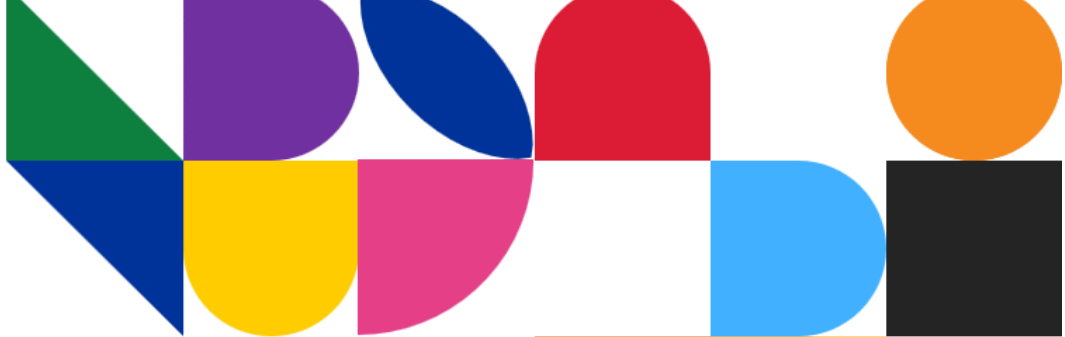




FUNDING INCLUSIVE FUTURES

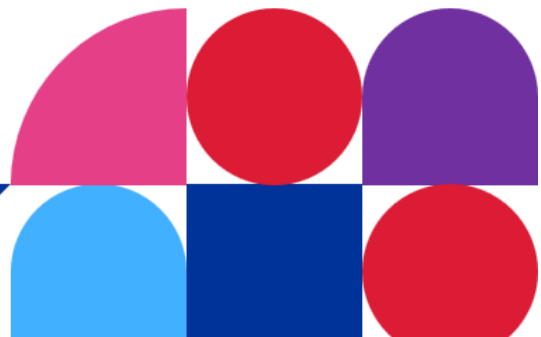


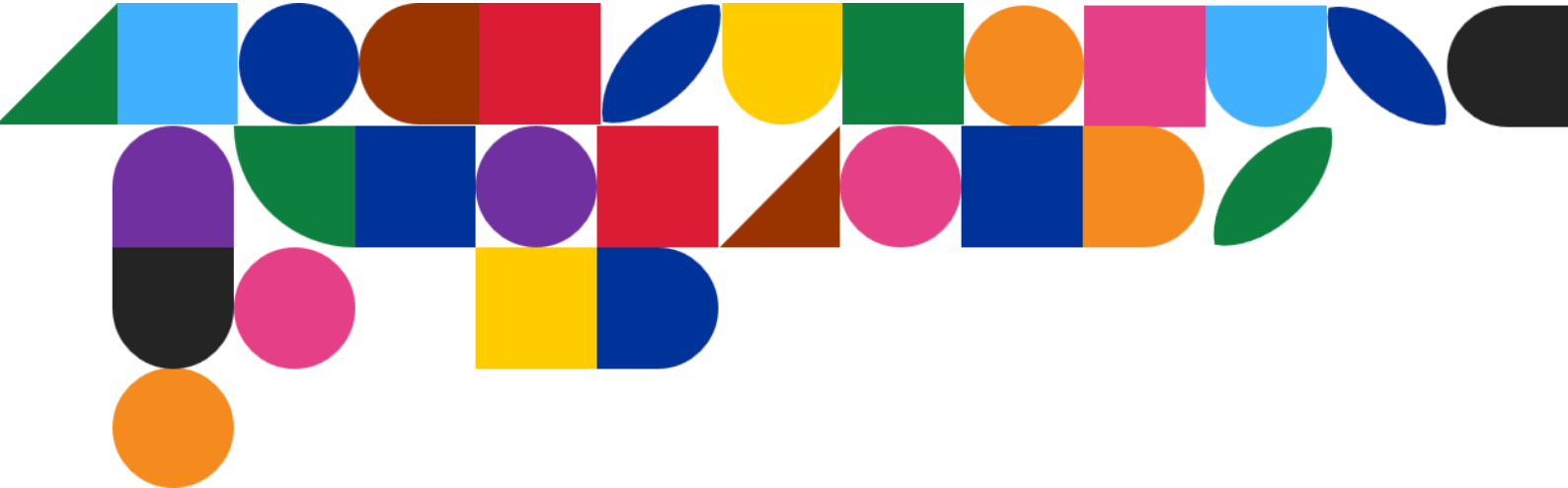
**Budget
2027**



A Pre-Budget Submission by LGBTQI+ community
and national organisations

July 2026





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Budget 2027 provides an opportunity to create an inclusive Ireland, for the benefit of all, by building the inclusive communities, society and health system that will allow LGBTQI+ people to live full, free and safe lives.

INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES



Provide sustainable foundations for LGBTQI+ community spaces, services and celebrations nationwide, to strengthen and build vibrant local communities.

INCLUSIVE SOCIETY



Realise a future where all LGBTQI+ people, can live fully and freely, without fear of hate or discrimination.

INCLUSIVE HEALTH SYSTEM



Create compassionate, person centred healthcare to improve the health and wellbeing of LGBTQI+ people

NLIS II & Community services	Community infrastructure	Regional Prides	LGBTQI+ Research	Tackling anti-LGBTQI+ hate	LGBTQI+ young people	Workplace inclusion	Inclusive healthcare	Sexual Health services	Equal families
DCDE	DRCD	DCCS	DFHERIS	DOJHAM	DEY	DETE	-----	DOH	-----
Support delivery of the benefits of the National LGBTQI+ Inclusion Strategy II €2m Sustain LGBTQI+ Community Services nationwide €3m	Invest in LGBTQI+ community infrastructure, through a capital investment stream to build vibrant communities	Fund Pride cultural programmes in every county, to celebrate LGBTQI+ life and strengthen local communities	Dedicate funding for research on LGBTQI+ inclusion and equality, to support evidence based policy-making	Deliver a National Action Plan to Combat Hate, to support safer communities and strengthen cohesion, for all	Support LGBTQI+ young people in schools €0.65m Resource youth work nationwide €27.3m	Pilot a national LGBTQI+ workplace training programme, in partnership with the LGBTQI+ community	Build inclusive practice in healthcare €1.2m Ensure access to gender affirming care €5.5m Support LGBTQI+ mental health €0.5m	Invest in equitable access to PrEP and PEP, and meet the sexual health needs of under-served populations	Invest in the full operationalisation of the AHRRA and expand public AHR services to include LGBTQI+ people, to support all families
€5m	€50m	€0.2m	€0.75m	€0.25m	€27.95m	€0.5m	€9.5m	€11m	Dept costings

Introduction

This pre-budget submission has been developed in consultation with LGBTQI+ organisations from across Ireland, representing a broad coalition of groups working directly with diverse communities nationwide. The priorities and proposals set out here reflect the lived experience, expertise, and frontline knowledge of the issues affecting LGBTQI+ people in Ireland today, of what is working and what is not, and show what targeted investment in Budget 2027 could achieve.

