

“*the*  
**A-Z**  
*of*  
**LGBT+**”

**A YOUTH LED BOOKLET EXPLAINING LGBT  
LANGUAGE, ISSUES AND TOPICS**

supported by



*The LGBT+ Ally Group in Carrickmacross was set up in March 2017, and early on we agreed that most of the problems we faced as queer young people were the result of a lack of understanding and miseducation from our teachers, parents, guardians and peers.*

We wanted to change this, so we began to think of ways we could educate people and help them understand the difficulties we face.

Only after a few months of getting to know each other, talking, drinking tea, watching Drag Race, and complaining, we knew what we wanted to do.

*“The A-Z of LGBT+” was born. We would create a booklet, and for every letter of the alphabet we would pick a word (or two) relating to the LGBT+ community and define it, so our families, teachers and peers could become more informed about LGBT+ language, issues, and topics which would help them accept us and become better allies to the LGBT+ community.*

We wanted to add photos to represent each word too, just to make it that bit more colourful.

And so, after 7 months of hard work (and more cups of tea), here we are. Along with our definitions and photos, we've included some quotes from young people to give you a better idea of the experiences we face.

While this won't answer every question that you may have about the LGBT+ community, (we can't speak for everyone, there's only ten of us!) we hope this booklet will help people become more understanding of us and our issues, and that you enjoy reading it as much as we enjoyed creating it.

We would like to offer a sincere thank you to Monaghan County Council, Health Ireland and all partner organisations for their support and funding for this booklet and project, and to Youth Work Ireland Cavan Monaghan who run and support the group on an ongoing basis.

**Finn O'Farrell** *Young Queer Person*

*"People constantly tell me that I haven't met the right person, or that I'll change my mind when I want children."*

*"Word of advice for when you meet asexual people: The plant jokes aren't funny."*

*Somebody who is asexual is not sexually attracted to anyone. Asexuality is a spectrum, some people might not be sexually attracted to anyone but still enjoy sex, while others might be completely sex repulsed, and some people might be demisexual; don't feel sexual attraction until they have a strong emotional bond with someone. Some people are also aromantic, which means they don't feel romantic attraction, or are demiromantic; don't feel romantic attraction until they have a strong emotional bond with someone.*

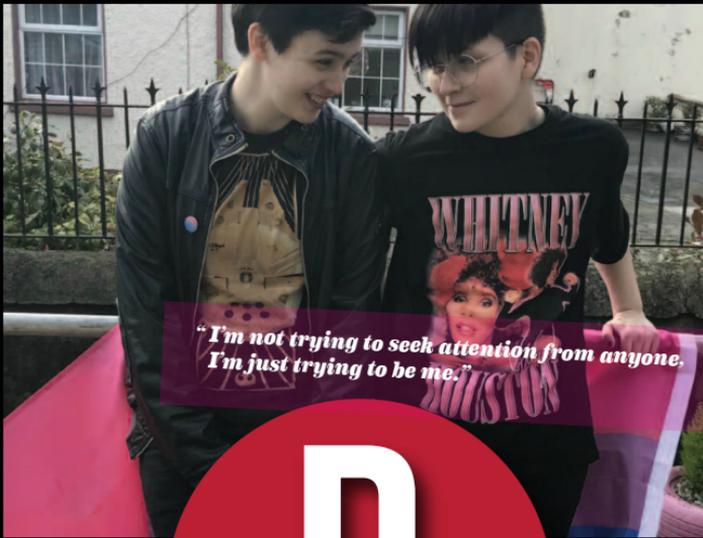
## **"ASEXUAL/AROMANTIC"**

**A**

## **"ALLY"**

*Someone who actively supports the LGBTQIA+ Community even though they may not be LGBTQIA+ themselves.*





*"I'm not trying to seek attention from anyone. I'm just trying to be me."*

**B**

## **"BISEXUAL / BIROMANTIC"**

*The sexual and/or romantic attraction to multiple genders.*



*"It's really annoying to hear people tell me I'm greedy or ask if I'm into threesomes."*



*“I wasn’t in the closet for long, but when I was outed I was terrified. I thought I would be looked at with uncertainty and that people would treat me differently.”*



