



## National Network

---

The purpose of the National Network is to ensure LGBTI+ young people have access to dedicated, high quality youth services and supports, by connecting youth workers and volunteers around the country in a forum for

1. working collectively for change, informed by the voice and experience of LGBTI+ young people.
2. sharing knowledge, best practice, experience and learning.
3. supporting and inspiring each other.

## Vision

---

The National Network will be a unified, inclusive, well connected, well resourced, structured network of trained and supported community-based youth workers and volunteers, informed by the voices of young people and youth workers to be a recognised advocate for change in policy and practice, underpinned by annual agreed goals.

## Terms of Reference

---

**Membership** is open to youth work organisations who have accreditation or who have made a commitment to work towards accreditation. Organisations who are interested in the work of the network are welcome to attend meetings to learn about what is involved.

Voting at network meetings is open to member organisations who are delivering services according to NQSF standards. The network will produce a summary of what is required for accreditation which can be given to interested groups and prospective members.

The National Network manager reviews accreditation every three years. Accreditation may be revoked in extenuating circumstances.

The network strives to balance being open, welcoming and inclusive with protecting and promoting quality standards.

When new groups contact Belong To they are put in touch with the existing service in their catchment area.

**Expectations of Network Members:** network members are expected to

- communicate with young people, other youth workers and volunteers and management in their own organisation about the work of the network.
- attend as many network meetings as possible.
- ensure that the voice and concerns of young people are influencing the work of the network through the meeting agendas, annual work plan and digital survey.

Membership is for the organisation and therefore it is important that the board of management, other staff and volunteers are aware of the network purpose and vision. The network will prepare a ten-minute information presentation for delivery to young people, boards of management, other staff and volunteers.

It is preferable that there is consistent attendance at network meetings where possible but other youth workers and volunteers from the organisation are welcome to attend.

**Meetings** will be held 4 times a year. Dates for the next year will be agreed at the October meeting .

The January meeting will be held over two days to include the AGM, reviewing work over the previous year and planning work for the coming year. The two day meeting is important for giving network members the opportunity to socialise and relax together with more time for sharing experience and building supportive relationships.

**Times:** Meetings will begin at 11am and finish at 4pm, with a short lunch break.

**Venue:** The network is concerned to make it as easy as possible for members from all over the country to attend meetings. Members from outside of Dublin requested that meetings be held in Dublin as that is the easiest national venue for them to get to.

Members plan to have more project visits outside Dublin. As the network grows there will also be more regional meetings.

The November residential meeting for peer educators meeting will be held outside Dublin. It will include a workshop to gather the issues highlighted by young people for the National Network priorities.

**Chairperson:** A member of the network will be elected to the role of chairperson for the year at the January meeting. The term of office is one year. This role is not open to Belong To staff.

The role of the chairperson is to:

- chair network meetings
- work closely with the Network Manager in planning, preparing and reviewing meetings
- represent the Network when necessary

*A good chair listens well and facilitates all members to participate at network meetings, ensures that all views are heard without the meeting becoming bogged down on one item and ensures that decisions made at meetings are implemented*

(It may be advisable to also elect a vice-chairperson who can chair meetings if the chair is not available.)

**Agenda:** The agenda should include the following standing items -

- check-ins and check-outs,
- updates on priorities, including progress reports from working groups,
- political & advocacy update,
- network sustainability & fundraising update.

**Secretary:** The National Network manager will be responsible to organising the network meetings, including

- planning, preparing and reviewing meetings with the chairperson,
- writing up and circulating the minutes within a week of every meeting,
- sending out the agenda for meetings two weeks in advance of every meeting.

**Identifying Priorities:** The Network will undertake an annual digital survey with young people throughout the country, asking for their priority issues. The network will ensure that Dublin and non-Dublin issues are weighted fairly in the results

The survey results will be discussed at the November peer educators' conference. At the January National Network meeting members will agree a plan for collective action on the three top issues.

**Communication and Information Sharing:** The network meetings are a vital forum for communication and information exchange. The network will also establish an online portal for communication and knowledge exchange. A small working group will be established at the January meeting to work on this with Oisín and Amy.

**Support** for members is one of the most important aspects of the work of the network. The network will maintain and develop this through:

- check-in and check-out at every meeting
- time to identify and discuss current difficulties in the work
- a template to be circulated in advance of meetings for members to identify key developments in their work since the previous meeting and what is coming up in their work. Moninne will bring a sample template to the January 2019 meeting.

**Measuring Impact:** It is important to develop simple but effective processes for measuring the impact of the National Network, both quantitative and qualitative, e.g.

- What is the impact of the national network on the lives of young people?
- What is the impact of the national network on the member organisations?
- What is the impact of the national network on individual youth workers and volunteers in terms of practice development, training, support, etc.?

A small working group will be established at the January 2019 meeting to plan how to measure impact.

## **Priorities for the National Network 2019-2022**

---

1. Agree and communicate the network purpose, vision and terms of reference – what we are and how we work together
2. Ensure that LGBTI+ young people are recognised and visible and that their voice is heard.
3. Implementation of the LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy, including holding relevant government departments and agencies accountable for progress.
4. National Conference for LGBTI+ young people and youth workers to inform our priorities.
5. Improved communication throughout the network.
6. Increased collaboration throughout the network.
7. Focus on education and mental health supports.
8. Continue progress on standardisation of youth work.
9. Increased opportunities for learning, supervision and training.
10. Process for gathering evidence and recording impact of the network.
11. Developing regional hubs to enhance network connections.
12. International networking, to include developing a UK & Ireland strategy.
13. Increased funding and resources for the National Network.
14. Development of data bases to facilitate communication, learning and measuring impact.
15. Review the National Network every three years.

## Goals for 2019

---

By January 2020 we will have achieved:

1. The **terms of reference** (TOR) for the network agreed and implemented.
2. Processes planned and undertaken for holding the **DCYA accountable for LGBTI+ Youth Strategy**.
4. Process for **measuring impact** agreed and implementation started.
5. **Digital survey** undertaken with young people.
6. Increased engagement of National Network members in the **Stand Up Awareness** campaign.
7. Progress on the development of **training**, including establishment of Training Working Group.
8. Increased access to **support and supervision** for youth workers and volunteers.

## 9. Increased **funding** for the National Network

---