Ireland has made significant progress in advancing LGBTQI+ equality over recent decades. From marriage equality to gender recognition, Government, civil society, the general public, and LGBTQI+ communities have worked together to deliver landmark legislative and social change. Ireland is rightly recognised as a country where LGBTQI+ rights have moved meaningfully forward. These advances have contributed to a more inclusive society and represent important and meaningful progress. They were hard-won, and are something to be proud of.

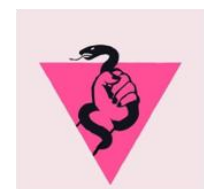
Despite this progress, significant challenges remain. LGBTQI+ people in Ireland continue to face disproportionate levels of mental health difficulties, harassment, and economic hardship. Rates of severe depression, anxiety, and stress have risen sharply since 2016, young LGBTQI+ people experience self-harm and suicide attempts at multiples of the general youth population, transgender and gender non-conforming people face mounting barriers to healthcare, and almost half of LGBTQI+ people report struggling to make ends meet. Legislative progress, while welcome, is not on its own enough.

It does not have to be this way. The same collaboration between Government, communities, and civil society that delivered the progress to date can continue to deliver – and this pre-budget submission is a roadmap. The priorities set out in this document are practical, evidence-informed, and deliverable. Together they describe what an inclusive Ireland looks like in concrete terms: healthcare that works for trans people, schools where LGBTQI+ young people feel safe, community services that are present in every region, and workplaces where people can be themselves.

Delivering this roadmap would position Ireland as one of the best countries in the world to be LGBTQI+ – an international leader with a reputation that reflects our values.

That investment matters for everyone. Investment in LGBTQI+ communities is also an investment in Ireland's social fabric. A society's cohesion depends on the strength of its civil society: organisations that are present on the ground, trusted by the communities they

serve, and able to reach people who may be less likely to engage with statutory services. Resourcing those organisations sustains the infrastructure through which support actually reaches people, and helps Ireland remain competitive, cohesive, and capable of protecting people through periods of difficulty and change.



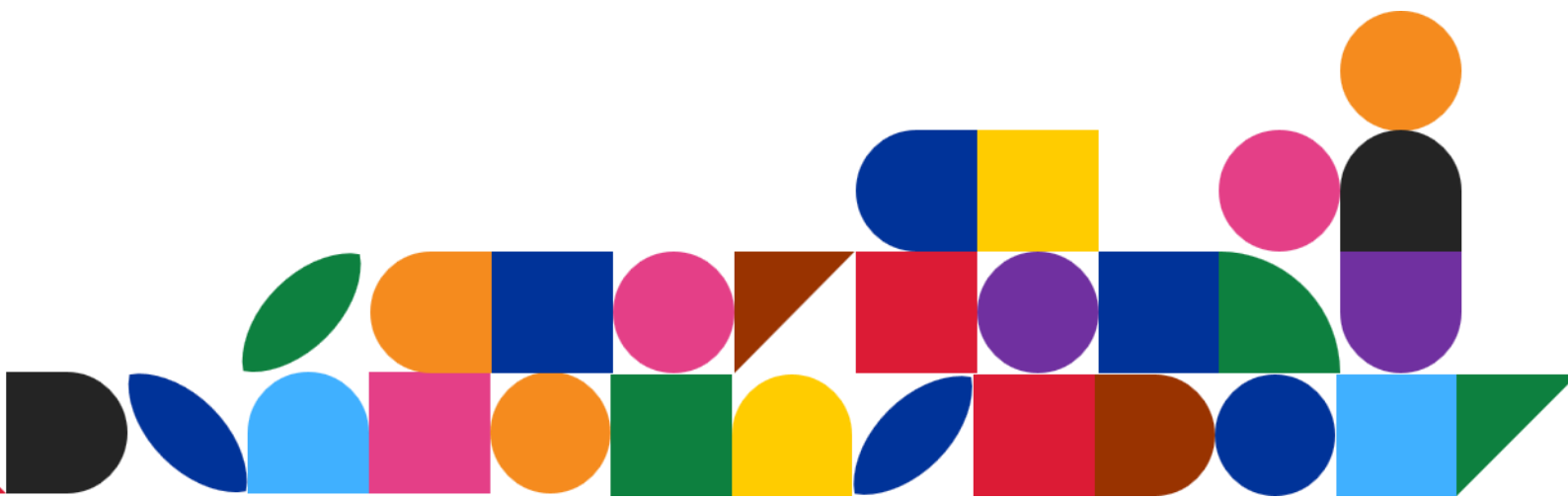
Opportunities

Budget 2027 provides an opportunity to create an inclusive Ireland, for the benefit of all, by building the inclusive communities, society and health system that will allow LGBTQI+ people to live full, free and safe lives.

Budget 2027 is the opportunity for...

- 1.1 A fully realised national strategy that delivers real benefit to LGBTQI+ people in Ireland and furthers Ireland's position as a global leader for LGBTQI+ rights.
- 1.2 Vibrant, sustainable LGBTQI+ community services in every region of Ireland, ensuring LGBTQI+ people can access support and connection where they live.
- 1.3 Accessible, inclusive LGBTQI+ spaces in every region of Ireland, giving LGBTQI+ people of all ages somewhere to meet, get support, and truly belong in their own communities.
- 1.4 Local Pride celebrations in every part of Ireland, celebrating LGBTQI+ life, strengthening communities, and contributing to cultural and economic vitality.
- 1.5 Closing data gaps and creating robust, lived-experience-based research to inform more inclusive public services and stronger policymaking.
- 2.1 A safer Ireland where no community is left vulnerable to hate, and everyone can participate fully in society free from fear.
- 2.2 Fostering inclusive schools nationwide, where all LGBTQI+ students are safe, supported, and able to learn.
- 2.3 An Ireland where young people thrive, supported by a youth-work sector that has the resources to be genuinely inclusive of every young person.
- 2.4 Workplaces across Ireland where LGBTQI+ employees can bring their full selves to work, with employers who have the practical tools to attract diverse, top-tier talent and support high-performing teams.
- 3.1.1 A stronger, more inclusive, person-centred healthcare system that improves health outcomes through compassionate, informed, rights-based care.
- 3.1.2 Supporting transgender people to live healthy, safe and full lives, through timely access to person-centred care that respects dignity, autonomy, and wellbeing.

