

Our Community

All-Ireland findings from the 2010 European MSM Internet Survey (EMIS)

Man2Man: Report One

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Our Community

'Our Community' is the first of four thematic reports to be published in the 'Man2Man' series. These reports aggregate data generated in the 2010 European MSM Internet Survey (EMIS), and represent the largest ever research sample of men who have sex with men (MSM) across the 32 counties of Ireland. These reports contain information relevant to those working with improving the sexual health and well-being of MSM and presents evidence relevant to policy and programme design for gay and bisexual men in both Northern Ireland (NI) and the Republic of Ireland (RoI).

The EMIS data was significant to the development of the first National HIV Preventions and Sexual Health Programme for MSM in Ireland, a joint initiative by the Gay Health Network and Health Service Executive (HSE). Launched on 1st. December, 2011, World AIDS Day, this year-long social media campaign is available at www.man2man.ie

Thank you!

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Man2Man Report 1:	Our Community	
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GMHS, GHN and the Rainbow Project would like to acknowledge all of you who completed the questionnaire; the HIV, sexual health and LGBT groups and organisations, social venues and websites who promoted the survey in Ireland and the scientists who organised and conducted EMIS between 2009 and 2011: Axel J. Schmidt (Project co-ordination); Ulrich Marcus (Project initiation and supervision); Peter Weatherburn (Promotion co-ordination); Ford Hickson and David Reid (Technical implementation); Harm J. Hospers (Questionnaire drafting).

The EMIS survey - Introduction:

The European MSM Internet Survey (EMIS) was a joint project of academic, governmental, and non-governmental partners from 33 countries in Europe (EU and neighbouring countries) to simultaneously run an online questionnaire in 25 different languages. This pan-European survey collected information on the knowledge, attitudes, needs and behaviours of men who have sex with men (MSM), including those who identify as gay or bisexual, in relation to HIV, sexual health, and well-being. The EMIS questionnaire was available online between June 4 and August 31, 2010. Following the slogan **“Be part of something huge!”** more than 180,000 MSM living in 35 European countries completed the survey, making EMIS the largest international study ever conducted on MSM.

The all-Ireland context

The lead agency, the Gay Men’s Health Service (GMHS) - Health Service Executive (HSE) - collaborated with the Gay Health Network (GHN) and the Rainbow Project NI in producing additional analysis and reporting for the all-Ireland dataset.

Overall, there were a total of 2,610 valid respondents - 2,194 (RoI) and 416 (NI).

This represents the largest ever all-Ireland sample of MSM – more than double the previous largest sample held in the year 2000 (1,290 respondents), and four times greater than the last internet survey held in 2008 (n=689). Previous all-Ireland surveys include: Vital Statistics (2000); Real Lives (2003 & 2004); Real Lives 2 (2005 & 2006); Real Lives 3 (2007 & 2008). According to EMIS, the response in the Republic of Ireland was the fourth highest among all the survey countries, with an estimated response rate of 5.1 per 10,000 inhabitants in the general population. This equates to roughly 5% of the MSM population, based on an MSM population estimate of 3% of the male population.¹

From this dataset, a further three thematic reports will be released with key findings and programme-level recommendations intended to both help equip the MSM community in Ireland, as well as to provide evidence-based data and analysis to inform policy and programme design directed at MSM, particularly for those who are gay and bisexual. These four reports compare equivalent data sets from previous similar surveys as appropriate.

As an internet-based survey, recruitment was focused online: 70% of participants were directed to the questionnaire from advertisements on international gay websites Gaydar (39%), Manhunt (17%), and GayRomeo (14%). The remaining respondents were directed from advertisements on various national and local LGBT community and HIV-related websites (e.g. Gay Health Network, GCN, QueerID, Gaire), or from posters and postcards distributed in various gay venues advertising the survey. The methods used to carry out the survey are described in detail in the full European report to be released later.

Country of residence	# of respondents	%
Northern Ireland (NI)	416	15.9
Republic of Ireland (RoI)	2194	84.1
Total	2610	100.0

This first report describes the final sample of 2,610 participants. To be included in this report, respondents had to: be male; be living in Northern Ireland (NI) or the Republic of Ireland (RoI); have had sex with a man in the last year or have a gay, bisexual or other ‘queer’ identity (it is notable that the EMIS survey does not disaggregate transgender data). Almost all participants in this study were men (99.5%), while transgender people accounted for 0.5% of the total sample. All transgender respondents (n=12) indicated that they were living in the Republic of Ireland.

