



# **BeLonG To Youth Services** Annual Review 2010

Supporting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Young People in Ireland Parliament House 13 Parliament Street Dublin 2. Ireland Tel: +353 1 6706223 Fax: +353 1 670 6219 Email: info@belongto.org Web: www.belongto.org

Supporting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Young People in Ireland

is the national organisation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender (LGBT) young people in Ireland

BeLonG To Youth Services is the national organisation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender (LGBT) young people in Ireland. We believe that LGBT young people need to be respected and cared for on the same basis as all other young people, and that when they are safe and supported in their families, schools and society they will thrive as healthy and equal citizens.

We provide direct youth work services to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual &Transgender young people across Ireland. These are spaces where LGBT young people can meet each other, get involved in activities and see that their identities and selves are valuable and important. Because we believe that the problems which LGBT young people experience are largely due to negative societal attitudes, we also work to change these attitudes. This is done by training teachers, youth workers and other professionals who work with young people. We also run awareness campaigns in schools and youth services and advocating and working with government departments, politicians and Non-Governmental Organisations to ensure that Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual &Transgender young people are heard so that positive social change occurs.

#### Vision

BeLonG To's vision is for an Ireland where Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender young people are empowered to embrace their development and growth confidently and to participate as agents of positive social change.

## **Our Mission is**

To provide safe and fun services to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender young people in Ireland which:

- Facilitate them through exploration, development and growth
- Enable them to access all their rights as equal citizens
- Empower them to participate as agents of positive social change

• and to provide advocacy and a campaigning voice so that society respects Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual &Transgender young people as full and valued members

#### Theory of Change

When Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender young people are safe and supported in their families, schools and society they will thrive as healthy and equal citizens.

# September 2011

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For any enquiries or to obtain additional copies of the Annual Review, please contact:

### **BeLonG To Youth Services**

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BeLonG To Youth Services is jointly funded by the One Foundation, The Ireland Funds, HSE - National Office for Suicide Prevention, Office of the Minister for Children & Youth Affairs, the North Inner City Drugs Taskforce, the European Commission under the European Refugee Fund and is supported by the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration in the Department of Justice and Equality and Pobal.

Introduction & Overview



# **Chairperson's Introduction**

It gives me great pleasure as Chairperson to present the BeLonG To Youth Services Annual Report for 2010. This has been a really exciting and eventful year for BeLonG To and the report sets out the key activities and achievements for the year.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank the staff of BeLonG To for their extraordinary energy, commitment and enthusiasm under the inspired leadership of our Executive Director Michael Barron. This report is a tribute to their work.

I would like to express sincere appreciation to all our funders who are named in this report without whose generous support all of the work outlined here would not be possible.

I would like to thank my fellow Board members for their dedication, commitment and unfailing good humour, they make BeLonG To board meetings a happy duty.

And finally, thank you to our young people here at BeLonG To who are at the heart of the organisation and who provide us with the inspiration and vision that underlies all of our work. We look forward to continuing to work in partnership with our funders, friends and allies to ensure that all LGBT young people in Ireland have the opportunity to enjoy life to the full as equal and integrated members of our society

Anna Quigley. Chairperson

# **Executive Director's Overview**

At BeLonG To we work with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender young people to make Ireland safe and equal place for them. 2010 was a hugely important year in our work to make this a reality. In late 2008 we received a major investment from the One Foundation and 2010 was the year when the worked which this support allowed came to fruition. The numbers of young people accessing our direct youth services almost doubled and our National Network of LGBT youth groups grew from five to eight groups.

This growth was in part due to the huge success of the documentary series Growing Up Gay, which we worked with Crossing the Line Productions and RTE to produce. The series was viewed by 1 in 10 of the population, while 1 in 4 people in Ireland viewed our related feature on the Late Late Show.

In 2010 we launched Stand Up! LGBT Awareness Week. Hollywood actor Colin Farrell's support for the campaign meant that it, and Irish LGBT young people, received great national and international attention. 2010 was a year when LGBT young people became a visible and central focus, both in public discussion and in policy development. This development included The Office for the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs adopting tackling homophobic bullying as a core issue and producing guidelines to combat it. It also allowed us to successfully apply and win funding for a new LGBT Asylum Seekers and Refugee project.