- 3.1.3 Reversing worsening mental-health outcomes for LGBTQI+ people by ensuring that inclusive, accessible, and affirming mental health services and supports are available when and where people need it.
- 3.2 An equitable, accessible, and inclusive sexual health system that prevents transmission, intervenes early, and supports Ireland's commitment to eliminating new HIV transmissions.
- 3.3 An Ireland where all LGBTQI+ people can equitably access safe, regulated, and affordable pathways to parenthood.



Inclusive communities

1.1 | The National LGBTIQ+ Inclusion Strategy II

 ISSUE	The <i>National LGBTIQ+ Inclusion Strategy II</i> needs resources that match the scale of its ambitions.
 OPPORTUNITY	A fully realised national strategy that delivers real benefit to LGBTIQ+ people in Ireland and furthers Ireland's position as a global leader for LGBTIQ+ rights.
 ACTION	Provide ring-fenced, multi-annual funding to deliver the next <i>National LGBTIQ+ Inclusion Strategy II Action Plan</i> .
 COST	€2 million (<i>plus individual departmental costings</i>)
 DEPARTMENT	Department of Children, Disability and Equality

The *National LGBTIQ+ Inclusion Strategy II 2024–2028 (NLIS II)*, published in June 2025 and accompanied by its first two-year Action Plan, is the State's primary targeted policy for LGBTIQ+ inclusion. As a whole-of-government strategy, it sets out the roadmap towards equality for the years ahead. Its value depends entirely on whether it is resourced to deliver.

Ireland's experience with the first *National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy (2019–2023)* should shape the approach. LGBT Ireland's shadow report graded implementation at C+ overall across 108 actions, with whole outcome areas – trans healthcare, intersex rights, and public policy inclusivity – receiving D and F grades. The report's final recommendation is unambiguous: adequate human and financial resources are what will ensure the next Strategy is fully implemented.¹ That recommendation has since been echoed externally; in its 2025 country report on Ireland, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) recommended that yearly funding for the Strategy's implementation be accompanied by multi-annual budgetary planning and adequate allocation of human and financial resources.²

¹[Progress Made. Renewed Efforts Required. A Shadow Report of Ireland's First National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy](#), p.98.

² [ECRI Report on Ireland \(sixth monitoring cycle\)](#), p.30.

Budget 2027 is the moment to act on this evidence. With ring-fenced, multi-annual funding for both the DCDE and other departments and agencies named in the strategy, the NLIS II can move from a policy document to a delivered strategy.

1.2 | Sustainable, multi-annual funding for LGBTQI+ services

	ISSUE	LGBTQI+ community services are the backbone of LGBTQI+ community support, but services remain overstretched, underfunded, and unevenly available across the country.
	OPPORTUNITY	Vibrant, sustainable LGBTQI+ community services in every region of Ireland, ensuring LGBTQI+ people can access support and connection where they live.
	ACTION	Increase predictable, sustainable, and multi-annual funding for LGBTQI+ community services.
	COST	€3 million (<i>for Budget 2027, with progressive investment to €6m annually by 2030</i>)
	DEPARTMENT	Department of Children, Disability and Equality

LGBTQI+ community organisations are essential partners in delivering the *NLIS II* and in meeting the diverse needs of LGBTQI+ communities that continue to face significant challenges. They provide frontline services, peer support, advocacy, education, and community infrastructure. They are the backbone of LGBTQI+ community support and play a critical role in reaching people who may otherwise remain disconnected from statutory services. In particular, in the context where LGBTQI+ people are experiencing enforced deprivation at nearly three times the national rate³, affordable and accessible services are further needed.

This work is being undermined by a funding model that is largely short-term, project-driven, and inadequate to the scale of need. Annual funding cycles, competitive calls, and single-year grant awards make it extremely difficult for organisations to plan strategically, enter multi-year commitments, or recruit and retain skilled staff. LGBT Ireland's shadow report documented this directly in relation to the LGBTI+ Community Services Fund, calling for

³ [Pride and Poverty Report, 2026](#)

the fund to be placed on a multi-annual basis after repeated delays in announcements caused real operational difficulties.⁴

These concerns are not unique to the LGBTQI+ sector. In 2026, The Wheel identified multi-annual funding as a top priority across the entire community and voluntary sector, noting that one in four organisations were unsure whether they would have sufficient funding to maintain existing services.⁵ The Programme for Government itself commits to a multi-annual funding approach in health; the same principle should be extended to LGBTQI+ community services.

Moving to predictable, sustainable, multi-annual funding would have an immediate and practical impact. Services would be better able to plan ahead, retain experienced staff, respond to rising demand and emerging needs, and invest in long-term development. However, achieving equitable access to LGBTQI+ supports across Ireland will require investment beyond current funding levels. Significant gaps remain in service provision, with many communities lacking access to dedicated LGBTQI+ supports.

Budget 2027 should therefore mark the beginning of a phased approach to strengthening the sector, with investment increasing to €6 million annually by 2030. This would provide a realistic pathway towards sustainable, nationwide service provision, enabling LGBTQI+ organisations to expand their reach, build resilience, and ensure LGBTQI+ people across Ireland can access the support and community connections they need to thrive, regardless of where they live.

“ For more than 20 years, Outcomers supported LGBTQI+ people across the North East with very limited resources.

Dedicated investment through the LGBTI+ Community Services Fund transformed what was possible. It meant we could support new peer groups, local Pride events, community leadership, and stronger connections between LGBTQI+ people and local services across counties where little or no dedicated support previously existed.

We have seen communities build their own local networks, organise events, and create lasting spaces for connection. It shows what sustained investment in LGBTQI+ community infrastructure can achieve, and why **every part of Ireland deserves access to that same opportunity.**”



Bernardine

⁴ [Progress Made. Renewed Efforts Required. A Shadow Report of Ireland's First National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy](#), pp.38–39.

⁵ [The Wheel, Pre Budget Submission 2026](#) and [survey reporting, RTÉ, 21 May 2026](#)

1.3 | Community Infrastructure

 ISSUE	Historic underinvestment in dedicated LGBTQI+ community infrastructure has left access uneven, particularly outside major urban centres.
 OPPORTUNITY	Accessible, inclusive LGBTQI+ spaces in every region of Ireland, giving LGBTQI+ people of all ages somewhere to meet, get support, and truly belong in their own communities.
 ACTION	Establish a targeted, multi-annual capital investment stream for LGBTQI+ community infrastructure.
 COST	€50 million (<i>capital investment</i>)
 DEPARTMENT	Department of Rural and Community Development

The 2024 *Being LGBTQI+ in Ireland* study found that 84% of participants said connection with the LGBTQI+ community through groups had a positive impact on their mental health. The buildings and spaces in which that connection happens are part of the public infrastructure of inclusion. Where they exist they are well-used, and where they do not, the absence is felt.

