

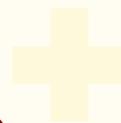


**GAY**   
**PROJECT**  
GAY | BI+ | QUEER | MSM | TRANS

# A Year of Transformation

**ANNUAL REPORT**

*2018/19*



**JULY 19**

**ABOUT  
S**

## ABOUT

The Gay Project is an Irish NGO and registered charity that:

- Supports gay, bi+, trans, MSM and queer men.
- Celebrates gender and sexual diversity.
- Advocates for LGBTQ human rights and policy protections.

## STAFF & STUDENTS

### **Pádraig Rice**

Coordinator - day to day management, finance, leadership and policy.

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Community Development - groups, volunteers, communications.

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### **Mark Holland**

Community Liaison - day to day operation of the community centre.

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### **Konrad Im**

Lead Volunteer / Student Placement.

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## BOARD MEMBERS

Cllr Colette Finn, *Chair*  
 Denis Cronin, *Treasurer*  
 Dr. Fiachra Ó Suilleabháin, *Secretary*  
 John Paul Calnan  
 Arthur Leahy  
 Margie Fennelly  
 John Buttimer

## VOLUNTEERS

Keelin Cox  
*Sexual Health Volunteer*

Julia Van Dyk  
*Café Assistant*

Patrick Imhof  
*Campaigns Assistant*

Patricia Perera  
*Communications*

Adam Lacey  
*Communications*

Anthony Morey  
*Caretaker*

Mark O'Brien  
*Bookclub Coordinator*

Ken O Mahony  
*Social Events Coordinator*

Gerson Leon  
*Photographer*

Ashish Verma  
*Photographer*

Tyrone Power  
*Librarian*

Kevin James O Sullivan  
*Mental Health Events Coordinator*

Gavin Scannell  
*Campaigns Assistant*

Carlos Almeida  
*Sports and Physical Activity Coordinator*

There are also 12 men who volunteer as part of Gay Information Cork / LGBT Helpline



## HSE COMMUNITY WORKERS

Triona Healy  
 Eleanor Moore  
 Rebecca Loughry



## AFFILIATIONS

Cork Equal and Sustainable Communities Alliance

Cork City LGBTI Interagency Group

Cork Sexual Health Network

Gay Health Network

LGBT Ireland

ILGA

## CORE FUNDERS

HSE Cork Kerry Community Work Department

Department of Rural and Community Development

Cork City Council

Community members

## REGISTRATION DETAILS

**(CORK GAY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT CLG):**

CRO: 256161

Charity Number: 20078652

CHY: 19938



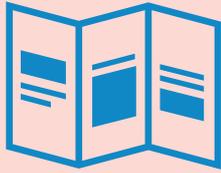
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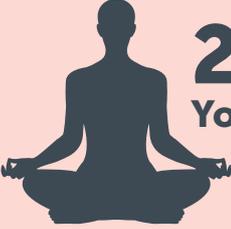
1 NEW GARDEN

2x  policy papers published

3x  SEASONAL WellGBT Programmes

9x  board meetings

 10 NEW GROUPS

 25x Yoga Classes

30+  LGBT young people supported each week

 47x one off events or activities

250  people attended Culture Night

 560+ new instagram followers

 800+ average daily reach on Facebook

 700+ CALLS FOR INFO AND SUPPORT

911  New Facebook likes

3000+  VISITS TO THE Community Centre

 6,000+ emails

 5K CONDOMS DISTRIBUTED

 6,500+ kilometres ran by FRONTRUNNERS

 10,000 leaflets DISTRIBUTED

 6K+ profile views on twitter

 1,500,000 STEPS TAKEN BY THE RAMBLERS & HILLWALKERS

## CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Cllr. Colette Finn

At this time of the year we take time to reflect on the year that has passed. Our project co-ordinator Mr Pádraig Rice and his team have strengthened the project with many achievements.

We welcomed Mr Michael O Donnell and Mr Mark Holland to the Project team. Alongside Pádraig, they have sought to progress the great work that the Project has achieved over many years.