2010 was also a difficult year for BeLonG To, and for all charities and NGOs in Ireland due to very significant reductions in government funding to the sector. I would like to commend the Board and staff at BeLonG To for taking brave and decisive action to ensure that LGBT young people did not suffer because of this. These actions included implementing major savings in core running costs and staff agreeing to take a significant percentage pay reduction. In this context the growth of supports to LGBT young people in Ireland is all the more remarkable.

As Executive Director it is my great pleasure to work with such a truly remarkable and dedicated team of staff, Board and volunteers. It is also an absolute privilege to have the opportunity to work with such brave and socially conscious young people. I think this report is a testament to what is possible when young people and adults work in partnership to make Ireland a better place.

Michael Barron, Executive Director

Because all young people deserve an equal shot at life...



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# Somewhere "I" BeLonG To

What our members have to say...









# Aodhán - age 20

"When I first came to BeLonG To I wasn't 'out.' I was really frightened. But I met people who sat down and told me their stories. It was just amazing and it made things a lot easier. My best friend held my hand through the whole journey and said, 'I love you for who you are, not what you are."

# Patrick - age 18

"I was bullied in school. It was disheartening to be bullied in front of teachers who didn't do anything about it. I realise it wasn't because they didn't care, but because they didn't have any training on how to deal with the situation. I challenged my school at the top level but the bullying continued and I eventually left school early. It was BeLonG To that finally helped me. Today, I'm continuing my education and I'm in college."

### Seán - age 20

"I was terrified when I first came in. But the youth workers here at BeLonG To let me open up when I was ready. The friends that I've made and the way I have grown as a person have given me confidence."

# Ruth - age 19

"I had a really tough time in school. I was on the verge of being expelled because I had come out to my friends but was so down I didn't want to go to school. I finally told my mom I had something to tell her. She said, 'you're gay?' She had already known, but was just waiting for me to say it. It was hard for her at first but she has come to terms with it. Today, both she and my dad just want me to be happy."

# **Coming-Out Younger**

The average age of a service user now at 16...

# **Coming Out Younger**

In 2010 we witnessed two major shifts in BeLonG To. Firstly the numbers of young people accessing our services increased beyond our expectations practically overnight in response to the documentary series Growing Up Gay which aired on RTE in April; and secondly the age profile of young people using our services dropped a staggering 18 months over the year with the average age of a service user now at 16, with most young people accessing BeLonG To for the first time being 14-15.

## Youth Leadership & Empowerment

Core to our work is empowering Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender young people to act as agents of their own positive social change. In 2010 our youth leadership programmes excelled and produced:

• The first all Ireland residential for Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender young women. This project was youth led, from sourcing the funding, to planning and delivery.

• A youth led campaign by Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender young women for positive recognition of their identities which engaged thousands in LBT women's issues.

• A peer led youth project to tackle drug misuse among their peer group which dramatically increased awareness among LGBT young people around drug misuse.

• A peer led youth project to engage young people in HIV and Sexual Health Awareness which heightened awareness among participants around sexual health and HIV in particular.

• 32 new Youth Facilitators were trained accross the country joining the existing team. Youth Facilitators act as peer educators and leaders within the organisation and receive intensive support and training for their roles throughout the year.

### **Skill Development**

As part of our mission to facilitate the growth of LGBT young people we consider how we can equip them with new and practical skills and opportunities to experience different careers so they can make informed decisions about their futures. In 2010 we ran over 30 projects in this area, here are just two examples:

• Reel Youth - This partnership project with other youth services allows young people to engage in scripting their own short film and work through filming, producing and editing their own short film.

• GCN Youth Issue - Each autumn LGBT young people work with the wonderful team at Gay Community News (GCN) and produce the annual 'youth issue'. This programme supports young people to explore journalism, media, photographic skills and project management, while they produce a high quality national newspaper.

# **Supporting Young People and Mental Health Promotion**

Throughout our work with LGBT young people we constantly engage in supporting their positive mental health. 153 young people availed of one-to-one support in relation to their mental health from our Youth Work Team. Our online support service pilot project was successfully completed.