A dedicated multi-annual capital stream would fund the development, expansion, and refurbishment of community facilities nationwide; the retrofitting of existing buildings to meet universal design and accessibility standards; the expansion of regional and rural community infrastructure; and the creation of inclusive, alcohol-free, community-based spaces supporting diverse needs across people's whole lives.

The NLIS II itself commits to fostering an enabling environment for LGBTIQ+ civil society organisations and to addressing rural isolation and the uneven geographic presence of LGBTIQ+ supports. Capital investment is needed to give those commitments physical form. A dedicated stream, housed in the Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht, would provide the buildings and spaces in which the Strategy's participation and inclusion objectives can actually be delivered.

The geographic dimension is particularly important. For LGBTQI+ communities, regional and rural provision is where the gap is widest and the need is highest. LGBTQI+ young people in rural areas; older LGBTQI+ people experiencing social isolation; and LGBTQI+ Travellers, migrants, and asylum seekers in regional accommodation are precisely the groups

for whom a local, accessible, affirming space is most likely to be the difference between connection and isolation.

Budget 2027 should establish this stream at a scale that matches the gap, with a clear priority for areas of current under-provision. The investment aligns directly with Government objectives on social inclusion, regional development, accessibility, and community participation, and would complement existing programme funding by building the physical infrastructure in which that programme work takes place.

1.4 | Pride celebrations across Ireland

 ISSUE	Pride events around Ireland – which bring visibility, social cohesion, and economic activity to towns and cities – often operate with very limited resources, leaving much of their cultural potential unrealised.
 OPPORTUNITY	Local Pride celebrations in every part of Ireland, celebrating LGBTQI+ life, strengthening communities, and contributing to cultural and economic vitality.
 ACTION	Fund Pride cultural programmes across Ireland through a national grants administrator.
 COST	€0.2 million
 DEPARTMENT	Department of Culture, Communications and Sport

Pride events bring visibility, social cohesion, and economic activity to local communities. AIB Spend Trend data from 2023 found that the day of the Dublin Pride parade generated greater consumer spending in the capital's hospitality sector than the June Bank Holiday weekend.⁶ This is an indication of the cultural and economic value these events generate.

Pride celebrations outside of the capital often operate with very limited resources, and the cultural potential of these events – arts, performance, exhibition, and community celebration – frequently goes unrealised. Grants to local organising groups would represent

⁶ [Dublin Pride parade saw peak consumer spend for Dublin's economy in June, says AIB.](#)

transformative support at community level, enabling meaningful cultural programming that reflects and celebrates LGBTQI+ life in every region of the country.

Recognising the administrative challenge of distributing small grants, we propose that this fund be channelled through a national organisation with an existing remit and the capacity to manage a straightforward grants process, minimising administrative overhead while ensuring accountability and reach. This is a modest investment with the potential for substantial cultural and community impact across Ireland.



Pride of the Déise began putting on events over a weekend and this has grown to an 11-day programme, sometimes building to two full weeks. For the community, this means that there will be historical events, workshops, performances, picnics, sea-side gatherings, walks, talks and general community building at festival time.

Waterford City doesn't have any specific LGBTQ+ spaces for adults. This summer festival is one of the major events of the year for people from the community to gather and create their own safe spaces in various venues around the city and county.

Without funding from the State, Waterford couldn't have this festival to the scale that it does."



Éadaoin

1.5 | LGBTQI+ research



ISSUE

While important progress has been made, persistent evidence gaps continue to limit the development of effective, evidence-informed policies and services for LGBTQI+ communities.



OPPORTUNITY

Closing data gaps and creating robust, lived-experience-based research to inform more inclusive public services and stronger policymaking.

 ACTION	Establish a dedicated LGBTQI+ equality and inclusion research funding stream within national research programmes to support partnerships between higher education institutions and civil society organisations.
 COST	€0.75m ⁷
 DEPARTMENT	Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science

Effective public policy depends on high-quality evidence. In recent years, research relating to LGBTQI+ communities has grown. However, much of the existing research has been driven by civil society organisations, often without sustained or dedicated State funding. As a result, important evidence gaps remain across a range of policy areas, which continues to hinder the State’s ability to design, implement, and evaluate evidence-informed policy responses to inequalities faced by LGBTQI+ people.

There is particularly limited research relating to the experiences of multiply marginalised LGBTQI+ communities, including Travellers and Roma, disabled LGBTQI+ people, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, older LGBTQI+ people, and LGBTQI+ people living outside urban centres. A key data, evidence and research gap exists in relation to people with variations in sex characteristics, which continues to limit effective policy, including healthcare outcomes and service gaps.⁸ Limited disaggregated data and inconsistent inclusion of LGBTQI+ identities within mainstream research and public data collection further constrain effective policy development, service planning, and evaluation.

Budget 2027 presents an opportunity to strengthen Ireland’s evidence base on LGBTQI+ equality and inclusion through targeted and sustainable research investment. Dedicated funding would support the development of more robust data and policy insights across areas including health and wellbeing, education, community safety, participation, and equality.

Funding for LGBTQI+ focused research aligns with the *Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science Statement of Strategy 2025–2028*, including commitments relating to inclusion, societal impact, and knowledge as a public good.⁹ There

⁷ For a specific dedicated fund for Budget 2027, in addition to specific projects which may be supported by other Departments in line with their strategies.

⁸ Monro, S., Wall, S. S., & Wood, K. (2024). [Intersex equality, diversity and inclusion and social policy: Silences, absences, and erasures in Ireland and the UK](#). *Critical Social Policy*, 44(1), 3–22.

⁹ [Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science Statement of Strategy 2025–2028](#)

is also clear precedent for thematic research funding aimed at addressing inequalities experienced by marginalised communities, including the *National Disability Authority Research Promotion Grant Scheme*.¹⁰

Similar dedicated funding to support partnerships between higher education institutions and LGBTQI+ community organisations would help ensure that research is grounded in lived experience, reaches underserved communities, and produces practical insights that can improve public policy and service delivery. In turn, this would support more responsive, effective, and inclusive policymaking across Government, including implementation of *NLIS II*.

