

LGBTI+

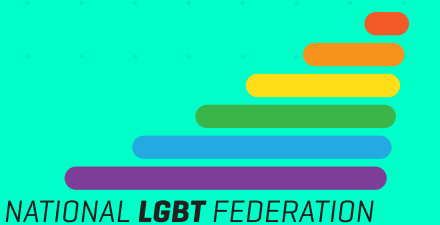
Life in Lockdown

Snapshot Survey Findings



LGBT
IRELAND

For Inclusion
For Equality
For Everyone



Foreword

The Covid-19 Pandemic has caused incredible hurt, damage and loss across all aspects of society around the world. There isn't a single person or community untouched by this dreadful disease. While everyone has felt the impact, we know that some communities are hit worse than others, whether by the virus itself or by its knock on effects.

The LGBTI+ Community already endures the injustice of discrimination and inequality, and we can see from this snapshot survey that the pandemic and lockdown has hit our community much harder. Isolation, loneliness, and loss are words we hear from callers to our LGBT Helpline all the time, even before the pandemic hit, and now we see these words repeated in this survey at an even greater level.

When we look at the voices represented here of LGBTI+ people who are additionally marginalised including LGBTI+ migrants, Traveller and Roma, refugees, older, living with a long-term disability, or other intersectional identities, we see that they have been the most impacted amongst us.

As LGBTI+ people we rely on our community spaces, our connections to each other, and our ability to take pride in our identities together. We have suffered so many different forms of loss throughout this pandemic, and for many it is difficult to see the end in sight.

But we need everyone to know that their community is still here. We see new ways of connecting virtually, members coming up with clever ways to stay connected, and a pride of spirit that will guide us through this. And no matter what position you find yourself in, your LGBTI+ Support Services are here, just pick up the phone, start a chat, reach out.

Paula Fagan
CEO of LGBT Ireland



A message from **NXF**

The outbreak of COVID-19 has had a rapid and profound impact on the way we perceive the world and our everyday lives. The impact of the disease, and of the measures taken to contain it across all sections of society, are as yet unclear. The National LGBT Federation is proud to have been involved in this early engagement with our LGBT+ community to hear the voices of people from across the community and country.

Caroline Keane,
Chairperson, NXF.

We are grateful to the people who shared their perspectives on how this global health crisis has affected their physical and mental health, how the sudden social isolation has impacted their lives and relationships and how the situation has further exacerbated existing inequalities. The insights from this research will help to design the support and educational services provided by the vital LGBT+ groups helping our communities. Thank you to LGBT Ireland for directing this research and to everyone who coordinated and took part.

Introduction to **The Survey**

The Life in Lockdown Snapshot Survey was conducted between the 2nd and the 18th of September 2020.

There was significant effort made to ensure that the survey was promoted widely. We aimed to recruit a sample that was as representative of our community as possible in terms of age, identity, geographic location, minority and socio-economic status. We believe the survey is representative of the diverse background of our community. We are pleased that it includes the perspectives and voices of the broad range of LGBTI+ people in Ireland.

The survey investigated a range of impacts of the first COVID-19 lockdown including **mental health, physical health, home life, work, and community**, as well as looking at awareness of LGBTI+ Services, particularly those offered by LGBT Ireland.

