

Rainbow News

A Portrayal of the Experiences of LGBTQIA+ Professionals in Irish Media

By

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I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of the MA of Arts in Journalism & Media Communications, is all only my own; based on my personal study and/or research, and that I have acknowledged all material and sources used in its preparation. I also certify that I have not used any form of 'artificial intelligence' or related software, nor copied in part or whole or otherwise plagiarised the work of anyone else, including other students.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation accompanies a practical project in the form of a short documentary film based on in-depth interviews with five professionals from the LGBTQIA+ community working across various sectors of the Irish media landscape (radio, television, print, digital journalism, and public relations). The primary objective of this research and its resulting product is to explore the personal and professional experiences of these individuals over the past three decades, offering a reflective insight into LGBTQIA+ representation and inclusivity within media in the Republic of Ireland.

What emerges from these conversations is a largely encouraging picture. The interviews reveal a generally positive and progressive professional environment for LGBTQIA+ media workers in Ireland. All participants highlighted inclusive workplace cultures, supportive colleagues and employers, and a lack of significant barriers related to sexual orientation or gender identity. Coming out, they shared, was not something they were ever pressured to do. It happened naturally, and was generally met with acceptance and encouragement rather than resistance.

That said, subtle challenges were not absent. While the overall narrative is optimistic, the findings also acknowledge the nuanced realities of navigating professional life as a queer person. Some participants recalled isolated incidents, such as being subtly advised to self-monitor behaviour or tone, people wondering about their sexualities, and encountering occasional differences in treatment. These small, yet still culturally rooted challenges, reflect the ongoing complexities of full inclusion. However, such experiences were limited in scope and do not indicate systemic discrimination, in the cases shown in the film.

Overall, both the written and practical elements of this project aim to document and reflect on the evolving role and visibility of LGBTQIA+ individuals in Irish media over the past three decades. It is a portrayal of how far things have come for members of the LGBTQIA+ community in the industry, and where there is still room for growth. Through storytelling and reflection, it offers a hopeful yet grounded perspective on identity, representation, and belonging in professional life. While the experiences highlighted here are largely positive, they also serve as quiet reminders that visibility and inclusion are ongoing, not completed, journeys.

KEYWORDS

LGBTQIA+, diversity, queer, gender, transgender, sexual orientation, identity, inclusion, media, journalism, workplace, Ireland

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This film is dedicated to every soul within the LGBTQIA+ community, a family I am very proud to belong to and will always stand beside. To all who have faced the pain of prejudice or the ravages of discrimination along the way, may your resilience endure and your authenticity continue to inspire. Together, may we rise above obstacles, hold each other with kindness, and embrace the freedom to be and love exactly as we are.

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1. INTRODUCTION

“Hope will never be silent.” –

(Milk, H. n.d.)

For a long time, LGBTQIA+ individuals have struggled to see themselves included and reflected in the media. Historically, mainstream media has often ignored or misrepresented queer lives, contributing to their marginalization in society at large. In recent decades, Ireland has witnessed meaningful progress in LGBTQIA+ rights, visibility, and social acceptance. Laws have changed, public discourse has become more inclusive, and queer voices are more present in civic life than ever before. But how have these societal shifts translated into professional environments, particularly in the media, where narratives are shaped, and voices are amplified? This introduction begins with a famous statement by Harvey Milk, openly gay American politician and activist, that still resonates and guides the LGBTQIA+ community in its journey toward inclusion worldwide. Milk dedicated his life to breaking down barriers and fighting for equality, always driven by hope.

Journalists and other media professionals who identify as part of the LGBTQIA+ community have, in recent years, been able to live and work openly, expressing their sexualities and identities more fearlessly both in their personal lives and in the workplace. This also includes those who are public figures and communicate with large audiences. Such progress has allowed for greater inclusion in the industry, which is reflected in a richer and more diverse representation of LGBTQIA+ people in the media, providing a broader spectrum of perspectives and stories. It has also influenced the way media outlets address social issues, including the LGBTQIA+ agenda, with a greater emphasis on inclusion and a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of marginalized groups. “Authentic LGBTQ+ storytelling is crucial for representation and visibility. It allows queer lives to be seen in all their complexity, not as tropes, stereotypes, or cautionary tales, but as rich, multifaceted human experiences.” (Norwich Film Festival, 2025)

While significant strides have been made toward visibility and acceptance, this journey is not yet complete, if it ever will be, and there are still challenges to overcome and room for progress. Overall, the film's interviewees described the Irish media landscape as largely inclusive and supportive of LGBTQIA+ professionals. They said they felt comfortable being out and experienced genuine acceptance from colleagues, leadership, and organizations. Some subtle challenges and occasional moments of discomfort were highlighted, such as self-checking regarding how visible their identities would be, unspoken or implicit guidance from management about behaviour, feelings of unequal treatment on certain occasions, etc. They also shed light on the persistent lack of inclusion of the transgender and non-binary communities in the media, which most cited as the industry's main bottleneck.

Rainbow News – A Portrayal of the Experiences of LGBTQIA+ Professionals in Irish Media, paired with this written report, explores the lived experiences of LGBTQIA+ individuals working in the Irish media industry over the past thirty years and captures a valuable portrait of it. This dissertation by practice aims to bring these realities to light through in-depth interviews, a format intentionally chosen for its directness and emotional, yet informative resonance.

It centres on five LGBTQIA+ professionals from a variety of media sectors (TV, radio, print, digital journalism, and public relations) and across generations, aged between 27 and 63. They are as follows: Alan Hughes, TV presenter for Virgin Media Television; Dr Walt Kilroy, former RTÉ journalist (Raidió Teilifís Éireann) and academic; Alice Linehan, editor of GCN (Gay Community News); Max Kane, presenter of radio stations FM 104 and Q 102; and Darragh McGirr, public relations for the national LGBTQIA+ organization Belong To.

The documentary listens closely to the characters' stories of career building, how they navigated their identities and dealt with progress and setbacks, and how they witnessed decades of continuous change in the industry. The practical format of a short documentary film was uniquely picked to allow these voices to be heard in their own words and on their own terms. Through the lens of a camera, the audio-visual recording richly and faithfully captures the testimonies of those who agreed to be part of this project.

The primary audience for this work includes current and future media professionals, students, and scholars in media and cultural studies, as well as anyone interested in LGBTQIA+ equality in Ireland. By centering queer voices, not just about them, this project seeks to contribute to the continuing dialogue about representation and inclusion within Irish media. It also hopes to highlight not only the progress achieved, but the ongoing work required, particularly in regard to the visibility of transgender and non-binary people, who remain deeply underrepresented in the field and were regrettably not available to take part in this project despite efforts to include them.

