



Transgender  
Equality  
Network  
Ireland

# 2015 **TENI** Activity Report



Transgender  
Equality  
Network  
Ireland

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## TENI

Transgender Equality Network Ireland (TENI) seeks to improve conditions and advance the rights and equality of trans people and their families. Our vision is an Ireland where trans people are understood, accepted and respected, and can participate fully in all aspects of Irish society.

### Staff



**Broden Giambrone**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

**Vanessa Lacey**  
HEALTH AND EDUCATION MANAGER

**Gordon Grehan**  
OFFICE MANAGER

**Patricia O'Connell**  
NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKER

**Catherine Cross**  
FAMILY SUPPORT AND EDUCATION OFFICER

**Jack O'Sullivan**  
TRAINING & ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

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**Aoife O'Driscoll**  
OFFICE AND COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER  
(Departed February 2015)

**Ben Power**  
OFFICE ASSISTANT (Departed February 2015)

**Clodagh Leonard**  
INTERN (Departed October 2014)

### Board



**Sara R. Phillips** (CHAIR)

**Claire Farrell** (VICE-CHAIR)

**Victoria Mullen** (FINANCIAL DIRECTOR)

**Fionnuala Power** (COMPANY SECRETARY)

**Simon Blanckensee**

**Sam Blanckensee**

**Tony Cooney**

**Aoibhinn di Torí**

**Peter Dunne**

**Laura Finlay**

**Lee Jollans**

**Darrin Matthews**

**Paula McGarry**

**Dani O'Connor**

**Simon Stewart**

## FOREWORD

The year 2015 will go down in trans history in Ireland. It is a proud moment for all of us. We must remember that we would not have had this opportunity without the courageous 22 year fight by Dr Lydia Foy against the State. We must be forever grateful for her fortitude and bravery. But who could have imagined the progressive gender recognition legislation commenced on the 4th of September by the Tánaiste Joan Burton?

We must acknowledge the commitment and dedication of many of our community throughout the Seanad debates in January and February and again in April during the Dáil debates. Many of you, through the clear and concise leadership of TENI's CEO, Broden Giambrone, canvassed, phoned and met with multiple Senators and Deputies looking for our voice to be heard and to ask for their support throughout those debates. Many politicians pledged that support, spoke up and fought for our cause. Trans voices were consistently heard throughout this process and TENI stood out as leaders.

We must also recognise the contribution of Minister Kevin Humphreys, who throughout the passage of the Bill, left his door open for discussion, was willing to listen to our reasoning and was willing to move and accept change. It has been a testament to our focus and tenacity not to accept 'just any old legislation'.

But there are still many challenges. We must continue to advocate for legal recognition to be extended to include under 16s and of course expand the self-declaration model to those between 16 and 18. We must also vigorously advocate for the meaningful inclusion of intersex & non-binary individuals in the Gender Recognition Act. We must also advocate for hate crime and equality legislation to include protections on the grounds of gender identity and gender expression. We need to create a functioning healthcare pathway throughout Ireland. We need to increase our education platform and include school guidelines for young trans people coming out and transitioning in the education system. Most importantly the past number of months have seen a need to increase our support networks across our whole community especially among families, young people and those sections that feel marginalised within the trans family. We need to actively engage with intersex, non-binary and transvestite individuals and consider their needs.

2015 has seen TENI go from strength to strength: educating, supporting, advocating and achieving progressive gender recognition and becoming a more visible community. Through innovation and flexibility we have been able to

grow our organisation with increased funding streams and resources. We have added to our team with two new staff members and many new programmes.

2016 will see the development of a new five year strategic plan and in advance of that the TENI Board has been engaged in improving and updating the organisation's Governance code. We still need to focus on creating financial and organisational stability and sustainability as we expand. We continue to set our ambitions at a high level. In 2016 TENI will turn ten years old. We have achieved a lot in those short ten years. We must not lose focus, there is more work to be done.

We have had a strong, focused and committed Board throughout the past year. Our staff, Vanessa, Gordon, Trish, Jack & Catherine, under the management of Broden, have continually accomplished more than the goals set and are steadfast in providing our community with support. I would like to express my thanks and appreciation on behalf of the Board for their dedication and commitment. I would also like to thank all of you who made it possible to sustain a cohesive and concerted effort across what has been a wonderful year.

It has been a privilege to have served as Chair of TENI at this moment in our history and I look forward to a bright future.

**Sara R. Phillips**

*Chair*



**Sara, Sam, Broden and Vicki**

### INTRODUCTION

This year has been incredible and we've achieved an incredible amount as an organisation and as a community. The wait for legal gender recognition is finally over. The practical and symbolic importance of being recognised in the eyes of the State cannot be underestimated. This is a turning point for trans rights in Ireland and I am sure this will lead to further positive changes for our community. I assure all of our members that TENI will continue to advocate for the meaningful inclusion of young, intersex and non-binary people in the Gender Recognition Act in 2016.