The building that we have been using has seen a lot of change. The core rooms have had a facelift, new furniture has been acquired and the installation of a patio garden has been a real bonus. The project has had many successful groups develop and we are clear that we need to consolidate the work done by our previous esteemed Co-ordinator, the late Mr Dave Roche. We also saw the project name and logo change to the Gay Project to reflect the fact that we are catering for men who live outside of Cork county.

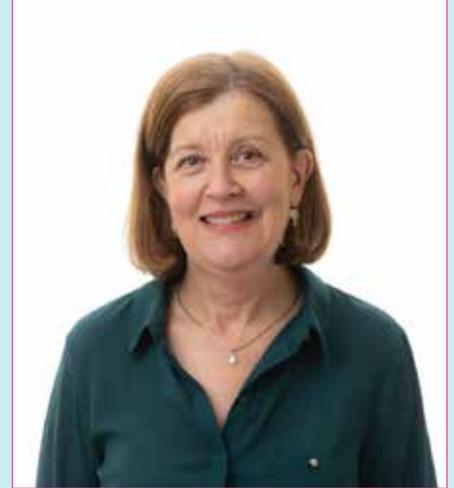
The Board has developed with the Staff Liaison committee and the Building Committee to progress the work of the project. We have endeavoured to put the Project on a more sound corporate governance structure. The implementation of the Charities Regulator's Code of Governance is a priority for the new Board.

Our Board has become more established and we are grateful to The Wheel for their input into Corporate Governance training. The equality agenda continues to

be a work in progress. Building on the Marriage Equality referendum in 2015 we continue to make strides for GBTI rights in Ireland. However a lot has been achieved but there is still plenty left to do.

I would like to thank the staff and Board of the Gay Project for their hard work throughout the past year. I look forward to many new achievements in 2019 and the years to follow.

**Cllr. Colette Finn**  
Chair of Gay Project



We have endeavoured to put the Project on a more sound corporate governance structure.

# COORDINATOR'S REPORT

Padraig Rice

Since last year's AGM the Gay Project has undergone a momentous transformation. We have kickstarted 10 new groups, held two new courses, ran countless new events, created a new space, hired two new staff, added 12 new volunteers, responded to new ideas - all the while maintaining the same core purpose of supporting gay, bi+, trans and queer men. This has been a hectic journey of change that has made the Gay Project more vibrant, more visible and more relevant. The first part of this report will guide you through some of that change and explain the reasons for it. Part two, will set out the context and nature of our ongoing core work.

## New community groups

The most notable change in the last year is the explosion of new gay community groups and activities. From new youth supports to a space dedicated to over 55s and from cultural groups to sports – there is now almost something for everyone.

These new groups and activities have come about as the result of suggestions from community members or success of smaller initiatives that transformed into something bigger.

*These groups are:*

- Cork Fronrunners LGBT Running Club
- OUT LIT LGBT Book Club
- GOLD – Over 55s Social Group
- TENI's Trans Youth Peer Support Group
- Yoga Club
- Gay Ramblers and Hillwalkers Group
- Reel Scene Movie Club
- Trans and Gender Queer Coffee Morning

- Out Past 10 monthly Social Club
- GBT Drama Group

*These are on top of the pre-existing:*

- Parents of LGB Group
- UP Cork LGBT Youth Group
- Queer Vibes LGBT Coffee Social Group

*And other external groups that we have supported:*

- Cork LGBT+ Pride Festival
- Gender Rebels Cork
- Cork Trans Peer Support Group
- ACT UP HIV Activism Group

## New courses

On top of the new groups we also ran two successful courses. The first, a personal development course for men facilitated by Robert Fourie, the second, an art therapy course led by Graham Redmond.

Robert and Graham are both qualified and experienced practitioners. Both expressed a keen interest in working closely with this community in particular and both felt that they wanted to give back to the community using their professional skills.

These courses offered men an opportunity to explore issues like self-care, self-confidence, and self-expression. Spanning over two months, each of the courses gave people an opportunity to make new friends or reconnect with the community.



# COORDINATOR'S REPORT

Padraig Rice - cont...

