

HERe NI

Supporting Families

Empowering Children and Young People with an
LGBTQ+ parent / carer

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LGBTQIA+ Community are more likely to:

- Be a victim of a hate crime: homophobic/bi-phobic/transphobic abuse.
- Be addicted to prescription/non-prescription medicines.
- Have problems with alcohol
- These will have an impact on family life



❖ Family Exercise

- What does the term family mean?
- What different types of families have you worked with?



'The Family'

- ✧ Dominated by heteronormativity
- ✧ Common assumption family= man woman & children
- ✧ Heterosexual families often viewed as 'the norm'
- ✧ Often anything that deviates from 'the norm' classed as abnormal



Routes to Parenthood

- ❖ Adoption
- ❖ Fostering
- ❖ Children from a previous relationship
- ❖ NHS / Privately funded
 - IUI – Donor insemination (clinic)
 - IVF/ICSI
- ❖ Donor insemination (home/other)
- ❖ Surrogacy



LGBT Families – IVF/IUI

Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 2008.

Lesbian couples who are civil partners

- Lesbian couples who are civil partners at the time of conception and conceive a child through artificial insemination will both automatically be treated as their child's legal parents
- This applies where civil partners conceive through fertility treatment at a licensed clinic and where civil partners conceive through artificial insemination by private arrangement

Lesbian couples who are not civil partners

- Couples who are not civil partners at the time of conception but who conceive together through a fertility clinic in the UK licensed by the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority may also both be treated as legal parents.
- The non-birth mother will be treated as the child's other legal parent if both partners sign consent forms electing for the non-birth mother to be treated as a parent.



LGBT Families - Surrogacy

The Surrogacy Arrangements Act 1985 (on-going consultation)

- legal parent of the child is the surrogate mother, and her spouse/civil partner
- Within 6 months following birth, the parents should make an application to the Court for a Parental Order. Certain circumstances must be satisfied for the Parental Order to be made:
 - The couple must be married, civil partners, or in an enduring family relationship.
 - The couple must be domiciled in the UK
 - The Court must be satisfied that no money or other benefit, other than reasonable expenses, has been received by the surrogate.
 - The surrogate mother must freely and unconditionally consent to the making of the Order.
- When such an Order is made, it terminates the rights of the surrogate mother and transfers Parental Responsibility to the intended parents. A Parental Order does not expire and the birth of the child is re-registered in the names of the parents. A Parental Order can only be made if one or both parents are genetically related to the child. If neither of the intended parents are related to the child, then the intended parents must proceed by way of adoption.
- The surrogate mother cannot be paid for entering the arrangement but she can receive reasonable expenses from the parents for agreeing to carry the child.



LGBT Families - Adoption

- Since a Court of Appeal ruling in 2013 same sex couples have been able to adopt whether in a civil partnership or not.
- Same process as heterosexual couples and single people

- **STATISTICS- SAME SEX COUPLES**

Belfast Trust have approved 18 same sex couples and placed 24 children.

In 2019/20 the regionally approved statistics are:

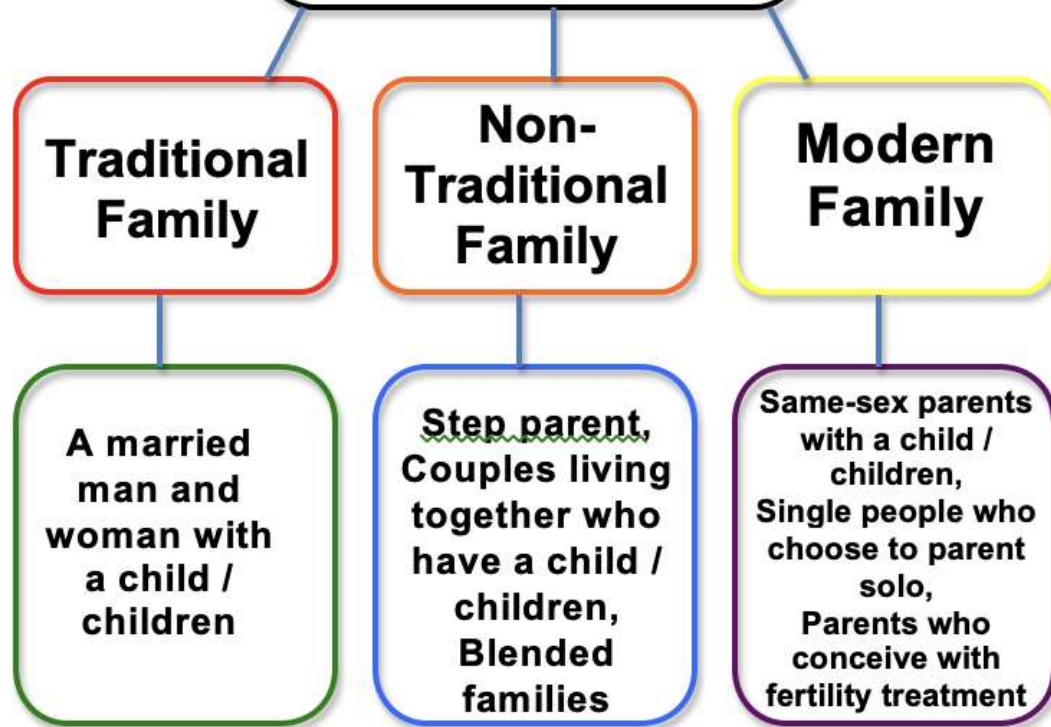
69 married heterosexual
1 co-habituating heterosexual
4 married/civil partnership same sex couples
4 co-habiting same sex couples
9 single women.

