbow Award Led over **60,000**participants as
Grand Marshall at
the **Dublin Pride Parade**



487 young people supported through our Dublin Youth Service

7,005

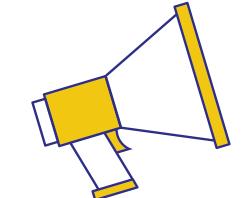
people trained to support LGBTQ+ youth

161 heroes raised funds through community fundraisers

72,581

students reached through the LGBTQ+ Quality Mark

319,075



students reached through Stand Up Awareness Week



Secured 217
pieces of media
coverage

schools involved in the LGBTQ+
Quality Mark

Our Impact in 2024



1 new Strategic Plan

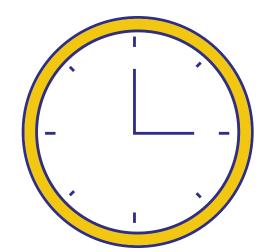
€2,428,089 was raised by our incredible





73,000

visitors to our website

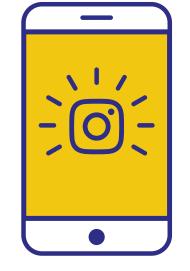


63 volunteers gave **722** hours of their time to support LGBTQ+ youth

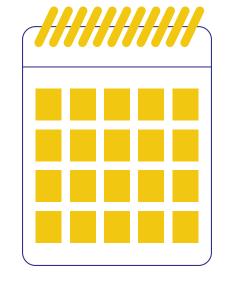


young people joined our Youth **Advisory Panel**

donors and funders



10,000+ followers secured on Instagram



12 weeks of seasonal programmes for LGBTQ+ youth

YAP members were interviewed by 2FM, RTÉ Radio 1, Newstalk, FM104, Irish Examiner, Irish Independent & GCN

Message from the Chair

Welcome to Belong To's 2024 Annual Report. The Board of Directors is delighted to present Belong To's 2024 Annual Report and financial statements for the year ending 31 December 2024.

As Chair of Belong To, I continue to be inspired by the commitment and dedication of so many stakeholders coming together to work with and for LGBTQ+ young people to create a society where we all belong.

In 2024, this proved challenging against an increasingly hostile climate for LGBTQ+ people, as documented within three research reports published by Belong To over the past 12 months.

Within this Annual Report, we offer an overview of our work throughout 2024 and highlight our commitment as an organisation to good governance, transparency and ethical fundraising.

Indeed, governance and transparency are the cornerstone of all activities and work at Belong To. The financial statements within this report are prepared to the standards set by the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) for charities.

Belong To has implemented and was awarded the coveted Triple Lock status by Charities Institute Ireland to recognise its achievements and commitment to good governance.

I am proud to share that in 2024, Belong To made a decision to opt in to voluntary reporting under the environment, social and governance (ESG) reporting framework and commenced working on developing an ESG strategy to enable us to do this, with the generous support of the accountancy and business advisory firm Crowe Ireland. This will enable us to report a fuller picture of the environmental impact of Belong To across its operations in the future. As an organisation, we will set clear targets to mitigate this impact over time.

I am grateful to my colleagues on the Board, who bring a wealth of experience and expertise from diverse sectors. Their commitment ensures high standards of transparency and accountability for the organisation. In 2024, we said goodbye to Maria Afontsenko (she/her) who served as Treasurer and Board Member. On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank Maria for her valuable contributions to Belong To during her tenure. I also would like to welcome the four new Directors appointed in 2024 following an extensive recruitment process – Ciarán Finlay (he/him), Kieran O'Donovan (he/him), Simon Finnegan (he/him) and Sinéad Barry (she/her). I thank you all for sharing your expertise and for your dedication to Belong To.

I would also like to acknowledge the courageous leadership of our CEO Moninne Griffith and the wonderful staff team at Belong To, who work tirelessly to drive impact and positively progress the lives of LGBTQ+ young people in Ireland.

As we look to the future, I feel confident that we will achieve the goals set out in our new *Strategic Plan 2025-2027, You Belong Here*. The plan was formed together with our stakeholders in 2024. The plan is reflective of how we work at Belong To – in partnership and collaboration. I thank all those who offered their insights to shape this plan including funders, donors, Board of Directors, working groups, volunteers, staff, partner organisations, teachers, youth workers, parents and, most importantly, young people themselves. We look forward to bringing this plan to life with you.

As the world undergoes unprecedented challenges relating to the rights of minority groups, including LGBTQ+ individuals, we will continue to show up and dedicate all of our efforts to bringing our vision to life. We hope that you will continue to show your support so together we can create a world where LGBTQ+ young people are safe to shine and can confidently shape their own futures.

In Pride

Patricia Carey (she/her) Chair, Belong To



Patricia Com

Message from the CEO

For Belong To, 2024 was a time when we showed our willingness to step up to the challenges that met us and leaned into courage – a value that we live and breathe as an organisation.

The past 12 months brought unprecedented challenges with an increasingly hostile climate and coordinated campaigns targeting our life-saving services for LGBTQ+ young people and their loved ones, and progress more generally.

There are small numbers of hateful individuals and groups here in Ireland, supported by others in other countries, who are attempting to prevent LGBTQ+ young people from being who they are. They want to stop people learning about LGBTQ+ identities, to prevent education, acceptance and progress. They want Ireland to go back to being a place where anyone who was different either left the country or lived a life in hiding, full of shame. We experienced this throughout 2024, with targeted attacks on our work and hateful incidents focusing on members of our dedicated team.

While the environment may be uncertain going forward, one thing remains sure – we will continue to be here for LGBTQ+ youth and their families. We will always be here to provide them with a place where they belong, a safe space, where they can be themselves and feel joy.

Reflecting on the last year, I am reminded of the incredible work of our resilient team, Board of Directors and volunteers in creating new services, releasing new research and driving impact against a difficult backdrop. Among the highlights that you will read about in this report is the reimagining of our Dublin Youth Service. A new team has innovated our frontline service offering, expanding with a programme of seasonal projects and new groups to meet the needs of LGBTQ+ young people today. We were thrilled to launch our new Family Support Service in April which proved hugely successful, engaging directly with 450 parents and guardians in 2024. We continued to build the capacity of those who work with LGBTQ+ young people through our training and accreditation programmes, including the LGBTQ+ Quality Mark for schools and Youthreach centres as well as the Rainbow Award for youth services and youth organisations. Across 2024, we supported thousands of students and young people through our work in formal and informal education services and spaces.

Our ever growing evidence base of research further emphasised the need for these life-saving services and supports. Being LGBTQI+ in Ireland, published with Trinity College Dublin highlighted the stark deterioration in the mental health of LGBTQI+ youth since 2016. Our trans healthcare research with University College Dublin demonstrated the massive barriers trans young people face in accessing healthcare and our research with University of Limerick showed the willingness and needs of primary level educators to learn about LGBTQ+ inclusivity. During 2024, we campaigned for the inclusion of LGBTQ+ rights in local, European and general elections to ensure that LGBTQ+ lives stay on the political agenda.

Youth participation was central to our impact in 2024, with the establishment of a new Youth Advisory Panel made up of 30 extraordinary young activists. One of my favourite moments of the year, was when Belong To marched as Grand Marshall at Dublin Pride, leading 60,000 people in the parade. Members of our new Youth Advisory Panel carried a banner at the head of a group of over 400 LGBTQ+ young people, youth workers and our dearest supporters, marching through the city calling for equality and safety for themselves and their peers. Persistent rain did not dampen our spirits on this very special day for the organisation. A special thanks to Dublin Pride for extending this invitation to us and to Dublin City Council for hosting our celebratory Pride breakfast. It was truly unforgettable.

All of this success would not have been possible without a wide community who are standing with Belong To and LGBTQ+ youth. Thanks to our committed Board of Directors, who steer the organisation with heart and expertise. I am so grateful to our funders and donors, both individuals and organisations, who supported the work of Belong To in 2024. Without you, we could not continue our life-saving work.

To all the LGBTQ+ young people across Ireland: we show up each and every day to work with and for you. We thank you for showing up, for sharing your insights and for guiding Belong To so that we can meet your needs today and into the future. Keep on shining!

In Pride,

Moninne Griffith (she/her) CEO, Belong To



Monne Grittite

Our Vision

We see a world where LGBTQ+ young people are safe to shine and can confidently shape their own futures.

Our Mission

We work with and for LGBTQ+ young people to create a society where we all belong.

Our Values

Welcoming

We are mindful of people's wellbeing and strive for our spaces and interactions to be joyful and fun while ensuring they are safe and respectful.

Trustworthy

We are transparent in our work, how we operate and in our governance.

Rooted in experience

We work as equals with LGBTQ+ young people. What we say and do is informed by their lives, experiences and the challenges they face.

Courageous

We challenge and speak out about the causes and effects of prejudice, discrimination, homophobia, biphobia and transphobia on LGBTQ+ young people and what must change.

Inclusive and diverse

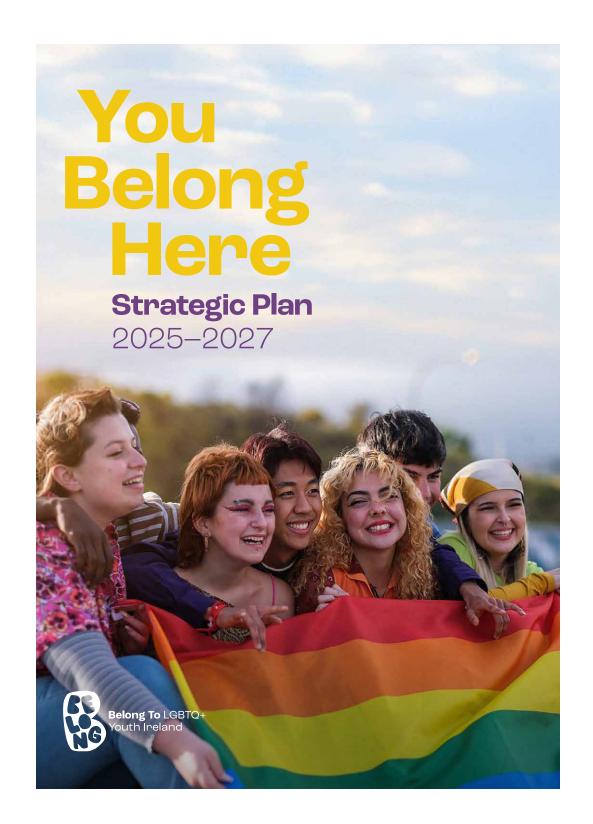
We seek to create a sense of belonging and to reflect and include the diversity of LGBTQ+ young people, and we are mindful of intersectionality. We work in community and solidarity for human rights and social justice.

Strategic

We make deliberate choices about where we focus our work and energy to make maximum impact on where we lead and where we partner with others.

We apply these values across the organisation by including a section in quarterly reviews about how each employee lives each value.

Our Strategic Plan



With this new *Strategic Plan 2025-2027, You Belong Here* we have set out our roadmap for the next three years — with the lives, rights and voice of LGBTQ+ youth at the core of what we do and how we do it.

Since 2003, Belong To has been supporting LGBTQ+ young people aged 14–23. We do this by providing safe and fun spaces for young people to meet, by providing individualised support with professionals such as youth workers, as well as promoting inclusivity in education and by creating resources for LGBTQ+ youth. The goal is for any young person who gets in touch with Belong To to feel accepted, safe and valued.

The process of developing *You Belong Here* took place between May and December in 2024. During the planning process, we examined challenges, opportunities, our database, and conducted an extensive consultation process. We brought groups together in-person and online a number of times to share their ideas, perspectives and insights. We spoke to our partner organisations, funders, politicians and policy makers, our team, Board of Directors, educators, youth workers, parents, and most importantly, LGBTQ+ young people to ensure that this plan reflects their perspectives.

In the new Strategic Plan, the lived experiences and voices of LGBTQ+ young people are louder than ever with the growth of our Youth Advisory Panel and youth participation.

We will continue to respond to the needs of the young people we work with; grow our range of unique projects, supports and groups; and expand our age range to meet the needs of young people from 10 years old.

Within this plan, we have set an ambitious goal to secure a permanent home for young people in Dublin City Centre. In a post-pandemic world, with increased security threats, young people have told us that they need a safe, secure third space, where fun and connection go hand in hand.

Other notable developments in the plan include expanding supports and resources for the families of LGBTQ+ youth, building on the capacity of professionals in social and healthcare settings and a focus on the dissemination of factual information based on our growing evidence base and research.

The plan was formed together with our stakeholders, reflective of how we work at Belong To – in partnership and collaboration. Over the next three years, we will continue to be there with and for LGBTQ+ young people. We look forward to bringing this plan to life and continuing to hold strong as we create an Ireland where LGBTQ+ youth are equal, safe and thriving.

Our Strategic Goals



Provide innovative, responsive youth work that supports LGBTQ+ young people to be equal, safe and thriving, and assist other youth services to do the same.

2 Goal 2

Create spaces so every young person feels safe and supported in their communities.

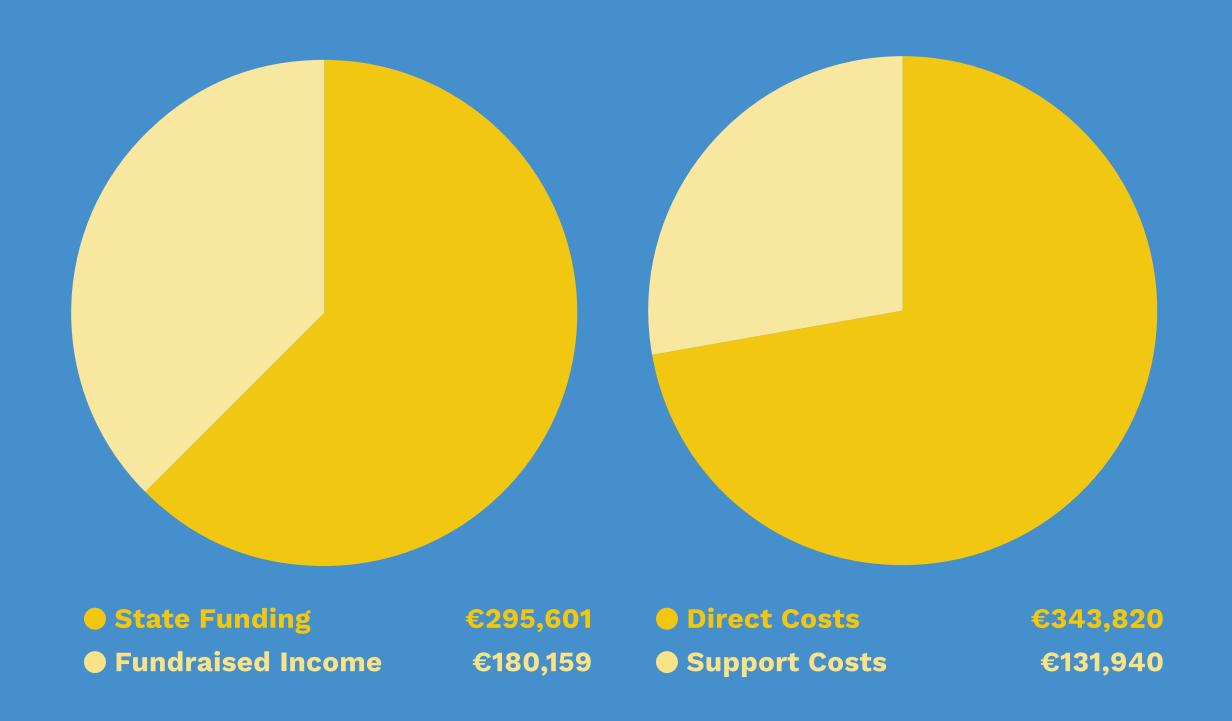


Drive change and equality through advocacy, research and campaigns.



Invest in our people, systems and sustainability to achieve our vision.

Delivering LGBTQ+ Youth Work Provide innovative, responsive youth work that supports LGBTQ+ young people to be equal, safe and thriving, and assist other youth services to do the same.



Strategic Objectives

Double the number of young people benefitting from Belong To's direct youth work.

We will do this by; expanding our age range to 10 to 23 year olds, reintroducing Belong To Sundays, reimagining our groups, activities and programmes — including harm reduction and sexual health programmes, providing a range of one-to-one supports, and assessing the changes we make for young people's mental health and wellbeing.

Engage isolated young people through an innovative digital youth work pilot.

This programme will reach isolated LGBTQ+ young people through the innovative use of technology. We will support their mental health and wellbeing through creating connection and community.

Support the development of more LGBTQ+ inclusive spaces with youth services across Ireland.

We will do this collaboratively through sustaining and growing the National Network to deliver targeted, good practice LGBTQ+ youth work and, through programmes such as the Rainbow Award, we will empower youth services to become inclusive and welcoming spaces for LGBTQ+ young people.

Secure a permanent LGBTQ+ inclusive youth hub in Dublin with an integrated model of service delivery.

To provide the best services for young people, we need sufficient space and security. Now is the time to progress this. We aim to raise funds to establish a permanent space for youth that is LGBTQ+ friendly and serves as a safe space for all young people in Dublin and beyond.

Run targeted media campaigns to engage and inform young people on topics including mental health and wellbeing, their rights and staying safe online.

We will provide education and information to LGBTQ+ youth about key topics relating to our mission across a range of digital media platforms.

Improve the mental health of LGBTQ+ young people.

In addition to our direct youth work and programme work, we will do this by offering affordable counselling and direct one-to-one supports for a range of mental health and wellbeing issues. We will also share knowledge, build partnerships, and collaborate with mental health professionals and services.



Empowering Tomorrow

We support LGBTQ+ young people through youth work and a range of support services.

At the core of our work is our direct engagement with LGBTQ+ young people aged 14-23. We strive to provide them with the necessary support to overcome challenges they face in life, provide a safe space and community to explore who they are and realise their fullest potential within society. In 2024, we continued to show our commitment to LGBTQ+ youth through youth-focused initiatives and an expansion of our frontline services.

Our Dublin Youth Service serves as a vital source of peer support and community for LGBTQ+ youth throughout Dublin and the surrounding areas. Our youth workers are committed to supporting LGBTQ+ young people and offer tailored youth-led support through peer groups, seasonal and programme-based work, harm reduction initiatives and one-to-one support for young people within our service. Our Youth Services Team ensures a holistic approach to supporting young people by extending support to adults including parents, guardians and other relatives through our Family Support Service, as well as supporting professionals working with LGBTQ+ young people through one-to-one support, information sessions and training to the youth sector.

2024 was a year of embedding new practices and establishing new initiatives and services within our Youth Services. Our new Family Support Service was launched in April 2024, with high demand for support from parents, guardians and other family members. We also saw changes to our peer groups with the introduction of seasonal and programme-based work with young people, including an eight-week summer project.

Our Youth Services Team has continued to showcase their dedication to providing frontline support to LGBTQ+ young people and their families, as well as offering strategic guidance on best practices for LGBTQ+ inclusive youth work across Ireland. Our approach includes comprehensive, tailored support to meet the unique needs of LGBTQ+ youth, ensuring a holistic focus on their wellbeing and empowerment.

Although we welcomed many new changes in Belong To in 2024, we also said goodbye to our colleague Leigha Dugdale (she/her) who departed from the role of Training and Development Officer in 2024. We want to thank Leigha for the professionalism and expertise she brought to our team during her time at Belong To. In June 2024, we were pleased to welcome Niamh Grennan (she/her) as her replacement. Niamh has enriched the Youth Services Team with her extensive experience and expertise in training and facilitation.

The Youth Services Team is funded by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. The role of Drugs and Alcohol Senior Youth Worker is funded by the North Inner City Drug and Alcohol Task Force. The role of the Family Support Worker is supported through the Toy Show Appeal and Community Foundation Ireland.

Inside the Frontline - Tracking our Impact

We collate feedback and data from our service users to help us respond to the needs of young people who engage with Belong To. Here, we share insights from our Dublin Support Services.

In 2024, 168 individuals attended our youth service through participation in our youth groups, projects and programme-based work. This is a 15% increase compared to 2023 (2023: 146; 2022: 151). This increase is attributed to the introduction of seasonal projects, new programmes and changes to group structures to better align with the needs of the young people within the service. In 2024, there was a total of 248 youth work sessions resulting in a total attendance of 1,474. A young person's average attendance across 2024 was nine engagements.

Our Youth Services Team supported 319 young people in 2024 through our online support service, which amounted to 961 engagements. Interactions with young people were delivered through calls, texts, emails and in person/online meetings. Through our one-to-one support with young people, we referred a total of 264 young people to both internal and external services. These included internal referrals to Belong To youth groups, LGBTQ+ youth groups across Ireland, crisis counselling with Pieta and other external organisations and services.

Support Services

Crisis Counselling

The stark findings of the *Being LGBTQI+ in Ireland* research (Trinity College Dublin and Belong To, 2024) emphasised the need for crisis counselling for LGBTQ+ young people (see more on page 41). The findings reinforce concern about the high levels of self-harm and suicidal ideation amongst LGBTQ+ young people; 77% of 14–18 year old participants reported suicidal thoughts, and 72% reported having self-harmed¹.

Many marginalised communities, including LGBTQ+ youth, face barriers to accessing mental health support. Many LGBTQ+ young people hesitate to seek support unless they are certain of an inclusive and safe environment. Both Belong To and Pieta continue to recognise the alarming rates of self-harm and suicidal thoughts among LGBTQ+ youth in Ireland. Since 2016, Pieta and Belong To have offered a national LGBTQ+ crisis counselling service to provide life-saving supports for LGBTQ+ youth.

LGBTQ+ young people can access free therapy from psychotherapists who understand and respect their sexual orientation and gender identity. With this partnership, we provide free, national crisis-intervention therapy for suicidal ideation, self-harm and those bereaved by suicide within the LGBTQ+ youth community. This service, available both inperson and virtually, caters to individuals aged 14–23, with parental or guardian consent required for those under 18.

In 2024, Pieta conducted 100 clinical therapy hours and 17 client assessments as part of its outreach at the Belong To service in Dublin City Centre. In 2023, Pieta conducted 31 clinical therapy hours and seven client assessments as part of their outreach at our Belong To premises.

On a broader scale, nationally, Pieta conducted 2,427 therapy hours with 299 client assessments in 2024 for clients aged 13–24 from the LGBTQ+ community (2023: 2,400 therapy hours with 299 client assessments).

Drug and Alcohol Support Service

From our direct experience working with LGBTQ+ young people and from national and international research, we know that LGBTQ+ youth are using drugs at higher rates than the general youth population. According to the *Being LGBTQI+ in Ireland* research, a combined 81% of LGBTQ+ 14–24 year olds had taken drugs (not for medical reasons). This compares to 40% of the general youth population in Ireland aged 12–25 in the MyWorld national study of youth mental health in Ireland by UCD and Jigsaw¹.

Belong To provides vital support for LGBTQ+ youth, who face a higher risk of drug and alcohol misuse due to factors like family rejection, bullying, isolation, stigma and discrimination. The Drug and Alcohol Support Service is funded by the North Inner City Drug and Alcohol Taskforce. This service supports LGBTQ+ youth facing drug and alcohol challenges, operates under a harm reduction model and equips youth workers and drug-related services with the skills and capacity to provide inclusive support and services.

We provide a non-judgmental, person-centred approach when supporting LGBTQ+ young people with drug and alcohol use. Alongside direct support, we offer educational resources, workshops and campaigns to raise awareness of substance-related issues within the LGBTQ+ community and to provide LGBTQ+ youth with information to make informed and healthier choices.

Our Drugs and Alcohol Senior Youth Worker supported Dublin City Comhairle na nÓg with their youth voices and local issues campaign this year which highlighted the risk associated with nitrous oxide. This was a campaign that ran all across Dublin City Centre and included the development of a lesson plan to inform students on the dangers of using nitrous oxide that was sent to schools and youth organisations across Dublin City. In 2024, we continued to contribute to the HSE Chemsex Working Group, the North Inner City Drug and Alcohol Taskforce, the Gay Men's Health Network and the National Voluntary Drugs and Alcohol Sector volunteer cluster.

Championing Equality

LGBTQ+ youth work changes lives and we provide spaces for community, connection and support through our Dublin Youth Service.

Belong To offers young people a safe space to explore their sexual orientation, gender identity and various LGBTQ+ topics without fear of judgment, harassment or discrimination. Through our Dublin Youth Service, we deliver youth groups designed to enhance the personal and social development of LGBTQ+ young people.



Our youth groups provide a safe, welcoming, fun space where LGBTQ+ youth can meet other LGBTQ+ young people and engage in non-formal educational programmes and activities based on topics affecting their lives. Our team of professionally qualified youth workers, with dedicated LGBTQ+ expertise, facilitate weekly youth groups assisted

by a team of volunteers. In 2024, a total of 168 young people attended our youth groups in Dublin. These groups met 248 times in 2024 (2023: 196, 2022: 146). This increase from previous years was a result of the introduction of our programme-based work and seasonal programmes.

Our Approach To Youth Work

The Youth Work Team ensure a youth-centred approach when working with young people. Young people are involved in the design and implementation of the programmes and activities carried out within our youth groups. We provide a safe space for LGBTQ+ young people, which aims to improve their wellbeing and increase their awareness and confidence when it comes to their identity.

The Dublin Youth Service operates under an equal partnership and youth participation model of youth work. This means that the young people within the groups have ownership within the space and democratically decide what workshops, projects and programmes take place. Workshops are based on non-formal education and run under the Critical Social Education model of youth work. This involves engaging young people in a critical analysis of social issues and structures, empowering them to understand and challenge injustices and fostering their active participation in creating social change. This approach prioritises critical thinking, social awareness and advocacy skills development within the youth work context.

