

SUBMISSION TO THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE SUCCESSOR TO THE ROADMAP FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION

Department of Social Protection

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Outhouse
LGBTQ+ CENTRE

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About Outhouse LGBTQ+ Centre

Outhouse is the cornerstone of support for the LGBTQ+ community. We provide a safe and welcoming space for LGBTQ+ individuals to gather, connect, and find solace in a world that doesn't always understand or embrace them. We are the heartbeat of the queer community, offering vital services including social spaces, mental health support, cultural events, and much more.

We are dedicated to supporting the people, spaces, and issues important to the LGBTQ+ communities. Our vision is a future where LGBTQ+ individuals are safe, seen, and celebrated.

Our mission is to improve the quality of life for LGBTQ+ people by providing a safe space to find:

- **Connection** - discovering themselves, their people, place, and passions.
- **Community Support** - accessing information, programmes, and services.
- **Culture** - experiencing creativity, heritage, discovery, and fun.
- **Campaigns** - being part of a strong, credible, and trusted voice for LGBTQ+ communities.

We live by the values of Trust, Respect, Joy, Inclusivity, and Impact.

Underpinning our work are our commitments to equity and intersectionality.

LGBTQ+ Rights in Ireland Today

Ireland has made important progress on LGBTQ+ rights in recent decades, with legislative advances, public visibility, and greater social acceptance. However, this progress has not been felt equally across our community.

LGBTQ+ people are not a homogeneous group. Our community reflects wider society: it includes people who are financially secure and people who are living in deep poverty; people who are housed and people who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness; people with access to services and people routinely excluded from them.

Those who have benefited most from social progress are typically those who face the fewest systemic barriers, those who are male, white, cisgender, able-bodied, employed, and secure in their housing. Many others continue to experience marginalisation, stigma, and material deprivation.

Poverty among LGBTQ+ people is not always visible, but it is real. It intersects with other forms of exclusion, racism, ableism, sexism, and xenophobia, and can compound the effects of discrimination in education, housing, healthcare, and employment.

Poverty is not the result of individual choices or failings. It is driven and sustained by political decisions, social and economic structures, and unequal access to power and resources. Any serious response to LGBTQ+ poverty must focus on removing these systemic barriers, not only supporting individuals in hardship. Tackling inequality requires shifting the underlying conditions that produce and reproduce deprivation.

An equitable approach to social inclusion must recognise that progress is not evenly distributed. It must identify and address the structural barriers that leave many LGBTQ+ people behind.

Intersectionality is not an academic concept; it is a practical necessity. If we are to reduce poverty in Ireland, we must understand how multiple forms of exclusion overlap and reinforce one another. That starts with naming LGBTQ+ poverty and building the evidence to address it.

We are at the very beginning of this journey. To date, there has been little to no targeted data collection or policy focus on poverty and material deprivation among LGBTQ+ people in Ireland. The absence of action has not been due to lack of need, but lack of attention. The next roadmap offers a chance to change that.

Addressing the Data Gap

Ireland does not currently have a developed understanding of how LGBTQ+ people experience poverty.

The previous Roadmap for Social Inclusion (2020–2025) made only limited references to LGBTQ+ people and contained no targeted actions. This omission has meant that the particular challenges faced by LGBTQ+ individuals have not been systematically identified, measured, or addressed.

One of the underlying structural issues is the absence of disaggregated data. The CSO's Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) does not include specific data on LGBTQ+ people or households. Without this information, it is not possible to compare poverty rates or material deprivation among LGBTQ+ people with the general population. If groups are not visible in the data, their needs are unlikely to be considered in policy and action plans.

Evidence of Risk

While national data is lacking, there is growing international evidence that LGBTQ+ people face increased risks of poverty and social exclusion. Data from the EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) shows:

- One in three LGBTQ+ people in the EU report difficulty making ends meet
- Older LGBTQ+ people, ethnic minorities, and those with disabilities experience disproportionately high levels of financial hardship
- Transgender people in particular face significant barriers to employment and housing
- Discrimination in the labour market is a key contributing factor

These findings are consistent with our own engagement with the community. In consultations, approximately 20% of LGBTQ+ participants identified as living with a disability. The additional cost of disability has been estimated by the Department of Social Protection to be between €8,700 and €12,300 per year. When this is combined with other structural barriers, such as discrimination in education, employment, and housing, it can lead to compounded disadvantage and social exclusion for the most vulnerable LGBTQ+ people.

National Strategies: Current Gaps

The *National LGBTIQ+ Inclusion Strategy II (2024–2028)* does not specifically name poverty or deprivation as a focus area. While some progress is evident through the inclusion of targeted actions in the first two-year action plan for SICAP, such as:

- Increasing LGBTIQ+ individuals receiving one-to-one supports;
- Expanding support to LGBTIQ+ social enterprises;
- Providing financial and capacity support to local community groups;
- Supporting local actions to combat discrimination;

These measures are limited in scope and are not linked to a broader, evidence-based approach to addressing economic inequality for LGBTIQ+ people.

A Timely Opportunity

In partnership with EAPN Ireland and with funding from the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC), Outhouse LGBTQ+ Centre has commissioned the first research study on LGBTIQ+ poverty in Ireland since 1995. This research, being carried out by TASC, is due to be published at the end of 2025.

The small study aims to:

- Document lived experiences of poverty within the LGBTIQ+ community
- Identify barriers to full economic participation
- Highlight themes requiring further investigation
- Inform future policy and programme responses

While this research represents an important first step, further investigation will be required to build a more comprehensive understanding of the scope and nature of poverty among LGBTIQ+ people and effective interventions.

Public Sector Duty

Under Section 42 of the *Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014*, all public bodies are legally required to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Promote equality of opportunity and treatment
- Protect the human rights of staff and service users

This duty applies when public bodies are developing plans and policies, including the Roadmap for Social Inclusion.

The next Roadmap must include specific, measurable actions and outcomes that address the lived experience of LGBTQ+ people to meaningfully meet this duty. General commitments to equality or inclusion are not sufficient in the absence of tangible evidence that they lead to improved outcomes.

At present:

- LGBTQ+ people are not included in national poverty datasets
- The previous roadmap lacked any targeted actions on LGBTQ+ poverty
- There is no routine monitoring or reporting of outcomes for LGBTQ+ individuals within existing poverty strategies

Without change, it would be difficult to conclude that the Public Sector Duty is being fulfilled in relation to LGBTQ+ people.

We urge the Department to ensure the next Roadmap gives visible and explicit attention to the needs of LGBTQ+ people, and that future monitoring includes clear indicators to assess progress.

Recommendations for the Next Roadmap

To ensure that the next Roadmap for Social Inclusion reflects the principles of equality and inclusion, we recommend the following:

1. **Commit to further research** on LGBTQ+ poverty and deprivation, building on the findings of the upcoming study, to provide a robust evidence base for meaningful action.
2. **Amend national data collection tools**, such as SILC, to enable comparative analysis of LGBTQ+ people's experiences of poverty and social exclusion.
3. **Include LGBTQ+ people explicitly in national poverty targets and reporting**, to ensure monitoring of progress and accountability.
4. **Develop a supplementary set of actions under the next Roadmap**, informed by further research and engagement with the LGBTQ+ community, to address specific barriers and needs.
5. **Ensure intersectionality is integrated**, recognising that LGBTQ+ people who are also disabled, ethnic minorities, or migrants often face overlapping forms of disadvantage.
6. **Apply equality and human rights proofing to all actions in the next Roadmap**, ensuring their impact on vulnerable and marginalised people is assessed and addressed from the outset.

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