## New events & festival

This year we hosted a range of one off events and a new festival. *Highlights included:*

The all singing, all dancing, all sparkling, Drag Extravaganza that saw 350 people visit the Gay Project on Culture Night.

OUTing the Past - Cork's first ever LGBT History Festival.

A very special visit by the Laurate for Irish Fiction Sebastian Barry. Which was deemed 'A Literary Coup' by the Evening Echo.



Other one off events included:

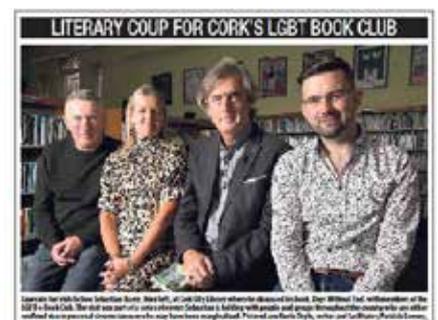
- Pride Wellbeing Evening
- Makeup for Men
- How to Recycle
- SAFEtalk
- ShoutOut Volunteer Training
- Frontrunners Info Night
- UCC Pop-Up Social Café
- Branding Consultation
- CIT SHAG Week event
- HIV Memorial Consultation with Tonie Walsh
- LGBT Ireland Volunteer Training
- Queer Vibes Does Spike Island
- Launch of Winter Wellness Programme
- LGBT Ireland Consultation
- Community Christmas Party
- Out For Movies x 3
- Gay Ramblers Info Evening
- Bi+ Guys Info and Discussion Evening
- Coffee Morning in Aid of Marriage Equality: Northern Ireland
- Launch of OUTing the Past with Senator David Norris
- Euro Games Info Night
- Pop-up Café
- Frontrunners General Meeting
- Big Spring Social
- Queer Vibes Coffee Morning in CIT
- Coffee Morning in Aid of Chechnya
- Grooming for Men
- Skincare Talk and Demo
- Policy Launch: Making Cork the Best Place to be LGBT+
- Non-alcoholic Cocktail Demo with Chambers
- Coffee Morning in Aid of UP Cork
- Strategic Planning Day
- Makeup for Men 2
- Intimacy talk
- WellLGBT Fest 2019
- Queer Vibes Coffee Morning in Bandon
- Big Summer BBQ
- Selfcare with Herbal Medicine Workshop
- Out For Dinner x 6

## New political & media engagement

In the last year I have sought to increase the profile of the Gay Project through engaging proactively and constructively with local and national politicians.

These engagements included:

- A meeting with An Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar at Government Buildings.
- A photo opportunity with Tánaiste Simon Coveney for LGBT Awareness Week.
- Visits to the Gay Project by Minister David Stanton and Senators Jerry Buttimer and Colette Kelleher for the launch of the Winter Wellness Programme in October.
- Inclusion of the Lord Mayor, Mick Finn, in our new promotional video.
- A speech from Senator David Norris as part of OUTing the Past.
- Writing to all of the local election candidates in advance of the elections.
- Meetings with leading national political figures including Micheál Martin T.D., Michael McGrath T.D., Róisín Shortall T.D. and Senator Fintan Warfield.



### We gained coverage in:



## COORDINATOR'S REPORT

Padraig Rice - cont...

### New workshops, classes & training sessions

Over the last 12 months, to tackle the health inequalities faced by the community head on, we have run a series of workshops with a mental, physical and sexual health focus.

We have also delivered training sessions for a general audience – including a session for the Life Long Learning Festival.

*These have included:*

- Classes on consent
- Facilitated discussions about porn
- Workshops on emotional selfcare
- Healthy cooking demos
- LGBT Online Safety workshop
- Workplace LGBT awareness talks
- Training for healthcare workers as part of the LGBT Ireland Champions Programme
- Talk in UCC on Gender Recognition and What Next for LGBT activism.

### New space

One of the biggest changes has been to our space. Thanks to the artistic direction and unparalleled work ethic of Konrad Im, the Gay Project Community Centre has been transformed into a fresh new space. The Centre is now set up in a café style, with storage spaces for groups, a library, a shop and kitchen facilities. The walls have been painted, new furniture has been bought and work is finishing up on a garden space.