We organise workshops focused on the themes of fun, interest, concern and life skills. Group members select the topics they would like to explore under each theme. In 2024, there was an increased interest in topics related to drugs, alcohol and sexual health leading to meaningful and impactful work in these areas. Additionally, there was a growing demand for a third space— an unstructured space where young people can come together with peers and make friends. In response, we reopened Belong To Sundays, a weekend space for LGBTQ+ young people to come together and build community.

Each of our youth groups meet weekly for two hours. Our qualified youth workers are trained to facilitate age-appropriate discussions about a diverse range of topics including wellbeing, coming out, LGBTQ+ history, culture and sexual health. Belong To's youth workers are trained to identify LGBTQ+ young people at risk of suicide ideation and self-harm, to implement Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) and to carry out referrals to our joint service with Pieta when this occurs. We also provide one-to-one support to young people who need additional support and guidance.

Belong To Groups

In 2024, we introduced a number of seasonal programmes aligning with school/university holidays. As a result, during these periods, we paused our weekly groups to deliver daily programmes. As a result, there is a reduction in the number of youth group sessions in 2024, but an increase in the number of young people accessing the Dublin Youth Services due to the hugely successful seasonal programmes.

New Young Person's Project

The New Young Person's Project is a welcoming space for young people interested in joining our youth groups. Here, they are introduced to a youth worker, learn about the services offered by the Dublin Youth Service and gain insight into what to expect from a youth group. In total, 39 young people attended this project in 2024. This 45% decrease compared to the previous year (2023: 72; 2022: 84) was due to young people joining groups organically through friends and an increase in youth workers meeting young people on a one-to-one basis in order to fast track them in for projects and progammes. In 2024, the New Young Person's Project ran 20 times (2023: 20; 2022: 20; 2021: 24).

Over-18s Group

This group is open to young people aged 18–23. This group offers a weekly space for young people to come together in Dublin City Centre. The group met 19 times in 2024 (2023: 38; 2022: 33) with a total attendance of 159 (2023: 240; 2022: 157).

Under-18's Group

LGBTQ+ young people aged 14–17 attend this weekly space to explore their identity and make friends. The group met 21 times in 2024 (2023: 41; 2022: 43) with a total attendance of 128 (2023: 212; 2022: 393).

IndividualiTy

Trans and non-binary young people join us weekly for our IndividualiTy youth group. In 2024, this group was split into two separate groups based on age range.

- IndividualiTy for trans and non-binary young people aged 14–17 met 15 times, with a total attendance of 60.
- IndividualiTy trans and non-binary young people aged 18–23 met 11 times, with a total attendance of 77.

The Ladybirds

This group is a space for lesbian, bi, trans and non-binary young people aged 14–17. The group met 21 times in 2024 (2023: 29; 2022: 37) with a total attendance of 84 (2023: 145; 2022: 239).

Dungeon and Dragons

In 2024, based on feedback from service users, we introduced a new weekly Dungeons and Dragons group. Dungeons and Dragons is an interactive storytelling game set in a fantasy world. It helps participants develop skills such as teamwork, problem-solving, diversity, goal setting, risk-taking and empathy. This group met 14 times with a total attendance of 119.

Programme-Based Work

Throughout the year, we facilitated various seasonal projects and programme-based initiatives. In 2024, we introduced several new programmes to our service. These programmes are designed to be delivered over a period of time and focus on developing specific skills. Notable examples of the programmes delivered in 2024 include:

Seasonal Projects

The seasonal projects were designed to coincide with the school calendar and included activities during the following periods: two weeks in April, the entirety of July and August, one week in October, and one week in December.

The first seasonal project for 2024 was the spring project, which aligned with the Easter break in schools. Activities included water sports, BMX riding, clothing swapping and upcycling, as well as a trip to the cinema.

The summer project took place over the months of July and August, with each week featuring a different theme. Themes included trans joy, ways4wellbeing with jigsaw, sustainability, sports, drama, harm reduction and an end-of-summer party. A total of 98 participants attended over the two months.

In October, we hosted our autumn project, a week-long project that coincided with the Halloween break. Activities included the Samhain Embers tour in the Botanic Gardens, a Halloween movie night and a Halloween party.

The final seasonal project was the winter project, which consisted of a week of activities that included Wild Lights at Dublin Zoo, a Christmas party and a show at the Abbey Theatre.

The Abbey Theatre Collaboration

Together with the Abbey Theatre, Belong To hosted a one-week drama project for LGBTQ+ young people in the Dublin Youth Service during the summer project. Six young people attended the week-long project at the Abbey Theatre. Throughout the project, participants worked together to devise their own original show called The Sleepaways. The show was an ode to queer joy, finding your tribe and sharing formative experiences with likeminded people. This project ended with a performance in The Abbey with a Q&A after about the story and the process.

Reel Youth Programme

Reel youth was a 12-week filmmaking programme that was conducted in collaboration with youth work services across Dublin. Each service created a film based on the theme 'The Chipper'. The programme ended with a premiere of all of the films. Eight young people participated in the 12-week programme. They wrote, directed and edited a film called 'Friendchips'. The short film was based on the struggle of trying to fit in and the different things you do to find your community and make friends.

Empowering Youth Voices

The Empowering Voices programme brings together young people from Ireland, Northern Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales to create a book/digital exhibition of stories and images to capture, collate and conserve LGBTQ+ young people's stories. The programme will end with a residential in Manchester in 2025, where we will come together as a group across five nations and showcase our art. This programme began in October 2024 with an online group with 21 young people from all of the regions – six of these participants were from Belong To groups.



Transboree

Transboree is an annual celebratory event for trans and nonbinary young people that focuses on body positivity and gender expression. This event was planned and organised with young people from IndividualiTy. The event included a trans positivity messaging corner, a conversation with Trans and Intersex Pride activist, Ollie Bell (they/he), and a hair station. We welcomed 18 young people to the event in July.



With Pride

Megan Quinn (they/them) attends Belong To and was part of the 2024 Pride Planning Committee. Here they share their experience.

"My first experience with Belong To was with the Pride Committee. Our first meeting was me, another young person, Katie and Kelsey (Youth Workers). We got to know each other and began to brainstorm ideas. It instantly felt like such a warm place and that warmness grew as I met the rest of the committee, and we worked with Dublin Pride. When it came time to lead the parade, I had truly been integrated into the Belong To community and had so many friends up front with me being so proud of who they were. Everyone was wearing t-shirts I helped design and celebrating in a march that I could say I had a part in planning. It was empowering. I got to get up on stage and speak with like-minded people and see my brother and mother watching me and enjoying the day, I and everyone else, had worked so hard to make perfect. Even in the lashing rain with my face paint running down my face I didn't want a thing to change. Belong To's Pride Committee not only gave me somewhere to get involved and be active but friends I still talk to and find every opportunity to hang out with. Being a part of the Pride Committee changed my life and I am forever grateful for the opportunity."

Delivering LGBTQ+ Youth Work Goal 1 20



Collaboration In Action

Since 2007, we've facilitated the National Network of LGBTQ+ Youth Groups — a space for youth workers to share best practice to ensure that LGBTQ+ young people across Ireland can access safe, high-quality youth work.

LGBTQ+ young people are in communities, villages and towns across the country. At Belong To, we support a National Network of youth workers to ensure that LGBTQ+ young people across Ireland have access to dedicated, high-quality youth services and support close to home.

The National Network is made up of skilled youth workers from across Ireland, that work with LGBTQ+ young people, with over 40 youth services within the National Network. The National Network supports the sharing of good practices and development of youth work competencies in the field of LGBTQ+ youth work. In Belong To, we aim to facilitate a space to offer subject matter expertise and support to the youth workers who lead these groups

Collaborating with the National Network

In 2024, the number of LGBTQ+ youth groups we support nationwide increased to 91 (2023: 89; 2022: 72; 2021: 64). A number of new organisations joined the National Network from across Ireland, including Sphere 17 in Darndale, SouthHill Hub in Limerick, Crosscare Dun Laoghaire and Cherry Orchard Integrated Youth Service.

In addition to this growth, a key focus for 2024 was to reengage existing National Network members and ensure that their needs were met through the Network. This year, we facilitated four in-person meetings for National Network members. These meetings offered youth workers a space to check in, discuss emerging themes and share support, resources and information to meet the needs of LGBTQ+ young people. Throughout these meetings, the Network welcomed speakers from the Hope & Courage Collective, the National Youth Council and Insight Matters.

Lisa Cannon-Monaghan (she/her) from Youth Work Ireland Galway, shOUT! LGBT+ Youth Project stepped into the position of Chair of the National Network for 2024, with Paula Kelly (she/her) from Ferns Diocesan Youth Service remaining in the post of Vice Chair..

As part of our support to the National Network, we distributed grants totalling €45,000 to 11 National Network members. The annual funding for these grants is provided to us by the National Office for Suicide Prevention. These 11 groups supported a total of 558 young people. Activities such as workshops on anxiety, promotion of counselling services and information events in partnership with the suicide resource officers all took place across Ireland.

Achievements and Challenges

2024 was a challenging year for members of the National Network as they experienced the impact of a growth in anti-LGBTQ+ sentiment. A number of members reached out for support relating to targeted attacks on services by anti-LGBTQ+ groups and individuals. These attacks included physical attacks and online hate directed at LGBTQ+ young people. Throughout the year, the National Network Coordinator offered phone and text support on this topic. This continued to reflect a wider pattern of anti-LGBTQ+ sentiment that we have witnessed throughout our work as an organisation in 2024. Alongside this, the lack of transgender healthcare and affordable mental health support were an ongoing challenge for young people who are supported through the National Network.

In 2024, the 11 National Network grant recipients delivered 332 one-to-one sessions. Some 793 peer-support groups took place in 2024, with 413 young people engaged with this service. The top presenting issues for LGBTQ+ young people across the National Network were mental health, school experiences and lack of family support.

The National Network continued to signpost young people to Jigsaw, Pieta, the LGBT Helpline and the HSE crisis text line, 50808. In November 2024, we saw the return of our annual youth leadership weekend, with 31 young people and 10 youth workers attending from across Ireland. This weekend was in partnership with the National Youth Council of Ireland and explored the theme of global youth work. Throughout the weekend, the group explored youth leadership within local communities and how challenges faced by LGBTQ+ young people can also be seen nationally and internationally. Young people also had time to build connections and get to know one another through social activities, including a karaoke party.

Celebrating Pride

This year's annual Dublin Pride event took place again in June and it was a very special day for Belong To as Grand Marshall of the parade. Over 400 LGBTQ+ young people marched with Belong To and led the Dublin Pride parade through Dublin City Centre on the event's 50th anniversary. The National Network celebrated Pride by bringing LGBTQ+ young people and their youth workers from across Ireland to the atrium in Dublin City Council for our annual Pride breakfast.

We were thrilled that An Taoiseach Simon Harris (he/him) joined us for the breakfast along with a number of ministers, TDs and special guests including Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Roderic O'Gorman (he/him); Deputy Neasa Hourigan (she/her); Minister of State, Jennifer Carroll MacNeill (she/her); Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly (he/him); Lord Mayor of Dublin, James Geoghegan (he/him); Dublin City Council Chief Executive,

Richard Shakespeare (he/him); and Minister for Finance, Jack Chambers (he/him). A big thanks to our Pride DJ Glamo (she/her) who provided entertainment, to Avcom who designed and produced the event for Belong To and to Limelight Communications and Dublin City Council for providing a safe and fun space for the young people to mark the day and celebrate as a community. As part of our participation work, a Youth Pride Committee was established consisting of six young people. This group supported staff in Belong To with our events for Dublin Pride. Young people were consulted by the event partners on the development of the event, received training from the Dublin Pride team and designed the event T-shirts in collaboration with an artist. They were also given the opportunity to speak at the Pride Village.

For many LGBTQ+ young people in attendance, this was their ever first Pride event and it was a really special day. We danced in the rain through Dublin City and hosted a tent at the Pride picnic in Merrion Square.

This year, Belong To staff came together to support local regional Prides across Ireland. We attended nine Pride events to support National Network groups across Ireland, from Donegal to Mullingar and beyond. This was the first year Belong To had the capacity to support local Prides. It was an honour to walk in solidarity with our colleagues from the National Network and other organisations to celebrate LGBTQ+ young people across the country.



The National Network

Lisa Cannon-Monaghan (she/her), of Youth Work Ireland Galway, shOUT! LGBT+ Youth Project talks about her experience as Chair of the National Network.

"I was delighted to be nominated as the National Network Chairperson in 2024 as creating supportive spaces for LGBT+ youth workers is something really important to me. The Network fosters all of the key elements we strive to develop in LGBTQ+ youth work spaces: coming together as a group to work on issues important to us, developing a sense of community and empowering each other to continue to do the amazing work we are doing with LGBTQ+ young people.

With the rise of the far right, no access to gender affirming healthcare and transphobia at an all-time high, it can sometimes feel very daunting as an LGBTQ+ youth project worker. The Network supports us to work together to continue to challenge these daunting issues with queer joy, positive spaces and empowerment to be your authentic self.

It is our own space to focus on issues that affect LGBTQ+ young people and to skill share, spread awareness and equip each other with information and resources that we need to support this group. Sometimes it can feel very isolating and feel like you are the only youth worker who is experiencing certain LGBTQ+ issues with young people. With the Network, however, you learn that isn't the case and there are amazing youth workers with support and experiences, plans, policy information, resources, a list of phone numbers and helpful signposting contacts that perfectly defines the network as a group of youth workers working hard towards the same goals, values and vision for LGBT+ young people."



Youth services and organisations across Ireland are making strides to be fully inclusive of LGBTQ+ youth through the Rainbow Award.

At Belong To, the National Network Team works with youth services and organisations to create safe, equal and inclusive groups and programmes for LGBTQ+ young people. In 2024, we continued to create these safe spaces across Ireland through the Rainbow Award. The Rainbow Award offers youth services an in-depth, action-focused programme to become fully inclusive of LGBTQ+ young people.

What Is Involved

The Rainbow Award is a holistic approach to LGBTQ+ inclusion in youth organisations that involves the whole community. Over the course of 12–18 months, youth organisations are supported in implementing evidence-based actions across a number of key areas, which research shows improve the wellbeing and safety of LGBTQ+ youth¹.

The Rainbow Award initiative was established in 2023 to support and accredit LGBTQ+ safe and supportive youth organisations. The initiative is based on learnings from our Rainbow Award pilot programme, guidance from youth workers in the National Network of LGBTQ+ youth groups and the latest national and international research on best practice in LGBTQ+ youth work, along with Belong To's experience of LGBTQ+ youth work over the past 20 years.

The programme is designed to bring youth organisation staff and young people, many of whom are new to this area, on a journey towards recognising, building and achieving a safe and supportive youth service for LGBTQ+ young people. To meet the Rainbow Award criteria, youth services must meet high standards in six key areas: policy and governance, people, practice, programmes, participation and empowerment and partnership.

Belong To team members support the organisations involved every step of the way. A number of resources and supports are available for participants, including training sessions, e-learning modules, dedicated National Network meetings, one-to-one support and information guides. In March, we hosted a Rainbow Award coordinator meeting in the Dublin Pride Hub. The purpose of this space was to share best practice, while coming together to support each other as a Rainbow Award community. Alongside this, the National Network team trained 216 youth workers in LGBTQ+ inclusion within youth services. We thank Education and Training Boards Ireland, City of Dublin Youth Services and the National Youth Council of Ireland for their ongoing support of the Rainbow Award.

Rainbow Award Recipients

In 2024, nine incredible organisations received the Rainbow Award in recognition of their work in creating LGBTQ+ inclusive youth services. These organisations collectively work with over 2,500 young people across Ireland. These organisations will be awarded at a ceremony in January 2025.

Congratulations to each of these services for their work to make their services inclusive or all young people!

- Belvedere Youth Club, Dublin 1
- Southill Hub, Southill, Co. Limerick
- Young Social Innovators, Glasnevin, Dublin 9
- Brú Youth Services, Walkinstown, Dublin 12
- Belong To Dublin Youth Service, Dublin 2
- Donegal Youth Service, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal
- Bradóg Youth Service, Dublin 1
- Familibase, Ballyfermot, Dublin 10
- Crosscare Bray, Bray, Co. Wicklow

1. Higgins A; Downes C; O'Sullivan K; de Vries J; Molloy R; Monahan M; Keogh B; Doyle L; Begley T; Corcoran P; (2024) The National Study on the Mental Health and Wellbeing of the LGBTQI+ Communities in Ireland. Trinity College Dublin and Belong To: Dublin.

Working With Scouting Ireland

In 2024, we began the process of piloting the Rainbow Award with Scouting Ireland. Belong To and Scouting Ireland have a long history of cooperation and collaboration to respond to the needs of LGBTQ+ young people. It has been identified by Scouting Ireland that many young people involved in their service are LGBTQ+. As a result, they wish to create a safe and supportive space for LGBTQ+ young people through their groups. The objective of this project is to run the Rainbow Award with a large national organisation. We are currently piloting with 13 Scout Groups from across Ireland. This pilot will be completed in 2025, where we will review and plan for partnership work going forward.



Safe and Supportive Spaces

Paul Murphy (he/him) is the Youth Information Officer and Rainbow Award lead at Crosscare, Bray. Here, he shares what is involved.

"As a youth service, it can be easy to take the idea that all of our projects provide a safe and supportive space as something that goes without saying, but we feel that it is important to not just say it, but to be able to demonstrate it. The Rainbow Award enabled us to, most importantly, check in with the young people that use the space, but also to check our process, staff attitudes and our organisational policies against externally recognised criteria.

We know that we have young people right across our service that identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community. For some, attending our LGBTQ+ youth group is of real benefit. Others don't need or want to attend that group, but it is important that if they wish to be open about their identity, they know the space is a safe and supportive one. We achieve this by simple things like displaying a rainbow, or through more reactive examples like all our young people knowing that homophobia or transphobia will be challenged and not tolerated.

The process of the Rainbow Award has allowed us as an organisation to reflect on our attitudes and practice and to ask ourselves that simple question of whether our spaces are both safe and supportive. We're really pleased that Belong To as administrators of the award, have found that Bray Youth Service offers exactly that."

Building Safe
Spaces & Services
Create spaces so every
young person feels safe
and supported in their
communities.



Strategic Objectives

Support the development of LGBTQ+ inclusive education spaces.

We work in partnership with key education stakeholders in primary, second level and further education to collate and share good practice, develop a quality standards framework and build capacity among professionals working with LGBTQ+ youth.

Support parents, guardians and carers to create safe, nurturing home environments.

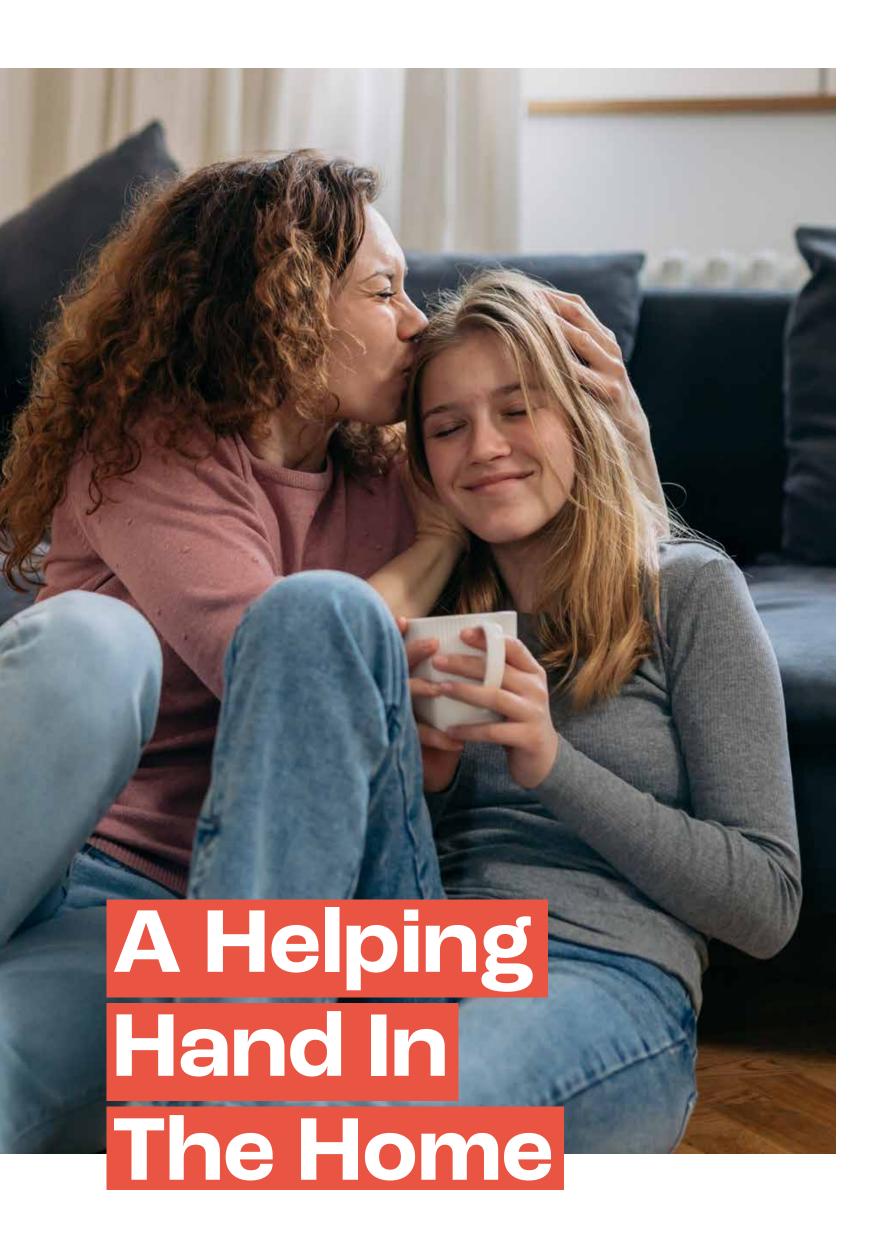
We provide one-to-one supports, and will establish peer support groups, and develop and disseminate a range of good practice information resources.

Equip employers to welcome and support young LGBTQ+ people in the workforce.

We work in partnership with employers to develop guidance and supports to ensure LGBTQ+ youth can be out and proud at work.

Support the development of LGBTQ+ inclusive social, health and community services.

We work in partnership with social, health and community services to develop guidance and supports for professionals working with LGBTQ+ youth.



Our new Family Support
Service offers one-to-one
support for the families of
LGBTQ+ young people across
Ireland.

We were thrilled to launch our new Family Support Service in April 2024. For some parents and family members, it can be a challenging time when their child comes out as LGBTQ+. The need for this service was highlighted by the significant number of families and carers reaching out to Belong To for guidance and support.

Prior to the official launch, youth workers provided ad hoc support to families, balancing this with their already demanding schedules working with young people. In December 2023, we hired a dedicated a Family Support Worker to coordinate the service.

Family Support

The Belong To Family Support Service is for family members who need support and guidance supporting their LGBTQ+ young person. Family life is not always easy. When a young person comes out as LGBTQ+ it can put stress and strain on family life and relationships.

Parents or guardians may have a lot of questions; they may not know what to say or why they feel the way they do. Our Family Support Service can support parents and carers with this through one-to-one support, through information sessions and resources developed specifically for parents and guardians of LGBTQ+ young people. Simply having someone to talk to can be the easiest way to begin to deal with this new piece of information. The service accepts enquiries from families, carers and professionals. The Family Support Worker contacts the enquirer, and an initial assessment is set up. From here, each person is given a tailored plan and approach to support them where possible. This support can come in many forms.

The overall aim of the Family Support Service is to address systemic challenges faced by LGBTQ+ young people and their families, fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment. We work directly with families to increase acceptance and understanding of LGBTQ+ issues, improving the health and well-being of LGBTQ+ youth. Additionally, we enhance access to inclusive services by building the competencies of professionals in other organisations and agencies, for example social workers through peer learning, advocacy and training initiatives. Our efforts also focus on combating societal disinformation and misinformation that negatively impact LGBTQ+ youth and their families. The Family Support Service is funded by Community Foundation Ireland from the RTÉ Toy Show Appeal grants for 2023.

Service Highlights

Overall, the Family Support Service engaged directly with over 450 parents and guardians through one-to-one support or through information webinars. We were surprised how fast the service took off and the demand for the service by parents and guardians alone. Over the course of the first year of the service we have supported individuals through the following key activities.

- Online enquiries: we worked with 66 families looking for once-off support via email.
- One-to-one support sessions: we offered 86 parents, carers, extended family and professionals one-to-ones in person in Dublin, online and over the phone outside Dublin.
- Development of resources: we updated our resource guide for the parents and carers of LGBTQ+ youth.
- Belong To Webinars: we hosted two information webinars for parents/guardians and covered the topics of mental health for LGBTQ+ young people and how to support your LGBTQ+ child. Over 140 individuals attended these events.
- Information sessions for parents and guardians in partnership with external organisations including One Family, Tusla and Parentline.

Looking ahead, our primary goal is to solidify the foundation of the service, setting the stage for future expansion and growth in 2025 and beyond.

Family Support Service Experiences



"Belong To have helped us better understand and support our amazing son. His transition hasn't been easy, and he has experienced bullying in school. We contacted Belong To and received invaluable information and resources for the school. Thanks to this, the school started an LGBTQ+ inclusion and awareness week, an

in-class awareness program and a lunch-time safe space, and have applied for funding to train the staff with hopes to do the training in the next academic year. Belong To saves our LGBTQ+ children's lives. Thank you so much for all the hard work you do."