In total, **there were 1855 responses to the survey.**

TOTAL RESPONSES

1855



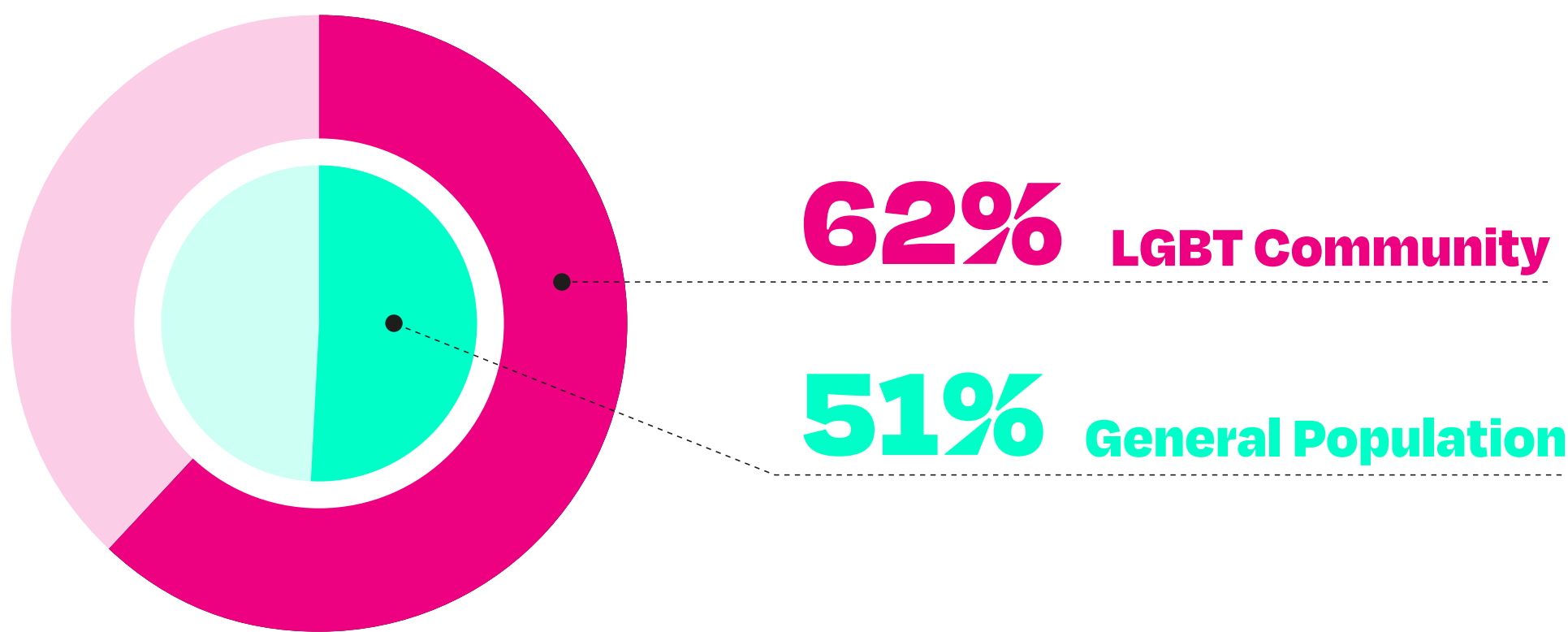
What we learned

01. Impacts on Mental Health

We asked participants whether they felt their mental health had improved, declined or stayed the same during lockdown. One of the most striking observations from the Survey showed that **62% of people reported a decline in their mental health**, substantially higher than the 51% impact in the general population

Footnote: Mental Health Reforms Responding to the Mental Health Impact of Covid-19 Survey.

This impact was significantly higher for members of our community who also have a long-term illness or disability, with 80% suffering a decline in their mental health. Other marginalised members of our community, including **Older People (64% reported a decline)**, **Travellers (85% reported a decline)** and **Asylum Seekers and Refugees (90% reported a decline)** faced additional mental health challenges.



In analysing the commentary made on the experience of the height of lockdown, the most common themes were

Loneliness
Isolation
Sadness
Anxiety
& in a number of cases
Anger.

“

Very difficult when the world suddenly shrunk to a size where feelings of isolation and loneliness were amplified greatly. Face-to-face interactions were withdrawn along with the ability to hug and be in physical contact with others. That was extremely difficult.

