

# Annual Report 2023



Belong To LGBTQ+ Youth Ireland

# All different



Image Credits?

## **Belong To**

Parliament House  
13 Parliament Street  
D02 P658, Ireland

Tel: +353 (01) 670 6223

Fax: +353 (01) 670 6219

info@belongto.org

www.belongto.org

Charity Number:

20059798

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## **Design and Layout:**

Dave Darcy

One Strong Arm

onestrongarm.com

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# All together

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# Our Impact in 2023

20

years of **Belong To**

27,905 

Students reached through the **LGBTQ+ Quality Mark**

97 

schools involved in **LGBTQ+ Quality Mark**

89

**LGBTQ+ youth groups supported nationwide**



youth services received **The Rainbow Award**

3

new seasonal programmes for **LGBTQ+ youth**

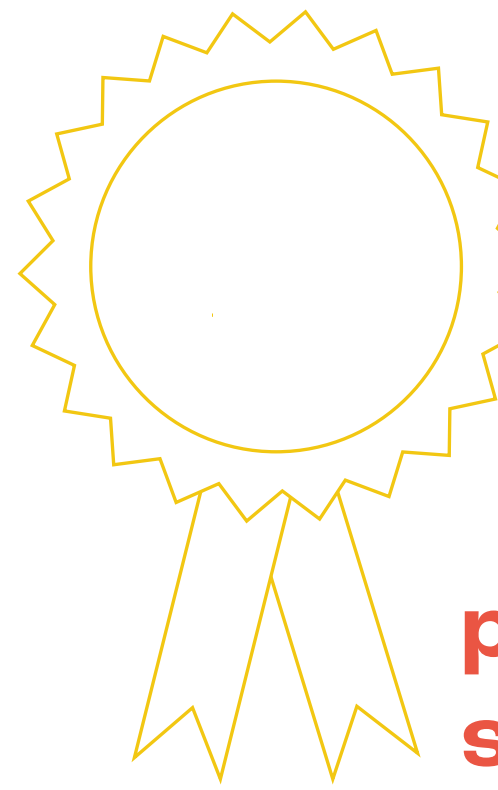
626

individuals supported through our **Dublin Youth Service**

34

**DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS**

# Our Impact in 2023



6,790

professionals trained to support LGBTQ+ youth



1 NEW WEBSITE

and 79,658 visitors to [belongto.org](https://belongto.org)

Increased our social media following by overall **9.2%**



Rainbow Balls



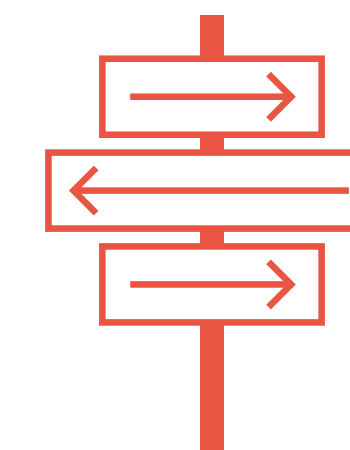
15 youth services started The Rainbow Award journey

312,473

Reached through Stand Up Awareness Week

€2,167,590

raised by our incredible donors and funders



Trekking **87km** of the Camino to fundraise for **Belong To**

# Message from the Chair

Welcome to Belong To's 2023 Annual Report. On behalf of the Board, I am proud to present our Annual Report and financial statements for the year ending 31 December 2023.

Within this Report, we reflect on our progress towards delivering our 2022-2024 Strategic Plan, *All Different, All Together*. We are guided by this Strategic Plan in achieving our vision of a society where LGBTQ+ young people are equal, safe and thriving. The report documents the wide range of services, programmes and projects offered by the organisation from frontline youth services, research reports and communication campaigns to training, fundraising and specialised programmes in schools. The breadth and depth of this work is quite extraordinary.

Here, you will find an overview of our work over the past 12 months, outlining the impact of our work, challenges we encountered and our achievements. We share with you our impact, good governance, financial audit and fundraising results.

As an organisation, we continue to focus on delivering the highest levels of governance and transparency. Accountability is central to our mission and everything we do is to ensure that LGBTQ+ young people feel safe in their homes, schools and communities.

In December 2023, I had the pleasure of stepping into the role of Chair of Belong To's Board of Directors. Following many years of LGBTQ+ activism and a career dedicated to social justice, I am proud to steer this growing organisation. There were a number of changes in the composition of the Board and subcommittees during 2023, which you will read about in this Report. Most significant was the departure of Dominic Hannigan (he/him), who served as Chair from 2021 to 2023. On behalf of the Board, I want to thank Dominic and the Board Members who have so generously dedicated their expertise and passion to Belong To over the years.

The Board continues to operate first-class in governance. This was again recognised in 2023 when, for the fourth year in a row, Belong To was nominated for Charity Board of the Year at the Charity Excellence Awards, organised by the Charities Institute Ireland. This award recognises excellence in governance, accountability and leadership by the Board of Trustees of the winning organisation. I would like to thank all members of our Board and subcommittees for their time and commitment to ensuring Belong To maintains best practice standards.

The dedication and passion of Belong To's staff members must be acknowledged, particularly during a challenging year. Led by CEO, Moninne Griffith (she/her), the team's hard work and commitment to Belong To's mission is unflappable, even when faced with coordinated opposition and personal abuse. On behalf of the Board, we want to commend their work and continue to show our support to the team.

Furthermore, I want to extend gratitude to all of our partners, our incredible team of volunteers, allied schools, youth services and organisations. You play an integral role in supporting the lives of LGBTQ+ youth. Our ambitious plans would not be possible without the ongoing support of our funders, corporate partners and donors, big and small. Thank you for helping to sustain the organisation as we strive to create an inclusive, fair and equal Ireland for everyone.

In Pride

**Patricia Carey** (she/her)  
Chair, Belong To



A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Patricia Carey".

# Message from the CEO

Our Annual Report provides a snapshot of our work at Belong To over the past 12 months.

2023 was an especially difficult year for Ireland's LGBTQ+ community as we experienced the impact of an anti-human rights movement that is being seen across the world, targeting LGBTQ+ and migrant communities.

As reported by ILGA Europe, the past 12 months have seen a stark rise in violence against LGBTQ+ people and an increase in the severity of that violence.<sup>1</sup> Anti-LGBTQ+ hate crime is on the rise and the trend of hate speech, particularly related to trans individuals, follows a global pattern.

In Ireland, LGBTQ+ organisations, groups and allies experienced protests and disruptions at local libraries and Pride events through tactics used by anti-democracy groups around the world. Education has come into focus as a key battleground for inclusion, as anti-LGBTQ+ actors continue to demonstrate fierce resistance to the progression of comprehensive sex education and the inclusion of LGBTQ+ identities in the curriculum.

We have felt this at Belong To as our work to create safe and inclusive schools, youth services and communities was targeted and attacked this year. We witnessed organised

attempts to undermine progress towards LGBTQ+ inclusion in Irish schools. Misinformation about Belong To's work with educators played a central role in these attempts to roll back equality. Schools, youth services and staff committed to creating safe and supportive spaces for LGBTQ+ youth were subjected to online targeting and abuse by anti-LGBTQ+ actors. Our staff team faced online abuse, with threats escalating to such an extent that we had to implement a series of measures for the safety of our team.

And yet, we continued our work. These sinister and hateful actions are designed to distract from our mission of creating an Ireland where all LGBTQ+ young people are equal, safe and thriving. We refuse to let that happen. I feel so proud of our team and want to take this opportunity to thank them for showing up with courage, compassion and commitment to our work.

Despite this challenging environment, our life-changing and life-saving work continued this year. In this Report, you will learn about a series of new programmes and projects launched by Belong To in 2023. In May, we celebrated the success of the first Rainbow Award recipients, shortly followed by a roll-out of the programme in 15 additional youth services. Our LGBTQ+ Quality Mark initiative has continued to go from strength to strength, with 97 post-primary schools now involved in this journey towards LGBTQ+ inclusion.

We dedicated time in 2023 to restructuring our Dublin Youth Service to meet the needs of LGBTQ+ young people today after lockdown, including the introduction of new programmes, projects and groups to empower and support LGBTQ+ youth. We launched a new website, increased our online following

and redoubled our efforts to diversify our fundraising. I was thrilled to join an amazing group of people on Belong To's first Camino to raise funds for our vital work.

These achievements would not have been possible without the support of our Board of Directors, who led the organisation with such care and expertise during a challenging year. I extend heartfelt thanks to our funders and donors, including both individuals and organisations, who supported the work of Belong To in 2023.

Finally, I want to pay tribute to the LGBTQ+ youth and their loved ones who knock on our door, attend our support services, call our team and visit our website. You are the reason we continue to do what we do and why we continue to show up.

There is immense strength in coming together in solidarity and bravery. Our LGBTQ+ community and allies have witnessed incredible progress in recent years. We will not allow this to be rolled back.

Entering into 2024, let us continue to be brave and to stand united against prejudice and injustice as we continue to build an Ireland where LGBTQ+ young people are equal, safe and thriving.

In Pride,

**Moninne Griffith** (she/her)  
CEO, Belong To



Moninne Griffith

1. ILGA Europe. (2023) 2023 Annual Review. Available here.



## Our Mission

Our mission is to empower LGBTQ+ young people through youth work, education, changing attitudes and research.

## Our Vision

Our vision is a society where LGBTQ+ young people are equal, safe and thriving.



# Our Values

## Welcoming

We are mindful of people's wellbeing and strive for our interactions and spaces 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, experience 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 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.

# Our Strategic Goals

*In All Different, All Together, our 2022-2024 Strategic Plan, we express our vision, mission and purpose to drive and give focus to our work.*

Since 2003, Belong To has grown from a youth project into a unique national services and advocacy organisation with and for LGBTQ+ young people. Youth services, which inform our research, education work and a development approach, enable us to provide solution-based advocacy at an institutional and public level.

We are rooted in and driven by our direct work with LGBTQ+ young people aged 14-23 and we exist to:

- Create and generate safe spaces and places for LGBTQ+ young people.
- Empower others through education to support LGBTQ+ young people.
- Lead policy and practice by providing expertise, developing best practice models, and reflecting lived experiences.
- Ensure LGBTQ+ young people have the opportunity to have their voices heard.
- Be an advocate for LGBTQ+ young people and champion change.

This Strategic Plan process provided us with the opportunity to look to both the past and the future. We came together and celebrated our strengths as an organisation. From reaching and supporting a record number of LGBTQ+ youth to building partnerships and effecting legislative change, we have a lot to be proud of. While celebrating our achievements, we reflected on the growth of the organisation and asked ourselves, what next? How can we support this growing demand and increase safe spaces for LGBTQ+ young people across Ireland?

We developed *All Different, All Together*, our Strategic Plan 2022-2024, to equip us with a roadmap to achieve our vision: a society where LGBTQ+ young people are equal, safe and thriving. To achieve this vision, we have set out four ambitious strategic goals. During the strategic planning process, we examined challenges, opportunities and our database, and conducted an environmental analysis. We spoke to our partners, the media, politicians, our team, educators, youth workers, families and LGBTQ+ young people to ensure that this Plan reflects their perspectives on how best to achieve our vision.

Throughout this Report, you will see how we are progressing during the second year of this strategy to achieve our strategic goals. The Report is divided into four sections corresponding to our four strategic goals.

# Goal 1

**Delivering LGBTQ+ Youth Work**

# Goal 2

**Building Safe Spaces and Services**

# Goal 3

**Campaigning for Change**

# Goal 4

**Being a Learning and Developing Organisation**

# Goal 1



Delivering LGBTQ+ Youth Work  
Delivering LGBTQ+ Youth Work

Delivering LGBTQ+ Youth Work  
Delivering LGBTQ+ Youth Work

# Goal 1

## Delivering LGBTQ+ Youth Work

LGBTQ+ young people are safe and supported by a quality youth work service delivered in Dublin in equal partnership with young people.

A strong, expanding network of quality, targeted LGBTQ+ youth groups and safe and supportive youth groups across Ireland.

### Objectives

- 1.1** Empower LGBTQ+ young people through the continued provision of a blended direct youth work and support service which encompasses support to parents and professionals working with them.

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- 1.2** Promote a positive attitude towards mental health while providing pathways for additional support through strategic partnerships with partner organisations.

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- 1.3** Improve access to LGBTQ+ youth services across Ireland by developing youth groups in partnership with services within local communities, expanding the existing National Network, and implementing a mark of quality to ensure quality youth work and best practice LGBTQ+ youth work is promoted.

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- 1.4** Reduce the harms of alcohol and drug use amongst LGBTQ+ young people.

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- 1.5** Empower LGBTQ+ young people to have better sexual health.

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- 1.6** Scope and research how best to provide support to LGBTQ+ children in the 10-14 year old age range.

### Outcomes

- LGBTQ+ young people will have access to safe, high-quality youth work groups, services and supports.

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- LGBTQ+ young people will have access to safe, high-quality mental health services and supports.

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- Young LGBTQ+ people will have access to safe, high-quality youth work services across Ireland.

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- LGBTQ+ youth will have access to specialist supports within Belong To, to reduce the harms caused by alcohol and drug use amongst LGBTQ+ youth.

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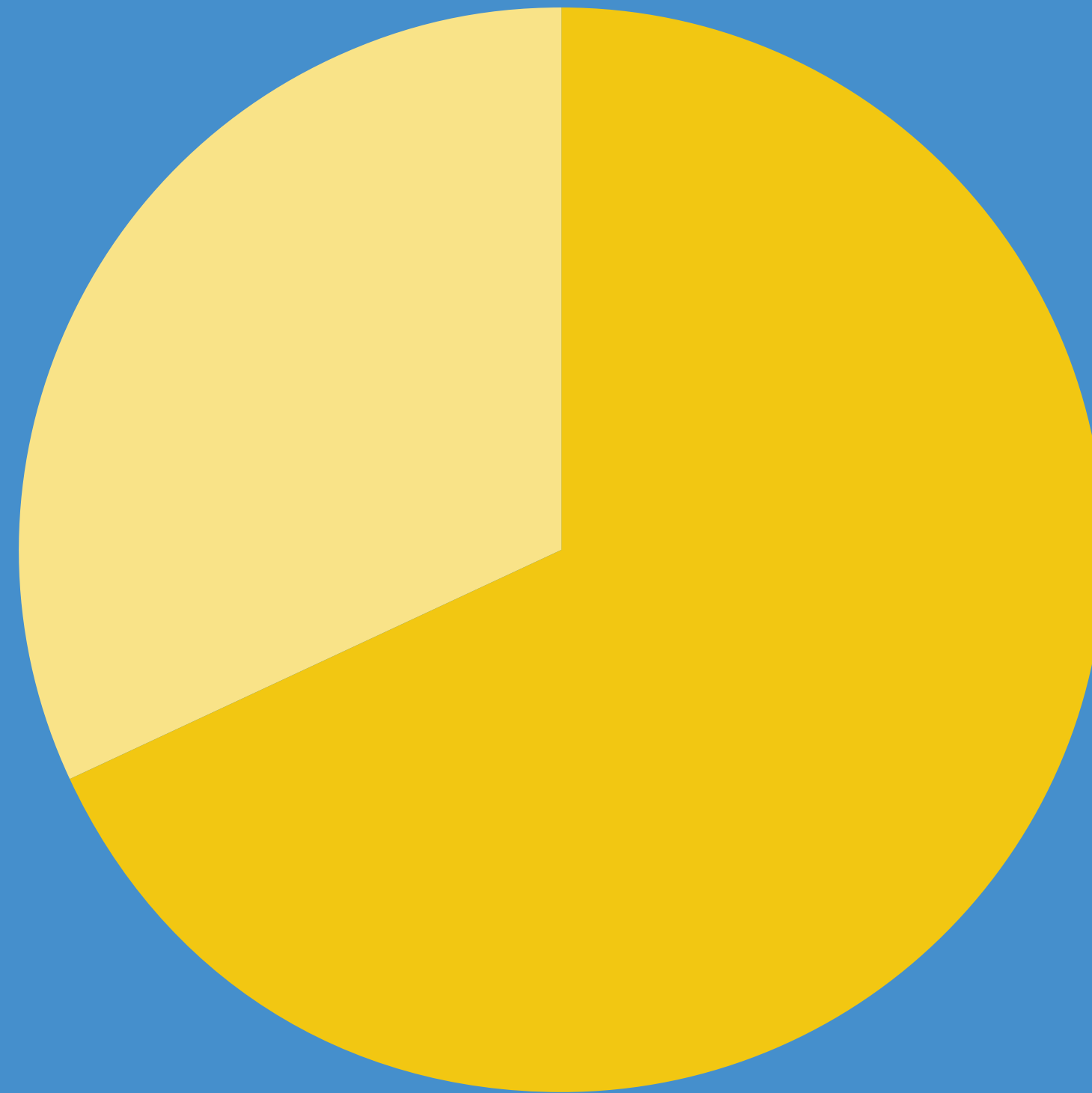
- LGBTQ+ young people will have access to specialist supports and programmes within Belong To related to sexual health and wellbeing, and sexual health professionals will have been supported to provide LGBTQ+ inclusive sexual health programmes.

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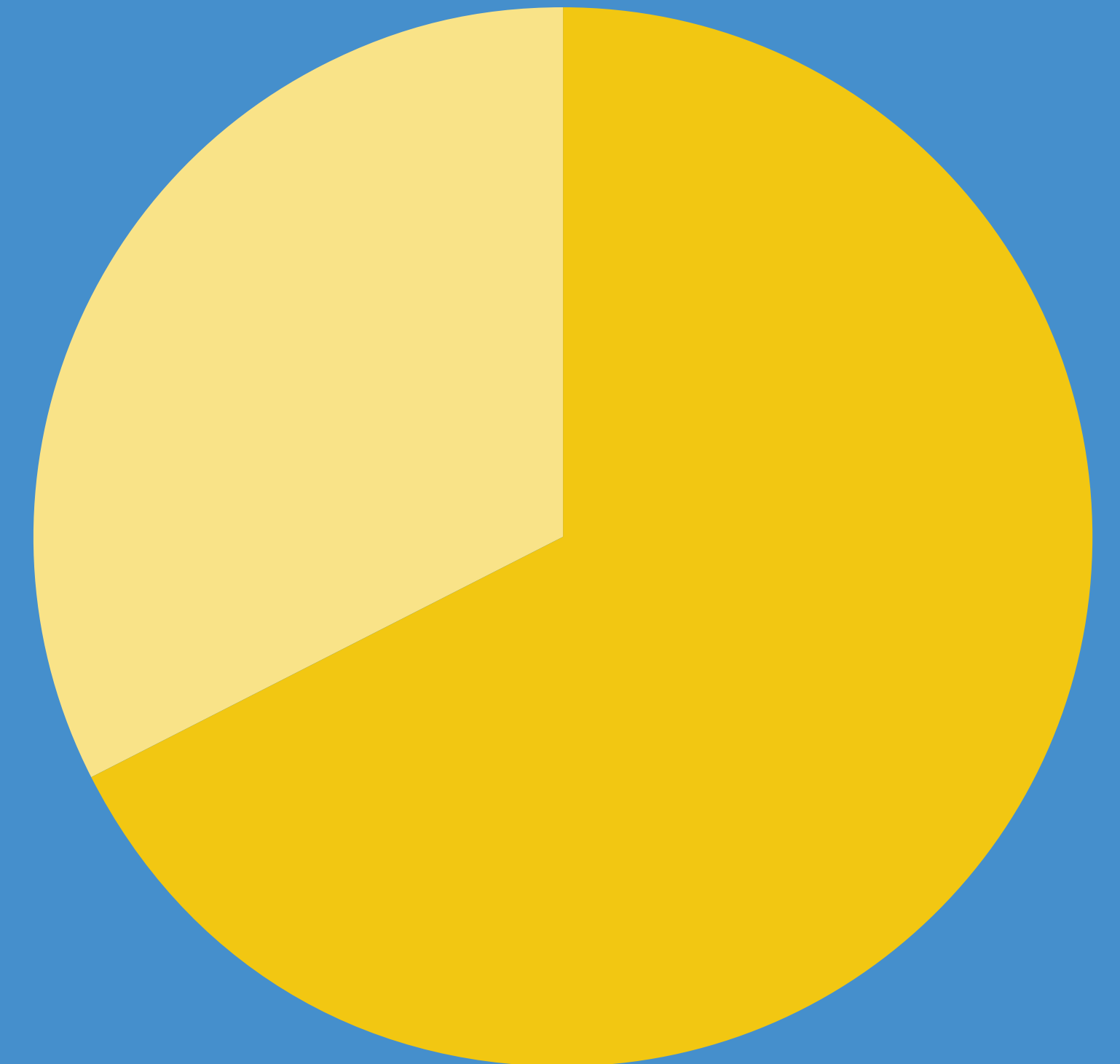
- Belong To will create and deliver a service for 10-14 year old LGBTQ+ children.

# Goal 1

## Delivering LGBTQ+ Youth Work



● State Funding	€299,245
● Fundraised Income	€137,376



● Direct Costs	€294,782
● Support Costs	€141,840



# Shiny Happy People

For many LGBTQ+ young people, our youth groups at Belong To are a space for fun, connection and community. Fifteen-year-old Erin Sharp (she/her) shares her story of coming out and finding her tribe at Belong To.

