

GENERAL ELECTION 2016: LGBT EQUALITY

Since the last General Election in 2011, extraordinary progress has been made for LGBT people with the enactment of tax elements of Civil Partnership, the Anti-Bullying Procedures for all Schools, the Constitutional Convention and then in 2015, the Children and Family Relationships Act, the Marriage Referendum, the Gender Recognition Act and the amendment of Section 37.1 of the Employment Equality Act.

The coalition Government of Fine Gael and Labour have brought forward these legislative measures which were supported by all Parties and by most Independent TDs and Senators.

The Marriage Referendum showed further remarkable political support as every Party supported marriage and very many TDs and Senators from all Parties and Independents actively campaigned for a Yes vote.

This progress lays a solid foundation for the next steps to ensure that LGBT people can participate fully in every aspect of Irish life. The laws have changed and the next steps are to tackle the

institutional and cultural change necessary to ensure that the lived experience of being LGBT is positive, affirming and inclusive.

Almost all Parties have committed in their manifestos to specific further progress for LGBT people, outlined below. Many Independent candidates for election have also strongly supported progress over the last number of years, including in the referendum, and have committed to supporting further progress for LGBT people. Please check the websites of the Independent candidates in your Constituency to see their support for LGBT people.

PLEASE VOTE!

Check out the full range of policies on individual Party websites. And remember, there are also many smaller Parties, groups and independent candidates standing for election who have not been included in this summary. Check the websites of all those running in your Constituency.

	ANTI AUSTERITY ALLIANCE	FIANNA FÁIL	FINE GAEL	GREENS	LABOUR	PEOPLE BEFORE PROFIT	SINN FÉIN	SOCIAL DEMOCRATS
Introductions		Over the next five years Fianna Fáil will continue to prioritise : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater North /South links on LGBT Rights. New Department of Justice lead on LGBT Rights implementation. Ensuring that the LGBT issues are continually addressed . 	Supporting the LGBT Community: <p>While the Marriage Equality Referendum was a major step forward in recognising the LGBT community, we must continue to ensure that all aspects of our society are safe and supportive of LGBT people.</p>		True Equality for LGBT People: <p>Labour has always championed LGBT rights. Over the past five years, we have delivered monumental change for LGBT people. Marriage equality, the Children & Family Relationships Bill, amending Section 37.1</p> <p>of the Employment Equality Act and the recent passage of the Gender Recognition Act are all changes delivered by Labour</p> <p>Now that the necessary legislative changes have taken place, we believe it is time to address the cultural problems that cause discrimination against LGBT people.</p>	LBGT Rights <p>The Marriage Referendum and the Gender Recognition Bill were momentous achievements for LGBT rights. However a number of legal and social issues remain. Homophobia and transphobia are still a significant problem. We also recognise that despite the progress made, depression, suicide and addiction rates among LGBT people are still significantly higher than in the general population. Isolation is also a major issue in rural areas and amongst older LGBT people. People Before Profit will continue the campaign for full equality for LBGT people.</p>	Equality and Human Rights: <p>We are committed to a range of proposals to strengthen equality and human rights protections</p> <p>and to move us closer towards full equality for women, children, older people, people with disabilities, people of all ethnicities and lesbian/gay/bisexual and transgender people</p>	
Comprehensive National Approach					Working with the voluntary sector and across government departments, we will enact a national LGBT strategy that will focus on tackling hate crimes, discrimination in schools and workplaces and improving the mental and sexual health of LGBT people	Provide proper funding for LGBT organisations and resource centres		
Schools and Anti-Bullying		Ensure LGBT students and staff are treated equally in every school	Build upon the Department of Education and Skills Anti-Bullying Plan , and focus on ensuring our schools are safe and supportive places in which LGBT young people can discover their sexual orientation or gender identity	Safeguard against bullying of gay and trans people in schools, workplaces and sports	(see above)		We will place school guidelines on anti-bullying and addressing diversity as well as guidelines on mental health and suicide awareness policies on a statutory footing , so that they are implemented across all schools to the same high standard	
Workplaces			Ensure that, within all workplaces , LGBT people are not inhibited from achieving their fullest potential	Safeguard against bullying of gay and trans people in schools, workplaces and sports	(see above)			
Policing, Safety and Hate Crimes			Work with An Garda Síochána to provide services and training to assist members of the LGBT community in seeking support should they experience homophobic or transphobic incidents		(see above)	Introduce hate crime legislation to deal with homophobic and transphobic attacks and proper recording of same	We will enact the ICCL's Criminal Law (Hate Crime) Amendment Bill 2015 to address racism, sectarianism and homophobia in Irish society. <p>Extending defamatory legislation to include offensive language towards the LBGT community</p>	
Mental Health and Well Being			Continue to resource adult and child mental health services in the community, ensuring timely access to services for all vulnerable groups, including LGBT people		(see above)	Restore and improve funding for mental health and addiction treatment services	Ban so called 'reparative therapies' as they are dangerous to individuals	We will ring-fence specialised mental-health funding for the most 'at-risk' groups, including young parents, the Travelling Community, asylum seekers, the LGBTQ community and persons with physical and mental disabilities
Trans	Work to support real equality for trans people				In 2017, we will review the operation of the Gender Recognition Act		Ensure transgender services are provided regionally rather than centralised in Dublin	
Other	Lift the ban on gay and bisexual men giving blood		We will bring forward legislation to regulate surrogacy and assisted human reproduction services , in conjunction with the legislation we intend to provide public funding for assisted reproductive treatments.		We will fully commence all sections of the Children and Family Relationships Act <p>introduce a new bill to expunge the criminal records of gay men who were convicted under historical indecency laws</p>	End the ban on blood donations from gay or bisexual men	End the blood ban for gay and bisexual men to give blood	We will provide age-appropriate sexual violence, education and prevention programmes for primary and secondary schools