



Youth Organisations #BringingPrideHome for LGBTI+ Young People Across Ireland

Youth organisations partner for #BringingPrideHome campaign to support LGBTI+ young people as Pride Parade moves online.

Nearly 1,000 LGBTI+ young people are set to receive a Pride Self-Care Pack to keep the spirit of Pride alive while remaining socially distant as the annual Dublin Pride parade is moved online for the second year due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Three leading youth organisations, Youth Work Ireland, Foróige, and BeLonG To Youth Services have teamed up to supply free Self-Care Packs for LGBTI+ young people to mark Pride together while apart. According to recent research¹, 83% of LGBTI+ young people felt acute loneliness throughout the pandemic as they were separated from friends, peers, and supportive adults due to space closures.

LGBTI+ young people across Ireland will receive a Self-Care Pack including a Pride t-shirt and a tote bag with a bespoke design by LGBTI+ artist Aodh Quigley, Pride badges, Rainbow face paint, pronoun pins, and a coming-out guide for LGBTI+ young people. The packs will be delivered on Thursday, June 24th. Youth Workers supporting the campaign will hand-deliver packs to those who are not yet out as LGBTI+.

Since January a group of dedicated and passionate young LGBTI+ people from youth groups across Ireland have met online to plan the #BringingPrideHome 2021 celebrations. As well as deciding on the items for the Care Packs, they have also made a video to express what Pride means to them and the importance of feeling safe and accepted to be themselves in their local communities.

Inez (16) from Kildare spoke about the meaning of receiving a Pride Pack: *"Pride packs are definitely a way to help bring Pride home and create your own version of Pride, and it means that many other people around the country will be doing the same. In my opinion, as never experiencing Pride, I can say that it's a really good alternative and makes me much more excited for Pride parades in the future for when they come back."*

Inez (16) from Kildare told us about the impact of missing Pride for the second year in a row: *"The impact of missing Pride affects many people all across the nation. It may seem like just a parade, but to many, it's the only time of the year where they aren't afraid to be themselves and they can surround themselves with people who can relate to them. Pride has positively impacted many people so much by helping them come out of their shells and being their true selves."*

Tia (15) from Waterford said: *"For me, a Pride Pack symbolises that although the LGBTI+ community cannot celebrate Pride in person, we are still connected. It shows that despite any hurdles we face, we can unite together and bring each other up."*

Moninne Griffith, CEO of BeLonG To Youth Services says: *"For the second year now, LGBTI+ young people are missing out on Pride events and in-person celebrations. They have shared with me how disappointed they are to miss the magical experience of marching with their community. Although we cannot be together this year, we are proud to join Youth Work Ireland and Foróige for this fantastic initiative to celebrate Pride together, although apart. We hope these Self-Care Packs add some brightness and joy to their Pride."*

Sadly, this month we have seen horrific acts of homophobia, from the burning of Rainbow Flags in Waterford to a campaign for 'Straight Pride.' This is not the Ireland we want LGBTI+ young people to grow up in. Now more than ever, we need to stand together with LGBTI+ young people and show them that Ireland is a country that is proud to stand up for our LGBTI+ citizens. The #BringingPrideHome campaign sends a message of solidarity, letting LGBTI+ youth know that they are not alone."

Dr Patrick Burke, CEO of Youth Work Ireland, says: *"Pride is about everybody being comfortable in their own skin, about who they are and who they love. Ireland is now a much more inclusive country than it once was, but we still have more work to do. Pride is a moment to remind us all that we must do more to eradicate homophobia and ensure that all our young people, without exception, feel welcome, included and celebrated for who they are. The impact of Covid on socially excluded and rural isolated young LGBTI+ people has been devastating so as we celebrate Pride we must also celebrate and recognise the amazing work youth workers have done, and continue to do, in supporting young LGBTI+ people in their journey to become their true authentic self."*

Seán Campbell, CEO of Foróige, says: *"As part of Foróige's celebration of Pride month we are delighted to collaborate with BeLonG To and Youth Work Ireland to make it possible for LGBTI+ young people, along with their families and friends, to mark Pride at home. In Foróige, Pride can be found in the communities we work with, in the diversity of our young people and volunteers, and in the values of inclusivity and individuality that we hold dear, and that add so much to the richness and vibrancy of our organisation. Pride is important to us because young people are important to us, each of whom has a right to dignity, equality and self-affirmation. I want to pay special tribute to the fantastic group of young people who have driven the #BringingPrideHome initiative to inspire hope, belonging and happiness in LGBTI+ young people across the country."*

ENDS

Notes to editors

- A panel of LGBTI+ young people, CEO of BeLonGTo Youth Services, Moninne Griffith, and CEO of Youth Work Ireland, Dr Patrick Burke are available for interview. To arrange an interview, please contact:

- Sinead Keane, BeLonGTo Youth Services | 087 768 0389 or sinead@belongto.org
 - Gina Halpin, Youth Work Ireland | 087 682 8045
ghalpin@youthworkireland.ie
- Images to accompany this release to follow Friday, June 24th from Mary Browne photography brownephoto@me.com

- **BeLonG To Youth Services** is a national organisation supporting lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex young people. Since 2003, BeLonG To has worked with LGBTI+ young people to create a world where they are equal, safe and valued in the diversity of their identities and experiences. The organisation advocates and campaigns on behalf of young LGBTI+ people and offers a specialised LGBTI+ youth service including information, support, crisis counselling in partnership with Pieta House and the provision of LGBTI+ youth groups across Ireland. www.belongto.org

- **Youth Work Ireland** is a youth led and rights-based organisation committed to equality and inclusion for all young people. Our 20 Member Youth Services deliver a wide range of innovative services, supports and programmes to over 76,000 young people each week. These include mental health supports, resilience building, anxiety programmes, drug/alcohol supports, LGBTI+ youth work, club development, employability programmes, counselling services, music programmes, rural outreach and fun safe spaces for young people to gather. Through dedicated and ally groups our services provide young LGBTI+ people with safe, inclusive and welcoming spaces where they can hang out with their peers, relax, talk, listen to music and be themselves. All our programmes are supported by trained and professional youth work practitioners who support young LGBTI+ people in their journey to become their true authentic self. www.youthworkireland.ie

- **Foróige** is a leading youth organisation working with over 50,000 young people and 5,600 volunteers through a national network of clubs and targeted youth projects. Foróige's vision is an Ireland that believes in every young person. We work with communities across all 26 Counties in the Republic of Ireland and at the heart of the organisation is a passionate belief in the potential of each young person. Foróige empowers young people to develop their own abilities and attributes, to think for themselves, to make things happen and to contribute to their community and society. Young people who are involved in the organisation develop increased self-confidence, self-reliance, resilience and a greater capacity to take charge of their lives. Foróige was founded in 1952. The organisation has a long and highly respected tradition, both nationally and internationally, and has guided generations of young people to lead happier, healthier and more fulfilled lives. More information about Foróige can be found at www.foroige.ie

¹ *LGBTI+ Life in Lockdown: 1 Year Later Key Findings The Impact of Covid-19 Restrictions*. June 2021. BeLonG To Youth Services.