## **“CLOSET”**

*Before somebody “comes out” as their sexuality or gender identity, they are referred to as being “in the closet”. Someone might not want to come out because they are scared of people’s reactions, or they’re still unsure about themselves.*

*“It feels like I have to hide everything and can’t be myself.”*



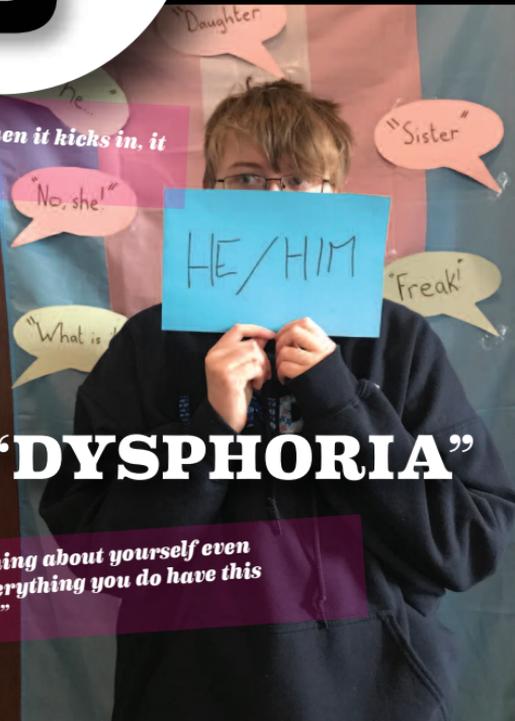
*Being treated differently in a negative way because you're in a minority group. Discrimination can be obvious, such as being attacked, or indirect, such as not being allowed to use the bathrooms that match your identity.*

## “DISCRIMINATION”



*“Dysphoria is not always present, but when it kicks in, it just makes the days kinda unbearable.”*

*The extreme discomfort with either assigned sexes and your physical body, or how people see and interact with you.*



## “DYSPHORIA”

*“It just makes you hate everything about yourself even more, and it makes you do everything you do have this weird mind damaging doubt.”*



*How you present yourself and how you want people to see you, regardless of gender or sexuality.  
Gender expression = Gender*

**“EXPRESSION”**



*We feel that a lot of the discrimination and judgement young LGBTQIA+ people face is because of a lack of education, and that's why this book is to inform people about the realities of being LGBTQIA+, and to debunk myths and common misconceptions.*