I lived in Belgium with my family for four years. I moved back to Ireland during Covid and pretty much realised I was queer at the same time. I felt lonely because I didn't know any other queer kids my age, so I said to myself – I need to find out where they are! That's how I ended up coming to Belong To.

I started going to online groups during lockdown. Logging into that first group was nerve wracking because I didn't know what it was going to be like. The first group that I attended in person was The Ladybirds. It was just so lovely! Everyone was doing their own thing, it was such a relaxing space and the youth workers were really nice.

Belong To is a great 'third space'. Lots of my friends complain that there are not many of these in Dublin for teenagers – places to hang out with friends. In most spaces like cafes, they want you in and out. In Belong To, we have a space where we can come together and have fun – and you don't have to pay!

I've been really lucky in that I have always lived in a really open household. My parents campaigned for marriage equality, and I remember knocking on doors with them as a child. For some reason, I forgot about this when I was preparing to come out and I was terrified, because so many people have a bad coming out experience. I was bracing myself for a problem that I didn't have to deal with. So I am very lucky.

I've made some really special friendships at the Belong To summer camp. I met loads of people who are in my life now and it's amazing! It has been a great way of connecting people. I now have a constant community.

I see a big difference in who I was before I started coming to Belong To. I attended The Ombudsman for Children's Rights Conference on behalf of Belong To and spoke at a Pride event. These things that I have been involved in kickstarted what I do now including a project with the Young Social Innovators. I was recently awarded a grant to build an online resource hub for refugees. The project is called Project Fearadh na Fáilte (Project Warm Welcome). There is so much that can get lost through the system, so I want to create one place where they can go and find out about all of the different supports and projects available to them. I am starting with Dublin and hopefully can grow this! Belong To has opened so many doors for me!

It is a wonderful space – what you wish school could be, but it can't because we have to focus on academics! For a few hours every week, you get to have fun, eat snacks, chat with friends and for those who need support, they can get that from the youth workers.



# Protect. Respect. Empower.

Through youth work and a range of support services, we are there for LGBTQ+ young people when they need us.

In 2023, Belong To has continuously highlighted our commitment to empowering and supporting LGBTQ+ young people through a combination of youth-focused initiatives and frontline services. Central to our mission is our direct engagement with LGBTQ+ young people aged 14-23, where we strive to provide them with the necessary support to overcome challenges, provide a safe space to explore who they are and realise their fullest potential within society. Belong To operates within the framework of the 'Critical Social Education Model' of youth work.

Our Dublin Youth Service stands as a beacon of peer support and community for LGBTQ+ young people across the Dublin area. Our dedicated youth workers offer tailored and youth-led support through peer group sessions, programme-based work, harm reduction initiatives and individual support for young people within our service. Further support

is also extended to parents, guardians and professionals working with LGBTQ+ young people.

2023 was a year of change for the Dublin Youth Service, with the departure of long-standing staff and the welcoming of new members to the team. Throughout the year, we said goodbye to interim Youth Work Manager, Glenn Keating (he/him), Sexual Health Youth Worker Seán Frayne (he/him) and National Network Coordinator Barry McSkeane (he/him). We want to thank Seán, Glenn and Barry for their unwavering dedication, professionalism and passion over the years.

As a result of these changes, in 2023 we took the opportunity to review and restructure our provision of and support to youth services in Dublin and nationally to better align with our Strategic Plan. As a result, we merged the National Network Team and the Youth Work Team into a new, single Youth Services Team.

The new Youth Services Team is managed by Carmel Walsh (she/her) who joined us in June 2023. During the year, the team also welcomed five new team members including National Network Coordinator, Kate Cummins (she/her); Development and Training Officer, Leigha Dugdale (she/her); Youth Participation Youth Worker, Katie McCabe (she/her); and Youth Worker, Kelsey Doyle (she/her). We extend congratulations to Brenda Kelly (she/her), who in 2023 was promoted from Youth Worker to Drugs and Alcohol Senior Youth Worker. In December, thanks to funding from Community Foundation Ireland, we created the new role of Family Support Worker and welcomed Jen Geraghty (she/her) to the team.

The newly-formed Youth Services Team is positioned to offer frontline assistance to LGBTQ+ young people and their families, and strategic support on best practice in LGBTQ+-inclusive youth work to the youth work sector throughout Ireland. Our approach will encompass comprehensive support tailored to the needs of LGBTQ+ young people, ensuring a holistic approach to their well-being and empowerment. 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 role is funded by the North Inner City Drug Task Force.



## Frontline Insights

We collate feedback and data from our service users to help us respond to the needs of young people who engage with Belong To. Similarly to last year, in 2023 the majority of LGBTQ+ young people who accessed our Dublin Youth Service groups were aged 18-21. We have identified that young people aged 15-17 made up the largest proportion of young people who access our digital support service, with 34% of this age range contacting us for support. The majority of service users got in touch with us online to find out about how to access our peer-support groups and for information on our support services. The other most common presenting issues in 2023 were supports for trans youth, mental health, queries relating to refugee or asylum originating outside of Ireland and coming out supports.

Our Youth Work Team supported 626 individuals in 2023, a decrease of 6.5% from the previous year (2022: 673; 2021: 909). This total number includes young people, parents, family members, youth workers, teachers, social workers and other professionals who work with LGBTQ+ youth. Our data tells us that LGBTQ+ youth accounted for 44% of this caseload (2022: 47%; 2021: 54%), and there were 1,941 interventions in total including calls and emails (2022: 2,395; 2021: 3,719). Belong To supported an average of 100 individuals each month in 2023, which is an increase of nearly 50% from monthly support in the previous year (2022: 56).

In 2023, we saw a 3% decrease in the number of LGBTQ+ young people attending our in-person groups (2023: 146), compared to the previous year (2022: 151; 2021: 122). This decline is largely attributed to insufficient staffing capacity within the Youth Work Team throughout 2023, stemming from staff departures, role changes and the team only reaching full staffing levels in July 2023. It has been identified by our service users that some LGBTQ+ young people are discouraged to attend groups in the city centre due to the increase in assaults against members of the LGBTQ+ community in recent months, as reflected in An Garda Síochána's recorded increase in hate crimes and hate-related incidents in 2022.<sup>1</sup> This is a challenge for the organisation and we continuously seek to mitigate this through the review and restructure of the Dublin Youth Service.

## Support Services

### Crisis Counselling

Many marginalised communities, including LGBTQ+ youth, often hesitate to seek support unless they are certain of an inclusive and welcoming environment. Recognising the alarming rates of self-harm and suicidal thoughts among LGBTQ+ youth in Ireland, Belong To and Pieta House collaborated in 2016 to establish a national LGBTQ+ service to address this issue. Since its inception, LGBTQ+ youth have found comfort in knowing they can access therapy from Pieta qualified therapists who fully understand and respect their sexual orientation and gender identity.

With this partnership with Pieta, 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 in-person and virtually, caters to individuals aged 14-23, with parental or guardian consent required for those under 18.

In 2023, Pieta conducted 31 clinical therapy hours and 7 client assessments as part of its outreach at the Belong To building on Parliament Street, Dublin 2.

On a broader scale, nationally, Pieta conducted 2,400 therapy hours with 274 client assessments in 2023 for clients aged 13 - 24 from the LGBTQ+ community. The previous year, 2022, saw 127 therapy hours with 64 client assessments. In 2021, Pieta conducted 522 therapy hours and 64 client assessments dedicated to providing free crisis counseling to the LGBTQ+ youth community.

## Drug and Alcohol Support Service

Research shows that substance use problems are significant in the LGBTQ+ community. These impact young people in real and negative ways. The *LGBTIreland Report* examined health and well-being indicators for the LGBTQ+ population in Ireland.<sup>2</sup> The research found that 56% of LGBTQ+ people living in Ireland had taken drugs at some point in their life, compared to 27% of the general Irish population. Among LGBTQ+ young people, 30% of those aged 14-18 and 63% of 19-25-year-olds had used drugs at some point in their lives. This is significantly higher than 14-25-year-olds in the general Irish youth population, only 27% of whom had ever consumed drugs.

1. In March 2023, An Garda Síochána released figures which reported a 29% increase in hate crimes and hate-related incidents in Ireland, with targeting on the basis of sexual orientation being the second-highest recorded form of hate crimes and hate-related incidents. Available here.

2. Higgins A. et al. (2016) *The LGBTIreland Report: national study of the mental health and wellbeing of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people in Ireland*. Dublin: GLEN and BeLong To Youth Services. Available here.

Belong To's *LGBTI+ Life in Lockdown: One Year Later* report also explored barriers faced by LGBTQ+ young people who wanted to access support related to their drug use.<sup>3</sup> Negative past experiences with healthcare workers and service providers, often related to their LGBTQ+ identity, made LGBTQ+ youth nervous and reluctant to seek support. The stigma associated with addiction and drug use was also named as a personal barrier in accessing support.

Belong To has a dedicated drug and alcohol support service that is funded by the North Inner City Drug Taskforce. This service aims to meet the needs of LGBTQ+ drug and alcohol users, minimise drug taking amongst LGBTQ+ young people and build capacity amongst specific drug-related services and youth workers so that they are sensitive to their needs. Belong To approaches this work in a way that does not demonise an already marginalised and vulnerable section of the community, all within the North Inner City.

We follow a harm reduction approach, focusing on reducing the risk associated with drug and alcohol use. We are non-judgmental and take a person-centred approach when working with LGBTQ+ young people around their drug and alcohol use. In addition to direct support, we also offer educational resources and information aimed at increasing awareness of drug and alcohol issues within the LGBTQ+ community. Furthermore, we actively collaborate with specialised agencies and services to ensure individuals receive comprehensive and positive assistance.

At the beginning of 2023, Belong To employed a Drug and Alcohol Senior Youth Worker who is responsible for rolling out a Drug and Alcohol Plan. This youth worker is responsible for providing direct support to LGBTQ+ young people with their drug and alcohol use. The Drug and Alcohol Senior Youth Worker also facilitates drug and alcohol awareness workshops within Belong To's peer support groups. This included a harm reduction campaign launched on social media during Dublin Pride 2023. This campaign, 'Protect Yourself at Pride', aimed to reduce the risk associated with drug and alcohol use.

In 2023, we continued to contribute to the HSE Chemsex Working Group, the North Inner City Drug and Alcohol Taskforce, the Gay Men's Health Network, the Midlands Regional Drug Taskforce, and the National Voluntary Drugs and Alcohol Sector volunteer cluster.

## Family Support Service

In December 2023, we welcomed our new Family Support Worker to the Youth Services Team. The Family Support Worker will create and implement a children and family support pilot service which will address the lack of access to specialised Family Support Service for LGBTQ+ young people. Belong To previously provided family support services on an ad hoc basis when resources are available, to the best of our ability.

Over time, we have seen a change in support requests with more family members (parents, guardians and carers) getting in touch when an LGBTQ+ young person shares that they are LGBTQ+, or are exploring their sexual orientation or gender identity. The aim of the new Family Support Service is twofold; to work directly with families of LGBTQ+ young people and to build the capacity of mainstream family support services to provide front-line health and wellbeing support to families with LGBTQ+ members.

3. Belong To (2021) *LGBTI+ Life in Lockdown: One Year Later*. Dublin: Belong To. Available here.



# Community Matters

Our Dublin youth groups and programmes provide a space for LGBTQ+ young people to develop friendships, get support and belong.

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 peer support 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 issues affecting their lives.

Our team of professional youth workers, with dedicated LGBTQ+ expertise, facilitate weekly youth groups assisted by a team of volunteers. In 2023, a total of 146 young people attended our peer support groups in Dublin. These groups met 196 times in 2023 (2022: 176; 2021: 133). This increase from previous years was a result of the introduction of our programme-based work.

## Youth Work Model And Approach

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 peer support groups. We provide a safe space for LGBTQ+ young people, which aims to improve their well-being 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 model involves engaging young people in 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.

Pictured: LGBTQ+ young people from the Dublin Youth Service joined hundreds of attendees at Dublin Pride 2023.

We facilitate workshops under the themes of fun, interest, concern and life skills. Group members choose what topics they would like to cover under each of these themes. Due to a rise in anti-LGBTQ+ hate, in 2023 we also facilitated workshops to support young people in feeling safe online and in their communities. We held workshops on online safety, self-defence and how to report a hate crime. Each of our peer support 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

### New Young Person's Project

The New Young Person's Project is a space for young people who wish to join any of our peer support groups. In this group, young people are introduced to a youth worker. They learn about the range of services provided by the Dublin Youth Service and what happens at a youth group. Young people need to complete this process to gain access to peer support groups as we need to ensure both the safety of everyone who already attends peer support groups, and the safety of the new young person in the context of their expectations of and preparedness for attending peer support groups. We also offer young people additional support around attending groups if there are any anxieties or if they need any additional support with their mental health. In total, 72 young people attended this project in 2023 (2022: 84; 2021: 78), which ran 20 times (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. Following this group's disengagement during the pandemic, we refocused and relaunched the group in January 2022, and are proud to see its continued success into 2023. The group met 38 times in 2023 (2022: 33) with a total attendance of 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 41 times in 2023 (2022: 43, 2021: 41) with a total attendance of 212 (2022: 393; 2021: 279).

### Individuality

Trans and non-binary young people join us weekly for our Individuality youth group. In 2023, the group met 42 times (2022: 43; 2021: 37) with a total attendance of 399 (2022: 475; 2021: 433).

### The Ladybirds

This group is a space for lesbian, bi, trans and non-binary young people aged 14-23. The group met 29 times in 2023 (2022: 37; 2021: 31) with a total attendance of 145 (2022: 239; 2021: 176). There was a reduction in the number of times the Ladybirds met weekly as Belong To's Abbey Theatre project was facilitated during this time from September through December.

## Programme Based Work

### Seasonal Programmes

Starting in August 2023, we introduced a new series of seasonal programmes in the Dublin Youth Service. Each season, we host a project that includes outings, workshops and specific events for LGBTQ+ young people while they are not at school or college. The purpose of these programmes is for young people to come together and have fun in a way that is different to the usual peer support groups. This promotes relationship building and helps young people with their confidence and social skills. Our seasonal programmes were introduced this year and we ran a summer, autumn and winter programme. Activities included rowing, ziplining, pumpkin carving, a Christmas party and drama workshops. This new series of programmes was very successful, with a total of 108 young people participating.

### Transboree

Transboree is an annual celebratory event for trans and non-binary young people that focuses on body positivity and gender expression. This event was planned and organised with young people from Individuality. Workshops at the event included a trans creative writing and art workshop, barbering service, make-up masterclass, drag workshop, and an arts and crafts station including pronoun bracelet making, zine making and card making. We welcomed 16 young people to the event in December 2023.



### The Abbey Theatre Collaboration

Together with the Abbey Theatre, Belong To hosted a 12-week drama project for LGBTQ+ young people in the Dublin Youth Service. Nine young people attended weekly sessions at the Abbey Theatre. Throughout the project, participants worked together to devise their own original show called 'Inmates'. Inmates told the story of young people navigating school life from First Year through to graduation.

The play was staged for family and friends at a private event at The Abbey Theatre in December. This programme was a huge success and we are grateful to Phil Kingston (he/him) and Darren Yorke (he/him) at the Abbey Theatre for facilitating this programme.

### Youth Participation Programme

In our 2022-2024 Strategic Plan, we set out to further amplify the voices and experiences of LGBTQ+ young people, supporting and facilitating them to be agents of positive social change. As part of this objective, in 2023 we added a youth participation role to both the Youth Services Team and the Communications and Advocacy Team. Consulting with other agencies, youth services and organisations involved in youth work, both at home and abroad, we commenced the work of designing a Youth Participation Plan. We look forward to implementing this plan early in 2024.



# Sharing Best Practice

We support youth workers through a National Network to ensure that LGBTQ+ young people across Ireland can access safe, high-quality youth work services.

As the national LGBTQ+ youth organisation with over 20 years of experience, Belong To shares our learning and expertise by supporting youth workers and organisations across Ireland to ensure best practice in LGBTQ+ youth work.

Since 2007, we have supported 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 passionate youth workers from national youth organisations such as Youth Work Ireland, Foróige and Crosscare, along with local youth and community services that run LGBTQ+ youth groups. As part of our role in coordinating the National Network, Belong To facilitates a space to offer subject matter expertise and support to the youth workers within the Network. We come together to deliver a standardised model of LGBTQ+ youth work and best practice across Ireland.

## Facilitating the National Network

The number of LGBTQ+ youth groups we support nationwide increased from 72 in 2022 to 89 in 2023 (2022: 72; 2021: 64). This increase came from existing National Network members running additional LGBTQ+ youth groups, rather than the addition of new members to the Network.

This year, we facilitated five meetings for National Network members, three of which were in-person. For 2023, the National Network members agreed they wished to return to quarterly meetings, in-person where possible, followed by informal meetings when necessary. 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.

Pictured: Staff and young people from Belong To and Youth Work Ireland join Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth of Ireland, Roderic O’Gorman (he/him) at the 2023 Pride breakfast.

A core element of facilitating the National Network is to host a residential meeting for Network members. This year, the residential was held in May in County Wicklow and brought 16 youth workers from across the National Network together. The aim of this residential was to reconnect as a Network while focusing on learning and development. We had an external trainer from MyMind, who provided excellent training for the National Network around youth mental health. At this meeting, the group revisited their key priorities, with mental health supports and clear pathways for trans healthcare remaining the focus for 2022-2023. Emma Whitty (she/her) from Ferns Diocesan Youth Service (FDYS), Wexford, remained in position of Chair of the Network for 2023. In April, Paula Kelly (she/her), also from FDYS, took up the post of Vice Chair.

As part of our support to the National Network, we distributed grants totalling €45,000 to 10 National Network members. The annual funding for these grants is provided to us by the National Office of Suicide Prevention. These 10 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 office all took place across Ireland.

## Achievements and Challenges

The number of National Network members reaching out for support around targeted attacks on services by anti-LGBTQ+ groups and individuals increased in 2023. Throughout the year, our National Network Coordinator offered phone and text support on this topic. This reflects a wider pattern of anti-LGBTQ+ sentiment that we have witnessed throughout our work as an organisation in 2023.

In 2023, the 10 National Network grant recipients delivered 382 one-to-one sessions, with 226 young people engaged with this service. Some 947 peer support groups took place in 2023. The top presenting issues for LGBTQ+ young people across the National Network were mental health, bullying and school experiences. Belong To offers a free therapeutic group space for LGBTQ+ youth workers experiencing vicarious trauma with Insight Matters. This vital support space continued in 2023 with eight group therapy sessions. The National Network continued to signpost young people to Jigsaw, Pieta, the LGBT Helpline and the HSE crisis text line, 50808.

It was with great excitement that the annual Dublin Pride event took place in June, with 2023 marking the 40th anniversary of Dublin Pride. The theme of this year's event, 'Protest, Remember, Celebrate', pays tribute to the inaugural parade which was held in response to the murder of Declan Flynn.

Working with Youth Work Ireland and the National Network, we celebrated Pride by bringing over 800 LGBTQ+ young people and their youth workers from across Ireland to Youth Work Ireland's head office for our Pride Breakfast. For many LGBTQ+ young people in attendance, this was their first Pride event. A big thanks to our Pride DJ Glamo (she/her) who provided entertainment in the courtyard at Youth Work Ireland and to Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Roderic O'Gorman (he/him) and Senator Fintan Warfield (he/him) for joining the event as special guests.





## A Place of Community

Vice Chair of the National Network and Youth Worker at Ferns Diocesan Youth Service, Paula Kelly (she/her) shares what the Network means to her.

“

On a personal level, I have found the National Network to be a place of community, respect, learning, unity and, most importantly for me, a sense of support.

”

As a youth worker supporting young people in the LGBTQ+ community, we ensure that a safe space is available with a warm welcome and a total sense of inclusion and community.

To have a safe space as a worker via the National Network, to feel the same benefits we offer our young people, not only allows for a sharing of best practices, but helps align our values, integrated relationships and provision of utter support.

On a personal level, I have found the National Network to be a place of community, respect, learning, unity and, most importantly for me, a sense of support. This has enhanced my sense of solidarity and commitment to the young people.

My best learning from the National Network during 2023 has been the ability to have collaborative approaches and the power of facilitating the young people we support to engage in their communities.

Although these learnings may appear basic, the incredible effects the young people have experienced has brought the simple methods to the forefront of my practice.

To be a part of the National Network is to provide yourself with a support network to utilise and encourage personal and professional development, which ultimately gives our young LGBTQ+ young people the security and connectivity needed for them to thrive.

The Network has provided me with a more objective view of the issues being experienced nationally. Being able to access and hear from amazing speakers and learning how impactful we can be as a collective is empowering and encouraging for the future.





# Belong To Rainbow Award

In 2023, we celebrated the end of a pilot project and launched an innovative new LGBTQ+ accreditation programme for youth services, the Rainbow Award

Supporting the creation of safe services for LGBTQ+ youth forms a key part of our Strategic Plan. At Belong To, we are committed to supporting youth services to create safe, equal and inclusive groups and programmes for LGBTQ+ young people. We want every single LGBTQ+ young person in Ireland to be able to access a local youth service that is free from homophobia, transphobia and biphobia. Belong To's Rainbow Award offers youth services an in-depth, action-focused programme to become fully inclusive of LGBTQ+ young people. This accreditation programme supports a whole-organisational approach to being a safe, supportive and inclusive service for LGBTQ+ youth, staff and volunteers.