“

**I felt lonely, isolated,
and with the cancelling
of events such as Pride
very cut off from my
community.**

“

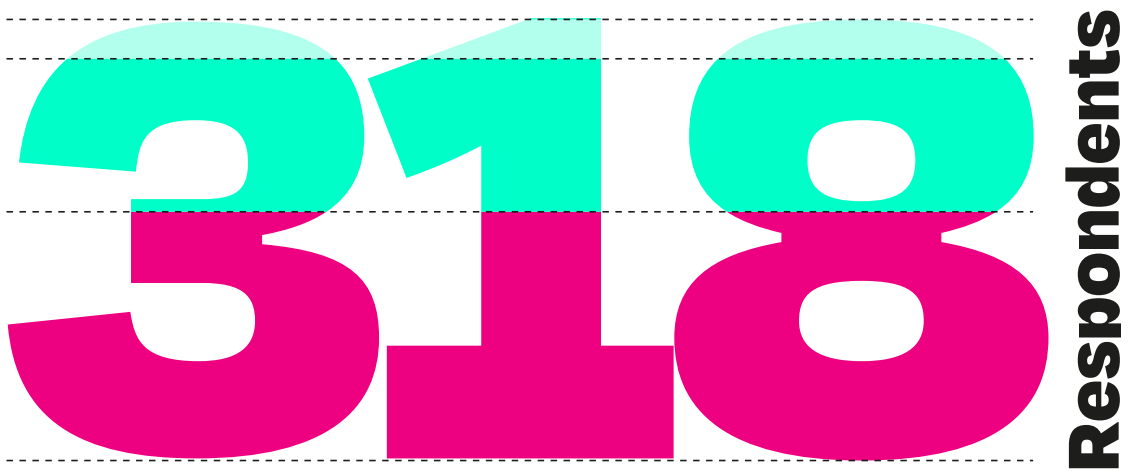
**I felt lonely.
Suddenly everything
was closed, people didn't
really communicate and
there was no one to hug me.**

02. Impacts on Physical Health, Wellbeing and Home Life

We asked participants whether they felt their physical health had improved, declined or stayed the same during lockdown. **41.1% of respondents noted a decline in their physical health** during the period of lockdown.

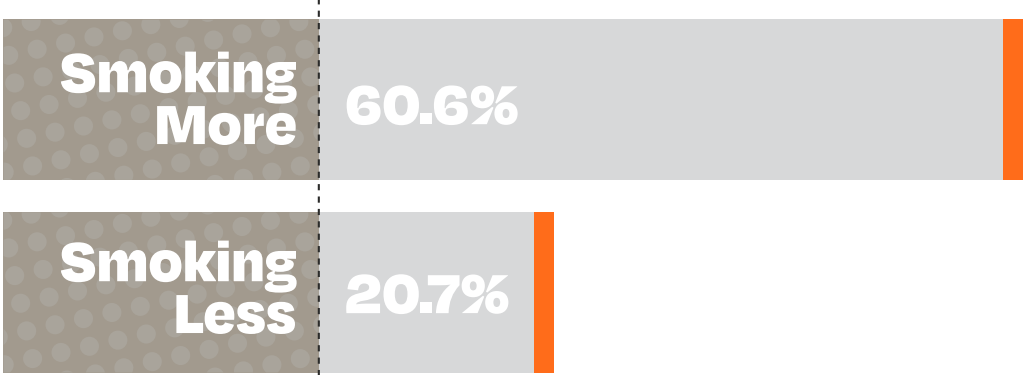
For those who were previously involved in LGBTI+ Sporting, Recreational or Wellbeing Groups (318 respondents), **56.9% weren't able to engage with these groups at all during Lockdown**, while 34.6% were able to engage virtually and 8.5% were still able to engage directly.