"My experience of reaching out to Belong To Family Support was one of absolute joy, friendliness and openness. I was so worried about my 21 year old child who came out to me as non-binary before they left the country. I was left bereft and sad. I had loads of questions. Belong To rang me. We spoke and it was so good to hear a friendly voice who understood what I was going through and answered all my questions of worry and concern for my child. It made me see things from their

perspective and it made me stop and listen to my inner voice — one that is inclusive and has empathy. It helped my relationship with my child, and we talk on the phone and they are doing well. Just love your young person, let them know you are there for them. It is so good to know there is help out there when you don't know where to turn. I always felt included and part of a family or group that look after each other. Thanks to Jen and her team — they are amazing!"



"I first reached out to see if I could get some resources for my children who were 15 and 10 at the time. They were both struggling with their mental health and had negative experiences with family and greater society due to being LGBTQ+. I was contacted straight away by the Family Support Worker and sent relevant information. I found the phone calls and meeting helpful and genuine. There is very little support for parents

and children when it comes to mental health problems, so the engagement with Belong To felt supportive for me. My eldest child was offered several youth group options and had a Zoom session to introduce her to the youth worker and receive information about what she could engage in. I feel supported by Belong To — just knowing there is an agency out there fighting for equality and providing safe spaces for young people."



Number of Training Places:

2024 7,305

2023 6,790

2022 6,223

2021 6,749

From Awareness to Action

We deliver evidence-based training to professionals and volunteers working with LGBTQ+ young people.

Belong To collaborates with key stakeholders to develop and provide evidence-based training for those supporting young people across key sectors such as education, mental health and community practice.

We also lead capacity-building initiatives to equip professionals and volunteers with the tools to create safe, inclusive and supportive spaces for LGBTQ+ young people. In 2024, Belong To also continued our engagement with national education bodies, unions, youth organisations and support services through our education sector advisory groups at both primary and post-primary levels.

Online Learning

Belong To continues to host a suite of e-learning modules aimed at supporting educators, youth workers and volunteers working with young people. These courses equip more people with the knowledge and skills needed to support LGBTQ+ young people in a variety of settings. Our current modules include:

- Supporting LGBTQ+ Young People: This module is designed for educators and youth workers in schools, centres and youth services. In 2024, 3,503 people registered for this course which was an increase of 11% on the previous year (2023: 3,144; 2022: 2,381).
- Volunteers Supporting LGBTQ+ Young People In Ireland To Feel Safe, Equal and Included: this module is designed to empower volunteers in clubs and youth services around the country to create LGBTQ+ inclusive environments for the young people they support. In 2024, 21 people enrolled for this course (2023: 130).
- Creating LGBTQ+ Inclusive Sports Clubs: This is a sportsfocused module aimed at supporting players, coaches and other club members to foster LGBTQ+ inclusion in their teams. In 2024, 127 people enrolled for this course (2023:199).

Stand Up Awareness Week

Stand Up Awareness Week 2024 training focused on essential steps for planning and delivering a successful Stand Up Awareness Week, with a particular emphasis on the 2024 campaign theme, 'Community'. We continued to offer inperson sessions in Dublin and Cork, alongside regional online trainings and dedicated sessions for Youthreach educators and youth workers. A total of 101 educators and youth workers participated across nine training sessions, supported by members of the National Network as co-facilitators. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with 100% of respondents rating the training quality as "high" or "very high". We are currently reviewing the format of training in 2025 year as we look to create different type of engagement opportunities.

Sexual Health

In 2023, we set about creating a new sexual-health toolkit which aims to empower lesbian, bi, and trans women aged 17-23. We did this by providing a safe, inclusive and youth-led space for co-developing and enhancing sexual-health knowledge, fostering positive relationships and promoting overall wellbeing. In 2024 we facilitated consultations with young people and health professionals to inform us how best to meet the sexual health needs of young women in our services. We hosted two in-person focus groups with LGBTQ+ youth, youth workers and professionals within the HSE Sexual Health Programme. We also created an advisory group to support the development of this toolkit. The advisory group is made up of eight professionals who work in the field of sexual health, healthy relationships, academia, health and wellbeing.

Mental Health

In 2024, we continued our partnership with Jigsaw, the National Centre for Youth Mental Health, to empower professionals in supporting LGBTQ+ youth. The training programme, 'Supporting the Mental Health of LGBTQ+ Young People', enhances participants' understanding of LGBTQ+ identities while highlighting the challenges this group faces, such as discrimination, homophobia, biphobia and transphobia. This programme is designed for adults working or volunteering with young people, as well as organisations and agencies delivering youth services. The programme gives participants the knowledge and tools to create LGBTQ+ inclusive and supportive environments in their mental health services.

This year the online, self-directed course was reviewed and updated to include current themes and research within our work. 306 individuals completed the online training in 2024 (2023: 544; 2022: 466; 2021: 459). We plan to re-launch this initiative in 2025 as a tool to provide further support for those working with LGBTQ+ youth. This will include relaunching the Jigsaw and Belong to e-learning while also facilitating in-person trainings across Ireland.

Youth Services

Offering training to youth workers nationwide builds their confidence and capacity to meet the needs of LGBTQ+ young people and to create safe and supportive youth services. Providing training, support, resources and information to youth workers ensures better experiences for LGBTQ+ young people accessing youth services. In 2024, the National

Network team trained 216 youth workers in LGBTQ+ inclusion within youth services across 19 organisations, including City of Dublin Education Training Board and the Catholic Girl Guides.

Homelessness

Building on a successful pilot in 2022, our partnership with Focus Ireland progressed in 2024 as we began implementing a plan to establish a network of LGBTQ+ safe and supportive services across all categories of Dublin homeless services over the next three years. Thirteen agencies, including Focus Ireland, Merchant's Quay Ireland, Peter McVerry Trust, Depaul, Sophia Housing, Threshold, Respond, Crosscare, Dublin Simon Community, NOVAS, Anew, PACE and Daisyhouse Housing Association have committed to participating in and contributing to the development of the initiative.

This work includes creating a quality standards framework, gathering national and international best practices, developing an e-learning module for all staff and co-delivering in-person training for key staff within each organisation. The Dublin Regional Homeless Executive and the HSE have committed to funding this project over a three-year period. In 2024, we established a project leaders and champions network. This group will work with Belong To and Focus Ireland in 2025 to design and co-deliver the initial training phase of the project including an e-learning module and in-person professional development called 'Building Inclusive Services: Supporting LGBTQ+ Youth in Ireland for Professionals in Homeless Services'.

Breaking Barriers

In 2024, 37 post-primary schools led the way in LGBTQ+ inclusivity and received the LGBTQ+ Quality Mark.

2024 was a very special year for the LGBTQ+ Quality Mark initiative as 37 schools were awarded with the LGBTQ+ Quality Mark accreditation. Students, teachers and principals from the schools came together to receive their award at a celebratory event generously hosted by Google at The Foundry in Google Headquarters in Dublin.



The event was hosted by presenter James Kavanagh (he/him). This was the first cohort of schools to be awarded with this accreditation for their commitment to LGBTQ+inclusion. The event was attended by Minister of State at the Department of Transport and Department of Environment, Climate & Communications, Jack Chambers (he/him) and Bernie McNally (she/her), Secretary General at the Department of Education.

Building on a two-year pilot initiative, the LGBTQ+ Quality Mark was first launched in May 2022. We rolled out the initiative to 57 schools representing 19 counties across all provinces of the country, and in 2023 an additional 56 schools and Youthreach centres joined us on the LGBTQ+ Quality Mark journey. They account for over 6,000 staff and more than 70,000 students.

What is the LGBTQ+ Quality Mark?

The LGBTQ+ Quality Mark is a support and accreditation initiative that demonstrates a school's commitment to the support and inclusion of LGBTQ+ young people and the wellbeing of their students as a whole. The LGBTQ+ Quality Mark model has been created in line with the four key areas of Wellbeing Promotion outlined in the Department of Education's Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice which outlines the importance of wellbeing for young people to both achieve academically and to go on to contribute to society as a whole. These areas are culture and environment, policy and planning, curriculum (teaching and learning) and relationships and partnerships. Schools are named as a key part in "equipping children and young people with the knowledge, skills and competencies to deal with challenges that may impact on their wellbeing."

The LGBTQ+ Quality Mark sets goals and requirements within each of these areas, which combine to ensure a holistic approach to LGBTQ+ inclusion that involves the whole school community. Each of these evidence-based requirements is informed by the Department of Education's *Being LGBT in School* resource. Belong To assists schools in attaining these goals through dedicated resources, trainings and one-to-one supports throughout the LGBTQ+ Quality Mark process. Over the course of 18 months, the LGBTQ+ Quality Mark journey gives school staff and students the time and space to plan, reflect upon and integrate key actions.

Build and Grow

The LGBTQ+ Quality Mark process is split into three phases: recognise, build and grow, and achieve. Schools and centres:

- Recognise and promote existing supports for their LGBTQ+ school community.
- Build on these existing supports, and grow as an LGBTQ+ safe and supportive school through inclusive practice and policies.
- Achieve the LGBTQ+ Quality Mark by demonstrating that they are an LGBTQ+ safe and supportive space through their commitment across four key action areas.

There are three training sessions involved in the LGBTQ+ Quality Mark process:

- A 90-minute LGBTQ+ Quality Mark Coordinator online training.
- A 60-minute individual e-learning module for teaching and ancillary staff.
- A two-hour on-site in-person whole-staff training session.

In 2024, 29 coordinators attended one of six coordinatorteam training sessions and 2,581 (2023: 1,769) completed the e-learning module and attended one of 46 whole-staff training sessions.

Each year there are four quarterly regional network meetings. These meetings provide updates, ideas, additional information and support, as well as building links between participating staff, schools and centres in a region. In 2024, Transgender Equality Network Ireland (TENI) provided information sessions in all regions as part of the third regional network meeting. 251 (2023: 188) school and centre staff attended regional network meetings in 2024.

In September 2024, 21 post-primary schools and centres joined the LGBTQ+ Quality Mark. This was a smaller cohort of schools than in previous years. Feedback from schools, centres and educators was that there was an increased number of required Department of Education initiatives due for the 2024/25 academic year which took priority for schools. Others were cognisant of how some individual teachers, schools and senior management were attacked online for their LGBTQ+ inclusivity work and were apprehensive about getting involved. Going forward, we will continue our work to grow the number of LGBTQ+ Quality Mark schools and Youthreach centres and create more safe spaces for LGBTQ+ students.

Inclusion Is Essential

Keith Purcell (he/him) is a PE and Biology teacher at Coolmine Community School in Blanchardstown — an LGBTQ+ Quality Mark school.

While exploring the Belong To website, I came across the LGBTO+ Quality Mark initiative. Our school was already doing many of the required activities, so it seemed like the obvious next step for us to pursue the award.

Our LGBTQ+ and Allies group has been set up for about six years now. Its purpose is to provide a safe space in the school. This idea came from a past pupil of the school. I had a very pleasant experience at the school, but a friend of mine, who came out as gay after we left, had a very different experience. We were chatting at a social event about old times at school, and he shared his struggles. Based on this, we established the group to create a safe space. We meet once a week. The group is open to LGBTQ+ students, friends, allies, and anyone who wants to join. It's a welcoming space where people can come

in, have a cup of tea, eat their lunch and meet like-minded individuals. This is the essence of the group and why it was established.

We decided to take part in the LGBTQ+ Quality Mark initiative to have a larger impact. While we had a clear safe space for LGBTQ+ students in our school, we lacked visible support around the school, such as posters or regular awareness weeks. I felt that if we were going to normalise LGBTQ+ inclusion, it needed to be more integrated into the school environment and curriculum.

The team from Belong To who ran the LGBTQ+ Quality Mark initiative and worked with our school did an excellent job. The feedback they provided was very positive. One of the biggest benefits of pursuing the Belong To LGBTQ+ Quality Mark was the training we received - it was so relevant and important. We had both online and in-person teacher training, which helped long-time teachers understand the importance of small gestures, like using inclusive language or displaying a rainbow flag sticker.

The training also addressed fears and misconceptions, helping teachers feel more confident in supporting LGBTQ+ students. It emphasised that these small gestures like wearing a rainbow badge are meaningful. These actions show students that they are safe in their classes. Teachers who might have shied away from LGBTQ+ topics before are now embracing them, which is a big positive change. I've never seen such positive feedback from the school staff after a training session.

For students identifying as transgender or going through a transition, teachers needed training on how to support them

effectively. This training provided teachers with the confidence to handle these situations appropriately, which was incredibly impactful. Additionally, we are working to embed LGBTQ+ topics within the school's policies and curriculum. This means that these topics are naturally integrated into every lesson, not just specific subjects like SPHE. For example, if you're teaching English or history and an LGBTQ+ topic comes up, it is treated as a natural part of the lesson.

In school, we aim to minimise any difficulties by providing a safe space and contact information for those who may not feel comfortable talking to us directly. However, there are still students who may not have support at home or feel unsure about the support available at school. Even though we advertise and promote the club, taking the brave step to join and get information can still be very difficult for them.

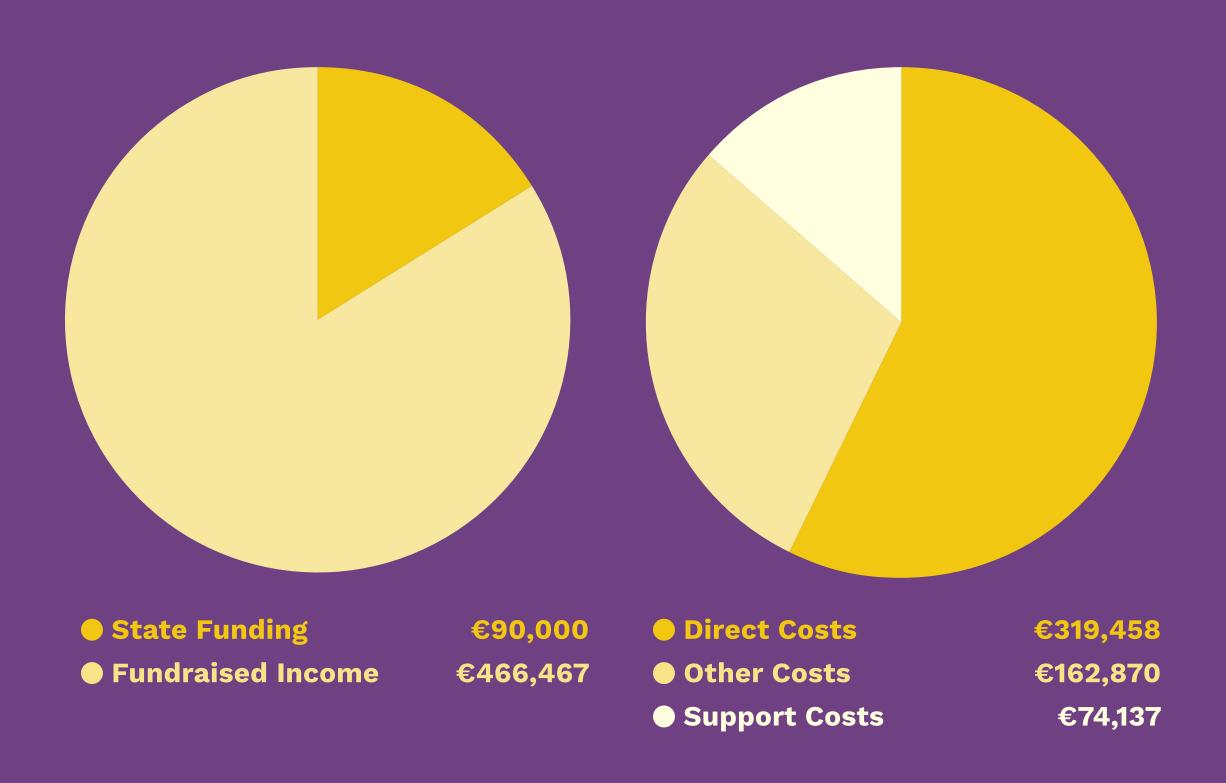
If every school pursued this, it would lead to community-wide change. The conversation would shift as schools, boards of management, principals, and everyone involved would be committed to LGBTQ+ equality. This change would extend to homes, as parents and students would bring these positive conversations back home, creating a broader impact.

I think it's crucially important because, as I mentioned in my conversation with my friend, if we don't provide support, students will get lost in the system. They will hide away, not be themselves, and suffer as a result. We can't allow that in modern schools or in modern life. Inclusion is essential.

I believe schools should also prioritise obtaining the Belong To LGBTQ+ Quality Mark. This external recognition shows that the school is proactive in ensuring it is LGBTQ+ positive and safe.

60818

Campaigning for Change Drive change and equality through advocacy, research and campaigns.



Strategic Objectives

Empower young LGBTQ+ activists to change their worlds.

Through youth participation and engagement, we empower LGBTQ+ youth to be agents for positive social change.

Sustain and enhance Belong To's reputation as the national LGBTQ+ youth organisation and a trusted source of factual information.

Through media engagement, digital media and campaigns, we promote public awareness about issues and policies relevant to LGBTQ+ young people.

Campaign for laws, policy, legislation and national strategies that protect the rights of LGBTQ+ youth.

Through advocacy, we ensure that LGBTQ+ young peoples' voices are heard and that their lives are reflected in policies, legislation and national strategies.

Conduct high-quality research to better understand and improve the lives of LGBTQ+ young people.

We will grow our evidence base to inform public knowledge, policy and practice about the lived experience of LGBTQ+ youth with academic partners.



Members of Belong To's Youth Advisory Panel join (l-r) Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Roderic O'Gorman; Deputy Neasa Hourigan; Minister of State Jennifer Carroll MacNeill; Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly; An Taoiseach Simon Harris; Lord Mayor James Geoghegan; Belong To CEO Moninne Griffith; Chief Executive, Dublin City Council Richard Shakespeare; and Minister for Finance Jack Chambers at the Belong To Pride 2024 breakfast.

Campaigning for laws, policy, legislation and national strategies that protect LGBTQ+ youth is a central part of our work.

Throughout 2024, we sought opportunities for LGBTQ+ youth and staff to meet with politicians, policymakers and decision-makers to advance policy formation and legislation on a number of key issues including LGBTQ+ inclusive education, trans healthcare, online safety and anti-LGBTQ+ bullying.

As Grand Marshall of Dublin Pride 2024, we were proud to host a Pride youth breakfast and speak to a number of politicians including An Taoiseach Simon Harris about issues important to LGBTQ+ lives. Members of the Belong To Youth Advisory Panel spoke to the Taoiseach at a roundtable about the importance of progressing hate crime and hate speech legislation. Belong To has campaigned for many years on the progression of modernised legislation relating to hate offences as a member of the Coalition Against Hate Crime. We welcomed the Criminal Justice (Hate Offences) Act 2024 and will continue to campaign for modernised incitement to hatred legislation in Ireland.



Online safety is a key strategic priority for Belong To. In relation to policy in this area, Belong To is proud to have staff and youth representatives serving as members of Coimisiún na Meán's Youth Advisory Committee, and we are a member of the Children's Rights Alliance Online Safety Advisory Group. In January, we made a submission to Coimisiún na Meán on the draft Online Safety Code and Statutory Guidance Material.

We welcome the Online Safety Code published by Coimisiún na Meán in October. This new code represents a step forward in addressing online harm to LGBTQ+ and all young people. We hope that this code will help to address the systemic issues and rising levels of hate online in order to help protect young people in online spaces, and would encourage reviews of the code and its implementation in the coming years to ensure its effectiveness in achieving that goal.

In June, we made a submission to the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment on the draft Primary Wellbeing Specification. This submission was produced using the Belong To Primary: New Foundations for LGBTQ+ Inclusivity in Primary Schools research report which revealed the needs of primary educators in Ireland in this area. Recommendations included naming and defining homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and providing comprehensive supports relating to homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying to educators via the Wellbeing Online Toolkit.

We continued our work with Trans Equality Together, a coalition led by TENI, Belong To and LGBT Ireland with 37 members from across civil society. In keeping with the objective of promoting positive attitudes to trans and nonbinary people, we launched the digital media campaign #ProudToBeAnAlly. Our 2023 polling research provided us with great insight and evidence. It confirmed that personal and subjective experiences with trans people builds empathy and understanding and produces greater and lasting support. The #ProudToBeAnAlly campaign aimed to build empathy, understanding and knowledge of the personal experience of trans individuals and their allies through relatable interviews. We amplified the campaign message through paid and organic media content, with Trans Equality Together coalition members sharing the content on their platforms across the campaign period 7 October to 31 October.

Trans Healthcare

Ireland was ranked as having the worst healthcare for trans people in Europe by TGEU (Transgender Europe) in 2022, and waiting lists have only grown since then. Currently, there is no active health service for trans young people in Ireland. As a result, many people resort to ordering medications online, administering hormones themselves or travelling abroad for treatment. In 2024, we continued to advocate for the provision of a respectful and compassionate model of trans healthcare for young people and adults that is delivered in primary and community care settings and based on informed consent and international evidence (World Health Organisation [WHO] and World Professional Association for Transgender Health [WPATH]). We utilised the findings of Belong To's Trans Healthcare in Ireland research to speak to decision makers and politicians about the needs for trans healthcare and secured the inclusion of trans healthcare in the 2025 Programme for Government. Looking forward, we will continue to advocate for the healthcare needs of trans and non-binary young people in 2025 as a new model of care is being created.

#CheckTheFacts -Local Election Campaign

During the 2024 Local Elections in May, Belong To asked Local Election candidates to pledge to use factual and accurate information from credible sources during their election campaign and during their term if elected. We wrote to all candidates asking them to sign the pledge. Some 313 candidates signed the Belong To pledge to show their support for the rights of LGBTQ+ people and marginalised communities whose safety is at threat due to misinformation and fake news.

Following the election, we followed up with the 107 signatories who were elected asking them to fulfil their commitment to bring a motion forward to their local council. The motion stated: 'That this council commits to using factual and accurate information, based on credible sources, in this council's discussion and debates.'

In November, Cork City Council was the first to pass this motion brought forward by Councillor Pádraig Rice. Since then, a number of councillors nationwide have engaged with us as they prepare to bring the motion forward in 2025.

#VoteWithPride – General Election Campaign

In November 2024, alongside 17 other leading LGBTQ+ organisations in Ireland, we launched the first ever LGBTQI+ sector-wide manifesto for the General Election. Together with our colleagues at LGBT Ireland, Belong To led the #VoteWithPride campaign for the duration of 2024. The 18 organisations set out our shared priorities for the new Government, calling on election candidates to commit to ensuring support for and the safety of LGBTQ+ communities and not to 'play politics' with LGBTQ+ people's lives. The manifesto included five key priority areas of action for a programme for Government, including strengthening LGBTQ+ rights, investing in LGBTQ+ health, implementing LGBTQ+ inclusive education, tackling extreme hate speech and supporting LGBTQ+ communities.

The campaign consisted of a lobbying campaign with policy asks presented to TDs and policymakers across political parties through meetings and briefings in 2024, including a briefing with the Houses of the Oireachtas LGBTQI+ Caucus.

The public manifesto was launched at an event in November at the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, attended by representatives of the 18 members of the collective, as well as wider stakeholders invested in promoting the rights and wellbeing of LGBTQ+ people. Following the launch, 13 pieces of media coverage were secured, with a combined reach of 882,846 listeners and readers.

The collective worked to advocate for the inclusion of key asks in the Programme for Government negotiations. Securing Ireland's Future, the 2025 Programme for Government, included 10 of the 15 asks from the #VoteWithPride campaign, which the collective welcomed. We will continue to advocate for priorities that were not included in the document, including a simplified legal gender-recognition process for 16 and 17 year-olds, explicit protection for the rights of intersex people, the resourcing of teacher training to enable them to feel confident addressing LGBTQI+ topics in schools, updating the Equality Acts to provide protections for all LGBTQ+ people and a model of trans healthcare that is based on informed consent and international evidence (WHO and WPATH).

A Trusted Source

In 2024, we produced a highquality evidence base of research reflecting the lived experiences of LGBTQ+ young people in Ireland.

At Belong To, we recognise the importance of producing a high-quality evidence base of research reflecting the lived experiences of LGBTQ+ young people in Ireland. Research is not only a means of capturing, analysing and categorising evidence but crucially it is also a methodology for change.



Pictured at the launch of the Being LGBTQI+ in Ireland research launch in April (L-R): Ranin Faidi, Moninne Griffith, Lisa Connell, Brendan Courney, Ciara Kelly, Professor Agnes Higgins and Dr Matt Kennedy.

It is a powerful tool which facilitates listening to LGBTQ+ young people, opening space for them to articulate their experiences and personhood and access to the full range of agency they deserve. Through research we stand to deepen our understanding of LGBTQ+ youth's lived experiences. We are presented with opportunities to learn from the specificity of their experiences and craft meaningful responses to the oppression and discrimination they experience through methods identified and actioned through collaboration and coproduction. 2024 was an exceptional year for research as we partnered with Trinity College Dublin, University of Limerick and University College Dublin and published three bodies of research.

Being LGBTQI+ in Ireland with Trinity College Dublin

Being LGBTQI+ in Ireland is a research project that aimed to examine the mental health and wellbeing of LGBTQI+ people in the Republic of Ireland and investigated public attitudes towards LGBTQI+ people. In 2016, the first ever comprehensive report on the mental health of Ireland's LGBTQI+ community as well as attitudes of the general public towards LGBTQI+ people was conducted by Trinity College Dublin and published in association with Belong To and GLEN. The report, LGBTIreland, was based on research conducted by a team at Trinity. In April 2024, the new report, Being LGBTQI+ in Ireland, was released. Involving over 2,800 LGBTQI+ people, it builds on the findings from that initial report, including a comparative analysis.

The research was conducted by a group of researchers led by Professor Agnes Higgins (she/her) of the School of Nursing & Midwifery, Trinity College Dublin. A wide range of stakeholders worked with us on this research project, including other LGBTQ+ organisations, statutory agencies and government departments. Being LGBTQI+ in Ireland was funded by the National Office for Suicide Prevention (NOSP) & Social Inclusion, the Health Service Executive (HSE), the What Works and Dormant Accounts Fund and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth through Belong To.

