

## **Interview 1: Fran [F] and Darren [D] with Anne Byrne [AB].**

[0.01]

AB: So, good morning, Fran.

F: Good morning, thanks for having me today.

AB: Thank you for being here. And, yeah, so, we're going to start with a question for the benefit of people listening to this recording. And would you describe the object that you've brought in, in your own words please, Fran.

F: Yeah, I suppose the picture I've brought in is a picture of myself and my husband. I grew up in a very different Ireland where I didn't ever think that I'd be getting married, it wasn't an option when I was young. In fact, being gay in Ireland was a criminal offence, so this picture means an awful lot in terms of, that eventually through a lot of, I suppose, campaigning and a lot of, you know, campaigns over the years, and a lot of battles, I suppose, we came to a stage in Ireland where we introduced marriage equality and we – myself and Darren – decided to get married and we're 23 years together this year, so 24 coming up in November. So we're a long time together but under... if that had been years and years ago, we wouldn't have been married and we'd still be living together and nothing wrong with that either but it was nice to be able to get married because it definitely wouldn't have thought when I was young. It never would've been an option. I wouldn't have even thought about it to be honest because when I was growing up we had two options. One was to join religious life or one was to get married and that was what was expected, that was the norm. And of course the marriage was going to be a heterosexual, you know, you'd have the children, you'd have the wife, living in the nice house. That was kind of what was expected, the norm in society at the time. So, yeah, this picture, I suppose reflects a different time. And of course this is taken in Stephen's Green. We had a wedding up in the Freemason's Hall in town and afterwards we went and got photographs at Stephen's Green, which was beautiful really. Beautiful day. And some of Darren's family and some of my family were out with us to celebrate the day. We went out to Spain and came back and had a party then of other friends, so it was lovely, yeah. It was a really special time.

[2.24]

AB: And would you describe the picture for listeners? What are you looking at? What are we looking at?

F: I suppose, well you can see... we're looking at each other, yeah, it's a very happy picture, isn't it, because I suppose, we were content that day. It was just a lovely day, it was a lovely moment, it was a very happy day, and it was just, just the fact we were holding hands in Stephen's Green, as you can see, you wouldn't have thought... definitely, as I said, when I was growing up you wouldn't have even thought. The idea of holding hands, even now I find it very strange and very hard to do that because I don't, to me, I just worry about what might happen or what people might say, so I'm still even conscious of that but that day it didn't seem to affect me. I probably wasn't even thinking of that at that time, we were just walking through

Stephen's Green and we got some lovely photographs and this is a very special one because it's, as you can see, we're really happy in it and, I suppose, a feeling of contentment.

AB: And it's autumn, it looks like autumn, is it?

F: Yeah, it was actually October we got married, it was Halloween. So, 31<sup>st</sup> October but it was actually a beautiful day. St Stephen's Green was absolutely fabulous as it always is.

AB: Yeah, yeah.

F: It's one of my favourite places, you know, for years. It was nice to be there. We don't go into town that often now but years ago I used to spend a lot of time in town and it was just a nice day out. And I suppose a normal day out, a wedding, the happiness that day, the usual running around, well Darren did a lot of that to be fair, the organising. Darren did a lot of that as well. Just, you know, the usual wedding jitters, the usual nerves when we were getting married, when we were saying the vows. Actually, it struck me how emotional I got, because I got really emotional which I didn't think, because I thought 'it's a wedding', you know, say these vows [?] but actually it was a very emotional day because, like I said, I think it kind of struck me on the day what the reality, the reality of what was happening and the reality that you can have a normal life, you know, now we're accepted, we live in a house in Clondalkin, I'm a local counsellor, we have... we're accepted. We're part of the community, everybody knows that we're gay in Clondalkin. We've very supportive neighbours and friends around us and it's just been incredible, been incredible just to see the change. And that change, you know, that's been a long time coming.

AB: What year was that?

F: 19... 2017, sorry, 1999 we met. 2017.

AB: 2017, is the, yeah, yeah.