Online only
Engagement
No Engagement

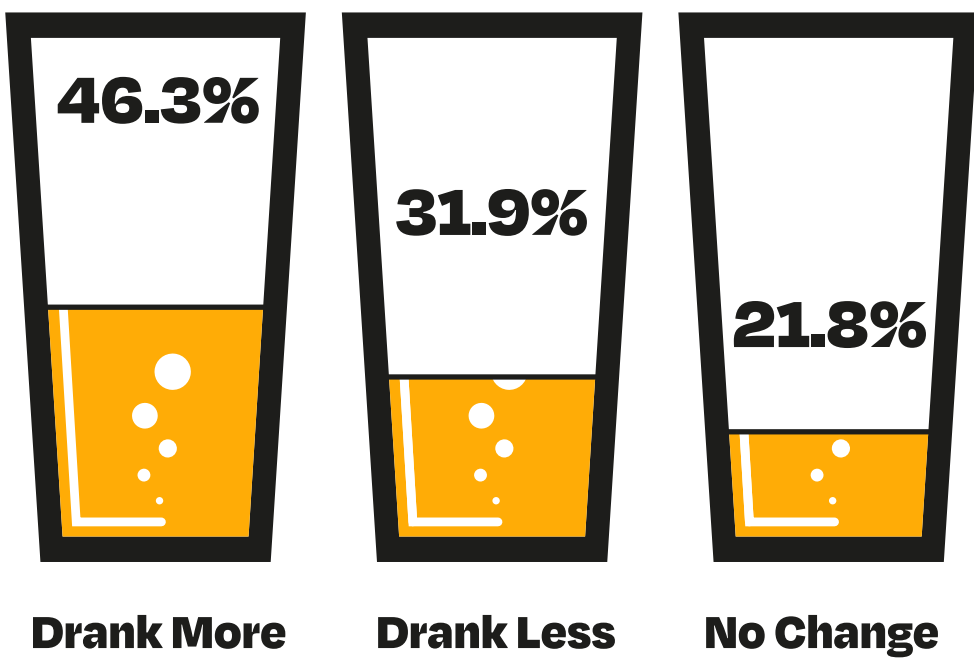


“
I’m single, live alone, I had Covid 19, was quite ill. It was frightening and lonely.

Of the 482 respondents who were smokers, **60.6% smoked more often**, 20.7% smoked less often, and the others remained the same.



Of the 1453 respondents who drank alcohol, **46.3% stated they drank more or more often**, 31.9% less or less often, and 21.8% did not change their drinking behaviours.



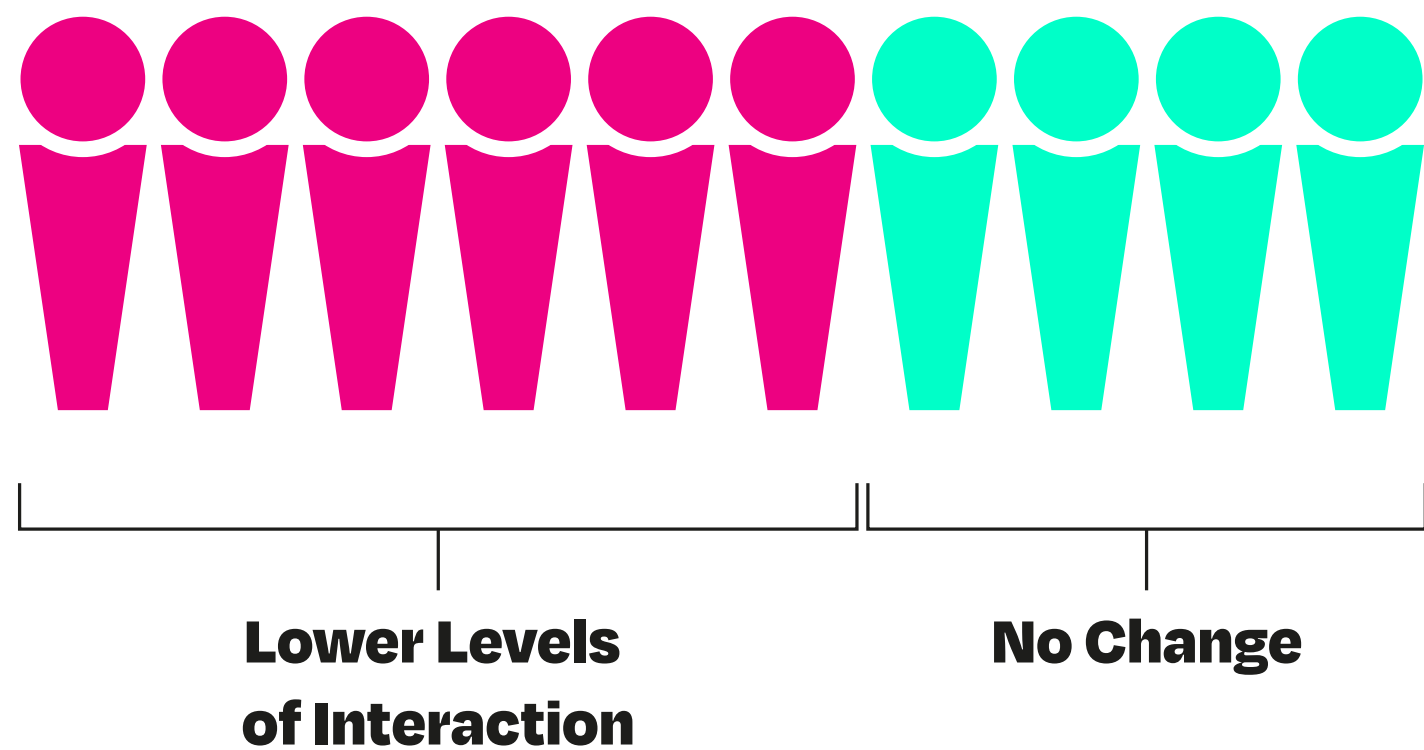
28.3% of respondents expressed that they were either **Uncomfortable or Very Uncomfortable** expressing their LGBTI+ Identity in their home environment.