I would like to thank all the volunteers and activists who work within and outside of TENI to progress trans rights. In particular, I would like to thank all the TENI Board members who gave their time and energy to help advocate and lobby during the legislative process. A significant amount of this work occurs behind closed doors and is often a thankless job so I would like to thank you. The passage of the Gender Recognition Act was a group effort.

Often TENI's most visible work is our advocacy but that is not all we do. As you flip through these pages you will witness the diversity of our programmes and initiatives. We provide community and family support, we educate and raise awareness in a variety of settings, we promote access to healthcare, employment and education and we fight for the rights and equality of all trans people. There is no doubt that the staff play a pivotal role in the organisation and it is their expertise, dedication and passion that propels TENI. I want to extend a warm thanks to Vanessa, Gordon, Trish, Catherine and Jack for all the work that they do. I could not ask for a better team.

I invite you to peruse TENI's 2015 activities and join us in celebrating how far we have come. But this is not the end, it is only the beginning. I look forward to an exciting 2016.

### Broden Giambrone

Chief Executive



### SUPPORT

Trans people are among the most vulnerable members of Irish society and experience high levels of stigmatisation and marginalisation. Research shows suicidality, regular harassment and systemic discrimination are commonplace. Support is critical to promoting positive mental health and it is the first step towards empowerment.

TENI engages in a range of activities aimed at mitigating the extreme sense of isolation, misunderstanding and exclusion felt by many trans people and their families. This year, TENI expanded our support programmes for trans people and their families.

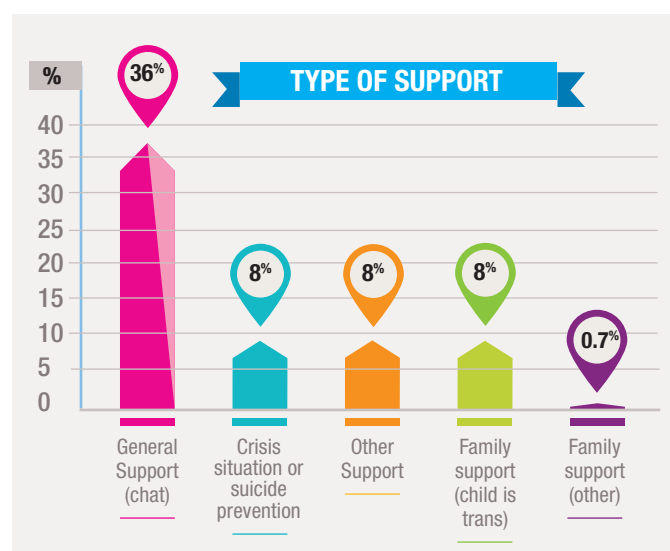
### Support & Information

TENI has been contacted 2,575 times since January 1st 2015.

At our 2014 General Assembly we reported that TENI had been contacted 625 times. This represents a 312% increase in contact with TENI between 2014 and 2015.

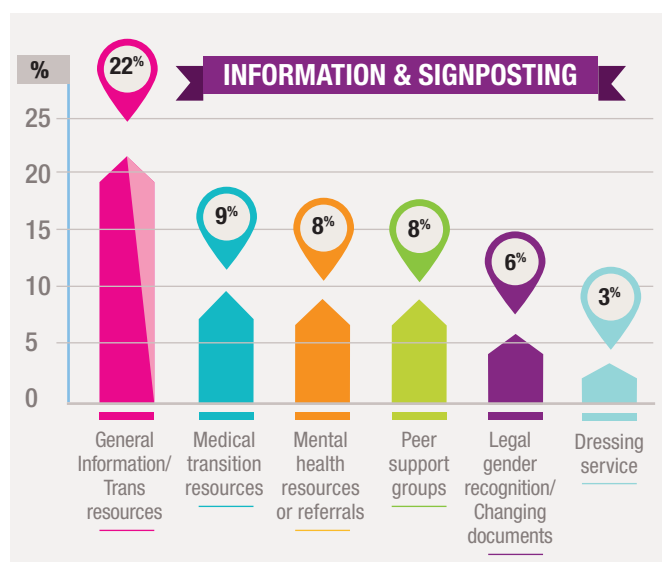
TENI is contacted primarily by trans people and their families. The majority of contact with the organisation is in relation to support, information and signposting to services.

The majority of contact with TENI consists of individuals seeking support.



General support (chat)	36% (N=938)
Crisis situation or suicide prevention	8% (N=205)
Other support	8% (N=198)
Family support (child is trans)	8% (N=204)
Family support (other family/friend/partner is trans)	0.7% (N=18)

TENI is regularly contacted by people seeking information or signposting to appropriate services and groups.



General information / Trans resources	22% (N=575)
Medical transition resources (hormones/GRS)	9% (N=228)
Mental health resources or referrals (psychologist, etc.)	8% (N=193)
Peer support groups	8% (N=193)
Legal gender recognition or Changing documents	6% (N=150)
Dressing service	3% (N=81)

### Community Support

TENI's National Development Worker Patricia (Trish) O'Connell engages in outreach and provides peer support and signposting to members of the trans community. Many individuals contact the organisation when they are in crisis, ranging from self-harming activities and contemplating taking their own life to being in a distraught or emotional state. Trish provides the majority of TENI's coalface community support, which includes referrals to appropriate interventions and services.

