

Press Release  
Youth Work Ireland  
22<sup>nd</sup> February 2022



**Proud Spaces**

Evidencing Safe and Inclusive Spaces for Young  
LGBTI+ People through Quality Youth Work Practices



**Youth Work Ireland announces a new €120,000 Erasmus funded project to support and evidence inclusive practices with young LGBTI+ people in Ireland and Europe.**

The organisation whose members work to support young LGBTI+ people across Ireland today announced the funding of a new European project in partnership with European Confederation of Youth Clubs (Belgium), GrowSpace (Poland) and Youth Work Ireland Laois. The PROUD SPACES project is funded by Erasmus+ and supported by National agency, Leargas.

Youth Work Ireland and its members are the largest providers of LGBTI+ youth work supports outside of Dublin and have for decades provided direct and indirect supports to young LGBTI+ people both in targeted and mainstream youth work through an integrated youth work approach. The PROUD SPACES project will evidence the positive outcomes these youth work practices have achieved and will develop tools to further support youth workers in creating safe and inclusive spaces.

The need to look at current practices in inclusive youth work has emerged from engagement with youth workers and young people across the Youth Work Ireland membership. The PROUD SPACES project places a strong focus on social inclusion and promotes the participation and voice of young people and youth workers in developing new tools.

Ireland as a society has come a long way in its acceptance and inclusion of the LGBTI+ community. Young people accessing our youth clubs get to explore and celebrate their identity in a safe and supported way. However, this is not the case in some European jurisdictions, such as Poland, where the human rights of young LGBTI+ people continue to be eroded and where policies and legislation seek to further exclude and discriminate. The PROUD SPACES project has been deliberately planned to address such concerns through European cooperation and shared policy engagement. By evidencing and promoting the success decades of Irish inclusive youth work practices have had on the lives of young Irish LGBTI+ people, we can seek to influence and inform European policy.

*“We are delighted to be allocated this funding which will allow us to better respond to the needs of young LGBTI+ people across our network and share some of the successful practices established through decades of supporting these young people. We look forward to working with our partners ECYC, GrowSpace and Youth Work Ireland Laois over the coming three years”*

Patrick Burke, CEO Youth Work Ireland

*“The Team at Youth Work Ireland Laois are delighted to be able to showcase the amazing young people within the service. We are thrilled to be able to share this learning with the*

*wider community for learning”.*

Clive Davis, Regional Director, Youth Work Ireland Laois

*"We are proud to be the partners in Erasmus funded project. At GrowSpace Poland we are working on Polish LGBTQ-friendly School Ranking each year, so that focusing on the young LGBTQ community is a priority for us. In my opinion, Poland really needs a European support in terms of Human Rights."*

Dominik Kuc, GrowSpace

The project will begin in March 2022 and run for three-years.

Ends

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