“

I and other LGBTQ+ people often do not receive support from our families of origin and due to covid my friends were not able to travel to see me for months. I felt extremely isolated and alone.

03. LGBTI+ Community and Support Services

There was a significant impact on the ability of LGBTI+ People to interact with their community, **with 60.2% reporting lower levels of interaction.** This was echoed in the sentiments expressed in the commentary, with many noting the particular difficulty of not being able to engage with Pride celebrations this year.



*Given that the survey was disseminated through social media channels related to LGBTI+ organisations, the profile of respondents are more likely to include those who were already aware of LGBT Ireland and other support services. Therefore, the level of awareness of LGBTI+ Support Services is likely to be much lower.

When questioned on their awareness of LGBTI+ Support Services, **62.1% noted that they were aware of LGBT Ireland with 31.2% aware of local LGBTI+ Resources***, however only 9.3% of respondents said they reached out to LGBTI+ Support Services during this time.

“
Our queer spaces aren’t open so it is difficult to feel like we belong especially in rural areas”

“

Lockdown made me feel lonely and a little bit more stressed due to not being able to be me as I am not out yet to family, whereas with friends I can be me.

04. New Ways of Connecting

Despite the difficult realities, respondents gave messages of hope and new ideas on how individuals and LGBTI+ Support services can make the impact of the pandemic easier.

The value of online spaces was remarked on heavily, with many noting that while they didn't expect to enjoy online interaction they found it to be an incredibly valuable and worthwhile way of keeping in contact with their community, and even finding new friends in new places.

A strong recommendation from many people was to find out what LGBTI+ services are available and what online groups and events they may have happening. Many had presumed that services had stopped, but when they looked into it they discovered that most had made a transition online. Once they engaged with these groups, events and opportunities, they had a positive impact on their wellbeing.

05. Recommendations

It is critical that we take the learning from this survey in order to improve approaches to the health and wellbeing of LGBTI+ People across Ireland, particularly in light of new restrictions and other periods of tightened

restrictions that may come in future. Now, more than ever strategic investment in the right services is critical, and we are calling on decision makers to implement these recommendations.

Recommendations

01

Recognise the additional challenges faced by members of the LGBTI+ community during this unprecedented crisis.

02

LGBTI+ services need to be properly resourced and promoted, so that those who need them can be informed and have access. Funding models must be reassessed and restructured to help services deal with this crisis and the mental health issues that will arise as a result.

03

Ringfenced funding must be allocated for members of the LGBTI+ community who suffer intersectional discrimination. Particularly in the health services sector.

06. Find Support Near You

LGBT Ireland

National LGBT Helpline:
1890 929 539
www.LGBT.ie

NATIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES

BeLonG To

www.belongto.org

Bi+ Ireland

www.biireland.com

HIV Ireland

www.hivireland.ie

TENI

Transgender Equality Network Ireland
www.teni.ie

NORTHEAST SUPPORT SERVICES

Outcomers (Dundalk)
www.outcomers.org

Outhouse (Dublin)
www.outhouse.ie

SOUTH SUPPORT SERVICES

The Gay Project (Cork)
www.gayproject.ie

LINC (Cork)
www.linc.ie

WEST SUPPORT SERVICES

AMACH! LGBT+ / Teach Solais
amachlgbt.com (Galway)

OutWest (West of Ireland)
www.outwest.ie

SOCIAL AND SPORT

ScEEN in Kerry
www.sceeninkerry.com

Sporting Pride
www.sportingpride.ie

**Gender Orientation
Sexual Health HIV** (Limerick)
www.goshh.ie

TEACHERS SUPPORTS

INTO LGBT+ Group
www.into.ie

ShoutOut
www.shoutout.ie

This is not an exhaustive list of services.

Thank You.

