



MEDIA RELEASE: 9TH DECEMBER 2014

‘Stop LGBT Hate Crime’ campaign launched by Minister Aodhán Ó Ríordáin T.D.

Today (Tuesday 9th Dec) the Minister of State for New Communities, Culture and Equality Aodhan Ó Ríordáin TD launches GLEN’s ‘**Stop LGBT Hate Crime**’ campaign.

The campaign encourages people to report LGBT hate crimes and incidents directly to the Gardaí and to log incidents they witness or experience at www.stopcrimehate.ie.

“There has been great progress in Ireland for LGBT people over the last decade. However, despite this progress, **LGBT people still experience alarming levels of violence and harassment, simply because of who they are**” said **Nathalie Weadick, Co-Chair of GLEN.**

1/3 of LGBT people have been physically or sexually attacked, and half have been harassed in the last 5 years. Little is reported to the Gardaí – only 17 homophobic incidents were registered on the Pulse system in 2013.

“No one should ever feel threatened or at risk because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. If someone does feel that they are a victim of LGBT hate crime, or indeed any hate crime, then it is imperative that they **report this matter to the Gardaí**” said **Minister Ó Ríordáin**, Minister of State for New Communities, Culture & Equality.

“It is only when we record these incidents and have an accurate data map of when, how and where they happen that we can effectively tackle this issue” continued Minister Ó Ríordáin

“Fear, self-censorship and excessive caution should not be part of the daily reality for many LGBT people. Whether at school, at home or in public, LGBT people should be able to go about their daily lives with the same sense of security that others enjoy” said Weadick.

“Many of us are so used to living with a background of homophobia and transphobia that we put up with abuse and insults. This can have huge personal costs, but it also resonates within the LGBT community, which can create a climate of fear or uncertainty” said **Craig Dwyer, Policy and Projects Officer, GLEN.**

“The ‘Stop LGBT Hate Crime’ campaign aims to bridge the gaps between LGBT people who experience hate crimes and incidents and the Gardaí, and to encourage reporting of all homophobic or transphobic incidents directly to the Gardaí or to the Garda LGBT Liaison Officers’ said Dwyer.

The 'Stop LGBT Hate Crime' campaign also highlights the range of support services available for LGBT people who experience harassment or violence.

"Being attacked because of who you are carries additional trauma and creates additional vulnerability for many LGBT people. Talking to someone who understands that can be a big help" continued Dwyer.

"Our aim is for an Ireland where a lesbian or gay couple can walk, hand-in-hand, without fear, down the main street of any town in Ireland, like any other couple. This campaign is a further step towards that goal" concluded Weadick.

Ends

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Editors Notes:

1. The Campaign will be launched today, **Tuesday 9th December at 6pm, at the Royal Irish Academy in Dawson Street, Dublin 2.**

2. Visual materials for the campaign are available at: <http://goo.gl/UdDFip>

3. Minister Ó Ríordáin chaired a roundtable discussion in the University of Limerick, hosted by the Hate and Hostility Research Group and the Irish Council for Civil Liberties on the issue of Hate Crime Legislation. He asked those in attendance, including GLEN and TENI, to engage in further research and come back to him in May with a draft Heads of Bill on the issue so that we legislation could be updated to be effective and offer minorities the legal protection that they require.

3. The **EU Fundamental Rights Agency LGBT Survey 2013** included 1,625 LGBT respondents from Ireland. The research showed that that almost 1/3 of LGBT people in Ireland had been physically or sexually attacked or threatened with violence at home or elsewhere in the past 5 years.

Over half have experienced harassment – verbal abuse, intimidation, graffiti – in the last five years, with a quarter of these experiencing harassment six or more times in the past 12 months. Further details at <http://goo.gl/Fh6v41>

4. The 'Stop LGBT Hate Crime' campaign is supported by the national LGBT support services and community centres – The National LGBT Helpline, Gay Switchboard Ireland, BeLonG To Youth Services, TENI, LINC, Outhouse, Gay Project Cork and Dundalk Outcomers – and by the national Crime Victims Helpline.