F: I had to think there for a second [laughter].

AB: No, it's alright. Just before we started the interview, we mentioned the Methodist's Hall.

F: Oh, Freemason's Hall.

AB: Freemason's. Sorry, apologies.

F: That's... we were the first wedding there so we made history that day. Darren's a Freemason, so.

[5:43]

D: They never allowed weddings there before because Freemason's don't want to be associated with religion. But because this was a secular wedding and same-sex, they allowed it so for the first time ever, a wedding was allowed to be held there.

AB: Goodness.

D: It shows the openness of the Freemason's as well.

AB: Yeah, yeah.

F: It was beautiful. Absolutely beautiful, I think everyone who attended that day commented on how beautiful and, I suppose, a lot of people had never been in the Hall so your family and mine, it would have been the first time for many of them to be actually in the Hall.

AB: Sure.

F: And it was just a fantastic building, very kind of gothic looking. Just lovely, kind of, venue for the wedding. And the person that married us, she got very excited the day we went into town to register, all the excitement of that, signing the things, she wanted to do that wedding and she ended up doing it and she was brilliant, wasn't she. She just made it very, kind of, I suppose, just a very happy occasion. Just a very normal, she was really great, wasn't she? [to D].

AB: Sorry for misnaming it there.

D: That's alright.

AB: I mis-heard it, I'm sorry. Okay, so, is there anything else about the photograph that...

F: Just, I mean, afterwards, we obviously got photographs with Darren's family and then we got photographs with my family and then we got photographs together. Just the normal things, we went for a meal then afterwards to the... beside the Mayor's place

D: The Mansion House

F: The Mansion House, yeah, so we ended up for a meal there. I suppose the photograph, it was just a day of happiness, it was just a celebration, like I keep saying it just a day we didn't really think would ever happen. We've been through a lot over the last 23 years, I think it would be fair to say. We've been through some attacks on our home, attacks on, I suppose, in terms of letters we got, different things... different forms of homophobia that we've experienced over the years. So it was great, like I said, it was great to be able to... when I look at it now, you see walking through Stephen's Green holding hands, nearly putting it up to everybody saying 'look this is normal, this is acceptable, this is the way life is, we just want to be the same as everybody else, just a very mundane, day-to-day life, you know, do the ordinary thing things in life because I'm a counsellor, I'm busy most of the time, I'm at a lot of meetings out and about. Yeah, we just want to be the same as everybody else and get on with life. We have the same relationship that anybody else has, the same arguments, the same... Darren's great at organising things and I'm not so good at that sort of stuff but we're good and bad at different things and yeah, so that's it.

AB: Great. So the next question is, and you've answered quite a lot of it already which is actually perfect.

F: Sorry.

AB: In a slightly different way, so it was the day that the object was created, the day that the photograph was made was the day of your wedding, so what happened next?

[9.29]

F: Well, I suppose, well afterwards, as I said, it was a great day of celebration. I had... Darren had his brother that stood in as best man and then I had a school friend that stood in for me and we just, when we went for a meal then after that, that was special, and we had a few drinks. We were getting ready to go to Spain the next day, you know, I suppose, doing everything, the normal things that you just go... you don't even think of at the time, just enjoy the time. And when we went to Barcelona was absolutely beautiful. We spent a week in Barcelona, I had never been, and it was fantastic, wasn't it? It really was beautiful, we spent seven days there. And then coming back, we had about a day and then we had a party. So it was good. Went on a lot...

AB: Yeah.