The Rainbow Award has been a work in progress for many years. We would like to acknowledge colleagues from Quality Matters and Youth Work Ireland who updated and expanded Belong To's 'Start-Up and Accreditation Guide' in 2014; Michael Barron (he/him) and Lisa O'Hagan (she/her) who developed the 'LGBTI+ Safe and Supportive Schools' toolkit in partnership with the HSE in 2016; Michael Barron who adapted this toolkit to produce an equivalent 'LGBTI+ Safe and Supportive Services' toolkit for youth workers; and Louise Monaghan (she/her) and Olive Ring (she/her) who have updated and developed upon these existing resources to produce the Rainbow Award guide and accompanying resources. All of this work has contributed to the culmination of our new Rainbow Award.

We thank Education and Training Boards Ireland, City of Dublin Youth Services and the National Youth Council of Ireland for supporting the Rainbow Award.

Pictured: Minister of State, Mary Butler (she/her) presents a group of young people and staff from ChillOUT LGBTI+ Youth Project, part of Waterford and South Tipperary Youth Services with the Rainbow Award in May 2023.

## 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+ youth.<sup>1</sup>

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, the latest national and international research on best practice in LGBTQ+ youth work, and 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
- 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 Network meetings, one-on-one support and information guides.

## A Successful Pilot

The pilot of the Belong To Rainbow Award was completed in December 2022. We provided six organisations involved in the pilot with a guide, toolkit, training and staff support.

Six youth services joined us to take part in the pilot programme and were accredited with the Rainbow Award in May 2023. Minister of State with responsibility for Mental Health, Mary Butler (she/her) met with staff and young people from youth services across Ireland who piloted the Rainbow Award programme, and presented them with their Rainbow Award at a ceremony in Dublin. The event recognised and celebrated the efforts of the accredited youth services in creating safe and supportive spaces for LGBTQ+ youth. We are so grateful to these amazing services and the youth workers who led the pilot in each service, Cabra for Youth, East Wicklow Youth Service (Crosscare), Ferns Diocesan Youth Service (FDYS), Finglas Youth Resource Centre, St. Andrew's Resource Centre, and Waterford and South Tipperary Community Youth Service.

From September 2023, 15 new services started their journey on the Belong To Rainbow Award.

“

Ciara Keegan (they/them), a youth worker with Finglas Youth Resource Centre, was one of the six services involved in the pilot. Here, they share what this meant to them:



“The Finglas Youth Resource Centre's engagement with the Rainbow Award this year gave us the opportunity to reflect on our current practices in how we create a safe and supportive environment for our LGBTQ+ young people. We found that it was incredibly affirming in the work we were already doing and provided us with some helpful considerations and adjustments to strengthen the inclusiveness of our service for young people and for future young people.

Our youth centre's open and inclusive nature has been built up by a team of caring and empathetic young people, youth workers, management and board members. Our hope is that we can continue to create safe and supportive spaces for LGBTQ+ young people in Finglas, and we know that the creation of awards like the Rainbow Award will help to maintain this ethos.”

”

1. Költő, A., Vaughan, E., O'Sullivan, L., Kelly, C., Saewyc, E. M., & Nic Gabhainn, S. (2021). *LGBTI+ Youth in Ireland and across Europe: A two-phased landscape and research gap analysis*. Dublin: Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. Available here.



# Goal 2

## Building Safe Spaces and Services

Training and educating professionals engaging with LGBTQ+ young people in schools, youth services, sports and other services for young people.

Engaging with and supporting families.

### Objectives

- 2.1** Support the promotion and creation of safe and supportive schools and alternative education spaces for LGBTQ+ young people.

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- 2.2** Increase the knowledge and understanding of professionals and volunteers working across key sectors on issues affecting LGBTQ+ young people.

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- 3.3** Support parents, guardians and caregivers of LGBTQ+ young people to create safe, nurturing home environments.

### Outcomes

- Schools and alternative education spaces will become supportive and inclusive environments for LGBTQ+ young people.

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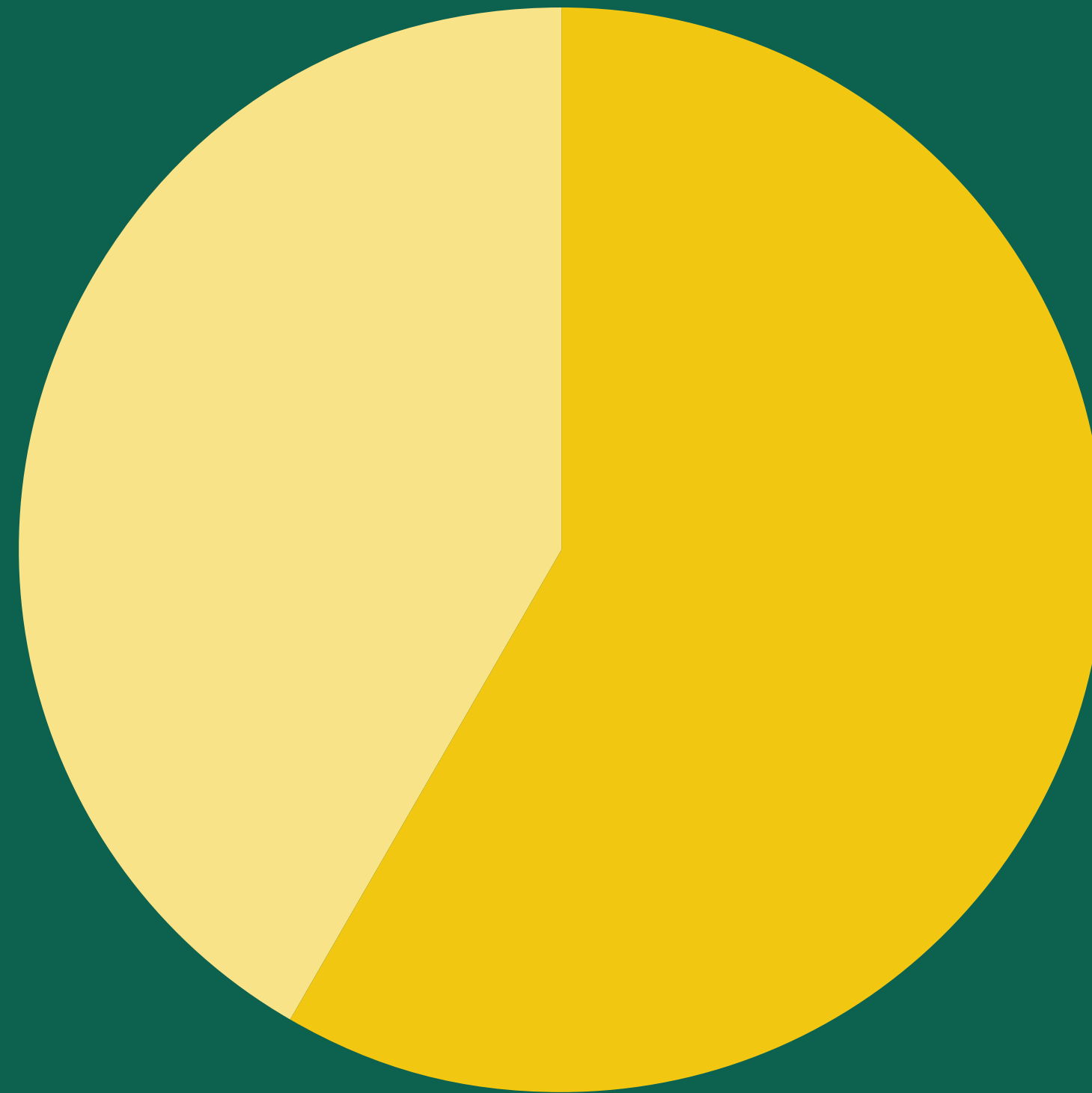
- Professionals and volunteers working in education, youth services, drug and alcohol services, sexual health services, homeless services and sports will have increased knowledge of the needs of LGBTQ+ young people and how to meet those needs.

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- Belong To will have a dedicated service for the parents, guardians and caregivers of LGBTQ+ children and young people.

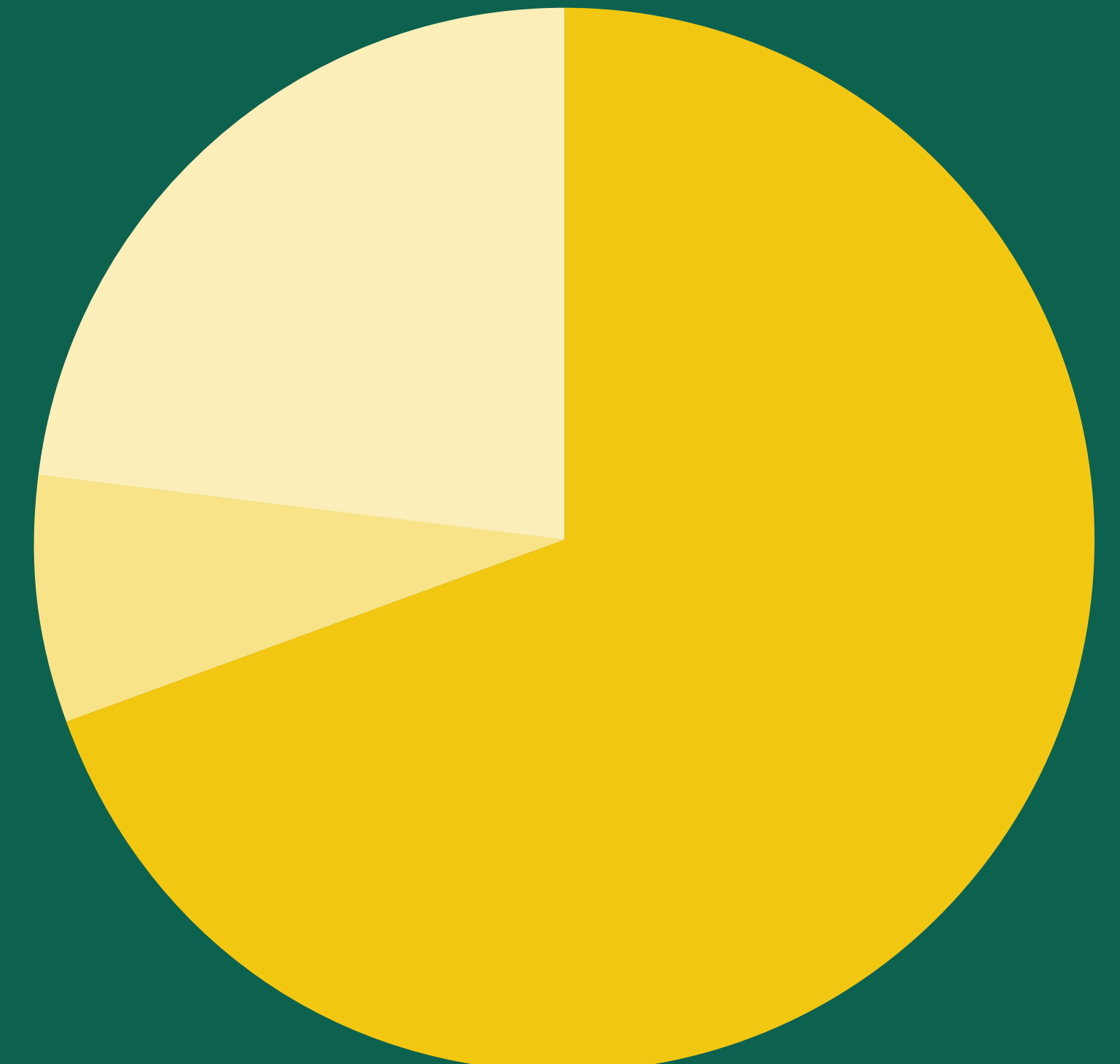
# Goal 2

## Building Safe Spaces and Services



● State Funding €348,004

● Fundraised Income €246,510



● Direct Costs €413,060

● Grant Funding of Activities €45,000

● Support Costs €136,455



**“Diversity Is Being Invited To The Party. Inclusion Is Being Asked To Dance.”**

LGBTQ+ Quality Mark Coordinators, Claire Dunlea (she/her) and Jonathan Barry (he/him) of North Monastery Co-educational Secondary School in Cork, talk about their school’s involvement in the LGBTQ+ Quality Mark.

In September 2022, our school, North Monastery Co-educational Secondary School, embarked on a journey to further promote inclusivity and celebrate diversity, following our success in achieving the Yellow Flag for interculturalism. The school’s dedication to establishing a safe and supportive environment for all students prompted our participation in Belong To’s Quality Mark programme, a targeted initiative aimed at enhancing LGBTQ+ awareness within post-primary schools.

The decision to engage with the LGBTQ+ Quality Mark programme emerged from the school’s recognition of the importance of acknowledging and supporting the LGBTQ+ community. As a school, we have strived to be a place where every student feels accepted, valued and empowered to express their authentic selves. Belong To’s LGBTQ+ Quality Mark programme presented an invaluable opportunity to formalise and strengthen these efforts.

Being involved in the LGBTQ+ Quality Mark has enabled all members of our school community to actively participate, from the board of management to parents, guardians, staff and students. Additionally, it has facilitated collaborations with external agencies and community groups, contributing to the cultivation of a more inclusive environment. The LGBTQ+ Quality Mark has empowered our school to engage in enjoyable, dynamic and innovative activities for students. It has facilitated continuous support training for staff and prompted a reimagining of our policies at management level.

Furthermore, the LGBTQ+ Quality Mark seamlessly aligns with our school's vision, heavily influenced by the overarching vision of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust. This vision is centred around fostering awareness of social justice, human rights and environmental care. It also aims to inspire students to embrace opportunities for developing leadership skills and advocating for causes they believe can positively impact today's world. The integration of the LGBTQ+ Quality Mark programme played a pivotal role in turning this vision into a reality.

Some of the key areas of focus during the implementation of the LGBTQ+ Quality Mark programme was the establishment of our allies group, made up of both students and staff.

Here, we meet together in a safe space to provide assistance and support for everyone within our community. We worked closely with Belong To to review and update existing policies to ensure they were not only compliant with policies and procedures set out by the Department of Education, but also reflective of the school's commitment to diversity. This involved revising anti-bullying policies, incorporating inclusive language in official documents and establishing clear guidelines for addressing challenges specific to LGBTQ+ students.

Beyond policy development, the school actively engaged in awareness campaigns and educational initiatives, from running Stand Up Awareness Week to special workshops, exhibitions and other student-centred events. Belong To provided valuable insights into the experiences of LGBTQ+ students and helped us to explore our community's own experiences. It also gave us the opportunity as educators to reimagine how to approach our teaching and learning from a more inclusive lens whether this was to chat, socialise, discuss and participate in inclusive activities. A staff support team was also established including teachers and special needs assistants. This team became instantly identifiable to all through many posters advertised around the school and on our social media.

North Monastery Co-educational Secondary School's commitment to LGBTQ+ awareness and inclusion is an ongoing journey. The LGBTQ+ Quality Mark programme has provided a roadmap for continuous improvement, with regular assessments and updates to ensure that the school remains at the forefront of fostering inclusivity. Through this initiative, North Monastery has not only embraced diversity but has also set a framework for us to continue to create a more welcoming and affirming environment for all students.

As individuals and as a school community, we have thoroughly appreciated this programme, and this marks not the conclusion but rather the continuation of our efforts. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all within our school community including our Board of Management, school leadership, students, staff, parents, guardians and the staff of Belong To for making the LGBTQ+ Quality Mark a reality. As the famous quote by Verna Myers says "Diversity is being invited to the party. Inclusion is being asked to dance".

# LGBTQ+ Quality Mark

In 2023, we continued to grow the network of schools joining Belong To's LGBTQ+ Quality Mark.

The LGBTQ+ Quality Mark initiative is a holistic approach to LGBTQ+ inclusion in post-primary schools that involves the whole school community. 2023 saw the continuation of the LGBTQ+ Quality Mark journey for 46 schools that began their engagement with the initiative in September 2022.

The LGBTQ+ Quality Mark was launched in 2022 as an evidence-based model for supporting and accrediting LGBTQ+ safe and supportive post-primary schools. Over the course of 18 months, schools are supported to implement actions relating to LGBTQ+ inclusion, using a model based on the four key areas of wellbeing promotion outlined in the Department of Education's *Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice*.<sup>1</sup>

1. Department of Education (2019) *Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice*. Available here.



Students and Staff from Holy Child Community School Sallynoggin mark Stand Up Awareness Week as part of their LGBTQ+ Quality Mark accreditation.

## Journey of Inclusion

The LGBTQ+ Quality Mark process for schools is divided into three phases: recognise, build and grow, and achieve. For the cohort of schools who began the journey in September 2022, January 2023 saw them move from the 'recognise' phase, during which they laid the groundwork for success, to begin implementing their action plans for meeting the goals and requirements of the LGBTQ+ Quality Mark.

The LGBTQ+ Quality Mark involves two trainings for all staff members in participating schools. The first is a 90-minute e-learning module created by Belong To called 'Educators and Youth Workers Supporting LGBTQ+ Young People'. School staff also attend a two-hour in-person session delivered by Belong To staff in their school. A total of 1,769 school staff attended these in-person trainings in 2023.



Our regional networks of LGBTQ+ Quality Mark schools continued to thrive. Throughout 2023, 188 educators (2022: 69) attended 12 meetings (2022: 1). Here, representatives from participating schools have forged links with neighbouring schools, sharing experiences and guidance for each other. Some schools have collaborated on events together, such as hosting the LGBTQ+ and allies student clubs from other participating schools, allowing students to form connections and friendships with other young people like them.

At the beginning of the new school year in September 2023, participating schools repeated the self-assessment surveys of staff, students, parents, guardians and Boards of Management members that they had surveyed at the beginning of the process. Capturing perspectives one year later allowed the schools to see the impact of their work to date.

Belong To staff visited each school again in October and November 2023 to meet with staff, management and some students to learn more about their experiences of implementing the LGBTQ+ Quality Mark.

School teams completed their accreditation submission forms to demonstrate how they had met the goals and requirements of the LGBTQ+ Quality Mark model, and these were submitted to Belong To in December 2023 for review in advance of an accreditation event planned for February 2024.

## Growing The Network

In September 2023, while the first cohort of schools were approaching the final phase of their journey, we also welcomed 51 new schools into the process, including, for the first time, five Youthreach centres. As education spaces, Youthreach centres offer an invaluable alternative to young people who may have encountered challenges in the formal education system.

We know that 1 in 10 LGBTQ+ students are unsure whether they will complete the Leaving Certificate.<sup>2</sup> Youthreach is a place where these young people have the opportunity to continue their studies. Therefore, we are delighted to be working with the first five Youthreach centres to embark on the LGBTQ+ Quality Mark process, leading the way to creating safe and supportive centres for their LGBTQ+ learners. These centres are Gorey Youthreach, Letterkenny Youthreach, New Ross Youthreach, Youthreach Galway City and Youthreach Gortahork.

Three coordinators from each school or centre were identified and attended an online training session to bring them up to speed on implementing the LGBTQ+ Quality Mark in their settings. They also had the opportunity to attend the fourth and final regional network meeting of the 2022/23 cohort. There, coordinators had the opportunity to meet coordinators from schools and centres that they will be embarking on the LGBTQ+ Quality Mark journey alongside. They also learned from those who were coming towards the end of their journey. In 2023, 194 coordinators attended these sessions (2022: 29).

The new schools and centres began the same process as their predecessors, beginning with self-assessment surveys for staff, students, Boards of Management, parents and guardians. The purpose of this is to gain invaluable insights into the perspectives on LGBTQ+ inclusion in the schools and centres, and use this information to develop individual action plans for achieving the LGBTQ+ Quality Mark.

Looking ahead to 2024, we are excited to recognise the successes of the 2022/23 cohort, to supporting the 2023/24 schools and centres in implementing their action plans, and to welcoming a new cohort of schools into the initiative in September 2024.

2. Pizmony-Levy, O. (2022) *The 2022 Irish School Climate Survey*. Research Report. Global Observatory of LGBTQ+ Education and Advocacy. Dublin and New York: Belong To and Teachers College, Columbia University. Available here.

# Shaping the Future



Our Education, Training and Community Practice Team develops and delivers evidence-based training to professionals and volunteers working with LGBTQ+ young people.

Through training, we increase the knowledge and understanding of professionals and volunteers working across key sectors on topics affecting LGBTQ+ young people. We deliver capacity-building initiatives to professionals and volunteers working with LGBTQ+ young people to create safe and supportive spaces and services for LGBTQ+ youth. The impact and efficacy of this work is improved immeasurably by collaborating with experts working in the education and community practice fields.

In 2023, Belong To continued working with our national Education Sector Advisory Group at post-primary level with representatives from national education bodies, unions, youth organisations and support organisations. We also established our post-primary Principal and Deputy Principals' Advisory Group with representatives from post-primary schools throughout the country, as well as setting up our new Primary Education Sector Advisory Group.

**Number of Individuals Trained\***



\* Clarification: The training numbers reported in 2022 (6,947) and 2021 (6,749) were not accurate due to a data error identified in the online 'In The Know' training in partnership with the Sexual Health Centre.