What follows in this report is a structured exploration of the methodology behind the documentary, key themes that emerged from the interviews, a discussion of the production process, and an analysis of the broader implications of the findings. Through a combination of documentary storytelling and critical analysis, this work is both a record of where we stand and a call to consider the next steps toward a truly inclusive media landscape, one where all members of the LGBTQIA+ community have a seat at the table and a voice in the national narrative. Ultimately, this dissertation seeks not only to document lived realities but to ask: what can Irish media still do to fully reflect the richly diverse society it serves?

2. EVIDENCE OF RESEARCH

2.1. The media landscape in Ireland

To fully appreciate the dynamics of media representation and inclusion in Ireland, it is essential first to consider the country's core media outlets and the structure of its media landscape. By examining the principal television, radio, digital, and print providers, we gain a foundational understanding of how information flows, whose voices are elevated, and which interests shape public discourse. This context is crucial for situating any analysis of diversity, access, and the ongoing challenges and opportunities within Irish media.

The Irish Entertainment & Media (E&M) sector is poised for steady growth over the next few years, with PwC forecasting an annual increase of about 2.9% in revenue up to 2028 (PwC Ireland, 2024). This means the industry's value is expected to rise from €6.6 billion in 2023 to approximately €7.6 billion by 2028. Market expansion is being driven largely by increased mobile internet usage, ongoing growth in internet advertising, and the rising popularity of video on demand (VOD) services. These trends reflect how technological advancements and changing consumer behaviours are shaping the future of Ireland's media landscape, blending traditional and digital platforms in new and dynamic ways.

People today are consuming information more than ever, but their media habits have become much more fragmented thanks to the explosion of new devices. Watching TV is not just about tuning into a set anymore, as you can watch live broadcasts, record shows to watch later, stream on-demand content through various apps, or catch your favourite programmes on your phone while out and about.

TV shows are no longer confined to television sets, as people now watch them on laptops, tablets, and smartphones, whether lounging at home or on the move. Similarly, you do not need a traditional radio set to listen to music or talk shows, there is endless access to music and podcasts covering nearly every topic imaginable, all available online whenever you want.

This surge in media consumption has been fueled by the rapid advancement of affordable, easy-to-use, internet-enabled portable devices. With more people owning laptops, smartphones, and tablets, the variety of media available and the ways to watch or listen to it have expanded dramatically, making connected devices a central part of how we experience entertainment and information today.

A recent report suggests that, for the first time, online outlets are the main source of news for Irish people, surpassing traditional media. According to the annual Digital News Report Ireland 2024, conducted by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism at the University of Oxford and sponsored by Ireland's media regulator, Coimisiún na Meán, online media outlets have taken center stage and are the most widely used means of searching for information in Ireland.

Below are the main Irish media players in terms of reach and relevance:

Public Broadcasting:

Raidió Teilifís Éireann (RTÉ) is Ireland's principal public broadcaster, delivering a broad range of television, radio, and online services in both English and Irish. Its operations are funded primarily through a mandatory TV license fee, bolstered by commercial advertising. RTÉ offers channels such as RTÉ One, RTÉ2, RTÉ News Now, and RTÉjr, while also providing extensive radio options including Radio 1 (general content), 2FM (contemporary hits), Raidió na Gaeltachta (Irish-language programming), and Lyric FM (classical/cultural content).

Commercial Television and Satellite:

Virgin Media One (formerly TV3), the chief commercial TV station, serves national audiences with a wide variety of programming. In addition to homegrown channels, British public and commercial networks remain widely accessible, reflecting the close media ties between Ireland and the United Kingdom. Saorview is Ireland's free-to-air terrestrial digital TV platform, making essential TV channels available without subscription, while Sky Ireland dominates the satellite pay-TV sector.

Radio Sector:

Alongside RTÉ's national networks, Ireland supports a vibrant ecosystem of privately-owned and commercial radio stations that operate at both the national and regional/local levels, ensuring a diverse auditory media landscape that caters to broad and niche audiences alike. National commercial radio stations like Today FM and Newstalk are central players, offering music, talk, and news programming.

Print and Digital Press:

Ireland's press includes major national dailies such as The Irish Times, Irish Independent, and Irish Examiner, as well as key weeklies like the Sunday World and Business Post. The print landscape is further enriched by numerous regional and local newspapers, plus Irish editions of prominent UK papers including The Times, The Sunday Times, Irish Sun, Irish Daily Star, Irish Mirror, and Irish Daily Mail, many with dedicated Sunday editions. All of these newspapers have a strong online presence, with significant access and subscriptions, which surpass the physical media, as pointed out by the annual Digital News Report Ireland 2024 report. (Coimisiún na Meán, 2024)

GCN:

When discussing journalism and media professionals in Ireland, it is essential to highlight the influential role of Gay Community News (GCN). Since 1988 GCN "has been at the heart of Ireland's LGBTQ+ community, reflecting the lived experiences of queer people the length and breadth of the island and beyond". (GCN Archive, 2023) It is Ireland's longest-running free publication dedicated to the LGBTQ+ community, distributed in more than 200 places across the country.

GCN has become a cornerstone of queer media, providing a platform for voices that have historically been marginalized or overlooked. Its contributions go beyond news reporting, GCN shapes public discourse, fosters community connections, and champions social advocacy. Over more than three decades, it has nurtured and showcased countless media professionals dedicated to representing the diversity and complexity of Ireland's LGBTQ+ community, making its presence inseparable from any comprehensive conversation about Irish media and

journalism today. It serves as a vital hub, working to inform, educate, connect, platform, entertain, and advocate for the community it represents. GCN's impact extends across print and digital platforms, including a widely read magazine, an extensive news, entertainment, and lifestyle website, innovative digital projects, social media channels, community campaigns, live events, and an online store, making it both a key information source and an active champion for LGBTQ+ rights and visibility in Ireland.

Regulation and Ownership:

Ireland's constitution guarantees freedom of the press, enabling newspapers, television channels, and radio broadcasters to operate independently while abiding by national law. This provides the backbone for a lively, pluralistic media scene that serves the public with a range of perspectives (Irish Constitution, 1937). Oversight of broadcasting and digital media—including emerging on-demand services—falls to Coimisiún na Meán (The Media Commission), which upholds rigorous standards, manages licensing, and continuously updates policies to keep pace with a rapidly changing communications environment (Coimisiún na Meán, 2023).

However, international organizations such as Reporters Without Borders (RSF) have raised concerns about the increasing concentration of media ownership in Ireland. Much of the country's print media is now dominated by Mediahuis Ireland (formerly Independent News and Media), while RTÉ, the public broadcaster, maintains significant influence over national television and radio (Reporters Without Borders, 2024). This concentration has sparked important discussions about ensuring a diversity of opinion within Irish media and safeguarding democratic debate. Even in a country proud of its press freedom, this situation is a reminder of the need for vigilance to guarantee that a true range of voices and viewpoints can be heard and represented (Reporters Without Borders, 2024).