Trish has also set up two monthly clinics at St Columcilles Hospital, Loughlinstown and she provides information and support for patients who are accessing health services at the clinic.

### Trish's Highlight

"At the beginning of 2015 I was presented with the challenge of reaching members of the transgender community who may have been at risk of self-harm or suicide. For me the main challenge was to reach people who were not accessing any support network. People from rural areas, and people who, for various reasons did not link into TENI. In March, I was given permission by Professor O'Shea and hospital management at St Columcilles to set up an information stall at the transgender clinics. At present, TENI has a presence at two clinics per month where people can ask questions and be informed of supports available to them, particularly in the area of mental health. The HSE staff are very supportive of the initiative and have agreed to distribute TENI Information packs to all new referrals to the clinic. The packs will contain information produced by TENI, NOSP and the HSE. This will help reduce the sense of isolation and confusion often experienced by people attending the clinic for the first time, particularly those from rural areas and those who do not have access to the internet. I am looking forward to developing this mental health resource further in the future."



## Trans Peer Support Groups

Trans peer support groups exist across Ireland and provide vital support to trans people and their families. These groups are the heart of the trans community. There are currently groups operating in Cork, Dublin, Galway, Greystones, Limerick and Waterford. TENI works closely with these groups to build their capacity to deliver peer support in their communities.

TENI created the Trans/Group Alliance (TGA) in 2011. This national network of trans peer support groups provides a safe space for group facilitators to meet, share information and support each other. After a brief hiatus, the TGA has been revived and the facilitators met twice in 2015.

## Family Support

TENI has been contacted 204 times by families in relation to trans children or gender questioning young people in the first nine months of 2015. This equates to 23 times/month. In 2014, TENI was contacted 14 times/month by parents, illustrating another significant rise in contact with the organisation.

The parents who contact TENI tell us that their children are as young as four years old but most range between 14-17 years of age. When the families contact TENI they are generally experiencing many complex emotions: stress, anxiety, confusion, depression, frustration and/or anger in trying to cope with their child's gender identity or expression. In certain cases these family members, and particularly their children, are in crisis and may be self-harming or expressing suicidality. Research shows that the existence of family support dramatically improves the experience of trans people. There is an urgent need for the provision of support, information and referrals to families.

In July, TENI hired Catherine Cross as our Family Support and Education Officer. Her role is to work closely with TransParenCI and provide support to the families of young trans people, aid families in navigating health and transition related services, develop resources and deliver training in the education system. Catherine, who works under the guidance of TENI Health and Education Manager Vanessa Lacey, deals with complex cases that require liaising with mental health professionals, clinicians, schools and family members to ensure a holistic approach.



Suzanne, Vanessa and Catherine at a TransParenCI meeting

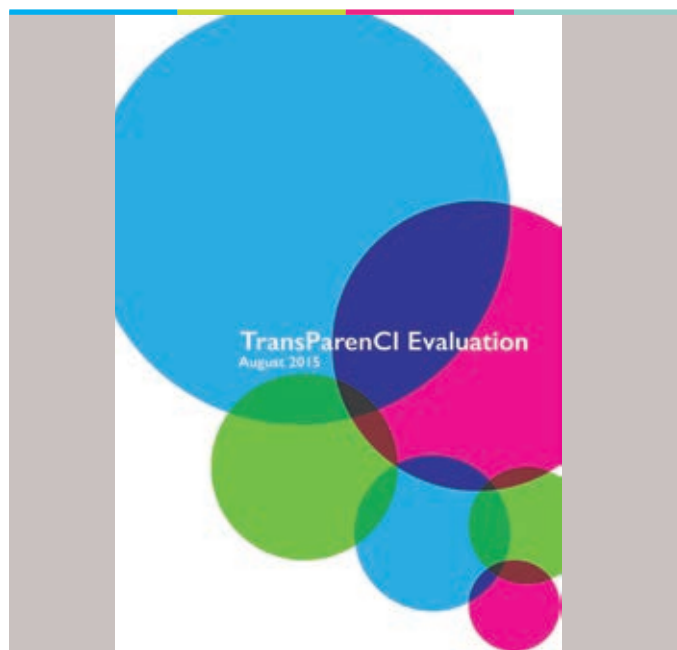
## TransParenCI

TENI works closely with TransParenCI, a group that provides important support to parents and families of trans people. TransParenCI also runs Transformers, a group for young trans people. Each year TransParenCI, with the backing of TENI, hosts a residential weekend that brings families from across Ireland together for workshops and social events. The second residential weekend was held in October 2014 in Carlow and 45 individuals attended, including parents, siblings and trans children.



Members of TransParenCI

TENI also commissioned an external evaluation of TransParenCI in order to measure the overall impact that the group has had since it began in November 2011. This evaluation is available on TENI's website.



