

# Violence and Harassment

## in the Transgender Community



**“I was walking with 2 friends when a man started asking if I was a guy or a girl. When I didn’t answer and walked on he started shouting louder threatening to hit me. He then decided I was a girl and started singing a song about how he was going to rape me. He followed us down the road singing this song till he got bored of us not replying.”**  
- 22 year old trans man<sup>1</sup>



## FACTS & FIGURES

TENI's *Speaking from the Margins: Trans Mental Health and Wellbeing in Ireland* report, is the largest survey (N=164) on trans mental health conducted in Ireland.<sup>2</sup> In this survey, trans people reported experiencing high levels of harassment or violence as a direct result of being trans:

- 64% had been made fun of or called names
- 36% had been physically intimidated or threatened
- 16% had been physically assaulted

Sexual violence was also evident amongst participants as a direct result of being trans:

- 36% experienced sexual harassment
- 12% experienced sexual assault
- 6% had been raped

TENI also runs the *Stop Transphobia and Discrimination (STAD)* campaign. In 2013, this campaign documented 32 hate crimes and incidents against trans people in Ireland. The STAD report found that 88% of respondents had experienced verbal abuse or insults, 28% experienced threats of violence, 19% experienced physical violence, 6% experienced sexual harassment and 3% had been raped.

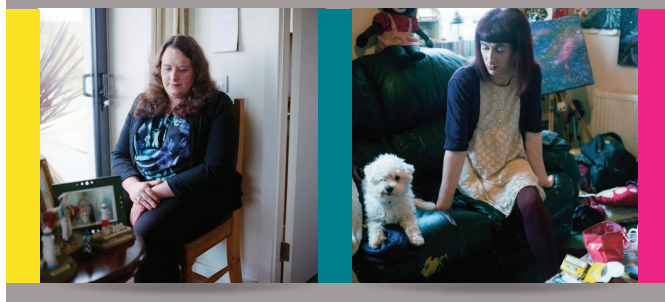
Excerpts from STAD highlight the prevalence of these experiences for many in the trans community:

**“I’m used to getting verbal abuse every day and have been attacked before but I’m feeling a bit more fearful.”**

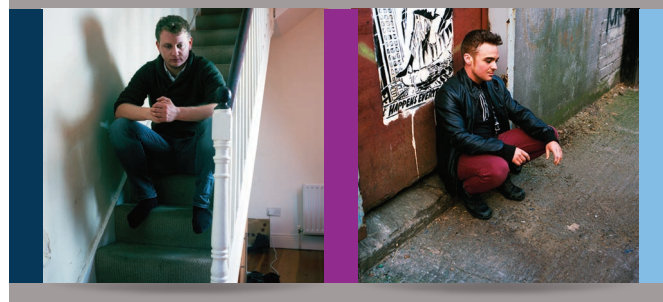
<sup>1</sup> TENI (2014) *STAD: Stop Transphobia and Discrimination*. Transgender Equality Network Ireland, Dublin.

<sup>2</sup> McNeil, J, Bailey, L, Ellis, S and Regan, M (2013) *Speaking from the Margins: Trans Mental Health and Well Being in Ireland*, Transgender Equality Network Ireland, Dublin.

**“Just abusive phone calls making very violent threats and intentions. Such as, when they see me they will hang me from a tree with a live electric cable...yet I don’t know who the phone call was made by.”**



**“I was walking down the street and talking in my phone. These boys started by throwing stones after me, and when I ignored them they took my wig and ran off.”**



## IRELAND COMPARED TO THE EUROPEAN UNION

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights’ (FRA) 2014 report *Being Trans in the European Union* found that trans people experience frequent discrimination and harassment across the EU. The most striking result was the high level of repetitive violence and hate-motivated crime trans persons suffer.<sup>3</sup>

Ireland held the ignoble distinction of having the second highest prevalence (13%) of hate motivated violence in the last 12 months in EU Member States, following Lithuania. This was significantly higher than the EU average of 8%.

The report also found Ireland was in the top 5 member states when it came to hate-motivated harassment in the last 12 months, with a prevalence of 31%. This compared negatively to the EU average of 22%.

Respondents were asked if they avoided expressing their gender or avoided certain places for fear of assault, threat or harassment. Of the Irish respondents, 43% said that they avoided expressing their gender and 66% stated that they avoided certain places. Again, Ireland fared poorly to the EU trans average which was 32% and 52% respectfully.

**Photographs by Alison McDonnell**  
<http://www.alisonmcdonnell.com/>

## CONCLUSION

Trans people regularly experience harassment, abuse and violence and are frequently victims of hate-motivated crimes. However, trans people are not explicitly protected in Equality legislation and are not covered in the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 1989. Furthermore, the Gardaí do not include the category of transphobia in the PULSE system which further contributes to the invisibility of this problem.

Legal gender recognition will not end all transphobia. However, it will send a message to society that trans people are valuable and contributing members of Irish society. It will also send a positive message to trans people that the State formally recognises their experiences.



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<sup>3</sup> FRA (2014) *Being Trans in the European Union: Comparative Analysis of EU LGBT Survey Data*, The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, Luxembourg.