Digital Media and Internet Use:

Internet use in Ireland is remarkably widespread, reflecting the deep integration of digital life into everyday experience. By early 2022, nearly everyone in the country (about 99% of the population) was regularly online, with more than 9 in 10 people accessing the internet daily (DataReportal, 2022; Statista, 2023).

Social media plays a fundamental role in how people in Ireland communicate, consume media, and share their lives. In 2022, about 79% of the population was active on social media, with Facebook connecting about half the population (about 2.5 million users). Platforms like Instagram and WhatsApp are also widely used, creating a vibrant and interactive digital culture (DataReportal, 2022).

This digital engagement has reshaped the media world in Ireland, combining a proud tradition of public service broadcasting led by RTÉ with innovative commercial ventures and the rapid growth of digital offerings. The result is a dynamic landscape where discussions about diversity, representation and who controls the media are more important than ever (CSO, 2022; Media Ownership Monitor Ireland, 2023).

2.2. Queer Theory

Queer theory is a critical framework that emerged in the early 1990s, deeply influenced by poststructuralist thought, feminist studies, and LGBTQ+ activism. It challenges conventional binaries and fixed categories of gender and sexuality, especially the idea that heterosexuality and cisgender identities are the societal norm. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick described queer theory as a practice of “questioning the normal, the natural, and the inevitable” (Sedgwick, 1990, p. 8), emphasizing its role in destabilizing entrenched notions of identity.

As Judith Butler famously wrote, “Gender is not something that one is, it is something one does, a series of acts, a doing rather than a being” (Butler, 1990, p. 33). Teresa de Lauretis, who coined the term ‘queer theory,’ argued that it seeks to “disrupt fixed identities and categories, making room for flexibility and fluidity” (de Lauretis, 1991, p. 8). Moreover, Michel Foucault’s foundational work on sexuality highlighted the social construction of sexual identities, stating, “sexuality must not be regarded as a kind of natural given but as a historical construct” (Foucault, 1978, p. 105).

In their book *Queer Theory Now: From Foundations to Futures*, Hannah McCann and Whitney Monaghan present queer theory as “not so much a singular theory but rather a set of approaches that continually question the normal, disrupt the taken-for-granted, and challenge the boundaries of sexual and gender categories” (McCann & Monaghan, 2019, p. 2). The authors chart the development of queer theory from its historical origins through its intersections with identity politics, transgender theory, intersectionality, disability studies, and affect theory. They emphasize that “queer theory asks us to critically interrogate the norms that shape our everyday lives, including the categories of gender and sexuality themselves” (McCann & Monaghan, 2019, p. 7).

McCann and Monaghan also highlight the importance of understanding both the achievements and challenges faced by queer theory, noting that the “history of queer theory is not a continually progressing march forward, but rather a history marked by debates, struggles, and reinvention” (McCann & Monaghan, 2019, p. 15). Their work provides a clear, accessible exploration of key concepts and current debates, underscoring the importance of queer theory “as an ever-evolving field that insists on reflexivity, inclusion, and a commitment to questioning power at every turn” (McCann & Monaghan, 2019, p. 18).

Queer Theory interrogates the power structures sustaining heteronormativity and opens up possibilities for marginalized identities to resist normative boundaries. It demands a critical examination of the language and social practices that produce and regulate gender and sexual norms. This theoretical lens has profoundly influenced media studies by urging scholars to analyze how media represent gender and sexualities, considering who gets visibility and how identities are constructed.

In Butler’s words, this means understanding that “performance conceals the fact that gender is performative” (Butler, 1990, p. 34), highlighting the inherent instability of fixed identities. As such, queer theory promotes a more inclusive, fluid conception of identity, which aligns with ongoing struggles for LGBTQ+ visibility and rights, especially in media representation.

2.3. LGBTQ+ people in the workplace

LGBTQIA+ individuals frequently encounter a range of challenges in the workplace, from discrimination and harassment to feelings of exclusion and other barriers. These negative experiences can impact job satisfaction, limit career advancement, and contribute to increased mental health strain. Research has shown that LGBTQIA+ employees are more likely than their heterosexual peers to experience verbal harassment and often feel compelled to conceal their identities to avoid bias or mistreatment. As Webster et al. (2018) observe, “supportive workplace practices and inclusive policies are directly linked to higher rates of openness among LGBTQ+ staff, which correlates with improved well-being and job performance.” (Webster, Pini & Adams, 2018, p. 126)

Recent findings from the Central Statistics Office (CSO) Equality and Discrimination Survey (2024) expose significant discrimination faced by LGBTQ+ people in Irish workplaces. While race is the most commonly cited ground for workplace discrimination (27%), sexual orientation and gender identity are also key factors. Transgender and non-binary individuals are especially affected, with 22% reporting workplace discrimination—three times the rate experienced by cisgender people (7%). Gay and lesbian employees encounter similar disparities, with 22% reporting discrimination at work compared to just 7% of heterosexuals.

The pattern continues for those searching for jobs: 12% of gay or lesbian and 8% of transgender or non-binary people reported discrimination, double the rate found among heterosexual and cisgender applicants (4%). The most common form of workplace discrimination experienced was bullying or harassment, reported by over one-third (35%) of respondents. In response, verbal actions, such as raising concerns with a manager, service provider, or support organization, were by far the most frequent, taken by 16% of those affected.

Legal action was uncommon, pursued by only 1% of respondents. These statistics highlight persistent inequities and underline the urgent need for stronger inclusion strategies and targeted anti-discrimination efforts in Ireland’s workplaces.

Another recent survey (2023) by the hiring platform Indeed revealed that more than half (53%) of LGBTQIA+ workers in Ireland feel they have faced discrimination at work. Even more, over 60%, have experienced microaggressions (those subtle, often unintentional, slights or comments that can really add up). Despite these challenges, there is hope: 82% of those surveyed said they believe their concerns would be taken seriously and addressed if they reported discrimination.

Among the LGBTQIA+ respondents, 92% were open about their identity at work, about a third (34%) to everyone, and more than half (57%) only to people they trusted. For those who chose not to come out, nearly half cited personal privacy as their reason, while others worried about discrimination or had not found the right moment to share.

When asked what would help them feel more supported, many pointed to clear anti-discrimination policies (50%), inclusive and welcoming teams (43%), workplace training on LGBTQIA+ issues (42%), employee networks or groups (35%), and celebrating Pride events at work (33%).

Fostering an inclusive workplace culture that values LGBTQIA+ diversity is not only a moral imperative but also delivers substantial organizational benefits. Inclusive workplaces see higher levels of satisfaction, innovation, and retention across the workforce. The visibility of LGBTQIA+ role models, especially in senior positions, empowers other staff and demonstrates a genuine organizational commitment to equity. As Donaghy et al. (2024) highlight, “workplace wellbeing among LGBTQ+ individuals improves significantly when diversity is celebrated and discrimination is actively addressed.” (Donaghy, Lyons & Hegarty, 2024, p. 25)

Leadership plays a crucial role in driving this culture, with effective initiatives including continuous education, supporting employee resource groups, and implementing robust anti-discrimination policies. A non-inclusive environment, however, can have irreversible effects of unknown extent on employees. “Although identity concealment can reduce exposure to distal stressors, exerting sustained efforts to hide one’s identity within a workplace context can lead to feelings of alienation, burnout and anxiety, and negatively impact wellbeing (Velez et al., 2013).