¹⁰ [National Disability Authority Research Promotion Grant Scheme](#)

Inclusive society

2.1 | Tackling hate

 ISSUE	While important legislative progress has been made in recent years, many individuals and communities continue to experience harm through hate both online and offline, undermining trust, participation, and social cohesion.
 OPPORTUNITY	A safer Ireland where no community is left vulnerable to hate, and everyone can participate fully in society free from fear.
 ACTION	Allocate dedicated, multi-annual funding for the development of an Action Plan to Combat Hate, using a whole-of-society approach.
 COST	€0.25m (with additional multi-annual funding to support completion and implementation planning).
 DEPARTMENT	Whole-of-Government, with a coordinating function through Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration

The Criminal Justice (Hate Offences) Act 2024 marked an important step forward in Ireland's response to hate crime.¹¹ However, legislation alone cannot address the broader drivers and impacts of hate. International evidence demonstrates that effective responses require comprehensive, cross-government approaches focused not only on enforcement, but also on prevention, education, trust-building, and victim support.

The EU Fundamental Rights Agency and the Council of Europe recognise national action plans against hate crime and hate speech as international best practice.¹² Budget 2027 presents an opportunity for the Government to build on recent legislative progress by investing in a strategic and coordinated national framework to combat hate in all its forms.

Dedicated multi-annual funding is needed to support the development of a comprehensive Action Plan to Combat Hate grounded in human rights and delivered through a whole-of-

¹¹ [Criminal Justice \(Hate Offences\) Act 2024](#)

¹² [European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights Opinion of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights on the Framework Decision on Racism and Xenophobia – with special attention to the rights of victims of crime; Council of Europe, Recommendation CM/Rec\(2022\)16\[1\] of the Committee of Ministers to member States on combating hate speech](#)

Government and whole-of-society approach. Crucially, this process must include dedicated coordination capacity, meaningful and adequately resourced engagement with affected communities, including LGBTQI+ organisations, to ensure that the Action Plan is informed by lived experience and community expertise, evidence gathering and the development of a costed implementation framework.¹³

Properly resourcing the development of this Action Plan would support a more coordinated national response to hate by strengthening prevention and education initiatives, improving public understanding of hate crime and hate speech, supporting community trust and engagement, improving reporting and data collection systems, enhancing trauma-informed supports for victims, and developing more effective responses to online hate and disinformation.

By investing in the development of a long-term national strategy to combat hate, the Government can help foster safer, more inclusive communities across Ireland and support broader Programme for Government commitments relating to equality, safety, participation, and social inclusion.

2.2 | Supporting LGBTQI+ young people in schools

	ISSUE	School remains one of the most difficult environments in Irish life for LGBTQI+ young people, with three-quarters reporting they feel unsafe at school.
	OPPORTUNITY	Fostering inclusive schools nationwide, where all LGBTQI+ students are safe, supported, and able to learn.
	ACTION	Ring-fenced funding for programmes that increase support for LGBTQI+ children and young people in schools.
	COST	€0.65m
	DEPARTMENT	Department of Education and Youth

School remains one of the most difficult environments in Irish life for LGBTQI+ young people. The 2022 *School Climate Survey* found that 76% of LGBTQ+ students feel unsafe at

¹³ [Policy Handbook: A Real-World Guide to Policy Development.](#)

school,¹⁴ and the 2024 Being LGBTQI+ in Ireland national study confirmed that almost half (49%) of LGBTQI+ participants had been subjected to homophobic, biphobic, or transphobic bullying, with around a third reporting that they did not feel they belonged at school at all.¹⁵

The evidence on what changes this picture is consistent. The School Climate Survey found that LGBTQ+ students who felt supported by school staff were 35% more likely to feel accepted by their peers, with higher levels of belonging and lower rates of missing school. An OECD 2023 randomised controlled trial found that workshops sustainably improved students' receptiveness to LGBTI+ inclusion and increased the proportion of students willing to raise LGBTI+ topics with school staff.¹⁶

A whole-school culture of inclusion reinforces and extends this work. Embedded policies and practices, and the presence of LGBTQI+ and ally student groups, are consistently associated with more positive school climates: studies show inclusive policies are linked to reduced absenteeism, while Gender and Sexuality Alliances (GSAs) or similar clubs are linked to greater feelings of safety, belonging and overall wellbeing among students.¹⁷

Irish providers have already demonstrated that well-designed LGBTQI+ programmes produce measurable shifts in knowledge, confidence, and behaviour. What the sector needs now is sustained investment to scale that work so that every school community in Ireland has access to the inputs that are known to make schools safer and more inclusive. An allocation of €0.65m would allow expansion of schools programmes by LGBTQI+ organisations to reach a wider cohort of students and make a sustained difference in their experiences.

“ Teachers who would have felt uncertain with how to approach the subject of LGBTQ+ in their classes felt much more assured after [LGBTQI+ inclusion training], and were more confident in talking through issues of gender identity and sexual orientation with students.

Being able to demonstrate that we as a staff were unconditionally accepting of them regardless of their identity or orientation has **definitely strengthened our bond with students.**



Teacher

¹⁴ [2022 School Climate Survey: Key Findings](#), p3.

¹⁵ [Being LGBTQI+ in Ireland: Key Findings](#), p.12.

¹⁶ [Fighting Homophobia and Transphobia in Schools](#), p.10.

¹⁷ [Gender-Sexuality Alliance Experiences and LGBTQ+ Inclusive School Policies and Practices Predict Youth's School Belonging](#)

Budget 2027 should provide dedicated, ring-fenced funding for programmes that equip teachers, school staff, parents and guardians, students, and Initial Teacher Education with the knowledge and skills to support LGBTQI+ children and young people. This is a direct, measurable investment in the school safety, mental health, and educational outcomes of LGBTQI+ young people in Ireland.

2.3 | Inclusive youth services

 ISSUE	Outside school, LGBTQI+ youth services are often the only LGBTQI+ provision a young person can access, but the youth work sector as a whole is operating under serious financial pressure.
 OPPORTUNITY	An Ireland where young people thrive, supported by a youth-work sector that has the resources to be genuinely inclusive of every young person.
 ACTION	Deliver the National Youth Council of Ireland's Budget 2027 ask of €27.3m for youth work nationwide, with LGBTQI+ inclusion explicitly resourced within it.
 COST	€27.3m (<i>for youth work as a whole</i>)
 DEPARTMENT	Department of Education and Youth

Outside the school gates, youth services are, for many LGBTQI+ young people, the only LGBTQI+ provision they can access. *Being LGBTQI+ in Ireland (2024)* found that 84% of participants said connection with the LGBTQI+ community through LGBTQI+ groups had a positive impact on their mental health, and 93% said the same of making LGBTQI+ friends.¹⁸ These are protective factors that are particularly important given the sharp decline in LGBTQI+ youth mental health documented in the same study.¹⁹ For a young person in a rural area, a young person whose home is unsafe, or a young person at a school without visible supports, a weekly youth group is often the single place where they can be themselves without negotiation.

