



Coming out in care

Information for Children & Young
People on Gender Identity



EPIC

empowering people in care

This leaflet is for trans and non-binary children and young people living in care. This leaflet was created by LGBTI+ care experienced children and young people. In this leaflet we have provided tips, resources and information about your human rights that you may find useful.

Accept yourself

Coming out and accepting yourself can be a tough thing to do.

Tips on Coming Out in Care

Who to come out to?

Someone you trust:

- A friend
- A professional (Social Worker, Residential Staff)
- Family member
- Foster Carer

It is **YOUR CHOICE**, never feel pressured. You may come out on impulse, but planning might help you feel better prepared.

Plan

- The right time
- A safe place
- The right person

Some people find writing a letter or email easier than starting a conversation in-person.

Plan for the Aftermath

- Coming out can be draining even if positive
- Practice Self-Care
- Relax, reflect

It may go well, or it may not go as well as you had hoped.

“You may have to come out over and over throughout your life, but it does get easier”

Some Helpful Terms

Gender Identity

A person's deeply felt identification as male, female, or some other gender. This may or may not correspond to the sex they were assigned at birth.

Transgender (trans)

Refers to a person whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from the sex assigned at birth. This term can include diverse gender identities.

Non-binary

An umbrella term for gender identities that fall outside the gender binary of male or female and may not conform to traditional gender roles. This includes individuals whose gender identity is neither exclusively male nor female, a combination of male and female, or between or beyond genders.

“Families are like genders - they're assigned at birth, but you do not have to stick with them”

If I am being bullied over being trans, what should I do?

Talk to someone you trust. If I am unhappy about my treatment after coming out in care what are my rights?

Contact EPIC.

Coming Out in Care: Coming out as trans or non-binary can be a very exciting journey for you. Being able to express your true self is very important. You may feel you are being seen for who you really are, and not some other person. It might feel like a weight has been lifted off you. There are many similar people going through a similar journey. Once you do come out it can feel like you are not holding anything back anymore. You can start to really live your life. You can start being YOU.

Coming out in any setting might not be an easy thing to do and coming out in care can make it a little different. Having many staff as well as other children and young people in your home life can make it a little daunting to come out.



The same rules apply if you want to plan your coming out process (choosing to write a letter/email, the right time, the right person, a safe place). However, there are some things to keep in mind. You may face judgement and ignorance from not only family and friends, but also foster carers, social workers, staff and other children and young people you live with. This can feel like no one understands you. You might not feel validated in your gender, even professionals might make a snap judgement about you.

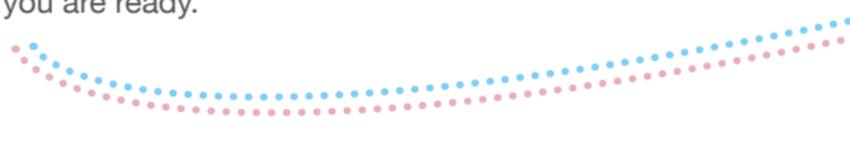
It can be easy to feel confused and not so sure about your gender identity. You might be worried about the backlash of coming out as trans or non-binary.

Your feelings and worries around this are real, just realise that there is support out there for you. The most important thing is for you to be able to express who you really are and enjoy the journey. Coming to terms with your gender identity can mean that you belong to a community that accepts you and can support you in your journey. You are not alone in your feelings, there is a wider LGBTI+ community that exists as well as the care experienced community out there.

Even though you may go through tough times, your gender identity journey can be a positive experience. You are protected by your rights. You have the right to privacy, you have a right to not be discriminated against, you have the right to survival and development and YOUR views must be taken into consideration in all matters that affect you (UNCRC Guiding Principles).

“Try using a different name when you are ordering food or a drink. Seeing your chosen name written by someone else might be validating”

Testimonial: You may have come out to a previous foster carer/staff member and now you have moved, where you may not have contact with the person you came out to anymore. This can be disheartening, and you may feel like coming out was pointless. In reality, you now have an understanding of what felt right and went well when you came out, as well as what you might want to change. Your experience can help shape the next time you come out when you are ready.



Your Rights Explained:

Your rights are protected under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

You have the right to:

Non-discrimination - this means that no child can be discriminated against, and no child should be treated unfairly for any reason, including on the basis of your sexual orientation, gender identity or any other status. (Article 2)

Survival and development – this means that you have access to basic services and to equality of opportunity in order for you to achieve your full potential in the best way possible. (Article 6)

Be heard – this means your views and opinions must be listened to and respected in all matters concerning you. (Article 12)

Privacy – You have a right to others keeping your information private, which includes your sexual orientation and gender identity. Staff, carers, social workers or others should not Out you without your consent. The law must protect children's privacy, family, home, communications and reputation from any attack. (Article 16)

Being trans and non-binary in Care in rural Ireland

Some rural supports:

- OutWest (Connacht)
- 8 Rays (Leitrim)
- BreakOut (Donegal)
- Teach Solais (Galway)
- Tuismitheoirí Le Chéile (Roscommon)
- Pride (Leitrim, Sligo, Mayo Galway)
- KLGBT Newbridge
- BeLonG To may be able to tell you about rural groups near you.

Remember:

You are not alone!! You are part of a wider trans and non-binary community in Ireland and also part of the care experienced community. You will find your people and get to choose your family.



There is a whole LGBTI+ online community if you want. You can access information on www.belongto.org

Tip: If you are on BeLonG To's website, you can hit the "EXIT" button and it will shut down the webpage immediately.

Resources for children and young people preparing to leave care:

If you are LGBTI+ in care, you might feel a little nervous about leaving care and what LGBTI+ supports are available to you that are friendly and understanding of your care experience as well as your gender identity.

Resources below:

- EPIC
- Belong To
- TENI
- Queer Housing Dublin
- Outhouse
- Pavee Point
- Queer Diaspora
- LGBT.ie
- Childline
- SpunOut
- OutWest
- Jigsaw Online Services (www.jigsaw.ie)

Text About It (Text HELLO to 50808)
(www.text50808.ie)

"You may have a negative experience while coming out, but this does not mean your whole LGBTI+ experience will be a negative one"



EPIC address: 7 Red Cow Lane,
Smithfield, Dublin 7, D07 KX52.

phone: 01 8727661

web: www.epiconline.ie