In *Breaking the Rainbow Ceiling: How LGBTQ+ People Can Thrive and Succeed at Work*, Layla McCay explores the persistent obstacles LGBTQ+ professionals encounter as they climb the career ladder, particularly the marked underrepresentation at senior leadership levels. As McCay writes, the book “explores why LGBTQ+ people are disproportionately less likely to be promoted to the most senior jobs, and what to do about it.” (McCay, 2024) She uncovers that barriers include subtle forms of bias, doubts about “fit,” and the unique pressures related to coming out at work, noting, “nobody I spoke to said that they regretted coming out. People did refer to it as being a weight off their shoulders and enabling them to be their best selves, do their best work, and obviously that’s a big incentive for any employer to be able to support that” (McCay, 2024).

The book highlights the power of visibility, with McCay advising: “If you are an LGBTQ+ person who is also a manager, if you can, if it’s safe, if it’s appropriate for you, then if you can come out and be visible, because being visible is such a high impact thing to do for the other staff in the organization.” (McCay, 2024) The author underlines that dismantling the rainbow ceiling requires both organizational and individual action: “It’s a complex way in which the rainbow ceiling has been built and the ways of dismantling it are similarly complex. But that’s not to say it can’t be done.” (McCay, 2024) McCay questions whether the gains in LGBTQIA+ rights in recent decades, such as the decriminalization and legalization of same-sex marriage, are reflected in the professional environment. Ensuring all citizens' rights involves equal career opportunities for all.

2.4. LGBTQIA+ professionals in the Irish Media

Scholarship on LGBTQIA+ professionals in the Irish media, especially the work of Dr Páraic Kerrigan, reveals a nuanced “tug-of-war” (Kerrigan, 2018) between evolving queer visibility and deeply embedded heteronormativity within media institutions. Dr Páraic Kerrigan’s PhD thesis *Queering in the Years: Gay Visibility in the Irish Media* (2018) and subsequent book *LGBTQ Visibility, Media and Sexuality in Ireland* (2021) draw on the history of queer visibility in Irish media over the decades. Both publications explore the processes by which the country’s media have shaped queer identities within a conservative and religious population. Such

resources speak directly to this documentary and were prominently relevant to the development of this research.

Kerrigan argues that “the history of gay Irish media visibility is not simply one of progress from oppression to liberation. Rather, it is one of nuance and complexity, an ever-shifting and changing dynamic between queer community activism, the state and media bodies and institutions” (Kerrigan, 2020, p. 4, 12). While increased visibility has brought opportunities for empowerment and representation, it has also subjected LGBTQIA+ media workers and narratives to increased scrutiny, stereotyping, and quotas under the control of predominantly heteronormative management.

For example, qualitative research by O’Brien and Kerrigan (2020) highlights that many gay and lesbian professionals in Irish television and film production face “an overarching tension between the heteronormativity of the industry and the queerness of the gay and lesbian media worker.” Interview evidence points to LGBTQIA+ staff being typecast for certain roles and genres, and facing obstacles “when pitching content pertaining to LGBT issues,” which were often “regulated and monitored closely by the broader production team” or vetoed for being ill-suited to a mainstream, presumed-hetero audience. As one interviewee shared: “Every attempt I made to create ground-breaking gay programming was shot down... The majority of our viewers were male, over the age of 55 and came from the countryside... much LGBT content that they pitched to production teams was often ignored or at the very best, watered down”. (O’Brien, Kerrigan, 2020)

Kerrigan’s work underscores that while queer visibility in Irish media has advanced in response to activism, legislative change, and global influences, it has often come at the price of respectability politics, compromise, or exploitation for “boosting audience ratings and generating sensationalism”. The dynamic is not one of simple linear progress, but rather illustrates how “visibility can obscure as much as it reveals,” as gatekeeping by media institutions can result in limited, stereotyped, or “palatable” portrayals, leaving much of the LGBTQIA+ community on the margins. As such, achieving truly diverse and authentic representation remains an ongoing challenge for LGBTQIA+ professionals within Irish media.

Crucial milestones – such as the decriminalization of homosexuality in 1993 (Irish Statute Book, 1993), the introduction of civil partnerships in 2010 (Irish Statute Book, 2010), the legalization of same-sex marriage by referendum and the passing of the Gender Recognition Act both in 2015 (Irish Statute Book, 2015) – have not only reshaped societal attitudes, but have also enabled increased presence and participation of LGBTQIA+ professionals within Irish media. These legal advances, coupled with activism and global influence, paralleled broader media inclusion, yet the road to authentic representation has remained uneven.

Kerrigan illustrates how these changes influenced evolving portrayals of queer identities: while activism, the fight against AIDS-related stigma in the 1980s, and landmark legal reforms have paved the way for more diverse and affirming media stories, visibility has not always equated to acceptance. LGBTQIA+ media professionals have often had to navigate a landscape shaped by institutional gatekeeping, content regulation, and cautious market approaches, resulting at times in sanitized, stereotyped, or sensationalized depictions intended for presumed

conservative audiences. As Kerrigan notes, “visibility can obscure as much as it reveals,” underscoring the ongoing contestation that surrounds inclusion (Kerrigan, 2020). This history demonstrates that true progress requires not only legal and social reform, but also continued activism and structural change within media itself to ensure authentic and equitable representation for LGBTQIA+ individuals in Ireland.

Kerrigan’s contributions encompass broad qualitative analyses of diverse media forms, historical and social contextualisation and theoretical frameworks from Queer and Media Studies. Dr Páraic Kerrigan is a Teaching Fellow in the School of Information and Communication Studies at University College Dublin. He has published widely in the areas of Media and Communication and Social Sciences and has worked in the media and communications industry in a variety of roles. His research concerns the dynamics of diversity in the media industries, specifically focusing on the LGBTQIA+ community in Ireland.

His publications converge on the central argument that Irish social factors have changed the contours of queer visibility in the media and reveal the long-standing relationship between LGBTQ organizing and the media in the country. The author problematizes that visibility was not only a tool employed by queer communities and activist groups to advance a political agenda, but also leveraged by institutions of power to exploit queer identities for boosting audience ratings and generating sensationalism.

