



LGBTQ+ Inclusive Schools Programme

cara-friend.org.uk

Cara-Friend is a **Registered
Charity**, No: XR55118

About Cara-Friend

Cara-Friend is the only youth service in Northern Ireland that provides support to LGBTQ+ young people aged between 11-25, through one-to-one support sessions and the provision of safe-space youth groups all over Northern Ireland.

It is a small, but effective, organisation with a core staff who work every day to ensure the lives of LGBTQ+ young people in Northern Ireland are constantly improving. In 2016 we had over 500 service users, and over 1,000 people in receipt of our training.

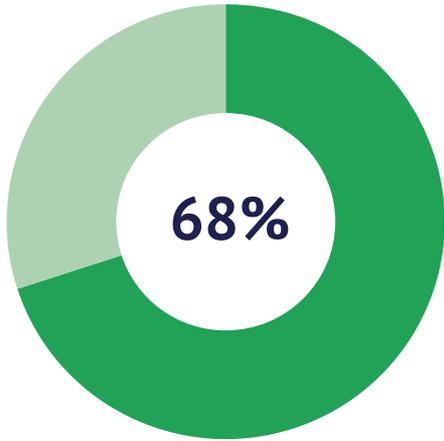
LGBTQ+ Inclusive Schools Programme

In September 2016, Cara-Friend launched their new LGBTQ+ Inclusive Schools Programme across Northern Ireland. The programme covers all aspects of school which are important to improve the experiences of LGBTQ+ students in Northern Irish schools. The Inclusive Schools Programme involves awareness training for teachers and school staff to help improve their professional practice, and to ensure they have the capacity to provide inclusive and responsive care to LGBTQ+ young people.

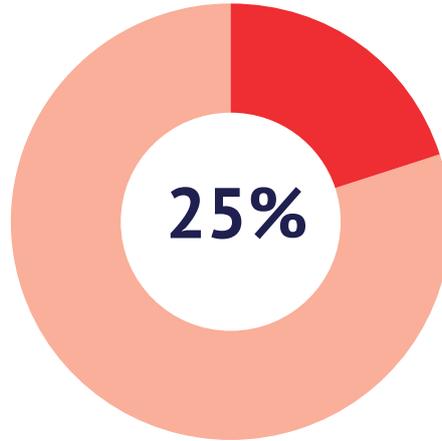
It also provides fun and innovative anti-bullying workshops to young people in the classroom to combat homophobia, biphobia and transphobia. The ultimate aim is to provide a safer, happier, more inclusive place for LGBTQ+ young people in secondary school.

Why is there a Need?

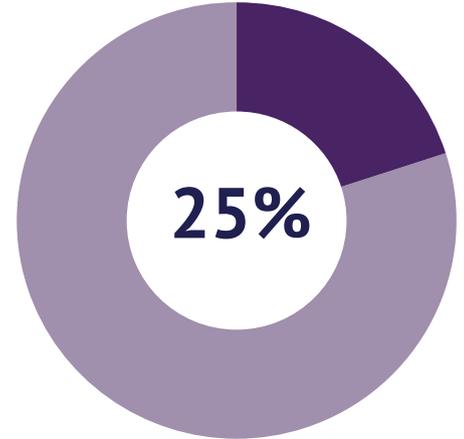
Still Shouting, research funded by the Education Authority, and carried out by Cara-Friend, Youth Action and YouthNet, in 2016, revealed the following statistics, directly from the mouths of LGBTQ+ young people themselves:



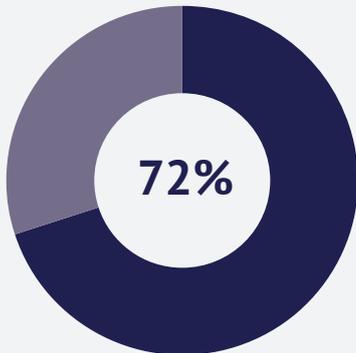
68% of those surveyed were **bullied at school** because of their gender identity and/or sexual orientation.



25% of those surveyed had physically **attempted suicide**, while **61%** said they had thought about it.

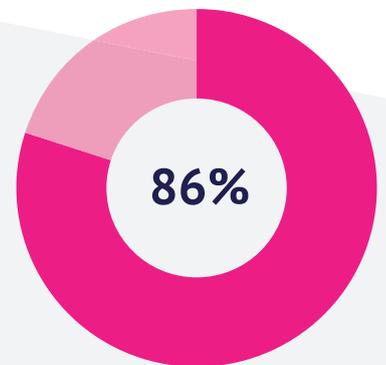


25% of young people noted increased **truancy** due to their sexual orientation and/or gender identity, while **12% stated they dropped out** because of responses in school to their coming out.