## HEALTH AND WELLBEING

### Improving Trans Health Services

Access to healthcare is an important issue for trans people and their families and it is vital that health services are holistic and respectful to diverse identities. TENI sits on the HSE led Transgender Health Working Group (THWG), which was formed in 2011, and includes key people from the HSE, TENI and GLEN. This working group strives to promote best-practice trans health initiatives and is currently working on a draft model of care which is intended to improve the healthcare pathways in Ireland. In an effort to ensure that the needs and experiences of trans people are at the centre of the model of care, TENI facilitated a community consultation process this year with members of the support groups.

In addition to supporting the development of better services for trans adults, TENI has undertaken significant work in promoting health services that address the needs of trans adolescents. Since 2013, TENI's Health and Education Manager Vanessa Lacey has worked with paediatric endocrinologists to develop services for adolescent trans people. In June, TENI coordinated a fact finding mission to the VUmc in Amsterdam. This clinic is one of the biggest trans clinics in the world. It was an opportunity to gain insight into a clinical unit delivering a healthcare programme to trans youth.

### Vanessa's Highlight

"The engagement of the HSE and TUSLA have been very encouraging and unexpected. Our work in this area will build the capacity of services throughout the country which eventually will impact positively on the lives of people in the short, mid and long term, especially when the pathways are finalised. Connecting up services with the aim of supporting young people, their families, and service providers has had a direct positive impact on the lives of young people, in some cases it has kept them alive and gave them hope. This gives me hope for the future and it is the reason I love my job."

### Training Medical Professionals

A key component of Vanessa's role is to provide trainings to medical professionals and equip them with the tools and resources to better serve trans people and their families. Since January, Vanessa has delivered 40 trainings to 1,320 medical professionals. The majority of these trainings (85%) were delivered to HSE staff and services. This has included trainings to Primary Care Teams (PCTs), psychiatrists/psychologists, GPs, CAMHS teams and Jigsaw Services for young people. TENI has also delivered six trainings to non-HSE medical practitioners (e.g. Counsellors). In March, Vanessa was invited to speak at the College of Psychiatrists of Ireland Conference which was attended by 250 people.



Vanessa raising awareness about trans issues



## Health Research

TENI is a member of the LGBTIreland Advisory Committee which is a research project on the mental health and wellbeing of LGBTI people in Ireland. This research is being conducted by a research team led by Professor Agnes Higgins from Trinity College Dublin School of Nursing & Midwifery. The research was commissioned by GLEN and BeLonG To and funded by the National Office for Suicide Prevention (NOSP). The research is poised to be published at the end of 2015 and will contain the largest sample of trans respondents in Irish research.

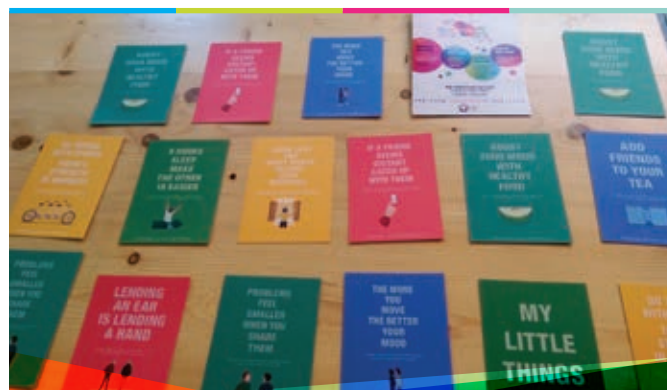
TENI also supported research in the South-East on the experiences of LGBTI people. The aim of this research was to look at ways to better support health professionals in the region to respond effectively to the needs of LGBTI clients. This research was undertaken by Niall Crowley with the support of the HSE and culminated in the publication of *The Rainbow Report: LGBTI Health Needs & Experiences and Health Sector Responses*. Vanessa joined Dr Philip Crowley, Deputy Jerry Buttimer TD and Senator Katherine Zappone at the report launch in April in Kilkenny.



Launch of Rainbow Report

## Mental Health Promotion

There are high rates of suicidality and self-harm in the trans community which makes suicide prevention and mental health promotion critical to our work. TENI works closely with the National Office for Suicide Prevention (NOSP) on a variety of initiatives. This year, TENI has been an active participant in NOSP's new mental health and wellbeing campaign called #littletthings. This campaign acknowledges that everyone experiences difficult times and that when this happens, there are some simple, evidence-based little things that can make a big difference.



#littletthings pamphlets at TRANS-FUSION

In May, members of the trans peer support groups in Cork and Waterford took part in Pieta House's Darkness into Light event to raise awareness about suicide.



Trish and members of the Cork Trans Peer Support Group at the Darkness into Light event

In June, TENI hosted TRANS-FUSION, a three-day creative mental health promotion event associated with Dublin LGBT Pride. TRANS-FUSION featured a variety of events, including soapbox sessions, community reception to honour Dr Lydia Foy and the annual arts-extravaganza *Gotta Get it Out Of My Head*. The goal of TRANS-FUSION was to promote positive mental health through community and the arts. Over 400 individuals took part in these events which featured music, theatre, poetry, art and photography from the trans community and our allies. In September, Transgender South-East organised a similar event at the Waterford Diversity Festival.