**“EDUCATION”**

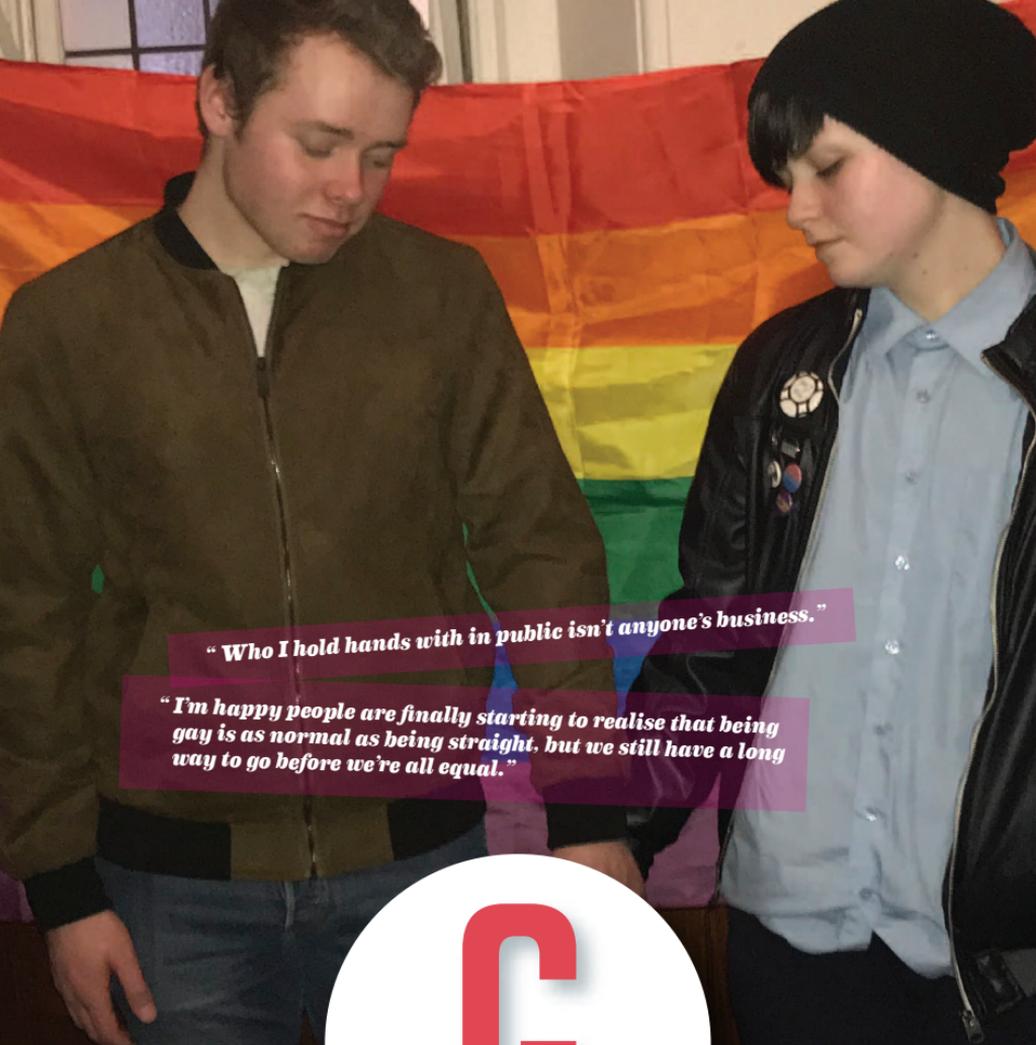




**F**

## **“FLUID”**

*Both sexuality and gender identity, which are two separate things, can be considered fluid, as identities may change over time and not everyone's identity is fixed.*



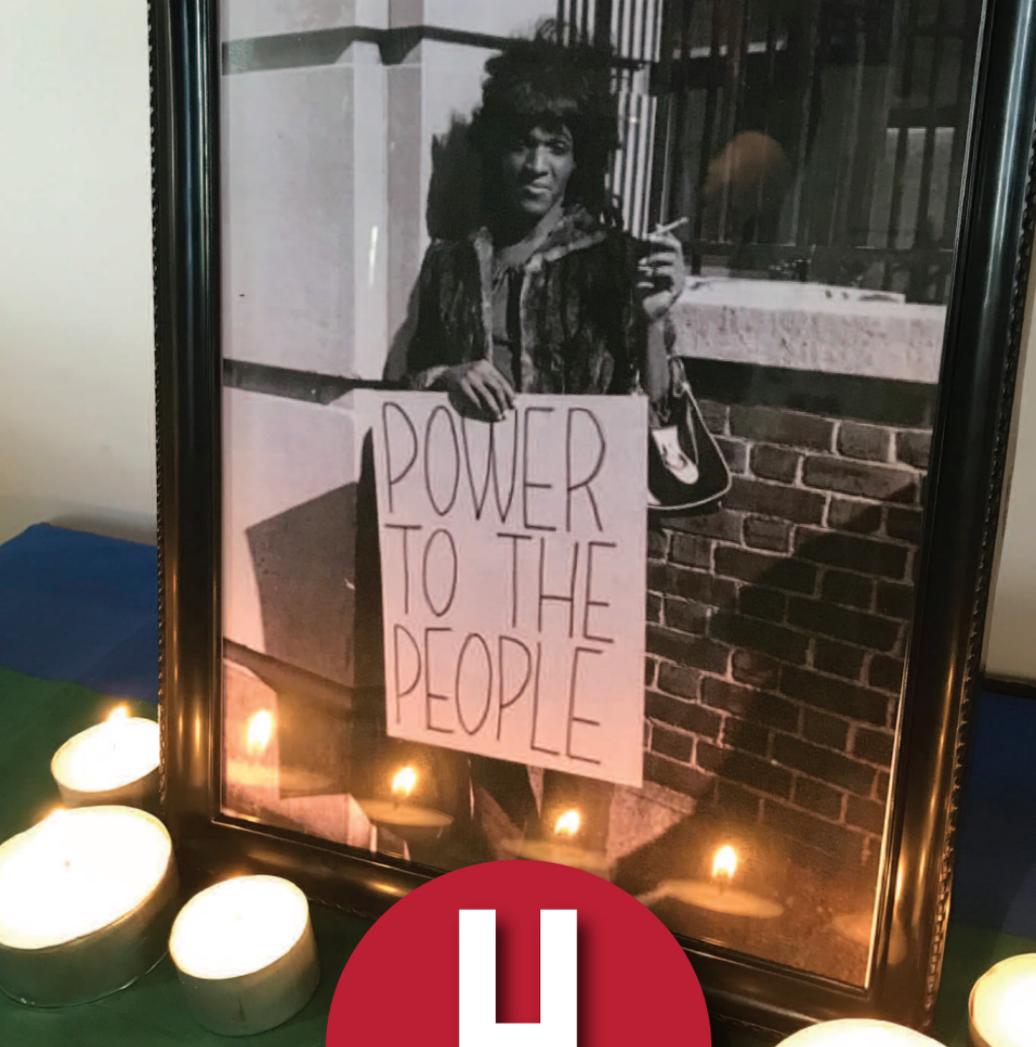
*“Who I hold hands with in public isn't anyone's business.”*