As the questionnaire was available in 25 different languages, approximately 8% of respondents answered the questionnaire in a language other than English, including Polish (1.7%) and Portuguese (1.3%). While the sample is almost four times greater than the sample in 2008, the proportion of respondents from RoI and NI is similar.

The sample is further described in this report using the following demographic characteristics: *area of residence; age; country of birth; education, employment & living arrangements; sexual attraction, identity & behaviour; 'outness' & friendships; relationships & sexual partners; HIV & STI testing history.*

¹ EMIS Community Report 1, 2011: http://www.emis-project.eu/sites/default/files/public/publications/EMIS_2010_CommunityReport1_Ireland_0.pdf

1. Area of Residence

Respondents from the RoI were asked: **'Which county do you live in?'** and those from NI were asked: **'Which district council or local authority area do you live in?'** This information was used to determine which Health and Social Care Trust (HSC) region in NI or Health Service Executive (HSE) region in the RoI the respondents lived in. *(For the purposes of this report, Dublin City and County is used as a single area of residence and Tipperary is included in the HSE South region, as these counties are split between two HSE regions.)*

Table 1.A

Area of residence by Health and Social Care Trust (NI) (n=416)	% Overall	Area of residence by Health Service Executive region (RoI) (n=2194)	% Overall
Belfast HSC	34.9	Dublin City and County	46.1
Northern HSC	22.8	HSE Mid-Leinster	6.7
South Eastern HSC	9.9	HSE North East	5.2
Southern HSC	15.1	HSE West	11.2
Western HSC	11.5	HSE South	17.4
Unknown	5.8	Unknown	13.4

Survey respondents were dispersed across Ireland, representing all 32 counties. Overall, almost half of respondents from the RoI were living in Dublin City and County (46.1%); in Northern Ireland, over a third of respondents lived in Belfast (34.9%). Compared to previous surveys, there is a slight increase in the proportion of respondents from regions with historically lower numbers of respondents (i.e. HSE North East and Western HSC).

Participants were also asked: **'How would you describe the place you live?'** Five options were given: *A very big city or town (a million or more people); A big city or town (500,000-999,999); A medium-sized city or town (100,000-499,999); A small city or town (10,000-99,999); A village or the countryside (less than 10,000 people).*

Table 1.B

Area of residence by approximate population size (n=2523, missing 78)	% Overall	% by country	
		NI (n=401)	RoI (n=2122)
1,000,000 or more people	33.0	4.5	38.4
500,000-999,999 people	13.0	20.7	11.6
100,000-499,999 people	15.7	32.4	12.5
10,000-99,999 people	20.7	27.9	19.3
Less than 10,000 people	17.6	14.5	18.2

Overall, the distribution of respondents by population size is relatively even: the exception being a third of respondents in the RoI indicating from a 'very big city' - Dublin being the only city fitting this criteria. *(Note: some discrepancies exist in the self-reporting of population bands – there is no NI city with a million and no second city in RoI with 500,000.)*

2. Age

The survey asked: **'How old are you?'** and requested participants to enter their age. The overall average age was 33.2 years, with the median age being 31 years, meaning that half of respondents were aged 31 years or younger. This information was used to allocate respondents to different age groups, as identified in the following table.

Table 2

Age groups (n=2610, missing 0)	% Overall	% by country	
		NI (n=416)	RoI (n=2194)
19 years old or under	7.1	8.4	6.8
20 – 24 years old	18.1	20.4	17.6
25 – 29 years old	19.3	15.6	20.0
30 – 39 years old	28.4	25.5	28.9
40 – 49 years old	18.2	18.3	18.2
50 years old or over	9.0	11.8	8.4

The most represented five-year age group overall was 25-29 with 19% of respondents, followed by 18% aged 20-24. Overall, one-quarter of respondents were aged 24 years or younger (25.2%). This represents a slightly older sample compared to the 2008 survey, where almost one-third of respondents were aged 24 year or younger.