¹⁸ [Being LGBTQI+ in Ireland: Key Findings](#), p.13.

¹⁹ [Being LGBTQI+ in Ireland: Key Findings](#), p.8.

Youth services that are properly staffed, trained, and resourced are in a position to be genuinely inclusive; those operating under chronic financial pressure are not. Short-term, project-based grants make it difficult to maintain trained youth workers in post, to roll out quality standards for LGBTQI+ practice across the sector, or to offer the consistent weekly presence that young people need to build trust.



I had to look for proper resources alone. My school had no obvious information about LGBTQI+ issues. I was too young for the adult groups in my area and there were no youth spaces, so I had no starting point from them either. I got lucky and found the right information, but many aren't so lucky.

Providing resources in spaces young people spend the most time in is vital to help set young queer people up for success as adults.



LGBTQI+ Young Person

The National Youth Council of Ireland's Pre-Budget Submission 2027 calls for €27.3m for youth work nationwide. Budget 2027 should deliver this increase in full, and in doing so ensure that LGBTQI+ inclusion is explicitly resourced within it. Investment at this level would deliver concrete, measurable gains for LGBTQI+ young people: more youth workers trained in LGBTQI+ inclusion, more services able to adopt and maintain quality standards for LGBTQI+ practice, and greater consistency and safety for young people who may have no other source of affirming support.

2.4 | Workplace inclusion



ISSUE

Many LGBTQI+ people still work in environments where they cannot be open about who they are, and face discrimination.



OPPORTUNITY

Workplaces across Ireland where LGBTQI+ employees can bring their full selves to work, with employers who have the practical tools to attract diverse, top-tier talent and support high-performing teams.

	ACTION	Fund a pilot national workplace LGBTQI+ inclusion programme delivering subsidised training to employers delivered by community organisations with existing expertise.
	COST	€0.5m
	DEPARTMENT	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment

LGBTQI+ employees who cannot be open at work face material consequences for mental health, performance, and retention. Many larger organisations have developed LGBTQI+ inclusion policies, staff networks, and training programmes. SMEs, which account for most Irish employment, often do not have the internal capacity, specialist knowledge, or dedicated HR resources to develop equivalent provision. Without targeted support, this gap is unlikely to close.

Existing LGBTQI+ organisations already deliver evidence-based workplace inclusion training and have established relationships with employers across the country. What is missing is the sustained public investment needed to scale that work, reduce cost barriers for smaller employers, and ensure that quality provision reaches all workplaces.

This funding would support LGBTQI+ nonprofit organisations to pilot the delivery of free and subsidised workplace training programmes targeted at SMEs and other employers with limited in-house capacity. This approach keeps accountability with organisations that have community legitimacy and specialist expertise, while maximising reach and impact. It will also establish the basis for sustainable growth and expansion over time.

The business case is well-established. Open for Business consistently finds that LGBTQI+-inclusive workplaces outperform peers on talent attraction and retention, innovation, and customer trust, with effects that extend beyond LGBTQI+ employees themselves.²⁰ Ireland's competitiveness depends in part on its ability to offer a working environment where people can bring their full selves to work. This investment supports that objective through the organisations best placed to deliver it.

²⁰ [Open for Business Cities Ratings: The Economic Case.](#)

Inclusive health system

3.1 | Inclusive healthcare

3.1.1 | LGBTQI+ inclusive healthcare services

 ISSUE	Many LGBTQI+ people continue to encounter barriers to safe, inclusive, and affirming healthcare in Ireland. In particular, there is a lack of coordinated, rights-based approaches to addressing the specific healthcare needs of intersex people.	
 OPPORTUNITY	A stronger, more inclusive, person-centred healthcare system that improves health outcomes through compassionate, informed, rights-based care.	
 ACTION	Invest in LGBTQI+ inclusive healthcare through dedicated training, capacity-building, and the development of inclusive practice, including specific measures to address the healthcare needs and rights of intersex people.	
 COST	€1.2m	
 DEPARTMENT	Department of Health	

Government commitments under *Sláintecare*, the *National LGBTIQ+ Inclusion Strategy II (NLIS II)*, and wider health policy frameworks recognise the importance of delivering person-centred and inclusive healthcare services. However, many LGBTQI+ people in Ireland continue to experience barriers to safe, affirming, and culturally competent care across the health system.

Addressing these inequalities requires inclusive service design and community-informed approaches to care, and sustained investment in workforce capacity and professional training. Strengthening LGBTQI+ competence across publicly funded healthcare services would support more consistent and responsive care experiences, improve trust in services, and contribute to better health and wellbeing outcomes for LGBTQI+ communities.

Dedicated investment is needed to support LGBTQI+-inclusive healthcare training and capacity-building, alongside the development of rights-based healthcare pathways and professional guidance, in particular relating to intersex healthcare. Investment in these areas would help strengthen a more inclusive and compassionate healthcare system that is responsive to the diversity of LGBTQI+ experiences and aligned with human rights and international best practice.

There remain fundamental gaps in relation to intersex inclusion within healthcare policy and practice. Intersex people in Ireland currently lack access to coordinated, rights-based healthcare pathways, and concerns remain regarding informed consent, bodily integrity, and access to appropriate multidisciplinary supports across the life course. International human rights bodies, including the Council of Europe, have highlighted the importance of protecting intersex people from non-essential medical interventions and ensuring healthcare approaches are grounded in autonomy, dignity, and informed consent²¹.

3.1.2 | Gender affirming healthcare

	ISSUE	Ireland's healthcare services for trans and gender non-conforming people are not safe, timely or person-centred, with significant implications for health, wellbeing, and quality of life.
	OPPORTUNITY	Supporting transgender people to live healthy, safe and full lives, through timely access to person-centred care that respects dignity, autonomy, and wellbeing.
	ACTION	Ensure sufficient, dedicated funding for the full implementation of effective gender-affirming healthcare services, informed by international best practice, and co-designed with the transgender community.
	COST	€5.5m (based on a GP-led model of care, and excluding additional costs which may be associated with system set-up or surgical services)
	DEPARTMENT	Department of Health

²¹ Council of Europe, [CM/Rec\(2025\)7 - Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member States on equal rights for intersex persons](#); Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, [‘Discriminatory laws and policies, acts of violence and harmful practices against intersex persons’](#).