# TRANS FUSION

Trans Pride Weekend  
JUNE 11-14TH



TRANS-FUSION  
events  
© Amana Dultra

TENI also participated in LGBT Pride festivities as a way of honouring and celebrating trans identity and community. This year we had the privilege of attending Dublin and Cork Pride.



Dublin Pride







## Trainings and Workshops

TENI has delivered 80 trainings to 2,770 people since January 1st 2015.

TENI provides training on key issues facing trans people and their families. These trainings provide practical information and promote understanding and respect of diverse trans experiences. We deliver these training in a variety of arenas, including healthcare, education and employment settings.

Training healthcare professionals is a key component of TENI's education portfolio. This year, 50% of all trainings were delivered to medical professionals with 1,320 participating since January (See Health & Wellbeing section for more details).

TENI also provides trainings to staff and students in schools and colleges. This year we've delivered training in nine first and second-level schools. We've also delivered 15 trainings to students, staff and administration in third-level education.

TENI delivered trainings to a wide variety of organisations and services such as trade unions, An Garda Síochána and LGBT/Human rights groups.

As a national organisation, TENI delivers trainings across Ireland. In 2015, we were in 15 counties.

## Resilience Training

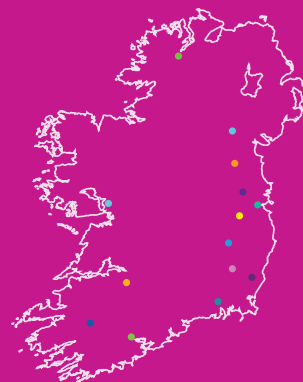
Trans people and their families report experiencing high levels of minority stress due to many factors. A pilot resilience training programme was developed by TENI to address the needs of the community by creating coping strategies that facilitate individuals to become resilient and promote positive mental health. The first resilience training took place in Cork in June with eight individuals from Cork, Waterford, Kerry and Tipperary. Another resilience training will be run in Dublin with members of the Dublin and Greystones trans peer support groups.

## EDUCATION

Education is key to positive change. Only through raising awareness and educating people about trans experiences will Ireland become a more open and inclusive society for everyone. TENI engages in a variety of activities that demonstrably increase awareness, understanding and respect of trans issues across key sectors of Irish society.

### In 2015, we delivered training to:

Dublin (32), Galway (9),  
Waterford (7),  
Wexford (6), Kilkenny (4),  
Tipperary (3), Cork (2),  
Kerry (2), Meath (2), Laois (2),  
Cavan (1), Limerick (1),  
Kildare (1), Donegal (1),  
Monaghan (1).



We also delivered six workshops internationally. This included participation at an Irish/Polish conference in Warsaw with Polish trans organisation Trans-Fuzja. This partnership was focused on capacity building, skills sharing and knowledge exchange. The initiative was funded by Open Society Foundations.



Sara, Julia, Daniel, Wiktor and Broden at Irish/  
Polish partnership event

## EMPLOYMENT

TENI works to empower trans people to attain employment and we promote respectful and supportive workplaces. There is no doubt that access to employment is a critical issue in the trans community. In TENI's *Speaking from the Margins* report only 51% of trans respondents were employed either part or full-time, with 24% being unemployed but seeking work.

### Community Employment Initiative

TENI teamed up with Express YOUR Gender to deliver a pilot five-week Career Development Programme in January-February. This course was facilitated by Rachel Moore and was designed to help trans people move forward in their career by providing dynamic and interactive workshops which supported participants to develop skills and confidence to find the right job. Eight individuals took part in the pilot programme. The evaluations suggested that the course was extremely beneficial to trans people so TENI and Express YOUR Gender ran a second six-week Career Development Programme in June-July which was completed by five people. This initiative was supported by Dublin City Council.

### Quotes from participants in the Career Development Programme

"Spending time understanding who I am and what I can bring to a company has become an invaluable resource for me in preparing for upcoming interviews. The group work meant I had great immediate feedback about how I interview. The mock interview made me feel much more secure and gave me a great chance to practice and has left me feeling much more secure about 'the real deal' as I've had a full trial run from clothes I wear to questions prepared."

"The unique selling point is understanding that trans issues are not separate to your work career and your 'work you'. Being able to address fears, issues and incorporate the positive aspects of your trans identity into your career path. Being in a safe environment with people who understand. There is no other programme catering to the trans experience. No other career guidance was able to make me feel like my trans experience is an advantage to me in the job market. The peer support of other trans people during and after the course is also really amazing. The focus in the early stages on identity and where you want to go was key for me personally and I find myself constantly going back to my notes and learning more."