This research addressed a number of significant gaps in existing literature and made meaningful, practical recommendations based on the experiences of the LGBTQI+ community in Ireland. Key findings from the new study indicate that mental health and wellbeing have declined amongst the LGBTQI+ population since 2016, with significant challenges experienced by younger age groups and the transgender and gender-non-conforming communities. The report also demonstrated the critical role LGBTQI+ community groups and support networks (family, friends, peers, work colleagues) play in supporting positive mental health amongst the community.

84% of participants felt that having a connection with the LGBTQI+ community through LGBTQI+ groups had a positive impact on their mental health, with 93% of participants rating making LGBTQI+ friends as also having a positive impact.

The final report and recommendations were published in April with policymakers, politicians, supporters and the media in attendance. The study was launched at an event in the Mansion House, Dublin by broadcaster Brendan Courtney (he/him) with a keynote from author Dr Seán Hewitt (he/him), and featured a panel discussion with a number of LGBTQI+ people sharing their experiences.

New Foundations with the University of Limerick

In 2024, we published the results of a quantitative and qualitative needs-analysis with primary school staff and LGBTQ+ families of primary-school-aged children. *Belong To Primary: New Foundations for LGBTQ+ Inclusivity in Primary Schools* was published in May 2024. The research was led by Dr Aoife Neary (she/her), Associate Professor in Sociology of Education in the School of Education, University of Limerick

The objective of the research was to understand the knowledge levels, views and professional needs of primary school staff in Ireland regarding LGBTQ+ inclusivity, in partnership with Belong To. The research was funded by an Irish Research Council grant. The Belong To Primary survey asked staff employed in primary schools across Ireland about their experience, attitudes, knowledge levels, practices and professional needs regarding LGBTQ+ inclusivity, and was conducted online from March to May 2023.

In total, 1,031 primary school staff across Ireland were surveyed, including principals, deputy principals, class teachers, special needs assistants and support staff.

Almost a quarter of respondents were principals or deputy principals. The survey findings show an overwhelming willingness among primary staff to be LGBTQ+ inclusive, but reveal a lack of knowledge, skills and confidence needed to deliver fully inclusive practice for their pupils. This research will support the development of evidence-based training, guidelines and support resources for primary schools, grounded in national and international best practice.

Trans Healthcare in Ireland with University College Dublin

The *Trans Healthcare in Ireland* research is the first dedicated quantitative study regarding trans and non-binary people in Ireland in relation to accessing gender-affirming care and healthcare related to gender identity. It identifies the specific pathways to trans healthcare accessed by trans people and explores the potential barriers encountered during access. The *Trans Healthcare in Ireland* research was conducted by Aideen Quilty (she/her)Associate Professor at the School of Social Policy, Social Work and Social Justice, University College Dublin in collaboration with Belong To and funded by the Community Foundation Ireland. The final sample consisted of 454 trans and non-binary people between the ages of 14 and 30.

The research shows that barriers to accessing trans healthcare in Ireland mean that vital healthcare is essentially non-existent for this group. Findings show that one in three trans adults waited at least three years for a first appointment to access trans healthcare in Ireland, while just 14% of trans young people successfully accessed trans healthcare in Ireland. Key findings from this new study indicate that trans healthcare is widely inaccessible in Ireland as a result of waiting times, lack of information, lack of guardian support, cost and negative experiences in healthcare settings.

As part of this research, Belong To presents a solution to the lack of trans healthcare in Ireland – adapting the Australian model in Ireland. For over a decade, Australia has been providing a high-quality, person-centred service that meets the needs of both medical professionals and trans individuals. Aligned with Sláintecare's core principle of communitybased, integrated care, Belong To's vision is for a local, safe and informed approach to trans healthcare, embedding key learnings and successes from the Australian model of trans healthcare. This vision is an accessible and holistic model of care, grounded in medical best practice and international and national research, as well as human rights best practice. The vision sets out a pathway for healthcare that is local (integrated, equitable and sustainable), safe (person-centred and grounded in best medical practice) and informed (accountable and rights-based).

This research was launched at a roundtable event in the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland in September 2025. The findings will be used to progress access to trans healthcare in Ireland.



Facts Not Fiction

We raise awareness about key issues experienced by LGBTQ+ youth through media engagement, digital media and campaigns.

Belong To drives conversation on LGBTQ+ topics important to LGBTQ+ young people nationally and locally through digital communications, media relations, public affairs, events and campaigns.

Our core audience is LGBTQ+ young people and their families, and we reach them with messages of hope and support. This work includes highlighting the services and spaces available to them through Belong To, as well as engaging young people in national conversations of importance. We also engage in youth information and develop and make easily available factual and reliable resources and information to support young people's healthy development and families to provide the best support possible to their young people.



Members of Belong To's Youth Advisory Panel recreated an image from Pride 1974 at the launch of the 50th anniversary of Dublin Pride.

Beyond young people and their families, our communications work also focuses on engaging a wide range of stakeholders from educators and youth workers to Government and policymakers – communicating the experience of LGBTQ+ young people in Ireland today and the supports and changes they need to ensure they are equal, safe and thriving.

Website

In 2024, we worked on updating and refining sections of the Belong To website following its redevelopment the previous year. Additional areas have been added to reflect the range of new services available and fundraising options offered, such as the Spill the Tea event pack and the annual Camino fundraiser.

The introduction of a new Family Support Service required a new section to host key information for family members as well as a contact form for them to get in touch. In support of increasing access to the website for parents and family members, in December 2024 we undertook search engine optimisation work to increase the search engine rankings of the website for that audience.

Work has continued on utilising the website as a repository for useful, factual and trustworthy information on important issues and topics relating to LGBTQ+ young people. Across 2024, we had over 73,000 visitors to our website, with a total of 188,000 page views.

Media Coverage

Our media relations work aims to increase our profile among the population in Ireland, the young people who will benefit from our services and their families and communicate our core messages through campaigns. We also utilise media coverage to reach policy and decision-makers with our advocacy asks.

In 2024, we secured 217 pieces of media coverage across national and regional broadcast, print and online outlets, a 57% increase on 2023. The collective reach of this coverage was more than 45 million viewers, listeners and readers.

This year, coverage primarily related to Belong To being Grand Mashall of Dublin Pride 2024, the publication of the Being LGBTQI+ in Ireland research report and the Stand Up Awareness Week and It's Our Social Media campaigns.

Our Stand Up Awareness Week partnership with RTÉ 2FM continued this year, increasing the reach of the campaign to a greater audience and driving the campaign message to parents, teachers and young people. The content that was broadcast included personal, anonymised interviews with young people on the impact of LGBTQ+ phobic bullying, as well as a call to action to stand up to this by allies. The partnership also resulted in an in-depth interview with comedian Gearóid Farrelly on his experience of homophobic bullying in post-primary school, on the flagship 2FM morning show The Laura Fox Show. We are grateful to the team at RTÉ 2FM for their continued support of our work at Belong To and for helping us to spread the word about the range of services we offer.

We also secured in depth feature pieces with national print media including The Irish Times, Irish Independent and Irish Examiner on topical issues such as advice for parents on supporting their child coming out and the experience for LGBTQ+ young people in Irish post-primary schools. Longform podcast, TV and radio interviews were also secured across a range of media including Virgin Media One, TG4 and RTÉ's The Out & Proud podcast.

Digital Media

In 2024, we increased our overall social media following by 8.3% (2023: 9.2%) and broke 10,000 followers on Instagram. We continued to utilise prominent youth platforms, Snapchat and TikTok, for larger campaigns such as It's Our Social Media and Better Out Than In, and trialled YouTube ads for the first time.

We have continued to promote Belong To's support services and youth groups to our youth audience through paid campaigns on Snapchat and TikTok. In 2024, new advertising guidelines were introduced on Snapchat meaning we could no longer target under 18s with 'traffic' campaigns, directing users to our website, and instead could only target this audience with 'awareness' campaigns. While this led to a fall in click-through rate for our campaigns, we reached a higher number of impressions than ever before. There was a total of 61 million impressions generated across TikTok and Snapchat alone in 2024, almost double the number of impressions achieved on these platforms in 2023 (32 million).

Representing a significant achievement in recognition of our work, our Better Out Than In 2023 campaign was shortlisted for the 2024 Digital Media Awards, where we were awarded Bronze.

In 2024, despite having left Twitter/X.com, we continued to face a high level of harassment and hateful commentary on social media, most prominently on Facebook paid campaigns targeting a broad audience of over-25s. We have continued to turn our efforts towards engaging with our key stakeholders online in new ways, such as sharing a weekly roundup of our work across platforms. This weekly post performs particularly well on LinkedIn and Instagram where we continue to grow our followers, with a 27.1% and 17.3% growth in followers respectively.

In 2024, we have continued to mark relevant days of celebration, visibility and remembrance in the LGBTQ+ community on our social platforms. For this, we reached out to Irish or Ireland-based queer artists to create a piece of art for us to share online as part of the content marking these days. In 2024 we worked with Fay-Orion Antar (any/all) for Trans Day of Visibility; Laura O'Donnell (she/her) for Lesbian Day of Visibility; Jean-Ellis Gbessia (he/him) for International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia; Louise Ní Chuilinn (she/her) for Bi Visibility Day and Eibhin Kavanagh (he/him) for World AIDS Day.

Campaign: It's Our Social Media

In March 2024, we launched It's Our Social Media for the third year, a digital media campaign which aims to make online spaces safer for LGBTQ+ young people.

This year, the campaign focused on mis- and disinformation and how to combat it, a theme that emerged from in-depth focus groups with LGBTQ+ young people. Devised by LGBTQ+ young people over three years ago, the campaign gives LGBTQ+ youth a platform to demand change and shines a light on the responsibility of social media companies to moderate anti-LGBTQ+ content.

The campaign featured a range of digital assets including short-form animations, and a longer hero video sharing the key message of the campaign: 'Pause. Question. Confirm'. We collaborated with the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) to produce a short, youth-facing video explaining the difference between misinformation and disinformation, and a video showing examples of misinformation online and its impact. We also worked with the ISD on an opinion piece for online news outlet The Journal.

Campaign content included a mixture of organic and paid posts, including the above, to direct young people to our microsite, itsoursocialmedia.com, where we hosted information on how to spot misinformation and disinformation online. We developed the campaign to be as engaging as possible with the use of two-way interaction with our followers using topical question and answer sessions on Instagram and Facebook.

It's Our Social Media 2024 ran across Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, TikTok and Facebook, generating 3.3million impressions, 40k clicks, 97k engagements, 1.1 million video views and 27k microsite visitors. The campaign was funded by Community Foundation Ireland. HOW TO STOP Spread the love on social media

46 Goal 3



Campaign: Better Out Than In

Better Out Than In is our annual campaign to encourage help-seeking behaviour amongst 14 to 23 year old LGBTQ+ youth, running throughout the month of September.

In 2023, we worked closely with the Belong To Youth Advisory Panel to develop the concept, themes and campaign outputs. The following themes were identified as pressing issues facing LGBTQ+ young people today: managing self-esteem, self-doubt and external reactions. These themes formed the basis of the campaign content.

We brought these themes to clinical psychologist Dr Brendan Dunlop (he/him), who worked with us on the campaign in 2023. Dr Dunlop developed solution-focused resources for young people to support them in overcoming these specific issues. On the campaign hub, we hosted practical worksheets developed by Dr Dunlop to support the mental health and wellbeing of LGBTQ+ youth. They supplemented the 2023 resources which covered the management of low mood, sleeping difficulties and anxious feelings. Dr Dunlop also created short-form video content on the respective topics and

campaign animations were created with the key messages, and all of this ran across social media organically and with advertising spend to reach our target audience.

This year, reaching out to an additional audience for the campaign, we hosted a free webinar for parents in collaboration with Pieta which provided advice and guidance on supporting the mental health of their LGBTQ+ children. Pieta psychotherapist Nash Zvikaramba (she/her) and Dr Dunlop presented to parents on a range of topics around supporting a young person's mental health. The webinar secured an attendance of 84 attendees.

The Better Out Than In campaign ran across Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok and Facebook, generating over 23 million impressions (67% increase on 2023), 1.6 million video views (45% increase on 2023), and 162k link clicks (76% increase on 2023).

Digital Performance Highlights

8.3% increase in our social media following

70,000 visitors to our website

187,996 individual page-views

1,896 new subscribers to our mailing list

Most Visited Website Pages

- How Do I Know if I Am Trans?
- **2.** Stand Up Awareness Week
- **3.** Get in Touch with Belong To
- 4. About Who We Are

Most Engaged TikTok Posts

- 1. TikTok Unpacks LGBTQ+ Allyship in Schools
- 2. Better Out Than In: Self-Esteem with Dr Brendan Dunlop
- 3. Better Out Than In: Self-Doubt with Dr Brendan Dunlop

Most Engaged Instagram Posts

- 1. Statement on Navan Assault
- **2.** Statement on the Phoenix Park Attack
- 3. Happy Pride 2024

Most Engaged LinkedIn Posts

- 1. Pride 2024 Photo Gallery
- 2. Introducing our Board of Directors
- 3. Rainbow Ball 2024 Thank You

Most Engaged Facebook Posts

- 1. Run 100k Fundraiser
- 2. Run 100k Fundraiser Reminder
- **3.** Stand Up Awareness Week Training for Educators

47 Goal 3

Stand Up Awareness Week

Through both policy and practice, we campaign so that LGBTQ+ students feel safe and supported in education settings.

Stand Up Awareness Week is a national LGBTQ+ anti-bullying week running in second-level schools, Youthreach centres and youth services across Ireland each November. Stand Up Awareness Week took place from 4–8 November in 2024.

We are proud to now be in our 15th year of running Stand Up Awareness Week, and to have steadily increased the number of young people taking part in the past five years. Stand Up Awareness Week is a time to celebrate LGBTQ+ youth in all of their diversity and to come together in support for LGBTQ+ young people.



Pictured at the launch of Stand Up Awareness Week 2024 at Coláiste Pobail Setanta, Phibblestown, Dublin 15 are Liam Walsh, Principal of Coláiste Pobail Setanta, Moninne Griffith CEO of Belong To - LGBTQ+ Ireland and students at Coláiste Pobail Setanta.

Taking A Stand Against LGBTQ+ Bullying

The focus of Stand Up Awareness Week is to decrease homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying, and increase friendship and support of LGBTQ+ students by other students. During Stand Up Awareness Week, LGBTQ+ young people and their allies learn about LGBTQ+ identities, take part in LGBTQ+ solidarity actions and come together to create a safe and supportive environment for all young people. The overall outcomes of the campaign align with that of Action 8 of the Department of Education's *Action Plan on Bullying (2013)*, with the main outcome being increased prevention and tackling of homophobic and transphobic bullying in schools. The campaign is partly funded by the Department of Education.

Running Stand Up Awareness Week can be the first step to creating a safe space within a school, Youthreach or youth service for LGBTQ+ young people. It is a time to show solidarity with LGBTQ+ youth so they feel seen, heard and safe, and to ensure everyone knows that homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language and bullying will not be tolerated. The campaign aims to decrease bullying, isolation, self-harm, suicidal ideation and mental health difficulties among LGBTQ+ youth. With the campaign, we also strive to increase peer support between LGBTQ+ youth and their classmates and increase awareness of the experiences of LGBTQ+ students among the entire school community.

Standing Up In Our Communities

This year, the theme of Stand Up Awareness Week was 'Standing Up in our Communities'. This theme links with one of our specific objectives for the campaign: increasing awareness of LGBTQ+ students among other students, teachers, principals and others in the school community. The 2024 Being LGBTQI+ in Ireland research from Trinity College Dublin and Belong To shows the importance of community groups and spaces in allowing LGBTQ+ people to foster connections and self-acceptance, which enhances their overall mental health and wellbeing. For true LGBTQ+ inclusion and to reduce discrimination and bullying, we need a communitywide response. It is important that all of us, in all spheres of life, make LGBTQ+ young people welcome and safe. Within our 2024 resource pack, we outlined actions to take in a school, Youthreach or youth service setting, in a town and then across a county.

Within this resource guide, we also included information on how to set up Stand Up Awareness Week in a school, Youthreach centre or youth service, learn about LGBTQ+ language and terminology and delve into a host of activity ideas for the week.

In 2024, we were proud to present an Irish version of all content, including the resource guide, posters and supplementary guides to ensure easy participation for Gaelscoilenna and Irish-language youth services across the country.

We sent Stand Up Awareness Week packs to 2,097 educators in post-primary settings and 129 educators in Youthreach centres. The packs included the 40-page resource guide (half in English and half in Irish), a terminology poster, two campaign posters and training posters for staff. The packs were also available to download from our website: www.belongto.org

We continuously hear from educators about the need for more resources, so we created a suite of supplementary resources available to download on our website. This included a media guide, a guide to allyship and seven steps to running the campaign in a school.

Stand Up Awareness Week

Stand Up Awareness Week 2024 was a great success, with 75% of post-primary schools participating in the annual campaign. The school and youth sector rallied behind this anti-LGBTQ+ bullying campaign with endorsements from ASTI, TUI, NAP, IGC, Joint Managerial Body, ACCS, ETBI, ISSU and Educate Together. A number of youth and community organisations also endorsed the campaign including the National Youth Council of Ireland, Youth Theatre Ireland, Youth Work Ireland and Foróige. Our Stand Up Awareness Week partnership with RTÉ 2FM continued this year, increasing the reach of the campaign and driving the campaign message to parents, teachers and young people. We are grateful to the team at RTÉ 2FM for their continued support.

Raise Your Voice

In 2024, we launched our new Youth Advisory Panel, bringing together LGBTQ+ youth from across Ireland to share their expertise.

Launched in early 2024, Belong To's Youth Advisory Panel (YAP) has quickly become an integral part of our organisation's work. The YAP brings together 30 passionate young people aged 16 to 22 who are helping to shape the future for LGBTQ+ youth in Ireland.

The YAP emerged from our commitment to meaningful youth participation and our belief that LGBTQ+ young people should be at the heart of decisions affecting their lives. Through an open recruitment process, we selected a panel of young people who demonstrated enthusiasm, insight and a desire to create positive change for their community, and they committed to collaborating with us for an 18-month term.



Belong To was the Grand Marshall at Dublin Pride in 2024 and who better to lead the parade than the new Belong To Youth Advisory Panel pictured above.



Activities and Actions

From their very first meeting in April 2024, the YAP hit the ground running. The inaugural session combined professional development with celebration, featuring media training, a workshop on queer joy and a Pride photoshoot that captured the energy and spirit of our young leaders. This preparation proved invaluable when Dublin Pride arrived in June. YAP members marched alongside Dublin's Lord Mayor, took part in media interviews and helped coordinate our Pride Breakfast event, demonstrating their capability to represent our communities with confidence and authenticity.

The summer months saw the YAP deeply engaged in shaping both our organisation's future and national policy. They provided crucial input into our strategic planning process through a World Café-style consultation, ensuring that young voices would guide our direction for years to come. They received practical support through CV-building workshops and professional headshots, while contributing their voices to our Better Out Than In campaign through video content creation. They took part in a journalism workshop with Gay Community News (GCN), where panel members learned about writing for print media and pitching stories, building valuable skills for future advocacy work. This was complemented by an 'Activism in Action' session, connecting our young leaders with experienced advocates in the LGBTQ+ community.

Throughout the year, the YAP members have made significant contributions to national policy development, participating in government consultations and helping to guide our own advocacy messaging. They have also been instrumental in shaping our key campaigns, including Better Out Than In and Stand Up Awareness Week.

The final YAP session of 2024 focused on political advocacy skills and planning for 2025, setting the stage for an even more impactful year ahead. The enthusiasm and commitment shown by our YAP members continues to exceed our expectations, and we are excited about what they have planned for 2025.

Looking ahead, we are sure that the remaining months of the panel's term will bring even more achievement, opportunities for growth and, hugely importantly, opportunities for joy, connection and community. We remain committed to supporting these young leaders through additional training, which will be shaped by their own identified needs and interests. Their contributions have already proved invaluable in ensuring our work remains relevant, effective and truly representative of the young LGBTQ+ communities we serve.

The success of the YAP in its first year has reinforced our belief in the power of youth voice and leadership. These remarkable young people are not just the future of our movement — they are making a difference right now, and we are privileged to support them on this journey.

Members of the YAP joined Dil Wickremasinghe to talk about their experience of Dublin Pride on the FM104 show 'Come In with Dil Wickremasinghe'.

Hear it from the YAP!

Ciara and Lea share their experiences of being involved in the first ever Belong To Youth Advisory Panel.



"I joined the YAP because I wanted to bring awareness to the life and struggles of LGBTQ+ people in Ireland and to bring positive change for these young people. I grew up in a small town and have had many friends who have not been able to come out, which made me feel grateful that I could join the Belong To YAP to help young people and share my story.

My favourite moment from the YAP was my 2FM interview for Stand Up Awareness Week. I remember being so nervous before it, but also excited because it was a huge opportunity that I will never forget. It was amazing to be a part of the interview, and I remember when I heard the interview back for the first time it made me feel so proud of myself.

I have gotten many things from the YAP, such as friendships for life, confidence and so many experiences I will hold with me for forever."

Lea Hennessy (they/them)



"I applied for the Youth Advisory Panel because it seemed like a valuable and exciting opportunity to engage with activism, meet likeminded people and grow my confidence. I already had some experience advocating for LGBTQ+ rights that prompted my interest, such as helping to organise my secondary school's Stand Up Awareness Week and advocating for a school LGBTQ+ support group. My personal struggles as a queer young person in Ireland, along with my experience of going to an LGBTQ+ youth support group since I was 14, drove my ambition to become involved with the YAP.

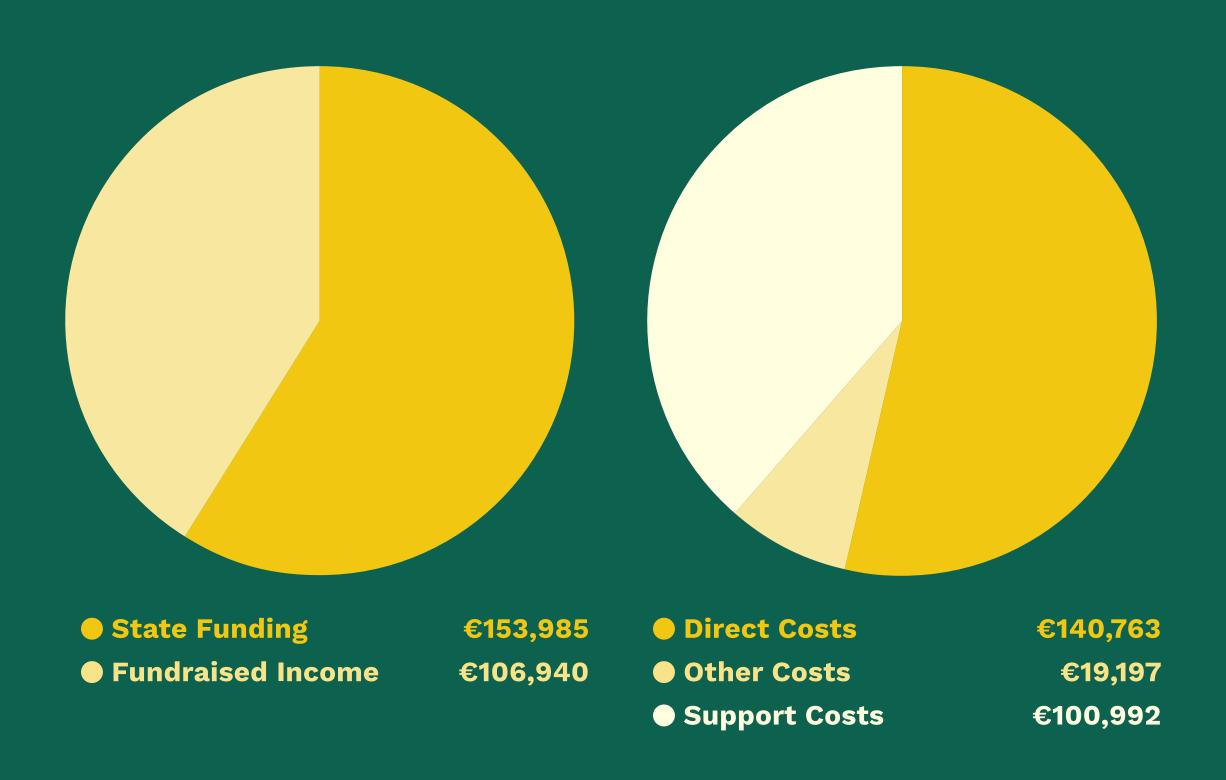
Participating in Dublin Pride was a stand-out moment because, despite the horrible weather at the time, I felt a tangible sense of community marching in the rain with my peers which resonated with me profoundly. Another favourite moment was speaking on FM104's 'Come In with Dil Wickremasinghe'. I feel very grateful for that opportunity to discuss LGBTQ+ rights and my personal coming-out story on radio, which I would not have imagined was possible.

Through my involvement with the YAP, I have noticed a massive growth in my confidence and public speaking ability, which is significant because I would see myself as a shy person. It has also developed my passion for activism and supporting LGBTQ+ young people in Ireland, influencing my aspirations in pursuing playwriting and youth drama facilitation.

I am glad to be a member of Belong To's YAP and my experiences with them have contributed to my love of activism and pride in being a member of the LGBTQ+ community."

Ciara Kelly (she/her)

Being a Learning and Development Organisation Invest in our people, systems and sustainability to achieve our vision.



Strategic Objectives

Develop staff competencies and effectiveness.

We will continue to invest in our people to best deliver for LGBTQ+ youth.

Grow volunteering across the organisation.

