



LGBTQI+ Inclusive
Schools' Charter



Diversity and Inclusion are at the heart of everything we do here at Citi Belfast. We are leaders in LGBTQI+ inclusion not only in the UK, but across the world. We truly value the work that community organisations such as Cara-Friend do and endeavour to support grass roots initiatives that provide educational resources.

LGBTQI+ education is so important and is needed within our schools to allow young LGBTQI+ people to be safe and thrive in an environment where they are valued.

We have built a welcoming and inclusive space in our organisation and hope that we can continue to support this initiative to introduce the same measures within schools.

Leigh Meyer

Managing Director
Citi Belfast Site Head



LGBTQI+ Inclusive Schools' Charter

The Inclusive Schools' Charter covers all aspects of the school environment which must be addressed to improve the experiences of LGBTQI+ students in Northern Ireland. Inclusivity can only be achieved by working with both staff and students.

The Inclusive Schools' Charter involves awareness training for teachers and all school staff to improve their knowledge, professional practice and ensure they have the capacity to provide inclusive and responsive care to LGBTQI+ young people. The Charter also provides training in the form of Cara-Friend's All Out anti-bullying workshop, which promotes LGBTQI+ inclusion in schools, celebrates diversity and combats bullying by allowing students to ask questions and gain knowledge of the LGBTQI+ community.

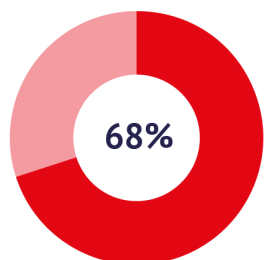
Cara-Friend has worked with over 110 post primary schools and colleges across Northern Ireland and trained over 14,000 staff and students. We are highly aware of the training required in schools and the level of engagement necessary to ensure LGBTQI+ students' needs are actively met. Our training highlights that respect and inclusivity are vital in creating a welcoming school environment.

Steve Williamson

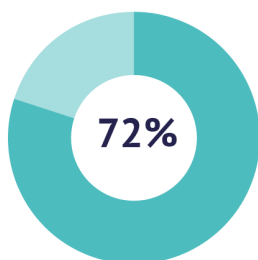
Director, Cara-Friend

Still Shouting Report

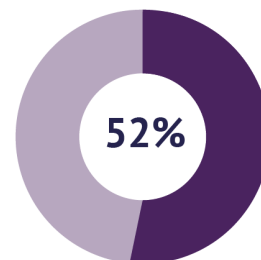
The Education Authority funded the Still Shouting Report which was carried out by Cara-Friend and Youth Action in 2017. The statistics revealed the experiences of LGBTQ+ young people within the education system of Northern Ireland.



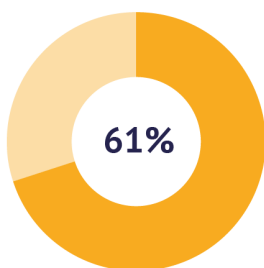
68% of LGBTQ+ young people had experienced bullying because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity



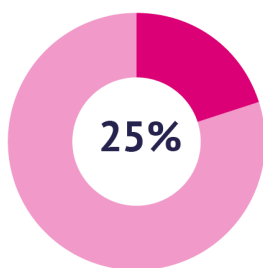
72% of LGBTQ+ young people experienced negative attitudes in school around their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.



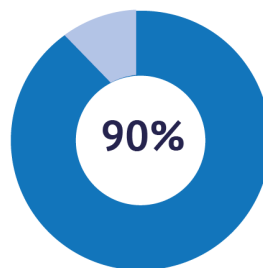
52% of young people stated they self-harmed because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.



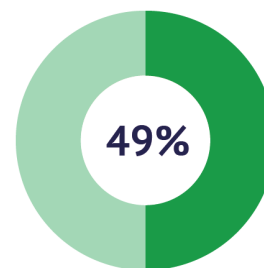
61% of young people contemplated suicide due to their sexual orientation during secondary school.



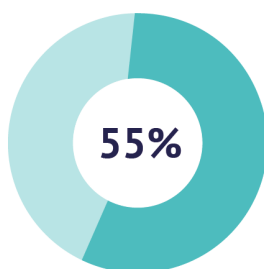
25% of young people attempted suicide due to their sexual orientation during secondary school.



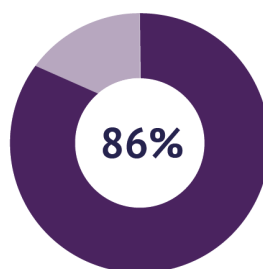
90% of young people contemplated suicide because of their gender identity during secondary school.



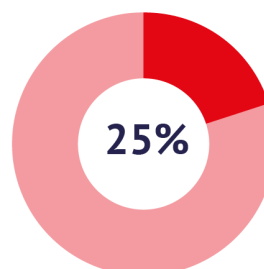
49% of young people attempted suicide because of their gender identity during secondary school.