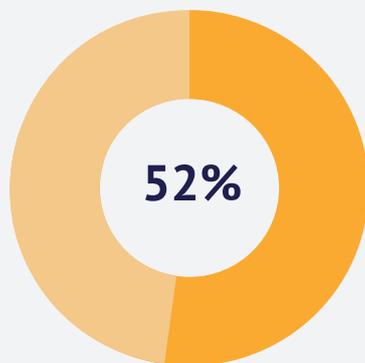


72% of LGBTQ+ young people experienced **negative attitudes** from teachers or school staff because of their gender identity and/or sexual orientation.

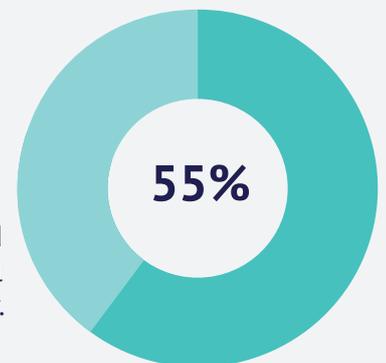
86% of young people surveyed stated that they were aware of their sexual orientation while at **secondary school**.



55% of young people who identified as **transgender**, stated that they were aware of their gender identity while at **primary or secondary school**.



52% of young people surveyed stated they **self-harmed** because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.



Clearly these statistics are worrying in that they paint a bleak picture of what it is like to be LGBTQ+ in Northern Irish secondary schools. **Cara-Friend wants to improve these statistics by working directly and constructively with schools.**

What we offer to Schools

Our mission is to impact positively on the school environment such that it becomes more responsive to and inclusive of the needs of LGBTQ+ young people. Social isolation, lack of visibility and an atmosphere of silence around LGBTQ+ issues are all problems that we endeavour to tackle through the LGBTQ+ Inclusive Schools Programme.



LGBTQ+ Awareness Teacher Training

We offer training for teachers, and all school staff, that will help improve their practice so as to make it more inclusive of, and responsive to, the needs of LGBTQ+ young people within the school community. We will train teachers and staff on the different identities and terminologies under the LGBTQ+ umbrella, and how best to support young people who may be struggling with their LGBTQ+ identity.

We will give teachers and staff all the know-how to be able to talk openly and comfortably about LGBTQ+ issues with their students, and indeed with the parents and guardians of their students. Specific school-based scenario work will empower recipients of this training to allow them to confidently engage with young people of all identities.

This training is tailor-made to each individual school, depending on how much time is available and what the specific areas of priority are for the school involved.





ShoutOut Anti-Bullying Workshops

ShoutOut workshops are available to all post-primary schools in Northern Ireland. They aim to improve the experiences of LGBTQ+ young people in all our schools by raising awareness among their peers of what it means to be LGBTQ+. Workshops are delivered in classroom settings to all ages and, due to their informal nature, are extremely effective in challenging negative attitudes, the use of derogatory language, and bullying.

The workshops are delivered in a non-political, non-judgemental way, which is respectful of differences of opinion. Workshops are delivered to a maximum of 35 students each and take one hour to facilitate.



One-to-One Support

Cara-Friend offers face-to-face meetings with young people all over Northern Ireland, regardless of where they are located, to provide a support service for young people who may be struggling with their sexual orientation and/or gender identity, or simply who want to talk to someone.

We accept referrals through schools who feel their students might benefit from talking to one of our staff members.



Professional Guidance

We offer all schools a call-in and email service if they are looking for information, advice or guidance in relation to how best to support a young person. We accept referrals from all over Northern Ireland.

Often a phone call is the first step to availing of our full programme of services for staff and students alike.



Gay Straight Alliance Support

Cara-Friend has worked with Hazelwood Integrated College, Newtownabbey, and Allen & Overy to develop a toolkit for students who wish to set up an inclusive LGBTQ+ and ally group, known as Gay Straight Alliances within their school.

We can work with students and teachers to make this happen, and to support the young people who are running the group with training, personal development, and more.

Pilot: September 2016 – January 2017

27 ShoutOut Workshops in 10 schools

meaning **802 young people** received LGBTQ+ inclusive, anti-bullying workshops. 5 school staff teams received LGBTQ+ Awareness Teacher Training.