- Average waiting time from approval to a child being placed is 3 months

(Statistics correct at 16/06/2020)



The Family



Definitions of different types of families.

Do you know how many types you have in your setting?



Voices of children

Reflections of adult children of same-sex parents on growing up with same-sex parents

"I remember hiding it to avoid getting picked on"

"Other people made it a problem: 'Who's that woman?' (referring to mother's girlfriend) I didn't have a name for her and people want a name"

"Someone said 'Your mum's gay' my friend said 'Is she, is she?' I was shy and didn't have the confidence to say back: 'Yes she is'"

"I never tried about it if asked...but I wouldn't have said...I was careful who I talked to about it"

"People need to have an open mind. Just be open to diversity"

"Because nobody else in the school talked about different families or same-sex parents, the job of explaining gay people always falls to them"

"Me calling..... My mother's partner 'is a really bizarre thing in my head. It's just my mum and my mum"

On hearing people describing gay people as 'disgusting' and 'weird'.
"Every time you hear that it's like an attack, and it makes you more fearful about saying who you are"

In school:
"I heard people whispering about me, asking who she (other mother) was"



Same Sex Family Project

- Worked with children aged 0-8 and their LGBTQ+ parent / carer
- Funded by the Community Fund under the "Reaching Out, Supporting Families" funding stream
- June 2015 -> December 2020
- Well over the target of 100 families





Different Families Same Love





S T A R T

TOGETHER



Start Together Project at HERe NI



- A 2 year project funded by Comic Relief
- Supporting LGBTQIA+ parents and carers of children aged 0-7 to reduce isolation and improve health and wellbeing through:





Start Together Project at HERe NI

Rhyme Time sessions for children aged 0-3

Offers parents/ carers an opportunity to chat to others who are going through similar experiences

Promotes speech and language development for the child

Introduction to similar family types

Provides a relaxing atmosphere for parent/carer and child



Start Together Project at HERe NI



Activity Session for children aged 3-7

Promotes all areas of development for the child

Children get to meet up with children with similar family types

Provides a relaxing atmosphere for parent/carer and child

Offers parents/ carers an opportunity to chat to others who are going through similar experiences eg schools holidays



Start Together Project at HERe NI



1-1 Family Support session

If a family is in need of some 1-1 support this can be done by phone, Zoom or in person



Start Together Project at HERe NI



Advice and Signposting

The closed Facebook page is used by parents/carers and staff to give out information about upcoming events and other activities that might be of interest

Parents/carers can contact staff via email or phone to ask for advice or information

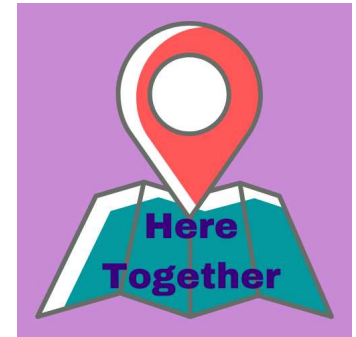
Staff can signpost parents/cares to organisations who may provide services that we do not





**Here
Together**

Here Together Project at HERe NI



- A 5 year project funded by Community Fund, began in January 2021
- Supporting and empowering children and young people aged 8-25 and their LGBTQ+ parent / carer
- Together we will combat issues such as social isolation, invisibility, alienation and marginalisation.



Here Together Project



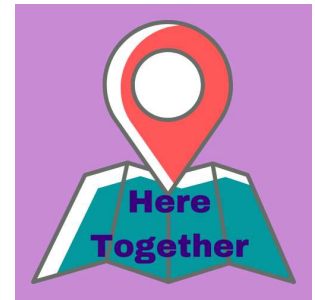
Outreach – We will provide opportunities for young people and their parents and carers to come together in a proactive, positive and affirming way.

1-1 support via Zoom, telephone or face to face when possible

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Here Together Project



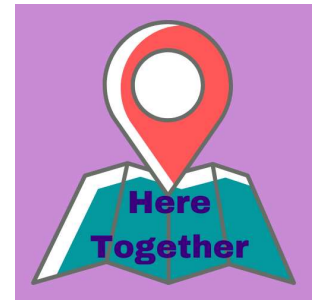
Peer Support – We will come together for support in Support Hubs for group activities with others from similar families.

The hub meet ups will be split into age appropriate group.

Locations: Belfast Foyle Newry



Here Together Project



Education – We will be engaging with schools, colleges, training providers and youth work providers to highlight the issues impacting young people with LGBTQIA+ parent(s) / carer(s)

We will provide a range of meet ups, workshops to build resilience and give them the confidence and skills they need for the future



Here Together Project



Steering Groups – We have set up two Steering Groups of children and young people. The first one is for children aged 8-17 and the second one is for young people aged 18+.

These groups will meet 3 or 4 times a year to plan and evaluate the project. This is a great opportunity for them to be a vital part of the process.



How can you support young people with Same-sex families in your setting?

As an individual

As an organisation



Individual ideas

- ✧ Creating a LGBTQIA+ friendly environment
- ✧ Gender neutral terminology
- ✧ Affirming language
- ✧ Confidentiality
- ✧ Resist assumptions – ask open ended questions



Process and Policy Ideas

- ✧ Use of images of same sex families
- ✧ Collation of data on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity
- ✧ Consultation events
- ✧ Visiting policy
- ✧ Training for staff and volunteers
- ✧ Staff and volunteer LGBTQIA+ Networks



Further Training

Here NI offers:-

Sexual Orientation Awareness workshops

Empowering children and young people with LGBT+ Parents



Questions?

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