Look After Yourself Look After Your Mental Health, the first booklet promoting positive mental health among LGBT people in Ireland was published and disseminated nationwide through public libraries and LGBT organisations and projects.

### **Drugs Education and Outreach Service**

Supported through the NICDTF (North Inner City Drugs Task Force), this remains the only LGBT drugs awareness service in Ireland. As well as individual support, the programme engaged 80 young people in a peerled substance awareness programme. In addition to this training for young people, the programme also responded to requests from outside agencies, to facilitate awareness training on LGBT drug users. More than 150 participants were trained at a series of successful events run throughout the year.

# **National Network of LGBT Groups**

31% of The Country Has Access!

### On the Birth of the National Network - Eoin's story

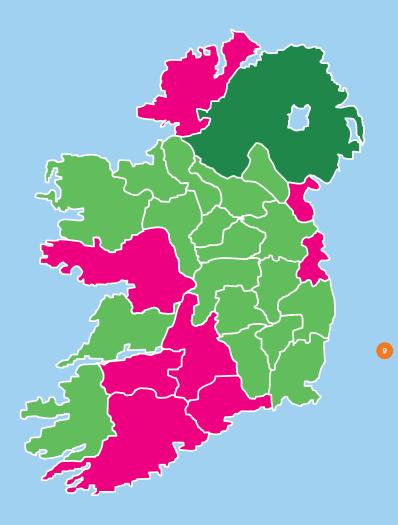
Since we opened our doors in Dublin in 2003 we welcomed amazing young people from all over the country. One such young person was Eoin, who on most Sundays in 2004 and 2005 would get on a train in Mayo and make the four hour journey to Dublin to attend our BeLonG To Sunday group. He would stay for two hours of the group and before it ended he would head back to Heuston Station and take the four hour journey home again. This remarkable young man needed support from LGBT peers so badly that he would spend eight hours travelling to participate in a two hour group. At the time there was no LGBT youth group anyway near him, or in fact anywhere in the West of Ireland. Eoin, and many others, inspired us to develop what has become BeLonG To's National Network of LGBT youth groups. We believe that all LGBT young people have the right to a safe space in their own area.

#### 31% of the country has access to an LGBT Youth Group

The BeLonG To Starter pack and accreditation scheme continued to act as a template for the development of new youth service around the country in 2010. Using the pack, the Network Manager continued to offer existing groups on-going support, and new groups a template on which to build safe and appropriate youth services. In 2010 a second LGBT youth group opened its doors in Donegal, and the Dundalk group, AIM, became the third group to achieve BeLonG to accreditation.

The national network of LGBT youth groups met four times during 2010, offering workers from around the country the opportunity to meet up for support, information exchange and to work on projects together. Two national youth events were facilitated, a residential youth leadership course which was held in Dublin, and groups from around the country descended on Sligo, for a special youth-friendly pride festival, run in conjunction with North West Pride.

By the close of 2010 there were 7 groups up and running outside of Dublin. Start up pack development work had commenced with 4 new groups, and the demand for network services continued to increase.



## Youth Groups in Ireland

Dublin Louth Cork Waterford Galway Donegal Limerick Tipperary

# Stand Up!

# Don't Stand For Homophobic Bullying 2010



In 2010, we launched, Stand Up! Don't Stand for Homophobic Bullying. During 2009 we had researched with LGBT young people what were the interventions that most helped when they were experiencing homophobic bullying, and when they were coming out. Young people clearly indicated that they greatest support for them came from their closest friends. Because of this we designed Stand Up! – a campaign which promotes friendship amongst young people as a way to combat homophobic bullying.

On the ground the campaign was a great success in its first year - engaging 2,100 young people in 230 youth services nationwide.

Online Stand Up! was also a huge success, with our series of online films (Stand Up! My Best Friend) being viewed over 30,000 times and with over 30,000 visits to our website over 2 weeks. Long Grass Productions, who made our short films, went on to produce a feature length documentary of Stand Up! My Best Friend which went on to be shown at film festivals in New York and Berlin.