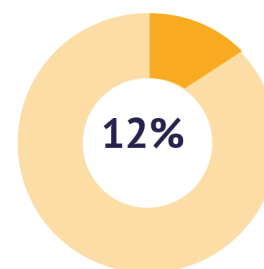
55% of young people who identified as transgender stated they were aware of their gender identity while in secondary school.



86% of young people stated they were aware of their sexual orientation while in secondary school



25% of young people noted increased truancy due to their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.



12% stated that after coming out and due to negative attitudes from others, they dropped out of school.

These statistics are worrying, highlighting the need for action in schools across Northern Ireland. By working with Cara-Friend you will help to protect LGBTQ+ students in your school and create a safer and more inclusive environment.

Training and Support

Our Mission

Our mission is to assist schools in creating a positive, safe and welcoming environment for all young people. We endeavour to build on the knowledge of teachers by giving them additional tools, enabling them to be even more responsive to the needs of LGBTQI+ students. Knowledge leads to understanding and acceptance, which in turn, will reinforce an inclusive school environment and one which upholds individual dignity. All young people must be protected and afforded a safe and welcoming place to be educated, they must be free from discrimination and prejudice, they must be allowed to be themselves without fear or judgement.

LGBTQI+ Awareness Training

This comprehensive training is offered to all schools to improve professional practice and assist staff in being responsive to the needs of LGBTQI+ students within the school environment. The training focuses on three areas; comprehension and understanding of what LGBTQI+ means and developing knowledge around specific terminology, highlighting the issues faced by LGBTQI+ students and providing practical advice on how to bring inclusion of LGBTQI+ identities into teachers' professional practice.

We finish all of our sessions with a Q&A, allowing for further elaboration, discussion and debate. This training is tailored to each individual school, depending on how much time they have available. The recommended length of time for this training is two and a half hours. This allows for an in-depth training session which will greatly benefit staff.

Professional Guidance

It is important that teachers feel supported when dealing with issues around sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Cara-Friend offers all teachers and staff professional advice and guidance on working with young people from the LGBTQI+ community. This advisory support can be via online contact, phone calls, emails and/or face to face consultations.

All Out Anti Bullying Workshop

All Out workshops are available to all secondary schools in Northern Ireland. They improve the experience of LGBTQI+ students by raising awareness and building knowledge around sexual orientation and gender identity among their peers. The workshops tackle bullying by focusing on developing understanding of individual difference and respecting diversity.

Workshops are delivered in a classroom setting and are appropriate for all students. These workshops can also be delivered online to students. Due to their informal nature, they prove extremely effective in challenging negative attitudes and the use of derogatory language or behaviour by students. They are delivered in a non-political, non-judgemental way, which is respectful to differences of opinion. Workshops are delivered to a maximum of 30 students per session and are one hour in length.

One-to-one Support

Cara-Friend offers young people a one to one support service. This service is for LGBTQI+ young people who may be struggling with their sexual orientation and/or gender identity, or who simply want to talk to someone. One to one support can happen face to face in school, over the phone or online. Young people who can connect with Cara-Friend can also avail of additional educational and fun workshops and gain peer support via our monitored chat platforms and regional groups.



LGBTQI+ Inclusive Schools' Charter

What is the LGBTQI+ Inclusive Schools' Charter?

The LGBTQI+ Inclusive Schools' Charter is an invaluable programme of events and targets which enable schools to address inclusivity, equality and respect within an educational environment. Through proactive measures your school will improve the experience of LGBTQI+ students, while promoting inclusivity for all. Included in all Charter levels, to ensure a greater depth of knowledge and understanding, is LGBTQI+ awareness training for staff and the All Out anti-bullying workshop for students.

In addition the LGBTQI+ Inclusive Schools' Charter will focus on reviewing LGBTQ+ policies and procedures, incorporating materials and resources, building cultural knowledge, ensuring self monitoring and evaluation systems are in place. The Education and Training Manager will ensure the highest level of knowledge and understanding are delivered and assist the school, staff and students promote a positive message of inclusion for all.

Will a Charter Award benefit this school?

Yes! Being LGBTQI+ in school can be terrifying. Students often suffer from homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying, also known as queerphobic bullying, they can feel excluded, invisible, disrespected and unsafe. The LGBTQI+ Inclusive Schools' Charter will make your school more responsive to the needs of students. It will make them visible and their voices heard, perhaps for the first time. The training will develop knowledge and understanding which will lead to greater inclusivity and respect. This programme endeavours to remove the barriers that separate and replace them with pillars of support. The Inclusive Schools' Charter award will make your school a more welcoming learning environment, signaling to other schools, parents and students the importance of inclusivity.