We will develop and implement a comprehensive volunteering programme to support and enhance all areas of Belong To's work.

Support staff wellbeing.

We recognise the challenges that our team face in the current climate and therefore prioritise staff wellbeing. We understand that only through their effort and expertise can we fulfil our mission.

Be accountable and transparent through good governance and financial management.

Belong To will continue to meet the highest standards in our policies and practices, and be fully compliant with legal obligations and the Governance Code. We will ensure financial sustainability and effective management of resources.

Enhance operational efficiency and effectiveness.

Through continued improvements to our systems and processes we will strengthen Belong To as an organisation and enhance our impact.

Ensure a sustainable income to achieve our ambitious goals for the next three years and beyond.

We will continue to maximise our fundraising and state income.

Enhance our environmental sustainability and ethical business practices.

Belong To will become one of the first charities in Ireland to use the environment, social and governance (ESG) framework to assess the organisation's business practices and performance in various sustainability and ethical areas, and will develop a multi-year strategy with defined targets to ensure we enhance our environmental and ethical practices.

The Heart of Giving

We are so grateful to our donors and funders for giving back and helping create a country where LGBTQ+ youth are safe in their homes, schools and communities.

Our 2022-2025 Fundraising Strategy entered its final year in 2024, as we continued implementing the plan to protect and diversify our fundraised income.

During this time, our fundraising team grew to four full-time members of staff with the recruitment of our new Fundraising Officer, Emma Dornan (she/her), in March. This appointment marked the completion of the restructuring of our fundraising team, with the team now having specific leads on corporate, community and individual giving fundraising.

We continued to work with existing and new corporate supporters to create new and to grow existing partnerships to the benefit of LGBTQ+ young people and the companies supporting our work. Community fundraising continued to grow with an increase in the number of community fundraisers, our 'Run 100K' in June challenge event and the launch of our new coffee morning, 'Spill the Tea'.

We continued work to better understand our donors and supporters, and to enhance our donor care and fundraising procedures to ensure our supporters are at the heart of our work to create an Ireland where LGBTQ+ young people and their families are equal, safe and thriving.

Individual Giving

Goal 4

In 2024, we further developed our individual giving programme to help our donors support LGBTQ+ young people. Our fundraising team continued to use story-led appeals to show the need for our supporters to give and to show the impact of their giving.

We continued to prioritise our donor care work to ensure each of our donors were thanked and made aware of our deep appreciation for their support. Developing support from individual givers is an important direction to ensure greater diversification in funding our life-saving supports for LGBTQ+ young people and their families. Thank you to each of our regular donors, and all of our individual givers for their generosity in 2024 – Belong To's life-saving supports would not be possible without you.

Trusts and Foundations

The roll out of our new Family Support Service occurred in April 2024 thanks to part-funding from the RTÉ Toy Show Appeal and Community Foundation Ireland. The uptake from parents across Ireland seeking advice and support from our new Family Support Worker immediately showed the need for these supports, and we are grateful to Community Foundation Ireland for their support.

We were also able to continue our work to create LGBTQ+ inclusive schools through support from an individual donor at Community Foundation Ireland and with further support from the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission and Google.org.

We thank our friends and allies for their important support in advancing these important supports for LGBTQ+ young people.

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The Rainbow Ball

The Rainbow Ball moved to a new venue in 2024 – the beautiful Round Room at Dublin's historic Mansion House. We were delighted to welcome our sponsors, supporters and allies where they were treated to stories from our frontline service and some amazing entertainment and dancing. Journalist Eileen Dunne (she/her) hosted an incredible evening with highlights including welcoming our sponsors SuperValu, HSBC, A&L Goodbody, M-Co and Accenture for the event, helping us raise much needed funds on the night.

Thanks to our generous corporate partners, artists and allies who proudly stood in support of the work and beneficiaries of Belong To. Over 420 people joined us for an unforgettable night and between ticket sales, auction bids and donations, we were ecstatic to raise almost €90,000. The Rainbow Ball continues to receive fantastic support as a key highlight of our year and our flagship fundraising event – thank you to everyone for their support.

Corporate Giving

As our largest source of fundraised income, expanding and protecting our corporate fundraising efforts remains a key priority for our team. We were delighted to see a mixture of new and old partnerships and engagements with our corporate partners throughout 2024.

Our long-standing and valued partnership with our wonderful friends in HSBC continued throughout 2024, with a key highlight being their generous gift of €35,000. Gifts like these are making real and positive change for LGBTQ+ young people in Ireland, now and in the years ahead.



Another highlight of 2024 was the continuation of our partnership with SuperValu, in which we launched the 'Wear With Pride' laces campaign for the second year in a row. Rainbow laces were available to purchase in SuperValu stores nationwide throughout the month of June, with €20,383 in proceeds going to support LGBTQ+ young people. In addition to these funds, campaigns such as these improve visibility and promote a positive message of inclusivity to LGBTQ+ young people in communities across Ireland.

Our Pride collaborations throughout the summer were a huge success in 2024, with over 59 events and workshops taking place throughout this busy period. Our event experience partner AVCOM supported us with the organisation's role as Grand Marshall of Pride 2024 and the Rainbow Ball in November. Their team provided invaluable pro bono event experience support making both events hugely memorable for all involved. We are grateful to all the organisations

who supported our work through workshops, events and donations – your support means the world to us.

We cannot thank our corporate contacts and all of the employee resource groups we interact with daily enough, for the work you do in campaigning and promoting Belong To internally in your organisation, in addition to your own workload. To us, the work you do on our behalf is invaluable.

Your donations demonstrate your trust in us as an organisation and team to use our expertise, knowledge and skills to best support the needs of LGBTQ+ young people in Ireland. It also allows us to provide support where it is most needed at any given time and is critical to us as an organisation to pivot quickly and address the unique needs of LGBTQ+ young people and meet them where they are currently at.

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Community Fundraising and Events

We celebrated a huge growth in income from community fundraisers in 2024, with 161 people raising funds in support of LGBTQ+ young people – an increase from 74 in 2023. In June, our team was thrilled to be joined by Malahide Woman to launch our new coffee morning fundraiser, 'Spill the Tea'. We are so grateful for the support from schools, community groups and workplaces who hosted their very own 'Spill the Tea' fundraisers.

Community Support Coordinator Chris Rowan (he/him), CEO Moninne Griffith (she/her) and Malahide Woman launching our new 'Spill the Tea' fundraiser in June.

2024 saw hundreds of Belong To's supporters running to raise funds to back our work. Our first ever social media challenge, Run 100K in June, resulted in 268 supporters registering to take part. Our runners raised an incredible €21,342 in support of Belong To's work. We were delighted to work with eight Dublin Marathon runners, who raised a combined €15,053, in what was our second year booking running slots in the Dublin Marathon. We had another first in 2024 with two Belong To Board members, Aisling Gannon (she/her) and Ciarán Finlay (he/him), and former Belong To team member, Glenn Keating (he/him), running the New York City marathon, raising €7,989 in support of LGBTQ+ young people.

We were also inspired by the many more supporters taking part in the Joe Duffy Clontarf Half Marathon, the Cork Pride 5k, the Docklands 5k, the Fastlane Half Marathon, the VHI Women's Mini Marathon and the Great Ireland Run – thank you all, your support has been incredible!

Our community fundraising saw us work with so many other amazing supporters of LGBTQ+ young people, through our work with third level institutions, including Munster Technological University, Kerry's Queer Society, Royal College of Surgeons staff and University College Corks' Trampoline Club.

Friends of Belong To found new and creative ways to raise funds in support of LGBTQ+ young people with comedians Gearoid Farrelly (he/him) and Morgan Rees (he/him) fundraising at their live shows, Twitch star TokiOri (they/them) holding a gamers streaming event, the wonderful Mishca McCarthy (he/him) hosting a variety night of music and dance, and the amazing community choir Belle Harmonics hosted two performances! Thank you to each and every one of our inspirational community fundraisers.

For the second year in a row, a Belong To group set off from Dublin Airport to walk the Camino. Thanks to the team from Aer Lingus for seeing our group off before their four days trekking 82km across the beautiful Spanish countryside between A Coruña and Santiago de Compostela. We are grateful to the incredible team of walkers for raising over €12,000 in support of Belong To's services.





'My daughter told me the youth groups are the most important thing in her life, and that Belong To literally saves LGBTQ+ young people's lives. That's when I decided to give a gift in support of Belong To's life-saving services.'

—Parent of Belong To Youth Group Attendee



Total Raised: 2024

€2,428,089

Thank you so much to everyone who raised money in support of LGBTQ+ young people in Ireland, your generosity is so appreciated.

Our inspiring Camino walkers enjoying their 82km trek along the Spanish countryside raising funds for LGBTQ+ young people.



Caring By Sharing

Behind the scenes at Belong To, we have an incredible team of dedicated volunteers whose impact is mighty and lifechanging.

Volunteers are vital to Belong To's success. They support our work directly with LGBTQ+ young people, as well as supporting our governance and fundraising.

In 2024, a total of 63 volunteers contributed 722 hours (2023: 34 volunteers contributed 598 hours; 2022: 57 volunteers and 1,579 hours; 2021: 27 volunteers, 810 hours).

The majority of our volunteers are youth engagement volunteers. These volunteers support the work of our professional youth workers to engage young people in our weekly LGBTQ+ Youth Groups in Dublin City Centre. Their role is to help ensure the groups operate smoothly and safely, support young people directly to complete tasks and project work and to share their experience and skills with the young people in our groups. The volunteers also assist the facilitation of our workshops and programmes. All youth engagement volunteers complete an induction programme which includes child safeguarding training and they are provided with opportunities to develop their skills, share their expertise and meet other volunteers. We recruited five new youth engagement volunteers in 2024 and, in total, our 16 youth engagement volunteers contributed 383 hours. This allowed us to run 202 youth group meetings.

As a charity, all of our Board and Board subcommittee members are volunteers. In total, they contributed 252 hours in 2024 to attend and prepare for Board meetings, contribute to our Board subcommittees and share their experience and expertise with our staff, volunteers and young people. You can read more about our Board of Directors on page 66 to 69 and our subcommittees on page 69.

Volunteers play a vital role in fundraising to allow us to continue to provide our services. This year 15 fundraising volunteers took part in on-street bucket fundraising to celebrate Dublin Pride. The group raised €1,588.94 in fundraising income.

In recognition of the essential role played by volunteers in our current operations and as we embark on a new strategy, Belong To has recruited a Volunteer Manager to support and expand volunteering in our organisation.

Following the Charities SORP (FRS102), the economic contribution of our volunteers is not recognised in the Financial Statements. Using the Volunteer Investment as Value Audit tool (VIVA), for every €1 we spend on volunteers, we get back €3.18 (2023: €2.61; 2022: €2.32; 2021: €2.27) in the value of work they do. The tool calculates volunteer value by linking volunteer roles to the cost of employing staff to perform the functions and dividing that value by the total expenditure on the volunteer programme. Volunteers are supported through a group supervision process and have access to external support should the need arise.



Giving Back

Layno Ruane (they/them) talks about their experiences volunteering with Belong To youth groups:

"I love volunteering with Belong To because it allows me to give back to my community in a rewarding and meaningful way. The youth groups are so important. They provide a safe space for LGBTQ+ youth to be themselves without fear of discrimination. Instances of homophobia and transphobia are disappointingly frequent in our daily lives and having a place where young people can find refuge and safely connect with peers is crucial in fostering their happiness and wellbeing. The power of feeling understood and safe can't be underestimated, especially for young people.

The group activity/topics each week are picked by the young people in their planning sessions and it's so fun to see their creativity, intelligence and humour while they discuss their interests, as well as the challenges they are facing. Watching them grow their confidence and resilience over time is really rewarding and I feel very lucky to be a small part of the journeys of these young people.

I really value the opportunity to work with the Youth Workers and learn from them as they facilitate the groups. They're very generous with their time and knowledge. Watching them navigate sensitive topics and manage group dynamics is very useful as I build my facilitation skills. Their support for the young people is professional and kind. It's impressive to see how they continually focus on the wellbeing of every individual in the group. When I began volunteering I thought it was something I would do that would help others. I didn't realise it would also be such a benefit to myself."

Our Staff Team

Our dedicated and professional team ensure that we deliver quality services and supports for LGBTQ+ young people.

A total of 30 staff were employed by the company over the course of 2024. As of 31 December 2024, there were 25 employees.

Aggregate payroll costs incurred during the year:

	2024	2023
Wages and Salaries	€1,147,262	€996,571
Social Insurance Cost	€126,699	€107,469
Pension Contributions	€24,273	€16,872
	€1,298,238	€1,120,917

Moninne Griffith	she/her	CEO
Sinéad Keane	she/her	Deputy CEO, Director of Advocacy and Communications
Derrie Murray	he/him	Director of Operations and Programmes
Suzanne Handley	she/her	Director of Governance and Finance
Carmel Walsh	she/her	Director of Youth Services
Sharon Heron	she/her	Director of Education, Training and Community Practice
Marty O'Prey	he/him	Director of Development
Caroline Flynn	she/her	Senior Partnerships and Diversity Manager
Tiffany Fitzgerald-Brosnan	she/her	Office and Operations Manager
Stephen Cassidy	he/him	Education and Training Manager
Brenda Kelly	she/her	Drugs and Alcohol Senior Youth Worker
Kate Cummins	she/her	National Network Coordinator
Róisín McGuigan	she/her	HR and Volunteer Manager
Roma Buckley	she/her	Salesforce Administrator
Chris Rowan	he/him	Community and Corporate Support Coordinator
Darragh McGirr	he/him	Communications Coordinator
Emily Bourke	she/her	Policy and Participation Coordinator
Jennifer Geraghty	she/her	Family Support Worker
Katie McCabe	she/her	Youth Worker
Kelsey Doyle	she/her	Youth Worker
Niamh Grennan	she/her	Development and Training Officer
Luke Madden	he/him	Education and Training Officer
Freya Carroll	she/her	Administration and Digital Communications Officer
Emma Dornan	she/her	Fundraising Officer
Lorna Fox	she/her	Administration Assistance
Diana Bamimeke	they/them	Trans Equality Together Coordinator (resigned September 2024)
Leigha Dugdale	she/her	Development and Training Officer (resigned March 2024)
Matt Kennedy	he/him	Research and Advocacy Manager (resigned September 2024)
Neasa Candon	she/her	Policy and Participation Coordinator (resigned August 2024)
Orla Martyn	she/her	Finance Officer (resigned March 2024)

Remuneration Policy

The Company has a Remuneration Policy that has been agreed by the Human Resources and Remuneration Subcommittee as delegated by the Board of Directors. This policy states that we seek to be competitive with our peers. As a general principle, this means the Company pitches its salaries at the median of the marketplace. A salary grading structure is in place. This was reviewed by the Human Resources and Remuneration Subcommittee in 2023, along with a broader review of the remuneration and benefits offering of the Company. This review confirmed that the salaries and benefits offered to staff are generally in line with similar organisations in the sector. Another review is due to be conducted in 2025.

Chief Executive's Remuneration

The CEO, Moninne Griffith, commenced on 1 November 2015. The value of her remuneration in 2024 was €95,897 (2023: €87,179). Included in this is employer pension contributions of €2,793. She receives no other additional benefits. Her contract of employment does not include a performance-related award scheme or any benefit-in-kind/perquisites.

Senior Management Remuneration

Remuneration paid to the seven members of the Senior Management Team (SMT), which includes the CEO, in 2024 amounted to €480,811 (2023: €447,928). Included in this figure is employer pension contributions of €14,004 (2023: €10,041). No other additional benefits are received by the SMT and contracts of employment do not include performance-related reward schemes or any benefits-in-kind/perquisites.

Diversity, Equality and Inclusion

Belong To is committed to being an inclusive and diverse organisation. Indeed, this is at the core of the organisation's charitable purpose. All employees, volunteers, beneficiaries and visitors are treated with dignity, respect and equality of opportunity, and are not discriminated against. We do not discriminate based on race, ethnicity, colour, class, ancestry, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disability, antibody status, marital status, membership of the Roma or Travelling community or any other legally protected status. The Company is fully compliant with the requirements of the Equal Status Acts 2000-2018 and the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015.

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005

Belong To continues to take appropriate measures to protect the safety, health and welfare of staff, volunteers, visitors and young people and promote awareness within its offices to meet this Act's provisions. This extends to the Public Health (Tobacco) Acts, 2002 and 2004. Belong To conducted a health and safety audit in 2023, and completed implementation of all recommendations in 2024.

Team Wellbeing

The Company prioritises staff wellbeing and continues to invest in staff wellbeing initiatives. The board recognise that the team, many of whom are LGBTQ+ themselves, are working in a climate that has become increasingly stressful in recent years and therefore invest in wellbeing to support staff retention. The Employee Assistance Programme is available to all team members and their immediate family members. It offers a confidential service that can provide practical assistance and emotional support, covering a spectrum of issues from personal and family matters to work and financial issues. In 2024, Belong To set up an employee-led Wellbeing Committee, which leads and organises the company's wellbeing initiatives.

Staff Training and Professional Development

The Company operates a further education scheme for staff members and actively encourages continuing professional development of the team. Participating staff members may be entitled to either paid or unpaid leave, or a combination of both, to attend an approved course, or to have a contribution towards the cost of academic fees. All courses relate to identified organisational needs and are dealt with on a case-by-case basis. During 2024, eight staff members availed of this scheme. Courses completed were in the areas of leadership and management, fundraising and Irish sign language. Continuous professional development is also facilitated outside of the Education Assistance Programme through facilitation of staff attendance at various conferences, seminars and other trainings.



Energy Efficiency Report

The coming years require concerted efforts to overcome the climate crisis. At Belong To, we are aware of the part we play in reducing carbon emissions.

At present, Belong To collects data and reports on the electricity usage at our offices for lighting, information and communication technology (ICT), heating, cooling, etc.

Our electricity usage for 2024 was as follows:

Energy Use	2024	2023
Direct Consumption (kWh)	17,002	17,188
Electricity, lighting, ICT, office		
power, heating and cooling		

In 2024, Belong To made a decision to opt in to voluntary reporting under the environment, social and governance (ESG) reporting framework and commenced working on developing an ESG strategy to enable us to do this, with the generous support of the accountancy and business advisory firm, Crowe Ireland. This will enable us to report a fuller picture of the environmental impact of Belong To across its operations in the future. As an organisation, we will set clear targets to mitigate this impact over time.

There are a number of existing measures in place to mitigate our operations' harmful effects on the environment and climate change including:

- Our energy provider is one of the leading suppliers of green energy in Ireland, ensuring emissions because of our operations are kept to a minimum.
- Belong To continues to operate a comprehensive internal recycling system.
- Belong To encourages staff to walk, cycle or use public transport for commuting and we encourage staff to participate in the Cycle to Work Scheme and obtain TaxSaver Leap Cards.

Structure, Governance and Management

Our values of transparency, openness and honesty are demonstrated through our adherence to the Charities Institute Ireland Triple Lock Standards of transparent reporting, ethical fundraising and strong governance structures.

The Company was deemed a Charity per Section 40 of the Charities Act 2009 and is registered as such with the Charities Regulator in Ireland with registration number 20059798.

Belong To Youth Services is registered in Ireland as a Company Limited by Guarantee and is incorporated in Ireland under the Companies Act 2014. The Company does not have a share capital. Consequently, the members' liability is limited, subject to each member's undertaking to contribute to the Company's net assets or liabilities on winding up such amounts as may be required not exceeding €1.

The Company was set up under a Memorandum of Association that established the Company's objects and powers. The Company is governed by a Constitution and is managed by a Board of Directors. The Articles of Association and Constitution were last amended by a unanimous written resolution of the company members on 6 September 2017.

The main object/charitable purpose of the Company is:

- To advance the wellbeing of the community at large by the provision of support and services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT+) young people and families in need; and,
- To advance the wellbeing of the community at large by the promotion and the advancement of the wellbeing of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT+) young people and their families whose lives have been affected by homophobia, social exclusion, discrimination, or other disadvantage, by fostering a culture of inclusiveness, equality, and human rights.

The Company has been granted charitable tax exemption by the Revenue Commissioners per the provisions of Section 208 (as applied to companies by Section 76), Section 609 (Capital Gains Tax) and Section 266 (Deposit Interest Retention Tax) of the Taxes Consolidation Act, 1997. This exemption, which applies to Income Tax/Corporation Tax, Capital Gains Tax and Deposit Interest Retention Tax, extends to the Company's income and property. Furthermore, the Company as the Charity has been designated as an approved body within the meaning of Section 848A, Taxes Consolidation Act 1997, by the Revenue Commissioners.

Directors/Charity Trustees

Belong To is governed by a Board of Directors with a maximum number of 10 people. All Board members and alternates work voluntarily and do not receive any remuneration as required by the Charities Act 2009. They are entitled to reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses in the discharge of their functions. The Board of Directors are also the Trustees of the Charity. In 2024, four new directors joined the board following a number of retirements and resignations in late 2023. These new Board members were recruited following an open recruitment process, which was led by a Nominations Committee of the Board. The nationality of all Board members is Irish, except for Maria Afontsenko who is Estonian.

Board Members

Board Meeting Attendance 2024*



Patricia Carey (she/her) Chairperson

Appointed 25/11/2021

Patricia has over 30 years' experience in the public service and not for profit sector. Patricia worked as CEO of the Adoption Authority of Ireland for nine years, and was Director of Services for St Vincent De Paul for 13 years. She is a founding board member of Outhouse. Patricia has worked with many not-for-profit organisations both as a volunteer and in senior staff roles since the 1990's. She was appointed by the Irish Government as Special Advocate for Survivors of Institutional Abuse in March 2024, and also serves as Chairperson of Loreto College Crumlin Board of Management.

9/10



Aisling Gannon (she/her)

Vice Chairperson

Appointed 25/11/2021

Aisling is the proud mother of two teenagers, and stepmother of three young adults. She is the mum of a trans young person, Steve. As a Board Member of Belong To, Aisling strives to ensure that the services best reflect and support the needs of LGBTQ+ young people across Ireland. In 2022, Aisling was appointed to the Dublin District Coroner's Court as Senior Counsel. She previously practiced as a Solicitor for over 25 years and was a Senior Partner in the Dublin office of a global law firm.

9/10



Maria Afontsenko (she/her) Treasurer **Appointed** 09/10/2015

Resigned 24/07/2024

Maria is a Partner in Grant Thornton Ireland. She is a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland and has extensive financial services experience and expertise, particularly in risk management, corporate governance and internal financial controls.

6/7



Sinéad Barry (she/her) *Treasurer since July 2024*

Appointed 24/07/2024

Sinéad is a Chartered Accountant and has extensive financial experience across various industries. She has previous board experience as a member of the Board of a private limited company. As a former secondary school teacher, youth basketball coach, and a mother of two young boys, she has a particular interest in young people and LGBTQ+ rights.

4/4



Lucy Ní Raghaill (she/her) Board Member

Appointed 01/12/2016

Lucy's professional background is in human resources and recruiting, with leadership roles across start-ups, SMBs and multinational enterprises. She has been a Scout Leader for 11 years with Scouting Ireland – a national youth organisation dedicated to the development of life skills for young people. She is a passionate LGBTQ+ rights advocate and ally.

8/10

Liz Harper (she/her) Board Member	Appointed 17/01/2017	Liz has over 30 years of experience working with young people and with youth services. She managed youth training projects in Tallaght for over a decade and subsequently has supported many locally based management groups and provided external supervision for youth workers in several settings. Liz holds a MSc in Equality Studies from UCD.	8/
Dermot Ryan (he/him) Board Member	Appointed 25/11/2021	Dermot has over 25 years of experience working in key advisory roles with political and campaigning organisations. Dermot returned to Ireland in 2017 after seven years in Australia, where he served as Head of External Affairs with Amnesty International and as Chief of Staff with the Transport Workers' Union. As Principal of Dermot Ryan Advisory, Dermot now offers a range of services to organisations, helping them to implement their vision. In 2022, Dermot was appointed Chair of the Board of the award-winning agency Alice Public Relations.	6/
Valerie Maher (she/her) Board Member	Appointed 25/11/2021	Valerie is Principal of Holy Child Community School, a post-primary school in Sallynoggin. Valerie is committed to providing a safe and inclusive environment for all students. Over the past five years, Valerie and her team have created a safe and welcoming space for LGBTQ+ students. Previously, Valerie worked with the National Behaviour Support Service as Assistant National Coordinator, working with schools around Ireland to promote and support a culture of positive behaviour.	7/
Ciarán Finlay (he/him) <i>Board Member</i>	Appointed 08/03/2024	Ciarán is a Senior Policy and Public Affairs Advisor with the National Disability Authority. A qualified barrister, he has over 12 years human rights experience at both the domestic and international levels. This includes legal and policy roles with the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, Free Legal Advice Centres and Permanent Missions of Ireland to the United Nations in Geneva and New York. A gay man, Ciarán has worked to advance LGBTIQ+ rights across different fora, including the UN Human Rights Council, and was a longstanding volunteer with the National LGBT Helpline.	8/
Kieran O'Donovan (he/him) <i>Board Member</i>	Appointed 08/03/2024	With 16 years of experience in advertising and youth communications, Kieran brings expertise in helping organisations connect with youth audiences, aligning with Belong To's mission to support LGBTQ+ young people. A member of the LGBTQ+ community, Kieran canvassed with Yes Equality for the marriage referendum, Together for Yes to support Repeal and has volunteered with Belong To since 2019. Kieran was a member of the RTÉ Audience Council for four years leading a sub-committee with a specific remit of youth services and programming.	8/8
Simon Finnegan (he/him) Board Member	Appointed 08/03/2024	Simon has over 30 years of experience working and volunteering in the community and voluntary sector and is the Finance Manager and Company Secretary with Exchange House Ireland National Travellers Service. He has served on multiple boards and committees, including as treasurer for National Traveller MABS. A proud member of the LGBTQ+ community, Simon is a dedicated advocate for the community and has held leadership roles in several LGBTQ+ organisations, including Glória, Dublin's LGBT+ Choir, the Emerald Warriors RFC and Greenbow Deaf LGBT Ireland. In his spare	7/8

time, he likes to watch rugby and knit (sometimes at the same time).