The inclusion of different sexual identities in RTÉ has been evident in some contexts, as Kerrigan shows throughout his publications. He argues that LGBTQIA+ visibility in Ireland was “the product of sympathetic decision-makers and producers within RTÉ, who were canvassed and lobbied by activists within the Irish gay civil rights movements and sought to make a claim for visibility within the broadcaster.” (Kerrigan, 2020) This article highlights the dialogue and cooperation between various organisations and RTÉ that has enabled the minority community to be present on screen and radio, despite the country’s cultural conservatism influenced by the Catholic Church.

2.5. Methodology

This work adopted a qualitative methodology, utilizing documentary filmmaking as a practice-based approach to explore the experiences of five LGBTQIA+ journalists and related professionals in Irish media. Documentary films, when used as a qualitative research method, brings lived experiences in a way that honours both the emotional and contextual richness of participants’ stories. As Borish (2021, p. 56) explains, “documentary film provides researchers with a ‘means to bring the complexities and contradictions of lived experience into the public eye through both seeing and hearing participants’ stories.” This use of sound and image allows researchers and audiences to connect on a far deeper level with the nuances, expressions, and settings behind each character, capturing the kind of detail and empathy often missed in transcripts alone.

It was employed semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis to document the professional and personal narratives of LGBTQIA+ individuals in the field. Max Weber’s Social Action Theory laid the foundation for understanding social waves through the lens of subjective experience, emphasizing that “social action can only be understood by interpreting the meanings and motives individuals assign to their actions within their social context” (Weber, 1947). Given the nature of the research, this study aligns with an interpretivist paradigm, which

seeks to understand social phenomena through subjective experiences, emphasizing the complexity and diversity of their identities and challenges in the realities they are insert.

The interviews were conducted with LGBTQIA+ journalists and related professionals currently or formerly working in Irish media, ensuring diverse perspectives across different platforms (e.g., print, broadcast, online journalism). Open-ended questions guided the discussions, covering topics such as identity and coming out at work, workplace discrimination and barriers, allyship and supportive systems, career progression, visibility in Irish media, and societal attitudes toward LGBTQIA+ individuals. The interviews were recorded, with additional cutaway footage added.

This film and its subsequent report were also informed by Queer Theory and Media Studies, which offered a critical lens for analysing issues related to identity, representation, and systemic challenges within the media industry. By focusing on personal testimonies, this research aims to highlight the intersection of gender, sexuality, and professional identity in Journalism and Media industry.

2.6. Ethical and Logistical Considerations

One of the main challenges of this project was gaining access to the voices of key individuals willing to share their personal and professional stories. For many LGBTQIA+ journalists and media professionals, particularly those who have faced discrimination, harassment, or significant difficulties in their careers, the idea of sharing these experiences in an audio-visual recording can be a daunting and emotionally draining process. Fortunately, I was able to gather five valuable interviewees from various media sectors for long, open-hearted, and insightful conversations on the film's subject matter. There were also some rejections, which is absolutely natural and predictable in these endeavours.

I attempted to get people from the transgender and non-binary community in the film to speak on their behalf, but unfortunately, it was not possible. There are very few people from this group in the media, and those I approached were unavailable or uninterested in participating. These access difficulties restricted my work and highlighted the steps the media still needs to take to address and include this segment of the community.

Furthermore, there remains a certain level of hesitation within the industry when it comes to publicly discussing LGBTQIA+ identity in the context of journalism and media in general. Despite increased visibility in recent years, some LGBTQIA+ professionals fear that speaking openly about their struggles could lead to professional setbacks, such as negative reactions from colleagues, employers, or the public.

There were also logistical and time constraints that prevented key figures from being available. Some journalists and other professionals, especially those in leadership or high-demand positions with busy schedules, lacked the time or energy to dedicate to participating in the documentary. Therefore, this project required not only a careful and respectful approach, but also patience and persistence to build trust with the interviewees, convince them, and ensure they felt confident and comfortable sharing their stories with me.

Beyond the practical challenges, ethical considerations were paramount. Special attention was paid to the degree of exposure, privacy, and safety of the interviewees, the potential emotional

triggers that could arise during the interviews, and ensuring that the documentary preserved the integrity and credibility of journalism and other media work.

A summary of the project, containing its proposal and the key topics addressed in the interview questions, was made available to all interviewees for careful review prior to recording. Interviewees were advised that we could skip any questions, pause, cut or delete sensitive content, or, ultimately, even end the recording at any point they wished.

Consent forms, duly signed and attached to the appendix, were provided to interviewees after the interview, ensuring they fully understood how their interviews and additional material would be treated, as well as stipulating image usage rights and the extent of their use. The consent forms stated that they could withdraw their participation at any time before the final edit on August 5, 2025, without providing justification for their decision.

3. CONSTRUCTING AND DESIGNING THE DOCUMENTARY

3.1. Production and Filming

The interviews were filmed in a controlled, indoor environment. Three of them were conducted on the Griffith College Dublin campus: Alan Hughes in the TV studio on July 23; Max Kane in the radio studio on July 15; and Darragh McGirr in a regular classroom on July 8. Walt Kilroy generously hosted me at his home and office in Rathmines on two separate days at Walt's request: July 7 and July 30. Alice Linehan preferred to film at the GCN office in the Temple Bar area. The first interview with Alice took place on July 24. However, technical issues with the image capture regarding the video's focus were only noticed later. Given the significant compromise in the quality of the material, I asked her to re-record it, which she empathetically agreed to. The second interview also took place on July 30, following Walt's second interview.

High-quality professional audio and video equipment (camera, tripod, and microphone) was used for audio and video capture. This equipment was available for loan from GCD.

Despite my initial intention of using two cameras (one main and one secondary), I ended up using only one professional digital camera due to limitations. The videos were recorded in 4K resolution to ensure high image quality and flexibility in post-production. The interview was shot from a long-sided angle. When possible and appropriate, cutaway shots and B-roll scenes were filmed.

A professional lavalier microphone was used to capture the interviewee's clear, directional sound while minimizing background noise.

3.2. Post-Production Workflow

“Editing is not so much a putting together as it is a discovery of a path.”

— Murch, W. (2001, p. 18)

Editing a short documentary film entirely based on interviews involves much more than just cutting scenes; it is about finding the most appropriate narrative and crafting it in a way that is authentic and engaging. As Murch put it, it is the editor who develops the tone and rhythm of the story to be told from the raw material at hand, a path of personal interpretations and decision-making. You start with hours of interviews and have to extract the best moments from a rich, extensive material to build the storytelling. There is no script. The documentary process begins with the understanding that the interviewees' responses guide and dictate the outcome. And the edition has the final say.

The editing process of *Rainbow News* was carried out using Adobe Premiere Pro on computers available to students at Griffith campuses. It took several days and nights, many hours of work, as editing is not my strong point. It is actually a personal challenge, but I am pleased with the final result.

An important first step is organizing everything: interviews, backing up footage, visual sequences, etc. It may seem like a simple and small thing, but it is actually crucial to create clear folders and name clips so you do not get lost when analysing and editing large amounts of content. Once organized, I began creating a rough first cut, stitching together the main interviews without any visuals or effects, to see if the essence of the story would be conveyed. If the sequence felt too long or disjointed, this was the time to rearrange things, eliminate redundancies, and ensure the story truly flowed.