*“I'm happy people are finally starting to realise that being gay is as normal as being straight, but we still have a long way to go before we're all equal.”*

**G**

**‘GAY’**

*The sexual and/or romantic attraction to people of the same gender. It is usually used to refer to gay men, or people who are non-binary and masculine presenting who feel comfortable with the label, but it is also an umbrella term for other identities.*



# H

## ‘HISTORY’

*People often think that being “gay” or “transgender” is a new trend but people have always identified on the LGBTQIA+ spectrum. There have been many LGBTQIA+ people throughout history, including Oscar Wilde (B) (Poet & playwright), Alan Turing (G) (Computer scientist), Marsha P. Johnson (T) (Gay liberation & AIDS activist), Anne Frank (B/Q) (Diarist), Kathleen Lynn (L) (Doctor & Chief Medical Officer of the Irish Citizen Army), and James Barry (T) (Military surgeon)*



## **‘INTERSEX’**

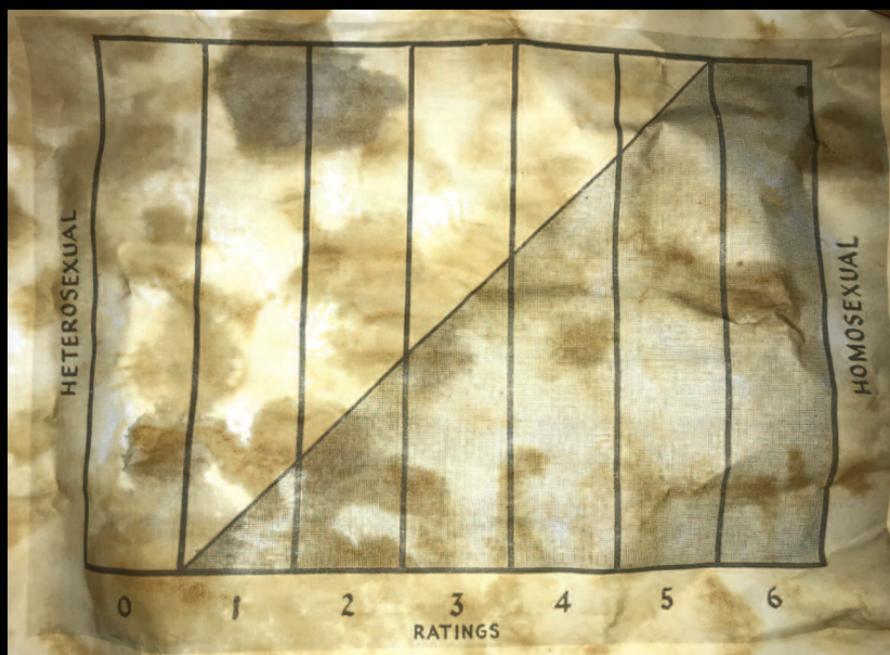
*Is a general term used for a variety of conditions in which a person is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn't fit the typical definitions of male and female.*