^{*}The Board met 10 times during 2024. The Board has an attendance policy, and the Chair is responsible for its implementation. This policy allows for Board members to take a leave of absence as dictated by their circumstances. Staff members are routinely invited to attend Board meetings to participate in discussions on strategic priorities relevant to their areas of responsibility.

Board Officers 2024

Board Chairperson	Patricia Carey (she/her)
Board Vice Chairperson	Aisling Gannon (she/her)
Treasurer (Jan-July 2024)	Maria Afontsenko (she/her)
Treasurer (from July 2024)	Sinéad Barry (she/her)
Company Secretary	Suzanne Handley (she/her)
Board Secretary	Derrie Murray (he/him)

Director/Charity Trustee Expenses

In 2024, the total amount of vouched expenses paid to Board members was nil (2023: 0). Board members are appointed initially on a probationary basis, during which time they are supported and evaluated. The Charity has taken out insurance to protect the Directors/Trustees. No loans have been granted to Directors. No remuneration or other benefits have been paid or are payable to any Directors, directly or indirectly, from the Charity's funds. Remuneration of Directors/Trustees is expressly forbidden by the governing document of the Charity. All further required disclosures in Sections 305 and 306 of the Companies Act 2014 are nil for both financial years.

Selection of Board Members

Board members are selected under the Board Recruitment and Selection Policy. Members are chosen based on their skills and any identified skills gaps on the Board.

Board members are appointed initially on a probationary basis, during which time they are supported and evaluated. Following successful completion of the probationary period, and subject to the members' approval, Board members serve in three-year terms to a maximum of nine consecutive years as a Board member. An exemption from the maximum duration of nine years applies to Board members serving at the time of its adoption on 6 September 2017. Currently, no Board member has served terms totalling more than nine years.

Four new Directors were appointed in 2024: Ciarán Finlay (he/him), Kieran O'Donovan (he/him), Simon Finnegan (he/him) and Sinéad Barry (she/her). Following an in-depth skills evaluation of the Board, an open recruitment process was initiated to fill vacancies that had arisen following retirements and resignations in the second half of 2023. Three Directors were formally co-opted by the Board in February 2024, and one in July 2024. All four were duly elected at the Company Annual General Meeting that took place on 25 September 2024.

Induction of Board Members

Board induction occurs as soon as possible after an individual has been selected to join the Board. Induction is the responsibility of the Company Secretary in collaboration with the CEO and Chair of the Board. Induction training includes meetings covering the organisation's role and aims, governance structures, core activities, history and successes. Also covered is an introduction as to how the Board functions and the role and responsibilities of becoming a member of the Board. A new Director also receives an induction pack which will include at a minimum the Constitution, governance handbook, Strategic Plan, minutes and the Board Book from previous Board meetings, organisational financial procedures and policies manual, Staff Handbook, and audited accounts of the prior year.

Board Review and Evaluation

Belong To completed its annual Board Skills Audit in Q4 2024 to identify any strengths and gaps in terms of skills and experience required of the Board. A report was prepared and issued to all Board members, and this will be examined at the Board's annual residential in February 2025.

Board Subcommittees

The Board is supported by a committee structure that deals with specific aspects of the Charity's business. Each subcommittee is governed by terms of reference specifying the scope of their competencies and any delegated authorities, and membership of each subcommittee must be approved by the Board. At least one independent external member, who is neither a member of the Board or a member of staff, normally sits on each committee to provide further oversight and expertise. The board subcommittees that operated in 2024 are:

Quality, Safety and Safeguarding

The Board of Directors have established the Quality, Safety and Safeguarding Subcommittee to ensure:

- Appropriate governance structures, processes, standards, oversight and controls are in place in relation to child safeguarding, and service quality and safety;
- Child safeguarding and protection arrangements, standards and guidance from the organisation are developed and reviewed in compliance with the relevant statutory requirements and guidelines; and,
- Quality, safety and safeguarding issues that cannot be resolved by the Senior Management Team are escalated to relevant external forums.

Governance and Risk

The Board of Directors have established the Governance and Risk Subcommittee to ensure:

- Oversight and reporting in relation to governance; and,
- Review and monitoring of the risk management systems of the organisation and to escalate and action identified risks to the board as appropriate.

Finance and Audit

The Board of Directors have established the Finance and Audit Subcommittee to ensure:

- Effective review and monitoring of financial risks;
- Reliable management and financial reporting of the annual budget and management accounts; and,
- Maintenance of an effective and efficient audit.

Human Resources and Remuneration

The Board of Directors have established the HR and Remuneration Subcommittee to:

- Set the pay and conditions for the CEO of Belong To;
- Support the CEO setting the remuneration policy for staff;
 and,
- Consider HR policy and related matters brought to the attention of the Subcommittee by the CEO.

Nominations Committee (December 2023 – February 2024)

In December 2023, the Board established a fixed-purpose, time-limited Subcommittee to:

- Review the recruitment needs of the Board; and
- Oversee succession planning and recruitment of new Directors.

Goal 4

Subcommittee	Members	Attn.
Quality, Safety and Safeguarding	Liz Harper (she/her)	4/4
	Simon Finnegan (he/him)	3/3
	Siobhán Laffey (she/her)	3/4
	Moninne Griffith (she/her)	3/4
	Carmel Walsh (she/her)	4/4
	Brenda Kelly (she/her)	3/4
	Jen Geraghty (she/her)	3/3

Subcommittee	Members	Attn.
Governance and Risk	Aisling Gannon (she/her)	4/4
	Patricia Carey (she/her)	4/4
	David Cullinane (he/him)	3/4
	Moninne Griffith (she/her)	4/4
	Derrie Murray (he/him)	3/4
	Suzanne Handley (she/her)	3/4

Subcommittee	Members	Attn.
	Maria Afontsenko (she/her)	3/3
	Sinéad Barry (she/her)	3/3
	Patricia Carey (she/her)	2/4
Tinanga and Audit	Dermot Ryan (he/him)	4/6
Finance and Audit	John McNamara (he/him)	2/2
	Vincent Teo (he/him)	3/3
	Suzanne Handley (she/her)	6/6
	Moninne Griffith (she/her)	5/6

Subcommittee	Members	Attn.
	Lucy Ní Raghaill (she/her)	5/5
	Valerie Maher (she/her)	3/5
Human Resources and Remuneration	Simon Ryan (he/him)	5/5
	Moninne Griffith (she/her)	4/5
	Derrie Murray (he/him)	5/5

Subcommittee	Members
Nominations Committee (Temporary Dec 2023-Feb 2024)	Patricia Carey (she/her)
	Lucy Ní Raghaill (she/her)
	Moninne Griffith (she/her)
	Derrie Murray (he/him)
	Suzanne Handley (she/her)

Working Groups

To complement the Subcommittee structure, the Board also encourages the executive team at Belong To, where necessary or helpful, to propose the establishment of working groups. These are similar to the Board Subcommittees in that they must have terms of reference and membership that is agreed by the Board, and they must report to the Board, but they do not require a Board member to sit on the working group (although any board member is welcome to attend meetings) and meetings are normally chaired by a member of the executive team. They are a further resource to the Board and executive to recruit external expertise to advise on, and contribute to, the delivery of the organisation's strategy and mission.

In 2024, there was one active working group:

Fundraising Working Group

The Board approved the establishment of a Fundraising Working Group to:

• Advise on the planning, coordination and implementation of the organisation's fundraising activities in support of the organisation's strategic objectives.

Goal 4

Governance

The Board of Directors is committed to achieving the highest standards of governance. The Charity has completed adopting and implementing the Charities Governance Code issued by the Charities Regulator, and the organisation reported on its compliance with the Code formally in 2024, as required by the regulator.

The Charity publishes its annual financial statements per Charities SORP annually. The Charity has implemented the Charities Regulator's Fundraising Guidelines and operates a professional Fundraising Team guided by high ethical standards. The Charity has achieved the three standards named above and was again in 2024 awarded the coveted Triple Lock status by Charities Institute Ireland to recognise its achievements and commitment to good governance. The Charity is committed to the highest standards of openness, integrity and accountability.

To further enhance accountability and transparency at Belong To, the organisation updated its Protected Disclosures Policy in 2024 to ensure that staff members, volunteers and other organisation members are enabled to voice concerns responsibly and effectively, and to raise concerns about any malpractice or wrongdoing within the organisation. Belong To's Protected Disclosures Policy is compliant with the Protected Disclosures Act 2014 and the Protected Disclosures (Amendment) Act 2022.

Conflicts of Interest and Loyalty

Belong To has a policy in place to manage conflicts of interest and loyalty that may arise for Board members, committee members and senior managers. It is a standard agenda item at all relevant meetings to remind everyone to declare conflicts if and when they arise, and Board members, committee members and senior managers are requested each year to submit a declaration of their interests to ensure that Belong To's Register of Interests is kept up to date.

Legal Compliance

Belong To's Strategic Plan commits the organisation to ensuring that the Charity's Board and Management comply with all relevant legal and regulatory requirements, and that appropriate internal financial and risk management controls are in place. In 2024, Belong To submitted its Annual Report to the Charities Regulator, its reports under the Lobbying Register, and its returns for the Companies Office on time. The Charity is compliant with the European Union (Anti-Money Laundering: Ownership of Corporate Entities) Regulations 2019. As a charitable company, there are no 'beneficial owners' of the entity, therefore, the senior managing officials, comprising the Directors/Trustees and CEO, appear in the register.

GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018

The Charity has undertaken rigorous work to ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations and the Data Protection Act 2018, especially as it processes large amounts of special category data of minors. Copies of the organisation's data protection policies are available at www.belongto.org/funding-governance. A copy of the Belong To Privacy Policy is available at www.belongto.org/privacy-policy.

In 2024, to ensure Belong To's ongoing compliance, Belong To engaged MDDM Consultants to undertake a comprehensive audit of Belong To's systems and data protection practices. A report was received in late 2024, and this will be examined by the Board for further actions in Q1 2025.

Decision-Making

The Board has the following matters specifically reserved for its decision:

- The Company's Strategic Plans and annual operating budgets;
- Projects outside the scope of the Strategic Plan;
- Business acquisition and disposals;
- Litigation;
- Appointment and/or removal of Members of the Company;
- Co-option of individuals to be Directors of the Company;
- Appointment and/or removal of Subcommittee Chairs and Members;
- Appointment and/or removal of the CEO;
- Appointment and/or removal of the Auditors;
- Approval of borrowing and/or Finance Facilities;
- Approval of contracts with a term exceeding one year or a financial liability on Belong To exceeding €15k;
- Approval of changes in accounting or financial procedure;
- · Approval of the annual accounts and annual report; and,
- Annual review of risk and internal control.

Principal Risks and Uncertainties

Effective risk management is important to the Board, ensuring that the Charity operates prudently and within its financial capabilities. It is also a primary priority of the Board to limit exposure to risk among service users, staff, volunteers and visitors.

In 2023, the Trustees instructed senior management to review the risk management framework, the risk register and the systems for managing and mitigating risks across the organisation. As part of this, a comprehensive review of the risks and control measures across the organisation was undertaken, and a new Internal Governance, Oversight and Risk (IGOR) group was set up, which is composed of the CEO, the Director of Governance and Finance, the Head of Operations and Programmes and the Office and Operations Manager. This new group drives the effective management of risk across the organisation, and ensures that the Board is kept informed of developments and that instructions from the Board are carried out.

In 2024, following on from the work in 2023, the Board developed a new Risk Management Policy to clearly outline the activities and reporting mechanisms for each of the four key groups that are responsible for overseeing and managing risks across the organisation: (i) the Senior Management Team, (ii) the IGOR group, (iii) the Governance and Risk Subcommittee and (iv) the Board.

The following have been identified as areas of highest risk to the Charity:

Finances and Financial Controls

The Charity is dependent on gifts and donations, and grant income from state organisations, companies, trusts and foundations. Following detailed modelling and assessments, the Board is confident that the Charity is well-positioned to manage the costs of running the Charity in the event of an economic decline due to the level of reserves on hand and the maturity of fundraising operations. In terms of financial management and controls, the Charity mitigates risks in this area through continuous oversight and monitoring, through ensuring the full implementation of the organisation's financial policies and procedures, and by monitoring emerging changes to regulations and legislation. Policies and procedures are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain in line with best practice and that they remain fit for purpose.

Health and Safety

The Board and wider organisation prioritise the health and safety of all service users, staff, volunteers and visitors. Health and safety audits are carried out at regular intervals and action plans are formulated for any actions required from these audits. Prior to any new activities or events, a risk assessment is completed to ensure the safety of all those in attendance to the highest degree possible. All staff and volunteers are trained in basic health and safety, fire safety and manual handling, with certain identified staff members then receiving further training in areas such as first aid and fire warden training.

Belong To maintains an incident report log for all incidents and accidents, including near misses, and this data is used to help identify any patterns that may emerge and may point to where additional risk mitigation measures may be needed. In the context of changes in the external environment, the organisation introduced additional measures to ensure the security of all staff, volunteers and services users in 2024, and plans to conduct a comprehensive security review in 2025 to ensure all necessary measures are in place to ensure the safety and security of everyone at Belong To.

Child Protection and Safeguarding

The organisation has adopted a Child Safeguarding Statement in line with its obligations under the Children First Act 2015. Belong To is fully compliant with the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2012. Belong To has Child Protection and Safeguarding policies based on the Children First Act 2015, and associated Children First Guidelines 2017, as well as best practice recruitment policies and procedures. The implementation of our policies and risk mitigation measures in relation to child protection and safeguarding are overseen by the Quality, Safety and Safeguarding Committee of the Board.

Reputation

There is a risk of reputation damage to the Charity or the charity sector caused by an event either within or outside the Charity's control. This risk is mitigated by regular engagement with The Wheel, The National Youth Council of Ireland and the Charities Institute Ireland (CII) to promote trust in the charity sector. Additionally, regular Board oversight of compliance and governance processes to ensure best practice and proactive engagement with partner organisations on good governance help to mitigate the risk further.

Other risks to the Charity's reputation stem from primarily online activity that promotes misinformation in relation to the activities of Belong To and its advocacy positions, as well as misinformation generally in relation to services provided to LGBTQ+ young people, in particular trans young people. Belong To mitigates these risks through its online engagement, through its work with media outlets, and through internal policies regarding communications and social media usage for staff.

People

Goal 4

There is a risk that the Charity will not be able to attract and retain talent at all levels, including volunteers, trustees and employees. This risk is mitigated by robust performance management with regular performance reviews for all team members. The Charity undertakes strong resource planning considering demands for services and commitments to funders, and has a commitment to a working environment that fosters wellbeing and positive engagement by all staff, volunteers and trustees.

Governance

While Belong To has robust governance procedures and policies in place, and the Board is satisfied that Belong To's governance is in line with best practice and all relevant legislation, governance is nonetheless identified as an area of high risk because of the negative consequences that would follow were we to fail in any area of the organisation's governance. As such, the monitoring of the organisation's governance is overseen by a multi-layered system as follows: (i) the Board, (ii) the Governance and Risk Committee of the Board, (iii) the Internal Governance, Oversight and Risk group, (iv) the Senior Management Team. This system ensures effective monitoring and accountability as regards good governance practice across the organisation.

Information Security

There are risks relating to the possibility of a cyber security attack and data theft, which are mitigated by a range of measures, including a managed cybersecurity detection and response solution with our IT providers, and the implementation of two-factor authentication across our IT systems. We also conduct regular reviews of our policies, procedures and systems, and provide training for staff in the areas of data protection and information security. In the context of an increase in the level of risk, further mitigation measures are planned for 2025.

Financial Overview

Financial Results

The year's financial results ended 31st December 2024 are set out in detail on pages 81 - 82. These results show a net surplus of €52,791 (2023: surplus €72,172). This surplus results from the change in timing of planned new hires of employees and the start date of programme costs.

Income totalled €2,428,089, an increase of 12.02% on 2023 (2023: €2,167,590). The increase is a result of continued investment in fundraising over 2023 to 2024 and the successful application of grants from trusts and foundations.

There was an increase in income from fundraised donations, trusts and foundations and training by 20.72% to a total of €1,354,963.98 (2023: €1,122,405). This is a direct result of investment in the fundraising team.

There was an increase in Benefit in Kind Donations of Goods and Services in 2024 to €191,799 (2023: €128,152). This is due to a increase in donations for advertising costs.

Total expenditure was €2,374,298 in 2024 (2023: €2,095,418) an increase of 13.31%. This reflects the increase in programme works, continued investment in the staff team and also rising costs in operations and the general cost of living.

Income Diversification

In 2024, the funding mix for the organisation was 36% state funding (2023: 43%) and 64% non-state funding (2023: 57%). Maintaining a balance of funding between state and non-state sources is important to mitigate the risks associated with a decline in any one source of income. It is also an essential guarantee of our independence in advocating for the health, safety and equality of LGBTQ+ young people. The Board addressed the over-reliance on any one source of funding by continuous investment in the Fundraising Team during 2024. The investment in the fundraising strategy has resulted in a diversification in the sources of funding to a more balanced outcome increasing funding from community events, public donations and grants from trusts and foundations to 50% (2023: 45%) balancing this with corporate donations to 50% (2023: 55%).

Reserves Policy

Belong To Youth Services has set a reserves policy to ensure that the Charity's core activities could continue during a period of unforeseen difficulty e.g. a global economic crisis. The policy considers the cost of making staff redundant in an emergency, the risk associated with variances in planned income versus expenditure, and the Charity's contractual commitments.

The Trustees have established reserves equal to six months operating costs. The Finance, Audit, and Risk (FAR) Committee advises on the appropriate level of reserves and planned contributions to the reserves set by the Committee during the annual budget process and reviewed as necessary

during the year. The reserves policy was reviewed in February 2025, and it was agreed to allocate €360,908 to support the programme work for the organisation in line with our Strategic Plan 2025 - 2027.

The opening balance on reserves was €1,189,307 on 1 January 2024. Details of reserves and designated funds:

Reserves at 1 January 2023	Amount	
6 Months Operating Costs	Based on Expenditure of €1,710,474 (2024)	€888,453
Designated to 2024	Designated to 2023 to ensure completion of current projects	€300,854
Total Reserves at 31 Decemb	€1,189,307	

The closing balance on reserves was €1,243,098 on 31 December 2024. Details of reserves and designated funds:

Reserves at 1 January 2024	Description	Amount
6 Months Operating Costs	Based on Operation and Staffing Costs in 2024 (1,764,380)	€882,190
Designated to 2025 The Board approved funds to continue work on scheduled programme work in 2025		€360,908
Total Reserves at 31 December 2024		€1,243,098

Fundraising Policy

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Belong To organises fundraising events and activities throughout the year. In addition, the Charity solicits the financial support of individual donors, companies, trusts and foundations, among others to fund both general operating costs and specific projects and programmes.

Belong To is committed to applying the highest standards of good governance and ethical fundraising practices in our work. We have completed the implementation of the Fundraising Guidance issued by the Charities Regulator and are in full compliance with the voluntary Statement of Guiding Principles in Fundraising.

Belong To is committed to ethical fundraising and all institutional donors are ethically evaluated prior to engaging them in fundraising or monetary support for our mission. During 2024 we declined to accept donations or asked fundraisers to cease fundraising on our behalf on one occasion due to ethical concerns.

In line with best practice, our professional fundraising staff are paid a fixed annual salary. There is no element of performance related pay or bonus payable to professional fundraisers employed by the Charity.

Investment Policy

The organisation's policy for investments is to retain its cash reserve in a low-risk deposit account. However, all-time low-interest rates and the risk of negative interest means the actual value of the Charity's reserve and cash on hand are devaluing.

Apportionment

Individual costs that are shared and not directly attributable to an individual programme are apportioned. In 2024, the organisation continued to use a budgeting template that allows precise apportionment of income against activities and related expenditure. The organisation's financial systems allow for income and expenditure to be apportioned against funded costs.

Accounting Records

The Board believe that they have complied with the requirements of Section 281 and 285 of the Companies Act, 2014 concerning accounting records by employing personnel with appropriate expertise and by providing adequate resources to the financial function. The accounting records of Belong To are maintained at Charity's registered office, 13 Parliament Street, Dublin 2, Ireland.

Auditors

Goal 4

The auditors, Hayden Brown & Company, have taken up office per Section 383(2) of the Companies Act, 2014 at the last AGM.

Relevant Audit Information

In the case of each of the persons who are Directors at the time this report is approved per Section 332 of the Companies Act, 2014:

- So far as each Director is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the company's statutory auditors are unaware and,
- Each Director has taken all the steps that he or she ought to have taken as a Director to make himself or herself aware of any relevant audit information and establish that the company's statutory auditors are aware of that information.

Going Concern

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis. The Directors have reviewed the 2024 statement of financial activities and balance sheet, the approved 2024 budget, and the latest financial information, including an up-to-date forecast which considers the ongoing impacts of wars in Ukraine and Palestine, high inflation and increase in the cost of living. The Directors are satisfied that the Charity has adequate resources to continue operational existence for the next 12 months. As a result, they are confident that there are sufficient resources to manage any operational or financial risks. There is no material uncertainty that affects this assumption.

Principal State Funders

The table below is provided as required by DPER Circular 13/2014. All grants listed in the table below are restricted.

The amount of the grant taken to final income in the financial statements

The amount deferred from 2025 to 2025 (if any)

Funder	Scheme	Amount And Term Of The Total Awarded	Taken to final income	Deferred to 2025	Purpose For Which The Funds Are Applied	Where Relevant The Amount Of Capital Provided And The Reporting Policies Being Used In Relation To Current And Future Installments
HSE - Mental Health Directorate / National Office for Suicide Prevention	Section 39 Health Act 2004	€240,964 per annum Term: 1st Jan to 31st Dec 2024	€240,964	-	Provision of nationwide supports for LGBTI+ young people, self-harm and suicide prevention, information and referral pathways, elimination of LGBTI+ bullying.	Reports submitted quarterly as set out in the agreement - additional reports submitted at specific internals. No capital grant received.
		€53,402 Once-off Term: 1st Dec 2020 to 31st Dec 2023	-	€38,971	Deferral of €53,402 at year-end 2020 was approved and carried forward to 2024. Provision of enhanced nationwide supports for LGBTI+ young people to enable an effective response to the COVID-19 pandemic.	Reports submitted quarterly as set out in the agreement - additional reports submitted at specific internals. No capital grant received.
City of Dublin Education and Training Board. Scheme: Local Drugs Task Force	Local Drugs Taskforce - Emerging Needs	€49,365 per annum Term: 1 Jan to 31 Dec 2024	€49,365	-	Provision of prevention and education service for the North Inner City targeting the LGBTI+ youth population.	Annual application submitted each year. Quarterly reports submitted as set out in the grant aid agreement. No capital grant received.
Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY): administered by Pobal	Youth Service Grant Scheme	€246,236 per annum Term: 1 Jan to 31 Dec 2024	€246,236	-	Core funding to support the delivery of nationwide supports for LGBTI+ young people.	Annual report and application submitted each year. No capital grant received.
Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY): administered by Pobal	Grant Scheme to Support the Continuous Professional Development of Service Providers Working with LGBTI+ young People.	€750 (phase 1) Term: 08 Oct - 31 Dec 2019	-	€750	Funding to support the development and roll-out of the Safe and Supportive Schools/ Services Project delivering continuous professional development of service providers working with LGBTI+ young people.	Final project report due on completion. No capital grant received.
Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY): administered by Pobal	Youth Capital Funding Scheme	€13,161	€13,161		A capital grant for upgrades too, and replacement of critical information and communications infrastructure.	Funds are fully expended and reports submitted. Funds are reflected in the balance sheet and proportionally as icome corresponding to the annual amortisation of the capital grant.
Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY): direct administration	2023 LGBTI+ Community Services Funding Call: SCHEME A: SUPPORTING COMMUNITY SERVICES FOR LGBTI+ PERSONS	€70,000 Term: 1st October 2023 to 30th September 2024	€52,500		LGBTQ+ Quality Mark for Schools. Funding to increase the safety and inclusion of post-primary schools for LGBTI+ young people by providing evidence-based support to staff and students. €52,500 deferred to 2024 in line with project agreement.	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY): direct administration	2024 LGBTI+ Community Services Funding Call: SCHEME A: SUPPORTING COMMUNITY SERVICES FOR LGBTI+ PERSONS	€100,000 Term: 1st October 2024 to 30th September 2025	€22,678	€77,322	LGBTQ+ Quality Mark for Schools. Funding to increase the safety and inclusion of post-primary schools for LGBTI+ young people by providing evidence-based support to staff and students. €77,322 deferred to 2025 in line with project agreement.	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY): administered by Pobal	What Works Building Evidence Fund	€49,999 Term: 3rd November 2023 to 2nd November 2024	€49,999	-	Better Data for LGBTQ+ Youth Services. Funding deferred to 2024 due to project start date.	Reports submitted as and when requested as per the terms and conditions of the scheme. No capital grant received.
Department of Education and Skills	National Action Plan on Bullying	€90,000 per annum Term: 1 Jan to 31 Dec 2024	€90,000	-	Grant aid to support the delivery of Action 8 under the National Action Plan on Bullying (2013).	Annual report and application submitted each year. No capital grant received.
Department of Rural and Community Development- administered by Pobal	Scheme to Support National Organisations 2022-2025	€272,474 Term: July 2012 to June 2025	€90,825	-	Core funding to support the delivery of nationwide supports for LGBTI+ young people and eliminate LGBTI+ bullying/ discrimination/ isolation and promote equality and human rights.	SSNO expenditure reports submitted every Additional reports submitted at specific intervals. No capital grant received.
Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC)	Human Rights and Equality Grants Scheme 2023-2024	€14,400	€14,400	-	Tackling homophobia and transphobia through supporting LGBTQ+ inclusive primary schools. Funds deferred to 2024 due to project commencement date.	Reports submitted as and when requested as per the terms and conditions of the scheme. No capital grant received.
Revenue Commissioners	VAT Compensation Scheme	€11,198	€11,198		The Value Added Tax (VAT) Compensation Scheme aims to reduce the VAT burden on charities and to partially compensate for VAT paid by the Charity.	Claim re eligible VAT paid in 2022.