### New staff

In the last year we have grown from 1 to three staff. In August 2018 Michael O'Donnell joined us part-time to work on communications, campaigns and community development. He has recently become full-time, adding volunteer coordination to his role and he also provides a range of training and workshops.

In April, Mark Holland joined us as a new part-time staff member. He is the Community Liaison – welcoming people to the community centre, supporting some of the groups and reaching out to the community in a variety of ways.

### New volunteers

Since Christmas we have recruited 12 new volunteers to our team. These volunteers are involved in almost every aspect of service delivery in our organisation. Without the dedicated work of these volunteers we could not deliver the same quality of service.

### New name

In the last year we changed our name and logo. In the past, the organisation has been called many things – most often the Cork Gay Project. For official purposes it is called the Cork Gay Community Development Project Company Limited by Guarantee. To many community members it was known as the Gay Men's Health Project. For others it was known by the personalities involved.

For the time ahead we have chosen the simple name the Gay Project. We hope the new name and brand

will signal that our doors are open to all regardless of where they are from. We are delighted to have people travelling each week from Waterford, Tipperary and Clare to attend our events. We have also added a tag line 'gay, bi+, queer, MSM, trans' to state clearly that we support a diversity of sexualities and gender identities. We are in the process of having the new name officially registered.

As we have a new logo we created a new pull up banner, new sign, new headed paper and new programmes.



### New ideas

We have opened the organisation to new ideas and ways of working. We have tried to reach people where they are with new ads on Grindr, better use of social media – with over 900 new Facebook likes in the last 12 month and outreach sessions in Chambers.

Our work and actions have been led by feedback from the community – from notes stuck in the suggestion box, chats over coffee, and more formal submissions. This summer we started the planning for a formal strategic plan for the next three years so that we can continue to build a thriving organisation for our diverse community.

We have also collated some of these ideas into a policy proposal Making Cork the Best Place to be LGBT that we launched in advance of the local elections. These included big ideas like a dedicated HSE Gay Men's Health Service and more novel ones like a rainbow crossing.

### New partnerships

Recognising the value of community partnerships and shared knowledge, over the last year we endeavoured to develop new allies and networks to raise a broader awareness of LGBT+ issues across the statutory and community sectors.

To this end, we have developed new partnerships in areas such as sexual health by becoming a founding member of the Cork Sexual Health Network. The Sexual Health Network aims to raise awareness of the sexual health services across the region.

In addition, we have also signed a new agreement with the Sexual Health Centre to provide free monthly Rapid HIV Testing in our centre and have worked on innovative ways to promote the testing including the use of ads kindly supported by Grindr.

We have provided the first ever LGBT representative to the Local Drug and Alcohol Taskforce and we have participated in other networks such as the Learning Neighbourhoods.

We have also worked to strengthen the bonds from the pre-existing networks such as LGBT Ireland, ILGA Europe, CESCA and others.



### Same core purpose

Despite all this change our core purpose remains the same. We exist to support gay, bi, trans and queer men, to celebrate gender and sexual diversity and to campaign for LGBTQ+ human rights and policy protections.

Like those who worked for the organisation before us we want to create a situation where everyone from our community can participate fully in Ireland's economic, social, cultural, political and artistic life.

To put it more simply we want to ensure everyone is enabled to live their best life – whatever that might be.

**Pádraig Rice**  
Coordinator



# CONTEXT OF OUR WORK

Our ongoing core work is informed by a growing bank of research that shows that the health outcomes for gay, bi+, queer and trans men isn't as good as it should be and the community still faces high levels of discrimination.