Once I found the tone I wanted and the main narrative worked, I moved on to B-roll overlay. Visual sequences complement, enrich, and add texture to the documentary. They are crucial in interview-based films, preventing them from becoming monotonous and tiring to watch.

Using Premiere Pro allowed flexibility in cutting and assembling sequences, including multi-camera/video setups and synchronizing multiple audio tracks. These were used for the film title, my credits, and to introduce the interviewees, providing names and roles, as well as relevant and appropriate image credits and/or information when necessary.

Throughout the editing process, the sound was polished, eliminating small background noises and balancing the audio levels so that nothing bothers the viewer or distracts from the message. A soft background soundtrack was added as well.

I intended to subtitle the entire documentary to ensure accessibility, but my numerous attempts to do so using Adobe Premiere Pro tools were unsuccessful. On one occasion, I spent over two hours with the tool open loading the subtitles, but it was impossible to complete. I tried to do this in other programs, but without success, so I ended up not adding them.

Some of the visual sequences were filmed during interview sessions, such as in Walt's office at GCN and scenes with Darragh. I filmed others at this year's Dublin Pride Parade on June 28th. I obtained Alan's Virgin Media footage directly from Luke Mulcahy, one of the producers who works with him at the channel, with permission from Hughes and the company through Mulcahy, provided proper credit is given and for academic purposes only.

I structured the answers in the same order in which the questions were asked, making the necessary cuts and interspersing the interviewees, as I thought the narrative would best be told.

4. DISCUSSION

This chapter reflects on the key findings from the documentary-based research project exploring the stories of LGBTQIA+ professionals working within Irish media. This project aimed not only to document these lived realities but also to centre authenticity, visual storytelling, and collaborative knowledge creation through short film. The project combined semi-structured interviews and storytelling to capture both the challenges and real sense of belonging experienced by participants. Rather than painting a picture of pure adversity and struggle, voices in this research spoke out about genuine progress, industry warmth, and the everyday work of inclusion, yet acknowledged gaps particularly for trans and non-binary colleagues.

The overwhelming tone shared by participants was one of cautious optimism regarding the inclusion and representation of LGBTQIA+ people in Irish media in last few decades. Many described personal victories, inclusive workplaces, and a genuine sense of belonging, with the important caveat that this progress is not evenly shared across all LGBTQIA+ identities, especially for trans and non-binary professionals, who still remain marginalised and notably not included in the industry.

As Kerrigan wrote in the conclusion of his book, titled "Queer visibility beyond marriage equality and Leo Varadkar" (Kerrigan, 2021), transgender people still occupy an invisible space in Irish media historical trajectory, with "some isolated instances of visibility when transgender issues broke into the mainstream media". (Kerrigan 2021, p. 166). The lack of representation on mainstream media outlets and publications extends to the absence of individuals from the transgender and gender-variant community on teams working in the field as well. The Irish scenario reflects the reality that has been addressed by Collins *et al.* (2015), who pointed out "formal discrimination relates to prejudice against trans people within formalized contexts, such as job applications, interviews, promotions, performance appraisals, and employment terminations.

Visibility emerged as a central theme, with the term "coming out" (or the extended version "coming out of the closet") being mentioned numerous times throughout the documentary, a term often used by large to describe members of the LGBTQIA+ community who openly embrace their gender identities and sexual orientations in a social context. It has a much richer and more communal history than many realize. It was not coined by a single person, and it certainly did not begin with the modern idea of coming out.

In early 20th-century Germany, the concept of "coming out" was often referred to as "self-denunciation" (Selbstanzeige) (Marhoefer, 2019) and carried significant legal and social dangers. Under Paragraph 175 of the German Criminal Code, male homosexual acts were criminalized, and revealing one's sexual identity risked arrest, imprisonment, and severe societal stigma. (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2021) The rise of the Nazi regime in the 1930s intensified these risks dramatically. Denunciations, formal accusations of homosexuality, could lead to police raids, interrogation, and torture. Being "outed" was not merely a personal declaration but could result in severe legal punishment and damaging reputational consequences. Historian Geoffrey J. Giles explains that before and during Nazi rule:

"Gay men were often arrested following denunciations, sometimes by neighbors or acquaintances, leading to prison sentences or worse. The regime's policies made 'self-

denunciation' a path of extreme peril, as any acknowledgment or exposure of one's homosexuality risked brutal repression and social ostracization."

(Giles, 2015, p. 123, paraphrased)

Thus, "self-denunciation" was unlike the more community-affirming meaning of "coming out" that emerged later; it was a dangerous exposure under an oppressive legal regime, associated with fear and punishment rather than pride or liberation.

The term as we know and use now emerged from queer communities themselves in the early 20th century, particularly among gay men in the United States. Back then, "coming out" meant something quite different: it referred to being introduced into queer society, often through lavish drag balls that resembled high-society debutante events. These occasions were not about secrecy or shame at all; they were about celebration, visibility, and belonging to a vibrant community.

"Gay people in the pre-war years... did not speak of coming out of what we call 'the gay closet' but rather of coming out into what they called 'homosexual society' or the 'gay world,' a world neither so small, nor so isolated, nor, often, so hidden as 'closet' implies."

(Chauncey, 1994, p. 7)

For most participants on this documentary, coming out was not marked by a single moment of announcement, but occurred gradually and organically as connections with colleagues deepened. It was less about disclosure as drama, and more about simply being oneself. These stories speak to Richard Dyer's (2002, p. 5) observation that queer representation is "not just about being seen, but being seen in ways that matter." That kind of visibility, authentic, unforced, emotionally safe, was the experience described by several participants.

GCN's editor, Alice Lineham, shared the only account shaped by a moment of decision. Her colleagues at the time did not know about her sexuality (she identifies herself as a cisgender lesbian woman). She recalled an early phase in her career when, at a staff Christmas party, the team started chatting about celebrity crushes. The conversation suddenly brought her identity into focus in a way she had not anticipated. "So, they asked me and I started kind of panicking, Alice recalled. She says she hesitated for a bit and considered lying and telling them any random man, but decided to be honest and share her female famous crush.

For others, the coming out process felt more fluid, rather than a single turning point. Alan Hughes, reflecting on his long-standing openness as a gay man in his field, explains this clearly, but raises a necessary question about the need for people to wonder about others' sexualities and that LGBTQIA+ people need to frequently explain themselves. "There is always a thing, you know? Gay people are constantly coming out. (..) You never ask somebody else if they are straight – It's just assumed – but there is always the thing 'oh, I wonder they are gay'", Alan pointed.