Director's Responsibilities Statement

The Directors are responsible for preparing the directors report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable Irish law and regulations.

Irish company law requires the Directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under the law, the Directors have elected to prepare the financial statements with consideration to Charities SORP, Companies Act 2014 and FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" issued by the Financial Reporting Council. Under company law, the Directors must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the company as at the financial year end date and of the profit or loss of the company for the financial year and otherwise comply with the Companies Act 2014.

In preparing these financial statements, the Directors are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether the financial statements have been prepared in accordance with applicable accounting standards, identify those standards, and note the effect and the reasons for any material departure from those standards; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business.

The Directors confirm that they have complied with the above requirements in preparing the financial statements.

The Directors are responsible for ensuring that the company keeps or causes to be kept adequate accounting records which correctly explain and record the transactions of the company, enable at any time the assets, liabilities, financial position and profit or loss of the company to be determined with reasonable accuracy, enable them to ensure that the financial statements and directors report comply with the Companies Act 2014 and enable the financial statements to be audited. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Sinéad Barry

Patricia Carey

Treasurer, Belong To

Chair, Belong To

Samy Pa

Report on the audit of the financial statements

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Belong To Youth Services for the year ended 31st December 2024 which comprise the Income and Expenditure Account, balance sheet, statement of changes in reserves, statement of cashflows and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies set out in note 2. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is Irish law and FRS 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland.

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the company as at 31st December 2024 and of its surplus for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with FRS 102
 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2014.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (Ireland) (ISAs (Ireland)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the section of our report. We are independent of the company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Ireland,

including the Ethical Standard issued by the Irish Auditing and Accounting Supervisory Authority (IAASA), and the provisions available for small entities, in the circumstances set out in note 31 to the financial statements, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions Relating to Going Concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the Company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the directors with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other Information

The Directors are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on Other Matters Prescribed by the Companies Act 2014

Based solely on the work undertaken in the course of the audit, we report that:

- in our opinion, the information given in the Directors report is consistent with the financial statements; and
- in our opinion, the Directors report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

We have obtained all the information and explanations which we consider necessary for the purposes of our audit.

In our opinion the accounting records of the company were sufficient to permit the financial statements to be readily and properly audited, and financial statements are in agreement with the accounting records.

Matters on Which we Are Required to Report by Exception

Based on the knowledge and understanding of the company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Directors report.

The Companies Act 2014 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion, the disclosures of Directors' remuneration and transactions required by sections 305 to 312 of the Act are not made. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Respective responsibilities

Responsibilities of Directors for the Financial Statements

As explained more fully in the Directors responsibilities statement, the Directors are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Directors are responsible for assessing the company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the management either intends to liquidate the company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (Ireland) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs (Ireland), we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the internal control.

- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Directors.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the Directors use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the company to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

The Purpose of our Audit Work and to Whom we Owe our Responsibilities

Our report is made solely to the company's members, as a body, in accordance with section 391 of the Companies Act 2014. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the company and the company's members, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Ciarán Murray

Ciarin murray

For and on behalf of

Hayden Brown

Chartered Accountants and Statutory
Audit Firm Grafton Buildings
34 Grafton Street
Dublin 2

13th August 2025

Statement of Financial Activities Year Ended 31st December 2024

Incoming Resource	s Notes	Restricted Funds 2024 €	Unrestricted Funds 2024 €	Total Funds 2024 €	Restricted Funds 2023 €	Unrestricted Funds 2023 €	Total Funds 2023 €
Donations and legacies	3.1	262,179	1,092,386	1,354,565	129,525	943,823	1,073,348
Charitable activities	3.2	870,128	191,799	1,061,927	913,985	128,152	1,042,137
Other trading activities	3.3	-	11,597	11,597	-	52,105	52,105
Total Incoming Resources		1,132,307	1,295,782	2,428,089	1,043,510	1,124,080	2,167,590
Expenditure							
Charitable activities	4	(1,959,834)	-	(1,959,834)	(1,434,394)	(239,881)	(1,674,275)
Cost of raising funds		-	(414,464)	(414,464)	-	(421,143)	(421,143)
Other expenses		-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Resources Expended		(1,959,834)	(414,464)	(2,374,298)	(1,434,394)	(661,024)	(2,095,418)
Net income / (expenditure)		(827,527)	881,318	53,791	(390,884)	463,056	72,172
Transfers Between Funds		827,527	(827,527)	-	390,884	(390,884)	-
Surplus / (deficit) for the year		-	53,791	53,791	-	72,172	72,172
Reconciliation of funds							
Balances brought forward at 1st January 2024	27	-	1,189,307	1,189,307	-	1,117,135	1,117,135
Balances carried forward at 31st December 2024	-	-	1,243,098	1,243,098	-	1,189,307	1,189,307

The statement of financial activities has been prepared on the basis that all operations are continuining operations. There are no recognised gains and losses other than those passing through the statement of financial activities.

A detailed breakdown of the above items is included in supplementary information part of the notes to the financial statements. The cost of voluntary income includes the apportioned fundraising salary costs.

The financial statements were approved by the Board on 13th August 2025

Sinéad Barry
Director

Balance Sheet Year Ended 31st December 2024

	S O O O			0000	
	Notes	€	2024 €	€	2023 €
Fixed assets					
Intangible assets	21	_		-	
Tangible assets	22	58,800		84,667	
			58,800		84,667
Current assets					
Debtors	23	172,457		106,313	
Cash at bank and in hand		1,384,198		1,507,622	
		1,556,655		1,613,935	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	24	(372,357)		(509,295)	
Net current assets			1,184,298		1,104,640
Total assets less current liabilities			1,243,098		1,189,307
Net assets			1,243,098		1,189,307
Contingency Reserve Fund					
Restricted Funds			-		-
Unrestricted Funds			1,243,098		1,189,307
Funds of the Charity	27		1,243,098		1,189,307

These financial statements were approved by the Board of Directors on 13th August 2025 and signed on behalf of the Board by:

Sinéad Barry Patricia Carey
Director Director

Statement of Changes in Funds Year Ended 31st December 2024

	Unrestricted Funds €	Restricted Funds €	Total €
At 1st January 2023	1,117,135	-	1,117,135
Surplus for the year	72,172	-	72,172
At 31st December 2023	1,189,307	-	1,189,307
Surplus for the year	53,791	-	53,791
At 31st December 2024	1,243,098		1,243,098

Statement of Cash Flows Year Ended 31st December 2024

	2024	2023
	€	€
Cash flows from operating activities		
Surplus for the financial year	53,791	72,172
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation of tangible assets	26,979	20,749
Accruals	5,409	(1,212)
Changes in:		
Trade and other debtors	(66,144)	30,096
Trade and other creditors	(142,347)	48,750
Net cash (used in)/from operating activities	(122,312)	170,555
Cash flows from investing activities		
Purchase of tangible assets	(1,112)	(37,727)
Net cash used in investing activities	(1,112)	(37,727)
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	(123,424)	132,828
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year	1,507,622	1,374,794
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year	1,384,198	1,507,622

Introduction

These notes to the accounts contain detailed and helpful information on the affairs of the Charity. We have decided to replicate some of the notes' information within the accounts in the annual report. This duplication is to follow through on our commitment to openness and transparency by presenting the whole picture to any readers of the document without them searching through the small print in the legally required notes for complete answers. An example of this is the duplication of note 20 on page 62 about our staff and volunteers.

1. Statement of Compliance

Belong To Youth Services is constituted under Irish company law, being a company limited by guarantee and not having a share capital. Before enacting the Companies Act 2014, companies not trading for gain by the members were not within the scope of certain company law requirements that apply to for-profit companies. In particular, companies not trading for gain were exempt from applying specific requirements regarding formats and content of financial statements, thus permitting charities to adopt a financial statement format appropriate to the sector.

Accordingly, Belong To Youth Services has adopted and reported its performance within the format recommended by: "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their financial statements with consideration to the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" (Charities SORP (FRS 102)).

These standards were developed jointly by the Charity Commission for England and Wales and the Scottish Charity Regulator's Office. Specifically, Belong To Youth Services reports its financial activities for the year in the format of the Charities SORP (FRS 102) Statement of Financial Activities (SoFA).

The Accounting Standards Body is the body responsible for developing accounting standards for the UK and Ireland. It recognises the Charity Commission for England and Wales and the Scottish Charity Regulator's Office as the SORP-making bodies for the charity sector. Hitherto, the SORP has been recognised as the best practice for financial reporting by charities in Ireland.

The Companies Act 2014 became effective in law on 1st June 2015. From that date, its provisions regarding the format and content of financial statements became applicable to companies not trading for gain, such as Belong To Youth Services. This would require Belong To Youth Services, for example, to present a profit and loss account and report on items such as turnover, costs of sales and profit or loss on ordinary activities before taxation, along with related notes. In the Directors' view, this is neither an appropriate presentation nor terminology for a not-for-profit organisation.

To provide information relevant to understanding the Directors' stewardship and the Charity's financial activities and position, Belong To Youth Services has prepared its financial statements following the formats provided for in the SORP consistent with the prior year.

2. Accounting Policies

Basis of Preparation

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis under the historical cost convention and with consideration to:

- Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their financial statements with consideration to the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (Charities SORP (FRS 102));
- The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102);
- Irish statute comprising the Companies Act 2014; and
- Department of Public Expenditure and Reform Circular 13/2014.

The requirements of the Companies Act 2014 have been modified to comply with the Charities SORP (FRS 102).

Financial reporting in line with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) is considered the best practice for Ireland's charities. As noted above, the Directors consider adopting the Charities SORP (FRS 102) requirements as the most appropriate accounting practice and presentation to fairly reflect and disclose the Company's activities.

In preparing the financial statements, the Directors have considered whether, in applying the accounting policies required by FRS 102 and the Charities SORP, the restatement of comparative items was required.

The preparation of financial statements in compliance with FRS 102 requires the use of certain critical accounting estimates. It also requires management to exercise judgement in applying the Company's accounting policies.

As noted in the Directors' Report, the financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis.

Departure from the Format set out in the Companies Act 2014

According to Section 291 of the Companies Act 2014, the Charity must prepare, in respect of each financial year, financial statements that comply with the format set out in Schedule 3 of the Companies Act 2014. The Company has availed of Section 291(5) of the Companies Act 2014 and has prepared the financial statements under the format as set out under SORP. The Company is a public benefit entity. The Company's Directors believe that the information provided under this format better reflect the Charity's activities.

Principal Accounting Policies

The following principal accounting policies have been applied:

Incoming Resources

Income is analysed according to the activity that produced the resources as follows:

Voluntary Income

Voluntary income, which consists of monetary donations from the public, corporate, or major donors and related tax refunds, is recognised when the organisation is entitled to the resource, the receipt is virtually certain and when the amount can be measured with sufficient reliability. In monetary donations from the public, this income is recognised when the gifts are received.

Charitable activities

Grants from Governments and other large institutional donors, where related to performance and specific deliverables are accounted for as the Charity earns the right to consideration by its performance. It is accounted for when amounts receivable on grant and funding application are approved or paid. Where entitlement is not conditional on the Charity's delivery of specific performance, they are recognised when the Charity becomes unconditionally entitled to the grant.

Donated Services and Facilities

The value of donated services and gifts in-kind provided to the organisation are recognised at their open market value in the period in which they are receivable as incoming resources, where the benefit to the Charity can be reliably measured. An equivalent amount is included as expenditure under the relevant heading in the statement of financial activities, except where the gift in-kind was a fixed asset. In which case, the amount is included in the appropriate fixed asset category and depreciated over the useful economic life per the Charity's policies.

The organisation benefits greatly from the involvement and enthusiastic support of its many volunteers. Following the Charities SORP (FRS102), its volunteers' economic contribution is not recognised in the Financial Statements. Using the Volunteer Investment and Value Audit tool (VIVA) for every €1 we spend on volunteers, we get back €3.18 (2023: €2.61) in the value of work they do. The tool calculates volunteer value by linking volunteer roles to the cost of employing staff to perform the functions and dividing that value by the total expenditure on the volunteer programme. Volunteers are supported through a group supervision process and have access to external support should the need arise.

Investment

Investment income is accounted for on a receipts basis.

Charitable Trading Activity

Incoming resources from charitable trading activity are accounted for when earned.

Restricted Income

The Company's income, the application of which is restricted to a specific purpose by the donor, is treated as restricted income and any unspent amounts as restricted assets. Such specified purposes are within the overall aims of the organisation.

Unrestricted Income

Apart from restricted income, other income is used by the Company to further its work and objectives. Such funds may be held to finance working capital or may be used at the discretion of the organisation for specified purposes within the organisation's aims.

Resources Expended

Resources expended are analysed between raising funds and expenditure on charitable activities. Raising funds and expenditure on charitable activities are accounted for on an accrual basis.

Charitable Activities

Expenditure on charitable activities includes all costs incurred by Belong To Youth Services in undertaking activities that further its charitable aims, including costs allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.

Governance Costs

Governance costs are those activities that provide governance infrastructure which allows the Charity to operate appropriately and to generate the information required for public accountability and transparency.

Raising Funds

Expenditure on raising funds includes all expenditure incurred by Belong To Youth Services for its charitable activities.

Support Costs

Expenditure which is not attributable to a single activity is apportioned between the activities supported.

Contingency Reserve Fund

The Contingency Reserve Fund is a restricted and unrestricted fund designed for ongoing projects to which the organisation is committed. Unrestricted funds are funds expended at the Directors' discretion in furtherance of the Charity's objects. If a part of an unrestricted fund is earmarked for a particular project, it may be designated as a separate fund. Still, the designation has an administrative purpose and does not legally restrict the directors to apply the fund.

Fund Accounting

Restricted Funds

Restricted funds are those donated for use in a particular area or for specific purposes restricted to that area or purpose. The restriction means that the funds can only be used for a particular purpose. Such purposes are within the overall objectives of the Charity.

Unrestricted Funds

Unrestricted funds consist of both general funds and designated funds.

- General funds are available for use at the Board's discretion in furthering any organisation's objects and have not been designated for other purposes. Such funds may help to finance working capital or capital expenditure requirements.
- Designated funds comprise unrestricted funds that the Board has, at its discretion, set aside for particular purposes. These designations have an administrative sense only and do not legally restrict the Board's discretion to apply the fund.

Going Concern

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis. The Directors have reviewed the 2024 statement of financial activities and balance sheet, the approved 2024 budget, and the latest financial information, including an up-to-date forecast which considers the ongoing impact of wars in Ukraine and Palestine, high inflation and increase in the cost of living. The Directors are satisfied that the Charity has adequate resources to continue operational existence for the next 12 months. As a result, they are confident that there are sufficient resources to manage any operational or financial risks. There is no material uncertainty that affects this assumption.

Foreign Currencies

Revenues and costs arising from transactions denominated in foreign currencies are translated into Euro at the rate of the exchange rate on the date on which the transaction occurred.

Assets and liabilities denominated in foreign currencies are translated into Euro at the rate of exchange ruling on the balance sheet date. The resulting surplus or deficit are dealt with in the statement of financial activities.

Payment of Creditors

The Directors acknowledge their responsibility for ensuring compliance with the provision of the EC (Late Payment) Regulation 2002. Our policy is to agree on payment terms with all suppliers and adhere to those terms.

Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand, demand deposits and other short-term highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities.

Tangible Assets

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Tangible assets are initially recorded at cost and are subsequently stated at cost less any accumulated depreciation and impairment losses. Any tangible assets carried at revalued amounts are recorded at the fair value at the date of revaluation less any subsequent accumulated depreciation and subsequent accumulated impairment losses.

An increase in the carrying amount of an asset resulting from a revaluation is recognised in other comprehensive income and accumulated in capital and reserves, except to the extent it reverses a revaluation decrease of the same asset previously recognised in profit or loss. A reduction in the carrying amount of an asset resulting from revaluation is recognised in other comprehensive income to the extent of any previously recognised revaluation increase accumulated in capital and reserves regarding that asset. Where a revaluation decrease exceeds the accumulated revaluation gains accumulated in capital and reserves regarding that asset, the excess shall be recognised in profit or loss.

Depreciation

Depreciation is calculated to write off the cost or valuation of an asset, less its residual value, over the useful economic life of that asset as follows:

Equipment	- 20%	straight line
Fixtures and Fittings	- 20%	straight line

Suppose there is an indication that there has been a significant change in depreciation rate, useful life or residual value of tangible assets. In that case, the depreciation is revised prospectively to reflect the new estimates.

Impairment

A review for impairment indicators is carried out at each reporting date, with the recoverable amount being estimated where such indicators exist. Where the carrying value exceeds the recoverable amount, the asset is impaired accordingly. Prior impairments are also reviewed for possible reversal at each reporting date.

When it is impossible to estimate the recoverable amount of an individual asset, an estimate is made of the recoverable amount to which the asset belongs. The cash-generating unit is the smallest identifiable group of assets that includes the asset and generates cash inflows that are largely independent of the cash inflows from other assets or groups of assets.

Amortisation

Goal 4

Amortisation is calculated to write off the cost of an intangible asset, less its estimated residual value, over the useful life of that asset. Suppose there is an indication that there has been a significant change in amortisation rate, useful life or residual value of an intangible asset. In that case, the amortisation is revised prospectively to reflect the new estimates.

Financial Instruments

Belong To Youth Services has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measures at their settlement value.

Taxation

The Revenue Commissioners have granted the Company charitable tax exemption under the provisions of Section 208 (as applied to companies by Section 76), Section 609 (Capital Gains Tax) and Section 266 (Deposit Interest Retention Tax) of the Taxes Consolidation Act, 1997. This exemption, which applies to Income Tax/Corporation Tax, Capital Gains Tax and Deposit Interest Retention Tax, extends to the Company's income and property. The Charity remits significant payroll taxes and incurs high costs in irrecoverable VAT. The Charity is fully tax compliant.

The Charity is an approved body under the "Scheme of Tax Relief for Donations to Eligible Charities and Approved Bodies" under Section 848A Taxes Consolidation Act, 1997. Therefore, income tax refunds from donations exceeding €250 per annum are included as income in the unrestricted funds.

Debtors

Debtors are recognised initially at fair value and subsequently less any provision for impairment. A provision for impairment of trade receivables is established when there is objective evidence that the Charity will not collect all amounts due according to the original terms of receivables. The provision is the difference between the assets carrying amount and the present value of estimated future cash flows, discounted at the effective interest rates. All movements in the level of the provision required are recognised in the income and expenditure.

VAT

Where appropriate, expenditure includes irrecoverable Value-Added Tax (VAT). Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

Provisions

Debtors are recognised initially at fair value and subsequently less any provision for impairment. A provision for impairment of trade receivables is established when there is objective evidence that the Charity will not collect all amounts due according to the original terms of receivables. The provision is the difference between the assets carrying amount and the present value of estimated future cash flows, discounted at the effective interest rates. All movements in the level of the provision required are recognised in the income and expenditure.

Provisions are recognised when the entity has an obligation at the reporting date due to a past event; the entity will probably be required to transfer economic benefits in a settlement, and the amount of the obligation can be estimated reliably. Provisions are recognised as a liability in the balance sheet and the provision's amount as an expense.

Provisions are initially measured at the best estimate of the amount required to settle the obligation at the reporting date and subsequently reviewed at each reporting date and adjusted to reflect the current best estimate of the amount that would be required to settle the obligation. Any adjustments to the amounts previously recognised are recognised in profit or loss unless the provision was originally recognised as part of an asset's cost. When a provision is measured at the present value of the amount expected to be required to settle the obligation, the discount's unwinding is recognised in finance costs in profit or loss in the period it arises.

Government Grants

Grants are accounted for under the accruals model as permitted by FRS 102. Grants relating to expenditure on tangible fixed assets are credited to the income and expenditure statement at the same rate as the depreciation on the assets to which the grants relate. The deferred element of grants is included in creditors as deferred income.

Grants of a revenue nature are recognised in the income and expenditure statement in the same period as the related expenditure.

3. Income

3.1 Donations and Legacies	Restricted Funds 2024 €	Unrestricted Funds 2024 €	Total Funds 2024 €	Total Funds 2023 €
Corporate donations & sponsorship	43,500	507,405	550,905	327,145
Local/ community fundraising	-	127,089	127,089	135,060
Regular & committed giving	-	20,661	20,661	19,339
Tax refunds	-	11,198	11,198	3,048
Direct marketing/ fundraising appeals	-	386,834	386,834	263,568
Other	13,173	-	13,173	29,873
Community Foundation Ireland	90,153	-	90,153	11,014
Trusts and foudations	12,477	39,199	51,676	250,301
Google.org - Impact Challenge on Safety	102,876	-	102,876	34,000
	262,179	1,092,386	1,354,565	1,073,348

3.3 Other Trading Activites

	Restricted Funds 2024 €	Unrestricted Funds 2024 €	Total Funds 2024 €	Total Funds 2023 €
Training Income	_	11,597	11,597	52,105
	_	11,597	11,597	52,105
Total Funds YE 2024	1,132,307	1,295,782	2,428,089	2,167,590

3.2 Charitable Activities	Restricted Funds 2024 €	Unrestricted Funds 2024 €	Total Funds 2024 €	Total Funds 2023 €
Donated goods and services	-	191,799	191,799	128,152
HSE Mental Health Directorate/ National Office for Suicide Prevention - s.39 Health Act 2004	240,964	-	240,964	243,320
HSE LGBT Research	-	-	-	76,661
CDYSB/ NICDTF - LDTF Emerging Needs	49,365	-	49,365	47,196
DCEDIY - Youth Service Grant Scheme	246,236	-	246,236	234,510
DCEDIY - Youth Capital Funding Scheme	13,161	-	13,161	16,139
DCEDIY - Scheme A: Supporting Community Services for LGBTI+ Persons 2022	-	-	-	87,184
DCEDIY - Scheme A: Supporting Community Services for LGBTI+ Services 2023	52,500	-	52,500	17,500
DCEDIY - Scheme A: Supporting Community Services for LGBTI+ Services 2024	22,678	-	22,678	-
Dept of Education - National Action Plan on Bullying	90,000	-	90,000	90,000
National Lottery Grants Scheme	-	-	-	1,400
University College Dublin and Irish Research Council - Employment Based Programme	-	-	-	9,250
DCEDIY What Works Business Evidence Fund	49,999	-	49,999	-
Dept of Rural and Community Development - SSNO Scheme 2022 - 2025	90,825	-	90,825	90,825
IHREC	14,400	-	14,400	-
	870,128	191,799	1,061,927	1,042,137

4. Expenditure

4.1 Charitable Activities	Direct Costs €	Grant Funding of Activities €	Other Costs €	Support Costs €	2024 €	2023 €	
Goal 1 - Delivering LGBTQ+ Youth Work	343,820	-	-	131,940	475,760	436,621	
Goal 2 - Building Safe Spaces & Services	487,604	45,000	-	134,078	666,682	594,515	
Goal 3 - Campaigning for Change	319,459	_	162,870	74,137	556,466	483,258	
Goal 4 - Being Learning and Development Organisation	140,736	_	19,197	100,993	260,926	159,881	
	1,291,619	45,000	182,067	441,148	1,959,834	1,674,275	
4.2 Governance Costs	Direct Costs €	Other Costs €	Support Costs €	2024 €	2023 €		
Governance costs	8,403		_	8,403	16,794		
Board members vouched expenses	_	-	_	_	-		
Legal and professional	-	73,665	-	73,665	29,690		
Finance Staffing Costs	-	-	82,206	82,206	53,062		
Audit fees	4,920	_	-	4,920	4,736		
	13,323	73,665	82,206	169,194	104,282		
4.3 Analysis Of Support Costs	Cost of Raising Funds €	Goal 1 €	Goal 2 €	Goal 3 €	Goal 4 €	2024 €	2023 €
Governance costs (note 4.2)	16,902	42,236	42,353	16,724	50,979	169,194	104,282
Office premises & facilities	7,499	49,623	63,695	31,066	37,549	189,432	97,400
Information technology	3,000	25,412	16,018	20,254	6,604	71,288	81,386
Human resources	5,629	9,920	7,643	2,937	250	26,379	56,550
Miscellaneous	18,690	4,749	4,369	3,156	5,611	36,575	92,564
	51,720	131,940	134,078	74,137	100,993	492,868	432,182
4.4 Cost Of Raising Funds	2024 €	2023 €					
Staff costs	246,117	186,382					
Support costs (% 4.3 Analysis of Support Costs)	51,720	41,764					
Direct costs	106,896	174,535					
Donated goods and services	9,731	18,462					
	414,464	421,143					

5. Donated Goods and Services

For the financial year 2024, in-kind donations have been recognised, measured at fair value and classified to comply with Charity SORP FRS102.

In-Kind donations and services	2024	2023
Legal and Professional Fees	19,197	29,690
Campaigns and Communications	162,870	80,000
Investment in Future Income	9,732	18,462
	191,799	128,152

6. Exemption from Disclosure

The Charity has availed of no exemptions, and it has disclosed all relevant information.

7. Funds Held as Custodian Trustee on Behalf of Others

The Charity does not hold any funds or other assets by way of custodian arrangement.