Ireland continues to perform significantly below other EU Member States in the provision of trans healthcare. Public services are extremely limited and unable to meet demand. The National Gender Service (NGS) is Ireland's only public gender clinic. Over 2,500 people are currently on waiting lists to access the service, which has an estimated wait time of approximately 18 years for a first appointment.²² There are currently no services for under-18s.²³ Patients report negative experiences, inaccessibility, and denial of care within the current system and a lack of clear, open communication with the trans community.

These challenges have had significant impact on health, wellbeing, and trust in healthcare provision. The current model of care does not align with international best practice (WHO and WPATH), which mandates the de-pathologisation of trans identities and classifies gender-affirming care under the umbrella of sexual health.²⁴ recognising the need for reform, the Department of Health has established a new National Clinical Programme for Gender Healthcare to develop a new model of care for transgender people.²⁵

Budget 2027 presents a critical opportunity to support the commitment to develop the new model of care, through secure, sustainable, multi-annual investment.

Dedicated funding is needed not only to finalise service design, but to ensure that implementation can proceed effectively and without further delay. Investment decisions at this stage must support a new model of care, rather than reinforcing structural limitations

²² Jessica Black, "[An eighteen-year wait for trans healthcare with more than 2,500 on waiting list](#)", The Beacon, 17 February 2026.

²³ Quilty, A & Belong To (2024) [Trans Healthcare in Ireland: Accessing Healthcare related to Gender Identity for Trans and Non-binary People](#). Dublin: Belong To.

²⁴ World Health Organisation, [International Classification of Diseases](#) – 11, 2022; Coleman, E. et al. [Standards of Care for the Health of Transgender and Gender Diverse People, Version 8](#), *International Journal for Transgender Health*, (World Professional Association for Transgender Healthcare, 2022).

²⁵ Dáil Éireann Debate, Thursday 26 February 2026, [Healthcare Policy, Questions, Minister for Health](#).

“ Long waiting lists and reports of negative treatment meant that I, like many other trans people I know, started transitioning with hormones I bought online, until I could afford to go to a private clinic in the UK.

I want to be happy, to live in dignity, and to be able to get the healthcare that I need right here in Ireland, and for that to happen, we need the Government to invest in high-quality, safe and affirming healthcare services.

Healthcare is a human right, and everyone should be able to get the care that they need when they need it.



Daire

within the current system. This is essential to address existing service gaps, restore trust, and ensure that transgender people in Ireland can access timely, local, informed, high-quality, and rights-based healthcare.

3.1.3 | LGBTQI+ mental health

 ISSUE	LGBTQI+ people in Ireland continue to experience significantly poorer mental health outcomes than the general population, with stigma, discrimination, loneliness, and social exclusion negatively impacting mental health and wellbeing.
 OPPORTUNITY	Reversing worsening mental-health outcomes for LGBTQI+ people by ensuring that inclusive, accessible, and affirming mental health services and supports are available when and where people need it.
 ACTIONS	Fund a dedicated LGBTQI+ mental health programme, focused on accessible counselling support. Invest in expanding specialist LGBTQI+ mental health provision, including increasing capacity within the LGBTQI+ Psychological Service.
 COST	€0.5m (for a dedicated LGBTQI+ programme of accessible counselling support; and increased capacity for the LGBTQI+ psychological service)
 DEPARTMENT	Department of Health

Government commitments under *NLIS II*, *Sharing the Vision*, and *Connecting for Life* recognise the importance of ensuring mental health services are responsive to the needs of LGBTQI+ communities.²⁶ These commitments represent important and welcome progress toward a more inclusive and equitable mental health system.

However, LGBTQI+ people in Ireland continue to experience significantly poorer mental health outcomes than the general population, with worsening trends since 2016, particularly among young people and transgender and gender non-conforming communities.²⁷ These disparities are closely linked to experiences of stigma, discrimination, and social exclusion.

²⁶ [National LGBTQI+ Inclusion Strategy II 2024-2028](#); [Sharing the Vision – A Mental Health Policy for Everyone](#); [Connecting for Life: Ireland's National Strategy to Reduce Suicide 2015 - 2024](#)

²⁷ [Being LGBTQI+ in Ireland: Key Findings](#), p.8.

Loneliness is a significant and often under-recognised driver of poor mental health, with LGBTQI+ people identified as being at increased risk. For LGBTQI+ people experiencing multiple and intersecting forms of marginalisation, mental health risks are often further compounded.²⁸

Despite existing policy commitments, access to appropriate, culturally competent, LGBTQI+-affirmative mental health supports and services remains extremely limited. Persistent barriers include stigma, long waiting lists, geographic inequities, affordability, and concerns about mainstream providers' LGBTQI+ competence. Currently only one part-time counsellor is available through the public health system specifically for LGBTQI+ people.

Targeted investment through a dedicated LGBTQI+ mental health programme would provide an important opportunity to strengthen accessible and culturally competent supports for LGBTQI+ communities. A programme focused on counselling and early-intervention supports could help ensure LGBTQI+ people can access timely and appropriate mental health services regardless of location or ability to pay, while also supporting wider public health objectives relating to prevention, early intervention, and community wellbeing.

Alongside broader investment in counselling and early-intervention supports, specialist LGBTQI+ mental health provision should also be strengthened. The recently established LGBTQI+ Psychological Service represents an important development in dedicated mental health provision. However, the service currently operates with only a 0.5 FTE staffing allocation and is based in Dublin, significantly limiting both its capacity and geographic reach. Stakeholders report lengthy waiting times, often exceeding four to five months, alongside restrictions on the number of sessions available despite high levels of need. While the service provides an important foundation for specialist LGBTQI+ mental health support, current provision is not proportionate to demand. Budget 2027 should provide an initial investment to expand capacity within the service and begin the development of a sustainable, nationally accessible model of specialist LGBTQI+ mental health support.

Models for these types of targeted intervention exist and demonstrate how dedicated investment can improve access to mental health supports for priority populations. In Northern Ireland, funding was provided for a dedicated LGBTQIA+ Mental Health Advocacy Service, supporting mental health professionals with LGBTQI+ expertise to work directly with the community.²⁹ Similarly, the allocation of recurring funding for a national men's

²⁸ [Unveiling Inequality– Experiences of LGBTI+ Travellers & Roma; LGBTI+ people living in International Protection Accommodation Services \(IPAS\) accommodation: Best practices & lived experiences](#)

²⁹ [The Rainbow Project and HERe NI launch brand new LGBTQIA+ Mental Health Advocacy Service](#)

mental health programme demonstrates the role targeted mental health initiatives can play in improving access to counselling and community-based supports.³⁰

Budget 2027 therefore presents an opportunity to build on existing Government commitments by establishing a dedicated LGBTQI+ mental health programme that delivers practical, accessible, and affirming supports for LGBTQI+ people, while contributing to a more inclusive and responsive mental health system overall.