F: Seven, eight, nine, probably ten days, in reality, of different celebrations but, even when we got to Barcelona and people were talking and we were saying about the wedding and stuff and it was just lovely when you met people out there were kind of, celebrating with us, I suppose. Yeah, when we came back we had a fantastic party. You know, we wanted a small wedding. Originally we going to have a really really small wedding and then I kind of decided, I couldn't not have my nieces there so we decided... it kind of got a bit bigger and that was my choice because we were originally just going to have the two witnesses and ourselves and have a very small, it got a bit bigger than that. So then we invited up my family, my two brothers, we had to invite Darren's, so it got a bit big, it was nice though and I think it was the right way to do it. Looking back now, it was a nice way to do it. And it was nice to do it in the Freemason's Hall because we were looking for a venue for ages obviously, so we wanted something special. Again, Darren surprised, to come with that. And actually when we got engaged, we got engaged in... we were over on the set of Coronation Street and we were walking up on the... doing the tour and there were two gentlemen with autism and I work with people with disability as well so I was talking to them about the different things about the set and we got into the Rover's pub and if you wanted a picture, you went behind. So Darren and myself went behind the bar and the guy who was doing the tour rang the bell and said somebody wants to make an important announcement and I'm looking around and next of all, Darren's started 'Fran, you've been watching Coronation Street more years than, you know...' and I was a bit taken aback [laughter] but the Rovers was full, it was like sitting on the TV, it was a TV set so it was like sitting in the actual, well it was the Rovers but it was like being on the programme, you know. We got a tremendous round of applause.

AB: Oh my goodness.

F: And the guy who was doing it said 'Our own piece of Corrie history' and then we walked out onto the street and there was a big round of applause out there, a wee cheer on the street for us, so it was a little bit dramatic as our life has been [laughter] so it was... we don't do things kind of normal, that way... it was nice, like your man said, a bit of Corrie drama.

[13:05]

AB: It's romantic.

F: But the day, now the day, I have to tell you. The day of the actual Marriage Equality [Referendum result], because Darren would say 'tell them the whole story'. The day of the Marriage Equality, we were up in City West and as I said I'm a counsellor so I was up at the count and Katherine Zappone was there, Leo Varadkar, it was a great celebration, they did a great bit of politics that day because I have different views than others and we were hugging each other and getting photographs and all this type of thing and I was sitting up with Darren and I said 'will we get married, I think maybe we should get married' and that was my proposal [laughter] no ring, nothing. We'll do this and that was why. So the day at the Rovers, Darren had the ring, of course, he was very organised so it was a little bit of a different proposal.

AB: So you proposed to each other.

F: We did. Yeah, I did propose but I didn't have the ring.

AB: And you're wearing the rings now. Are they the rings? They're beautiful. Would you describe it, Darren, please?

D: It's just a plain silver band with, like, leaves carved into it.

AB: Are they both the same?

F: Yeah, they are.

AB: Oh, my gosh. It's beautiful, thank you for showing it to me. And the leaves, have they any particular symbolism?

D: No.

F: Just something plain.

AB: Great, there was one question I wanted to ask you. You mentioned the registrar, was it?

F: Yeah.

AB: That that person was excited about...

F: Aw, she was fierce excited. She was more excited, she got really excited about the wedding, didn't she?

D: She did.

F: She was like 'at the Freemason's Hall, there's never...' Straight away, she said there's never been a wedding there, I want to do that wedding, you know, so. Whatever way she managed it but she managed to do it. We didn't mind who does it but she was the right person to do it. [To D] You might talk about the service?

AB: Yeah, just a little bit. Thanks, I'm just going to move this [the recorder] a wee bit closer to you.

D: Yeah, so, they gave us a standard format.

AB: Yeah.

D: for the wedding and then you can customise it yourself.

AB: Right.

D: So, we worked with them and we added in our own music and added in our own vows and at the end we asked for a handfasting, so basically that's when both partners hold hands and a rope is bound between the two hands just to bind them together and she was very accommodating.

F: Oh, she was, yeah.

D: She was lovely, I mean anything we wanted she was more than happy to oblige.

AB: Yeah, and music, what was... I'm curious about the music, what was... can you remember?

F: We got for the wedding, we didn't get live music, we had Boyzone – 'No Matter What'.

AB: Cool.

F: We had Maura O'Connell, my favourite, 'If you love me' [laughter] I'm not going to remember all the songs. We had 'Peaceful Waters Flow' Chris de Burgh. We had 'The Wonder of You' Elvis and the other song, can't remember now.