### Promoting Respectful Workplaces

Trans people often experience discrimination and harassment in the workplace. In the *Speaking from the Margins* report, 14% of trans people felt they had been unfairly turned down for a job because of their gender identity while 8% had not applied for certain jobs due to fears of workplace harassment or discrimination. TENI supports employers to create a respectful and inclusive workplace environment for trans employees. In July, TENI hired Jack O'Sullivan as our new Training and Administrative Officer. Jack works closely with employers to help them support their employees through the development of good practice and strong policies. Jack has already started this training programme by delivering trans awareness trainings

at LinkedIn and Accenture. TENI is also working closely with Trinity College Dublin to provide training to University staff as part of Trinity's ground-breaking Gender Identity and Gender Expression policy.

## ADVOCACY

TENI strives to achieve full rights and equality for trans people and their families. We work to promote the inclusion and integration of trans people in Irish society. Advocacy is a cornerstone of our work and we actively engage with politicians and policy-makers to instigate political and legislative change.

The Gender Recognition Act was formally passed in July which marked a turning point for trans rights in Ireland. The passage of this legislation was the culmination of Dr Lydia Foy's 22 year legal struggle. The new law provides legal recognition based on self-determination for individual's over 18 years of age. This places Ireland among the top five countries in the world in terms of progressive legal gender recognition. Despite this great step forward, the law still effectively excludes young, intersex and non-binary people.

### Lobbying and Advocacy

Lobbying and advocacy was crucial in achieving significant changes to the Gender Recognition Act. TENI's legal recognition campaign was led by Chief Executive Broden Giambrone. In the first six months of 2015, TENI members individually met with over 40 politicians, including Ministers, TDs and Senators. TENI Board members, particularly Sara R. Phillips, Claire Farrell, Simon Blanckensee, Sam Blanckensee, Victoria Mullen, Peter Dunne and Dani O'Connor played a crucial role in this process. The development of personal relationships and the building of trust and strong communication facilitated the emergence of many political champions. Parliamentarians from across all parties were educated and empowered to speak knowledgeably and confidently about trans rights.

In addition to individual lobbying, we participated in three cross-party briefings where TENI members presented information and shared personal stories. These meetings were imperative in engaging politicians on the issues and helped result in TENI being referenced 24 times by 14 different politicians during the Dáil debate in March.

"I pay tribute to the campaigning work of transgender people and, in particular, Transgender Equality Network Ireland, TENI. Without that, we would not have the Bill before us. The campaign is responsible for having the Bill and also for the fact that the criticisms raised about the inadequacy of the Bill have been widely reflected in the debate on Committee Stage in the Seanad and today in the Dáil."

– Deputy Paul Murphy TD

"Finally, I thank TENI and the trans and intersex community of Ireland for their work in having their rights recognised. This is not the end but it is certainly a positive step and full credit for it lies with that community."

– Deputy Dessie Ellis TD

In an effort to ensure that trans voices would be heard during the legislative debates, TENI commissioned expert filmmakers Anna Rodgers and Zlata Filipovic to create the Gender Recognition Matters video. This was launched on 21st January to correspond with the legislation entering the Seanad. The video featured real trans people and their families and was unscripted, allowing for the emergence of an authentic voice. The video has been viewed over 15,000 times on TENI's YouTube channel.



Still from the Gender Recognition Matters video



In addition to domestic lobbying and advocacy, TENI also worked to shine an international spotlight on Ireland. For instance, in June, Helen Kennedy of ILGA-World read a statement drafted by TENI in the UN Human Rights Council calling on the Irish Government to legally recognise trans young people. In July, Boris Dittrich on behalf of Human Rights Watch wrote to Tánaiste Joan Burton to encourage the inclusion of trans young people in the legislation. The Department of Social Protection also received correspondence from Transgender Europe (TGEU) urging the Government to revise the legislation. These interventions were done in collaboration with TENI.



## Policy Briefs

To complement our lobbying, TENI developed several policy briefs that were evidence-based and provided strong argumentation for human rights based gender recognition legislation. These publications included: *Gender Recognition Bill 2014: Executive Summary*, *The Medical Criteria in the Gender Recognition Bill 2014* and *Gender Recognition and Transgender Young People*. These briefs were important educational tools which helped inform the contributions during the debate.