3. Country of Birth

Respondents were asked: **'Which country they were born in?'** Respondents who were born outside of the island of Ireland represented 20% of the total sample (n=506), with 92% residing in the Republic of Ireland. Among those born abroad, almost one-quarter (23.3%) were born in England, Scotland or Wales. This was followed by those born in a Central European country (18.0%), Western Europe (16.8%), Latin America and the Caribbean (11.1%), and Canada and the USA (6.3%).

Table 3

Region of Birth (n=2536, missing 74)	% Overall	% by country	
		NI (n=404)	RoI (n=2132)
Ireland	80.0	90.3	78.1
England, Scotland, Wales	4.7	3.5	4.9
Central Europe	3.6	1.0	4.1
Western Europe	3.4	1.2	3.8
Latin America & Caribbean	2.2	0.2	2.6
Canada & USA	1.3	0.2	1.5
Eastern Europe	1.1	0.0	1.3
Africa	0.9	0.0	1.1
Western Pacific	0.7	0.7	0.8
Australia & New Zealand	0.4	1.0	0.3
Eastern Mediterranean	0.4	0.0	0.4
South East Asia	0.3	0.5	0.2

The sample of 506 respondents born outside of Ireland included those born in a total of 65 different countries worldwide. Following those born in England, Scotland, or Wales (23.3%), the greatest proportion of respondents born outside of Ireland were from Poland (11.9%), Brazil (7.3%), Germany (5.3%), United States of America (5.1%), Italy (4.2%), France (3.6%), and Spain (3.4%).

4. Education, Employment & Living Arrangements

Respondents were asked: **'What is your highest education qualification?'** according to the International Standard Classification of Educational Degrees (ISCED). These qualifications were grouped in three educational levels: low (primary or below primary), medium (secondary or technical) and high (university degree or higher). Most respondents (67%) had a high educational level, 23% had medium level and 10% had attained a low-level of education. Overall, a greater proportion of respondents from the Republic of Ireland (70%) had attained a high-level of education compared to respondents from Northern Ireland (55%).

Table 4.A

Highest education qualification (n=2588, missing 22)	% Overall	% by country	
		NI (n=415)	RoI (n=2173)
Primary or below primary (Low-level)	9.8	11.6	9.5
Secondary or technical (Medium-level)	22.8	33.0	20.9
University degree or higher (High-level)	67.3	55.4	69.6

Participants were asked: **'Which of the following best describes your current occupation?'** and were asked to select one of the following eight categories: *Employed full-time; Employed part-time; Self-employed; Unemployed; Student; Retired; Long-term sick leave/medically retired; Other*. Over 70% were employed (full or part time), 16% were students, 9% were unemployed, and 5% were classified as 'other' employment status. Overall, a slightly greater proportion of respondents from the RoI reported being unemployed (9%), compared to those from NI (7%).

Table 4.B

Employment status (n=2599, missing 11)	% Overall	% by country	
		NI (n=415)	RoI (n=2184)
Employed	70.4	69.4	70.6
Unemployed	8.8	6.5	9.2
Student	16.3	17.6	16.1
Other status	4.5	6.5	4.1

Respondents were asked: **'Who do you live with?'** and asked to select all that applied from the following list: *Male partner; Female partner; Child(ren); Friends; One or both of my parents; Other family members; Others; I live by myself*. Over a quarter of the total of respondents lived alone (27%), 17% lived with a male partner and 20% lived with their parents. Respondents in Northern Ireland were more likely to live alone or with one or both parents.

Table 4.C

Living arrangements (n=2599, missing 11)	% Overall	% by country	
		NI (n=414)	RoI (n=2185)
Live alone	27.3	31.6	26.5
Male partner	16.7	20.3	16.0
Female partner	5.9	3.1	6.5
Child(ren)	3.1	2.7	3.2
Friend	17.5	12.6	18.4
One or both parents	20.0	24.4	19.2
Other family members	12.5	11.8	12.6
Others	8.5	4.3	9.2

5. Sexual Attraction, Identity & Behaviour

In the survey, sexual orientation was analysed on the basis of questions related to three components: sexual attraction, sexual identity and sexual behaviour by gender of sexual partners. Respondents were asked: **'Who are you sexually attracted to?'** and asked to select all that applied from the following list: *Only to men; Mostly to men and sometimes to women; Both to men and women equally; Mostly to women and sometimes to men; Only to women*. Most respondents reported being sexually attracted only to men (74%), 26% were attracted to men and women, and 0.1% were attracted only to women.