Hughes's words highlight that, even in inclusive spaces, queer visibility requires ongoing emotional labour. It is not a one-off, it's something managed daily, even in casual exchanges or new collaborations. Her statement echoes D'Augelli's approach, emphasizing that coming out is not a one-time experience. According to her, "coming out is not a single event but a

recurring process... It involves disclosures and developments that are repeated as individuals move through new social contexts and life stages.” (D’Augelli, 1994, p. 316)

Regarding Alan Hughes in particular, a public figure on Irish television for about 30 years, there are other nuances in respect of visibility. Not only the professional environment, but also public acceptance also plays a role. When asked if he ever felt he had to manage how people perceived his identity at work, in this case in front of the cameras, Hughes says that in certain circumstances he might feel he should check himself, whether he's being "over camp," or "exuberant.", in his words. He recalls that, early in his career, he might have been more concerned about this, but that he definitely does not do that nowadays. "What you see is what you get. And that is me. I don't hold back on anything.”, Hughes asserts firmly.

The Virgin Media presenter says the vast majority like him precisely because of who he is and that he wouldn't have been on the air for almost three decades otherwise. Hughes said he is proud to have "normalized" being gay in the Irish media for so long, which he called a "legacy" for the LGBTQIA+ cause in the country. He also said that simply his presence in this highly visible space helped many people in the community see themselves, accept themselves, and embrace their identities. He said he often hears on the streets and online, "You helped me come out of the closet because my mom loves you so much, and I was able to tell my mom that I was gay, too, like you." In this regard, Alan says he has always received kind comments from people about being openly gay on TV.

In short, what stands out in this chapter's reflections is how inclusion is felt not only through formal policies, but in small, human moments in everyday life. Inclusion is in how people react or even how questions are asked, how individuals feel free to be themselves without prefaces or apologies, in front of and out of the spotlight. As this work demonstrates, the visibility that matters most is not being the token LGBTQIA+ person in the workplace, but rather being deeply known and comfortably present in everyday life among colleagues, leaders and, in some cases, the public. As for organizations, being a truly inclusive company is not about pulling out the rainbow flag only when Pride Month rolls around to say they support the cause. It requires an environment where LGBTQIA+ professionals feel respected and validated in their full identities every day.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation set out to explore the experiences of LGBTQIA+ professionals working in Irish media, through their own voices, stories, and lived realities. Using a practical approach rooted in documentary filmmaking, this work sought to portray the trajectories of these individuals not simply as abstract identities, but as people who navigate real work environments, with all their nuances, challenges and triumphs.

Through a combination of qualitative interviews and creative documentary practices, the project sought to go beyond stereotypes or superficial analyses, listening closely to both the everyday challenges and victories that LGBTQIA+ professionals encounter in the Irish industry. Overall, what emerged throughout the project and its final outcome was a strong sense of progress and the presence of real inclusion across much of the media landscape. However, it also highlighted gaps and flaws that still exist and need to be addressed, and a clear reminder that inclusion is a process, not a destination. In short, the picture painted is one of cautious optimism, celebrating the strides made, but aware of the improvements still needed. For most participants, Ireland's media landscape today is not the hostile environment it once was: society, laws, policies, and, most importantly, team cultures have changed. Many spoke of workplaces that offer genuine belonging, described colleagues as allies, and found space to "come out" in ways that feel natural and supported. Pride in seeing one's own story authentically reflected and the normalcy of inclusion at work were highlighted as signs of significant progress.

But this is not an unqualified success story. This film made it clear that inclusion for the LGBTQIA+ community remains uneven. Cisgender people, despite their same-sex orientation, are more included in society and, consequently, in the job market. And the Irish media industry is no different; trans and non-binary professionals continue to face high barriers of discrimination, underrepresentation, and exclusion. Issues such as the lack of representation of trans people in the media, misinterpretation of gender nuances, hesitation to tell trans stories, and others all serve as reminders that superficial or unequal acceptance can mask deeper gaps. Thus, true inclusion remains a work in progress, one that cannot be achieved through policy alone, but must be built on daily exchanges and trust between colleagues, leaders, and society in general.

As the Spencer Stuart Diversity & Inclusion Report (2022) notes, "When LGBTQ+ people are visible, especially in leadership roles, it can help others feel safe to be open about their identity... Creating a work environment that supports visibility provides the foundation for the LGBTQ+ community to not just be seen, but ultimately to flourish and thrive." This shows how important real, lasting visibility is, not just for show, but as a way to create workplaces where people can truly be themselves and do their best.

Perhaps the most celebrated achievement of this work is that it affirmed the unique power of collaborative and authentic storytelling, especially through documentary-style filmmaking, to foster empathy, visibility, and lasting change. This project created a safe space where interviewees could tell their experiences candidly, in their own words and images, within the confines they felt comfortable doing so. The narrative construction resulted in a fluid, captivating, and resonant film. As participants reminded us in their testimonies, visibility for LGBTQIA+ people is not just about being present, but about being present in one's entirety and on one's own terms; and this film honoured this principle.

Beyond the professional sphere, this research speaks to something deeply human: the need to be recognised, accepted, and connected. Each story shared in this project carried both weight and joy: the weight of navigating identity and vulnerability, and the joy of finding belonging and strength through community. The courage it takes to come out, again and again, in every new space, and the power of solidarity and representation light the way forward. These are not just personal acts; they are signals of what is possible for workplaces, institutions, and society as a whole.

As Ireland's media landscape continues to grow and evolve, it is vital that media organisations not only listen to the lived experiences of LGBTQIA+ professionals, but act on them. Real inclusion means more than broad statements of support or pride isolated events, it means amplifying trans and non-binary presence, telling a fuller range of queer stories, and embracing the real complexity of people's lives.

This project contributes to both media and LGBTQIA+ studies by offering a grounded, real-world portrait of how inclusion, identity, and storytelling intersect in contemporary Ireland. More than anything, it opens space for deeper conversations about whose stories are told, how they are told, and by whom. It invites scholars, creatives, and industry professionals alike to keep asking questions, to keep widening the lens, and to keep working toward an industry that truly reflects the fullness of our shared humanity.

APPENDICES

1. Interview Question Guide and Informative Form:

This interview is part of a dissertation-by-practice project for a short documentary film titled “*Rainbow News – A Portrayal of the Experiences of LGBTQIA+ Professionals in Irish Media.*” It is produced by Filipe Fernandes for the academic purposes of the MA in Journalism and Digital Communication at Griffith College Dublin. The film aims to explore the professional experiences of LGBTQIA+ journalists and related careers in Ireland from 2000 to 2024, with a focus on identity, inclusion, discrimination, progress, and representation. Through interviews with LGBTQIA+ media professionals across print, broadcast, and digital platforms, it features how sexual orientation and gender identity intersect with their careers, highlighting both challenges faced and positive developments in the industry. All interviews will be conducted with informed consent, and participants will be consulted regarding the context of their contributions. The final documentary will be submitted as part of Fernandes's academic dissertation and assessed within the framework of research and practice. Your participation will contribute to a broader understanding of the media industry's role in shaping and responding to LGBTQIA+ experiences.