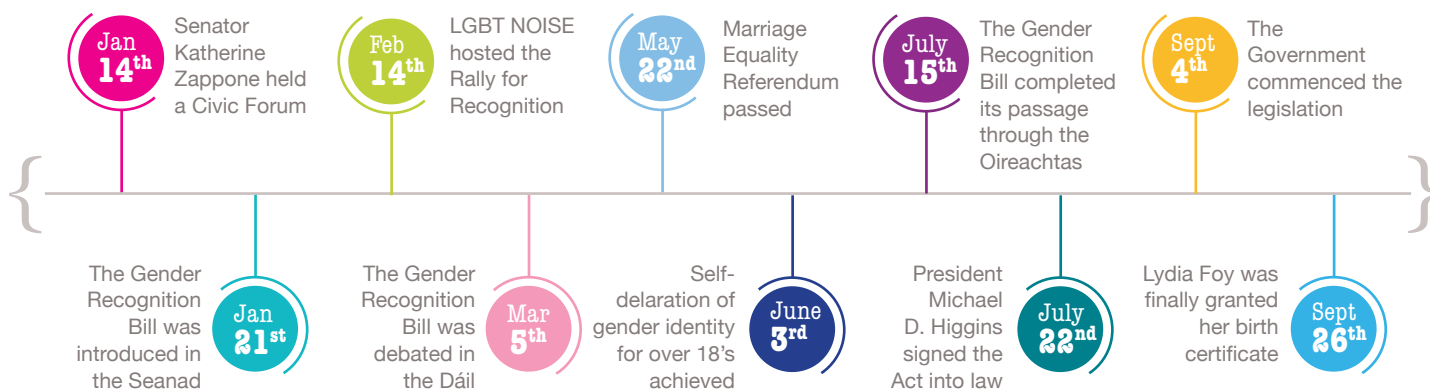
## Legal Working Group

TENI worked closely with the Legal Gender Recognition Working Group, which included members of FLAC, PILA and independent legal experts such as Dr Tanya Ni Mhuirthile, Dr Fergus Ryan, Anne Marie O'Sullivan and Patrick Malone. This group drafted amendments that were shared with various politicians who tabled them during different phases of the legislative process. These amendments became part of the historical record and informed the Government's own amendments.

TENI's advocacy would not have been possible without the generous support of Open Society Foundations and the Sigrid Rausing Trust.



## { Gender Recognition Timeline }



On January 14th, Senator Katherine Zappone held a Civic Forum which was attended by 50 members of the trans community who came together to share their thoughts on the Gender Recognition Bill. This culminated in an Outcome Report that was widely circulated to Senators and TDs.



Participants at Senator Zappone's Civic Forum

The Gender Recognition Bill was introduced in the Seanad on 21st January for the Second Stage debate, which continued on 28th January and 3rd February. The Bill entered the Final and Report Stage on 17th February and was officially passed in the Seanad. As a result of strategic lobbying, a two-year review clause was included in the legislation and the words 'medical evaluation' were removed.



TENI members and supporters after the Seanad debate  
© Mark Stedman/Photocall Ireland

On 14th February, LGBT NOISE hosted the Rally for Recognition. TENI Board Members Vicki Mullen and Claire Farrell spoke at the event and called for changes to the legislation.



Vicki and Claire at the Rally for Recognition



The Gender Recognition Bill was debated in the Dáil on 5th March. This was a historic moment as 26 TDs from all parties spoke on the Bill. All TDs broadly welcomed the introduction of the legislation but called on the Government to improve the Bill. In particular, they were critical of the requirement that a primary treating medical practitioner affirm an applicant's identity, need for applicants to be single ('forced divorce') and absence of protection for young trans and intersex people.

Senator Katherine Zappone published letters from the Irish Medical Organisation and the Irish College of General Practitioners on 5th March stating their willingness to certify individuals as part of the legal recognition process. This was important because the term 'medical practitioner' had been defined narrowly to solely include endocrinologists and psychiatrists.

After the debate, and under significant pressure, Minister Kevin Humphreys announced that the Government would consult with GPs on their inclusion as 'medical practitioners'. While the inclusion of GPs would not have de-medicalised the legislation, it was seen as a pragmatic step towards de-pathologisation and would have allowed greater access to the legislation.

During April and May the Marriage Equality Referendum took centre stage in Irish society. On 22nd May Ireland became the first country to pass marriage equality by popular vote with 62% voting 'Yes'. This overwhelming victory created additional momentum for the Gender Recognition Bill and the Government was empowered to move towards a model of self-determination.



On 3rd June, the Government announced that trans people over the age of 18 would be able to self-declare their gender identity and there would be no requirement of certification from a medical practitioner.

In June, TENI hosted a Community Reception for Dr Lydia Foy to honour her for her 22 years of activism. The event was attended by Tánaiste Joan Burton and Minister Kevin Humphreys.



Community Reception to honour Dr Lydia Foy  
© Grace Photography



The Gender Recognition Bill completed its passage through the Oireachtas on 15th July. Ireland became the fourth country in the world to pass gender recognition legislation based on self-determination.



TENI members and supporters celebrate passage of Gender Recognition Act



Dr Lydia Foy's birth certificate

President Michael D. Higgins signed the Act into law on 22nd July.

The Government commenced the legislation on 4th September and opened the application process.

Dr Lydia Foy was finally granted her correct birth certificate on 26th September.



TENI members participate in a press conference with Tánaiste Joan Burton, Minister Kevin Humphreys, Dr Lydia Foy and Michael Farrell to mark the commencement of the Gender Recognition Act





## Trans Young People

Despite the great progress for trans people over 18, there remains a lack of meaningful inclusion of young trans people. This issue was championed by Independent Senator Jillian van Turnhout who spoke out publicly on the need for young trans people to be legally recognised and worked closely with a variety of children's rights organisations such as the Children's Rights Alliance, Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (ISPCC) and the National Youth Council to push for amendments to be made. The Senator spoke passionately during the legislative debates and worked closely with the Minister for Children, James Reilly who voiced his support for amendments.



TENI will continue to advocate for young trans and intersex people and work closely with our allies in Government. TENI has also taken significant steps to build our evidence base and seek input from young people about their experiences to better inform our advocacy.