Table 5.A

Sexual attraction (n=2602, missing 8)	% Overall	% by country	
		NI (n=415)	RoI (n=2187)
Only to men	73.5	76.6	72.9
Mostly to men and sometimes to women	17.9	16.6	18.1
Both to men and women equally	5.0	4.6	5.1
Mostly to women and sometimes to men	3.5	2.2	3.8
Only to women	0.1	0	0.1

Respondents were also asked: **'Which of the following options best describes how you think of yourself?'** and were offered five options: *Gay or homosexual; Bisexual; Straight or heterosexual; Any other term; I don't usually use a term*. Most respondents identified themselves as gay or homosexual (79%). A total of 21% of respondents did not identify as gay, with 14% identifying as bisexual.

Table 5.B

Sexual identity (n=2606, missing 4)	% Overall	% by country	
		NI (n=415)	RoI (n=2191)
Gay or homosexual	78.9	84.3	77.9
Bisexual	13.5	10.8	14.0
Straight or heterosexual	1.1	0.2	1.2
Any other term	0.4	0.5	0.4
I don't usually use a term	6.1	4.1	6.5

Considering the last 12 months, respondents were asked: **'When did you last have any kind of sex with a man?'** and **'When did you last have any kind of sex with a woman?'** Most respondents had sex exclusively with men (82%), 11% with both men and women, and 2% only with women. A total of 5% of respondents indicated having no sexual partners in the previous 12 months.

Table 5.C

Gender of sexual partners in last 12 months (n=2582, missing 28)	% Overall	% by country	
		NI (n=414)	RoI (n=2168)
Men only	81.8	82.9	81.6
Both men and women	11.4	9.4	11.8
Women only	1.9	0.7	2.1
No one	4.9	7.0	4.5

6. 'Outness' & Friendships

'Outness' is defined by the study as the degree to which people are open about their sexual orientation with various individuals (being 'out'). This was determined by asking participants: **'Thinking about all the people who know you (including family, friends and work or study colleagues), what proportion know that you are attracted to men?'** Five answers were offered: *All or almost all; More than half; Less than half; Few; None.* Overall, 40% indicated that they are out to most people, while almost one-third (32%) said they were out to few people or no one. This distribution was similar between respondents from both NI and the RoI.

Table 6.A

Proportion of people aware of sexual attraction to men (n=2596, missing 14)	% Overall	% by country	
		NI (n=415)	RoI (n=2181)
All or almost all	39.9	40.7	39.8
More than half	17.7	18.3	17.6
Less than half	10.7	13.3	10.2
Few	20.8	19.5	21.0
None	11.0	8.2	11.5

Survey participants were also asked: **'What proportion of your male friends are attracted to men?'** and requested to select all that applied from the following six categories: *Almost all of them; More than half of them; Approximately half of them; Less than half of them; Almost none of them; I don't have any male friends.* These responses were recoded into three categories: *Most or all, Some, and None or few.* The majority of respondents had some friends who were attracted to men (64%), while over one-third (36%) had none or few friends who were attracted to men.

Table 6.B

Proportion of male friends attracted to men (n=2602, missing 8)	% Overall	% by country	
		NI (n=416)	RoI (n=2186)
Most or all	13.9	15.1	13.6
Some	49.7	51.0	49.5
None or few	36.4	33.9	36.9

7. Relationships & Sexual Partners

In the survey, participants were asked a series of questions about steady and non-steady relationships, and about their sex with these partners. Respondents were asked: **'Are you currently in a steady relationship?'** and could select all that applied from the possible responses: *Yes, with a man; Yes, with more than one man; Yes, with a woman; Yes, with more than one woman; No, I'm single.* Overall, 64% were single, 29% were in a relationship with a man, and 6% were in a relationship with a woman.