D: 'Never, ever and forever.'

AB: 'Never, ever and forever', yeah.

F: And it was lovely because my niece did a reading from the Bible and my other niece read a poem so it was nice to have a bit of everything. It was nice. It wasn't a religious service but it was nice to have a bit of everything in it. It was really special. And my other niece and nephew brought up a gift. One of them brought up a picture of my mother who's deceased so we had her on the stand, yeah, it was really nice wasn't it.

AB: What does it feel like now, just talking about it? You now going back into that space?

D: It's nice to remember. It was a beautiful day.

F: I suppose for Darren and myself, we've been so long together that it hasn't made a huge difference really in day-to-day life, you know what I mean, but it's nice to be able to be married. You know, it's nice to... Even if we never wanted to be married, it's nice to have the choice to be able to do it. It's nice to be like everybody else. There's people who decide not to get married and that's fine as well. Or whatever lifestyle. You know, but it kind of reaffirmed... I suppose, part of the whole thing of life is as you get older, you do think about well if anything happened, how would, you know... not that, my family are very good and Darren's family are very good but would Darren be ok, would we have a house together, so we have to look after that side of

it as well so, I suppose, there's a contentment that's sorted, you know what I mean, it won't be messy because you have to think of reality as well and things happen. But it's nice, there's a comfort in knowing that's sorted, which a lot less stressful.

[18.44]

D: But I think we were together for so long before we were able to get married that we'd done everything, we had established a house, we were living together, we had our own friends within the community. It was a wonderful, glorious day, and a great celebration but nothing actually really changed in our day-to-day lives. That day happened and we carried on as normal because we had already established our life together.

F: And it was impossible for people to buy wedding presents because we had everything.

[F, D, AB laughter]

F: We didn't need an ironing board or a toaster or any of this. We had so much, we really had too much, like we have our house in Clondalkin a good few years now and, like Darren said, we moved in about two weeks after we met. It was a very fast courtship but we stayed the pace. We've had a few rocky moments over the years but we stayed the pace and we're still together, so that's the main thing. But yeah, the house has been... as Darren said, we are very active in the community, we are very involved in a lot of things and overall we've had huge support in the community, really, haven't we? Even when we've had troubles, even when, you know, we had our home attacked and different things. The response back from the people of Clondalkin has been huge, you know hard to describe, it really is, isn't it? Even when we had recently... what real community is or what real family is. Even though we have our own families, there's a lot of people around us. We had Covid there recently the two of us so makes you very vulnerable, we'd a really bad dose of Covid both of us and we were in the house and really frustrated because you can't do the normal things you want to do. We had people leaving us food, fruit, come to do the shopping for us. It was incredible what people, you know, were happy to do, even the likes of local paper that I read every week, obviously as a counsellor I like to keep what's... so that was delivered to the door, that type of stuff --that's community, that's real family.

AB: Yeah, it is.

F: And we know, we never really ask, but if we were ever stuck, you can pick up the phone and say 'would you do this for me', we'd have people who'd do it. And same as if they needed something they know they could ring us as well. But that's real... being part of community and I suppose being able to get married is part of that as well.

AB: Exactly. So, you talked a lot Fran about how the photograph, the image, what it meant to you on the day.

F: Yeah.

AB: And this is a slightly different question is, what does it mean to you now? This is the object you brought in for the interview, both of you brought in. What does it mean to you now, given all that you've said.