## Trans Youth Forum

TENI, BeLong To, Irish Trans Student Alliance (ITSA) and a Trans Youth Organising Committee came together to organise the first Trans Youth Forum on 15th July at Trinity College. This event was open to all trans people aged 14-25 and 50 individuals participated. The goal of the event was to bring together young people to share their experiences of education, health and legislation to better advocate for change. This event was also supported by TCD Equality and ILGA-Europe.

In addition to the Forum, a Trans Youth Survey was developed by the Trans Youth Organising Committee and staff from TENI and BeLong To. This survey was completed by 161 individuals ranging in age from 14-25. The results will be published in October.

### Jack's Highlight

"The highlight of my year was definitely being involved in the Trans Youth Forum. From the planning stages all the way through to the actual event, it was a trans formative experience. I learned so much from everyone, participants and organisers alike. Engagement is always a key part to the work TENI does, "nothing about us without us" as the adage says. Witnessing the enthusiasm, determination and community spirit in a younger generation of trans people has made me so excited about the future."



## STAD

The STAD (Stop Transphobia and Discrimination) campaign raises awareness about transphobic violence in Ireland and enables the trans community to report hate crimes and incidents in a safe environment and without fear of ridicule or discrimination. The STAD campaign began in 2013.

In 2014, 41 incidents were reported through STAD. Of these, 22 incidents bore the characteristics of criminal offences: 8 public order offences, 5 cases of simple assault, 3 cases of harassment, 3 cases of sexual assault, 1 case of assault causing harm, 1 case of aggravated sexual assault and 1 case of threat to kill or cause serious harm. Since January 2015, TENI has received 27 reports of transphobic incidents. We believe this is just the tip of the iceberg as many incidents are never reported.

TENI advocates for the introduction of hate crime legislation that explicitly protects trans people. This year ICCL supported researchers Amanda Haynes and Jennifer Schwappe from the University of Limerick to conduct research on hate crimes in Ireland and draft legislative





proposals. TENI was actively involved in the affiliated NGO working group and provided feedback throughout the process. In July, legislative proposals for hate crime legislation that included the protection of individuals on the basis of gender identity and gender expression were submitted to Minister Aodhán Ó Ríordáin. TENI joined a host of NGOs in endorsing these proposals.

TENI works with the Gardaí to develop resources to aid them in supporting trans people. We also continue to advocate for the inclusion of 'transphobia' in the PULSE system.

## MEDIA

TENI staff and Board have appeared in a wide variety of local, national and international print and broadcast media.

For instance, TENI Vice-Chair Claire Farrell appeared on TV3's Ireland AM and TENI staff and Board appeared on Euronews.

However, the biggest media event of 2015 occurred in March when Vanessa Lacey, Sam Blanckensee and Simon Blanckensee appeared on The Saturday Night Show on RTÉ One. Vanessa and Sam were interviewed by Brendan O'Connor who asked about their experiences of being trans in Ireland.

TENI has also been highlighted extensively in the LGBT press. The passage of the Gender Recognition Act was featured in GCN and included a photoshoot with some of the activists involved in the campaign. Broden and Sara graced the GCN cover of the September issue.



Sara being interviewed for Euronews



Trish in the Evening Echo



Vanessa and Sam on the Saturday Night Show





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ACTIVITY REPORT 2015

Issue 309 • September 2015 • Fri



Broden and Sara on the cover of GCN  
© Ruth Medjber

# RECOGNITION AT LAST

*An historic victory for Ireland's trans community*





## COMMUNICATIONS

Effective organisational communication is key to staying connected with our members and keeping people informed of TENI's activities. Office Manager Gordon Grehan leads our communications and has been integral in developing TENI's online voice. Under Gordon's leadership, TENI's social media reach has significantly expanded and we have an interactive and vibrant online presence.

### *TENI engages in a variety of communications activities\*:*

**Website** (<http://www.teni.ie/>)

**TENI E-Newsletters & Press Releases**

**Facebook** (<https://www.facebook.com/TransEquality>)

**Twitter** (@TENI-Tweets)

**YouTube** (<http://www.youtube.com/transgenderequality>)

**Instagram** (<https://instagram.com/tenipics/>)

55 E-newsletters since Jan 1, 2015.

7,190 likes.

2,010 tweets with 4,860 followers.

282 subscribers.

193 followers.

*\*All figures as of September 26th 2015.*

## MEMBERSHIP

TENI is a member-driven organisation and we rely on our members to inform and support our work. In September, TENI launched a new membership campaign for 2016 to increase member involvement. Are you Team TENI?





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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TENI's work is only possible through the dedication of all the staff, Board members, volunteers, activists, allies and partner organisations who strive to secure trans rights and equality in Ireland. Thank you.

We would not be able to do the work that we do without the generous financial support of our funders. We gratefully acknowledge the support of the HSE, National Office for Suicide Prevention (NOSP), Open Society Foundations (OSF), Sigrid Rausing Trust and ILGA-Europe.



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Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
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