## Information Sessions and Webinars

Online and in-person information sessions and webinars are a great first step in creating an understanding of the lived experience of LGBTQ+ young people. In 2023, Belong To travelled around the country delivering information and awareness sessions to 628 principals, deputy principals, ethos coordinators and guidance counsellors in Dublin, Westmeath, Longford, Donegal, Kildare, Sligo, Mayo and Galway. We provided an overview of what we do at Belong To, shared the voices of LGBTQ+ young people through the results of the 2022 *School Climate Survey*, and outlined the evidence-based LGBTQ+ Quality Mark initiative.

We encouraged participants to follow up on these sessions by completing the 90-minute Belong To e-learning module ‘Supporting LGBTQ+ Young People’. We also emphasised the importance of speaking with their staff about building on their Stand Up Awareness Week work by getting involved in the LGBTQ+ Quality Mark initiative. We emphasised that training is just one part of the elements that embeds cultural change in a school. A holistic approach focussed on people, policies and practices is needed to effect real change.

Belong To hopes to continue and expand these sessions in 2024 to build awareness and understanding among professionals working with young people.

## Online Learning

In 2023, we were delighted to add to our suite of e-learning modules with the launch of a sports-focused module aimed at supporting players, coaches and other club members to foster LGBTQ+ inclusion in their teams. This work was generously supported by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. Together our existing suite of e-learning modules aimed at educators, youth workers, and volunteers working with young people, these courses help equip more people with the knowledge and skills needed to support LGBTQ+ young people in a variety of settings.

Our module aimed at volunteers, which launched last year, had 130 registrations in 2023 (2022: 142). 199 club members registered for our new sports e-learning module. Our ‘Supporting LGBTQ+ Young People’ module continued to be in high demand among educators and youth workers, with 3,144 people registering for the course in 2023, an increase of 32% on the previous year (2022: 2,381; 2021: 2,346).

## Training Educators

### Stand Up Awareness Week

Staff training continues to form an important component of supporting schools to prepare for Stand Up Awareness Week. In 2023, we again offered in-person sessions in both Dublin and Cork, as well as regional online sessions and dedicated trainings for both Youthreach educators and youth workers. Training content covered key components of planning and implementing a successful Stand Up Awareness Week, along with a focus the campaign’s theme for 2023, ‘allyship’. A total of 143 educators and youth workers were trained across nine

sessions (2022: 173; 2021: 314), with support from members of the National Network co-facilitating the sessions. Feedback from the sessions was very positive, with 96% of respondents rate the quality of the training as either high or very high.

## Primary School Pilot

2023 was a significant year for Belong To as we embarked upon on the initial stages of creating safe and supportive primary schools in line with our Strategic Plan. We conducted a quantitative and qualitative needs analysis with primary school staff and LGBTQ+ families of primary school-aged children. This research project is funded by the Irish Research Council New Foundations grant, and is in partnership with the University of Limerick, led by Dr Aoife Neary (she/her).

Belong To was also successful in applying to the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission and Community Foundation Ireland for funding in relation to LGBTQ+ inclusion in primary schools. In December 2023, we received funding from Google.org to develop our eLearning module for Primary educators. These grants will support the development of evidence-based training, guidelines and support resources for primary schools, grounded in national and international best practice.

In 2023, we established our Primary Education Sector Advisory Committee with representatives invited from across the primary education sector, parents’ representative organisations and LGBTQ+ organisations. Looking ahead to 2024, we will work with primary education experts and our Primary Education Sector Advisory Committee to develop a robust model for LGBTQ+ inclusion at primary level, together with supplementary resources. We intend to roll out a pilot of this model in September 2024.

## Specialised Training

### Sexual Health

‘In The Know’ is our personal development training initiative designed specifically for gay and bisexual men and transgender young people. This programme comprises of three one-hour sessions held over three to four weeks. In 2023, we conducted the ‘In The Know’ programme with young people aged 17 and above who are part of our service. Participants received education on topics such as sexual health, online dating, consent, chemsex and HIV prevention. During 2023, a total of 5 individuals engaged in this programme (2022: 28; 2021: 39). Due to the departure of our Sexual Health Youth Worker in May, we were unable to conduct workshops for young people for the remainder of the year.

As part of our efforts to deliver ‘In the Know’ training for professionals, we conducted a one-day training session in October. This session was attended by 15 participants including youth workers. Additionally, a total of 31 participants from youth work backgrounds completed our online training module. This programme is a partnership project between the Sexual Health Centre, Belong To and the HSE Sexual Health Crisis Pregnancy Programme (SHCPP). Through this initiative, we aim to equip youth workers, community workers, sexual health workers and other appropriate professionals to deliver the ‘In the Know’ programme to their young service users.

### Mental Health

In 2023, we continued to collaborate with Jigsaw, the national centre for youth mental health, to equip professionals to support LGBTQ+ youth. The training programme ‘Supporting the Mental Health of LGBTQ+ Young People’ provides participants with a greater understanding of LGBTQ+ identities and raises awareness about the specific challenges facing this cohort, including discrimination, homophobia, biphobia and transphobia. The training is for adults who work or volunteer with young people in their community, and organisations and agencies that provide youth services.

In 2023, this training consisted of an online self-directed course. There was a 15% increase in the number of individuals who completed the online training in 2023 compared to 2022 (2023: 544; 2022: 466; 2021: 459). Our National Network Coordinator provided a number of Resource Officers for Suicide Prevention in Ireland with training on Belong To’s work and best practice in supporting LGBTQ+ young people.

### Drugs and Alcohol

In 2023, Belong To recruited a Drug and Alcohol Senior Youth Worker to support our frontline services and development of training in this area. Training and capacity building in the drug and alcohol sector is a priority for Belong To. This year, we submitted plans and funding proposals to build on the existing organisational training delivery model and create a whole sectoral approach to supporting LGBTQ+ young people across all aspects of service provision. By creating LGBTQ+ inclusive and safe spaces and services, it is hoped that more LGBTQ+ young people will access the services and maintain engagement.

### Homelessness

Following on from a very successful pilot in 2022, 2023 saw our continued partnership with Focus Ireland in the development of a proposal focusing on establishing a network of LGBTQ+ safe and supportive services across each category of homeless services over three years. Namely, these services include:

- Day Services.
- Homeless Prevention, Tenancy Sustainment and Resettlement Supports.
- Supported Emergency Accommodation for Singles and Families.
- Long-Term Supported Accommodation.

We were delighted that 13 national support agencies committed to take part and contribute to the development of the initiative. This involves the development of a quality standards framework, collation of national and international good practice, development of an e-learning module for all staff, and co-delivery of in-person training to key staff within each organisation. The Dublin Regional Homeless Executive and the HSE have committed to provide funding this project over a three-year period.

# Goal 3



Campaigning for Change  
Campaigning for Change

Campaigning for Change  
Campaigning for Change

# Goal 3

## Campaigning for Change

Champion the voice of LGBTQ+ young people through advocacy and engagement to create an Ireland where LGBTQ+ young people are equal, safe and thriving.

Empowering LGBTQ+ young people to be agents for positive social change.

### Objectives

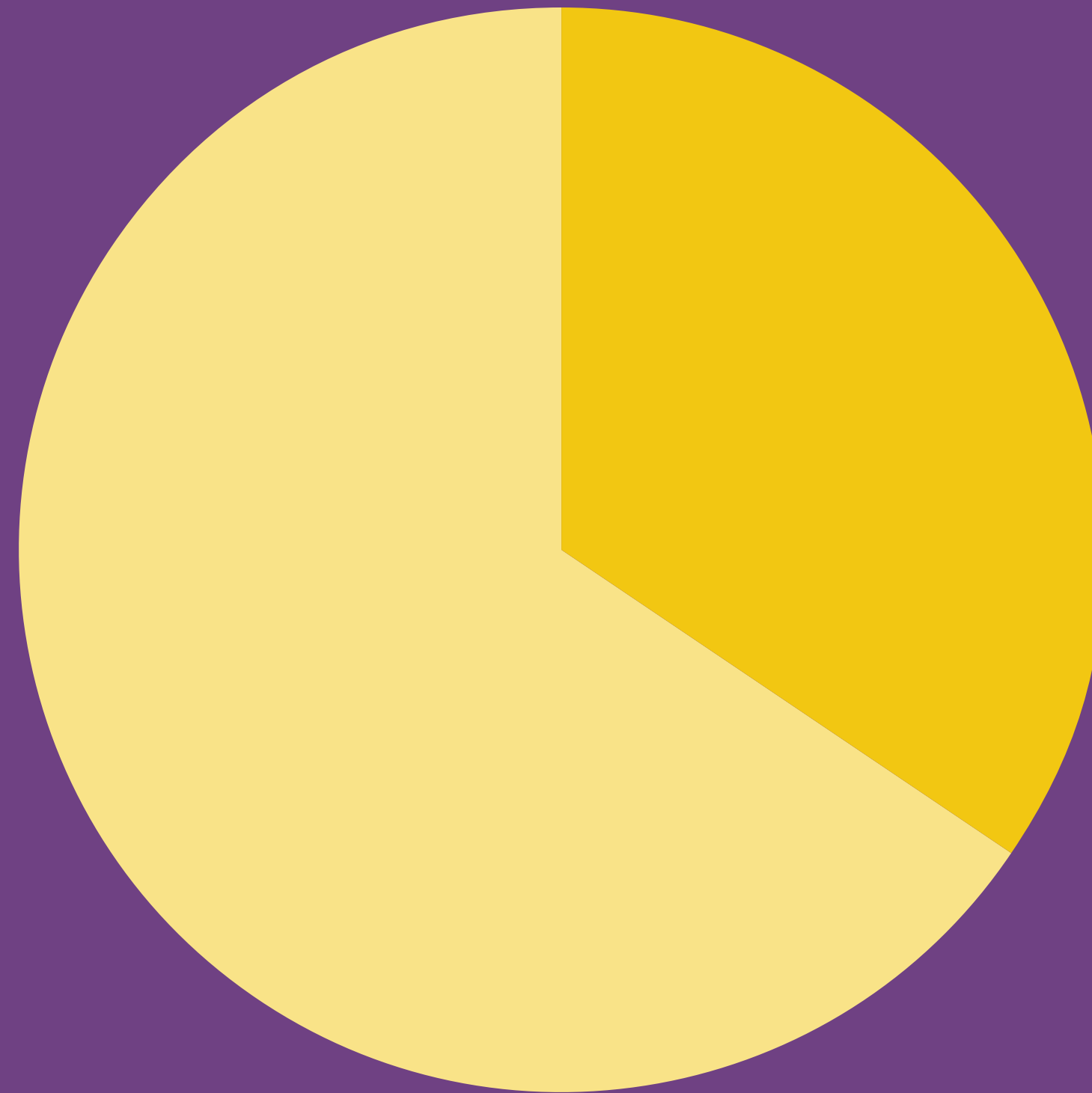
- 3.1** Campaign for laws, policy, legislation, and national strategies that protect LGBTQ+ youth.
- 3.2** Develop the research and data environment to better understand and improve the lives of LGBTQ+ young people.
- 3.3** Amplify the voice and experiences of LGBTQ+ young people, supporting and facilitating them to be agents in positive social change.
- 3.4** Grow public awareness of content related to LGBTQ+ youth and Belong To by reaching and mobilising existing and new stakeholders and the general public.
- 3.5** Work for international solidarity to protect and advance LGBTQ+ people's rights.
- 3.6** Campaign for inclusion of LGBTQ+ young people in education.

### Outcomes

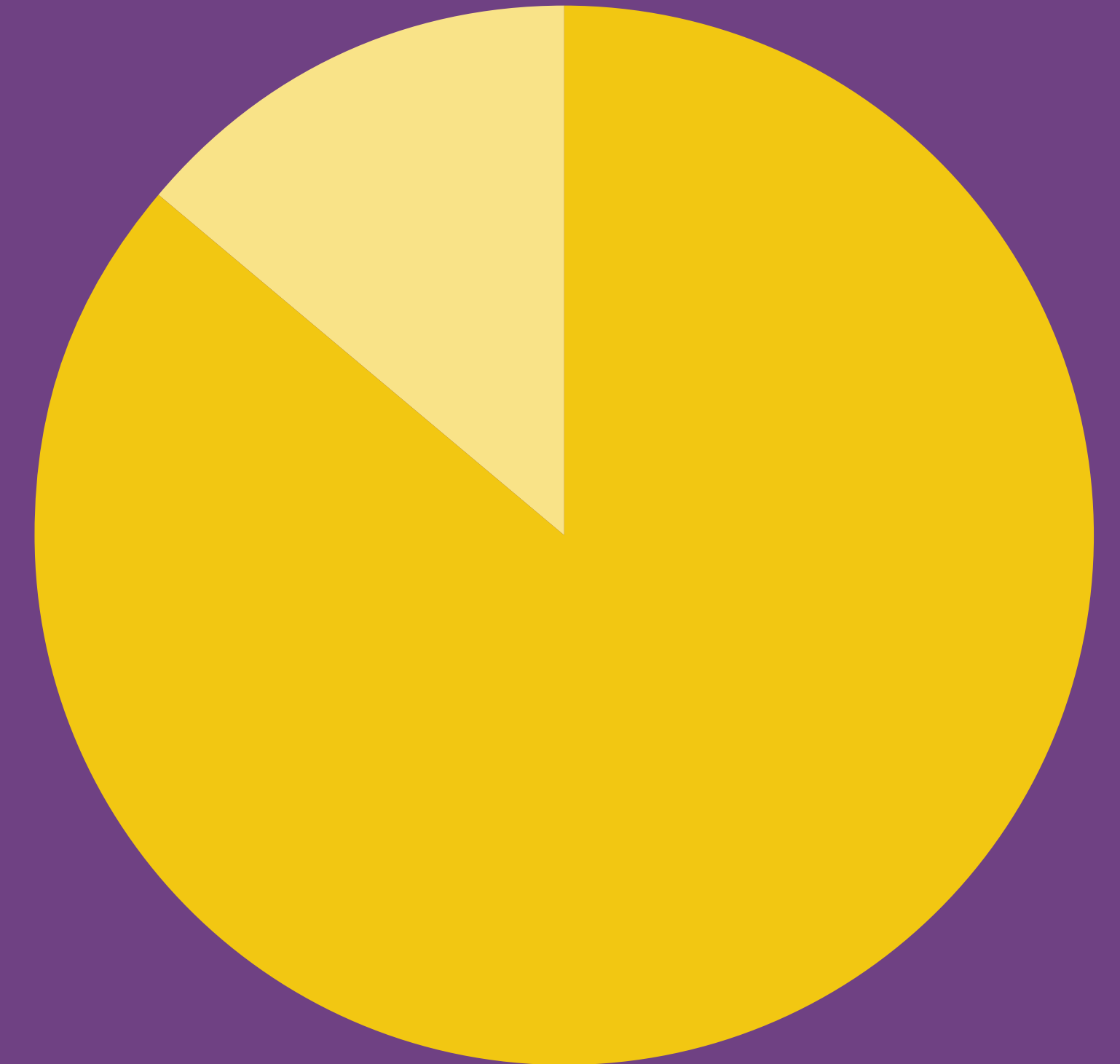
- Belong To will have influenced policies, legislation and national strategies relevant to LGBTQ+ youth, ensuring there is greater attention to non-discrimination, bullying, access to healthcare including mental health and sexual health, and the creation of safe, supportive and inclusive environments.
- Belong To will have produced a high-quality evidence base of research reflecting the lived experiences of LGBTQ+ young people in Ireland.
- Belong To will have ensured that the voices and lived experiences of LGBTQ+ young people have been heard in the decisions that the effects their lives taken by the state.
- Belong To will have increased its visibility and recognition amongst its stakeholders in the media and in public discussions on matters that relate to LGBTQ+ young people.
- Belong To will have engaged in solidarity actions to protect and support the advancement of LGBTQ+ rights internationally.
- Schools will be supportive and inclusive environments for LGBTQ+ young people.

# Goal 3

## Campaigning for Change



● State Funding €166,661  
● Fundraised Income €316,597



● Direct Costs €416,870  
● Support Costs €66,388



# Creating LGBTQ+ Inclusive Education

We campaign for the inclusion of LGBTQ+ students in education so that they feel safe and supported at school.

In 2023, Belong To experienced the impact of organised efforts to discredit LGBTQ+ inclusion in an education setting. Misinformation about our work including the Stand Up Awareness Week campaign and LGBTQ+ Quality Mark Programme was shared widely.

We are proud of our work in education and training as we strive to create safe spaces for LGBTQ+ young people across Ireland. Aligning with a global pattern of anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric, we experienced an increasing number of actions designed to take time away from achieving our shared mission of creating an Ireland where all LGBTQ+ young people are equal, safe and thriving. This is a deliberate tactic adopted from anti-LGBTQ+ groups. These attempts took place from September as the updated Junior Cycle SPHE curriculum was being rolled out to First Year students.

Despite experiencing these disruptive actions, we continued our work across policy and practice to create safe spaces for LGBTQ+ students.

## Stand Up Awareness Week

Stand Up Awareness Week is Ireland's largest LGBTQ+ anti-bullying campaign. Now in its 14th year, the campaign took place from Monday, 6 November to Friday, 10 November, 2023. Running Stand Up Awareness Week can be the first step to creating a safe space for LGBTQ+ young people within a school, Youthreach centre or youth service. 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.

Pictured: Students from Holy Child Community School Sallynoggin, Dublin are pictured with Belong To CEO, Moninne Griffith during Stand Up Awareness Week 2023. Picture shows Amie Kinsella, Nicole Modesto Nogueira, Shauna Curran, Ryan Dixon, Jasmine Byrne, Nina Smith and Stephen Hendron.



The campaign aims to decrease bullying, isolation, self-harm, suicide 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.

Stand Up Awareness Week is supported by the Department of Education and is endorsed by major organisations in the post-primary school sector, including the National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals, the teachers' unions, guidance counsellors and management bodies for second-level schools.

Our 2022 *School Climate Survey* research revealed that casual homophobia remains rife in Irish post-primary schools.<sup>1</sup> Among LGBTQ+ students surveyed, 69% reported hearing other students make homophobic remarks and 58% overheard a homophobic remark from a member of their school staff.

We used these findings to select 'allyship' as the theme for Stand Up Awareness Week 2023. Within our longer, 36-page resource guide to running Stand Up Awareness Week, we detailed the four levels of development to becoming an ally: awareness, knowledge, skills and action. The guide includes detail on the importance of allyship, some of the challenges faced by allies and suggested allyship actions for Stand Up Awareness Week. We sent three packs including the resource guide, a terminology poster and a campaign poster to every second-level school in Ireland. The packs were also available to download from our website.

In 2023, 75% of Irish post-primary schools participated in the campaign (2022: 77%, 2021: 75%), translating to 312,473 students being reached with our anti-bullying message (2022: 312,971, 2021: 293,773). Over the last number of years, participation of post-primary schools in Stand Up Awareness Week has increased by an incredible 74%, from 43% in 2018 to 75% in 2023. A huge thank you to all of the teachers, youth workers, educators and young people who took the time to host the campaign in November.

## Social, Personal and Health Education

Following many years of campaigning for LGBTQ+ inclusion across school curricula, Belong To welcomed the publication of *Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying* in December 2022. Cineáltas commits to reviewing and updating the SPHE curriculum across primary and post-primary schools to ensure the inclusion of LGBTQ+ identities.

The updated SPHE curriculum for Junior Cycle was published in May 2023, and we were proud to see a number of recommendations from Belong To's submission included, as informed by our focus group with LGBTQ+ young people. These recommendations include consideration of LGBTQ+ identities and experiences throughout the curriculum, positive and LGBTQ+ inclusive teaching on consent and safer sexual behaviour, a holistic approach to health and wellbeing, a strong focus on online safety in a way that reflects the reality of young people's lives, and clear actions relating to bullying and abusive behaviour in schools, friendships, families and other relationships.

The updated Junior Cycle SPHE curriculum was rolled out to incoming First Year students in September 2023, and we look forward to working further with the Department of Education to ensure that teachers are equipped with the knowledge and skills required to effectively teach this comprehensive curriculum.

In September, Belong To hosted two focus groups with LGBTQ+ young people on the review of the Senior Cycle SPHE curriculum. Key issues highlighted by young people included the need for teacher training to support the roll-out of the updated curriculum, particularly in relation to LGBTQ+ identities and LGBTQ+ inclusive teaching on Relationship and Sexuality Education, the risk of misinformation, the importance of teaching digital literacy in school, and the need for a clear standard in teaching SPHE with the opportunity for students to provide feedback. Belong To's submission, informed by our youth focus groups, was returned to the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment in November. We look forward to the publication and roll-out of the updated Senior Cycle curriculum in September 2024, and engaging in the upcoming review of primary-level SPHE.

1. Pizmony-Levy, O. (2022) *The 2022 Irish School Climate Survey*. Research Report. Global Observatory of LGBTQ+ Education and Advocacy. Dublin and New York: Belong To and Teachers College, Columbia University. Available here.



During Pride 2023, Belong To CEO, Moninne Griffith, alongside LGBTQ+ sectoral leaders, was invited to meet with a number of politicians including Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly; Táiniste, Micheál Martin; Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar; and Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Roderic O’Gorman.

# Changing the Temperature

We champion the voices of LGBTQ+ young people through advocacy, policy formation and legislation.