Table 7.A

Partnership (n=2601, missing 9)	% Overall	% by country	
		NI (n=416)	RoI (n=2185)
Single	64.4	66.1	64.1
One man	27.4	29.3	27.0
More than one man	1.8	1.4	1.8
One woman	6.2	3.1	6.7
More than one woman	<0.1	0	<0.1
Both a man and woman	0.2	0	0.3

The majority of respondents (58.4%) who were in a 'steady' relationship with another man had been in that relationship for more than two (2) years. Only 21% had been in a relationship lasting less than one (1) year. Of the respondents who reported being in a stable relationship with a woman, 90% reported that their relationship had lasted more than two (2) years.

In relation to sexual behaviour, respondents were asked: **'How many different non-steady male partners have you had sex with in the last 12 months?'** In the survey, 'non-steady' meant men they have had sex with only once, or men they have had sex with more than once but who they don't consider as a steady partner. Almost two-thirds of respondents (65.2%) indicated having more than one non-steady sexual partner in the previous 12 months, while over one-quarter (26.3%) indicated having none.

Table 7.B

Number of non-steady male sexual partners in last 12 months (n=2559, missing 51)	% Overall	% by country	
		NI (n=409)	RoI (n=2150)
None	26.3	31.1	25.4
One	8.5	8.6	8.5
2 to 5	32.0	32.8	31.9
6 to 10	14.3	11.0	14.9
11 to 30	13.9	12.5	14.1
More than 30	5.0	4.2	5.2

8. HIV & STI Testing History

In the questionnaire, participants were invited to answer a series of questions about testing for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). All were asked: **'Have you ever received an HIV test result?'** The possible responses were: *No, I've never received an HIV test result; Yes, I've tested positive (I have HIV infection); Yes, my last test was negative (I did not have HIV infection at the time of the test).* Almost two-fifths of respondents indicated that they had never been tested (38.0%). Overall, 5.5% indicated they tested positive, or 9% of those who had ever tested. Men from Northern Ireland were more likely to report that they had never been tested for HIV. In comparison to the 2008 survey, respondents in this sample were slightly less likely to have never tested, while a greater proportion of respondents had tested positive.

Table 8.A

HIV testing history (n=2599, missing 11)	% Overall	% by country	
		NI (n=415)	RoI (n=2184)
Never tested	38.0	43.9	36.9
Last tested negative	56.5	53.3	57.1
Tested positive	5.5	2.9	6.0

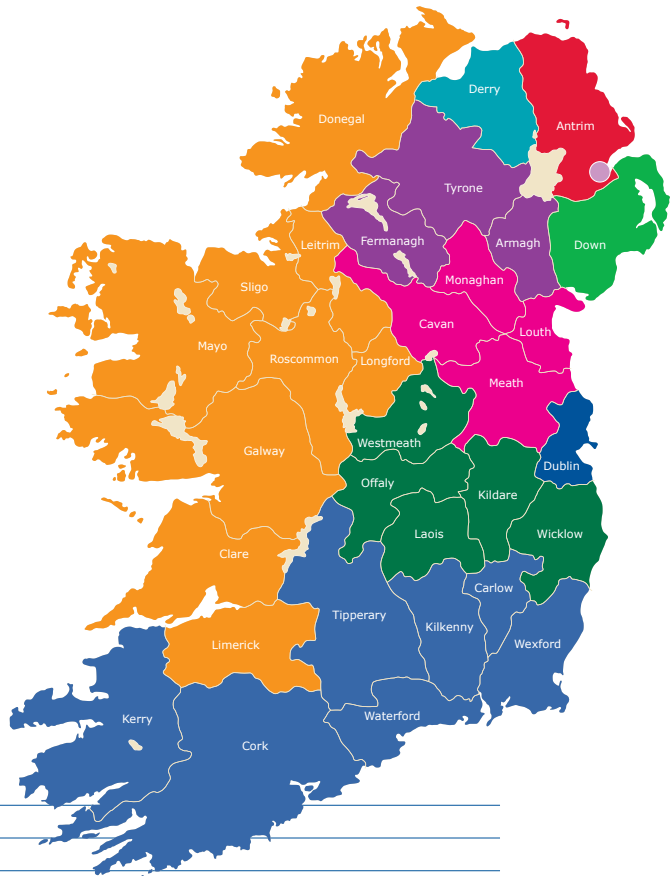
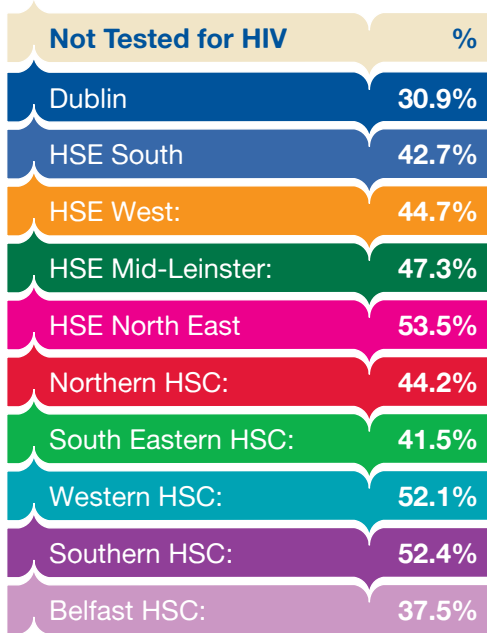
Respondents were also asked: **'Have you ever had a test for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) other than HIV?'** They could choose from the following responses: *Yes; No; I don't know.* Similar to HIV testing history, approximately two-fifths of respondents (41.8%) indicated that they had not been tested for other STIs or were unsure. Respondents from the Republic of Ireland were more likely to report being tested for other STIs compared to respondents from Northern Ireland.