3.2 | Sexual health services

	ISSUE	Access to essential sexual health services remains uneven for LGBTQI+ people generally, and the sexual health needs of some LGBTQI+ communities are under-researched and underserved.
	OPPORTUNITY	An equitable, accessible, and inclusive sexual health system that prevents transmission, intervenes early, and supports Ireland's commitment to eliminating new HIV transmissions.
	ACTIONS	Provide dedicated investment to expand equitable access to sexual health services, including PrEP, PEP, HIV prevention, SH24, and community-based sexual health supports. Fund targeted research and service planning to address gaps in sexual health provision for under-served LGBTQI+ communities.
	COST	€11m
	DEPARTMENT	Department of Health

The *Programme for Government* includes commitments to improve investment in and access to healthcare services for LGBTQI+ people, increase the availability of PrEP and reduce waiting times to access it, and develop a new HIV Action Plan to eliminate new HIV transmissions by 2030.³¹ These are reflected in and inform the *National Sexual Health Strategy*.³²

³⁰ [Minister for Mental Health announces €2 million for new counselling supports for men](#)

³¹ [Programme for Government 2025: Securing Ireland's Future.](#)

³² [National Sexual Health Strategy 2025–2035.](#)

However, despite important progress in sexual health policy in recent years, sexual health services in Ireland remain under-resourced, unevenly distributed, and insufficiently inclusive of the full diversity of LGBTQI+ communities. Access to PrEP remains a significant challenge.³³ Demand continues to exceed service capacity, with a recent report confirming that 809 people are waiting to access PrEP nationwide. Access remains geographically inconsistent, with many regions and areas experiencing waiting times of up to 18 months. These constraints are limiting the effectiveness of Ireland's HIV prevention response and delaying progress toward national targets to expand access and eliminate new HIV transmissions. Additional dedicated and sufficient funding is urgently required to ensure equitable access to PrEP nationwide.

Both the *National Sexual Health Strategy* and the *NLIS II* identify the importance of LGBTQI+ inclusive approaches to sexual health policy and practice.³⁴ Sexual health services and public health responses have historically focused on the needs of gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (gbMSM). This focus remains essential and must continue to be adequately supported. However, significant gaps remain in relation to the sexual health needs of under-served LGBTQI+ populations. The Strategy recognises the need to broaden LGBTQI+ sexual health provision and commits to scoping the sexual health needs of lesbians, bisexual women and other women who have sex with women (gbWSW), transgender and non-binary people, intersex people, and LGBTQI+ people experiencing intersecting marginalisation.

The *National Sexual Health Strategy* also commits to “explore and where possible implement the best ways to enable wide, timely access to PEP, including out-of-hours provision and access for people living at a distance from public STI clinics, for example through online solutions and availability via pharmacists and primary care services, subject to necessary legislative changes.”³⁵ However, a significant gap remains between established policy guidance and the actual experience of accessing PEP within the 72 hour window.

Targeted investment will be necessary to ensure commitments can be implemented effectively and consistently across the country. Budget 2027 therefore presents an opportunity not only to strengthen Ireland's HIV prevention response, but also to build a more inclusive, equitable, and prevention-focused sexual health system that delivers better outcomes for LGBTQI+ communities nationwide.

³³ [Irish Examiner article on PrEP waiting lists.](#)

³⁴ [National Sexual Health Strategy 2025–2035](#); [National LGBTQI+ Inclusion Strategy II Action Plan 2025–2026.](#)

³⁵ [National Sexual Health Strategy 2025–2035](#), p. 29.

3.3 | Enhance equality for LGBTQI+ families

 ISSUE	LGBTQI+ families in Ireland continue to face barriers in access to assisted human reproduction (AHR) services and equitable pathways to family formation.
 OPPORTUNITY	An Ireland where all LGBTQI+ people can equitably access safe, regulated, and affordable pathways to parenthood, and all families are recognised.
 ACTIONS	Invest in the full and timely operationalisation of the Assisted Human Reproduction Regulatory Authority (AHRRA). Expand publicly funded assisted human reproduction services to include donor-assisted treatments, including for LGBTQI+ individuals and couples.
 COST	Department costings <i>We understand that Department costings have already been developed for the operationalisation of the AHRRA. Additionally, inclusion of LGBTQI+ people in a publicly funded DAHR scheme will have a minor impact on the overall costs of such a future scheme.</i>
 DEPARTMENT	Department of Health

The *Health (Assisted Human Reproduction) Act 2024* represents an important step toward establishing a regulatory framework for assisted human reproduction (AHR) services in Ireland and provides for the creation of the Assisted Human Reproduction Regulatory Authority (AHRRA). However, the legislative framework has not yet been fully commenced, and significant gaps remain, meaning many LGBTQI+ families continue to face inequalities in access to family formation, assisted human reproduction (AHR) services, and legal recognition.

Publicly funded AHR treatment has been available since 2023, but treatments involving donated gametes remain excluded.³⁶ This disproportionately impacts same-sex female couples, who can only secure legal recognition of both parents where conception takes place through regulated clinical services in Ireland. To secure legal parentage these couples are required to access AHR services at significant personal cost, creating unequal pathways

³⁶ [Minister for Health announces full funding for assisted human reproduction treatment from September.](#)

to parenthood and family recognition. It is anticipated that forthcoming amending legislation may address some of the remaining gaps within the current framework. However, regardless of future legislative developments, meaningful progress will also depend on adequate implementation, operational capacity, and equitable access to services in practice.

Additionally, the establishment of the AHRRA is a critical step toward a safe, effective, and equitable AHR system.³⁷ However its effectiveness will depend on sufficient multi-annual resourcing, including investment in staffing, infrastructure, operational capacity, and implementation of the wider legislative framework.

Budget 2027 therefore presents an opportunity to support more inclusive and equitable pathways to family formation for LGBTQI+ people and families. Investment in the full and timely operationalisation of the AHRRA, alongside the expansion of publicly funded AHR services to include donor-assisted treatments for LGBTQI+ individuals and couples, would help to enhance equality for rainbow families, in line with *National LGBTQI+ Inclusion Strategy* commitments.

³⁷ [Minister for Health establishes Assisted Human Reproduction Regulatory Authority.](#)