At Belong To, we engage in research, policy and advocacy to progress our vision of a society where LGBTQ+ youth are equal, safe and thriving.

Throughout 2023, we sought opportunities 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 LGBTQ+ anti-bullying.

In January, we contributed to the Central Statistics Office public consultation on Census 2027, highlighting the importance of including new questions on sexual orientation and gender identity as a vital data collection tool to better understand the demographics and needs of Ireland's LGBTQ+ community.

In March, we were delighted to support the launch of a survey for primary school staff exploring their experiences, attitudes, knowledge levels, practices and professional needs regarding LGBTQ+ inclusion. This research is a partnership project with the University of Limerick, led by Dr Aoife Neary (she/her), and is funded through the Irish Research Council's New Foundations grant. We look forward to launching the results of this research in 2024.

In June, Belong To provided feedback to the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth on the development of a new *Action Plan for Youth Services*, and returned a submission to the Citizens' Assembly on Drug Use highlighting the unique needs, experiences and challenges faced by LGBTQ+ youth in Ireland.

As a member of the End Conversion Therapy Steering Group, we continued our work to ensure that a ban on conversion practices is introduced within the lifetime of this government. We are continuing our work as a member of the Coalition Against Hate Crime to ensure that new legislation on hate crime and hate speech is introduced as a matter of urgency.

We continued our work with Trans Equality Together in 2023. This is a coalition led by TENI, Belong To and LGBT Ireland, with 36 members from across civil society. The coalition is working towards an Ireland where trans and non-binary people are equal, safe and valued. In keeping with the objective of countering false and negative messaging surrounding trans people, we initiated two pilot sessions of the Safer Spaces Conversations project in late 2023. By convening offline, face-to-face gatherings with invited organisations, this project aims to equip members of the public with correct and empathetic information about the trans community, allowing them to become better allies.

Throughout 2023, we developed our relationships with the international LGBTQ+ community by attending a number of conferences, including the IGLYO Annual Members Conference and the ILGA-Europe Annual Conference, and welcoming colleagues from LGBT Youth Scotland and The Proud Trust to our offices in Dublin.

## Trans Healthcare

Ireland currently has the worst healthcare for trans people in Europe, according to TGEU – Transgender Europe<sup>1</sup>. Currently, there is no active health service for trans young people in Ireland. As a result of the lack of availability of trans healthcare here, many people resort to ordering medications online, administering hormones themselves or travelling abroad for treatment.

In August, we were successful in seeking funding from Community Foundation Ireland for one of Ireland's first quantitative studies on gender-affirming healthcare, conducted in partnership with University College, Dublin. In October, we opened a survey for trans, non-binary and gender-questioning young people to share their experiences of accessing gender-affirming healthcare in Ireland and abroad. The results of this research will be published in 2024.

1. TGEU - Transgender Europe. (2022) *Trans Health Map 2022: The State of Trans Healthcare in the EU*. Available here.

## Being LGBTQI+ in Ireland

In 2023, we continued our work as part of *Being LGBTQI+ in Ireland*, a research collaboration between Belong To and Trinity College, Dublin. The research looks at the mental health and wellbeing of LGBTQI+ people in Ireland. This project is a continuation of the *LGBTIreland Report* published by Belong To, GLEN and Trinity College, Dublin in 2016, a ground-breaking national study into the mental health and wellbeing of the LGBTQI+ community in Ireland.

The research is being 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 are also working with us on this research project, including other LGBTQI+ organisations, statutory agencies and government departments. In 2023, the research team extensively analysed the data collected from the mental health and wellbeing survey of the LGBTQI+ community in Ireland. Additionally, the team analysed the data collected from public polling exploring the general public's opinions, beliefs and attitudes regarding the LGBTQI+ community's rights and social inclusion in Ireland. Towards the end of 2023, analysis of this data was completed and the research team began to write up the findings of the research.

This research addresses a number of significant gaps in existing literature and aims to make meaningful, practical recommendations based on the experiences of the LGBTQI+ community in Ireland. The final report and recommendations will be published in spring 2024.

*Being LGBTQI+ in Ireland* is 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.

## Online Safety

In 2023, we saw the continued trend of increasing anti-LGBTQI+ hate and harassment online. In March, as part of the It's Our Social Media campaign, Belong To released findings relating to the experiences of LGBTQI+ young people living in Ireland and their social media use. A shocking 87% of LGBTQI+ youth had seen or experienced anti-LGBTQI+ hate and harassment on social media in the past year. Among young people who reported this content, only 21% saw action from the relevant social media platform.

The campaign launch aligned with the establishment of Ireland's new media regulator, Coimisiún na Meán. Belong To strongly welcomed An Coimisiún's decision to prioritise the rights and safety of children and young people online within its first year of work.

In September, Belong To provided input to Coimisiún na Meán on the development of Ireland's first binding Online Safety Code. Based on our research and frontline work with LGBTQI+ young people, Belong To's key recommendations included stronger moderation of anti-LGBTQI+ online hate, consistent application of community guidelines, transparency and reporting requirements for online platforms, and the development of a user- and youth-friendly complaints process.

In December, Belong To attended the first meeting of Coimisiún na Meán's newly established Youth Advisory Committee. The Committee is made up of young people and staff representatives from nine national youth organisations, and works to assist and advise Coimisiún na Meán in relation to its online safety functions. We look forward to continuing our work with the Committee throughout 2024 as Ireland's first binding Online Safety Code comes into force.

# On Message



Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Roderic O’Gorman (he/him), TD pictured with Belong To CEO, Moninne Griffith (she/her) and LGBTQ+ young people at the launch of the 2022 Annual Report in May 2023.



Through media engagement, digital media and campaigns, Belong To raises awareness about topics important to LGBTQ+ young people.

Communications play a key role in letting LGBTQ+ youth, and the family members and professionals who support them, know about how they can access the information and services we provide.

We speak to a wide range of audiences, including parents, educators, youth workers, health professionals and policy-makers, to help them understand what life is like for LGBTQ+ youth. We speak to these audiences through a range of channels including digital media, advertising, flyers, mailouts, our e-newsletter and the press.

## Website

2023 marked a significant milestone in our digital journey with the launch of our new website in October. Our new website was developed to be an inclusive, user-first and mobile-friendly online space with our key stakeholders in mind. We improved our overall navigation and usability to ensure LGBTQ+ young people, parents, teachers and professionals alike can access the information they need effectively and efficiently.

In 2022, during the early planning stages of our website redesign, we held focus groups with LGBTQ+ young people and team members at Belong To. These groups provided us with feedback on our previous website and their overall user experience. This gave us invaluable insights into how our updated website's overall design and usability should be developed. We are so grateful to the team at Fusio, who provided the digital expertise and worked with us on this project.

Our new menu is broken out into three key segments:

- Support for Me: Advice for LGBTQ+ young people and information about support services.
- Support for Someone Else: Information on how to support LGBTQ+ youth at home, at school, in the community or in the workplace.
- Support Our Work: Information on our research, campaigns, policy submissions and how to volunteer or fundraise for Belong To.

Across 2023, we had over 80,000 visitors to our website. November saw 22,000 website visitors, our highest of any month in 2023.

## Media Coverage

Our communications work aims to highlight LGBTQ+ topics in the media and to provide a space for LGBTQ+ youth to share what is important to them. By engaging the media on different topics and campaigns, we aim to increase our profile so that more audiences are aware of our brand and so that we can reach policy-makers and decision-makers with our advocacy asks.

In 2023, we featured in 138 pieces of media coverage across national and regional radio stations, television channels and media publications. This year, coverage primarily related to the launch of the It's Our Social Media campaign, Dublin Pride and the Stand Up Awareness Week campaign.

A communications highlight in 2023 was our media partnership with RTE 2FM for Stand Up Awareness Week. This partnership allowed us to carve out a space for our messaging with new audiences across the country and let people know about our services. This year, we were lucky to have two Stand Up Awareness Week campaign ambassadors, celebrity hairdresser, Andrew Fitzsimons (he/him), and GAA referee and primary school principal, David Gough (he/him), who featured on interviews with Jennifer Zamparelli and The Two Johnnies respectively. Short interviews featuring LGBTQ+ young people and promos focusing on Stand Up Awareness Week were played on the station during the campaign period, November 6-10, 2023.

We are grateful to the team at RTE 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 for LGBTQ+ young people, their families and professionals who support our community.



## Digital Media

In 2023, we increased our overall social media following by 9.2% (2022: 8%).

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. We also introduced paid campaigns to these platforms, which promote Belong To's support services and youth groups on an ongoing basis. This provided us with an opportunity to reach more young people than ever before, with a total of 32 million impressions generated across TikTok and Snapchat alone in 2023, almost double the number of impressions achieved on these platforms last year (2022: 16.7 million).

We were finalists at the 2023 Social Media Awards, where our digital work was recognised across two categories, Best Instagram NGO and Best Social Media Strategy.

Although 2023 was a year of many successes, we also faced challenges. This year, Belong To made the decision to adapt our online presence to reflect an ever-changing digital landscape, due to growing harassment and hateful commentary on social media. This increase in online vitriol, alongside the spread of misinformation about LGBTQ+ lives, led us to the decision to close our Twitter/X account in October 2023. This in turn encouraged us to re-connect and engage with our key stakeholders online in new ways, such as increasing our overall level of activity on platforms like LinkedIn, which saw a 40% growth in followers in 2023 alone (2023: 4,266, 2022: 3,053, 2021: 2,218).

Each year, we work with LGBTQ+ artists to create bespoke illustrations to mark days of celebration and remembrance in the LGBTQ+ community, and 2023 was no different.

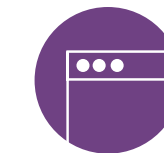
Throughout the year, we worked with talented artists including Andretarkovsky3000 (she/they) and Slime.lines\_ for Trans Day of Visibility, Bronagh Lee (she/her) for Lesbian Day of Visibility, Sage T for Bi Visibility Day, and Amy Lauren (she/her) for World AIDs Day.

## Digital Performance Highlights



### Website Data

**285,592K** Page Views / **79,658K** Users



### Most Visited Website Pages

1. How do I know if I am Trans?
2. Support Services
3. Stand Up Awareness Week
4. Belong To's Youth Groups



### Most Engaged Facebook Posts

1. Legacy Campaign Video
2. Christmas Fundraising Campaign
3. Statement on The Catholic Primary Schools Management Association's Comment



### Most Engaged Instagram Posts

1. Statement on Navan Assault
2. Statement on Twitter/X Departure
3. Statement on The Catholic Primary Schools Management Association's Comment



### Most Engaged LinkedIn Posts

1. Rainbow Ball 2023 Thank You Post
2. Statement on Twitter/X Departure
3. Statement on The Catholic Primary Schools Management Association's Comment

I BELIEVE IN

THE POWER OF

POSITIVITY

ONLINE

I found my  
friends on  
social media

#FeedTheGood



## Campaign: It's Our Social Media

March saw the launch of It's Our Social Media for the second time. It's Our Social Media is a digital media campaign which aims to combat online hate speech experienced by LGBTQ+ youth, while empowering young people to take back social media and protect themselves online. This campaign is funded by Google.org through the 2019 Impact Challenge on Safety.

Devised and created by LGBTQ+ young people, the campaign gives LGBTQ+ youth a platform to demand change. The campaign shines a light on the responsibility of social media platforms to moderate hateful, anti-LGBTQ+ content through comprehensive and consistent enforcement of community guidelines. The campaign featured a range of digital assets including short-form animations, and hero videos of young LGBTQ+ people sharing their thoughts on social media and how we can create safe spaces for LGBTQ+ youth online.

For our 2023 campaign, we kept the same key messaging, #FeedTheGood and #BlockTheBad, while continuing to amplify youth voices on LGBTQ+ hate speech online. We also shared positive news stories from around the world throughout the month and encouraged users to use the #FeedTheGood hashtag by sharing their own positive news stories or experiences online.

One of the main objectives of the campaign was to drive traffic to our microsite, [itsoursocialmedia.com](https://itsoursocialmedia.com), which once again provided resources on how to stay safe online, digital self-care tips and much more. Our microsite also featured an online poll to gather users' thoughts on online safety. Some of key stats from this online poll included:

**57%** of users do not feel safe online.  
**43%** need help in feeling safer online.

It's Our Social Media ran across Facebook, Instagram, Twitter/X, Snapchat and TikTok, generating over 12.6 million impressions (2022: 11 million), 4 million video views (2022: 3.3 million), 99,000 engagements (2022: 35,700) and 58,000 microsite visitors.

We were delighted to see It's Our Social Media win Silver at the Digital Media Awards in the category Best in Government and Not For Profit.



## Campaign: Better Out Than In

Better Out Than In is a campaign that aims to encourage help seeking behaviour amongst 14–23-year-old LGBTQ+ youth.

In 2023, Better Out Than In focused on providing direct supports to LGBTQ+ young people for low mood, anxiety and sleeping difficulties. We know from research that difficulties with sleep, anxiety and low mood can impact the mental health of LGBTQ+ young people. Through this campaign, we wanted to send a message to LGBTQ+ youth that there are ways to manage these issues and that it is always #BetterOutThanIn.

As well as encouraging help-seeking behaviour online, we wanted to equip LGBTQ+ youth with strategies to help manage these three topics. To achieve this, we collaborated with Clinical Psychologist, Dr Brendan J Dunlop (he/him), to discuss these key topics through short-form videos and interactive worksheets which we housed on our Better Out Than In online hub.

We also reached out to our youth group members to find out their favourite LGBTQ+ activists, TikTokers, athletes or those who they admire, to talk about the importance of opening up about their mental health. This led us to collaborating with Ciara Ní É (she/her), founder of REIC Spoken Word and co-founder of Aerach Aiteach Gaelach, who discussed the unique struggles that many bisexual people face, the importance of opening up, starting conversations and reaching out for support.

As part of this year's Better Out Than In campaign, we expanded outside of the digital realm by holding an in-person mental health seminar for professionals working with LGBTQ+ young people. We were thrilled to welcome Dr Brendan J Dunlop (he/him) as our keynote speaker. We were also joined by experts in youth mental health for a panel discussion, including the Ombudsman for Children, Dr Niall Muldoon (he/him); Tara Mulhern (she/her), Clinical Lead at Jigsaw, the National Centre for Youth Mental Health; and Nash Zvikaramba (she/her), Psychotherapist at Pieta and Belong To. In total, over 60 professionals attended this sold-out event.

The Better Out Than In campaign ran across Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat and TikTok, generating over 13.6 million impressions (2022: 6.7 million, 2021: 2.1 million), 1.1 million video views (2022: 404,000; 2021: 477,000), and 92,000 link clicks (2022: 36,800; 2021: 12,000).



# Goal 4

Being a Learning and Developing Organisation  
Being a Learning and Developing Organisation



Being a Learning and Developing Organisation  
Being a Learning and Developing Organisation

# Goal 4

## Being a Learning and Developing Organisation

A sustainable, professional, learning organisation with a skilled team and robust systems working to achieve our vision.

### Objectives

- 4.1** Nurture an internal culture that is rooted in our values, and which prioritises wellbeing, curiosity, courage and learning.
- 4.2** Review organisational structure.
- 4.3** Collaborate with other like-minded LGBTQ+ organisations to scope out the potential for a shared flagship premises in Dublin.
- 4.4** Review and enhance key processes, through optimising the use of digital technology, emphasising effective communications and strengthening relationships of trust.
- 4.5** Protect existing resources and grow sources of income to ensure sustainability.
- 4.6** Maintain good governance.

### Outcomes

- Belong To's team will have been effectively managed, will have embodied the organisation's values, and be resilient.
- Belong To will have a robust Senior Management Team and team in place to achieve the organisation's ambitious strategic goals.
- A strategic decision will have been reached on the co-location of services for the LGBTQ+ community.
- Belong To will have best-in-class operating systems and practices, our organisation will be efficient, well-run, and we will emphasise tools to save time and money.
- Belong To will have maintained, diversified and increased its resources. It will maintain a high proportion of independent fundraised income comparatively to income from the state and state agencies.
- Belong To will be fully compliant with legal obligations, the Governance Code and our own governance guidelines and policies.

# Goal 4

## Being a Learning and Developing Organisation



● State Funding €103,122  
● Fundraised Income €56,759



● Direct Costs €114,145  
● Support Costs €45,736



We have a team of amazing volunteers who support our work across the organisation from fundraising to youth services.

Volunteers are central to the work that we do at Belong To. They join our team as they believe in our mission and we simply could not succeed without them. Many of our volunteers work directly in our Dublin Youth Service, supporting our professional youth workers with LGBTQ+ youth groups. Other roles undertaken by volunteers include supporting our fundraising and governance through various subcommittees and working groups. Our volunteers play a vital role in helping us to achieve our strategic goals, and we are so grateful to each and every one of them. They bring knowledge, enthusiasm and skills to Belong To. You can read more about our Board of Directors on page 64 and our subcommittees on page 66.

In 2023, 34 volunteers contributed 598 hours to the organisation (2022: 57 volunteers and 1,579 hours; 2021: 27 volunteers, 810 hours). In the second half of the year, we saw a decline in active volunteers as some of our long-term volunteers moved country or changed jobs. We will embark on a recruitment drive in 2024 and hope to welcome new volunteers to the organisation.

The organisation benefits greatly from the involvement and enthusiastic support of our volunteers. 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 €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.

## Whole Organisation Approach

Belong To's volunteer programme sits under Goal 4 Being a Learning and Developing Organisation. With the departure of the organisation's Volunteer Coordinator, Glen Keating (he/him), in 2023, it is intended that a review of the volunteer programme will take place in 2024. This review will seek to identify:

- How we can best utilise volunteers across the organisation.
- How to better recognise the value of volunteers to our work and to achieving our strategic goals.
- The training needs of existing and future volunteers.
- How to enhance the flow of information to volunteers about Belong To's impact on the lives of LGBTQ+ young people.
- How to most effectively and efficiently manage volunteers across the organisation.
- Once this review has been undertaken, we will plan to recruit new volunteers in line with the needs identified across the organisation.



**Púca Carrie (she/they) shares what she has learned during her time volunteering with our LGBTQ+ youth groups:**  
**“I started volunteering with Belong To as a Youth Engagement Volunteer in January 2023, having developed a sense that I would like to give back to the LGBTQ+ community and trying to figure out a way to do so.**

Over the last year or so, I have volunteered with the Individuality group and have enjoyed every minute so far. Workshops have included peer-led tips on gender expression and living authentically, ways to ensure safety in crowds and while out in public, and, the group’s favourite – show and tell – where they can wax poetic about their current interests!

The group itself is an important place to many of our young people who may not get the opportunity to affirm their transness in other avenues in their lives. In addition to this, Individuality is a venue in which a young person can explore their gender without necessarily needing to know what their gender may be. For me, volunteering with Belong To has offered me a stronger sense of community amongst the other volunteers and the youth workers, while also giving me the chance to pay back all the kindness and support I’ve experienced from the LGBTQ+ community.”



**Giving**

**Back**

By supporting our work, our donors and funders are creating an Ireland where LGBTQ+ young people are equal, safe and thriving – and we are so grateful for their support!

2023 saw a continuation of our efforts to protect, diversify and build on our fundraised income in accordance with our 2022-2024 Fundraising Strategy. In January, we were delighted to start the year with the return of our flagship fundraising event, The Rainbow Ball. We continued to diversify our fundraised income through growing our individual giving programme, seeking new corporate support and encouraging greater levels of community giving.

In October, we launched our new legacy appeal. As part of this appeal, LGBTQ+ activist and feminist, Ailbhe Smyth (she/her), joined us for a video and article explaining why she is leaving a gift to Belong To in her Will.

We restructured our fundraising team in line with our Fundraising Strategy as we strive for the best use of our staff resources. The team also saw some exciting changes in roles, with Caroline Flynn (she/her) as our new Senior Partnerships and Diversity Manager, and Chris Rowan (he/him) as our new Community and Corporate Support Coordinator.

2023 was a year of continuing change as our Fundraising Team settled into their new roles along with facing new challenges. Hosting two Rainbow Balls in one calendar year put additional pressure on our staff resources. We were pleased to raise €2,167,590 in 2023, an increase of 17.61% on 2022 (2022: €1,843,036). Our growing Fundraising Team feel privileged to work with our generous supporters who share our vision of an Ireland where LGBTQ+ young people are equal, safe and thriving.

Pictured: Belong To welcomed SuperValu as a new Gold Sponsor for The Rainbow Ball in November.

## Individual Giving

Throughout the year, we worked to strengthen our relationship with our generous supporters around the country. This work centred on developing of our individual giving programme.

There was a positive response to our Pride and Christmas fundraising appeals, our tax back appeal, our first ever legacy appeal and our donor survey. Our generous regular givers continued to show support through their monthly gifts, which are so important in allowing us to plan our work into the future with greater confidence. Through our donor newsletter and our first ever annual report summary, our donors were kept up-to-date on how their support helps LGBTQ+ young people across Ireland. Supporters of LGBTQ+ young people were generous in donating to Belong To throughout the year in response to digital appeals across our social media channels.

## The Rainbow Ball

The Rainbow Ball returned with not one, but two events in 2023! This was due to the postponement of our 2022 event. In both January and November 2023, we were delighted to welcome our supporters to the incredible surroundings of the Aviva Stadium. We saw a huge response from our corporate partners and allies on both nights, with both events selling out. An event highlight was welcoming SuperValu as a new Gold Sponsor for the November event, helping us raise much needed funds on the night. Thanks to our generous corporate partners and allies, both nights were great successes, with over 450 people in attendance at each event. With ticket sales, auction bids and donations, we were ecstatic to raise almost €160,000.