# Colin Farrell Endorsed Stand Up!

This made global news and Colin later talked openly on the Ellen Degeneres Show describing when growing up in Dublin how his gay brother experienced homophobic bullying:

"The taunting and beatings were very frequent for him, and a constant part of his school years. I didn't understand at the time, the concept of difference. Back then, as now, he was just my big brother. Intolerance is not genetically encoded, it is taught. It is learned at home, in the classroom and anywhere else that we gather as a group. But it is usually learned early and added on to from there. If there is nothing to fear, then there is nothing to hate"



### **Growing Up Gay**

Growing up Gay, a two-part documentary series was broadcast on RTÉ 1 on April 19th and 26th. The series allowed LGBT young people to tell in their own words what it is like for them growing up in Ireland today. Developed by Crossing the Line Productions with us over four years, the documentary followed a number of young people over a two year period, all of whom were involved in BeLonG To and the National Network.

Because of the huge viewership figures, Growing Up Gay has been described as 'the most gay ever in Irish living rooms!' and went a long way to challenging the invisibility and stigma which LGBT young people experience in Irish society.

Growing Up Gay subsequently went on to win 'Best TV Programme of the Year' in the Irish Entertainment Awards and 'Event of the Year' at the Gay and Lesbian Awards (GALAS)









**Policy & Strategy** 

### **National Alcohol & Drugs Strategies**

Through our submission to the public consultation process and colloboration with young people and other LGBT Organisations, LGBT people are included in both the National Alcohol and Drugs Strategies.

# **Gender Identity Advisory Group**

Both young people and staff developed a submission and presented to the Gender Identity Advisory Group, articulating the needs of transgender young people.

#### LGBT Refugees & Asylum Seekers

Since BeLonG To's inception we have worked with young LGBT refugees and asylum seekers in Ireland. In 2010 we successfully secured funding from the European Refugee Fund, Pobal and the HSE to develop Ireland's forst LGBT Refugee and Asylum Seekers Project.

### **National Youth Work Advisory Committee**

We have been members of the National Youth Work Advisory Committee (NYWAC) since 2007. This committee advises the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs on the direction of supports for young people in Ireland. In 2010 we worked to develop an Equality subgroup of this committee to work to embed equality across national youth policy. This work supported the development of close working relationships with other national youth organisations and with the Office for the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs. It also resulted in the development of guidelines for tackling homophobia in youth services. 11



### LGBT School Curriculum

Our engagement with strategic partners has led to the development of the first resources on LGBT Issues for the Social Personal & Health Education Programmes (SPHE) in post primary schools in Ireland. These resources will become part of the school curriculum and will be used in the classroom to address LGBT issues.

# Office for the Minister for Children's Addressing Homophobia Guidelines

This resource for the youth sector in Ireland is designed to assist youth workers and leaders to combat homophobic bullying they encounter in their youth service. Copies were distributed to all Youth Projects, Clubs and Organisations in Ireland. It was produced with and by the Office for the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs and was launched by Minister Barry Andrews TD.

### IGLYO

In September 2010 we nominated a staff member to the Board of the International LGBTQ Youth & Student Organisations. This stronger link with IGLYO has allowed us to forge relationships with other LGBT youth organisations across Europe and facilitated the distribution of knowledge and experience which is already having positive impacts on our work. Our work within IGLYO supports the development of LGBTQ youth organisations in Eastern Europe and further afield with experience, expertise, advice, training and development.

#### **Love Action**

Love Action was a colloborative campaign involving BeLonG To, Irish Council for Civil Liberities, LGBT Noise, MarriagEquality, Gay Community News, GLEN & the National Lesbian & Gay Federation. The campaign had three core themes; Equality for Same Sex Relationships, Diverse Familities and LGBT Young People. We ran a series of activities for for Valentines Day and at the Electric Picnic and Milk music festivals.

### **IDAHO**

The International Day Against Homophobia takes place on the 17th of May each year. In 2010 we along with a coalition of other LGBT organisations in Ireland chose to foucs our campaign on combatting Transphobia and distributed 10,000 postcards across Dublin and held a rally at the General Post Office to raise awareness of Trans issues.