Taking A Closer Look

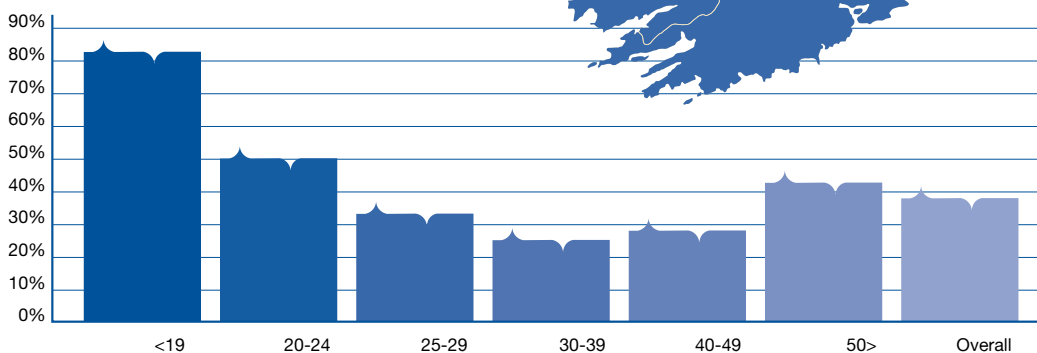
Men were least likely to have tested for HIV if they were younger men (24 years and younger), bisexual men or other MSM, or reside outside of urban centres.

- 84% of men aged 19 and younger and 50% of men aged 20 to 24 had never tested.
- 58% of non-gay identified men (61% bisexual and 52% other) had never tested.
- 54% of men living in villages or the countryside (less than 10,000 people) and 46% of men living in small towns or cities (10,000 to 99,999 people) had never tested.
- In the Republic of Ireland, 54% of men residing in HSE North East and 47% of men residing in HSE Mid-Leinster had never tested.
- In Northern Ireland, 52% of men residing in Southern HSC and 52% of men residing in Western HSC had never tested.

This indicates a need for targeted interventions to increase access and encourage younger men, bisexual men and other MSM, and men living in rural areas to test for HIV.



Not Tested By Age-Range %



Summary:

This initial Man2Man report ‘Our Community’, highlights the sheer diversity that exists within the MSM community in Ireland. Future reports will use this information to help identify unmet needs of gay, bisexual, and other MSM. With such diversity, a ‘one size fits all’ approach is not sufficient to effectively improve the sexual health and well-being of MSM. The EMIS survey demonstrates that a diversity of methodological approaches are needed to reach sub-groups of the targeted populations.

In particular, specific strategies are often required for those who are typically more difficult to reach with existing programmes for gay and bisexual men, such as foreign-born MSM and ‘hidden’ MSM – including those who are not ‘out’ or in steady partnerships with women. Forthcoming reports will elaborate on programming gaps by focussing on the following themes: MSM living with HIV; testing and access to services; sexual behaviour and practices; and other issues including drug use, and stigma and discrimination.