[21.53]

F: Yeah, I think it's... it's a real sign of how far we've come. You know, people underestimate that because I've headed up the council and I've said it at different things I've been at, you know, for us to be able to get married had been a long, long battle, and I remember back to when Declan Flynn was murdered in Fairview Park, I remember David Norris when he started out, not started out but when he came on TV and when he started to talk about things that nobody else in the country was talking about. So... and people like Catherine Zappone when she came over, you know, she'd got married in Canada. That was the first time I remember thinking, gay people can get married, you know, I hadn't really thought about that before. And then I thought, yeah, why not? Of course, I should be the same as everybody else. So it is a sign, to me it's a symbol of, kind of, how far we've come. And I suppose we're very lucky in a lot of ways even though we have had some disagreements and that, we are very lucky that we have each other and very lucky that no matter what, over the years, we've always watched out for each other and looked after each other through our difficult times. [To D] Is that fair enough? [laughter]

Yeah, so you know, yeah, no, it does for me, it's a sign of how far we've come. No matter what you know, even like I said, the different homophobia stuff that's happened over the years. It's kind of just kept us together, I suppose. And it's made, I suppose, us even stronger within the community if you like I suppose nobody likes... you know people like to play for the underdog or play for somebody that's been attacked, and it made me realize how much good people there is around.

AB: Exactly.

F: And even during the Marriage Equality Referendum, because it does remind me of that, you know, it reminds of, I spent... anyway a lot of shoe leather walking Dublin Midwest during the Marriage Equality Referendum, I must have knocked on thousands of doors and coming in the time just exhausted, you know, just really mentally exhausted and you'd come home and you'd be... and then you'd go back knocking on doors and some days, you were kind of going, do I have to explain my life to people, do I have to ask for permission, it felt that way, you know, it felt that way at times. One or two doors, and given they were only one or two, do you knock you back. There was one house we went to and he said, you know, 'this is not right, you know it's not right' and all this type of stuff, and then another man quoted the Bible to me and told me I was changing the definition of marriage and all that. I said, 'it won't affect your marriage. If you're happy and content, you'll live the same life. You know, all I'm asking to do is the same.' Anyway, it is a sign of how far we've come but it's, yeah. I remember, sorry, the night before the Marriage Equality, I said to Darren, you know, what... and I was really tired and stressed and worried, I suppose, even though I was fairly confident that the Irish people would do the right thing in my head, but my heart was saying imagine it wasn't the vote, it wouldn't have made much of a difference to us. We would've continued on, we would've got there somewhere. What I was worried about was the younger generation. What would you say to younger people? You're not as equal as that person there? So you know, the results started coming in the next day, you can imagine the excitement. It really was buzzing at City West and even people that I would have been overly fond of, different politicians from different parties and stuff, but I maybe wouldn't be best friends with but we were hugging each other because it was a celebration. And it was a really amazing day and we came home and watched Vincent Brown was in the George that day and we watched it on telly and it was just... even Vince's emotions because he... I remember he actually said, 'I didn't realize it would mean so



much to so many'. And it really struck me that day and we went down to the local pub down in Clondalkin. [To D] And remember Quinlan's? The whole of Clondalkin was lit up with rainbow flags and you know, it was quite an event because having said when I walked through Clondalkin, you know, a long, long time ago and saw people being attacked because they were gay, you know, so things have changed.

[26:31]

And even... even my local school I went to... I went to the Marist Brothers in Clondalkin, Moyle Park, you know was the same as many schools back then. They had, I suppose a different way of teaching and a different education that wasn't always the most pleasant and most easy way to learn. But I was invited back there about four or five years ago now, and I walked down... the monk[?] led me down to the school, still the same but what was different when I approached the door, there was pride flags and transgender flags and that in a Marist Brothers school, so it shows how far we've come on and I don't underestimate that because that's huge progress, from statues that were quite daunting as a kid and these big posters or pictures of Jesus, you know, hell and condemnation and all this and suddenly you've got pride flags and transgendered, so we've moved a long way. This again, going back to the picture, is where I see that Ireland has moved on. We have a lot of battles ahead.

AB: I know.

F: There's a lot of stuff to do with transgender, transsexual. There's a lot of people don't understand, including myself sometimes. I don't understand all these different titles or names for want of a better word. But when I don't understand something I do say to people, at least have the decency to open your mind and say before you say something wrong or something... condemn something... step back and say yeah, because I remember a time in Ireland when being gay was condemned from the pulpits, condemned on television, so at least have the decency to kind of... and I think I'll try, anyway, I don't always get it right, but I try to understand, you know, whatever the label is, I don't understand all these labels, I don't understand what I call new labels. Maybe they're not new, maybe they're new to me, but you know, and we will, we'll get there, we'll get there. So it's important because, you know, younger people deserve the same and they deserve better chances than we ever had, deserve more openness in society and I think it's a better place for that.