The LGBTQI+ Inclusive Schools' Charter emphasises that equality, diversity and respect are at the heart of your schools ethos. Students play a vital role in creating this inclusive atmosphere. Your students are directly involved in this Charter through their responsibility for creating and maintaining inclusivity and diversity notice boards. They will also engage with other students and staff to deliver events throughout the school year which focus on building an inclusive school environment, respecting diversity and emphasising equality for all.



Charter Awards



Inclusive Schools' Charter Silver Award:

The Silver Charter signifies that a school has reached the first milestone in LGBTQI+ inclusivity. Both students and staff will engage in training to develop knowledge and understanding of the LGBTQI+ community. Students will take charge of an inclusivity notice board and hold assemblies which focus on LGBTQI+ inclusion and diversity. The schools LGBTQI+ policies and procedures are to be updated as well as establishment of self monitoring and evaluation practices. Additional requirements are to be completed within 1 school year of receiving LGBTQI+ awareness training. The Charter is awarded for 1 year on completion of the requirements and verification through the Charter audit.



Inclusive Schools' Charter Gold Award:

In addition to the goals achieved in the Silver Charter, the Gold Charter will see additional LGBTQI+ engagement by focusing on celebrating diversity during anti-bullying week. This may be through Cara-Friend's All Out anti-bullying workshops, assemblies and /or classroom discussions. Additional requirements are to be completed within 1 school year of receiving LGBTQI+ awareness training. The Charter is awarded for 2 years on completion of the requirements and verification through the Charter audit.



Inclusive Schools' Charter Platinum Award:

The Platinum Charter highlights the highest level of LGBTQI+ inclusivity a school may obtain. A key element of this charter is the implementation and maintenance of a GSA or Gay Straight Alliance; where students may focus on developing a more inclusive space within the school by creating a safe and welcoming environment for all. Cultural engagement and inclusion will be achieved through organised school events during LGBTQI+ awareness week. Additional requirements are to be completed within 1 school year of receiving LGBTQI+ awareness training. The Charter is awarded for 3 years on completion of the requirements and verification through the Charter audit.

Cara-Friend's Education and Training Manager will liaise with schools on their journey to achieving a desired LGBTQI+ Inclusive Schools' Charter award. Once all additional requirements are completed by a school, Cara-Friend will award a Silver, Gold or Platinum Charter Certificate which will be valid for 1, 2 or 3 years. Additional requirements are to be maintained for the duration of the Charter award.



Charter Breakdown

Platinum Charter Award Standards

Training and Support from Cara-Friend :

- Bespoke LGBTQI+ awareness training for all staff.
- All Out anti-bullying workshops for 1 year group per year - for 3 consecutive years.
- One to one student support for 3 years.
- One to one professional staff support for 3 years.
- Resources for students, teachers and parents.
- Parents LGBTQI+ awareness training session.

Suggested Donation: £500

Additional Requirements for Charter Award :

- 3 x Student-led inclusion and diversity notice boards.
- Promoting inclusivity via student-led assemblies on LGBTQI+ issues.
- Celebrating diversity during anti-bullying week to combat queerphobic bullying.
- Cultural engagement via organised school events during LGBTQI+ awareness week.
- Start up and maintenance of a GSA (Gay/Straight Alliance).
- Update LGBTQI+ policies and procedures.
- Self monitoring and evaluation measures in place.
- Platinum Charter audit.

Gold Charter Award Standards

Training and Support from Cara-Friend :

- Bespoke LGBTQI+ awareness training for all staff.
- All Out anti-bullying workshops for 1 year group per year - for 2 consecutive years.
- One to one student support for 2 years.
- One to one professional staff support for 2 years.
- Resources for students, teachers and parents.

Suggested Donation: £350

Additional Requirements for Charter Award :

- 2 x Student-led inclusion and diversity notice boards.
- Promoting inclusivity via student-led assemblies on LGBTQI+ issues.
- Celebrating diversity during anti-bullying week to combat queerphobic bullying.
- Update LGBTQI+ policies and procedures.
- Self monitoring and evaluation measures in place.
- Gold Charter audit.

Silver Charter Award Standards

Training and Support from Cara-Friend :

- Bespoke LGBTQI+ awareness training for all staff.
- All Out anti-bullying workshops for 1 year group.
- One to one student support for 1 year.
- One to one professional staff support for 1 year.
- Resources for students, teachers and parents.

Suggested Donation: £200

Additional Requirements for Charter Award :

- 1 x Student-led inclusion and diversity notice boards.
- Promoting inclusivity via student-led assemblies on LGBTQI+ issues.
- Update LGBTQI+ policies and procedures.
- Self monitoring and evaluation measures in place.
- Silver Charter audit.



Written 2021
by Jo McParland

For further information contact:
Education and Training Manager
028 9089 0202
training@cara-friend.org.uk
cara-friend.org.uk

Charity Number
NIC106210