## Corporate Giving

We saw exciting new collaborations and engagements with our corporate partners throughout 2023. A special thank you to the individuals, employee resource groups and allies within the organisations we work with. We acknowledge and appreciate the work you do in campaigning for and promoting Belong To internally, in addition to your own workload.

A key corporate giving highlight in 2023 was the Pride launch of the SuperValu ‘Wear With Pride’ laces. Rainbow laces were available to purchase in SuperValu stores nationwide throughout the month of June, with €27,141 in proceeds going to support LGBTQ+ young people.

We also continued our long-term partnership with Aviva Ireland, who raised an amazing €18,270 through their Pride campaign. For every pair of Pride socks sold, Aviva matched the sale and donated an additional €10 to Belong To. Furthermore, for every home insurance policy sold in June, Aviva donated €10 to Belong To. Thank you to the Aviva Ireland team for their amazing dedication to supporting LGBTQ+ young people in Ireland.

In 2023, we had continued support from Google.org, whose generous grants enabled our LGBTQ+ Quality Mark programme to expand to more schools throughout the country.

2023 was the last year of our partnership with the Dropbox Foundation. We want to thank them for their unwavering support over the past three years. Their passion and desire to make real and lasting change across the demographics in which they operate was invaluable to us as a partner and to LGBTQ+ young people in Ireland.

Our Pride collaborations throughout the summer were a huge success in 2023. We are grateful to all the organisations who supported our work through workshops, events and donations – your support means the world to us!





Our amazing group of Camino fundraisers celebrate at the finish line in Finisterre, Spain after trekking 87k and raising over €10,000 to support LGBTQ+ young people.



Aidan Luttrell (he/him) was one of seven brave runners who raised funds for LGBTQ+ youth as part of the Dublin City Marathon in October.

## Community Fundraising

We were delighted to receive donations from 74 Community fundraising events held throughout 2023. Events included bake sales and coffee mornings within workplaces, community groups and teams. We are so grateful to these dedicated and creative fundraisers!

Some highlights included the amazing team at Medtronic hosting a very spooky Beetlejuice screening night, Windmill Lane recreating their favourite TV show and holding a 'Taskmaster' night, and seven brave runners taking part in the Dublin City Marathon.

2023 marked the first time that Belong To was represented at the Dublin City Marathon, which raised an incredible €9,217. We also had phenomenal fundraisers supporting us at the Cork City 10k, the VHI Women's Mini Marathon, the Roe Valley Sprint Triathlon and the Sydney Marathon.

The wonderful folks at Trinity Law Society chose Belong To as their Charity of the Year, and held a series of events throughout the year including a treasure hunt, quiz night, kick-boxing tournament and movie nights. Schools around the country celebrated Stand Up Awareness Week and, through Rainbow Jumper Day, non-uniform days, bake sales and many other innovative events, helped to fundraise for Belong To.

In September, we saw a group of supporters, including seven Aviva Ireland employees and our CEO, Moninne Griffith (she/her), come together to fundraise by walking the Camino. Starting in Santiago de Compostela, the group walked 87km to Finisterre over four days raising much-needed funds for our work. Together with their colleagues and friends, they raised over €10,000 for Belong To.

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

Total Raised: 2023

€2,167,590

“

Thank you to each and every one of our generous donors in 2023

”

# Our Staff Team

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

A total of 31 staff were employed by the company over the course of 2023. As of 31 December 2023, there were 24 employees.

## Aggregate payroll costs incurred during the year:

	2023	2022
Wages and Salaries	€996,571	€796,644
Social Insurance Cost	€107,469	€87,112
	<b>€1,104,040</b>	<b>€883,756</b>

Moninne Griffith	she/her	CEO
Sinéad Keane	she/her	Director of Advocacy and Communications
Derrie Murray	he/him	Head of Operations and Programmes
Suzanne Handley	she/her	Director of Governance and Finance
Marty O'Prey	he/him	Director of Development
Carmel Walsh	she/her	Youth Services Manager
Sharon Heron	she/her	Director of Education, Training and Community Practice
Glenn Keating	he/him	Interim Youth Work Manager (resigned May 2023)
Tiffany Fitzgerald-Brosnan	she/her	Office and Operations Manager
Caroline Flynn	she/her	Senior Partnerships and Diversity Manager
Stephen Cassidy	he/him	Education and Training Manager
Matt Kennedy	he/him	Research and Advocacy Manager
Kate Cummins	she/her	National Network Coordinator
Barry McSkeane	he/him	National Network Coordinator (resigned July 2023)
Chris Rowan	he/him	Community and Corporate Support Coordinator
Brenda Kelly	she/her	Drugs and Alcohol Senior Youth Worker
Neasa Candon	she/her	Policy and Participation Coordinator
Diana Bamimeke	they/them	Trans Equality Together Campaign Coordinator
Roma Buckley	she/her	Salesforce Administrator
Jen Geraghty	she/her	Family Support Worker
Hannah Clancy	she/her	Digital Communications Officer (resigned December 2023)
Freya Carroll	she/her	Administration and Finance Officer
Robert Johnston	he/him	Education and Training Officer (resigned October 2023)
Kelsey Doyle	she/her	Youth Worker
Katie McCabe	she/her	Youth Participation Youth Worker
Seán Frayne	he/him	Sexual Health Youth Worker (resigned May 2023)
Leigha Dugdale	she/her	Development and Training Officer
Orla Martyn	she/her	Finance Officer
Emma Dornan	she/her	Administrative Assistant
Jessica Ryan	she/her	Administrative Assistant (contract ended June 2023)
Bronagh Ritchie	she/her	Sessional Youth Worker (contract ended August 2023)

## Remuneration Policy

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 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.

## Chief Executive's Remuneration

The CEO, Moninne Griffith, commenced on 1 November 2015. The value of her remuneration in 2023 was €87,179 (2022: €84,114.51). Included in this is employer pension contributions of €2,539 (2022:€634). 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

The Senior Management Team (SMT) at Belong To was restructured in 2022 in response to the organisation's continued growth and to best support the organisation's work. In 2023, some additional adjustments were made to the SMT following reviews of the Youth Work Team and the National Network Team. The new Youth Services Manager now oversees a single Youth Services Team, encompassing staff from both of the former Youth Work and National Network Teams, and represents staff from the Youth Services Team at the SMT.

At the end of 2023, seven staff were members of the SMT. Remuneration paid to the SMT in 2023 amounted to €447,928 (2022: €341,912). Included in this figure is employer pension contributions of €10,041 (2022: €4,594). This compares to a total SMT remuneration figure of €341,912 in 2022. 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.

To ensure Belong To's continued compliance with health and safety legislation and best practice, a health and safety review of the organisation was undertaken with an external consultant in 2023. The organisation also arranged for an inspection of its offices by a Fire Prevention Officer from Dublin Fire Brigade. Following these, a number of recommendations were acted on and appropriate adjustments were made to the organisation's risk register.

In addition, a number of trainings were arranged for staff in the areas of first aid, manual handling and for staff fire wardens.

## Team Wellbeing

The Company prioritises staff wellbeing and continues to invest in staff wellbeing initiatives. 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 the second half of 2023, the Company undertook an employee engagement and wellbeing survey, which was complemented by workshops hosted by an external consultant focusing on the organisation's values and team culture. The SMT gathered the feedback from these initiatives, which will inform a new wellbeing programme in 2024 and the development of a new team culture statement.

## 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 2023, eight staff members availed of this scheme (2022: 5; 2021; 7). Courses completed were in the areas of data protection, training and continuing education, digital marketing, public affairs, equality studies, and leadership and management.



# Energy Efficiency Report

Overcoming the climate crisis requires concerted efforts. 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, ICT, heating, cooling, etc. Our electricity usage for 2023 was as follows:

Energy Use	2023	2022
Direct Consumption (kWh) Electricity, lighting, ICT, office power, heating and cooling	17,188	17,200

While recording our energy usage and taking measures to reduce our energy consumption is important, we recognise that reporting on consumption of electricity at our offices is telling only part of the story. In 2024, Belong To aims to investigate ways to improve the reporting of our energy consumption across our operations, which in turn will better enable us to assess our efforts to reduce our impact on the environment.

Some of the measures that are currently in place to mitigate our operations' harmful effects on the environment and climate change include:

- Our energy provider is one of the leading suppliers of green energy in Ireland, ensuring emissions as a result of our operations are kept to a minimum.
- We continue to operate a comprehensive internal recycling system.
- Belong To encourages staff to walk, cycle or use public transport for commuting. Belong To participates in the Cycle to Work Scheme and facilitates staff to 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 Limited is registered in Ireland as a Company Limited by Guarantee incorporated in the Republic of Ireland under the Companies Act 2014. Under section 1180 of the Companies Act 2014, the Company is exempt from including the word 'limited' in its name. Belong To Youth Services Limited is a company limited by guarantee, under Section 980/1190(5)/1247(4) Companies Act 2014. The Company does not have a share capital. Consequently, the member's 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 charitable 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 September 6th, 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 2023 four directors retired and resigned due to term limits and personal reasons. The Board evaluated the skill gaps and prepared a successful board recruitment campaign in December 2023 with new Board Members joining in March 2024.

# Board Members

Board Meeting Attendance 2023



**Patricia Carey**  
(she/her)  
*Chair of the Board since December 2023*

**Appointed**  
25/11/2021

Patricia has over 30 years' experience in the public service and not for profit sector. Most recently as CEO of the Adoption Authority of Ireland, previously Patricia was Director of the St Vincent De Paul charity 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. Patricia is Chairperson of the Board of Management at Loreto College, Crumlin.

8/8



**Dominic Hannigan**  
(he/him)  
*Chair of the Board*

**Appointed**  
08/05/2012

**Resigned**  
15/12/2023

Dominic Hannigan is Head of Public Transport Regulation at the National Transport Authority. He served as Teachta Dála (TD) for the Meath East constituency from 2011 to 2016. During that time, he chaired the Good Friday Agreement Committee and was Chair of the EU Affairs Committee. He was a Senator for the Industrial & Commercial Panel from 2007 to 2011. From 2004 to 2007 he was a Councillor on Meath County Council. Dominic was one of the first two openly gay people elected to Dáil Éireann in 2011. Dominic brings significant experience in public policy and campaigning to the Board.

8/8



**Ciarán McKinney**  
(he/him)  
*Vice-Chair of the Board*

**Appointed**  
09/10/2015

**Resigned**  
15/12/2023

Ciarán McKinney is Manager of the Engage programme, promoting Lifelong Learning and Active Citizenship at Age & Opportunity. Ciarán has extensive experience in policy development and delivering services to meet the needs of groups often distinguished by the experience of social exclusion, including people living with HIV, sex workers, lesbian, gay and bisexual people, and IV drug users.

8/8



**Aisling Gannon**  
(she/her)  
*Vice-Chair of the Board since December 2023*

**Appointed**  
25/11/2021

Aisling is mum of two teenagers and stepmum of three young adults, the youngest of whom is a trans young person. Professionally following 25 years in private practise as a Solicitor she is now a Dublin District Coroner and a Senior Counsel. Aisling is a passionate and committed D advocate. As Vice Chair, a Board Member and Chair of the Governance and Risk Committee with Belongto, Aisling strives to ensure that the services best reflect and support the needs of LGBTQ+ young people across Ireland.

7/8



**Maria Afonsenko**  
(she/her)  
*Treasurer*

**Appointed**  
09/10/2015

Maria Afonsenko is currently a Director of FS Audit 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.

4/8





**Lucy Ní Raghail**  
(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.

7/8



**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 an MSc in Equality Studies from UCD.

8/8



**Kery Mullaly**  
(he/him)  
Board Member

**Appointed**  
11/07/2017  
**Resigned**  
20/09/2023

Kery is a well-known antique dealer and is also Director of Fundraising, Marketing and Events Management at Fundfest, which works with a variety of festivals, charities and not-for-profit organisations.

3/8



**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.

6/8



**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.

5/8



**Dr Brian Melaugh**  
(he/him)  
Board Member

**Appointed**  
18/12/2021  
**Resigned**  
15/12/2023

Dr Brian Melaugh is a lecturer in the Department of Applied Social Studies, Maynooth University. Before taking up an academic position, he worked extensively in the area of drug practice and drug policy, and was CEO of the Ana Liffey Drug Project in Dublin. Brian holds professional qualifications in community work and youth work, social work, a Masters in Systematic Organisation and Management, a Masters in Organisational Consultancy, and a Doctorate in Health.

5/8

The Directors met eight times during 2023. 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.

## Director/Charity Trustees Expenses

In 2023, the total amount of vouched expenses paid to Board members was nil (2022: 0). No Board member claimed expenses during the year (2022: 0).

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 for a one-year term of office, during which time new members 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. Presently, one Board member has served terms totalling more than nine years.

No new Directors were appointed in 2023. Patricia Carey (she/her), an alternate Director, was appointed Director at the AGM in September 2023. Four Board members retired in 2023, one

in September and three in December. Looking forward, having completed an in-depth skills evaluation of the Board, we will recruit three new Board members in the first quarter of 2024.

## Induction of Board Members

Board induction occurs as soon as possible after an individual has been selected to join the Board. In all cases, this is scheduled to take place in advance of their first meeting. Induction is the responsibility of the Company Secretary in collaboration with the CEO and Chair of the Board.

Induction training includes a face-to-face meeting 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

In 2023, Belong To continued the work of the external evaluation of the previous year. We completed an in-depth internal skills audit in Q4 of this year to identify the skills and experience required of new board members due to the planned retirement of three board members in December 2023. An action plan was agreed and recruitment of new board members began in December 2023. It is intended that three new board members will be in place by the end of Q1, 2024.

## Board Subcommittees

The Board is supported by a committee structure that deals with specific aspects of the Charity's business. We reviewed this in September 2023, and restructured our existing five subcommittees to four subcommittees.

## 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.

## 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.

## Governance and Risk

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

- Oversight and reporting Governance policies, processes, and compliance; and,
- Review and monitoring of the risk management systems of the organisation and to escalate and action identified risks to the board as appropriate.

## HR 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.

## Advocacy Subcommittee

The Board of Directors established the Advocacy Subcommittee to:

- Monitor the advocacy and public policy activities of Belong To and to make recommendations to the Board regarding same.
- Monitor objectives and actions under Strategic Goal #5 Campaigning for Change.
- As part of the subcommittee review in September 2023 to consolidate Subcommittees, the Advocacy Subcommittee concluded their work as a in December 2023. This work continues to be a priority for the organisation and Board of Directors.

Each subcommittee is governed by terms of reference specifying the scope of their competencies and any delegated authorities. Additionally, we established working groups for Fundraising and Advocacy, along with an ad-hoc Nominations Subcommittee. Established in December 2023, the purpose of the Nominations Subcommittee is to review the needs of the Board, to recruit new board members and to propose a succession plan. Attendance at each subcommittee is outlined in the following table:

Subcommittee	Members	Attn.
<b>Quality, Safety and Safeguarding</b>	Brian Melaugh (he/him)	3/3
	Liz Harper (she/her)	3/3
	Moninne Griffith (she/her)	1/3
	Siobhan Laffey (she/her)	2/3
	Carmel Walsh (she/her)	3/3

Subcommittee	Members	Attn.
<b>Finance, Audit, Governance and Risk (January to September)</b>	Ciarán McKinney (he/him)	4/4
	Maria Afontsenko (she/her)	4/4
	Moninne Griffith (she/her)	3/4
	Tiffany Fitzgerald-Brosnan (she/her)	4/4
	Vincent Teo (he/him)	4/4
	Suzanne Handley (she/her)	4/4

Subcommittee	Members	Attn.
<b>Finance and Audit (September to December)</b>	Ciarán McKinney (he/him)	3/3
	Maria Afontsenko (she/her)	3/3
	Moninne Griffith (she/her)	3/3
	Vincent Teo (he/him)	3/3
	Suzanne Handley (she/her)	3/3

Subcommittee	Members	Attn.
<b>Governance and Risk (September to December)</b>	Aisling Gannon (she/her)	2/2
	David Cullinane (he/him)	2/2
	Patricia Carey (she/her)	2/2
	Moninne Griffith (she/her)	2/2
	Derrie Murray (he/him)	2/2
	Suzanne Handley (she/her)	2/2

Subcommittee	Members	Attn.
<b>HR and Remuneration</b>	Valerie Maher (she/her)	2/6
	Lucy Ní Raghail (she/her)	4/6
	Simon Ryan (he/him)	2/6
	Moninne Griffith (she/her)	6/6
	Derrie Murray (he/him)	6/6
	Ciarán McKinney (he/him)	4/6

Subcommittee	Members	Attn.
<b>Advocacy</b>	Dominic Hannigan (he/him)	2/2
	Valerie Maher (she/her)	0/2
	Dermot Ryan (he/him)	0/2
	Moninne Griffith (she/her)	1/2
	Sinéad Keane (she/her)	2/2
	Andrew Hyland (he/him)	0/2
	Anthony Muldoon (he/him)	1/2

## 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. It will report 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 Regulators Fundraising Guidelines and operates a professional Fundraising Team guided by high ethical standards. The Charity has achieved the three standards named above and was 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.

An important aspect of accountability and transparency is enabling any staff member or volunteer and other organisation members to voice concerns responsibly and effectively. Since 2016, the Charity has had a Speaking Up Policy in place, including an independent point of contact for staff or volunteers to raise concerns about any malpractice or wrongdoing within the organisation. The Speaking Up Policy is in full compliance with the requirements of the Protected Disclosures Act 2014.

## Legal Compliance

The 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 2023, 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 <https://www.belongto.org/funding-governance/>. A copy of our Privacy Policy is available at <https://www.belongto.org/privacy-policy/>.

## 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 a key role of the Board, to ensure 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. This group 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.

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 2023. The organisation plans to conduct a comprehensive security review in 2024 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 are 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 mitigations measures in relation to child protection and safeguarding are overseen by the Quality, Safety and Safeguarding Subcommittee 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 disinformation in relation to the activities of Belong To and its advocacy positions, as well as disinformation 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.

## 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 Subcommittee 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.

## People

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 systems 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.

## Information Security

There is a risk of a cyber security attack and data theft. This risk has increased in the last 12 months, with LGBTQ+ organisations around Europe reporting an increase in both successful and unsuccessful attempts at cyber-attacks on their operations. These risks 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 2024.

# Financial Overview

## Financial Results

The year's financial results ended 31st December 2023 are set out in detail on pages 35 - 36. These results show a net surplus of €72,172 (2022: surplus €132,562). This surplus results from the change in timing of planned new hires of employees and the start date of programme costs.

Income totalled €2,167,590 an increase of 17.61% on 2022 (2022: €1,843,036). The increase is a result of investment in fundraising over 2022 to 2023 and the successful application of grants to trusts and foundations.

There was an increase in income from fundraised donations by 30% to a total of €1,122,405 (2022: €866,091). This is a direct result of investment in the fundraising team. There was a decrease of Benefit in Kind Donations in 2023 to €128,152 (2022:€ 164,882) this is due to a decrease in donations for advertising costs.

Total expenditure was €2,095,418 in 2023 (2022: €1,710,474) an increase of 22.51%. This reflects the increase in the staff team and also rising costs in operations and the general cost of living.

## Income Diversification

The organisation aims to maintain a minimum 50/50 split in funding between state and non-state funding. In 2023 the funding mix for the organisation was 45% state funding (2022: 48%) and 55% non-state funding (2022: 52%).

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 LGBTI+ young people.

The lack of diversification in non-state funding represents a sustainability risk. The Board addressed the over-reliance on any one source of funding by expanding the Fundraising Team in 2023 and investing in a fundraising strategy resulting in a move to a more balanced outcome in fundraising sources increasing funding from community events and public donations to 44% (2022: 36%) balancing this with corporate donations to 56% (2022:64%)

## 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 a reserves policy 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.

The opening balance on reserves was €1,117,135 on the 1 January 2023. Details of reserves and designated funds:

Reserves	Description	Amount
6 Months Operating Costs	Based on Expenditure of €1,710,474 (2022)	€855,237
Designated to 2023	Designated to increased staffing expenditure to cope with the scale of demand for support from the organisation and increase our fundraising and advocacy capacity	€130,000
Designated to 2023	Designated to 2023 to ensure completion of current projects	€131,898
<b>Total Reserves @ 31 December 2022</b>		<b>€1,117,135</b>

The closing balance on reserves was €1,189,307 on the 31st December 2023. Details of reserves and designated funds::

Reserves	Description	Amount
6 Months Operating Costs	Based on Operation and Staffing Costs in 2023 (1,776,906)	€888,453
Designated to 2024	Designated to 2024 to ensure completion of current projects	€300,854
<b>Total Reserves @ 31 December 2023</b>		<b>€1,189,307</b>

## Fundraising Policy

Belong To organises fundraising events and activities throughout the year. In addition, the Charity solicits the financial support of individual donors, companies, trusts & 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 2023 we declined to accept donations or asked fundraisers to cease fundraising on our behalf on two occasions 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.

## Apportionment

Individual costs that are shared and not directly attributable to an individual programme are apportioned. 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

The auditors, Hayden Brown, 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 2023 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.