8. Post Balance Sheet Events/ Events after Year End

The Board has assessed and considered the potential financial impact to the Charity's fundraising operations due to current global economic conditions and the ongoing wars in Ukraine and Palestine. The risk was assessed as a low probability in the short term but that a medium-term risk presents in 2024. A risk mitigation strategy which began in 2023 and continuing through 2024, includes diversification of income and designation of reserves has been put in place to reduce this risk.

9. Related Party Transactions

The Directors report details vouched for expenses paid to Board members.

In 2024, the total amount of vouched expenses paid to the Board members was €nil (2023: €nil). No Board member claimed expenses during the year (2023: €nil).

As well as donating their time and expertise during 2024, the Directors made unconditional donations of €12,226 (2023: €1,101) to the Charity.

The total amount of gifts, donated goods, and donated services received from companies controlled by Directors during 2024 was €nil (2023: €nil).

Key management personnel made unconditional donations of €3,335 (2023: €2,865) to the Charity. There were no other related party transactions with key management personnel other than remuneration. Please see note 20 for further information.

There were no further related party transactions concerning the Charity's affairs in which the Directors or key managing employees had any interest, as defined in the Companies Act 2014, at any time during the period ended 31st December 2024.

10. Ex-gratia Payments

The Charity made no ex-gratia payments in 2024 and 2023.

11. Public Benefit

The Charity is a registered charity and constituted as a Public Benefit Entity.

12. Capital Commitments

The Charity had no capital commitments on the 31st December 2024 (2023: €nil).

13. Contingent Liabilities

The Charity had no contingent liabilities on the 31st December 2024 (2023: €nil).

14. Umbrella Organisations

The Charity is a member of a wide range of umbrella organisations. Membership of these umbrella organisations does not impact the operating policies adopted by the Charity in any way.

15. Taxation Clearance

Belong To complies with Circular 44/2006 "Tax Clearance Procedures Grants, Subsidies and Similar Type Payments" by providing its tax clearance access number to grant providers when requested.

16. Operating Leases

Expenditure on operating leases is accounted for on a straight-line basis over the length of the lease.

	2024 €	2023 €
Payable on leases in which the commitment expires wi	thin:	
One year	-	-
Two to five years	110,000	165,000
More than five years	_	-
Tota	ıl 110,000	165,000

17. Pension

The Charity operates a Defined Contribution Pension Scheme matched 3% contribution of €24,273 (2023: €16,872) to employees participating in the scheme. In 2024, 15 employees participated in the scheme (2023: 7). Per the provisions of the Pensions (Amendment) Act, 2002, the Charity facilitates employees in establishing a Personal Retirement Savings Account (PRSA) by way of payroll deductions.

18. Critical Accounting Judgements and Estimates

The preparation of these financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the application of policies and reported amounts of assets and liabilities, income and expenditure.

Judgements and estimates are continually evaluated and are based on historical experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances.

The Charity makes estimates and assumptions concerning the future. The resulting accounting estimates will, by definition, seldom equal the related actual results. The estimates and assumptions that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year are discussed below.

Establishing useful economic life for depreciation purpose

The annual depreciation charge depends primarily on each asset's estimated useful economic life and residual value estimate. The directors regularly review the assets useful lives in light of prospective economic utilisation and the physical condition of the assets concerned. Changes in assets useful lives can have a significant impact on depreciation and amortisation charges for the period. Detail of the useful economic lives is included in the accounting policies.

Providing for doubtful debts

The Charity estimates the recoverable value of trade and other debtors. It uses estimates based on historical experience in determining the level of debts, which the Charity believes will not be collected. These estimates include the debtor's current credit rating, the ageing profile of the debtor, and historical experience. Any significant reduction in customers' level that default on payments or other significant improvements resulted in a reduction in the level of bad debt provision would have a positive impact on the operating results. The necessary level of provision is reviewed on an ongoing basis.

19. Operating Surplus

Operating surplus is stated after charging:	2024 €	2023 €
Depreciation of tangible assets	26,979	20,749

20. Staff Costs

The average number of persons employed by the company during the year was as follows:	2024 Number	2023 Number
Administrative	7	7
Education and Training	3	3
Policy, Research and Communications	4	4
Youth Work	7	7
Fundraising	4	3
	25	24

The aggregate payroll costs incurred during the year were:	2024 €	2023 €
Wages and salaries	1,171,535	996,571
Social insurance costs	126,699	107,469
	1,298,234	1,104,040

Bands of Salaries	2024	2023
€50,000 - €60,000	1	1
€60,001 - €70,000	5	5
€70,001 - €80,000	1	1
€80,001 - €90,000	-	1
€90,001 - €100,000	1	_

Remuneration includes salaries and any benefits in kind. One (2023: 1) part-time employees would have the full-time salary equivalent of between €70,001-€80,000 in the year. These part-time employees are included in the table above.

The Company has a remuneration policy that has been agreed by the Human Resources and Remuneration subcommittee as delegated by the Board. This policy states that we seek to be competitive with our peers. As a general principle, this means the Company pitches its salaries at the median of the marketplace. A salary grading structure has been in place for several years and has been approved by the Board.

The CEO, Moninne Griffith commenced on 1st November 2015. The value of her remuneration in 2024 was €95,897 (2023: €87,179). Included in this is employer pension contributions of €2,793 (2023: €2,539). Her contract of employment does not include a performance-related award scheme or any benefit-in-kind/perquisites.

Software Dev

Total

21. Intangible Assets

Software Dev	iotat
€	€
11,364	11,364
11,364	11,364
-	-
Software Dev	Total
€	€
11,364	11,364
11,364	11,364
	11,364 11,364 - Software Dev €

Intangible assets represents the costs involved in developing Belong To CRM technology product which allows the company to manage all their resources and information in one single shared secured location. The costs are being amortised over a five year period.

22. Tangible Assets

	Equipment	Fixtures and	Total
	€	Fittings €	€
Cost			
At 1st January 2024	145,877	39,590	185,467
Additions	948	164	1,112
At 31st December 2024	146,825	39,754	186,579
Depreciation			
At 1st January 2024	76,161	24,639	100,800
Charge for the year	21,379	5,600	26,979
At 31st December 2024	97,540	30,239	127,779
Carrying amount at 31st Dec 2024	49,285	9,515	58,800

	Equipment €	Fixtures and Fittings €	Total €
Cost			
At 1st January 2023	111,819	35,921	147,740
Additions	34,058	3,669	37,727
At 31st December 2023	145,877	39,590	185,467
Depreciation At 1st January 2023	60,928	19,123	80,051
Charge for the year	15,233	5,516	20,749
At 31st December 2023	76,161	24,639	100,800
Carrying amount at 31st Dec 2023	69,716	14,951	84,667

23. Debtors	2024 €	2023 €
Trade debtors	123,907	67,443
Other debtors	-	8,732
Prepayments and accrued income	48,550	30,138
	172,457	106,313

24. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2024 €	2023 €
Trade creditors	64,832	80,167
Other creditors	19,465	32,762
Tax and social insurance: PAYE and social welfare	31,831	32,109
Accruals	20,859	15,450
Deferred income	235,370	348,807
	372,357	509,295

	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	*
Deferred Income	2024	2023
	€	€
HSE - National Office for Suicide Prevention	38,971	38,971
DCYA - CPD LGBTI+ Youth Strategy	750	750
DCEDIY - LGBTI+ Funding 2023 - 2024	-	52,500
DCEDIY - LGBTI+ Funding 2024 - 2025	77,322	-
DCEDIY What Works 2023-2024	-	49,999
IHREC	-	7,200
Google E Learning QMark 2024	-	22,875
TIDES Foundation	-	80,000
CFI Transhealthcare	-	7,044
CFI Its our Social Media	-	15,000
CFI Primary Schools	-	19,093
CFI Toy Show Appeal 2023-2024	6,359	55,375
CFI Toy Show Appeal 2024-2025	40,000	-
Welsh Government Grant Youth Work	3,594	-
British Government Grant Youth Work	3,500	-
HSE Sexual Health Grant 2024-2025	6,700	-
Focus Ireland	58,174	-
	235,370	348,807

25. Company Status

The Company is limited by guarantee not having a share capital. Under section 1180 of the Companies Act 2014, the Company is exempt from including the word 'limited' in its name. The liability of each member in the event of the Company being wound up is €1.

26. Statement of Movements on Statement of Financial Activities

Statement of Financial Activities	€
At 1st January 2024	1,189,307
Surplus for the year	53,791
At 31st December 2024	1,243,098

27. Reconciliation of Movements in Funds of The Charity

27.1 Reconciliaton of Movement of Funds	Unrestricted Funds €	Restricted Funds €	Total Funds €
At 1st January 2023	1,117,135	-	1,117,135
Movement during the financial year	72,172	-	72,172
At 31st December 2023	1,189,307	-	1,189,307
Movement during the financial year	53,791	-	53,791
At 31st December 2024	1,243,098	_	1,243,098

27.2 Analysis of Movements on Funds	Balance 1 January 2024 €	Income €	Expenditure €	Transfers between funds €	Balance 31 December 2024 €
Restriced income					
Restricted	_	1,132,307	(1,959,834)	827,527	
Unrestriced income					
Unrestricted	1,189,307	1,295,782	(414,464)	(827,527)	1,243,098
Total Funds	1,189,307	2,428,089	2,374,298	-	1,243,098

27.3 Analysis of Net Assets by Fund	Fixed assets - charity use €	Current assets €	Current liabilities €	Total €
Restricted	30,807	235,370	(254,835)	11,342
Unrestricted	27,993	1,321,285	(117,522)	1,231,756
	58,800	1,556,655	372,357	1,243,098

28. Grant Recipients

The Mental Health Directorate/ National Office for Suicide Prevention in the HSE provides funding on an annual basis to Belong To Youth Services to operate a small grants scheme to support the establishment and ongoing running of LGBTI+ youth groups across the country.

Prospective fundees are invited to make an application for funding annually setting out their priorities for the year and how they align to the published criteria for the fund. Applications are reviewed against these criteria and are awarded in line with the overall funding available for disbursement and the points awarded to each application. The scheme is open to all members of Belong To's National Network of LGBTI+ youth groups.

In 2024 the total amount of funding disbursed through the scheme was €45,000 (2023: €45,000). The recipients of funding in were:

Grant Recipients	2024 €	2023 €
Crosscare (Bray Youth Services)	2,250	2,250
Youth Work Ireland Cork	8,000	8,000
Crosscare (East Wicklow Youth Services)	2,446	2,446
Donegal Youth Service CLG	8,000	8,000
Ferns Diocesan Youth Service (FDYS)	4,000	5,000
Kerry Diocesan Youth Service (KDYS)	4,790	4,790
Kildare Youth Services Ltd.	5,000	5,000
North Connaught Youth Services	2,190	2,190
Red Ribbon Project Limited T/A GOSHH	4,600	4,600
Youth Work Ireland Tipperary	2,724	2,724
Galway Youth Regional Youth Federation	1,000	-
	45,000	45,000

29. Financial instruments

The carrying amount for each category of financial instruments is as follows:	2024 €	2023 €
Financial assets measured at amortised cost		
Trade debtors	123,907	67,443
Other debtors	48,550	38,870
Cash at bank and in hand	1,384,198	1,507,622
	1,556,655	1,613,935
Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost		
Trade creditors	(64,026)	(80,167)
Other creditors	(308,331)	(429,128)
	(372,357)	(509,295)

30. State Funding Income and Expenditure

Name of Grantor	Health Directorate	Board (CDYSB)	Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY)	Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY)	Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY)	DISACILITY, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY)	Education and Skills	vevelopment (administered by Pobal)	DISABILITY, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY)	Equality Commission	Scheme
Funding Stream	Youth Work	LDTF Emerging Needs	Youth Service Grant Scheme	Youth Capital Funding Scheme	Scheme A: Supporting Community Services for LGBTI+ Persons 2023	Scheme A: Supporting Community Services for LGBTI+ Persons 2024	National Action Plan on Bullying	SSNO 2022-2025	What Work 2023 - 2024	Human Rights and Equality Grants Scheme 2023- 2024	Tax and VAT Refunds from Revenue
Income YE 2024	240,964	49,365	246,236	13,161		100,000	90,000	90,825		7,200	11,198
Deferred Income from 2023 C/F	38,971	_	_	_	52,500	_	-	_	49,999	7,200	
Less Deferred Income to 2025	(38,971)	_	-	-	_	(77,322)	-	_	-	_	_
Capital Grant	_	_	_	_	_	_	<u> </u>	_	_		
Amortisation of Capital Grant	_	_			_	-	<u> </u>	_	_		-
Total Income YE 2024	240,964	49,365	246,236	13,161	52,500	22,678	90,000	90,825	49,999	14,400	11,198
Capital Grant Note: This expenditure is	recognised on the	balance sheet a	us it is a capital e	expenditure							
Expenditure											
Salary	99,637	46,546	190,734		52,500	17,400	44,804	90,825	36,545	_	
Program Costs	89,907	1,039	7,114		_	4,528	29,250	_	11,650	14,400	11,198
Rent and Rates	8,420	750	12,500		_	750	1,750	_	500		
Telephone	2,541		1,251		_	_	556	_	_	_	
Motor and Travel	1,556		1,000		_	_	551	_	_	_	
Light and Heat	1,625	760	1,500		_		1,015	_	475	_	
Print, Post and Stationery	4,159		1,750		_	_	1,416	_	_		
ICT Management	9,078	270	9,500		_	_	2,175	_	_		
Professional Fees	7,798		8,500		_	_	1,665	_	250	_	
Staff Training & Development	4,999		2,500		_	-	1,909	_	250	_	
Communications	1,724		2,000		-	-	1,572	-	329	_	
Insurance	4,024		4,000		-	-	1,563	-	-	_	
Repairs and Maintenance	2,808				_	_	1,765	_	_	_	
Bank Charges and Interest	52		42		-	-	. 9	-	-	_	
Depreciation				13,161	-	-	· _	-	-	_	
Governace & Board Exp	533		823		-	_	-	-	-	_	-
Audit and Accountancy	1,288		1,500		_	_	-	_	_	_	_
Conference					_	_	. <u>-</u>	-	-		_
Membership & Subscriptions			422		_	_	· _	_	-	_	_
			1,100		_	_		_	-	_	-
General Expenses	815										

Goal 4

31. Ethical Standard - Provisions Available for Small Entities

In common with many other businesses of our size and nature we use our auditors to prepare and submit returns to the tax authorities and assist with the preparation of the financial statements. We also use our auditors to provide tax advice and to represent us, as necessary, at tax tribunals.

32. Controlling Party

Revenue Refund

The Directors are the controlling party of the Company.

33. Lobbying and Political Donations

The Charity did not make any political donations during 2024, and as a result, no disclosures are required under the Electoral Act, 1997.

As required under the Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015, the Charity records all lobbying activity and communications with Designated Public Officials (DPOs). The Charity has made the returns and submissions required by the Act.

34. Approval of Financial Statements

The Board of Directors approved these financial statements for issue on 13 August 2025.

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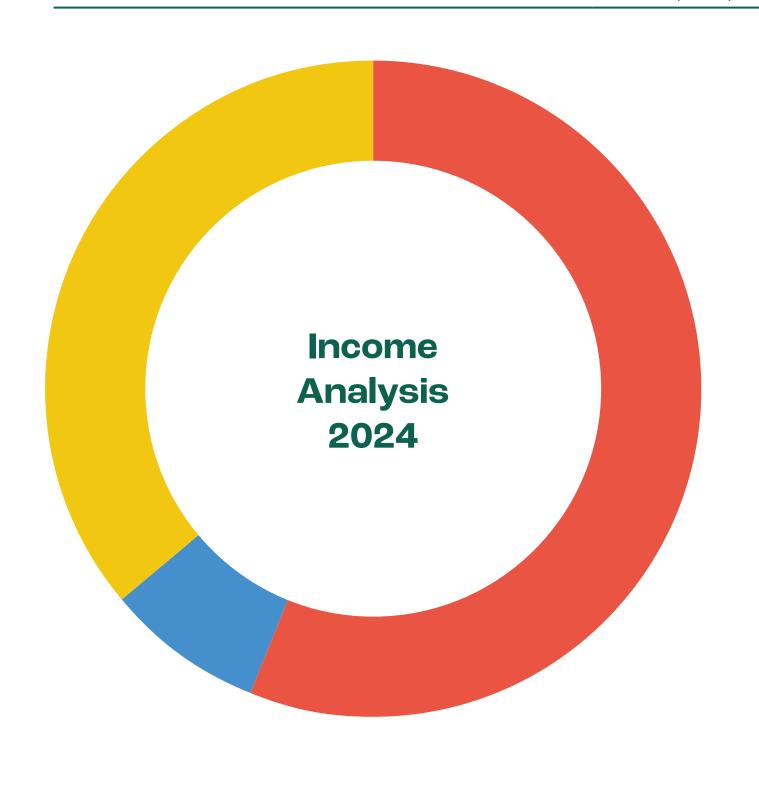
Detailed Income and Expenditure Statement Year Ended 31 December 2024

Income	2024 €	2023 €
DCEDIY (Youth Service Grant Scheme)	246,236	234,510
DECDIY (LGBTI+ Youth Strategy)	125,177	124,659
DECDIY - Transfer to capital grant	-	(19,975)
DCEDIY - Youth Service Grant Scheme	-	76,661
HSE Mental Health Directorate/NOSP	-	45,001
Amoritisation Youth Capital Funding Scheme Grants	13,161	16,139
CDYSB/ NICDTF - LDTF Emerging Needs	49,365	47,196
Dept of Education-National Action Plan on Bullying	90,000	90,000
DRCD - SSNO Scheme 2022-2025	90,825	90,825
HSE Mental Health Directorate/NOSP - s.39 HA 2004	240,964	198,319
IHREC	14,400	
Donations and Legacies	1,264,412	1,072,984
Community Foundation of Ireland	90,153	11,014
Training Income	11,597	52,105
Donated Goods and Services	191,799	128,152
	2,428,089	2,167,590

Expenditure	2024 €	2023 €
Wages and salaries	1,171,535	996,571
Employer's PRSI contributions	126,699	107,469
Advertising and communications	183,917	120,218
Programme costs	365,405	318,512
Investment in future income	116,628	192,997
Printing and Publications	15,884	10,665
Rent payable	62,186	57,491
Insurance	16,486	18,961
Light and heat	11,126	8,042
Cleaning	6,550	6,260
Repairs and maintenance	6,087	6,168
Professional Fees	31,628	42,744
Volunteer Expenses	1,304	_
Telephone	11,036	7,299
Computer and website costs	71,288	81,386
Postage & Stationery	10,534	7,806
Staff Training & Recruitment	26,377	43,496
Travel and subsistence expenses	7,427	6,096
Conference	613	5,058
Legal and professional	34,226	-
Accountancy fees	27,008	_
Auditors remuneration	4,920	4,736
Bank charges	1,516	1,423
Subscriptions	3,894	6,523
Bad debts	18,690	-
General expenses	5,951	7,954
Governance and Board Expenditure	8,404	16,794
Depreciation of tangible assets	26,979	20,749
	2,374,298	2,095,418
Operating surplus	53,791	72,172
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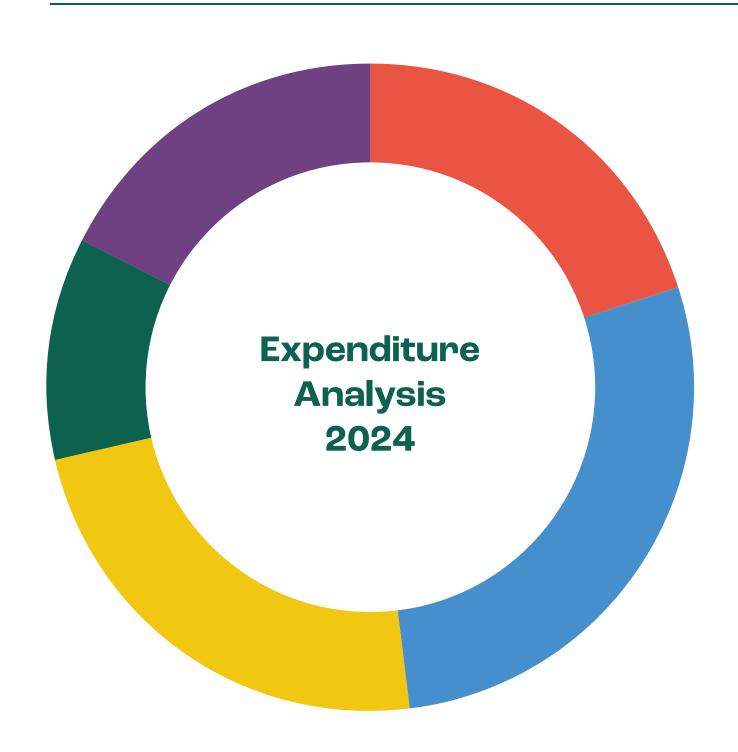
Income Analysis

	2,428,089
State Grants	870,128
Donated Goods and Services	191,799
Fundraised Income	1,366,162



Expenditure Analysis

Goal Analysis	Total YE	State	Fundraised
Goal 1 - Delivering LGBTQ+ Youth Work	475,760	295,601	180,159
Goal 2 - Building Safe Spaces & Services	666,683	330,542	336,141
Goal 3 - Campaigning for Change	556,467	90,000	466,467
Goal 4 - Being a Learning and Development Organisation	260,925	153,985	106,940
Cost of Fundraising	414,464		414,464
	2,374,298	870,128	1,504,171



Reference and Administrative Details

Name of Charity:

Belong To Youth Services

Also Known As:

Belong To

Registered Charity Number:

20059798

Charitable Tax-Exemption Number:

CHY16534

Companies Registration Number:

369888

Ireland

Registered Office:

Parliament House 13 Parliament Street Dublin 2, D02 P658 The names of the persons who at any time during the financial year were directors or secretary of the company are as follows:

Directors/Charity Trustees:

Patricia Carey

Chair December 2023

Aisling Gannon

Vice-Chair December 2023

Maria Afontsenko

Treasurer Resigned July 2024

Sinead Barry

Treasurer Appointed July 2024

Liz Harper

Lucy Ní Raghail

Valerie Maher

Dermot Ryan

Ciaran Finlay Appointed March 2024

Kieran O'Donovan Appointed March 2024

Simon Finnegan Appointed March 2024

Company Secretary:

Suzanne Handley Appointed March 2022

Chief Executive and Senior Management Team to whom responsibility for the day-to-day management of the charity is delegated:

Chief Executive Officer

Moninne Griffith

Deputy CEO, Director of Advocacy & Communications

Sinead Keane

Director of Operations & Programmes

Derrie Murray

Director of Youth Services

Carmel Walsh

Director of Governance & Finance

Suzanne Handley

Director of Education,
Training & Community Practice

Sharon Heron

Director of Development

Marty O'Prey

Names and address of professional advisors:

Auditor

Hayden Brown

Grafton Buildings

34 Grafton Street

Dublin 2, D02 XY06

Solicitors

A&L Goodbody

28 Northwall Quay

Northwall

Dublin 1, D01 H104

Legal Advisors

William Fry

2 Grant Canal Square

Grand Canal Dock

Dublin 2, D02 A342

Arthur Cox

10 Earlsfort Terrace

Dublin 2, D02 T380

Bankers

Allied Irish Bank plc.

126 Capel Street

Dublin 1, D01 VW89

Bank of Ireland

2 College Green

Dublin 2, D02 N271

Our core funders continuously champion the rights of LGBTQ+ young people and we are grateful for their ongoing support.

















Thanks to the generous support of the following organisations in 2024, we can be there for LGBTQ+ youth when they need us most.

A&L Goodbody Eaton Enterprise Registry Solutions Accenture **ESB Energy for Generations** Aer Lingus AerCap **Eversheds Sutherland** AIB Life ΕY Gaiety School of Acting Airtel ATN

Alkermes Genesys Allied Irish Bank Google Inc. **Grant Thornton** Amgen

An Siopa Leabhar Headway Brain injury Services and Supports

Arthur Cox Health Service Executive Horizon Therapeutics Hostelworld

Bank of Ireland HSA **HSBC** Ireland BioMarin International

Blcok Inc. **IES Abroad BNY Mellon** Indeed Inc.

International Financial Data Services (Ireland) Bray Engineering Services

Byrne Wallace **Intuity Technologies** Cadence Design Systems **IPB** Insurance Carberry Group Irish Distillers

Irish Life Carne Group Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Castleknock Hotel

Mark Anthony Brands International

Marsh & McLennan

Matheson

Maven TM Ltd

Clonmel Enterprises Irish Life Health

Irish Wheelchair Association Cognizant **CPL Resources PLC** Johnson Controls

Cronin & Sutton Consulting Kennedys Law

Crowleys DFK Knight Frank Lanelli Ltd Cubic Telecom Maples Dalata Hotel Group

Darta

ATU

Avanade

Dental Care Ireland

Department of Children, Equality, Disability,

Integration and Youth Department of Education

Dogpatch Labs Medserv Dropbox Microsoft Ireland E Y Law MSD Ireland

Musgrave

Murgitroyd & Co

NXF

National Office for Suicide Prevention National Treasury Management Agency

National Youth Council of Ireland

North Inner City Drugs & Alcohol Taskforce

O'Neills

Orchard Fostering

Origina Personio Primark Rabo Bank Rehab Group Salesforce Scor Siro

Society of Actuaries Spectrum Life Sprout Social State Street Strive HQ

Sun Life Financial

Tenable

The Community Foundation for Ireland

The Hive Agency The National Lottery

TJX Europe Toast

Ulster Bank Vestas

Vodafone Ireland

Wayflyer

Western Care Association

William Fry Workday Inc



Belong To

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Dublin 2

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