***Informed Consent Note** – Before beginning, it is important to emphasize that the interviewee’s comfort and safety are top priorities throughout this conversation. Some questions may touch on personal aspects of identity or experiences. Please feel free to share only what you feel safe and comfortable in doing so. There is absolutely no pressure to answer anything that feels too private or sensitive. Any topic can be skipped, rephrased or revisited at any time. This space is intended to centre your voice, on your own terms.*

Section 1: Personal Introduction and Identity

1. Can you please tell me your name, age and nationality?
2. Would you be comfortable sharing how you identify in terms of your gender and/or sexual orientation?
3. What is your current role in the media industry?
4. How long have you been working in the media sector?
5. How would you describe your professional focus or specialisation within media?
6. What types of media platforms have you worked with (e.g., print, broadcast, online)?

Section 2: Coming Out in the Workplace

7. Have you come out at work, either partially or fully? Could you describe how that process unfolded, if you feel comfortable doing so?
8. Did you feel safe and supported in coming out at your workplace, or were there moments of hesitation or fear?
9. Have you ever felt the need to manage how much of your identity is visible?
10. Do you believe your identity has influenced how colleagues or management perceive or treat you in your professional environment?

Section 3: Experiences of Discrimination, Harassment, and Barriers

11. Have you experienced any form of discrimination, harassment, or exclusion in the workplace related to your sexual orientation or gender identity?
12. Was there a specific moment in your career where your LGBTQIA+ identity was a barrier?
13. Have you ever felt pressure – subtle or overt – to conform to heteronormative expectations in order to advance your career or be accepted?
14. Do you think your sexual orientation or gender identity has influenced your professional opportunities in limiting ways?
15. Do you believe there is a difference in how LGBTQIA+ identities are perceived across different departments (e.g., on camera roles vs behind the scenes; newsroom vs production)?

Section 4: Experiences of Allyship and Support Systems

16. have you encountered allies and supportive structures within the media workplace that stood up for you or advocated for LGBTQIA+ inclusion?
17. Can you share any experiences where you felt fully supported as an LGBTQIA+ professional at work?
18. Are there any policies, groups, or initiatives within your media organization that have helped foster an inclusive environment for LGBTQIA+ staff?
19. Can you recall moments when your gender or sexual identity felt like a source of strength or empowerment rather than a challenge?
20. Have you ever felt that your LGBTQIA+ identity positively influenced your work or professional opportunities?

Section 5: Representation and Media Culture

21. From your perspective, has the Irish media landscape become more inclusive over the past two decades?
22. Do you see generational differences in how LGBTQIA+ colleagues are treated or understood in media workplace?
23. Do you think media organizations understand the importance of queer perspectives, or do you still encounter tokenism or stereotyping?
24. Are there specific media outlets or individuals you see as leaders or laggards in promoting LGBTQIA+ inclusion?
25. How do you feel LGBTQIA+ topics are represented in the Irish media today compared to earlier in your career?
26. Have you been encouraged or discouraged from covering LGBTQIA+ stories? If so, how did you respond?


Section 6: Hopes for the Future

27. What still needs to change in Irish media to make it a truly inclusive space for LGBTQIA+ professionals?
28. What does a truly inclusive workplace look like to you?
29. What advice would you give to a young LGBTQIA+ person entering journalism/media today?

30. Is there anything else you would like to add about your journey or experiences that we have not covered?
31. Do you have any final reflections or comments you would like to share?

2. Consent forms:

Alan Hughes


GRIFFITH COLLEGE
Faculty of Journalism and Media Communications
Masters of Arts in Journalism & Digital Communications

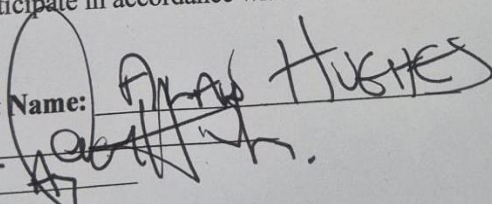
Consent Form

Project Title: Rainbow News – A Portrayal of the Experiences of LGBTQIA+ Professionals in Irish Media
Researcher: Filipe Luiz Raimundo Fernandes
Student Identification Number: 3167853
Contact: filipel Luiz.raimundofernandes@student.griffith.ie
Supervisor: Conor Tiernan
Contact: conor.tiernan@griffith.ie

I, the undersigned, hereby grant permission to Filipe Luiz Raimundo Fernandes to record and use my interview — including both video and audio — as part of the short documentary film entitled *Rainbow News – A Portrayal of the Experiences of LGBTQIA+ Professionals in Irish Media*. I understand that this material will be used solely for educational purposes and will form part of a dissertation by practice submitted in fulfilment of the MA in Journalism and Digital Communications at Griffith College Dublin.

- The interview may be archived by Griffith College Dublin for research and academic assessments.
- No commercial use will take place without further written consent.
- All data will be securely stored under GDPR and Griffith College policy. Personal data and unused recordings will be deleted after the project's conclusion.
- I voluntarily agree to participate in this production.
- I understand that I have the right to withdraw my participation and consent at any time prior to final editing (August, 1st 2025), without giving any reasons.

I confirm that I have read and fully understood the contents of this consent form and hereby agree to participate in accordance with the terms outlined herein.

Participant Name: Alan Hughes
Signature: 
Date: 10/07/2025

Researcher: Filipe Fernandes
Signature: _____
Date: _____



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Participant Name: WALT KILROY

Signature: [Handwritten Signature]

Date: 30.7.25

Researcher: Filipe Fernandes

Signature: _____

Date: _____



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I confirm that I have read and fully understood the contents of this consent form and hereby agree to participate in accordance with the terms outlined herein.

Participant Name: ALICE LINEHAN

Signature: *Alice Linehan*

Date: 30/07/2025

Researcher: Filipe Fernandes

Signature: _____

Date: _____



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I confirm that I have read and fully understood the contents of this consent form and hereby agree to participate in accordance with the terms outlined herein.

Participant Name: MAX KANE
Signature: [Handwritten Signature]
Date: 5/4/25

Researcher: Filipe Fernandes

Signature: _____
Date: _____



**Faculty of Journalism and Media Communications
Masters of Arts in Journalism & Digital Communications**

Consent Form

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Researcher: Filipe Luiz Raimundo Fernandes

Student Identification Number: 3167853

Contact: filipeluz.aimundofernandes@student.griffith.ie

Supervisor: Conor Tiernan

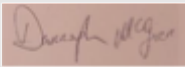
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I confirm that I have read and fully understood the contents of this consent form and hereby agree to participate in accordance with the terms outlined herein.

Participant Name: Darragh McGirr

Signature: 

Date: 05.08.2025

Researcher: Filipe Fernandes

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