Here are the statistics our work seeks to change:

## HEALTH STATISTICS

55% of gay, bi and trans men are not active enough to maintain good health. This compares to 33% in the general population.<sup>1</sup>

LGBTQI+ young people are two times more likely to have self-harmed, three times more likely to have attempted suicide and four times more likely to have experienced severe anxiety or depression.<sup>2</sup>

256 gay, bi+, other men who have sex with men became HIV+ in 2018.<sup>3</sup>

Drug use in the LGBT community is two times higher than in the general population.<sup>4</sup>

Only 18% of respondents consider that health, social and care services for older people in Ireland are fully inclusive of LGBT people and respectful of their relationships.<sup>5</sup>

## DISCRIMINATION & HATE

33% of LGBTI+ people experienced discrimination in the last two years.<sup>6</sup>

Ireland is ranked 15th in Europe for LGBTI+ human rights and policy protections.<sup>7</sup>

Lack of Hate Crime Legislation or hate crime monitoring / reporting.

75% have been verbally abused due to being LGBTI.<sup>8</sup>

1 in 5 have been punched, hit or physically attacked in public due to being LGBTI.<sup>9</sup>

## REFERRALS

From our service we refer people to a range of other services and supports. These include but are not limited to:

- Sexual Health Centre
- CUH GUM Clinic
- CUH HIV Clinic
- SHEP – low cost counselling
- Cork Counselling Services
- Private providers of counselling services
- LINC
- Gender Rebels
- Cork Transgender Peer Support Group
- Citizens Information
- Free Legal Aid



1 Sports England, 2016  
 2 LGBTIreland, 2016  
 3 Health Protection Surveillance Centre 2019  
 4 LGBTIreland, 2016  
 5 NXF, 2016  
 6 CSO, 2019  
 7 ILGA Europe, 2019  
 8 LGBTIreland, 2016  
 9 LGBT Ireland, 2017

# ONGOING WORK

## Core Activity One - Information and Resources

### Gay Information Cork

Gay Information Cork is a weekly source of information and support. It is part of the national LGBT helpline. The trained volunteers provide a non-judgemental, confidential, listening support and information service for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people as well as their family and friends.

### Open for Information and Resources

Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, the Gay Project is open from 12pm – 3pm for members of the community to call in for information, support, resources, or just to hang out. We offer tea and coffee, LGBT books, DVDs, LGBT and general health leaflets, copies of Gay Community News and free condoms and lube.

### Parents of LGBT Children

The Parents of LGBT Children supports parents to support their children. The group is an informal source of information and support for other parents. They meet on the second Friday of every month at 7pm in LINC on White Street.

### UP Cork LGBT+ Youth Group

The mission of UP Cork LGBT+ Youth Group is to offer young people opportunities for active participation and inclusion in addressing issues that affect their lives. The group provided by Youth Work Ireland meets in the Gay Project every Tuesday.

### Transformers Peer Support

Transformers is a new monthly peer support group for trans young people which is provided by TENI. The group meets in the Gay Project on the third Friday of each month.

### Monthly Free Rapid HIV Testing

In June 2018, we began free community based rapid HIV testing in partnership with the Sexual Health Centre as part of the #KnowNow Programme.



# ONGOING WORK

## Core Activity Two - Events and Social Groups

### OUT LIT LGBT Book Club

In collaboration with Cork City Library we support a monthly LGBT+ Book Club. The goal of the Book Club is to provide a non-alcohol focused social opportunity for the community. They meet on the third Saturday of each month at 3:30pm at the Cork City Library.

### Queer Vibes Coffee Social Group

Queer Vibes is an LGBT+ Social Group which meets once a week. This is a friendly group who are always up for a laugh and is very welcoming to new people. Whether you're a local, a blow-in or totally new to the city, this group provides an opportunity to meet some new people, make some friends and have a chat.

### GOLD Older Men's Group

GOLD coffee morning in the Gay Project is an opportunity for older gay men to meet, socialise and chat with other guys of a similar age. They meet every Friday at 12.

### Yoga for Men

Weekly Yoga for Men every Monday at 7:30pm.

### Drama Club

Drama workshops are an opportunity to let out your inner Drama Queens! The workshops are facilitated by a professional drama instructor. They meet on the first Thursday of every month at 6pm.

### Out Past 10

Out Past 10 is our monthly social night. Members meet at the Gay Project, play some pool and video games, eat snacks and have a laugh. Occasionally this event moves from the Gay Project into the city. The group meets on the first Friday of every month at 9pm.