Training & The Cathal Ryan Award

## Training

In 2010 we trained over 3,000 professionals – mostly teachers and youth workers.

BeLonG To's training is tailored to each particular group's needs. Participatory in approach, the training allows professionals the space to safely explore issues in regard to working with LGBT youth. The training covers topics such as language and terminology, mental health, coming out and dealing with homophobic bullying.

Highlights and Innovations of the training calendar in 2010;

• Successful completion of a joint training project with the National Association of Principals, training teams of principals and students.

• 1st 'whole school' project successfully completed, training provided across all disciplines from teachers, management, students and parents.

• Over 3,000 professionals working with young people were trained during 2010.

#### **Captain Cathal Ryan Award**

Our Executive Director, Michael Barron, was the 2009 recipient of the Captain Cathal Ryan Award for Social Entrepreneurship. This was awarded from The One Foundation, The Ryan Family, and Social Entrepreneurship Ireland.

The award offered Michael and BeLonG To huge opportunities, and as a result in 2010 Michael:

• Participated in an executive education programme for NGO leaders at UPEACE, the United Nations mandated university for peace in Costa Rica.

• Travelled to New York to visit foundations and international LGBT and Human Rights organisations.

• Spent time in South Africa, working with Gay and Lesbian Memory in Action in Johannesburg and The Triangle Project in Cape Town.

**Communications & Media** 





















#### **Ethos behind our Communications**

BeLonG To uses communication tools to normalise the lives of LGBT young people to the general public, support LGBT young people with positive messages, and highlight that prejudice, intolerance or the denial of LGBT young people has serious negative consequences and must be reversed.

BeLonG To's media strategy satisfies multiple objectives including;

- Normalising LGBT young people's identities
- Prioritising LGBT youth issues
- Conveying the negative impact of homophobic attitudes.

• Supporting LGBT young people with positive messages, images and resources.

• Positioning of BeLonG To in the hearts and minds of press, public and policy makers.

## **Media & Public Relations**

The most significant single media event for BeLonG To in 2010 was our appearance on the Late Late Show where 1 in 4 Irish people tuned in to watch two young people from BeLonG To being interviewed about the issues LGBT young people in Ireland face and their own lived experience growing up in Ireland.

BeLonG To has cemented itself as the leading experts on the issues faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender young people in Ireland and our staff contribute regularly in interviews for print and broadcast media. In 2010 BeLonG To gave a total of 89 interviews.

### **Information Support**

We regularly receive queries from members of the public, individuals from other organisations, government agencies and departments of academic and research staff. Staff members normally refer such queries where appropriate or assist the enquirer to resolve their issue. BeLonG To continued to receive frequent and varied queries throughout 2010, nearly 300 queries in all were received throughout the year.







Income & Expenditure 2010

Income & Expenditure Account for the year ended 31st December, 2010

Income	2010	2009
State Grants	336,782	377,488
Philantrphic Grants	250,000	125,00
Donations	56,303	10,493
	643,085	512,981
Expenditure		
Programme Costs	517,486	567,754
Administration Costs	121,379	128,339
	638,865	696,093
Excess of Income Over Expenditure	4,229	-183,112
Revenue Reserves at 01/01/10	119,920	303,032
Revenue Reserves at 31/12/10	124,149	119,920

Expenses incurred in 2011 have been offset against revenue in 2010 leaving a reckonable reserve of 34,099 at the end of 2010

# Balance sheet for year ended 31st December, 2010

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Fixed Assets	2010	2009
Tangible Assets	11,148	19,216
Current Assets		
Debtors & Prepayments	18,000	28,502
Cash at Bank	212,638	80,839
Cash on Hand	441	1
	231,079	109,342
Creditors - Failing due within 1 Year	-37,578	-8,638
Net Current Assets	193,501	100,704
Total Assets Less Current Liabilities	204,649	11,920
Deferred Income	-80,500	0
Net Assets	124,149	119,920
Democrated Dr.		
Represented By		
Revenue By	124,149	119,920