AB: Darren, do you want to...?

D: I think now, anytime I see this photo there's still a little tiny buzz because, I keep using the term normal but we're like everyone else, around the house we have lots of pictures of us as a couple and I go into, like my brother's homes, or friends' homes and you see their wedding photos out on the side board, and now we have a wedding photo up. And it's different from the pictures of us just being together. It actually symbolizes something remarkable. So there's always that little tiny buzz when you see it, yeah, we did that.

AB: Yeah, yeah. I'm feeling emotional now just listening to you both, you know because... and hearing how you experienced that day and the consequences.

F: Yeah, it wasn't lost on us. I don't think.

AB: Not at all.

F: The funny thing, well not the funny thing. One of the... you know, as a counsellor, you've very little say in most things, you know, I'm a minority counsellor in South Dublin, I know that you can't change the world. There's loads of stuff I'd love to do but you've very limited power, you know, very limited say in a lot of things but one of the... two of the things I was able to do and probably been proudest, I was able to get the pride flag flown over County Hall which goes up every year now and the transgender flag, they mean a lot to people. Symbols mean a lot. And the amount of people that wrote to me after the wedding, that wrote to me after the trans flag, after the pride flag. I got incredible... I got some nasty letters as well but I got some incredible letters, the majority of them were and a lot of young people that wrote to me, particularly after the trans flag and said, you know, thanks for putting this up, it means an awful lot and I knew it would. I knew because symbols are important and symbolic stuff like that. So it is again, I keep saying, I think it's a sign we've come very far.

AB: And to keep going. To the next step. Whatever it is.

[31.06]

F: Oh, absolutely. It's all part of it. You know when you look at what's happening out in the Ukraine and stuff, freedom is a huge thing that was very hard fought for in so many countries, including Ireland that it's worth it, equality has been incredibly hard fought for and we need to keep that because... we need... something worth for fighting for, it's worth it to keep it as well. We have to have to keep it because the rise of extremism, but all this type of stuff does threaten the future for particularly young people, that's what I worry about now, my nieces and nephews, they'll have battles going ahead.

AB: So the last question that I have to ask, and it's a really interesting one. It's, again, you've answered it in different kinds of ways but I have to ask and it is why you chose this object, out of all that you possess to illustrate your view of family because our project is about family.

F: Yeah, you know, and Darren can answer as well, I mean, but again, going back sorry to the Marriage Equality Referendum campaign for that. At the time, when I was campaigning, I wasn't necessarily thinking about getting married, myself or us getting married. But I was convinced that it was the right thing and that everybody should have choice and I campaigned for the gender recognition bill, I campaigned for, you know, the right to adopt, you know, even though, that wouldn't really be in my plan to have children, I'm too busy, I probably... sometimes you think that that would be nice and all but they wouldn't... the reality of it wouldn't really appeal to me to be quite honest.

AB: You mean, to adopt?

F: Yeah, to adopt. Yeah to adopt children. But I... but again, I think, you know, kids need one good adult, two good adults so family can be... like I grew up in a time and very quickly without going into all the details. I grew up and spent some time in an institution because my mother wasn't married, so the condemnation again, particularly from the Catholic Church, but from society in general, was that that wasn't the normal family and, you know, she wasn't allowed to have her kids because, you know, they would be better off within an institution which obviously wasn't right, but then they'd be better off going to another family that you could call

'Mummy' and 'Daddy', but they weren't your family. So there is a kind of... you know, Darren and myself are family now, we're our family, you know. But we also have, you know, our nieces and nephews. Darren went up to see his nephews at the weekend. They're an important part of our life, part of our family but for us, I suppose, we're family, like. Darren is my best friend, we're together a long, long time now, I don't think I could imagine not being with Darren now at this stage. Even though I might give out all the time, but...