## Principal State Funders

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



Funder	Scheme	Amount and term of the total awarded	The amount of the grant taken to final income in the financial statements		The purpose for which the funds are applied	Where relevant, the amount of capital provided and the reporting policies being used concerning current and future instalments
			Taken to final income	Deferred to 2024		
Health Service Executive – Mental Health Directorate / National Office for Suicide Prevention	Section 39, Health Act 2004	€243,320 per annum Term: 1st Jan to 31st Dec 2023	€243,320		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.
Health Service Executive – Mental Health Directorate / National Office for Suicide Prevention	Section 39, Health Act 2004	€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 2023. 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: Local Drugs Task Force	Local Drugs Taskforce – Emerging Needs	€47,196 per annum Term: 1st Jan to 31st Dec 2023	€47,196	-	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	€234,510 per annum Term: 1st Jan to 31st Dec 2023	€234,510	-	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: 8th Oct to 31st 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 2023	€19,975 Term: 4th Aug to 31st Dec 2023	€19,975		A capital grant for upgrades to, and replacement of critical information and communications infrastructure.	Final project report due on completion. The total amount is a capital grant. The funds were entirely expended in 2023 and are reflected in the Balance Sheet.
Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY): direct administration	2022 LGBTI+ Community Services Funding Call: SCHEME A: SUPPORTING COMMUNITY SERVICES FOR LGBTI+ PERSONS	€100,000 Term: 1st October 2022 to 30th September 2023	€87,184		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. €87,185 deferred to 2023 in line with project agreement.	Final project report due on completion. No capital grant received.
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	€17,500	€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. €87,185 deferred to 2023 in line with project agreement.	Final project report due on completion. No capital grant received.
Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY): Administered by Pobal	What Works Building Evidence Fund	€49,999 Term: 3 November 2023 to 2 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 Term: 1st Jan to 31st Dec 2023	€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: Jul 2012 to Jun 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.
Health Service Executive – Mental Health Directorate / National Office for Suicide Prevention	LGBT Research	€60,000	€26,661		LGBT Ireland 2: The Second National Study of the Mental Health and Wellbeing of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex people in Ireland. Deferred from 2021 as project due for completion in 2023.	Reports submitted as and when requested as per the terms and conditions of the scheme. No capital grant received.
Health Service Executive – Mental Health Directorate / National Office for Suicide Prevention	LGBT Research	€50,000	€50,000		LGBT Ireland 2: The Second National Study of the Mental Health and Wellbeing of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex people in Ireland. Deferred from 2022 as project due for completion in 2023	Reports submitted as and when requested as per the terms and conditions of the scheme. No capital grant received.
Health Service Executive	National Lottery Grant 2023	€1,400	€1,400		Pride Youth Games Ireland	Reports submitted as and when requested as per the terms and conditions of the scheme. No capital grant received.
Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC)	Human Rights and Equality Grants Scheme 2023-2024	€7,200		€7,200	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	€3,048	€3,048		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.

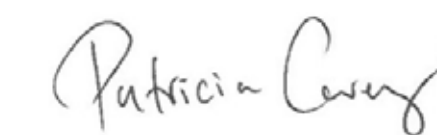
In preparing these financial statements, the Directors are required to:

- 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.

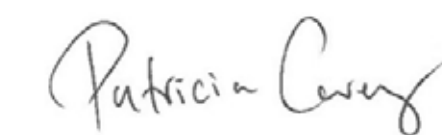
The Directors confirm that they have complied with the above requirements in preparing the financial statements.

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.

**Maria Afontsenko**  
Treasurer



**Patricia Carey**  
Chair, Belong To



## 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 2023 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 2023 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.

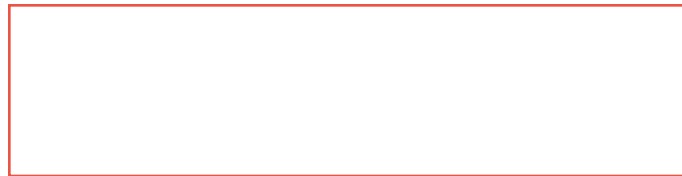
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Directors.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the Directors use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a 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**



*For and on behalf of*

### **Hayden Brown**

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

10th July 2024

## Statement of Financial Activities Year Ended 31st December 2023

	Notes	Restricted Funds 2023 €	Unrestricted Funds 2023 €	Total Funds 2023 €	Restricted Funds 2022 €	Unrestricted Funds 2022 €	Total Funds 2022 €
<b>Income</b>							
Donations and legacies	3.1	129,525	943,823	1,073,348	139,186	699,577	838,763
Charitable activities	3.2	913,985	128,152	1,042,137	811,286	164,882	976,168
Other trading activities	3.3	-	52,105	52,105	-	28,105	28,105
Total Incoming Resources		1,043,510	1,124,080	2,167,590	950,472	892,564	1,843,036
<b>Expenditure</b>							
Charitable activities	4	(1,434,395)	(239,881)	(1,674,276)	(790,760)	(751,756)	(1,542,516)
Cost of raising funds		-	(421,143)	(421,143)	-	(167,958)	(167,958)
Other expenses		-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Resources Expended		(1,434,395)	(661,024)	(2,095,419)	(790,760)	(919,714)	(1,710,474)
<b>Net income/ (expenditure)</b>		<b>(390,885)</b>	<b>463,056</b>	<b>72,171</b>	<b>159,712</b>	<b>(27,150)</b>	<b>132,562</b>
Transfers Between Funds		390,885	(390,885)	-	(159,712)	159,712	-
<b>Net movement in the funds for the financial year</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>72,171</b>	<b>72,171</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>132,562</b>	<b>132,562</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>							
Balances brought forward at 1 January 2023	27	-	1,117,135	1,117,135	-	984,573	984,573
Balances carried forward at 31 December 2023		-	1,189,307	1,189,307	-	1,117,135	1,117,135

The statement of financial activities has been prepared on the basis that all operations are continuing 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 the supplementary information part of the notes to the financial statements.

The cost of voluntary income includes the apportioned fundraising salary costs.

Approved by the Board of Directors on DATE and signed on its behalf by:

**Maria Afontsenko**  
Treasurer

**Patricia Carey**  
Chair, Belong To

## Balance Sheet Year Ended 31st December 2023

	Notes	2023		2022	
		€	€	€	€
<b>Fixed Assets</b>					
Intangible Assets	21	0		0	
Tangible Assets	22	84,667		67,689	
		<b>84,667</b>		<b>67,689</b>	
<b>Current Assets</b>					
Debtors	23	106,313		136,409	
Cash at bank and in hand		1,507,622		1,374,794	
		<b>1,613,935</b>		<b>1,511,203</b>	
<b>Creditor: amounts falling due within one year</b>	24	(509,295)		(461,757)	
			<b>1,104,640</b>		<b>1,049,446</b>
<b>Net Current Assets</b>					
			<b>1,189,307</b>		<b>1,117,135</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>			<b>1,189,307</b>		<b>1,117,135</b>
<b>Contingency Reserve Fund</b>					
Restricted Funds		-		-	
Unrestricted Funds		1,189,307		1,117,135	
<b>Funds of the Charity</b>	27	<b>1,189,307</b>		<b>1,117,135</b>	

These financial statements were approved by the Board of Directors on 10 July 2024 and signed on behalf of the Board by:

**Maria Afontsenko**  
Treasurer

**Patricia Carey**  
Chair, Belong To

## Statement of Changes in Funds Year Ended 31st December 2023

	Unrestricted Funds €	Restricted Funds €	Total €
<b>At 1st January 2022</b>	<b>984,573</b>	-	<b>984,573</b>
Surplus for the financial year	132,562	-	132,562
<b>At 31 December 2022</b>	<b>1,117,135</b>	-	<b>1,117,135</b>
Surplus for the year	72,172	-	72,172
<b>At 31st December 2023</b>	<b>1,189,307</b>	-	<b>1,189,307</b>

## Statement of Cash Flows Year Ended 31st December 2023

	2023 €	2022 €
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>		
Surplus for the financial year	72,171	132,562
<i>Adjustments for:</i>		
Depreciation of tangible assets	20,749	18,854
Accrued (income)	(1,212)	10,434
<i>Changes in:</i>		
Trade and other debtors	30,096	(88,492)
Trade and other creditors	48,750	(184,963)
<b>Net cash from operating activities</b>	<b>170,554</b>	<b>(111,605)</b>
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>		
Purchase of tangible assets	(37,727)	(17,858)
<b>Net cash used in investing activities</b>	<b>(37,727)</b>	<b>(17,858)</b>
<b>Net increase/ (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents</b>	<b>132,828</b>	<b>(129,463)</b>
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year</b>	<b>1,374,794</b>	<b>1,504,257</b>
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at end of year</b>	<b>1,507,622</b>	<b>1,374,794</b>

## 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 55 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 €2.61 (2022: €2.32) 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 program. 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 2023 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

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 Fixtures and Fittings

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

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 2023 €	Unrestricted Funds 2023 €	Total Funds 2023 €	Total Funds 2022 €
Corporate donations & sponsorship	32,500	294,645	327,145	225,142
Local/ community fundraising		135,060	135,060	80,246
Regular & committed giving		19,339	19,339	22,441
Revenue refunds		3,048	3,048	778
Fundraising appeals inc. Rainbow Ball		263,568	263,568	52,254
Other		29,873	29,873	115,457
Community Foundation Ireland	11,014		11,014	-
Trusts and Foudations	52,011	198,290	250,301	203,260
Google.org - Impact Challenge on Safety	34,000		34,000	139,186
	<b>129,525</b>	<b>943,823</b>	<b>1,073,348</b>	<b>838,763</b>

### 3.2 Charitable Activities

	Restricted Funds 2023 €	Unrestricted Funds 2023 €	Total Funds 2023 €	Total Funds 2022 €
Donated goods and services		128,152	128,152	164,882
HSE Mental Health Directorate/ National Office for Suicide Prevention - s.39 Health Act 2004	243,320		243,320	258,275
Health Service Executive LGBT Research	76,661		76,661	-
CDYSB/ NICDTF - LDTF Emerging Needs	47,196		47,196	45,600
DCEDIY - Youth Service Grant Scheme	234,510		234,510	264,395
DCEDIY - Youth Capital Funding Scheme 2022	16,139		16,139	12,144
DCEDIY - Youth Capital Funding Scheme 2023	0		0	
DCEDIY Scheme A: Supporting Community Services for LGBTI+ Services 2022	87,184		87,184	12,816
DCEDIY Scheme A: Supporting Community Services for LGBTI+ Services 2023	17,500		17,500	51,145
Dept of Education - National Action Plan on Bullying	90,000		90,000	58,000
National Lottery Grants Scheme	1,400		1,400	-
University College Dublin and Irish Research Council - Employment Based Programme	9,250		9,250	18,499
Dept of Rural and Community Development - SSNO Scheme 2019-2022	-		-	44,999
Dept of Rural and Community Development - SSNO Scheme 2022-2025	90,825		90,825	45,412
	<b>913,985</b>	<b>128,152</b>	<b>1,042,137</b>	<b>976,168</b>

### 3.3 Other Trading Activities

	Restricted Funds 2023 €	Unrestricted Funds 2023 €	Total Funds 2023 €	Total Funds 2022 €
Other Grants	-	-	-	-
Training Income	-	52,105	52,105	28,105
	<b>-</b>	<b>52,105</b>	<b>52,105</b>	<b>28,105</b>
<b>Total Funds YE 2023</b>	<b>1,043,510</b>	<b>1,124,080</b>	<b>2,167,590</b>	<b>1,843,036</b>

Analysis of state funding and expenditure is detailed in Note 29

# Notes to the Financial Statements Year Ended 31 December 2023

## 4. Expenditure

### 4.1 Charitable Activities

	Direct Costs €	Grant Funding of Activities €	Other Costs €	Support Costs €	2023 €	2022 €
Goal 1 - Delivering LGBTQ+ Youth Work	294,782	-	-	141,840	436,622	415,745
Goal 2 - Building Safe Spaces & Services	413,060	45,000	-	136,455	594,515	667,203
Goal 3 - Campaigning for Change	336,870	-	80,000	66,388	483,258	316,809
Goal 4 - Being a Learning and Development Organisation	114,145	-	-	45,736	159,881	142,759
	<b>1,158,857</b>	<b>45,000</b>	<b>80,000</b>	<b>390,418</b>	<b>1,674,275</b>	<b>1,542,516</b>

### 4.2 Governance Costs

	Direct Costs €	Other Costs €	Support Costs €	2023 €	2022 €
Governance direct costs	16,794	-	-	16,794	14,081
Board members vouched expenses	-	-	-	-	-
Legal and professional	29,690	-	-	29,690	-
Finance and Governance Staff Costs	-	-	53,062	53,062	48,017
Audit fees	4,736	-	-	4,736	4,551
	<b>51,220</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>53,062</b>	<b>104,282</b>	<b>66,649</b>

### 4.3 Analysis Of Support Costs

	Cost of Raising Funds	Goal 1 €	Goal 2 €	Goal 3 €	Goal 4 €	2023 €	2022 €
Governance costs (note 4.2)	5,214	36,499	20,856	26,071	15,642	104,282	66,649
Office premises & facilities	9,311	28,869	35,968	8,105	15,147	97,400	156,403
Information technology	10,173	32,381	33,461	3,900	1,471	81,386	44,108
Human resources	5,437	22,007	19,274	8,519	1,313	56,550	45,047
Miscellaneous	11,629	22,084	26,895	19,793	12,163	92,564	28,703
	<b>41,764</b>	<b>141,840</b>	<b>136,454</b>	<b>66,388</b>	<b>45,736</b>	<b>432,182</b>	<b>340,910</b>

### 4.4 Cost of Raising Funds

	2023	2022
Staff Costs	186,382	132,755
Support Costs (% allocated from overheads)	41,765	
Direct Costs	174,535	35,203
Donated Goods and Services	18,462	
	<b>421,143</b>	<b>167,958</b>

The increase in direct costs is a result of two Rainbow Ball Events held in 2023

## Notes to the Financial Statements Year Ended 31 December 2023

### 5. Donated Goods and Services

For the financial year 2023, in-kind donations have been recognised, measured at fair value and classified to comply with Charity SORP FRS102.

	2023	2022
In Kind donations and services	128,152	164,882

### 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 will continue 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 2023, the total amount of vouched expenses paid to the Board members was €0 (2022: €0). No Board member claimed expenses during the year (2022: 0).

As well as donating their time and expertise during 2023, the Directors made unconditional donations of €1,101 (2022: €672) to the Charity.

The total amount of gifts, donated goods, and donated services received from companies controlled by Directors during 2023 was €nil (2022: nil).

Key management personnel made unconditional donations of €2,865 (2022: €948) 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 2023.

### 10. Ex-gratia Payments

The Charity made no ex-gratia payments in 2023 and 2022.

### 11. Public Benefit

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

### 12. Capital commitments

The Company had no capital commitments on the 31st December 2023 (2022: €nil).

### 13. Contingent liabilities

The Company had no contingent liabilities on the 31st December 2023 (2022: €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.

	2023 €	2022 €
Payable on leases in which the commitment expires within:		
One year	-	-
Two to five years		
More than five years	165,000	220,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>165,000</b>	<b>165,000</b>

### 17. Pension

The Charity operates a Defined Contribution Pension Scheme matched 3% contribution of €16,872 (2022: €7,481) to employees participating in the scheme. In 2023, 15 employees participated in the scheme (2022:7). 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.

2023	2022
16,872	7,481

### 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

## Notes to the Financial Statements Year Ended 31 December 2023

a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year are discussed below.

### (a) 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.

### (b) 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:	2023 €	2022 €
Amortisation of intangible assests	0	0
Depreciation of tangible assets	20,749	18,854
	<b>20,749</b>	<b>18,854</b>

## 19. Staff Costs

### Average number of persons employed by the charity during the year:

	2023	2022
Administration	7	6
Education and Training	3	2
Policy, Research, and Communications	4	4
Youth Work	7	7
Fundraising	3	3
	<b>24</b>	<b>22</b>

### The aggregate payroll costs incurred during the year were:

	2023 €	2022 €
Wages and Salaries (Including Pension)	996,571	796,644
Social Insurance Costs	107,469	87,112
	<b>1,104,040</b>	<b>883,756</b>

Bands of Salaries (Including Pension)	2023	2022
€50,000 - €60,000	1	2
€60,001 - €70,000	5	1
€70,000 - €80,000	1	1
€80,000 - €90,000	1	-

	2023	2022
CEO Salary	87,179	84,115
CEO Pension	2,539	634
SMT Total	447,928.05	341,912
Pension Total	10,041.15	4594

The Senior Management Team (SMT) was restructured in 2022 which resulted in a full compliment of Senior Managers for the year 2023. This reflected in the salary increase representing seven members of the team at full annual cost.

Remuneration includes salaries and any benefits in kind. One (2022: 2) 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 2023 was €87,179 (2022: €84,115). Included in this is employer pension contributions of €2,539 (2022: €634). Her contract of employment does not include a performance-related award scheme or any benefit-in-kind/perquisites.

The Senior Management Team (SMT) was restructured in 2022 which resulted in a full compliment of Senior Managers for the year 2023. This reflected in the salary increase representing seven members of the team at full annual cost. Remuneration paid to the SMT in 2023 amounted to €447,928. Included in this figure is employer pension contributions of €10,041 (2022: €4,594). This compares to a total SMT remuneration figure of €341,912 in 2022. 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.

## Notes to the Financial Statements Year Ended 31 December 2023

### 21. Intangible Assets

	Software Dev €	Total €
<b>Cost</b>		
As 1st January 2023 and 31st Dec 2023	11,364	11,364
Amoritisiation		
At 1st Jan 2023	11,364	11,364
Charge for the Year	0	0
<b>At 31st December 2023</b>	<b>11,364</b>	<b>11,364</b>
<b>Carrying Amount as at 31st Dec 2023</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

	Software Dev €	Total €
<b>Cost</b>		
As 1st January 2022 and 31st Dec 2022	11,364	11,364
Amoritisiation		
At 1st Jan 2022	11,364	11,364
Charge for the Year		
<b>At 31st December 2022</b>	<b>11,364</b>	<b>11,364</b>
<b>Carrying Amount as at 31st Dec 2022</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Intangible Assets represents the costs involved in development BeLonG To's CRM technology produce which allows the charity to manage all their resources and information in one single shared secured location. The costs are being amoritised over a five year period.