Become an LGBTQ+ Inclusive School Today

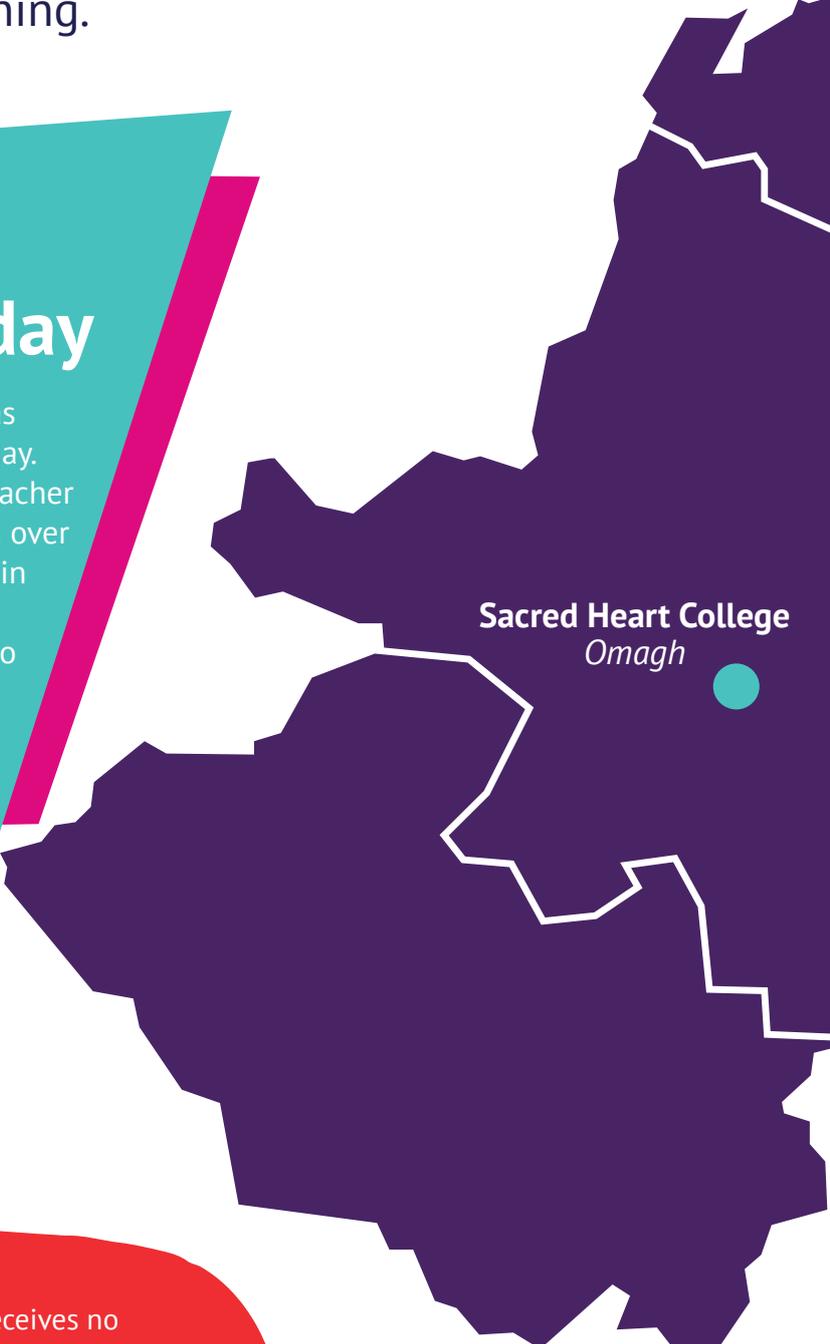
If you would like your school to be recognised as an LGBTQ+ Inclusive School then contact us today. We can take bookings for LGBTQ+ Awareness Teacher Training and ShoutOut Anti-Bullying Workshops over the phone or by email. Schools who participate in the LGBTQ+ Inclusive Schools Programme will receive certification, and will help their school to respond to, and be more inclusive of, the needs of its LGBTQ+ community of young people.

Our Ask

Cara-Friend LGBTQ+ Inclusive Schools Programme receives no direct funding from the Education Authority, Department of Education or any other governmental agency or department. As such its operation depends on sponsorship and donations.

We therefore ask participating schools to make small donations to cover the cost of delivering training and workshops.

Schools who simply cannot afford to financially support the programme but which to avail of workshops and training may avail of programme for free.



Sacred Heart College
Omagh

Contact us to see how you can get your school involved.

LGBTQ+ Inclusive Schools (Pilot Programme)



St. Mary's College
Derry-Londonderry

Ballymena Academy
Ballymena

Ulidia Integrated College
Carrickfergus

Carrickfergus Grammar School
Carrickfergus

CBS Glen Road
Belfast

St. Patrick's Academy
Dungannon

Royal School Armagh
Armagh City

St. Joseph's Boys High School
Newry

Shimna Integrated College
Newcastle

St. Joseph's High School
Crossmaglen

St. Louis's Grammar School
Kilkeel, Co. Down

Declan Meehan

✉ declan.meehan@cara-friend.org.uk

☎ 07478727121 | 028 90890202

Jo McParland

✉ joanne.mcparland@cara-friend.org.uk

☎ 07729808177 | 028 90890202

Cara-Friend is an organisation dedicated to supporting, empowering, educating, and offering friendship to everyone in the LGBT community

cara-friend.org.uk

[f facebook.com/cara.friend.ni](https://facebook.com/cara.friend.ni)