[34.33]

D: I think for me, family has... there's so many definitions of family. There's no one set definition. It can be single people with kids. It can be couples like us. And I don't think a wedding actually has anything to do with being in a family but what the wedding was, what that day was, was a celebration of our love for each other and that is what family is, it's about people that love each other. And that is why this represents family to us.

AB: Very well said. Yeah.

D: Thank you.

AB: Because in the project is recollecting or reconnecting, revisiting the Irish family because we know, as Leanne said, family has many different definitions and many different formations, to try and move away from...

F: Right up until, as you know, right up until the 1980s and 1990s even, when the vast institutions shut, the condemnation was horrendous. You know, like I had a neighbour next door who had her child taken off her in 1984 which is incredible, like really but, obviously that's had a big impact on me but that's different story for a different day but it hasn't been lost on me that some of the best people that you meet haven't grown up in the... in that family, because you know this thing, 'aw, we'll stay together for the sake of the child' and it's miserable for everybody because it's not a nice.

F: So family is about happiness, whether that's two people in the house, whether that's one person and they've got their family outside, they live in their house or a family with kids or whatever definition it is, two male, two female, whatever it is, it's about happiness and it's about community really, because I'd be lost anyway without having that. I like to go out, I like to meet people and they're my extended family even though we're not blood related, some of them are closer to me probably than my own family, although you can cut that part out [laughter].

AB: Yeah, it will be edited don't worry.

F: Ah, they'll know that anyway. But that's what it is, it's about having friends, it's about having people you can call on in a time of illness or a time of sadness or whatever, and you can, I suppose, walk the journey together. So yeah, that's family.

[37.14]

AB: So, we're beginning to wrap up the interview. So, so looking back on what we've talked about. Is there something else you want to add or keeping in mind our listeners that you know...

F: [to D] anything else you want to add?

AB: or just comes to mind or something that you're thinking about?

F: No, I suppose, what we need now, today, especially after the events of the last few weeks, because they've been quite horrendous, and they've had a huge impact on the LGBT community and people who have messaged and are frightened. Because the battle doesn't stop, we will get to a day, there'll always be some people that will, you know, homophobic but we do need robust hate legislation. I really believe... I don't believe they'll stop hate but it'll definitely send out a clear signal that we're a state that doesn't allow, or doesn't condone, the behaviour of, you know, condemning people because of their sexuality, and so there's no room for homophobic, biphobia, transphobia or any form of racism in a modern Republic. So I think that's kind of the last way because we want families to live but you have to live in a place that you feel safe. You feel loved and you feel valued and to be part of the community but you also just want to be safe in that community. And there's huge progress again. So you know, because, as a counsellor, I know that even within the Guards there's huge progress made in terms of education and there's huge... I was lucky with the council as well to have a motion down, which all the counsellors supported and they got what I was saying that we put in our county development plan that South Dublin was a safe place for LGBT and one or two maybe had said what's the point of putting that in a county development but I think it's really important, and particularly after the events of the last few weeks. I think it's important that we keep that conversation going and of course schools, the progress, as I mentioned in the school I went to, that progress will lead to great... you know, because at the end of the day, I suppose freedom to be able to express yourself, in whatever form that is. I think it's healthy and I think it's... we should be, you know, we should be, I suppose, exploring that more when we're younger. And you know, the amount of people in Ireland that lived in relationships, and I knew a lot of people that got married are that weren't happy and were LGBT and felt they had to get married because that was the norm, so, you know, to be able to live the life that you're supposed to live or that you're happy in because you can't be that. Because we only get one go with this. This is... we're not... this is not a dress rehearsal. This is life. So each person needs to be able to live the best life they can.

AB: Thank you, Fran. Darren, is there anything else? So thank you both very much.

F: Thank you.

AB: So we'll just formally end the interview.

[40:43]