### 22. Tangible Assets

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

	Equipment €	Fixtures and Fittings €	Total €
<b>Cost</b>			
At 1st January 2022	93,961	35,921	129,882
Additions	17,858	0	17,858
<b>At 31st December 2022</b>	<b>111,819</b>	<b>35,921</b>	<b>147,740</b>
<b>Depreciation</b>			
At 1st Jan 2022	47,621	13,576	61,197
Charge for the Year	13,307	5,547	18,854
<b>At 31st December 2022</b>	<b>60,928</b>	<b>19,123</b>	<b>80,051</b>
<b>Carrying Amount as at 31st Dec 2022</b>	<b>50,891</b>	<b>16,798</b>	<b>67,689</b>

### 23. Debtors

	2023 €	2022 €
Trade Debtors	67,443	55,778
Other Debtors	8,732	4,186
Prepayments and Accured Income	30,138	76,445
	<b>106,313</b>	<b>136,409</b>

### 24. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2023 €	2022 €
Trade Creditors	80,167	48,822
Other Creditors	32,762	28,941
PAYE and Social Welfare	32,109	23,706
Accruals	15,450	16,662
Deferred Income	348,807	343,626
	<b>509,295</b>	<b>461,757</b>

Deferred Income	2023 €	2022 €
Digital Google		34,000
HSE - National Office for Suicide Prevention	38,971	38,971
HSE - National Office for Suicide Prevention (LGBT Research)	0	76,661
DCEDIY - CPD LGBTI+ Youth Strategy	750	750
DECDIY- LGBTI+ Funding	52,500	87,184
DCEDIY What Works 2023-2024	49,999	0
ILGA Funds	0	1,588
Rainbow Ball	0	104,471
IHREC	7,200	0
Google E Learning QMark 2024	22,875	0
TIDES Foundation	80,000	0
CFI Transhealthcare	7,044	0
CFI Its our Social Media	15,000	0
CFI Primary schools	19,092	0
CFI Toy Show Apeal	55,375	0
	<b>348,807</b>	<b>343,626</b>

## Notes to the Financial Statements Year Ended 31 December 2023

### 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	€
As 1st January 2023	1,117,135
Surplus for the Year	72,172
<b>At 31st December 2023</b>	<b>1,189,307</b>

The surplus for the year is a result of timing of new employee start dates and the movement of planned programme costs to 2023

Expenditure of this surplus is planning in 2023 as detailed in our reserves on page:

### 27. Reconciliation of movements in funds of the charity

<b>27.1 Reconciliation of Movement of Funds</b>	<b>Unrestricted Funds €</b>	<b>Restricted Funds €</b>	<b>Total Funds €</b>
At 1 January 2023	984,573	0	984,573
Movement during the financial year	(132,562)	0	(132,562)
At 31 December 2023	1,117,135	0	1,117,135
Movement during the financial year	72,171	0	72,171
<b>At 31 December 2023</b>	<b>1,189,307</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,189,307</b>

<b>27.2 Analysis of Movements on Funds</b>	<b>Balance 1 January 2023 €</b>	<b>Income €</b>	<b>Expenditure €</b>	<b>Transfers between funds €</b>	<b>Balance 31 December 2023 €</b>
<b>Restricted income</b>					
Restricted	-	1,043,510	(1,434,395)	(390,884)	-
<b>Unrestricted income</b>					
Unrestricted general	1,117,135	1,124,080	(661,024)	(390,884)	1,189,307
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>1,117,135</b>	<b>2,167,590</b>	<b>(2,095,419)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,189,307</b>

<b>27.3 Analysis of Net Assets by Fund</b>	<b>Fixed assets - charity use €</b>	<b>Current assets €</b>	<b>Current liabilities €</b>	<b>Total €</b>
Restricted Funds	30,807	348,807	381,569	(1,955)
Unrestricted Funds	53,860	1,265,128	127,726	1,191,263
	<b>84,667</b>	<b>1,613,935</b>	<b>509,295</b>	<b>1,189,307</b>



## Notes to the Financial Statements Year Ended 31 December 2023

### 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 2023 the total amount of funding disbursed through the scheme was €45,000 (2022: €45,000). The recipients of funding in were:

<b>Grant recipients</b>	2023 €	2022 €
Crosscare (Bray Youth Services)	2,250	2,850
Youth Work Ireland Cork	8,000	8,000
Crosscare (East Wicklow Youth Services)	2,446	2,200
Donegal Youth Service CLG	8,000	8,400
Ferns Diocesan Youth Service (FDYS)	5,000	5,004
Kerry Diocesan Youth Service (KDYS)	4,790	4,132
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	4,500
Youth Work Ireland Tipperary	2,724	2,724
	<b>45,000</b>	<b>45,000</b>

### 29. Financial instruments

The carrying amount for each category of financial instruments as follows:

	2023 €	2022 €
Financial assets measured at amortised cost		
Trade debtors	67,443	55,778
Other debtors	38,870	80,631
Cash at bank and in hand	1,507,622	1,374,794
	<b>1,613,935</b>	<b>1,511,203</b>
Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost		
Trade creditors	(80,167)	(48,822)
Other creditors	(429,128)	(412,935)
	<b>(509,295)</b>	<b>(461,757)</b>

# Notes to the Financial Statements Year Ended 31 December 2023

## 30. State Funding Income and Expenditure

Name of Grantor	Health Service Executive - Mental Health Directorate	City of Dublin Youth Service Board (CDYSB)	Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration, and Youth (DCEDIY)	Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration, and Youth (DCEDIY)	Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration, and Youth (DCEDIY)	Health Service Executive	Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY)	Department of Education and Skills	Dept. Rural and Community Development (administered by Pobal)	Health Service Executive - Mental Health Directorate / National Office for Suicide Prevention	Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration, and Youth (DCEDIY)
Funding Stream	Section 39 Health Act 2004	LDTF Emerging Needs	Youth Service Grant Scheme	Youth Capital Funding Scheme	SCHEME A: SUPPORTING COMMUNITY SERVICES FOR LGBTI+ PERSONS 2022	National Lottery	SCHEME A: SUPPORTING COMMUNITY SERVICES FOR LGBTI+ PERSONS 2023	National Action Plan on Bullying	SSNO 2022-2025	LGBT Research	What Work 2023-2024
<b>Income YE 2023</b>	243,320	47,196	234,510	-	-	1,400	70,000	90,000	90,825	-	49,999
Deferred Income from 2022 C/F	38,971	-	-	-	87,184	-	-	-	-	76,661	-
Less Deferred Income to 2023	-38,971	-	-	-	-	-	-52,500	-	-	-	-49,999
Benefit in Kind	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Legal Fees	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Campaign and Communications	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fundraising	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Grant*	-	-	-	16,139	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Amortisation of Capital Grant	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Income YE 2023</b>	<b>243,320</b>	<b>47,196</b>	<b>234,510</b>	<b>16,139</b>	<b>87,184</b>	<b>1,400</b>	<b>17,500</b>	<b>90,000</b>	<b>90,825</b>	<b>76,661</b>	<b>-</b>
Capital Grant*   Note: This expenditure is recognised on the balance sheet as it is a capital expenditure											
<b>Expenditure</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wages	114,914	40,122	184,640	-	68,861	-	17,500	62,898	90,825	14,658	-
Program Costs	78,051	-	10,500	-	12,620	1,400	-	27,102	-	62,003	-
Rent and Rates	11,927	4,400	12,000	-	2,500	-	-	-	-	1,250	-
Telephone	1,819	882	2,021	-	450	-	-	-	-	-	-
Motor and Travel	1,892	522	1,250	-	913	-	-	-	-	-	-
Light and Heat	950	607	1,889	-	350	-	-	-	-	450	-
Print, Post and Stationery	2,936	150	1,979	-	200	-	-	-	-	550	-
ICT Management	7,673	200	5,000	-	750	-	-	-	-	1,450	-
Professional Fees	4,587	105	4,333	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,466	-
Staff Costs	5,505	95	2,500	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,000	-
Communications	4,587	-	1,750	-	320	-	-	-	-	5,000	-
Insurance	3,099	113	2,000	-	220	-	-	-	-	-	-
Repairs and Maintenance	1,429	-	667	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bank Charges and Interest	209	-	105	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Depreciation	-	-	-	16,139	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Membership, Conference and General Expenses	1,835	-	1,871	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Governance and Board	1,007	-	1,355	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Audit & Accountancy	900	-	650	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Investment in Future income	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>243,320</b>	<b>47,196</b>	<b>234,510</b>	<b>16,139</b>	<b>87,184</b>	<b>1,400</b>	<b>17,500</b>	<b>90,000</b>	<b>90,825</b>	<b>88,827</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Surplus/Deficit</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-0</b>	<b>-12,166</b>	<b>-</b>

## 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

The Directors are the controlling party of the Company.

## 33. Lobbying and Political Donations

The Charity did not make any political donations during 2023, 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. Comparative Figures

Comparative figures have been re-classified on the same basis as current year figures.

## 35. Approval of financial statements

The board of directors approved these financial statements for issue on 10 July 2024.

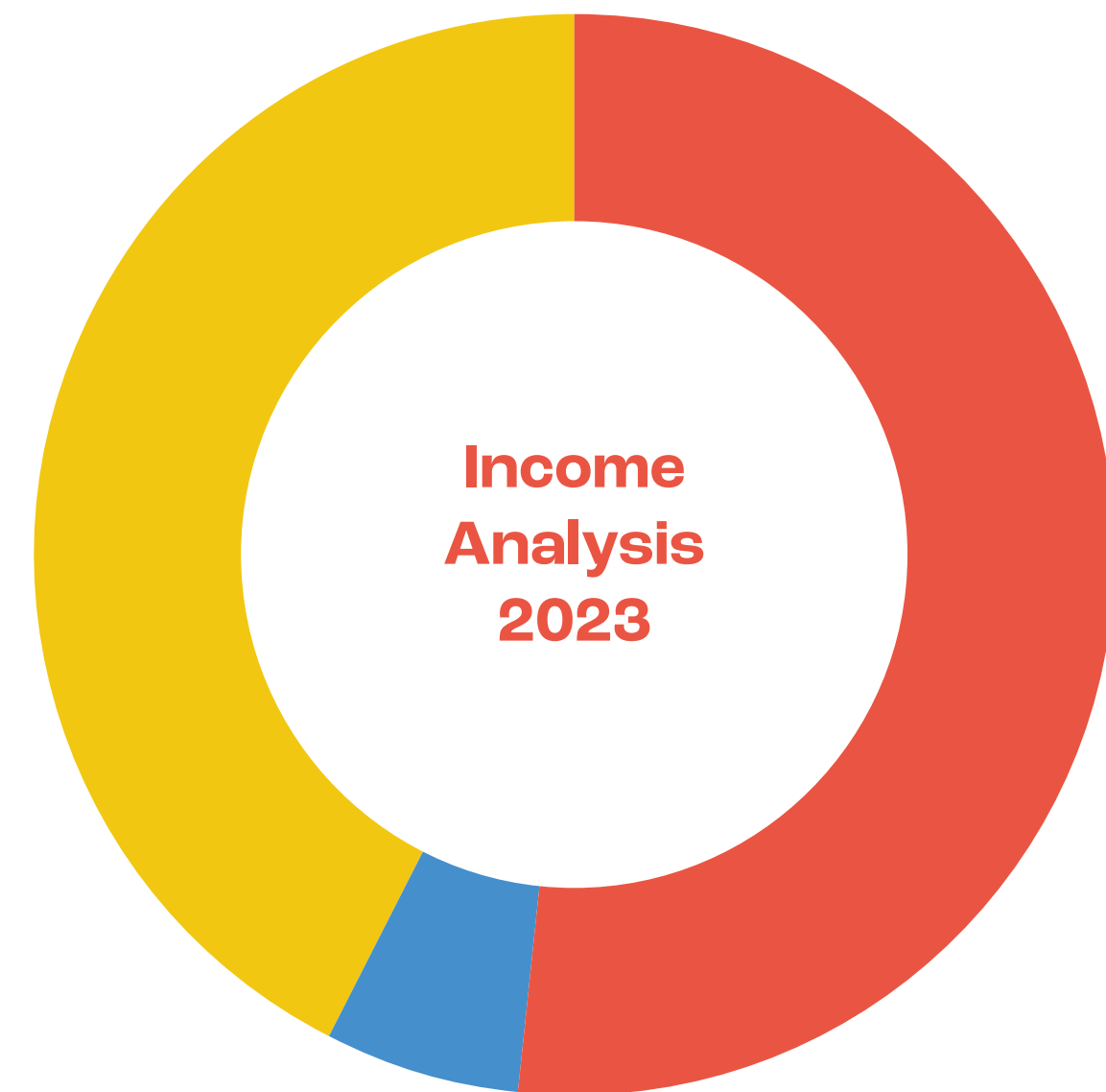
## Detailed Income and Expenditure Statement Year Ended 31 December 2023

Income	2023 €	2022 €
DCEDIY - Youth Service Grant Scheme	234,510	264,395
DCEDIY - Youth Capital Funding Scheme	19,975	10,127
DCEDIY - Youth Capital Funding Scheme Transfer of capital grant	(19,975)	(10,127)
Amoritisation of on the Youth Capital Funding Scheme Grants (DCEDIY)	16,139	12,144
CDYSB/ NICDTF - LDTF Emerging Needs	47,196	45,600
Dept of Education - National Action Plan on Bullying	90,000	58,000
Dept of Rural and Community Development - SSNO Scheme 2019-2022	0	44,999
Dept of Rural and Community Development - SSNO Scheme 2022-2025	90,825	45,412
HSE Mental Health Directorate/ National Office for Suicide Prevention - s.39 Health Act 2004	243,320	258,275
HSE Mental Health Directorate LGBT Research	76,661	0
The National Lottery	1,400	0
DCEDIY Scheme A: Supporting Community Services for LGBTI+ Services 2022	87,184	12,816
DCEDIY Scheme A: Supporting Community Services for LGBTI+ Services 2023	17,500	51,145
University College Dublin and Irish Research Council - Employment Based Programme	9,250	18,499
Donated Goods and Services	128,152	164,882
Donations and legacies	1,025,286	699,578
Google.org - Impact Challenge on Safety	34,000	139,186
Community Foundation	11,014	0
Revenue Refund Scheme	3,048	0
Training	52,105	28,105
	<b>2,167,590</b>	<b>1,843,036</b>

Expenditure	2023 €	2022 €
Wages and salaries	996,571	796,644
Employer's PRSI contributions	107,469	87,112
Advertising and communications	120,218	124,715
Programme costs	318,512	321,596
Investment in future income	192,997	35,203
Printing and publications	10,664	3,271
Rent payable	57,491	55,000
Insurance	18,961	19,250
Light and heat	8,042	4,855
Cleaning	6,260	6,531
Repairs and maintenance	6,168	10,575
Professional fees	42,744	87,011
Telephone	7,299	7,762
ICT Management	81,386	44,108
Postage and stationery	7,806	10,130
Staff training and recruitment	43,496	27,793
Travel and subsistence expenses	6,097	15,970
Auditors remuneration	4,736	4,551
Bank charges	1,423	1,009
Subscriptions	6,523	4,935
Conference	5,058	3,997
General Expenses	7,953	5,522
Governance and board expenditure	16,794	14,081
Depreciation of tangible assets	20,749	18,854
	<b>2,095,418</b>	<b>1,710,474</b>
<b>Operating Surplus</b>	<b>72,172</b>	<b>132,562</b>

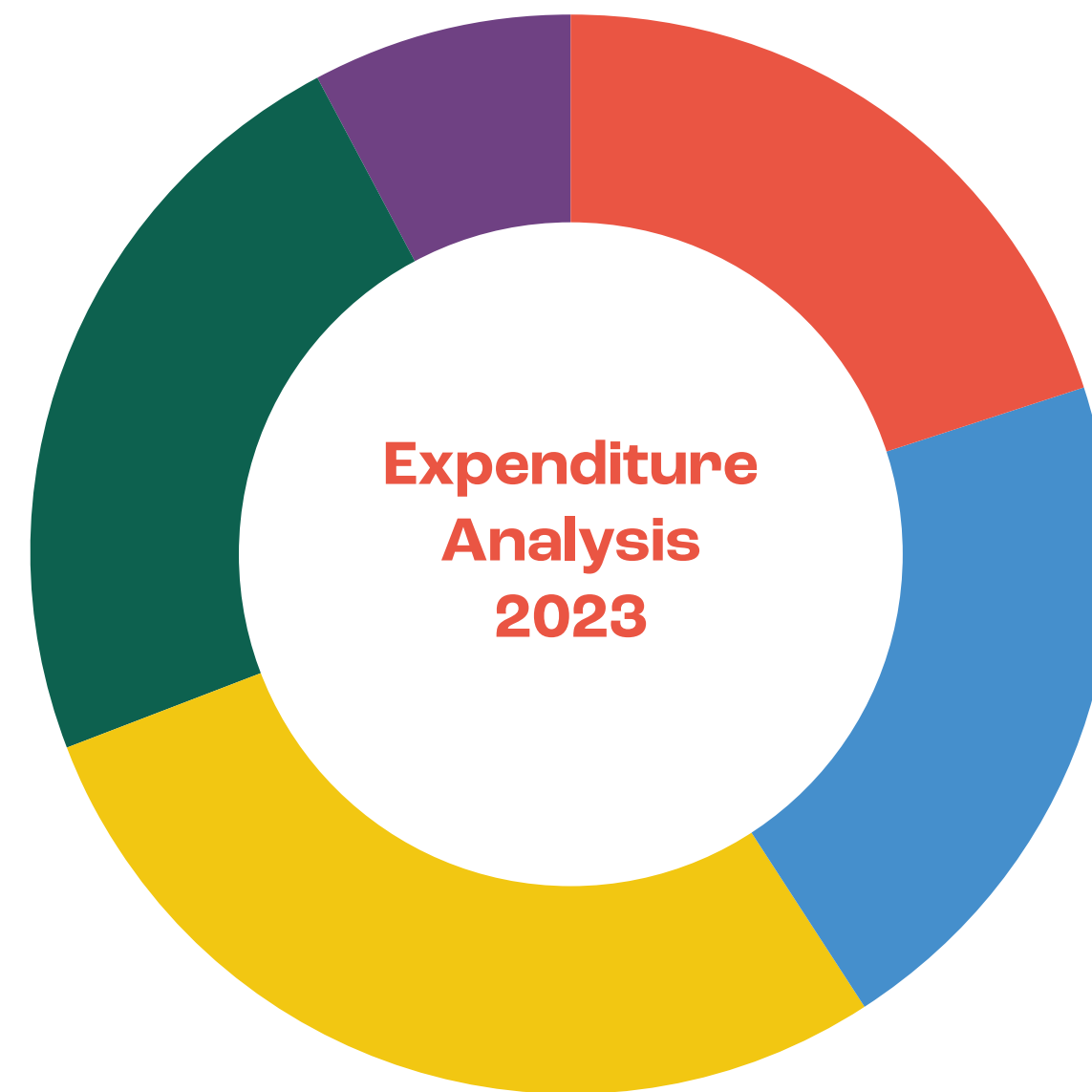
## Income Analysis

Fundraised Income	1,122,406
Donated Goods and Services	128,152
State Grants	917,033
	<b>2,167,591</b>



## Expenditure Analysis

Goal Analysis	Total Ye 2023	State	Fundraised
Goal 1 - Delivering LGBTQ+ Youth Work	436,622	299,245	137,376
Goal 2 - Building Safe Spaces & Services	594,515	348,004	246,510
Goal 3 - Campaigning for Change	483,258	166,661	316,597
Goal 4 - Being a Learning and Development Organisation	159,881	103,122	56,759
Cost of Fundraising	421,143		421,143
	<b>2,095,419</b>	<b>917,033</b>	<b>1,178,384</b>



# Reference and Administrative Details

## **Name of Charity**

BeLong To Youth Services

## **Also Known As**

Belong To - LGBTQ+ Youth Ireland

## **Registered Charity Number**

20059798

## **Charitable Tax-Exemption Number**

CHY16534

## **Companies Registration Number**

369888

## **Registered Office**

Parliament House  
13 Parliament Street  
Dublin 2, D02 P658  
Ireland

*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**

Dominic Hannigan

*Chair Resigned 15 December 2023*

Patricia Carey

*Chair Appointed 15 December 2023*

Ciarán McKinney

*Vice-Chair Resigned 15 December 2023*

Maria Afontsenko

*Treasurer*

Kery Mulally *Resigned 20 September 2023*

Liz Harper

Lucy Ní Raghail

Valerie Maher

Brian Melaugh *Resigned 15 December 2023*

Dermot Ryan

Aisling Gannon

*Vice-Chair 15 December 2023*

## **Company Secretary**

Suzanne Handley

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

## **Chief Executive Officer**

Moninne Griffith

## **Director Communications and Advocacy**

Sinéad Keane

## **Head of Operation and Programmes**

Derrie Murray

## **Director Governance and Finance**

Suzanne Handley

## **Director of Education, Training and Community Practice**

Sharon Heron

## **Director of Development**

Marty O'Prey

## **Youth Services Manager**

Carmel Walsh

*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.

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 2023, we can be there for LGBTQ+ youth when they need us most.

- A&L Goodbody LLP
- Accenture
- Aer Lingus
- Allied Irish Bank
- Amgen
- An Taisce
- Arthur Cox LLP
- AVCOM
- Aviva Insurance
- Axonista
- Bank of Ireland
- Beauchamps
- Bibby Financial Services Ireland Limited
- BidX1
- BioMarin International Limited
- Black Shamrock Games
- Brown Brothers Harriman
- Chartered Accountants Ireland
- Children's Rights Alliance
- Clondalkin Public Library
- Clonmel Enterprises
- Cognizant
- Colgate Palmolive Support Services Organisation
- Cornmarket Group Financial Services Ltd
- Crowley's DFK
- CSCGFM Group
- Davy
- DELL
- Deloitte
- Dentsu Ireland Ltd.
- Department of Agriculture
- Department of Children, Disability, Equality, Integration and Youth
- Department of Education
- Department of Health
- Department of Housing
- DLA Piper
- Dogpatch Labs
- Dropbox
- Eaton
- ebay
- Eir Grid
- Elavon
- Engineers Ireland
- ESB Energy for Generations
- Eversheds Sutherland
- EY
- Gallagher
- Gas Networks Ireland
- Gilead Sciences
- GMIT
- Golf Ireland
- Google Inc.
- Grant Thornton
- Gym+Coffee
- Health Service Executive (HSE)
- Horizon Therapeutics
- HSBC (Ireland)
- Intercom
- Irish Distillers
- Irish Games Association
- Irish Human Rights & Equality Commission (IHREC)
- Irish Life
- Irish Wheelchair Association
- Kérastase
- Keywords Studios
- Kroll
- Mangopay
- Maples
- McCann Fitzgerald
- M-Co
- Medserv
- Meta
- Microsoft Ireland
- MKN Properties Limited
- Moneysave Insurance
- MSD Ireland
- Musgrave
- National LGBT Federation (NXF)
- National Office for Suicide Prevention (NOSP)
- National Treasury Management Agency
- Net App
- New Look
- NIB
- Northern Trust
- Origina
- PartnerRe Ireland
- PayPal
- Penny Lane
- Personio
- Philip Lee Commercial Law
- Phorest
- Platform 55
- PTSB
- Revenue
- RSA Insurance
- Scope Eyecare
- ShareGift
- Siro
- Smartbox Group Ltd
- SMBC Aviation Capital
- Spencer Stuart
- Starcircle
- State Street
- Sun Life Financial
- Taylor Mason Capital Limited
- Tekenable
- The Community Foundation for Ireland
- The Dead Rabbit
- The Walt Disney Company
- Three Square
- TikTok
- TJX Europe
- Wexford County Council
- William Fry
- Wix
- Wow Burger
- Xperi
- Yahoo EMEA Limited



**Belong To** LGBTQ+  
Youth Ireland

Belong To  
13 Parliament St  
Dublin 2

[www.belongto.org](http://www.belongto.org)  
[info@belongto.org](mailto:info@belongto.org)  
01 670 6223

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