### Frontrunners

Frontrunners Cork is an LGBT+ running club. The club is designed to remove barriers to physical activity for the community. The club is social and non-competitive in nature – from time to time the club enters races for fun. They meet every Monday at 7pm and every Saturday at 11am at Blackrock Castle.

### Reel Scene Movie Club

Reel Scene Movie Club organise occasional screenings of LGBT themed movies at the Gay Project as well as trips to the cinema!

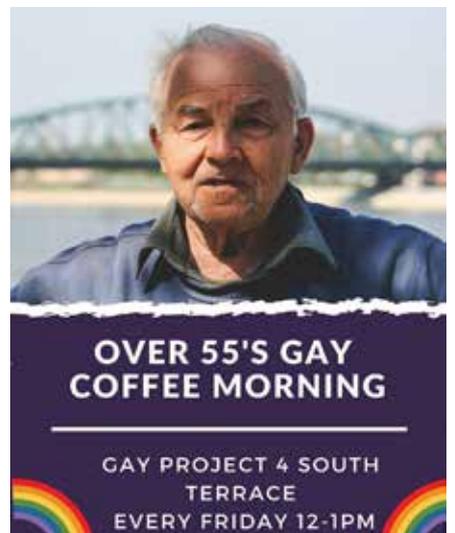
### Gay Rambling Hillwalkers

This group is for members of the community who have an interest in rambling and hillwalking and who would like to share that interest and experience with others. The group is facilitated by members who are volunteers and who have some prior experience of hiking and hillwalking. They meet on the second Sunday of every month at 9am in the city centre to travel together to locations across Munster.

### Other Groups

We also support Cork Rebels FC. This is a football team for members of the LGBT community. They meet in the Lough Community Centre every Saturday at 1pm.

We have made the Community Centre space available to other independent groups including ACT UP Cork and Cork LGBT+ Pride Festival.



## ONGOING WORK

### Core Activity Three - Workshops and Talks

We run a range of in house courses and external talks.

In the last year we ran a personal development course and a course of art therapy as well as one off classes. We have also delivered talks in workplaces and colleges.



### Core Activity Four - Campaigning for LGBTQ+ Human Rights and Policy Protections

We campaign for LGBTQ human rights and policy protections. We are on a mission to make Ireland the Best Place to be LGBT. This year we have placed a focus of effort on the formation of the National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy as a means of advancing a number of causes. We have also continued to engage with our network of local, national and international partners.

These include:



#### Cork Sexual Health Network

A new network of sexual health services has been formed to improve sexual health outcomes in Cork. Some of the members are the Health Service Executive, GUM/STI Clinic in the South Infirmary Victoria University Hospital, the Youth Health Service, Sexual Violence Centre, LINC, the Gay Project and the Sexual Health Centre.



#### Cork LGBTI+ Interagency

The Cork LGBTI+ Inter-Agency brings together a range of state and community partners to raise LGBTI+ awareness and to enhance LGBTI+ Inclusion at a local level. In May we held a week of events to mark the International Day Against Homophobia. The theme for the week's events was LGBTI+ Allies.



#### Cork Equal and Sustainable Communities Alliance

We work with 17 other community and voluntary groups and the HSE to address disadvantage and enhance social inclusion across Cork City.



#### Gay Health Network

Through our membership and involvement with the Gay Health Network we help inform and shape the national sexual health response for men who have sex with men including the introduction of PrEP.



#### LGBT Ireland

As a network member of LGBT Ireland we are working collectively with other LGBT community organisations to support, provide services and advocate for LGBT people in Ireland. One of the core projects we were involved in this year was the creation of an e-learning module for the HSE.



#### ILGA Europe

We have engaged in information sharing and report to ILGA-Europe the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association.



## Get in touch

### Pop in!

Monday, Wednesday or Fridays 12pm — 3pm  
4 South Terrace, Cork, Ireland, T12 DP46

### Phone Us

021 430 0430

### Find Us Online

 @GayProjectIRL  
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 [gayproject.ie](http://gayproject.ie)

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An Roinn Forbartha  
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Department of Rural and  
Community Development



Cork  
City Council  
Comhairle Cathrach Chorcaí