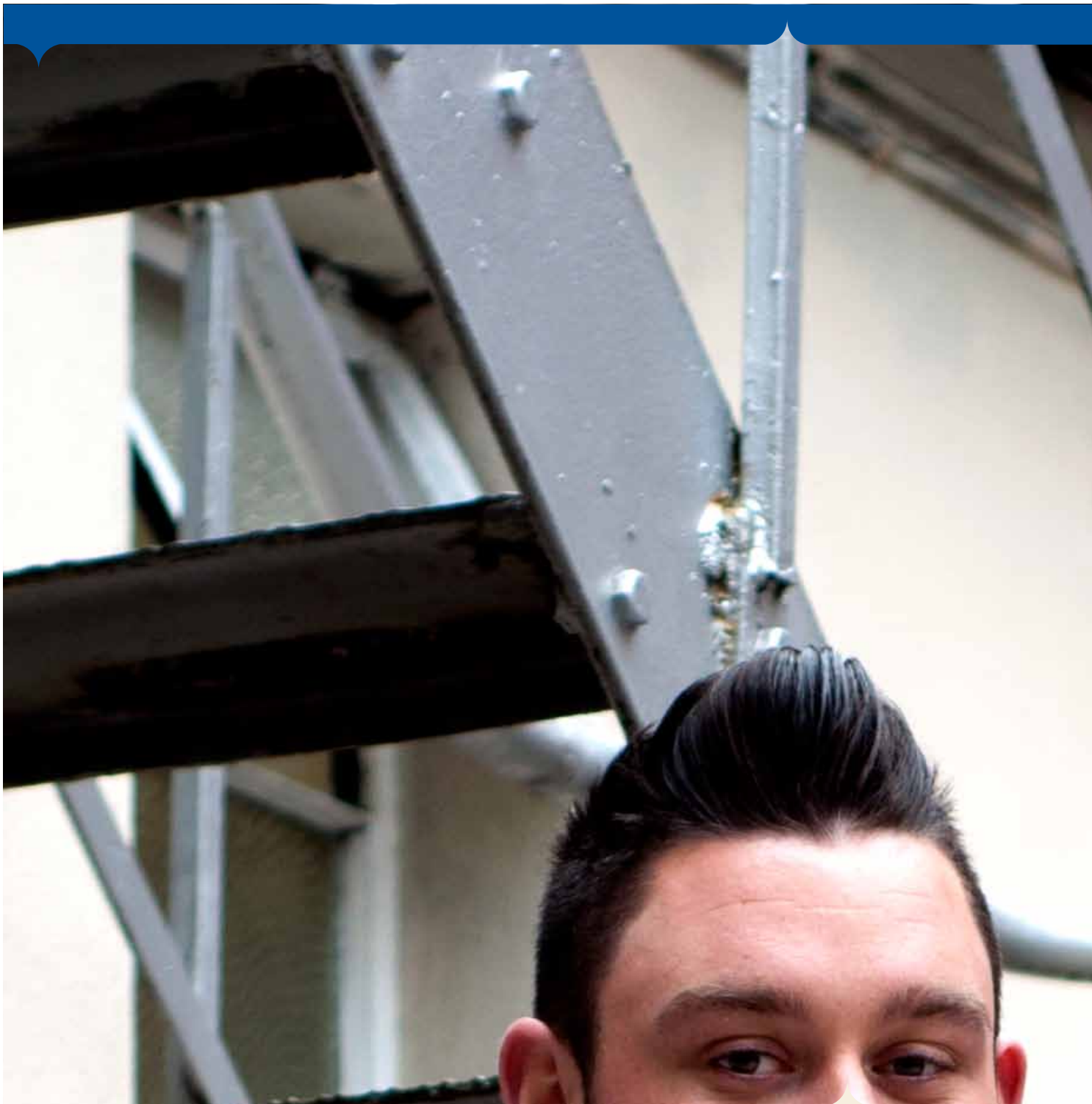
EMIS Partners:

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**It's Our Community
Have a look!**