# **Finance** BeLonG To Funders







**Core Funders / Project Funders** 

# **Core Funders**

# The One Foundation

- Office of the Minister for Children & Youth Affairs
- Health Services Executive National Office for Suicide Prevention
- North Inner City Drugs Taskforce
- European Commission via Pobal European Refugee Fund
- Health Services Executive Health Promotion Office

## **Project Funders**

- European Commission PROGRESS PROGRAMME 2007 2013
- Equality Authority Equality Innovation Fund
- The Ireland Funds
- Starbucks Realising Potential Grant
- Dún Laoghaire/ Rathdown County Council
- Health Services Executive North East Region
- ESB Electric Aid
- The Irish Film Board
- Health Services Executive National Office for Suicide Prevention
- Cobranding Group
- Office of the Minister for Children & Youth Affairs
- Dublin City Council Office for Integration
- Dublin City Council Community Support Office
- Irish Youth Foundation
- Dublin LGBTQ Pride Festival
- Google Ireland
- The George Bar
- Spin 103.8

is the national organisation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender (LGBT) young people in Ireland

#### **Board Members**

At BeLonG To Youth Services Annual General Meeting on the 6th of September 2010 the following Directors were re-elected:

Chairperson	Anna Quigley
Company Secretary	Billy Rabbit
Treasurer	Aodhan Bourke
Director	Maureen Looney
Director	Susan Donlon
Director	Brian Hewson
Director	Billy Redmond
Director	Aidan Harney
Director	Emily Scanlan

#### Governance

At all times BeLonG To aspires to the highest standard of governance at every level in the organisation. Following a review, the Board decided to establish a permanent finance and fundraising group to support the work of the staff team in ensuring the organisations continued financial sustainability.

There were ten meetings of the Board in 2010. BeLonG To extends its thanks to all Board Members for their work during the year and for their continuing involvement and support.

### Staff Members

The staff team within the organisation is listed below. BeLonG To's staff participated in many training and development programmes in 2010 relevant to their roles.

Michael Barron

Executive Director
National Network Manager
Advocacy Coordinator
Office Manager
Project Leader
Training Officer
Drugs Officer
Youth Worker
Youth Worker

David Carroll Carol-Anne O Brien Oisín O' Reilly **Glenn Keating** Orla Egan Morley (until Oct) **Gillian Brien** Lisa Mc Kenny John Duffy

### **Internships & Work Experience**

In 2010 BeLonG To was fortunate to benefit from the opportunity to host a number of interns and students on placement from NUI Maynooth. Our Internship Programme has become a staple part our of service delivery plan each year and we as an organisation are delighted to be in a position to offer support and experience to aspiring youth workers and community activists throughout the year.

# Affiliations

BeLonG To is affiliated with or is a member of many other national and international non-governmental organisations. Below you will find a list of organisations of which BeLonG To is a member:

National Youth Council of Ireland International LGBTQ Youth & Student Organisation International Lesbian & Gay Association **Dublin LGBTQ Pride Festival Gay Health Network Children's Rights Alliance** Volunteering Ireland Irish Association of Suicidality The Wheel **Fundraising Ireland** HSE Technology For Well-being group LGBT Diversity

**Advertising & Campaign** Samples 2010



One In Five LGBT People Skip School Because They Fear Being Bullied.





BeLonG To are making real progress in making Ireland a better, safer and more Equal place for LGBT young people. This past year the number of young people being supported by BeLonG To has more than doubled. At the same time our funding has been cutback by a fifth.

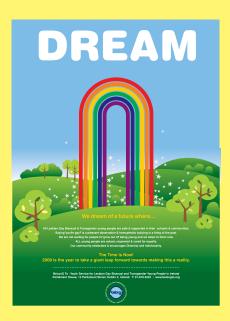
Because of this we need your help to continue to provide this support our young people.

Please Donate by visiting **www.belongto.org** Or send what you can to: **Belong To Youth Services,** 



"People would try to feel me up in the corridors which was humiliating, especially when teachers saw & would ignore it. It was unnerving to have totally disgusting things said in my ear. It felt really degrading to be defined by all these gay sex jokes"

Bisexual and Transpender Young Peop blin 2, Belandi Tri co-670 6223 / Veren













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