J

## **‘JUDGEMENT’**

*Making an assumption of someone based on limited knowledge of them.  
LGBTQIA+ people face judgement from people who don't understand and  
aren't educated on what it means to be LGBTQIA+.*



**K**

## **‘KINSEY SCALE’**

*An old scale to describe sexuality that is out of date because it doesn't include asexuality and doesn't take gender fluidity into account.*



*“I still occasionally get weird looks from strangers when I’m with my girlfriend.”*

*A kid screamed “Are you lesbians?” at me and my girlfriend once. If you’re gonna try to use it as a derogatory term, at least pronounce it right.”*



## **‘LESBIAN’**

*A woman, or somebody who is non-binary and feminine presenting who feels comfortable with the label, who is sexually and/or romantically attracted to other women.*



## **“LOVE”**

*Love is the same for LGBTQIA+ people as it is for straight and cisgender\* people. It just so happens that some of us are romantically attracted to different people.*

*A misconception that people have is that being gay is all about sex.*

*"Internalised homophobia was a big problem for me."*

*"Being gay had a major impact on my mental health which resulted in depression, social anxiety and self-harm, although since then things have improved quite a bit for me mental health wise."*

*"I think how scared I was of how people would treat me if I came out affected my mental health and caused me to suffer from anxiety."*

*"It made me feel so terrible to not fit to what people wanted/expected and going against all those years of cis-het brainwashing was real tough."*

- 56% of LGBTQIA+ teens have self harmed
- 70% of LGBTQIA+ teens have considered suicide

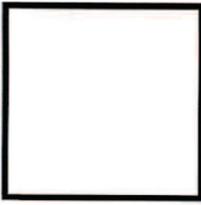
**M**

*"Being told you're not valid is really damaging for your mental health."*

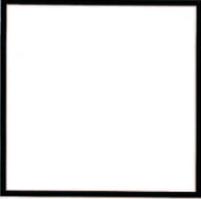
## **'MENTAL HEALTH'**

Young LGBT+ people in Ireland are a lot more likely to struggle with mental health issues than the wider teenage population. LGBT+ teens were two times more likely to have self-harmed, three times more likely to have attempted suicide and four times more likely to have experienced anxiety or depression according to a study from 2016. 56% of LGBT teens aged 14-18 in the study said they had self-harmed while 70% considered suicide.

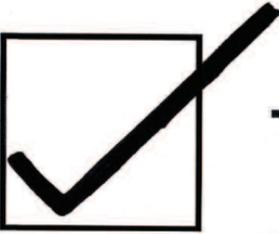
*"I've been treated pretty terribly by cis-het people, as well as other LGBT+ people, who question and nit-pick my identity as if it isn't to their standards, which has left me hyper-aware and very socially anxious."*



**Male**



**Female**



ㄟ(ツ)ㄟ

**N**

*“Me being non-binary doesn't hurt anyone, but how people treat me for being non-binary hurts me, so how am I the one ruining society?”*

## **‘NON BINARY’**

*Someone who is non-binary identifies as neither male nor female. Non-binary can be an umbrella term for labels like agender, genderfluid, genderqueer, bigender and demigender, etc.*

*“Gender isn't a box for everyone to sort each other into. We can identify the way we feel comfortable.”*



## ‘OBJECTIFICATION’

*LGBTQIA+ people, particularly transgender women and women who are attracted to women, are often sexualised and are objectified. There have been too many occasions of homophobic straight men who think “being gay is a sin” but “lesbians are hot”, and straight men asking bi/pan women for threesomes, or if they’ve ever cheated on someone. Trans women can be seen as a sexualised fetish and means to serve cis men’s sexual desires*



*In June 1969, police raided a gay bar, the Stonewall Inn\*, in New York, which sparked off a riot, and now cities all over the world hold Pride Parades and other events to celebrate LGBT+ identities, usually in June to commemorate the Stonewall Riots. Pride is still considered a protest as well as a celebration.*

*\*Marsha P. Johnson, mentioned in History, was one of the prominent members of the community involved in the protests and riots.*

## ‘PRIDE’

P

*“People need to understand that pansexuality isn't the same as bisexuality.”*

## ‘PANSEXUAL / PANROMANTIC’

*The sexual and/or romantic attraction to somebody regardless of gender identity.*

*“I'm not confused or attention-seeking for using a label I'm comfortable with just because it isn't as common as other labels.”*



*Queer is an umbrella term for people who identify as LGBT+. It was previously considered a slur but has been reclaimed by many people in the community who chose to identify as queer, although some people still consider it an insult and you shouldn't call someone queer unless they specifically say you can.*

## 'QUEER'



## 'QUESTIONING'

*Questioning is a term used to describe people who don't think they are straight and/or cisgender, but are unsure of how they feel comfortable describing themselves.*





R

## **'ROLES'**

*People are expected to conform to specific roles because of their sex and/or gender, e.g. men are expected to act masculine and go to work, while women are expected to act feminine, cook and clean.*



## **‘SCHOOL AND SEX EDUCATION’**

*In many schools in Ireland, LGBTQIA+ issues aren't talked about enough.*

*It may depend on how accepting and inclusive school staff are, but most people don't learn about what LGBTQIA+ means in school, many teenagers are bullied if they are perceived to be "gay", it is particularly difficult for trans students in same-sex schools to feel comfortable and safe. Teachers are often free to say exactly what they think about LGBTQIA+ people regardless of whether it's good or bad, and they aren't taught enough information about the LGBTQIA+ community to pass along to students. Sex Education in schools is not inclusive to LGBTQIA+ people at all, and it is very difficult for people to find accurate information about safe sex from people they trust.*

***“The amount of homophobia and transphobia in a single sex school is too much, especially with unsupportive teachers (teachers are the worst: they refuse to acknowledge anyone that isn’t cis-het)”***

***“ It’s not inclusive at all for LGBT+ people.”***

***“Schools should definitely have more facilities available to LGBT+ students such as; inclusive Sex Education, Non-Binary Bathrooms and things like a GSA.”***

***“ We don’t learn enough about contraception. People need to know that female condoms and dental dams exist too.”***

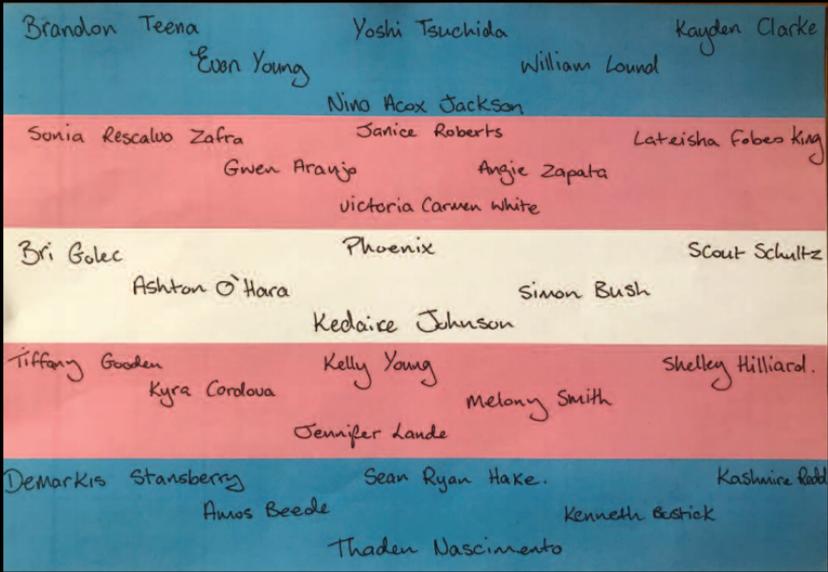
***“I fear bathrooms a lot, but teachers refuse to let me go when no other students are there which puts me at serious risk of assault should they question my gender.”***

***“ Sex Ed for the LGBT+ community is pretty much limited to what they find online and on social media. A more inclusive, sex positive and trans positive is desperately needed in schools.”***

***“Anything LGBT related tends to be swept under the rug.”***

***“In fourth year we were briefly told that “some people are gay or lesbian and that’s okay.” But there’s no mention of bisexuality, pansexuality, asexuality, the difference between romantic and sexual attraction, protection against STIs, or that sex isn’t just for reproduction.”***

***“I came out to my year head as trans and I was told I was too young to know.”***



*"I was often silenced whenever equality was mentioned because people would say "the gays have 'marriage equality' what more needs to be done for them", when the bare minimum has been done for trans people."*

# **'TRANSGENDER'**

*Someone who is transgender identifies as a different gender to the one they were assigned at birth. This can include binary trans people, who are male or female, or non-binary trans people, who feel more comfortable with a different label. Some trans people decide to go on hormone replacement therapy or get surgery to feel more comfortable with their identity, but this isn't necessary, and someone who does not medically transition is still the gender they identify as regardless.*

*\*Trans people are more likely to experience harassment and assault compared to others in the community, (especially trans women of colour), and at least one transgender person is murdered every three days. The names on the flag represent transgender people who were murdered.*



## **‘UNISEX’**

*Unisex refers to things that aren't specific to any gender. Many transgender and non-binary people want public unisex bathrooms to become more common, so they can use bathrooms comfortably, without having to conform to a label and without fear of harassment.*



## **‘VARIED’**

*Within the LGBTQIA+ community there are many varied identities on both the sexuality spectrum and gender identity spectrum. No two people in the LGBTQIA+ community are the same.*



## **‘WORRY’**

*LGBTQIA+ people tend to worry a lot because of their sexuality and/or gender identity. They're usually worried about how their friends and families will react or treat them if they come out, or how strangers in the street will see them, or how it will affect their education/job opportunities.*



## **‘X RATED’**

*LGBTQIA+ people are often seen as an “X-rated” topic. People often say that children are “too young” to be told about or understand what “gay” means, or that they shouldn’t see it on TV. A misconception that people have is that being gay is all about sex, and this is enforced by the popularity of gay/lesbian/trans porn among straight people. Being LGBTQIA+ is normal and is related to romantic/sexual preferences and gender identity, not sex itself.*



Y

## **‘YESEQUALITY’**

*YESEquality was the campaign for the Yes vote in the same-sex marriage referendum in Ireland in 2015. The campaign won, and same-sex marriage was legalised, but while this was a huge step for the LGBTQIA+ community, we still aren't done fighting for equality. Same-sex marriage didn't end homophobia or transphobia, it didn't end discrimination, and it doesn't help people who are bullied in places of education or work.*



## **‘ZIGGY STARDUST’**

*Look, there aren't that many words that begin with Z, (and we're pretty sure that most of them are fake words that were invented to get Scrabble points.) So, to finish off our book, we've decided to dedicate this page to David Bowie, who was openly bisexual, never conformed to gender roles, and is considered an inspiration to a lot of queer kids both within our group and all over.*

# DEFINITIONS

## **ACE**

A shortened version of the word asexual

## **ARO**

A shortened version of the word aromantic

## **BI**

A shortened version of the word(s) bisexual/biromantic

## **BINARY**

Gender is a spectrum of binary and non-binary identities. People who identify as either male or female, (regardless of whether they are cisgender or transgender), identify as a binary gender

## **CISGENDER**

Someone who identifies as the gender they were assigned with at birth

## **CIS-HET**

A term to describe someone who is both cisgender and heterosexual

## **ENBY**

A shortened version of the word non-binary.

## **HETEROSEXUAL/HETEROROMANTIC**

The sexual and/or romantic attraction to the opposite gender

## **PAN**

A shortened version of the word(s) pansexual/panromantic

## **POLYSEXUAL/POLYROMANTIC**

The sexual and/or romantic attraction to more than one gender

## **STRAIGHT**

See heterosexual

## **TERF**

### **(Trans Exclusionary Radical Feminist)**

This is used to refer to people, usually women who are “feminist activists”, who are extremely transphobic and will often attack trans women on social media saying they are not real women and are not welcome in women’s spaces and sometimes use violent language towards them

## **TRANS**

A shortened version of the word transgender

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This booklet explains LGBT+ language, issues and topics from A to Z, so that families, teachers, and peers can become more informed about the lives of LGBT+ people.



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